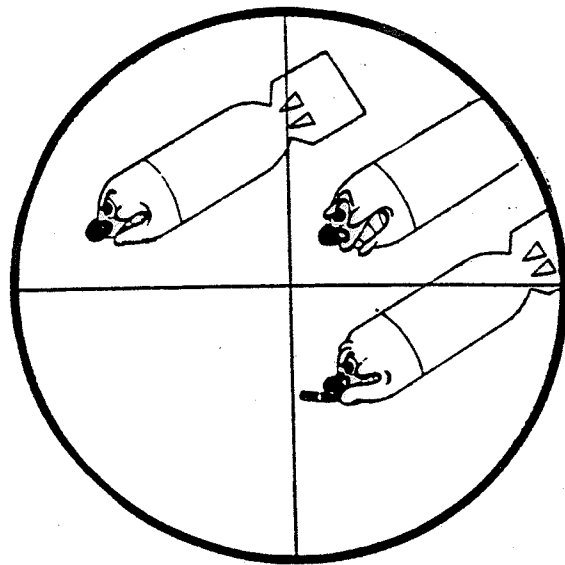
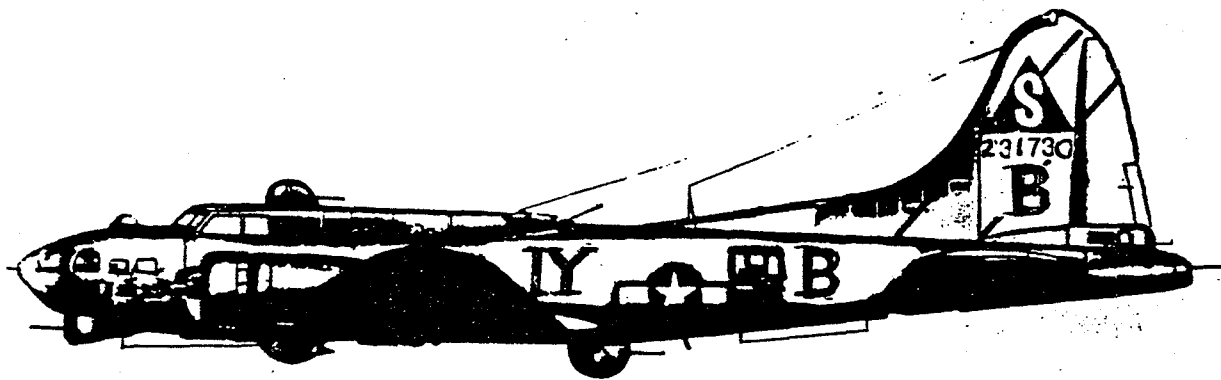


**615th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
401st BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
SQUADRON HISTORY**





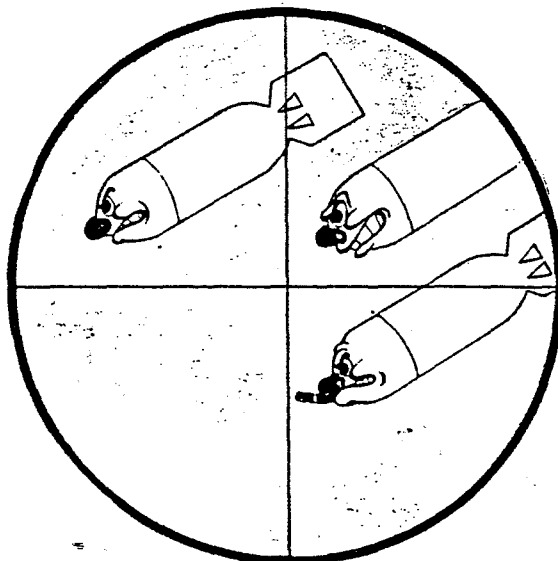
615TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)

401ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

SQUADRON HISTORY

BY

Vic Maslen



FRONT COVER

42-31730, IY-B, "MORNING STAR"

Only a very small number of 401st Bomb Group B-17's reached the magic figure of 100 missions. One of these was the "MORNING STAR", a 615th Squadron ship that recorded a total of 112 missions before returning to the USA on Operation "HOME RUN" in June 1945.

This History is dedicated to Brigardier General William T. Seawell, Lt. Colonel Ralph J. White and Major Clyde A. Lewis, the former Commanding Officers of the 615th Bombardment Squadron (H) throughout W.W. II.

WILLIAM T. SEAWELL

From the paper beginning in 1943 of the 615th with General Order No. 46, Hq. Second Air Force, thru final U.S. training at Lewistown, Montana, to the Crucible of war at Deenethorpe and finally to military victory in Europe in 1945 all of us shared a common all important experience.

We lost dear and heroic comrades; we formed friendships whose bonds continue today strong and true.

Each of us has indelible memories; all of us thank Vic Maslen deeply for reinforcement of those memories with this squadron history.

FOREWORD

I have read and reread three times every word of the 615th Bombardment (H), 401st Bombardment Group (H) Squadron History compiled and prepared by our friend Vic Maslen. It is a masterful report of one of the outstanding combat units of World War II.

Those who served in the 401st will always be indebted to the leadership of Colonel Harold W. Bowman and Major/Colonel William T. Seawell. We who were an early part of the 615th were privileged to have had the benefit of then Major Seawell's example and outstanding leadership. There was no substitute for the methodical training and molding of the efficient combat unit which Major Seawell and Captain Ralph J. White, the 615th's initial operations officer, provided and instilled in each member of the squadron.

Every 615th pilot remembers well the admonition of Major Seawell during our training and overseas that if you were not able to fly tight formation, you could not fly with the 615th and the 401st. His theory drilled into each of us that a closely knit group/wing going to war was necessary for the required bomb patterns; also vital and necessary to provide maximum firepower directed against Jerry's fighter attacks. I recall many missions when wingtips almost touched and the three squadron formations were stacked on top of each other with only sufficient clearance on the bomb runs for bombs to clear the middle and lower squadron. The low loss ratio of the 615th/401st was a result primarily of Colonel Seawell's early discipline which always produced a tight formation.

With the 615th crews, there was no room for stragglers in enemy fighter territory.

The late Colonel Ralph J. White left his mark on the 615th. He was a superb leader and worthy successor to Colonel Seawell as 615th squadron commander.

As you read each mission report, you will recall the missions you flew--the events will be dramatically recalled. When I first received the history, I closed my office door, stopped all telephone calls and did not take a break for almost four hours.

Vic Maslen's front cover and introductory page make those who flew the "Morning Star" very proud. It was my late wife Helen who actually gave that ship its name when it became a part of the 615th at Lewistown. We both thought that the inspiration to all and the permanency of the Morning Star in the heavens was very meaningful. It was something to which its successive crews could always relate. We who flew that ship's 112 missions thank Vic Maslen for the recognition accorded one of the 401st's special ships.

Generals Bowman and Seawell, Ralph Trout and Vic Maslen are to be commended for the 615th Squadron History which will always be a part of each of us who were privileged to be a part of the BEST heavy bombardment squadron in World War II.

Clyde A. Lewis
Squadron Commander No. 3
of the 615th Bombardment
Squadron (H)

Plattsburgh, New York
June 15, 1986

April 1943

Like the other three Squadrons in the 401st Bombardment Group (H), the 615th Bombardment Squadron (H) came into being - on paper at least - in the Headquarters of the Second Air Force, then located at Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington, on 1st April, 1943. The fact that it was 'April Fools' day did not go unnoticed, but it was also the anniversary of the birth of the RAF in 1918 and they had proved to be no 'April Fools'.

The Activation Order was General Order No. 46, Hq. Second Air Force, and included the four Squadrons of the Group -- 612th, 613th, 614th and 615th. A search then began for personnel to operate the four Squadrons and on 22nd April, 1943, the Officers and Enlisted Men that were to make up the Cadre were notified of their selection by TWX.

The temporary Headquarters of the 401st Group and the four Squadrons was set up at the Ephrata, Washington Army Air Base and the Cadre and Air Echelon of the Group were ordered to report there before proceeding to Orlando, Florida, for a month's intensive work at the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics. The 401st Cadre were the third of the Heavy Bombardment Groups to go through this School, and it is recorded that those that took part in it long remembered this month. Each of the Squadrons had one B-17 and a model crew, and while this crew flew down to Orlando, Florida, the other personnel went by rail.

On May 14th the B-17's flew to one of the school's satellite bases at Brookville, Florida. The other personnel followed and settled down to living in simulated combat conditions in tents on a camouflaged base.

Deenethorpe was still some months ahead and I doubt if living in tents in Florida was the ideal preparation for the mud, fog, ice and snow that they were going to experience on Station 126 in the middle of an English winter. Nevertheless, the camp was described as "rough", with very few kind words for the mess.

While at this camp practice missions were flown to Mobile, New Orleans, Dry Tortugua, Charleston, S.C. and a sea search mission over the Gulf of Mexico.

On 29th May the Group returned to Orlando for the departure to Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington, with the remainder of the Group again proceeding by rail. At Geiger Field numerous Officers and Enlisted Men joined the Squadron until it numbered about 20 Officers and 200 Enlisted Men. At this time there was probably only one combat crew with the Squadron, with the other crews, who would join the Squadron later, in the throes of the first phase of training at Moses Lake and Ephrata AAB's.

The Squadron spent a month at Geiger and the first week in July found the Squadron moving again. This time the Squadron went to the Army Air Base at Lewistown, Montana and spent three months there. The bulk of the personnel were again conveyed by train. These hectic months were used in training crews for long hours each day with bombing, formation flying, instruments etc., work which kept the whole Squadron on the hustle.

Eventually more crews joined the Squadron until it reached the allotted nine. The outfit continued to shape into combat efficiency with Engineering and Operations putting in very long hours to keep the aircraft and crews busy with training. The formation flying and bombing continued to improve, with many hours being flown both by day and night.

There was a change in tactical orders at a very late date adding

34 extra crews to a heavy bomber group, making it 70 aircraft and crews instead of 36. This new order was quickly cancelled when the 401st Group eventually arrived in the UK with the extra crews being transferred to the 351st B.G. (H) at Polebrook. The extra nine crews to the Squadron meant far more work as regards maintenance and flying but it was done well, and many hard hours of experience at this time were to prove themselves profitable later on.

Then, at 1730 hrs on October 19th, 1943, the Squadron began the first step on its long journey to the ETO and what was deemed the "Big League". The general consensus of opinion among the personnel of the Squadron was that Lewistown was indeed a town filled with hospitality, friendliness and good cheer, not to mention fine steeds, charming girls, good hunting, famous wheat ranches, and above all real Indian Summer weather - the likes of which the men had'nt seen.

The ride on the train to New York was uneventful, periods of loafing being interspersed with hot crap games, bull sessions and big time poker games. The train reached Chicago on 21st October at 1400 hrs, but though it stopped for about an hour no one was allowed to leave the train, much to the chagrin of many a G.I. living near that section of the city.

Then, proceeding eastward, the train finally reached its destination on the Hudson River, namely Camp Shanks, on the 22nd October, 1943 at 1830 hrs. No one was allowed to leave camp. There were hasty physicals, including shots and lectures on various subjects. Exactly 103½ hours after arriving the Squadron were herded into a motor caravan to move through the darkness toward a certain ship known as "SS NY 501" - which turned out to be the "Queen Mary". The Squadron drew the lowest deck on the ship known to them as the "X" and "Y" section of the "Blue" area, and slept in hammocks.

At about 1700 hrs on October 27th, 1943, the ship vibrated and shuddered, indicating that the Squadron was on its way to the ETO.

On November 2nd they had their much-awaited landfall. It was about 0800 hrs and the ship was making its way up the Firth of Clyde to its anchor point off Gourrock, on the foggy and forbidding coast of Scotland. The first impression taken in that morning was the dependance on shipping, with ships of countless nations at anchor around them, with an American cruiser nearby. Then began what seemed like an endless wait and it was 1100 hrs on the following morning that debarkation took place. It was then a short walk to the train and they were on their way, finally arriving at the tiny station of Geddington on the line between Kettering and Corby. This was on Tuesday 4th November at 0300 hrs on a very cold and foggy morning. G.I. trucks took them the few miles to Deenethorpe, or, as it was known in American Army Air Force language - Station 128. The 615th Bombardment Squadron (H) had arrived at their battle station in the European Theater of Operations.

Now back to Lewistown, Montana, and the brand new B-17G's and their crews. There were fifteen Fortresses and their crews with the Commanding Officer, Major William T. Seawell flying 42-31077, later to be known by the Squadron Code of IY-A and the nickname PAKAWALUP II. This aircraft was eventually lost on the 30th September 1944 Munster mission with Lt. Thomas A. Davis and crew, just one day after Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell had flown her to Birmingham to pick up Marlene Dietrich for a concert held at Deenethorpe in Hanger No. 1 that same night.

The 615th Staff Officers made up the crew of 42-31077 with Captain Ralph J. White as co-pilot, Lt. R.F. Causey, navigator, Captain A.C. Kuennig, bombardier, Lt. C.I. Blumenthal, radio operator, Lt. R.W. Newman, eng-

ineer, Lt. George Gould, as extra pilot, M/Sgt. G.G. McDevitt, Asst. Eng., M/Sgt. H.A. Simons, ball turret gunner and S/Sgt. R.E. Hall, tail gunner.

The first stop for Major Seawell and his crew was Scott Field, Ill. The crew were processed for their trip overseas and spent that night in town, and it was another four days before they were on their way to the next stage of their journey. At 1200 hrs on October 22nd, 1943, they landed at Syracuse, N.Y. and left the following morning for Bangor, Maine, arriving the same day. Enroute to Bangor, Maine, the crew flew over Boston Harbor, and caught sight of the tremendous array of warships anchored there.

They departed Bangor at noon on October 26th, the first stop being Gander, Newfoundland, which they reached some few hours later.

The crew left Gander on the night of October 31st and headed for Scotland but approximately 500 miles out in the Atlantic they were recalled and returned to Gander due to very stormy weather over the North Atlantic. The storms continued to rage for another week, and it was November 6th at 2200 hrs that 'O77 finally took off for the ETO, this time completing the long hop to Nutts Corner, Ireland. It is said that during this crossing of the Atlantic the crew played a friendly game of Blackjack, which made M/Sgt. McDevitt and Lt. Newman poorer and M/Sgt. Simons and S/Sgt. Hall considerably richer. In the meantime, during this hot Blackjack game, Major Seawell settled himself in the bomb bay to catch up with some sack time, stretching out on the crews hand luggage. It was later noted that at this particular time Captain Kuenning, the bombardier, unaware that Major Seawell was taking this nap in the bomb bay, was having some practice "togglng" in the nose of the ship, with almost dire results. How close he came to "salvo-ing" his CO into the Atlantic from 12,000 feet is something he evidently worried about for quite some time afterwards.

Arriving at Nutts Corner, Ireland on the morning of 7th November, the crew took some delight in exploring their first "pub" about 12 miles from Belfast. They drank their first English "ale" and discussed their record trip of nine hours 55 minutes across the Atlantic, out of sight of land for the whole period until they hit the Irish Coast. On the 9th November they took off once more and headed for the Army Air Base at Polebrook, Northamptonshire, just a few miles down the road from their eventual final destination --- Deenethorpe. They were met by their own mechanics who had already established themselves at Deenethorpe.

The story of the other ships and their crews is similar to that of 'O77, with slight variations. Lt. Chapman and his crew consisting of Lt.'s Jones, Hulbert and Wallis, and Sgt.'s Badura, Chaffin, Roundtree, Johnson, Reed and Fix, flew a similar route to the ETO via Lewistown, Scott Field, Syracuse, Bangor, Gander, Prestwick, Polebrook and finally Deenethorpe. Lt. Chapman's crew flew the entire trip across the Atlantic without seeing water. They also had an early introduction to the war when they were fired on by a "friendly" tramp steamer - luckily there was no damage to crew or ship.

Flying Fortress 42-37833, piloted by 1st Lt. William M. Rumsey and his crew of nine men, included the following:- Lt. R.D. Kaercher, co-pilot, Lt. M.R. Walsh, navigator, Lt. J.D. Haffner, bombardier, T/Sgt. D.B. Roberts, S/Sgt. W.W. Carter, S/Sgt. I.R. Lee, S/Sgt. I.I. Lieberman, T/Sgt. F.A. Rothwell and S/Sgt. H.F. McElligot. This crew took off at 0230 hrs on October 19th, 1943 from Lewistown, Montana, and landed at Scott Field shortly afterwards. While there T/Sgt. McElligot was able to visit his home at East St Louis. Leaving Scott Field on October 23rd at 1200 hrs, the crew of '833 took off for Syracuse where they landed at 1810 hrs the same day. The overnight stay there gave T/Sgt. Roberts ample time to visit his home

in nearby Oneida, N.Y. Bowling alleys in the PX offered S/Sgt. "Lucky" Leiberman and S/Sgt. Carter plenty of recreation. The following morning, October 24th, the crew took off for Bangor, Maine, arriving there at 2000 hrs the same day. The entire crew enjoyed their stay at this base for four days. The next stop was Stephenville, Newfoundland, where they arrived on 28th October.

'833 left Gander on the night of November 2nd, at 2300 hrs for Prestwick, Scotland, arriving there at 1100 hrs on the 3rd. Crossing 1900 miles of water was quite an experience for the men of the crew, but in addition to the men there was also a 6 month-old pup named "Shanty", who, despite his youth, would later make a mission into France. Leaving Prestwick at 1000 hrs on November 7th the crew of '833 arrived at Polebrook AAB at 1300 hrs the same day.

Now that the entire Squadron had arrived in England there was plenty of work to be done. However, at Polebrook, 8 of the 615th Squadron B-17's were promptly taken away, with the crews, and incorporated into the 351st B.G. (H). The crews transferred were those of Lt. McCarthy, Lt. Putman, Lt. Jones, Lt. Maginn, Lt. Robertson, Lt. Litsinger, Lt. Anderson and Lt. Meers.

The crews of the 615th Squadron B-17G's on the Atlantic crossing were:-

Aircraft 42-31077
Major W.T. Seawell
Capt. R.J. White
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
1st Lt. G.I. Blumenthal
1st Lt. G. Gould
2nd Lt. R.F. Causey
2nd Lt. R.W. Newman
S/Sgt. R.E. Hall
M/Sgt. G.G. McDevitt
M/Sgt. H.A. Simons

Aircraft 42-39873
Capt. R.T. Beers
2nd Lt. H.E. Byrne
2nd Lt. W.L. Ritch
2nd Lt. H. Gershon
T/Sgt. C.E. Young
S/Sgt. M. Paola
S/Sgt. F.M. Grigg
S/Sgt. A.H. Craft
S/Sgt. J.E. Turvey
S/Sgt. K.J. Lynn

Aircraft 42-37809
2nd Lt. H.J. Chapman
2nd Lt. A.E. Jones
2nd Lt. H.J. Hurlbert
2nd Lt. D.G. Wallis
Sgt. C.S. Badura
Sgt. H.W. Chaffin
Sgt. C.L. Roundtree
Sgt. D.D. Johnson
Sgt. F.L. Reed
Cpl. N.J. Fix

Aircraft 42-39834
2nd Lt. V.J. Kaminski
2nd Lt. R.W. Mallon
2nd Lt. L.J. Hildinger
2nd Lt. J.C. Gallagher
2nd Lt. J.W. Osland
Sgt. J. Lodhot
Sgt. D.L. Draginis
Sgt. E.R. Cheatham
Sgt. G.J. Powell
Sgt. W.J. Brennan

Aircraft 42-39778
2nd Lt. C.A. Lewis
2nd Lt. E.S. Sutton
2nd Lt. W.M. Eaton
2nd Lt. H.S. Arnold
S/Sgt. M.C. Weber
Cpl. C.R. Miner
Pfc. A.P. Marshall
Sgt. L.R. Cushing
S/Sgt. J.E. Howell

Aircraft 42-39761
2nd Lt. R.M. Dempsey
2nd Lt. L.A. Mitchell
2nd Lt. C.W. Sellers
2nd Lt. W.W. Delan
S/Sgt. H.S. Zander
Cpl. J.E. Beller
Sgt. B.J. Fatica
Sgt. F.A. Merlino
Sgt. W.H. Sweepe
S/Sgt. P.H. Knapp

Aircraft 42-39843
2nd Lt. E.A. Christensen
2nd Lt. R.L. Rustand
2nd Lt. H.A. Reynolds
2nd Lt. D.E. Weng
Sgt. R.J. Breen
Sgt. R.C. Mehlmann *
Sgt. R.W. Johnson
Sgt. H.A. Ross
Sgt. A.L. Batson
Sgt. J.D. Nonemaker

Aircraft 42-37833
1st Lt. W.M. Rumsey
2nd Lt. R.D. Kaercher
2nd Lt. M.R. Walsh
2nd Lt. J.D. Haffer
T/Sgt. D.B. Roberts
S/Sgt. W.W. Carter
S/Sgt. I.R. Lee
S/Sgt. I.R. Lieberman
S/Sgt. F.A. Rothwell
S/Sgt. H.F. McElliget

Aircraft 42-31069
2nd Lt. S. Wysocki
2nd Lt. J.L. Peck
2nd Lt. R.M. Gurvin
2nd Lt. J. Taylor
S/Sgt. W. McIntyre
Sgt. G.M. Kenny
Sgt. E.H. Koön
S/Sgt. J.P. Ostrowski
Sgt. J.R. White
Sgt. D.E. Clare

* Note. Sgt. W.J. Brennan was entered as flying with Lt. V.J. Kaminski and Lt. E.A. Christensen in error.

November 1943

22 days after arriving at Deenethorpe the Squadron flew its first mission on 26th November, 1943. November was a month of very hard work, getting settled in, preparing for combat and the final training for the Officers and Enlisted Men in various schools.

Missions

Mission 1

Target : Bremen

26 November 1943

The first mission, led by Colonel Bowman, was into northwest Germany, where the Group bombed the port of Bremen. 20 aircraft were briefed to go on this mission, but due to three abortives, only 17 aircraft went in over the target, which was bombed through the overcast by PFF methods.

Disaster struck the Squadron on this first mission. First of all the Squadron Commander, Major William T. Seawell, was prevented from taking off in 42-31069 because a 614th ship managed to mire itself in some of the very tacky English mud directly in front of the Major's ship. Then Lt. V.J. Kaminski in 42-39873 had a brake failure and ran into the tail of Lt. Ralph M. Dempsey's ship 42-31091, demolishing the tail and disabling both planes. From the Group's point of view however, the mission was successful, the target being bombed without loss, although eight ships suffered minor flak damage.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew.
42-37833 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-31193 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

The following new crew joined the Squadron in November:-

1st Lt. F.D. Grinham
2nd Lt. F. Brown Jr.
2nd Lt. R.F. Whitney
2nd Lt. R.W. Wolf
T/Sgt. R.W. Cockerham
T/Sgt. C.M. Lewis
S/Sgt. C.E. Hardy
S/Sgt. W.T. Cummings
S/Sgt. H.M. Houseman
S/Sgt. J.R. Hamilton

December 1943

Mission 2

Target : Solingen

2 December 1943

The target on this mission was Solingen, in "Happy Valley", the famous airplane manufacturing center in the Ruhr. The Group was led by Lt. Col. Harris E. Rogner, with Major Seawell leading the 615th Squadron in the Lead low position.

The 401st Group flew the low position in the 1st Combat Wing, and this was the third Wing over the target. They encountered 25 to 35 FW-190's over the target itself, but the escorting fighters did a good job of protecting the bombers, and although the attack went on for about 30 minutes the Group suffered no losses. The target was bombed once again by the PFF method.

On the way home the co-pilot of 42-31077, Lt. Fred Brown, was busy releasing three hung up bombs and then noticed that the radio operator, Sgt. Charles W. Lewis, was unconscious on the radio room floor. He used his own portable oxygen supply to revive Sgt. Lewis and then collapsed unconscious himself - to be revived in turn by Sgt. Lewis.

The mission leader, Lt. Col. Rogner, flew with Lt. Stephen Wysocki and his crew in a 613th ship, 42-3507.

The loading list for the mission was as follows:-

42-37833 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew with Major W.T. Seawell.
42-31088 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31193 Capt. R.W. Beers and crew.

Mission 3

Target : Paris

5 December 1943

The target on this mission was a ball-bearing plant located five miles northwest of Paris. The 401st B.G. was the High Box of the Wing formation and consisted of 20 aircraft. Due to 10/10th's cloud cover no bombs were dropped and the mission was classed as an abortive sortie mission.

This was also the day that Lt. Walter B. Keith crashed on take-off into the village of Deenethorpe. It was believed a combination of prop wash and icing cause loss of power causing the port wing to sink until it touched the runway, turning the aircraft to port and down the hill into the village. The heroes of the crash were Captain Ralph J. White and T/Sgt. William N. Luna who aided injured members of the crew to escape before the aircraft's 6,000 lb bomb load and full tanks exploded. To this day - January 1986 - the crater made by the explosion can still be seen, and many pieces of 42-39825 can still be picked up on the site.

The Squadron put up the following aircraft and crews:-

42-31036 Major W.T. Seawell and crew with Major A.C. Brooks, Group Air Commander.
42-31077 Lt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-37809 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31193 Capt. R.W. Beers and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-39873 615th aircraft flown by a crew from another Squadron.

Mission 4

Target : Emden

11 December 1943

The target on this mission was the port of Emden and the 21 aircraft of the 401st B.G. were led by the Commanding Officer of the Group, Col. H.W. Bowman. Col. Bowman flew with a 615th crew in a 613th aircraft. The crew was that of Lt. S. Wysocki and the aircraft was the "Betty J", later to become famous as the only original 401st B-17 to return to the USA in June, 1945 on Operation "HOME RUN".

523 four-engined bombers of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Air Divisions attacked Emden on this mission with a loss of 17 aircraft. 138 aircraft were also damaged on this mission. The claims for the bombers were 86-22-23 and the fighters 21-0-7.

The 615th Squadron loading list was as follows:-

42-31077 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew.

Mission 5

Target : Kiel

13 December 1943

Col. H.E. Rogner led this mission to Kiel in a 615th ship, IY-O, 42-31091, but the crew with him was not named. 21 ships were despatched and 18 attacked the primary target. The bombing was carried out by PFF with unobserved results. Four 401st aircraft sustained battle damage.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-31077 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew.
42-37843 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-37943 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.

Mission 6

Target : Bremen

20 December 1943

During the day the RAF Deenethorpe Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Edward Watson, handed the base over officially to Colonel Bowman, and it became Station 128 of the USAAF.

This was another visit to the port of Bremen with 15 of the 19 aircraft despatched hitting the primary target. 14 of the Group's aircraft sustained battle damage on this mission, in fact over half of the force of 472 aircraft hitting Bremen were battle damaged.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-31077 Major W.T. Seawell and crew. (Weather ship)
42-40057 Capt. R.J. White and crew.

42-31068 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.

Mission 7

Target : Osnabruck

22 December 1943

23 aircraft, including a PFF ship from another Group, were sent on this mission, with the 401st in the Lead box position of the Wing formation. One aircraft suffered supercharger failure and was forced to land at Bassingbourne.

The Group did not bomb the target because after the I.P. they found themselves on a collision course with a Group that had bombed Munster as a diversion. Another aircraft, 612th Squadron's "Channel Express", SC-J, 42-37835, was hit over enemy territory by a bomb from another B-17 in a higher element. The crew brought it back to Deenethorpe but could not land it so they bailed out over the base. The plane went on to crash near the town of Washingley, Huntingtongshire.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-37833 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-39904 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31077 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew.
42-31091 Major W.T. Seawell and crew.
42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.

Mission 8

Target : Gorenflos

24 December 1943

This mission was led by Major W.T. Seawell and the 20 aircraft of the 401st attacked a V-1 site near Gorenflos, east of Abbeyville. This was in the Pas de Calais area of France and was the first attack on these, what was then considered to be, mysterious installations.

The Squadron Bombardier, Captain A.C. Kuenning, was flying with Major Seawell on this mission, leading a Squadron of 9 aircraft, and, although flying at only 12,000 feet, admitted that his bombs hit nothing but fields.

There was no enemy opposition and all aircraft and crews returned to Deenethorpe safely.

The Squadron put up the following aircraft:-

42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew.
42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-39904 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-40001 Major W.T. Seawell and the following:-
Capt. D.E. Silver
Lt. R.F. Causey
Lt. C.W. Sellers
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
S/Sgt. J.E. Beller
S/Sgt. W.H. Sweepe
S/Sgt. P.N. Knapp
S/Sgt. F.A. Merlino

Mission 9

Target : Ludwigshaven

30 December 1943

This was an attack on the chemical works of I.G. Farbinindustrie at Ludwigshaven, which the Allies had reason to believe were producing poison gas. The Group put up 23 aircraft with 20 of them attacking the primary target under the leadership of Major E.W. Brown.

The 401st lost its first aircraft on this mission when a 612th aircraft piloted by Lt. Trian Neag was shot down. Lt. Neag was one of the original members of the 401st B.G. and his loss must have been a very sad blow to his friends.

This was the longest mission yet flown by the Group with 10 hours engine time recorded. The target was attacked by PFF method in Wing formation. No results were observed.

The loading list was as follows:-

42-31091	Capt. R.J. White and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)
42-37809	Lt. D.C. Sprecher and crew.
42-31193	Capt. R.T. Beers and crew.
42-31069	Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-37843	Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-39904	Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 10

Target : Cognac

31 December 1943.

The mission was led by Major Seawell with 21 401st aircraft leading the 94th Wing formation. The primary target was the airfield at Bordeaux but it was obscured by cloud so the Wing Leader ordered the formation to proceed to the secondary at Cognac, again an airfield. The Group Bombardier on this mission, flying with Major Seawell, was Captain Kuenning and he had not been briefed on this target nor had he studied it, but with help from his good friend Lt. Causey they located it on the map. In fact the target was seen from about thirty miles away by the smoke from bombings by the preceding formations.

Some fighters had attacked the formation as they crossed the Brest peninsula jumping on a straggler, and shooting him down. This turned out to be the C.O. of 614th Squadron, Major I.W. Eveland, who eventually returned to Deenethorpe after walking through France into Spain.

The run into the target was upwind, making the groundspeed of the B-17 slow enough for the flak gunners to take very careful aim and throw some accurate fire in its path. As Captain Kuenning aimed at the large building on the airfield the bursts of flak jolted the plane. He was sure that they'd "had it", to use his own words. Nevertheless the bombs landed on the group of buildings blowing three of the four up. In fact it turned out that this was the assigned aiming point, and Major Seawell collected a commendation from General Lacey, the 94th CBW Commander, as did Captain Kuenning from Colonel Bowman.

(The details of this, and a number of other missions, are taken from Major Arnold C. Kuenning's "Twenty five Missions over Europe")

The Group lost a total of four aircraft during this mission. Two 614th aircraft, 42-31064, piloted by Lt. Donald H Lawry, and 42-37770, piloted by Lt. Homer R. McDanal, were shot down. The other two, 42-31068,

piloted by Captain Jere Maupin and 42-31198, piloted by Lt. Scribner Dailey, both ran out of fuel forcing the crews to bail out. Four of Lt. McDanal's crew were killed, and there were no survivors from Lt. Lawry's crew when their Fort spun into the sea in an inverted position.

The Group were credited with shooting down three enemy aircraft with the 615th Squadron claiming four damaged and one probable.

The loading list was as follows:-

42-31091 Major W.T. Seawell and crew.
42-31077 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-39904 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-37809 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31609 Lt. D.C. Sprecher and crew.
42-31193 Capt. R.T. Beers and crew.

The following new crews joined the Squadron in December:-

2nd Lt. J.E. Ferdyn	2nd Lt. E.T. Gardner* KIA
2nd Lt. R.S. Enstad	2nd Lt. G.L. Carter
2nd Lt. Manning	2nd Lt. C.A. Cougar
2nd Lt. J.D. Black KIA	2nd Lt. J.L. Foster
T/Sgt. J.D. Agee	S/Sgt. D.W. Minard
S/Sgt. Cooper	Cpl. F. Monnes
S/Sgt. W.M. May	S/Sgt. P.J. Piazza
S/Sgt. E.M. Bushendorf	S/Sgt. S.R. Rezowski
S/Sgt. H. Herten	Sgt. S.A. Trupia
S/Sgt. J. Johnson	Sgt. F.J. Durben
2nd Lt. D.T. Nicklawsky*	2nd Lt. D.C. Sprecher*
2nd Lt. J.J. Carter	2nd Lt. Z.M. Massomian
2nd Lt. C. Filler	2nd Lt. K.W. Tinklepaugh
2nd Lt. N.L. Keller	2nd Lt. G.A. Weiss
S/Sgt. A.C. Washinko	S/Sgt. O. Anderson
S/Sgt. J.A. Kilbane	S/Sgt. R.E. Allen
Sgt. R.A. Killgore KIA	Sgt. D.W. Peart
Sgt. M.H. Schmit	Sgt. R.G. Vindhurst
Sgt. E.J. Nientkowicz	Sgt. G.R. Schrader KIA
Sgt. G.S. Casparis	Sgt. J.R. Whire KIA
Capt. W.W. Trimble*	2nd Lt. L.C. Van Syckle*
2nd Lt. F.L. Shantz	2nd Lt. M.K. Woods
2nd Lt. B.F. Lemke	2nd Lt. R.L. Monfort
2nd Lt. E.C. Cury	2nd Lt. S.T. Groski
S/Sgt. J.L. Mackay	Sgt. R.A. Hask
S/Sgt. E. Tracey	S/Sgt. J.J. Glonek
Sgt. J.E. Schaeffer	Sgt. D. Lamb
Sgt. W.R. Asbell	Sgt. R.C. Roberts
Sgt. J.P. Acker	Sgt. A. Paganelli
Sgt. P.K. Courtad	Sgt. C.N. Duke
2nd Lt. W.K. White	S/Sgt. E.R. Cranz
2nd Lt. F.R. Potter	S/Sgt. A.B. Viescas
2nd Lt. W.L. Briner	S/Sgt. J.B. McQuade
2nd Lt. R.L. Aufrance	S/Sgt. W.F. Smith
S/Sgt. P.A. Whitney	S/Sgt. M.I. McCommis

* Denotes crews MIA.

January 1944

Missions

Mission 11

Target : Kiel

4 January 1944

19 crews were briefed for this mission at 0400 hrs with some aircraft taking off late and then returning to base. Eventually only ten 401st aircraft attacked the target. On the way to the target the 612th's C.O., Major M. Martin, was forced to ditch in the North Sea on what the Royal Navy called one of the coldest days of the winter. Capt. Garland, the pilot, set the Fortress down near two British trawlers but it was an hour before the crew were picked up. Lt. Floyd C. Howe, the bombardier, died just after being picked up and Sgt. Ralph D. Newton, engineer, was washed away and his body never recovered.

The 8th Air Force put 486 a/c over Kiel on this mission and ran into heavy flak and defending fighters. 17 aircraft were shot down, 132 received battle damage, 22 crew members were KIA and 53 wounded.

The only 615th crew on this mission was:-

42-31072 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.

Mission 12

Target : Tours

5 January 1944

Briefing was at 0500 hrs on this Wednesday morning with 18 crews. The Group was led by Lt. Col. H.E. Rogner and 14 aircraft, with 64 aircraft from three other 1st Air Division Groups, attacked the FW-190 pilot training base at Tours, France.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-37809 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-37833 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-31069 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-39904 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.

Mission 13

Target : Ludwigshaven

7 January 1944

Twentytwo crews were briefed at 0500 hrs, with 19 crews taking off by 0900 hrs. The mission leader for the Group was Captain R.J. White, and the target, Ludwigshaven, was attacked by the whole of the 8th Air Force. The 420 four-engined bombers over the target dropped 1001 tons of bombs and were subjected to heavy flak and fighter attacks. 12 bombers went down and 126 were damaged; 14 crew members were killed and 13 wounded. The crews who flew that mission might be interested to learn that on that day they flew with Major James Stewart the film star. He was the Air Commander of the 445th B.G. flying a B-24.

One of the 30 enemy aircraft shot down that day was claimed by a 615th gunner on Lt. V.J. Kaminski's crew, S/Sgt. Stephen H. Bosowski. For him the thirteenth Mission of the Group was a lucky one.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-39993 Capt. R.J. White and crew.
42-39904 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-37633 Capt. R.T. Beers and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.

42-37809 Lt. D.T. Nicklawsky and crew.

Mission 14

Target : Oscherslaben

11 January 1944

As Schweinfurt was to be remembered by the earlier 8th Air Force Groups so would Oscherslaben be remembered by the Groups that were to take part on this mission. The statistics of this mission tell the story very graphically. 139 aircraft attacked the aircraft production plant at Oscherslaben and 20 attacked targets of opportunity and of these 159 aircraft 34 were shot down and 85 damaged. Of the crew members 349 were posted as MIA, 11 were wounded and 9 killed in action.

In reply, the 1st Air Division bombers claimed 209 fighters as destroyed, 32 probables and 63 damaged. Although 8th Air Force Intelligence were somewhat dubious of these large claims by the gunners the post war Luftwaffe records showed that they were not far short of the true figures.

The largest number of crews sent on a mission were briefed at 0400 hrs that Tuesday morning, with 33 of the 34 crews taking off by 0845 hrs. One aircraft failed to take off because of an oxygen leak. The Air Commander for this mission was Major A.C. Brooks.

It was a great tribute to hard-working mechanics, armament and ordnance personnel of the 615th Squadron that each and every B-17 of the Squadron took part in this mission.

The loading list for the mission was :-

42-31485 Capt. R.J. White and crew. (with Major A.C. Brooks)
42-31193 Capt. R.T. Beers and crew.
42-37843 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew. (with Capt. D.E. Silver)
42-31077 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31091 Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
42-31069 With a 613th crew.
42-37809 Lt. H.J. Chapman and crew. MIA
42-39893 Lt. D.C. Sprecher and crew. MIA
42-37633 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)
42-40057 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.

Mission 15

Target : Gorenflos

14 January 1944

This was an anticlimax after the raid to Oscherslaben a few days before, with nine 401st aircraft under the command of Major K. Martin on a mission late in the afternoon to the Pas de Calais. 550 four-engined aircraft of the 8th A.F. went after 21 V-weapon sites and attacked 20 of them. The attack went in at 12,000 feet with very good results, and, except for a few minor holes there were no casualties.

There were very few aircraft on the base for this mission, most of them being diverted to other bases on returning from the Oscherslaben mission.

Two 615th aircraft were on this mission and were:-

42-31091 Flown by the crew of another Squadron.
42-37833 Capt. J. Maupin and crew. (with Major K. Martin)

Mission 16

Target : Notre Dame de Ferme

21 January 1944

The 8th Air Force despatched 795 bombers to the French "rocket coast" because of bad weather over Germany, but the bad weather extended over the Pas de Calais also and only about a half of the force were able to bomb the primary targets or targets of opportunity.

The 23 Fortresses of the 401st were under the command of Captain Carl Hinkle and took off from Deenethorpe by 1230 hrs. Ten of the Group's aircraft reported bombing their primary, and ten bombed targets of opportunity.

For those interested in UFO's the Control Tower Log Book has an interesting entry for one minute after midnight on this day. It reads:-

"Curious moving light, more like a Met balloon, observed over Kingscliffe."

The 615th loading list for this mission was:-

42-31069 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-31193 Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
42-37833 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-40057 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew. (with Capt. G. Gould)
42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31414 Lt. L.C. Van Syckle and crew.

Mission 17

Target : Frankfurt

29 January 1944

This was an all-out effort by the 8th Air Force on Frankfurt, and well over 800 four-engined aircraft were despatched, with an escort of 632 fighters. The 401st briefed 35 crews for the mission with Major E.W. Brown as the Air Commander.

The flak and fighters caused the loss of 29 bombers, 4 of them from the 401st, three of them from the 615th Squadron. The Group ran into very heavy fighter opposition just after bombs away and the three 615th aircraft, flying as an element in the Low Box, were hit and exploded. The three crews were those of Capt. R.T. Beers, Lt. L.C. Van Syckle and Lt. D.T. Nicklawsky. The other ship to go down was 42-31486, piloted by Lt. John Tannahill of the 612th Squadron.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-31077 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-31193 Capt. R.T. Beers and crew. MIA
42-31069 Capt. G. Gould with Lt. Campbell and crew.
42-37933 With a crew from another Squadron.
42-40057 Lt. D.T. Nicklawsky and crew. MIA
42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-31012 Lt. L.C. Van Syckle and crew. MIA

Mission 18

Target : Brunswick

30 January 1944

26 aircraft were briefed for this mission at 0500 hrs, with take-off commencing at 0840 hrs and the final two aircraft taking off at 0942 hrs. The PFF ship leading this mission left Alconbury at 0945 hrs to join the 401st formation. The Air Commander for this mission was Lt. Col. H.E. Rogner, flying as co-pilot with Capt. R.J. White and a 615th crew.

The weather ship for this mission was the B-17E used by the Group as a hack and target tug, 41-9107. This aircraft would scout the weather to the coast and then return to base.

On the Brunswick mission the Group used "chaff" for the first time as an anti-flak weapon, and with apparent success. The "chaff" was dropped in bundles which broke open so that strips of tinfoil floated down beneath the bombers' level in the flak area. If a sufficient quantity was dropped the enemy radar detection devices were unable to plot the course and altitude of the formations passing the same area later.

A 612th Squadron aircraft was lost on this mission. It was SC-B, 42-37956, FANCY NANCY III, piloted by 2nd Lt. Ronald R. Rohner.

The loading list for the 615th on this mission was:-

42-31077 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)
42-37833 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-31069 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-37643 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-31485 Capt. R.J. White and crew. (with Lt. Col. H.E. Rogner)
42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.

February 1944

Mission 19

Target : Wilhelmshaven

3 February 1944

32 aircraft were briefed for this mission at 0430 hrs. 28 aircraft took off in very bad weather conditions and 8 of them failed to find the Group formation and eventually returned to base. The Air Commander for the mission was Capt. D.E. Silver. Some indication of this day's very bad weather can be judged from the events in the 2nd Air Division. 193 aircraft became airborne but 140 of them returned to base. The other 53 went on but eventually abandoned the mission over the Zuider Zee due to high cloud.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-37833 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew. (with Capt. G. Gould)
42-31077 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31619 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-40002 Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
42-37843 Flown by Lt. W.R. Smith and crew, 614th Sqdn.
42-31518 Flown by Lt. P.F. Scharff and crew, 613th Sqdn.

Mission 20

Target : Frankfurt

4 February 1944

This was a major 8th A.F. attack on Frankfurt with the three Air Divisions putting up 748 aircraft with a cover of 637 escorting fighters. The 401st's share in this raid was 31 B-17's under the command of Major W.T. Seawell.

Again the weather was very bad with 10/10th's overcast over the target. Before reaching the target the PFF ship leading the 401st aborted, so the Group carried on and began dropping their bombs intermittently over the general area of the target. The Group Bombardier, Capt. A.C. Kuenning, waited until they got into a flak area, which they guessed was somewhere in "Happy Valley", and then let them go.

Lt. C.A. Lewis, the pilot of Major Seawell's aircraft, found himself on his own and joined another Wing, only to find that they were heading

right up the Ruhr Valley, which was no doubt the heaviest flak belt in the world at that time. It was about half an hour before they were free of the flak and heading for home.

One 614th crew - Lt. Frank J. Zitkovic - was lost in a 615th ship, 42-31036, IW-X.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
42-31485 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)
42-37833 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-40002 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-31037 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 21

Target : Chateauroux

5 February 1944

This was a major 8th A.F. attack on Luftwaffe bases in France. The 26 aircraft from the 401st B.G., under the command of Captain Leon Stann, attacked the airfield at Chateauroux.

Lt. E.A. Christensen and his crew were flying 42-97496, and just after they had dropped their 12 x 500 lb G.P.'s on the primary target, a single ME-109 came in at 1 o'clock and opened up on them with its cannon. A little later an FW-190 came up under them and opened fire with his 20mm cannon from about 20 yards then stalled away.

One shell struck the ball turret and a fragment went through the forehead of S/Sgt. Jack D. Nonemaker, Ball Turret Gunner. Another fragment made a deep gash in the back of his neck. Two more found their mark, one cut his right hand and another tore a finger off his left hand. Despite these injuries, he managed to crawl out of his turret unassisted and went to the radio room. During this same attack, Sgt. Clarence R. Miller, the radio operator was standing at his gun when a 20mm shell came through the bomb bay and struck him in the right leg just above the ankle, shattering the leg badly. He applied a tourniquet by himself. At this same time S/Sgt. Battista J. Fatica, the right waist gunner was hit below the hip by a 20mm shell which exploded and blew his leg off. A fragment laid his scalp open. He died 45 minutes later when the aircraft was over the channel. The aircraft was also badly damaged and started to climb out of control and Lt. Christensen ordered the crew to bail out, but immediately recinded the order. In the shambles at the back of the aircraft the bombardier, Lt. Reynolds, and the left waist gunner, S/Sgt. A.L. Batson, gave first aid to the three injured crewmen and although unable to save the life of Sgt. Fatica more than likely saved the lives of the other two injured men. With their radio out the co-pilot, Lt. R.L. Rustand, signalled by aldis lamp to one of the wing ships who then led them back to England to RAF Abingdon, near Oxford. During the attack a 20mm shell came through the tail of the fuselage, hit an ammo box at the side of the tail gunner and exploded, blowing him completely around but not injuring him.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-31077 Lt. D.A. Currie and crew of the 612th.
42-31496 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-37833 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-40002 Lt. P.F. Scharff and crew of 612th.

42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-31730 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-31619 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
42-31521 Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.

Mission 22

Target : Caen

6 February 1944

The 8th A.F. set out to attack a number of airfields in France but the cloud cover caused the formations to split up and look for targets of opportunity. Only 206 of the force of 642 eventually found a target, with the 401st failing to locate Dijon/Longvic and dropping their bombs on Caen. The Group put up 28 Fortresses under the command of Colonel Bowman, and 27 bombed Caen, which, for some reason not then disclosed, did not please the 8th Air Force H.Q. Bombing in the area of the Invasion Beaches was to be avoided if possible, not to draw the German's attention to it.

The airfield bombed was Carpiquet, and the 60 bombers in the formation did an excellent job of bombing in the visually conditions, putting over 160 tons of bombs on the field.

The following crews flew on this mission:-

42-31077 Lt. V.K. Cammack and crew of 614th.
42-31091 Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
42-31485 Capt. R.J. White and crew with Col. H.W. Bowman as co-pilot and Air Commander. Also flying with Colonel Bowman on this mission as an observer was Lt. Col. James R. Luper, the C.O. of the new Group at Glatton, the 457th B.G. (H). Col. Luper was shot down later on and made a POW, his place being taken by Col. H.E. Rogner of the 401st. By a strange coincidence both of these officers were killed shortly after the war in air crashes, Col. Rogner in a B-29 in 1951 and Col. Luper in a B-26 in 1953.

42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-31730 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-31619 Lt. E.G. Owens Jr. and crew of the 614th.
42-30855 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Capt. C. Hinkle)

Mission 23

Target : Frankfurt

11 February 1944

The target was a metal working factory at Frankfurt specialising in propellers and aircraft parts. The plant covered 600 acres of land and employed 10,000 people, and was estimated to produce 30% of Germany's propellers. The Group despatched 32 ships but 4 returned early. Good bombing was believed to have been achieved despite a 10/10th's undercast at 9,000 - 15,000 feet with occasional breaks. There were no claims or losses.

Just after 11 o'clock that morning a 612th aircraft, 42-38026, SC-N, crash-landed on Runway 23/05 and blocked the runway. It had been shot up by another 401st aircraft, sustaining a flat tire and lots of other damage. Two other aircraft required ambulances to take away wounded crew members.

The attack on the factory was carried out by 212 Fortresses of the 1st Air Division with an escort of 600 fighters.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.

42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-39873 Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew.
42-31730 Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew. (with Capt. G. Gould)
42-31619 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.

Mission 24

Target : Leipzig

20 February 1944

In line with the 8th Air Force determination to wreck Germany's aircraft plants, the target on the 20th February was Leipzig, and the MPI was an area containing two final assembly plants for JU-88's and other ships including the ME-109. The plant assembling the ME-109 was the specific target of the 401st, and the photographs of the bombing they did showed good hits among the buildings surrounding the MPI as well as the MPI itself.

A record number of B-17's took off that morning from Deenethorpe, with all 41 aircraft briefed becoming airborne by 0955 hrs. The mission leader was the "Boss" himself - Colonel H.W. Bowman. 42-39840, IN-A, one of the original B-17's, flew as weather ship.

On this mission the Squadron lost Lt. E.T. Gardner and his crew in 42-31518, due to a fighter attack. Lt. Gardner held the ship on a level course while the crew bailed out but failed to get out himself and was killed when the ship crashed.

The 401st put up two Groups on this mission, and bombed from 20,500 and 21,000 feet respectively, both visually. The loading list for the 615th Squadron was as follows:-

42-31077 Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
42-31091 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-31069 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
42-37833 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
42-39873 Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
42-31521 Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
42-31730 Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
42-31369 Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
42-31518 Lt. E.T. Gardner and crew. MIA

Mission 25

Target : Lippstadt

21 February 1944

After a false start, the mission being scrubbed at 0039 hrs that morning, the 36 crews of the 401st were briefed for this mission at 0615 hrs with all aircraft airborne by 1051 hrs. The mission leader was Major E.W. Brown. The target of the lead Group on this raid was identified as Emlichheim, near the Netherlands border. The attack was made on the factory and shop installations with good results. The Low Group target was the Hopstein airdrome near Rheine, with excellent bombing patterns obtained on twelve hangars. All 36 aircraft of the Group bombed these two targets of opportunity visually.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31069 Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
42-31485 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Capt. R.J. White)
42-39873 Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
42-31619 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
42-31521 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

42-30855 Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
42-37843 with Lt. V.A. Arneson and crew of 614th.

Mission 26

Target : Ascherslaben

22 February 1944

This mission was flown in very bad weather with the 3rd Air Division being forced to abandon the mission, and the 2nd Air Division being recalled when 100 miles into enemy territory. 181 B-17's of the 1st Air Division pressed on dropping their bombs on three primaries and four targets of opportunity. The cost was high, with 38 B-17's shot down, 145 battle damaged, 30 crewmen wounded and 35 killed. The bombers claimed 32 enemy aircraft destroyed, 18 probables and 17 damaged, while the fighter escorts claimed a further 59 - 7 - 25. Eleven fighters were also lost. The 401st lost 42-31930, with Lt. Roy M. Shanks and crew, and 42-38002 with Lt. Vernon A. Arneson and crew.

The Lead Box of the 401st attacked Marburg, a secondary target on this mission. The railway station was hit effectively. The Low Box bombed Magdeburg. The 401st Air Commander on this mission was Major W.T. Seawell. The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-31091 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
42-31619 Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
42-31521 Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
42-31557 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
42-32891 Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
42-38033 Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)

Mission 27

Target : Schweinfurt

24 February 1944

This famous target was again visited by the 8th Air Force on 24th February and the particular MPI's were the five individual works of the Keigulfischer ball bearing works, consisting of a complete manufacturing unit estimated to produce 24% of all the Axis requirements, and covering 50 acres of land, employing 1,000 people. That this target was important was evidenced from the fact that the Germans had been placing orders in Switzerland and Sweden for ball bearing, so short was their supply. On this raid special tactics were employed by the raiders to confuse the German radar, and the bombing results were good.

The 401st, consisting of 21 aircraft under the command of Capt. W.C. Garland, flew the Low Box of the 94th Combat Wing, which was 5th over the target. When the 94th arrived, large columns of smoke were observed rising to 17,000 feet. Bombing from 21,000 feet, the 94th Combat Wing took two minutes to unload their bombs, with very little opposition. The weather was CAVU over the continent and the target.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-31485 Lt. A.H. Chapman and crew, with Capt. W.C. Garland of 614th.
42-37833 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
42-37843 Lt. E.A. Christensen and crew.
42-39873 Lt. E.A. Post and crew. (with Capt. G. Gould)
42-31891 Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 28

Target : Augsburg

25 February 1944

The target on this mission was the parent factory of the Willy Messerschmitt concerns --- the research, experimental and development lab-

oratories, and modification center for all Messerschmitt designs. Bombing was visual and "right on the nose" according to the returning crewmen. Only about 15 - 20 enemy aircraft were seen, but these were loath to tangle with the Forts in view of the excellent escort by 8th Air Force fighters.

20 B-17's of the 401st were airborne by 0915 hrs after a briefing at 0520 hrs. The Air Commander for the Group was Major W.T. Seawell flying as co-pilot with Lt. R.M. Dempsey in "OLD IRONSIDES".

Captain A.C. Kuenning recorded that it was the clearest day he had ever seen over Europe. He made the bombing run exactly as briefed and saw his bombs make direct hits on the machine shops assigned as his aiming point. Part of the Group's bomb patterns also covered the office buildings and the hangar.

The following 615th crews were on this mission:-

42-31091 Lt. P.M. Kolb and crew.
42-31485 Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. (with Major W.T. Seawell)
42-31496 Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
42-38136 Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
42-39846 Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew. (with Capt. G. Gould)
42-3507 Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

The following crews joined the Squadron during February:-

2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd **	2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell
2nd Lt. F.H. Calfee	2nd Lt. A. De Siano
2nd Lt. W.D. Patterson	2nd Lt. A.C. Wilhelm
2nd Lt. C.R. Vickery	2nd Lt. R.B. Malone
S/Sgt. D.L. Patterson	S/Sgt. O.N. Hensley
S/Sgt. J.C. Exnowski	S/Sgt. M.A. Anderson
S/Sgt. M. Holman	S/Sgt. S.H. Brown
Sgt. L. Muscarella	Sgt. A.E. Smith
Sgt. W.T. Hussey	Sgt. J.W. Kendrick Jr.
Sgt. F. Skelton	Sgt. S. Standafer
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight	2nd Lt. P.M. Kolb *
2nd Lt. W.B. Huegin	2nd Lt. F. Brown Jr.
2nd Lt. L.T. Cummings	2nd Lt. R.R. E'Del
2nd Lt. E.C. Chambers	2nd Lt. E.C. Jones
S/Sgt. W.D. Sarter	S/Sgt. F.H. Webb
S/Sgt. N.C. Binkin	S/Sgt. E. Wallach
S/Sgt. W.E. Mackwiak	Sgt. F.R. Lutzi
S/Sgt. C.L. Pacely	Sgt. L.A. Raymer
Sgt. F.L. Cope	Sgt. C.S. Conerty
S/Sgt. C.J. Wilson	Sgt. L.A. Podlazeck
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski *	2nd Lt. W.J. Otton *
2nd Lt. E.R. Child	2nd Lt. F. Line
2nd Lt. L.T. Cummings	2nd Lt. J.A. Wade
2nd Lt. H.E. Hughes	2nd Lt. R.F. Lotz
S/Sgt. M.J. Mucuria	Sgt. H.D. Reddy
S/Sgt. B.J. Weber	S/Sgt. D.L. Draginis
Sgt. J.F. Keller Jr.	Sgt. C.R. Marlow
Sgt. W.M. May	Sgt. J.A. Cumpson
Sgt. J.A. Williams	S/Sgt. J.T. Loadholt Jr.
Sgt. I.I. Friedman	S/Sgt. G.J. Powell

1st Lt. E.A. Post
2nd Lt. V.L. Ledray
2nd Lt. B.V. Hirsh
2nd Lt. J.V. Welsh
S/Sgt. R.C. Mehlman
T/Sgt. E.L. Romano
Sgt. J.R. Johnson
S/Sgt. C.J. Wilson
Sgt. L.F. Bre
S/Sgt. A.L. Burger

Note:

- * Crews missing in action.
- ** Crew landed in Sweden.

March 1944

Mission 29

Target : Frankfurt

2 March 1944

The Group was briefed for the mission at 0500 hrs and all 36 aircraft and crews were airborne by 0915 hrs. The 401st put up the High Box in the 41st "B" Combat Wing and the Lead and Low Squadrons in the 94th C.W. Composite formation. The 615th Squadron flew the Lead in the Composite formation with Captain R.J. White flying as co-pilot with 1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and as Air Commander of the Group.

The target was covered by 10/10th's clouds and a navigational error by the 1st Air Division caused the bombing of a target of opportunity by most of the aircraft. The 613th Squadron lost an aircraft piloted by Lt. William C. Sheahan, 42-31467, IN-J.

The 615th Loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew. (with Capt. R.J. White)
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.

Note:

Unfortunately, at this point, the Loading Lists do not give the serial numbers of the aircraft.

Mission 30

Target : Wilhelmshaven

3 March 1944

This was to be the day the 8th Air Force finally attacked Berlin but with deteriorating weather, dense contrails and 10/10th's undercast the formations turned back or sought targets of opportunity. The 401st Group put up the High Box in the 94th C.B.W., and after abandoning the primary, Erkner, they bombed Wilhelmshaven by PFF.

25 crews were briefed for this mission at 0420 hrs that morning but only 20 aircraft finally took off at 1010 hrs under the command of Captain C. Hinkle. At 1200 hrs the Control Tower were advised by Division that there had been a recall.

The Loading List for this mission was as follows:-

2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.

Mission 31

Target : Cologne

4 March 1944

The PFF aircraft to lead the mission on this Saturday morning came into Deenethorpe at 0300 hrs, the lead crew always having a special briefing half an hour before the normal crew briefing. 35 crews were then briefed at 0430 hrs with 33 aircraft eventually taking off at 0918 hrs an even longer time than usual between briefing and take-off. The 401st put up the Lead Box and the Low Squadron in a Composite Combat Wing with Lt. Col. A. Brooks as Air Commander.

The briefed target was again Berlin, with the 401st assigned MPI at Erkner but a front extending up to 25,000 feet used up a lot of oxygen and gas so the Divisional Commander abandoned the mission to Erkner and bombed Cologne by PFF. Over 1,000,000 leaflets were also dropped on Cologne.

The 615th, flying the High Squadron, put up the following crews:-

Captain G. Gould and crew.
1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
2nd Lt. P.M. Kolb and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.

Mission 32

Target : Berlin - Templin

6 March 1944

This was the day all the 8th Air Force had been waiting for, the attack on the German capital itself - "Big B" - Berlin, and the flak and fighter attacks were all that was expected of them. Of the 672 four-engined bombers over Berlin 69 were shot down, 6 received Cat. E battle damage and 347 battle of a lower category; 31 crew members were wounded and 17 KIA. In terms of individual crew members it meant that 686 of them were posted as MIA. On top of this there were many aircraft lost as a result of mid-air collisions, ditchings in the sea and crashes of battle damaged aircraft. In return the bombers made claims of 97-28-60 and the fighters 81-8-21. The 615th Squadron lost one aircraft over Berlin, that of Lt. C.M. Kolb and his crew.

The Group was briefed at 0445 hrs, with 24 crews, under the command of Lt. Col. E.W. Brown, becoming airborne by 0839 hrs. Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks had taken off in the Group weather ship at 0705 hrs to scout the weather to the coast and report back to the formation leaving Deenethorpe 1½ hours after him.

Erkner was again the primary target but, due again to bad weather, the Group Templin, -NE of Berlin. Bombing was by PFF means and was later interpreted as being excellent. The 401st was Lead Box of the 94th CBW with the 615th flying as Lead Squadron. There were numerous enemy attacks from the target area all the way back home and the number of enemy aircraft was from 60 to 150.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. C.M. Kolb and crew. MIA

Mission 33

Target : Erkner

8 March 1944

The whole of the 8th Air Force went after Erkner yet again and the clear weather made possible visual bombing of the target by 470 of the 539 aircraft over Berlin that day. And yet again the Luftwaffe and the Flak batteries defended the German capital fiercely, knocking down 37 bombers and damaging 231 others. In reply the bombers claimed 63-17-19, with the fighters adding another 87-12-32 to the score for the loss of 18 of their numbers.

The 401st furnished 24 aircraft to form the High Box of the 94th Combat Bomb Wing under the command of Major D.E. Silver, their assigned target being the V.K. ball bearing plant at Erkner. In the visual attack the Group placed their bombs squarely on the MPI. The 614th Squadron lost one aircraft on this mission, IW-D, 42-31488, piloted by 2nd Lt. Dale A. Peterson.

The 615th Squadron Loading List was as follows:-

1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.

Mission 34

Target : Berlin

9 March 1944

The weather closed in again over the continent but the 8th Air Force again went after Berlin in force. The 1st and 3rd Air Divisions had about 340 B-17's over Berlin on this mission but the bombing was done by PFF through 10/10th's clouds on secondary targets.

The 401st Group briefed 24 crews that morning at 0445 hrs and 24 aircraft had taken off by 0848 hrs under the command of Lt. Col. E.W. Brown. The Group flew as the Low Box of the 94th CBW and were the fourth wing over the target. The 615th Squadron flew as the High Squadron in the formation.

At 1135 hrs a spare aircraft, the 613th's IN-D, Serial No. 42-31202, came back to Deenethorpe because none of the Group's ships had aborted and nosed over at the end of the runway - with a full bomb and fuel load, blocking Runway 22. It took about six hours to clear the runway.

The Squadron put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.

Mission 35

Target : Munster

11 March 1944

This was a small scale attack by 124 B-17's of the 1st and 2nd Air

Divisions on the marshalling yards at Munster. The 401st put up 20 aircraft and were the Lead Box of the 94th CBW with Captain Rumsey flying in the No. 3 position as Deputy Lead. Two PFF ships were used because there was solid overcast up to 23,000 feet. The Combat Wing Leader was Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees.

21 Crews were briefed but one of the 615th aircraft, IW-K, Serial 42-31369, "ROUND TRIPPER", had a flat tire and was scrubbed from the mission. The 615th Squadron Loading List was as follows:-

- Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Major M.K. Martin)
- 1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
- 2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.

Mission 36

Target : Gorenflos

13 March 1944

This was a small scale attack by the three divisions of the 8th Air Force on the "Crossbow" sites in the Pas de Calais area of France. Of the 271 aircraft despatched only 7 succeeded in finding a target of opportunity, the 401st Group, like many others that day, bringing their bombs back to Deenethorpe.

No enemy aircraft were encountered but meagre to moderate flak was run into on the route back and a 613th aircraft was lost. This was IN-B, Serial 42-31374, with 2nd Lt. G.J. Hellmuth and his crew.

The Group put up 23 aircraft with Captain R.J. White ("Jumbo" to his friends) as Air Commander. The 615th Loading List was as follows:-

- 1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
- 2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
- 1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
- Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. (with Capt. R.J. White - Air Commander)
- 1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
- 2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 37

Target : Augsburg

16 March 1944

The 8th Air Force put up 500 B-17's in the shape of the 1st and 3rd Air Divisions to attack the city of Augsburg, the B-24's of the 2nd Air Division going after Friedrichshafen. The 401st were unable to bomb their primary target at Augsburg so, with the Wing, dropped by PFF on Lechfeld.

The 20 B-17's of the 401st were airborne by 0800 hrs with Capt. D.G. McCree as the Air Commander. Then, at 0954 hrs a 615th ship, IY-H, requested an ambulance. After dropping off the bombardier, who entered the ambulance, the aircraft swung slightly on taxiing and hit the ambulance, causing slight damage to the ambulance and to the leading edge of the right stabilizer.

After all the ships had landed from the mission it was reported that IY-F was missing, but a short time later the Control Tower received a message that it had landed at Friston.

The flak was moderate at Augsburg and meagre on the route home. During a gap of 1 hour in the fighter cover, enemy aircraft attacked, chiefly Me-109's which came in individually; very few were aggressive. The 401st flew in the Low Box position of the Wing with the 615th Squadron in the Low Squadron position. S/Sgt. Michael J. Murcurio, Top Turret Gunner of Lt. Lozinski's crew,

destroyed an enemy aircraft on this mission. The 615th crews flying the Mission were:-

1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew. (with Captain G. Gould)
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 38

Target : Landsberg Am Lech

18 March 1944

Quick thinking by the 401st Bomb Group Deputy Leader who took over when the Group Leader moved in the Wing Lead position after the abort by the assigned Wing Leader, made it possible to drop on a target of opportunity when he encountered bomb-release mechanism difficulty on the briefed MPI. He held his bombs until a favorable target presented itself, and the strike photo's later disclosed excellent results. Hence, the Wing hit the assigned target and the 401st bombed Memmingen. Me-109's, Me-110's and FW-190's - about 25 to 35 in number - were encountered in non persistent attacks. Intermittent flak was observed en route.

21 crews were briefed and 20 aircraft eventually took off at 1010 hrs, 5 hours and 10 minutes after briefing time. This was due to the airfield being declared Red through bad weather. The Group was led by Capt. C. Hinkle with the 615th Squadron flying in the High Squadron position of the Wing.

The following crews of the 615th were on the loading list:-

2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. Lt. William W. Dolan, the bombardier, had a confirmed damaged enemy aircraft to his credit on this mission.

Mission 39

Target : Watten

19 March 1944

The 1st Air Division despatched 129 B-17's to the the V-1 sites at Wizernes and Watten, with Watten as the primary target for the 401st. The flak batteries evidently found the correct altitude of the formation, with 1 B-17 shot down and 74 others sustaining flak damage out of a total of 117 over the target.

The morning mission for the Group was scrubbed but a new briefing took place at 1300 hrs in the afternoon, with take off at a time when the Group had usually returned from the days mission - 1645 hrs. The last of the 23 aircraft on the mission finally became airborne at 1706 hrs. By 2000 hrs all but one aircraft had returned to Deenethorpe, with a 612th aircraft, SC-H, landing at RAF Woodbridge with the controls of the ship shot out and the tail wheel jammed in the "up" position. The Group was led by Major D.E. Silver with the Lead and Low Squadrons of the formation bombing the primary target with poor results, as indicated by the strike photo's.

The 615th crews on the loading list were:-

1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.

Mission 40

Target : Frankfurt

20 March 1944

The Squadron Historian describes this mission as an almost perfect example of an imperfect mission - no leaflets were carried; no bombs were dropped; no enemy opposition was encountered; no friendly fighters were observed after making landfall, and only intermittent flak was observed. The reason, as usual, was the weather. A solid overcast which built up solidly higher and higher, hence nothing was possible to do but to turn back.

The two PFF ships from Alconbury, "Chopstick M" and "Chopstick N", landed at Deenethorpe at 0345 hrs, in time to get their special briefing before the normal one at 0500 hrs. 20 of the Group's aircraft were airborne by 0846 hrs with the last of the 21 to take part in the mission finally getting away at 0925 hrs but, with the Group, Wing and Division assembly usually taking almost two hours, he no doubt had plenty of time to slot into his position in the Group formation before it went out over Splasher No. 5 near Cromer.

The Group Leader was Capt. W.C. Garland and flew in the Lead Box position of the 94th CBW. The 615th Loading List was as follows:-

- 1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
- 2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
- 2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 41

Target : Berlin

22 March 1944

Back to "Big B" again, bombing by PFF for a change through 8/10th's clouds. Flashes could be seen through breaks in the undercast indicating hits in the center and NW section of the city. No enemy opposition was encountered and friendly fighters rendezvous was made as briefed. The MPI for the Group was the aviation industry plants at Oranienburg.

21 crews were briefed for the mission at 0430 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 0826 hrs. The 401st flew as the High Box in the 94th CBW with the 615th Squadron flying as the Low Squadron and led by Capt. W.M. Rumsey. The Group mission leader was Capt. Leon Stann.

The radio operators might recall that from midnight on the 21st March they had been given new radio call signs. They were:-

R/T call signs:-	W/T call signs:-
612th FILLY	612th JXD
613th GARET	613th KQT
614th MOORMOSS	614th RNH
615th ESQUIRE	615th WPIG

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

- 2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
- 2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
- Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew.
- 2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
- 1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.

Mission 42

Target : Ahlen

23 March 1944

The 401st Bomb Group visited Ahlen for the first time on this mission when they bombed this target of opportunity as part of a force of

67 aircraft. The observations and the reports on the strike photo's confirmed that a large factory and important rail lines and the business section were hit. No enemy aircraft were seen and the flak was generally meagre and inaccurate except at Hamm where the reverse was true.

The briefing that morning was at 0345 hrs, which meant, allowing time for dressing, shaving, having breakfast etc., that the crews would have been out of bed by just after 2:0 am. The 20 401st B-17's were in the air by 0735 hrs under the command of Capt. Jere Maupin with the 615th flying as the High Squadron under the leadership of 1st Lt. C.A. Lewis.

The crews of the 615th taking part in this mission were:-

1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.

Mission 43

Target : Schweinfurt

24 March 1944

This was the Group's second visit to Schweinfurt, and when the curtain rolled back to reveal their destination that morning many minds must have gone back to that mission that the 8th Air Force had flown to this target on 14th October 1943. A Force of 229 B-17's had attacked the ball bearing plant, pressing their attack through a wall of fire and steel, and seeing 60 of their number going down.

Unknown to these crews disaster had already touched the 401st at a nearby base. The PFF ships were serviced at the 305th B.G. Base at Chelveston, and the crew that was to lead them to Schweinfurt that morning was that of 401st'ter, Lt. W.D. Sellers. They took off at 0100 hrs with their ground crew chief but failed to become airborne. The aircraft left the runway and smashed its way through a barrack block killing eight of the occupants and then buried itself into a cottage on the edge of the airfield. The ten crew members, the crew chief and two children in the cottage were killed, a total of 21 people dieing in this tragic accident.

The briefing was at 0230 hrs so obviously the 21 crews had had very little sleep before the mission. Another PFF ship arrived from Chelveston at 0326 hrs and all operational aircraft were airborne by 0626 hrs. The Mission leader was Major R.J. White who flew as co-pilot with 1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey.

Because of solid undercast over the target, bombing was done by means of PFF, hence, no observations, pictorial or otherwise, were possible. No enemy aircraft were encountered, and the flak was generally poor for height and deflection en route and at the target.

Only one 615th crew was on this mission, it was:-

1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.

Mission 44

Target : Watten

26 March 1944

The mysterious Pas de Calais Rocket Coast, specifically, Watten, was the target on this mission and here, en route, the 615th Squadron suffered the greivous loss of one of its original crews - that of Capt. Rumsey.

In fact Captain Rumsey and his crew had formed the nucleus of the 615th Squadron. An even greater blow was to be revealed later on when word came through the Red Cross that Captain Rumsey, Lt. Kaercher and Sgt. Roberts had been killed in action.

Strike photo's disclosed many bomb bursts in the target area forming an excellent pattern. No enemy aircraft were encountered. The flak was moderate but accurate.

On returning to Deenethorpe a 614th Squadron aircraft, IW-B, Serial No. 42-31098, PENNY'S THUNDERHEAD, landed with a flat tire, ran off runway 28, nosed over, came to rest in the normal position minus one engine and a wrecked undercarriage - with five 1,000 lb bombs on board!

The 615th Loading List was as follows:-

Capt. W.M. Rumsey and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 45

Target : Tours

27 March 1944

The 8th A.F. sent out 700 B-17's and B-24's to attack airfields in France on its 282nd mission since 17th August 1942. The 401st's share was 40 B-17's, the second highest number despatched to date, and the Air Commander for the Group was the redoubtable Group Operations Officer, Major D.E. Silver - still known as "Hi Ho" Silver to his many friends. As a matter of interest he and his charming wife "Echo" live in Oregon near a very good friend of both of us - Major Pat Fry, the 401st Intelligence Officer.

Major Silver led the Low Box in the 94th CBW while the other aircraft formed the Low Box of the 94th Composite CBW. This was an attack on a FW aircraft repair works and crew observations and photo's indicated fair results. Two to four enemy aircraft were encountered with no damage reported. Fighter was observed to be excellent in the target area and during withdrawal. Intermittent flak was observed, good for height and deflection, en route and during withdrawal from the enemy coast at La Havre. The 615th Squadron had Lt. F.D. Grinham leading the Low Squadron in the 94th CBW Box. The 615th Squadron put up the following crews:-

1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 46

Target : Brunswick

29 March 1944

The industrial center of Brunswick was the MPI since the bombing was expected to be by PFF. No photo's were taken, no observations of

results being possible because of 10/10th's cloud cover over the target. No enemy aircraft attacked the Group, but dog-fights with the escorts were observed. Meagre to moderate flak was encountered en route to, and at the target. The 401st was the Lead Box of the 94th CBW and Major William T. Seawell was the Wing Air Commander, with the Squadron Bombardier and Squadron Navigator, Captain Kuenning and Captain Causey respectively, assisting. The 615th put up the High Squadron in the Wing formation.

A 613th ship, IN-D, Serial No. 42-31202, returned to Deenethorpe in such a state of battle damage that it was classed as beyond repair. For a while it appeared that a 615th ship, IY-J, Serial No. 42-97496, was MIA but at 2232 hrs that night the Control Tower was informed that it had landed at Lakenheath.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. V.J. Kalinski and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew. (with Capt. W.W. Hill as observer)
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.

Major Seawell and the Leading Crew flew with Lt. Walter B. Keith in a 613th aircraft. They had been taken by road to Chelveston to pick up a PFF aircraft and met the Group over Deenethorpe.

For wounds received during the mission to Berlin on 6th March 1944, the following Officers received the Purple Heart:-

Lt. Herbert Reynolds
Lt. Wayne D. Patterson
Lt. Harold E. Hughes

The following ground echelon Officers were promoted as of 1st March 1944 :-

1st Lt. W.W. Hill to Captain
2nd Lt. H.L. Knopman to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. C.W. Burke to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. R.W. Luebke to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. J. Studeny to 1st Lt.

April 1944

Mission 47

Target : Marienburg

9 April 1944

After a number of false starts - missions being briefed and the scrubbed - 21 401st aircraft finally took off for Marienburg on 9th April, almost two weeks after their last mission. The mission to Marienburg marked a further step for the 401st. This all important target was the greatest in distance that the Group had ever travelled, and they flew as the High Box of the 41st "B" CBW. An excellent pattern of bombs was obtained with numerous strikes in adjacent buildings to the MPI.

Fighter opposition was meagre but did account for a B-17 of 614th Squadron. IW-R, Serial No. 42-38162, piloted by one of the original 401st crews, 1st Lt. William R. Dawes, was seen to go into the sea in an inverted attitude. There were no survivors. Flak too, was meagre at the target.

After the target Lt. G.C. Byrd found that he was in trouble, one engine failed and he was short on gas so he turned back and headed for Sweden, where he eventually landed safely.

At Deenethorpe on this day there was nothing but trouble. SC-O lost an engine and after dropping its bombs in the Wash landed at Woodbridge. IW-L found himself in the same sort of trouble and also landed at Woodbridge after jettisoning its bombs into the Wash. Then IN-G landed with supercharger problems and a little later IY-N landed with mechanical problems.

After the mission IY-G landed at Ludham, IN-M landed at Rackheath and IN-G landed at Oulton.

The two 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. G.C. Byrd and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 48

Target : Brussels

10 April 1944

The 401st Bomb Group made a "social" call to a large Brussels airfield on 10th April. Hits were made on hangars, and smoke was seen rising and explosions noted. Meagre to moderate flak was encountered from the enemy coast in and out.

An unusual occurrence was the fact that the Group could not keep up with the Wing. Thereafter the Lead and Deputy Lead of the High Squadron were knocked out by flak which disorganised the formation for a few moments. A few minutes later, however, the 401st Group was reformed and bombed in good formation. The aircraft piloted by Lt. Gaston M. Fox, SC-D, Serial No. 42-31511, went down the Channel not far off the English Coast but they were out of luck when the wind blew them back to the coast of France where they were made prisoners.

21 crews were briefed at 0330 hrs and all aircraft were airborne by 0653 hrs under the command of Major R.J. White. Lt. F.D. Grinham flew as Deputy Leader for the Group. The 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
Capt. G. Gould and crew with Major R.J. White.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.

Mission 49

Target : Politz/Sorau

11 April 1944

Briefing was at 0400 hrs on this Tuesday morning with 32 being briefed and 32 B-17's taking off by 0755 hrs. The 401st Bomb Group was briefed to bomb, of course, the primary target but cloud coverage over the target obscured it to the extent that a target of opportunity was selected - an industrial installation in the vicinity of Politz. Photo's did not disclose hits due to the weather but thick columns of black smoke

billowed up to 10,000 feet.

Flak was encountered continuously and was extremely accurate. Some enemy fighters made a brief appearance and one was shot down, and that was the only attack. The friendly fighter support was very effective. Again leaflets were dropped in the vicinity of Politz. The 615th flew the Low Squadron position in the Lead Box which was led by Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks.

The Squadron loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.

Mission 50

Target : Schweinfurt

13 April 1944

The Germans had managed to repair a portion of the Schweinfurt factories producing ball bearings, so it became necessary to attack these works and put the rebuilding back for some months. The 1st Air Division despatched 172 B-17's of which 154 bombed the primary target, 21 of them from the 401st Bomb Group under the command of Major D.E. Silver. And Schweinfurt proved to be as tough as ever. 14 ships went down, including two from the 401st - IN-Q, Serial No. 42-31508, piloted by 2nd Lt. Alfred B. Vokaty and IW-D, Serial No. 42-97464, piloted by 1st Lt. Boudinot Stimson, a cousin of the United States Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. The navigator of Lt. Stimson's crew, Lt. J.E. O'Neal was KIA as were two gunners of the crew of Lt. Vokaty's, S/Sgt. W.M. Canter and S/Sgt. R.T. Sanders. Also 128 of the remaining 140 aircraft received battle damage.

Altogether seven of the nineteen returning aircraft had wounded aboard. One 615th aircraft, IY-D, Serial No. 42-40002 belly landed at Manston but the crew were OK.

From 150 to 200 enemy fighters were encountered and attacks were pressed home vigorously to as close as 75 yards. The friendly fighters escorting the Wing seemed too few in number to be effective until the target area was reached, where many dog-fights took place and 5 or 6 enemy aircraft were shot down by the 8th Air Force fighters. The nearby 384th Bomb Group at Grafton Underwood lost 9 of their aircraft on this mission.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew.

Mission 51

Target : Wittenburg

18 April 1944

The briefed target at Oranienburg was completely overcast, hence a target of opportunity - Wittenburg - was bombed. Large fires were seen to have been started in a rayon textile mill, and an adjacent warehouse and industrial building. 600,000 leaflets were dropped on the target.

No flak was encountered except from a small convoy off Heligoland. Many enemy aircraft were seen, but only one pass was made by two Me-109's.

The Group put up 21 aircraft under the command of Lt. J.R. Locher, with the following three crews from the 615th Squadron:-

1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.

Mission 52

Target : Kassel

19 April 1944

Two PFF ships to lead the days mission arrived from Chelveston at 0120 hrs, and the crews filed into the briefing room at 0315 hrs. A very early start to the day indeed. 28 crews were briefed but IY-G had a flat tire on runway 33/15 and was scrubbed from the mission. 26 of the crews became airborne by 0709 hrs and a further ship, SC-F, who had burst a tire on the perimeter track, had the tire replaced and was airborne by 0800 hrs. The 401st Bomb Group put up the Lead Box and one Squadron of the High Composite Box of the 94th CBW, which, in turn, led the 1st Air Division. The Air Commander of the 1st Air Division on this mission was Col. H.W. Bowman.

A good pattern of bombs in the target area was disclosed by the photo's, direct hits being observed on a gun testing range and adjacent buildings. No enemy opposition was encountered. Flak was observed but very little encountered until near the target area where it was intense and accurate. Friendly fighter support was described as excellent, being among the most efficient to date.

The 401st were given a new task early on the morning of 19th April. Two aircraft from the 401st and one from Grafton Underwood were to carry out Air/Sea Rescue work over the North Sea and destroy any empty dinghys they found.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.

Mission 53

Target : Bois Coquerel

20 April 1944

On the 20th, the 53rd Mission was flown to Bois Coquerel Airdrome. Capt. Garland and Capt. Stann each led a Box. 1st Lt. Briarton's bombing was of such a high standard -- he was lead bombardier -- that Col. Lacey, Combat Wing Commanding Officer, despatched a letter extolling his work and the bombing results. The other Box was not so accurate. (see below)

This was an afternoon mission with briefing for the 28 crews at 1330 hrs and the last aircraft becoming airborne at 1620 hrs, one B-17, SC-J, landing back after a quarter of an hour with flap trouble, the crew taking off again in IW-M about 20 minutes later.

Due to the ground haze a second run was made over the target but the bombing results were not too good - mediocre accuracy was the term used. Accurate flak was encountered en route at landfall and at the target area. No enemy air opposition was encountered. Two aircraft from the Group were

lost. They were IW-H, Serial No. 42-97448, piloted by 2nd Lt. Charles S. Ksieniewicz and IN-L, Serial No. 42-31593, piloted by 2nd Lt. Frank F. Dougherty.

The 615th Squadron loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.

Mission 54

Target : Hamm

22 April 1944

This was a concentrated attack by the whole of the 8th Air Force on the marshalling yards at Hamm with almost 800 B-17's and B-24's dropping almost 2,000 tons of bombs. It was an unusual attack in that it was carried out in the evening, the last of the 401st aircraft taking off at 1630 hrs. The Luftwaffe also carried out an unusual attack on the returning bombers. In the darkness they infiltrated the bomber stream with their fighters and when the bombers switched on their landing lights, and the airfields switched on their runway lights, the fighters attacked. In a few seconds 14 aircraft were shot down or had collided in the confusion.

Capt. D.G. McCree led the 21 aircraft from the 401st and the bombing results were fair to good for this mission. Smoke and fire covered the entire area. Meagre to moderate flak was encountered at Edam, the target area and Ostend. No enemy air opposition was encountered. Night landings were made at the home base by squadrons in good formation and in good order.

The Squadron loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
2nd Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
2nd Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.

Mission 55

Target : Erding

24 April 1944

The primary for just over 100 1st Air Division B-17's on this mission was the airdrome at Erding, which was bombed with the help of 21 401st aircraft under the command of Major W.T. Seawell. They flew the High Box with the 351st B.G. Leading and the 457th B.G. Low.

About 40 to 50 enemy aircraft were observed, all single engined. Most of the attacks were made on the Low Box. Fighter escort was described as excellent. Bombing was fair to poor with a majority of the incendiaries hitting over the MPI which was a main storage building of an operational German station and air equipment depot. Meagre to moderate flak was encountered.

An RAF "Blenheim" (6605), piloted by Flying Officer Bartholomew, landed at Deenethorpe at about 10 o'clock in the morning and while taxiing on the perimeter track got one wheel off and nosed over into a ditch.

The 615th Crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 56

Target : Nancy/Essey

25 April 1944

With the briefing for 21 crews at 0230 hrs breakfast must have been at about 1.00 am in the morning, not the best of times to enjoy a hearty breakfast. The 401st Bomb Group was the Lead Box in the 94th CBW and was led by Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees; Major R.J. White was Deputy Lead.

The target area had 10/10th's cloud coverage, preventing visual bombing. The bombing runs were made and cloud conditions still prevailed. Exactly the same weather conditions existed over the secondary target. After the second 360 degree turn was made the Group was approximately fifteen minutes late and proceeded to look for a target of opportunity but none were visible. At 0845 hrs the Control Tower radioed orders through to the Group to jettison their bombs 30 miles east of Southwold.

No enemy aircraft were encountered and the flak was observed but not encountered.

Six 401st aircraft also spent 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours on Air/Sea Rescue work over the North Sea.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
1st Lt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. (with Major R.J. White)
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.

Mission 57

Target : Brunswick

26 April 1944

Briefing was again very early for the second morning running, the crews being awakened at around 0030 hrs, hardly enough time to let them snatch more than a few hours rest. Take-off was completed by 0629 hrs with IY-C and IY-H the last two ships to leave the ground. The 21 401st B-17's flew as the Low Box in the 94th CBW, the Group Air Commander being Major Jere Maupin.

Because of 10/10th's undercast over the primary target bombing was done by PFF on the secondary target - Brunswick. Nothing was seen of the Luftwaffe. There was generally meagre to moderate flak en route to, at and from the target.

The loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 58

Target : Le Grismont

27 April 1944

For the first time in the history of the 8th Air Force, two big missions were scheduled and run in one day. In the morning the Group's 58th mission was flown to Le Grismont, Captain McCree leading. In the afternoon the Group's 59th mission was completed to Nancy, with Major C. Hinkle taking over the lead.

The first mission was another new target on the Rocket Coast and it was bombed with excellent results. Bombing was from 22,000 feet and the crews reported a saturation of hits in the wooded area in which the target was situated. No enemy aircraft were encountered. Moderate flak was met to and from the target - and intense at the target itself. There was no Wing formation on this mission, bombing being done by Groups. The 615th flew in the High Squadron position.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.

Mission 59

Target : Nancy/Essey

27 April 1944

The second briefing of the day took place at 1300 hrs with 20 crews being present. Take-off time was 1545 hrs and 20 minutes later all B-17's were airborne. The target was the air depot at Nancy/Essey, France and according to the observations of the crews, the incendiaries hit the MPI forming an excellent pattern. No enemy aircraft were encountered on this, the second mission of the day either. Meagre to moderate flak was observed rather than encountered to and from the target. The weather was described as CAVU with ground haze.

Major C. Hinkle led the Group and the 615th furnished spares, and as there were no aborts 2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and 1st Lt. E.A. Post returned after reaching a mid-point over the English Channel.

Mission 60

Target : Berlin

29 April 1944

Briefing for the 21 crews on this mission took place at 1340 hrs with Lt. B.M. Shotts taking off in the weather ship (IN-K, Serial No.42-31072 "BETTY J") at 0505 Hrs. All aircraft were airborne by 1730 hrs and headed for Berlin under the command of the 94th Combat Wing Air Executive and formerly Air Executive of the 401st Group, Lt. Col. Harris E. Rogner.

Because of cloud coverage of 4/10th's over Berlin, bombing was done by means of PFF, with Lt. W. Reigler, 613th pilot, leading the PFF ships. Some crew members were able to observe bomb strikes, reporting that bombs hit buildings in the center of the city. No enemy air opposition was encountered by the 401st. Moderate to intense flak was encountered to, at and from the target.

The 401st Bomb Group was the Lead Box in the 94th CBW. The Group lost three B-17's - one from the 615th Squadron piloted by Capt G. Gould, who went down with the crew of 1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell. Last observations of the missing aircraft confirmed that it was still under control, two engines gone and

Crews (cont.) 2nd Lt. C.J. Parr
 2nd Lt. H.H. Shelton
 2nd Lt. G.E. Hansen
 2nd Lt. J.L. Ridley
 S/Sgt. E.E. Boseley
 S/Sgt. J.L. Allen
 Sgt. A. Terhorst
 Sgt. G.C. Daniels
 Sgt. L.A. Perez
 Sgt. J.E. Holland

May 1944

Missions

Mission 62

Target : Siracourt

1 May 1944

The briefing for this mission was very early indeed, taking place at 0100 hrs. 21 crews were briefed and it was with some difficulty that the ships began to taxi to the end of Runway 23 at 0400 hrs. About half an hour earlier the electric supply to the base had failed and left them in complete darkness. The Sandra Lights and the portable flare path on the runway were all turned on as were the Chance lights to show some light down the runway.

Major L. Stann led the Group with the 615th flying as the High Squadron. The bad weather frustrated all three major attacks on the V-1 sites by the 8th A.F. and the 401st returned to Deenethorpe with their bombs. No enemy aircraft were seen and only a few minor burst of flak were encountered.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.

Mission 63

Target : Bergen/Alkmaar

4 May 1944

The briefed targets for this mission were Berlin, Brunswick and some targets in Central Germany, however, cloud formations from 13,000 to 23,000 feet resulted in a recall. Almost 600 four-engined bombers were on the mission but only the 401st found a target of opportunity to bomb, the airfield at Alkmaar being "picked up" by the Wing Leader, Major W.T. Seawell.

The 35 B-17's from the Group made up the Lead and High Boxes of the 94th CBW and the 615th led the Lead Box over the target. Through breaks in the clouds two airdromes at Alkmaar were visible, and the strikes photo's indicated direct hits.

No enemy air opposition was encountered. The flak was described as meagre and inaccurate at landfall- the only place where bursts were seen.

The Squadron put up the following crews:-

1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.

Mission 64

Target : Berlin

7 May 1944

The two PFF ships that were to lead this mission to Berlin landed early in the morning, some time before the 39 crews were being briefed at 0230 hrs. It turned out that they were needed, the 9/10th's cloud coverage over the target making PFF bombing on targets of opportunity necessary.

The weather ship, SC-X, took off to scout the route to the coast about two hours before the 39 ships of the 401st became airborne at 0638 hrs. Lt. Alfred A. Winograd was the "Mickey" operator on this mission, his first, and it didn't turn out all that well for him. His set went out two miles from the Dutch Coast; he had oxygen failure and informed his pilot just in time so that someone could look after him. As if this wasn't more than enough on his first mission, there was a malfunction in the plane's electrical system and as the bomb bay doors opened at the I.P. the bombs dropped out. Most of the Wing dropped on seeing the bombs leave the Lead aircraft. Then, with empty bomb bays, and boxed in between two other Boxes, the Wing were forced to fly over the target without a bomb to drop. Then, with manifold pressure dropping on two engines and flak damage, they just about made it home. He made the understandable comment, " It sure was a rough one for my first mission".

The mission leader was Major R.J. White for the 615th Squadron and deputy leader for the Group, the Group mission leader being Lt. Col. Brooks.

No enemy air opposition was encountered, although a few FW-190's were believed to have been at a great distance away from the formation. Flak was observed in varying intensity and accuracy along the route. At the target intense flak of the barrage type was encountered. In fact about two thirds of the 1st Division B-17's over Berlin that day received battle damage. A 612th ship went down over Berlin.

The 615th crews flying on the mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 65

Target : Berlin

8 May 1944

Berlin again, with the defences as tough as ever. Of the 742 effective aircraft over the target 36 were shot down and 205 damaged. In reply the bombers and their escorts accounted for about 120 German fighters. The 401st Bomb Group put up the Low Box and the High Squadron in the High Box of the 94th CBW. Because of solid overcast, bombing was done by means of PFF techniques. The High Box led by the 457th B.G. bombed Brandenburg. No enemy air opposition was encountered. Moderate flak was met en route

and on the return from the target. Intense and accurate flak was flown through over Berlin.

Capt. C.A. Lewis led the 615th Squadron flying the Low position of the Low Box "A" Wing.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
2nd Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew. (with Capt. C.A. Lewis)

Mission 66

Target : Luxembourg

9 May 1944

This was the start of the pre-invasion bombing of the enemy installations in northern France, and 800 four-engined bombers of the 8th Air Force made visual attacks on airfields and marshalling yards. The 21 crews of the 401st were briefed at 0245 hrs and, under the leadership of Major W.T. Seawell, were airborne by 0619 hrs and heading for Luxembourg.

The 401st Bomb Group furnished the Lead Box of the 94th Combat Wing, which attacked their primary target, the marshalling yards at Luxembourg, visually. The bombs of the Group were seen to strike squarely on the MPI which was a point between the roundhouses. These roundhouses were covered with an excellent pattern. The Wing Leader and the Wing Bombardier described the results as excellent.

From 4 to 6 enemy aircraft, silver with yellow noses and tails were observed in the area. Some flak was seen. Many important observations as to transport activity were noted by all crews participating on this mission.

It is of interest to list the crew of the Lead Ship on this mission. They were:-

Capt.	R.M. Dempsey	Pilot
Major	W.T. Seawell	Co-pilot and Air Commander
Capt.	R.F. Causey	Navigator
1st Lt.	C.W. Sellers	Navigator - H2X ("Mickey")
Capt.	A.C. Kuenning	Bombardier
Sgt.	C.L. Roundtree	Eng./Top Turret Gunner
S/Sgt.	J.E. Beller	Radio Operator
S/Sgt.	W.H. Sweepe	Ball Turret Gunner
S/Sgt.	F.A. Merlino	Waist Gunner
S/Sgt.	P.N. Knapp	Waist Gunner
2nd Lt.	M.F. Maloney	Tail Gunner - Observer
1st Lt.	H.L. Knopman	Observer - 615th Intelligence Officer

With all this extra weight one wonders how the aircraft managed to get "unstuck" from the runway.

Capt. Arnold Kuenning described this mission in his log as "an ideal mission -- good target, good location, good weather, with lack of enemy opposition, and everything clicked perfectly." The fact that Capt. Kuenning was able to place his bombs within 100 feet of the roundhouse, his MPI, was due in no small way to the fact that Capt. Causey was one of the finest navigators in the 8th Air Force. During the course of a mission the navigator advised and identified each checkpoint, groundspeed, etc., giving the information

to the bombardier who then adjusted his bomb sight to pre-determined angles listed for each checkpoint. Information was also fed to the bombardier by the "Mickey" operator. The fact that the 401st Bomb Group was the most accurate in the 8th Air Force points to the obvious fact that they had teams of the best navigators, bombardiers and radar operators in the ETO.

The other 615th Crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. S. Wysocki and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.

Mission 67

Target : Kons Karthaus

11 May 1944

This was an attack on marshalling yards in the north of Occupied Europe by the B-17's of the 1st and 3rd Air Divisions of the 8th A.F. The primary target for the 401st B.G. was the Kons Karthaus marshalling yards and the results were excellent, the bombs dropped demolishing the railway workshops adjacent to the roundhouse which was the MPI.

It was an afternoon mission with briefing at 1200 hrs for 21 crews. The 401st furnished the Low Box for the 1st CBW.

This was a "stand down" for 615th crews.

Mission 68

Target : Merseburg

12 May 1944

This was the first attack on German oil production by the 8th Air Force. The 3rd Air Division was heavily attacked by German fighters and lost 41 of their B-17's.

One of the most briefed targets the 401st had had finally resulted in a mission to Merseburg - home of the large synthetic oil refineries supplying the German Air Force. The 401st Bomb Group led the 1st Air Division, putting up the Lead and Low Boxes for the 94th CBW. The Group's 41 aircraft were led by the Group Commander, Colonel H.W. Bowman.

Strike photo's were rated as fair, since most of the bombs fell short of the briefed MPI. No enemy attacks were made against the Wing, but there were a good number of enemy aircraft operating in the vicinity - judged by the reports to the Wing and Division. It was generally observed that the friendly fighter support was the most efficient and numerous yet given to the 401st. Flak was encountered en route and there were considerable concentrations of it over Merseburg.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 69

Target : Stettin

13 May 1944

Briefing on Saturday, 13th May, was at 0600 hrs with 21 crews

attending and getting airborne by 0945 hrs. The primary visual target was the oil refinery at Politz, in northeastern Germany, with the city of Stettin as a secondary target to be bombed blind by PFF plane in the lead of the Wing.

There was a very thick haze over the North Sea and nothing could be seen, except the sea, until they reached the Danish Coast where the pilots made their way around the peninsula and avoided the flak areas. Then the broken undercast became solid cloud and at the I.P. the Wing Leader called for Pathfinder bombing. Because of high cirrus clouds the 401st Box were forced to drop down to the level of the lead Group and just before reaching Stettin the leader made an abrupt right turn forcing the 401st to turn right also. The 401st were now ahead of the PFF ships over the target and a break in the clouds allowed the Group Bombardier, Capt. Kuenning, to see the city in his bombsight and release.

The 401st furnished the High Box for the 94th CBW and was led by Major R.J. White, 615th Squadron Operations Officer. One aircraft from the Group, piloted by Lt. Tonti, was hit by flak and after limping to the Danish Coast, escorted by friendly fighters, wisely judged that he could not make the journey back to England and so turned and made for Sweden.

The Crew leading the 401st on this mission was as follows:-

Capt. R.M. Dempsey
Major R.J. White
Capt. R.F. Causey
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
T/Sgt. E. Tracey
S/Sgt. F.A. Merlino
S/Sgt. W.H. Sweepe
S/Sgt. S. Finchell
S/Sgt. P.H. Knapp
2nd Lt. F.L. Shantz

The other crews were:-

2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.

Mission 70

Target : Kiel

19 May 1944

The two PFF ships to lead the mission to Berlin arrived from the nearby base of Bassingbourne at around 2.00am, and were "Dimple J" and "Dimple Q". 37 crews were briefed at 0500 hrs and all ships were airborne by 0918 hrs led by Lt. Col. E.W. Brown.

There was broken clouds all the way to the I.P. and when the Group failed to make contact with their escort they turned around according to plan and attacked Kiel, the secondary, by PFF techniques. The 4/10th cloud coverage allowed observations of strikes in the industrial section along the canal. No enemy aircraft were encountered. Meagre to moderate flak was noted around the Box the 401st were flying and was unusually accurate, which resulted in a ship being lost. This was SC-N, Serial No. 42-30826, piloted by Lt. M.O. Hagan, a 612th Squadron ship.

Capt. C.A. Lewis and 1st Lt. E.E. Christensen were the Squadron Leaders of the two Boxes put up by the 401st.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Brown and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.

Mission 71

Target : Villacoublay

20 May 1944

Because the targets were in France and Belgium this had to be a visual attack. Of the 638 four-engined bombers sent out by the 8th A.F. on this morning only 288 managed to find visual bombing possible. The 15 aircraft despatched by the 401st were part of a force of 73 B-17's that were able to put 192 tons of bombs on the airdrome at Villacoublay. The MPI for the Group was a building in the center of a maintenance and repair factory for Ju-52's, He-177's and FW-190's.

Flak was encountered along the route to and from the target. At the target the flak was moderate to intense and very accurate. The weather over the continent was 4/10 to 6/10th's undercast with haze. Major A Brooks led the 401st on this mission. It was another "stand down" day for the 615th.

Mission 72

Target : Kiel

22 May 1944

The 1st and 3rd Air Division of the 8th A.F. sent a force of about 300 B-17's to attack the important warship and submarine shipbuilding yards at Kiel, although the MPI was designated as the center of the built-up city area. 623 tons of bombs were dropped with unobserved results. Five of the B-17's were shot down and 210 suffered battle damage.

Briefing for the 15 crews was at 0600 hrs with all aircraft airborne by 0943 hrs. The 401st furnished the High Box of the 94th CBW. No enemy air opposition was met but five FW-190's were observed at a distance just after leaving the target. Flak encountered or observed along the route and at the target area was meagre to moderate and accurate.

The 615th crews on the mission were:-

Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. F.D. Brown and crew.
1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski and crew.

Mission 73

Target : Bayon

23 May 1944

This day witnessed a major visual attack by the 8th A.F. on airfields and rail targets in France. Just over 800 B-17's and B-24's with an escort of 560 fighters crossed the English Channel to do battle with the Luftwaffe but the enemy did not put in an appearance. Only three bombers were lost and three fighters damaged.

The two PFF aircraft from Bassingbourne landed at Deenethorpe

in the very early hours of the morning. They were coded "Dimple B" and "Dimple H". Briefing was at the very early time of 0200 hrs and the last of the 29 401st ships on the mission became airborne at 0621 hrs.

The Group put up the Lead and Low Boxes of the 94th CBW. The briefed target was obscured by cloud cover and was not bombed, although three runs were made in an attempt to pick it up through a break in the clouds. On the last run, the Wing Leader dropped on the railroad tracks at Bayon. Crews observed strikes on the tracks.

The bombs of the Low Box, which did not bomb with the Wing Leader, were dropped 12 miles SE of Verdun, France.

No enemy aircraft were encountered. Meagre to moderate flak was encountered only at Rheims.

The 615th crews were:-

2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. J.S. Whiteman and crew.
Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.

Mission 74

Target : Berlin

24 May 1944

The day saw a force of 490 B-24's sent out to attack the airfields around Paris and 616 B-17's to attack Berlin visually and by PFF methods.

The 21 401st crews on this mission were briefed at 0400 hrs with the final ship taking off at 0730 hrs. The Group furnished the Low Box of the 94th CBW.

Bombing of the center of Berlin was done by means of PFF through approximately 5/10th's undercast. Breaks in the clouds allowed crews to observe fires started in the area surrounding the Air Ministry and the Friedrichstrasse railway station.

No enemy air opposition was encountered, although 3 or 4 enemy aircraft were observed in the distance in the vicinity of Berlin. Meagre flak was encountered at several places along the route but became intense at the target. Fighter support was good, especially on the return from the target.

The Berlin defences had once again proved to be tough with 33 of the bombers going down and 257 receiving battle damage. The 615th Squadron lost the crew of 2lt. Lt. John S. Whiteman and was last seen with one engine out and one smoking. It was the crew's first mission. The missing B-17 was IY-L, Serial No. 42-31619.

The 615th Squadron put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. J.S. Whiteman and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew. *
Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.

Mission 75

Target : Fecamp/ Metz

25 May 1944

The two PFF ships for the 75th mission had landed from Bassingbourne at around 2300 hrs on the 24th. May with briefing at 0300 hrs for the 34 aircraft taking part. By 0608 hrs all were airborne, with 16 aircraft heading for a coastal battery at Fecamp and the remainder going on to attack the railway station at Metz.

The attack on the coastal battery was thought to have been fair to poor. No flak or enemy fighters were seen. The 615th Squadron did not have any of its crews on this part of the day's missions.

The attack on the marshalling yards at Metz seems to have been a hurried last minute arrangement with the Field Order arriving only about two hours before takeoff. The assembly point was near London and the crews made out very large fleets of boats in the Thames - the question naturally came to their minds - the Invasion?

After the I.P. the Lead Ship started towards Metz and over it they saw strikes on the left part of the marshalling yards followed almost immediately by the 401st bombs covering the right hand side.

The 401st Bomb Group attacking Metz furnished the High Box of the 94th CBW with Major R.J. White as the Air Commander.

The lead ship crew were:-

1st Lt. P.E. Campbell
Major R.J. White
Capt. R.F. Causey
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
S/Sgt. O.N. Hensley
T/Sgt. M.A. Anderson
S/Sgt. P.H. Brown
S/Sgt. A.E. Smith
S/Sgt. J.W. Kendrick Jr.
2nd Lt. H.P. Swisher

The other 615th crews were:-

1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew
2nd Lt. A. DiSiana and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.

In praising the team of Navigator, Bombardier and "Mickey" operator on pages 38 and 39 for superior bombing I should have pointed out that they all depended on the flying skills of the pilot. After I.P. their work would have come to naught had not the pilot kept the aircraft on a level, straight course at a constant speed. Any deviation would have made useless all the data fed into the Norden Bombsight by the other three members of the highly skilled team.

Mission 76

Target : Ludwigshaven

27 May 1944

Two PFF aircraft from Bassingbourne, "Dimple B" and "Dimple K", came in to land just before midnight on May 26th, but as "Dimple K" turned in to its dispersal it damaged its tail. A replacement, "Dimple P", was sent and landed at Deenethorpe at 0128 hrs on the 27th.

Briefing for 38 aircraft was held at 0330 hrs and all became airborne by 0835 hrs except for IN-F, and this finally took off at 0906 hrs. The 401st furnished the Lead and Low Boxes of 18 aircraft each including two PFF aircraft to form the 94th "B" CBW under the command of Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks.

Capt. Arnold Kuenning's narrative goes on:- "The route was clear of both flak and clouds except in the target area. In the Rhine river areas there was some undercast and it was not definite that visual bombing could be done until the I.P. was reached. At that point the city of Ludwigshaven could dimly be seen through the haze. There some fighter opposition made contact with a Wing almost beside us and received some vicious attacks with some losses, but the Jerries kept away from us for the most part.

Because of having an improper level on my sight gyro, I think our bombs missed the aiming point. However, the bulk of our pattern hit within the yards, blew up an oil storage tank, and we got a few hits on the roundhouse"

The later photo interpretation showed that the bombs of the Lead Box fell about 700 feet over and almost 1,000 feet to the right of the assigned target. The bombs of the Low Box fell approximately 525 feet to the right of the assigned MPI. Some direct hits appeared in one of the two roundhouses, choke points and tracks.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew. (with Lt. Col. Brooks)
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. Di Siano and crew
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenshirt and crew.

Mission 77

Target : Dessau

28 May 1944

There is no doubt that this mission was the roughest the Group was ever to experience in the time it was in the ETO. Six of the 21 aircraft on the mission were lost, five going down under the guns of a mass fighter attack over the target and one going down in the sea.

The Sunday morning briefing was at 0645 hrs with the last of the 21 B-17's becoming airborne at 1106 hrs. A relay ship set off at 1020 hrs to circle over the North Sea and relay messages back from the far distant aircraft on the mission.

The 401st furnished the Low Box for the 94th CBW. Dense smoke was observed over the target, particularly the MPI for the 401st, and small clouds completely obscured the MPI, consisting of cumulus formations which

may have resulted from smoke and steam put up by the artificial condensers. Strike photo's indicated that the fall of the bombs was true and struck the MFI in an excellent pattern.

Approximately 200 enemy aircraft were encountered in the most concentrated attack on the 401st that the crews had known. The attacks lasted for 40 minutes, from I.P. to after two runs on the target. As many as 60 enemy aircraft came up in formation, flying abreast of the Group for a few minutes and then turning and attacking in formation, using saturation tactics.

Attacks were concentrated on the High Squadron and an entire Squadron was lost with the exception of the Squadron Leader. One aircraft of the Low Squadron, piloted by one of the 615th's oldest and best-liked veterans, 1st Lt. V.J. Kaminski, was lost during this attack. The plane went down after a wing over with fighters still firing into him and the B-17 exploded. It was almost the end of Lt. Kaminski and his crew's tour, the pilot being on his 27th mission. The crew with Lt. Kaminski was that of Lt. Ferdyn.

The aircraft that Lt. Kaminski went down in was IY-N, Serial No. 42-97075. After leaving the formation it was continuously attacked by the German fighters and succeeded in shooting some of them down until the plane suddenly blew apart, throwing Lt. Robert J. Enstad, co-pilot, and Lt. Charles H. Manning, navigator, clear of the wreckage. The time was about noon and they came down at Muehro, about 11 miles north of Dessau. Lt. Manning had the sad task of identifying the remains of the crew and attending their burial in the cemetery at Muehro. Lt. Manning and Lt. Enstad were POW's in Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan, Puresburg and Moosburg from where they were liberated on April 29th 1945. These details were given by Bob Enstad in a recent letter.

The other losses were as follows:-

42-31034	SC-G	BONNIE DOWNIE	1st Lt. George E. West	(3 KIA)
42-31557	IN-R		1st Lt. Walter B. Keith Jr.	(4 KIA)
42-39837	SC-L	RED'S ROGUES	Capt. G.F. Carter	(ditched)
42-102580	IN-Q		1st Lt. William F. Protz	(5 KIA)
42-102581	IN-L	LONESOME FOLECAF	1st Lt. Paul F. Scharff	
42-102647	IN-G	BTO IN THE ETC*	2nd Lt. Frederick H. Windham	(5 KIA)

* BTO was an 8th A.F. abbreviation for "Bombing through Overcast".

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

- 1st Lt. Kaminski and crew. (All crew KIA except Lt.'s Enstad and Manning)
- 2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
- 2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
- 1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
- 1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
- Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 78

Target : Sorau

29 May 1944

The 8th Air Force went out to visually attack aircraft plants and oil installations on the 29th May, and some Groups, like the 401st, had to fly as far as the Polish border to find their target. The briefing was at 0530 hrs but the Luftwaffe paid Deenethorpe a call some hours earlier, the Air Raid Siren going off at 0300 hrs.

The 401st put up 21 aircraft with Major R.J. White as the Air Commander. The formation crossed the enemy coast at Holland and headed for "Big B", and just west of it turned southwest and began to let down to 15,000 feet - there was not enough oxygen to stay at altitude. After the loss of 7 ships the day before the crews were probably a bit edgy but things went very smoothly. The fighters escorting them came in on time and the formation made

all their rendezvous points on time. They had been fired on only once just south of Bremen, and the formation was good. The I.P. came up and the Bomb-bay doors were opened and the Lead Bombardier, Lt. Bill Dolan, easily pick-up his MFI and synchronized on it. At the right time he hit the salvo handle and the formation dropped their bombs on the MPI. The reform went smoothly after "bombs away" and they headed north toward the Baltic and home.

On the way home Lt. Dolan watched a new fighter pilot, 2nd Lt. Spencer, shot down four Me-410's in 45 seconds in what he reorted as the most remarkable piece of shooting and flying he had ever seen. It turned out to be Lt. Spencer's first mission and first kills, and he was royally entertained at Deenethorpe so that the 401st could express their gratitude and congratulations.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. (with Major R.J. White)
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
1st Lt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.

Mission 79

Target : Oscherslaben

30 May 1944

The fine weather again allowed the 8th Air Force to visually attack aircraft industry target in Germany and some marshalling yards in France and Belgium. The target for the 401st was the fighter assembly plant specializing in FW's, located at Oscherslaben. The 18 B-17's from the 401st were part of the 51 aircraft that dropped 118 tons of bombs on this primary target, and ex-Pacific veteran of the famous "Suzy Q", Lt. D.E. Fesmire, was Lead Bombardier. The bombs covered the MPI perfectly, 50% of the strikes were within 500 feet and 100% within 2,000 feet.

Between 40 to 50 enemy aircraft, including Me-109's and FW-190's were encountered several minutes after leaving the target area. Attacks were made in trail from 11 o'clock low, on the 401st Low Squadron, resulting in the loss of two aircraft, both from the 614th Squadron. They were:-

42-97440	IW-A	FLAK RAT II	1st Lt. Carleton L. Wilson
42-107207	IW-O		2nd Lt. Alpheus L. Kilmer

The 615th Squadron were on "stand down" on this day.

Mission 80

Target : Luxeuil

31 May 1944

With a weather front going up to 26,000 feet in some areas only about a third of the 1,029 aircraft sent out by the 8th A.F. were able to find a target. The 14 aircraft of the 401st, under the leadership of Lt. Col. William T. Seawell, were part of a Wing of 36 aircraft that succeeded in finding their primary target, the only formation in the 1st Air Division to do so. The Lead Crew were Lt. Col. Seawell (Group Air Commander and co-pilot), Capt. F.D. Grinham (pilot), Capt. Causey (navigator), Capt. Kuenning (bombardier) and Capt. Grinham's crew. The 401st were the Low Group of the 94th "A" Combat Wing.

This was another "bulls-eye" for Capt. Kuenning, the 615th marksman. The Wing dropped down to the briefed altitude of 17,000 feet for the bomb

run, and a good run was made with excellent results. The strike photo's showed that they had hit the hangar and the administration area of the air-field.

The 615th Crews flying on this mission were:-

- Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew. (with Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell)
- 1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
- 1st Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.
- 2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.



The following Officers were promoted during May 1944:-

- Major W.T. Seawell to Lt. Col.
- 1st Lt. S. Wysocki to Capt.
- 2nd Lt. D.C. Knight to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. Beach to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. B.F. Lemke to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. R.B. Malone to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. A.C. Wilhelm to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. L.T. Cumming to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. A. Di Siano to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. F.L. Shantz to 1st Lt.
- 2nd Lt. E.C. Chambers to 1st Lt.

The following new crews joined the Squadron in May:-

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2nd Lt. J.C. Neill * | 2nd Lt. J.S. Whiteman * |
| 2nd Lt. E.L. Hammond | 2nd Lt. H.H. Shelton |
| 2nd Lt. A.H. Reddy | 2nd Lt. S. Ringle |
| 2nd Lt. G.J. MacDougall | 2nd Lt. J.A. Stevenson |
| T/Sgt. G.S. Moore | S/Sgt. R.H. O'Bannan Jr. |
| S/Sgt. M.L. Roberts | S/Sgt. W.G. Munn |
| S/Sgt. H.J. Nicol | Sgt. H.N. Liddle |
| S/Sgt. M.E. Warner | Sgt. O.J. Yemma |
| S/Sgt. G. Schult | Sgt. M.L. Carroway |
| S/Sgt. R.T. Fraker | Sgt. J.R. Culliton |

* Crews MIA



June 1944

Missions

Mission 81

Target : Equihen

2 June 1944

21 crews were briefed at 0700 hrs for a tactical target in France, a four-gun battery at Equihen. The Group Air Commander was Lt. Col. E.W. Brown. The weather ship took off at 0927 hrs and a few minutes later two 615th ships collided on the perimeter track, IN-G ramming IN-B, but all was eventually sorted out and the Group became airborne and headed for France.

Due to a solid overcast the bombing was carried out by PFF and was therefore unobserved. No enemy air opposition was encountered and flak was observed but not encountered. Capt. E.E. Christensen was the No. 1 man for

615th Squadron which flew as the Low Squadron in the Box.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
Capt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
1st Lt. E.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 82

Target : Neufchatel

3 June 1944

The PFF aircraft to lead the 401st on this mission arrived at Deenethorpe at 0250 hrs. It was "Dimple Z", Serial No. 686. Briefing for 21 crews took place at 0600 hrs with take-off time scheduled for 0830 hrs, and by 0845 hrs all aircraft were airborne.

The 401st attacked a coastal battery of 4 howitzers, dangerous to naval ships and landing craft. PFF techniques were employed because of the weather but strikes were observed through breaks in the clouds.

Major D.G. McCree led the 401st Box and Capt. F.D. Grinham led the 615th flying as the High Squadron. The 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.

Mission 83

Target : Massey/Palaiseau

4 June 1944

This was an afternoon mission to a railroad crossing just south of Paris, with the 401st putting up three Boxes, "A", "B" and "C", a total of 38 aircraft. All 38 B-17's were airborne by 1657 hrs. The "B" Box was led by Major R.J. White, while the Air Commander of the Group was Major C. Hinkle. The Formation went over the enemy coast in the Normandy area and then headed for Paris with Lt. Bill Dolan the Lead Bombardier for the "B" Box. The MPI was picked up as soon as the formation turned onto the I.P. but the smoke from the preceding Boxes began to cover it, and the crews soon saw that a flak barrage was between them and the target. They were going to have to fly through it. Then, just as they got level with the flak bursts, it suddenly dropped to a lower altitude, which, they believed, was probably the result of "chaff" being dropped by some of the groups that were ahead of them.

After bombs away they turned off to the right and headed for home, finding a mass of friendly fighters covering them all the way. The airfield was declared Red at 2056 hrs so the 401st were diverted to Boreham, Matching and Great Saling. They landed back at Deenethorpe by 1022 hrs on the following morning.

Bombing results were described as good to excellent. No enemy aircraft were encountered and the flak was Meagre to moderate.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.

2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
Capt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.

Mission 84

Target : Ver-Sur-Mer/Mont Fleury 6 June 1944

D Day was certainly the "day of days". The vast program initiated for immediate action found the entire 8th Air Force out in full strength and the 401st played its part in reducing coastal batteries on the coast of France.

The 401st Group furnished four Squadrons of 6 aircraft, including two PFF. The four Forces of four Squadrons bombed by PFF through 3/10 to 10/10th's coverage with results that were unobserved. A 5th Force of two Squadrons of 6 aircraft each, also including a PFF ship, met with the same conditions as the previous Squadrons. This last Force led the 1st Division and were the last heavy bombers to drop bombs on the Invasion Coast just five minutes before the Allied landings.

No enemy aircraft or flak was encountered. In fact, of the 2,362 bombers sent out that morning only one was lost to enemy action.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.

Mission 85

Target : Caen

6 June 1944

The target for the second mission of the day was designated as a highway bridge at Caen. The 401st furnished 6 aircraft as the Lead Squadron of the 94th Composite CW Group of 12 aircraft. The briefing of the first mission was at 0230 hrs and the second one at 0445 hrs, takeoff time for the second mission being at 0813 hrs. There was even a third mission briefing for 24 aircraft at 1330 hrs but this was scrubbed.

The mission leader was Capt. J.F. Goodman and the Squadron found the weather over the target was 8/10 to 10/10th's cloud coverage with 5,000 foot tops. Because of this the target could not be observed and the bombs were brought back.

Two enemy aircraft were encountered and flak was meagre but fairly accurate over the island of Jersey. Only one crew from the Squadron was on this mission - it was:-

1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 86

Target : Falaise

7 June 1944

Choke points on a railway line at Falaise, France were assigned to

the 401st Bomb Group on this mission. But since the target was almost totally covered by clouds, two runs were made which were described as successful, although no observations could be made because of complete undercast.

The briefing for 18 crews was at 0645 hrs with the first aircraft being scheduled to take off at 0945 hrs. By 0947 hrs all 18 aircraft had become airborne but it was 1531hrs before the last of them had returned from the mission over France. The 401st furnished the High Box of the 94th CBW, the 615th flying as the High Squadron. The mission leader was Major McCree.

No enemy aircraft were encountered or even seen and only meagre flak bursts were noted in the area.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

Capt. E.E. Christensen and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.

Mission 87

Target : Caen

10 June 1944

This was the first time that Gee-H bombing methods were mentioned by the 401st. A Gee-H aircraft, Serial No. 824, landed at Deenethorpe on the evening of the 9th June from nearby Grafton Underwood to lead the mission on 10th June.

During the remainder of the month there were some very early briefings, the one on this morning being at 0145 hrs. This one was for 21 crews. The weather ship, IY-Q, Serial No. 42-39873 and appropriately nicknamed "STORMY WEATHER", left the base at 0404 hrs, about three-quarters of an hour before the 21 operational aircraft became airborne.

The 401st furnished the Lead Box of the 94th CBW but the 615th was on "stand-down" so none of the Squadron crews took part.

A tow-glider base at Caen was the assigned target for the 401st on this mission, but because of Gee-H difficulties of navigation and weather no bombing was carried out. The Group lead was Major D.E. "Hi Ho" Silver. No enemy aircraft were seen and meagre, inaccurate flak was observed near Rheim, France.

Whereas H2X Radar was a self-contained set that looked down on the terrain it was flying over, the Gee-H system was a very accurate navigational aid with two ground stations. This limited the range of the Gee-H system to 200 miles at 25,000 feet, the curve of the earth eventually cutting off the signal.

The 615th was on stand down.

Mission 88

Target : Bernay/ St Martin

11 June 1944

This was a day of attacks on tactical targets in support of the Invasion, the 8th Air Force putting up over 1,000 bombers and 900 fighters. Another very early briefing took place at 0115 hrs for 21 crews with all aircraft becoming airborne by 0453 hrs. All landed safely from the mission by

1032 hrs.

The weather over the target again compelled the Group to use Gee-H techniques for finding the target which was then bombed with unobserved results. The 401st furnished the Low Box of the 94th CBW, comprising 18 aircraft with the 615th Bomb Squadron putting up the Lead Squadron. No enemy aircraft were seen but between 6 and 10 bursts of flak were seen near Granville, France, which was all the enemy opposition offered.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.

Mission 89

Target : Vitrey-En-Artois

12 June 1944

The 401st was briefed at 0220 hrs to attack as the primary target an airdrome at Vitrey-En-Artois and was composed of 3 Boxes on three different MPI's. Major R.J. White led the Low Box of the 94th CBW and Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees was the 94th CBW Leader.

Bombing results were described and later confirmed as excellent with the Lead and Low Groups placing 100% of their bombs within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI. Lt. R.J. Wolf, Lead Bombardier, of the 615th Box distinguished himself. The only enemy opposition was intermittent flak between the coast and Brussels and 10 ground rockets over Lille and Cambrai.

All aircraft from the mission landed back at Deenethorpe at 1142 hrs, the 36 ships landing in 36 minutes.

Some hours later some fragmentation bombs were being unloaded from one of the aircraft in Dispersal No. 2 when one of them exploded. Seven men were killed and seven injured in this incident. (a/c IW-C, 42-107207)

The 615th Squadron furnished the following crews:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. R.E. Schroeder and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. C.L. Parr and crew.

Mission 90

Target : Le Bourget

14 June 1944

This mission was a record for the 401st and the 8th Air Force. The 401st furnished 60 aircraft for the mission, the greatest number it was to put up on one mission in its history. The 8th A.F. put up 1,525 four-engined bombers and 908 fighters, another record. The targets were a mixture of airfields, supply depots and oil refineries.

The 60 401st crews were briefed at 0115 hrs and the two Wings were airborne by 0517 hrs and on their way to Paris where their primary target was the airfield where Lindbergh had landed after crossing the Atlantic.

One of the most successful missions attained by a bomb group was the unanimous opinion of the Le Bourget mission, by the 401st. So much so that the Divisional Commander, Major General R.B. Williams wrote a special letter of commendation addressed to the five Lead Bombardiers on the mission. The 615th Bomb Squadron bombardiers, Lt. W.W. Dolan and Lt. R.J. Wolfe achieved high praise on behalf of the Squadron.

The 401st furnished five Boxes of 12 aircraft each for the 94th "A" and two for the 94th "B" Combat Bomb Wing. Major R.J. White was the Low Box Leader of the "A" CBW. The Air Commander for the Group, Wing and Division on this mission was the 401st Bomb Group Commanding Officer, Colonel H.W. Bowman.

Some enemy opposition was encountered particularly from Me-109's, and one of the new crews, that of 2nd Lt. R.E. Schroeder, was lost before the target area. The two Me-109's that caused this loss were immediately bounced upon by a swarm of around 50 8th A.F. fighters and disposed of very quickly. The flak at the target was moderate and accurate.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew.
2nd Lt. R.E. Schoeder and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.

Mission 91

Target : Monchy/Breton

17 June 1944

This must have been a very long day for the 18 crews that finally took off for this mission to Monchy/Breton at 1035 hrs on this Saturday morning. The first briefing was at 0130 hrs for 38 crews but this mission was scrubbed at 0340 hrs. A stand-by message came through at 0437 hrs and a second briefing for 18 crews was held at 0730 hrs. It meant that these 18 crews had been awake and getting ready for this mission for at least 11 hrs before take-off.

An airdrome, Monchy/Breton, was the target assigned, and from observations, the target was attacked successfully, even with 10/10th's under-cast. Bombing was carried out by the new Gee-H technique of navigation.

Major Jere Maupin, 612th C.O. , led the Group, to which the 615th furnished some aircraft but no crews.

Mission 92

Target : Hamburg

18 June 1944

The 8th Air Force returned to strategic bombing with this mission to the oil industry at Hamburg and Misburg, 1,200 plus bombers dropping well over 3,000 tons of bombs on them and a variety of other targets of opportunity. The briefing was at 0115 hrs for 40 crews and there were many changes

of plan before 40 aircraft became airborne at 0553 hrs.

Because of 8/10's undercast over the target bombing was done by means of PFF on the highly industrialised bombed-out city of Hamburg. The crews reported seeing huge columns of smoke rising following the explosions near the briefed MPI.

No enemy air opposition was encountered, and the flak encountered along the route was meagre and inaccurate. However, at the target it was fair to good for accuracy.

Fighter support was described as effective, particularly over the target area.

Major D.E. Silver was the leader of the Wing and Capt. Goodman was the leader of the Low Box. 615th Squadron furnished the Lead Squadron and part of the High Squadron. Capt. E.E. Christensen flew Deputy Lead to Major D.E. Silver.

The crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.

Mission 93

Target : Merignac

19 June 1944

Yet another very early mission, the briefing taking place at 0130 hrs. 41 crews were briefed and 41 aircraft were airborne by 0553 hrs. There were many changes, the last one having to be taken out to the three lead and three deputy lead aircraft out on the runway.

The 615th Squadron put up IV-K, Serial No. 42-31069, as the weather ship at 0434 hrs.

The 1st and 3rd Air Division were sent out to bomb the airfields in the Bordeaux area but heavy clouds up to 30,000 feet forced some units to abandon the mission. The target for the 401st was the airfield at Merignac with Major D.E. Silver in the Lead aircraft. When they reached a point near the I.P. they found they were boxed in by two other Wings and unable to turn. The "Mickey" operator, Lt. Alfred A. Winograd, led them around to a point where the Wing was back on the correct course, enabling the Wing Bombardier, Lt. Fesmire, to bomb visually and get a shack.

Four minutes of moderate but very accurate flak was encountered and three aircraft went missing, one of them being the crew of Lt. W.W. Trimble of the 615th Squadron. One of the others, IW-C, Serial No. 42-31315 took a direct hit in the tail, killing the tail gunner Sgt. L.T. Maiden. The pilot, Lt. Filemyr, flew the aircraft on to Spain and bailed out near Barcelona, returning to Deenethorpe with his crew shortly afterwards. The third aircraft lost was SC-J, Serial No. 42-40050, piloted by Lt. W.E. Massey. This aircraft blew up over France at 26,000 feet for an unknown reason. Lt. Massey, Lt. L.V. Stelljes, Bombardier, and Sgt. F.J. Bernard, were blown out of the wreckage and survived. All other crew members were killed.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
1st Lt. W.W. Trimble and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.

Mission 94

Target : Hamburg

20 June 1944

The 38 crews for this mission were briefed at 0115 hrs and the two Wings were airborne by 0506 hrs and on their way to Hamburg. The 8th A.F. put up a massive force for the missions over Germany, Poland and France, with 1,965 four-engined bombers and 1,111 fighters taking on the Luftwaffe and the flak. A total of 50 bombers and 8 fighters were lost with 942 bombers coming back with battle damage and carrying 12 dead crewmen and 44 wounded.

The primary target for the 401st was the oil refineries at Hamburg, the Germans by this time having rebuilt the bombed out factories. The 401st furnished the High Boxes for the 94th "A" and "B" Combat Bomb Wings. Strike photo's were taken and showed excellent results for both Boxes. Huge explosions and smoke were observed. No enemy aircraft opposition was encountered. Flak at the target was fair to good for accuracy.

Major R.J. White, with Capt. E.E. Christensen as pilot, flew the lead of the High Box of the 94th "A" CBW. Major C. Minkle was leader of the 94th "B" Wing. The 615th furnished the High Squadron and an additional ship to the Low Squadron.

The Lead Crew was:-

Capt. E.E. Christensen
Major R.J. White
Capt. R.F. Causey
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
T/Sgt. N.C. Blinkin
T/Sgt. W. McIntyre
S/Sgt. C.L. Roundtree
S/Sgt. A.L. Batson
S/Sgt. S. Finchell
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton

Other crews on the mission were:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
2nd Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.
2nd Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.

Mission 95

Target : Hazebrouck

20 June 1944

All operational aircraft from the first mission of the day were all back on the ground by 1216 hrs and a second briefing of the day took place at 1415 hrs for 13 crews. Incredibly, two of the 615th crews that had already been to Hamburg that day, and had probably been without a break for something like 18 hours, were airborne again at 1756 hrs on their way to the Pas de Calais to attack V-1 sites. It was 2202 hrs when then landed, and, after briefing, one must conclude that these two crews must have been going at least 24 hours non-stop.

The assigned target was not bombed because of cloud cover, but a target of opportunity, Hazebrouck, a railway junction and bridge was attacked successfully.

The 401st furnished 12 aircraft for the Lead Box of the 94th CBW, and the Wig Leader was Major R.J. White, also carrying out the second mission of the day. This time he flew with Capt. F.D. Grinham, with Lead Navigator, 1st Lt. W.M. Eaton and Lead Bombardier, 1st Lt. R.W. Wolfe. No flak or fighters were seen.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew. (with Major R.J. White)
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.

Mission 96

Target : Berlin

21 June 1944

The was a major attack on Berlin by 496 B-17's of the 1st Air Division with visual bombing and a strong reaction from the Luftwaffe and the flak defences. Although the 401st itself reported no attacks by enemy aircraft there were many on other formations. 16 B-17's went down, 216 received battle damage for claims of 16-20-19 for the bombers.

The 401st Bomb Group furnished an 18 aircraft High Box for both the 94th "A" CBW and the 41st Composite "C" CBW, also a six ship High Squadron for the High Box of the 94th "B" CBW. Strike photo's disclosed excellent results and many explosions and much fire and smoke was reported for the entire Berlin area. Moderate to intense flak, fairly accurate, was encountered at the target area. Fighter escort was excellent. One ship from the 612th Squadron was lost. It was SC-Q, 42-31496, piloted by Lt. Atherton.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. V.L. Ledray and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 97

Target : Frevent

22 June 1944

This was a day of visual attacks on industrial sites and airfields in northwest France, with about 1,000 bombers taking part. the 401st was given a tactical target but after clouds covered the target they went

after three targets of opportunity, one for each of the 12-ship Boxes of the 94th "C" CBW that the 401st made up. Good results were observed at the targets attacked.

The PFF aircraft for this mission was "Chitchat Y", a Polebrook ship. The mission took place in the late afternoon with the briefing taking place at 1330 hrs and all 36 aircraft becoming airborne by 1654 hrs. The mission leader was Major C. Hinkle with Capt. F.D. Grinham flying as the Low Box Leader. There was no enemy air opposition, and the flak, observed at one point only, was fairly accurate for altitude but poor for deflection.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
Capt. F.D. Grinham and crew.

Mission 98

Target : Fienvilliers

23 June 1944

Just after midnight the two Gee-H aircraft that were to lead the day's mission landed from Grafton Underwood. They were Serial No.'s 125 and 824. 26 crews were briefed at 0730 hrs and all were airborne by 1047 hrs and on their way to the French Rocket Coast. The 401st made up two forces, the 94th "A" CBW attacking a V-1 site and the Composite Force attacking a V-1 supply depot, both by means of Gee-H navigational methods. Although the targets were both covered by 10/10th's cloud the Gee-H navigators were of the opinion that they had hit the target.

No enemy aircraft were encountered, but some meagre and inaccurate flak over the target was encountered. The mission leader was Major D.E. Silver.

The 615th crews flying the mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 99

Target : Belloy-Sur-Somme
& Bachimont

24 June 1944

This was an afternoon mission with briefing at 1300 hrs and all aircraft airborne by 1707 hrs. Again targets in the tactical area of France were attacked. The 401st Group furnished two Forces of 12 aircraft each for the 94th CBW "D" and "E" Forces. Major Stann led the "D" Force, but poor results were obtained due to a bombsight malfunction in the Lead aircraft which was discovered too late, resulting in the bombs being dropped on the deputy lead signal.

The Force "E" Formation, with 1st Lt. E.C. Owens leading, did an excellent job on their target. The air opposition was nil. Flak was meagre

but accurate and was encountered leaving the coast and at the I.P. but not at the target area.

The 615th loading list for this mission was:-

- 1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
- 2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
- 2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
- 2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 100 Target : Montbartier 25 June 1944

The briefing for the Group's 100th mission was at 0115 hrs, 36 crews taking part. The weather ship, IY-A, piloted by Captain Riegler, left Deenethorpe at 0340 hrs and was followed by the 36 operational ships at 0506 hrs. The Group Leader was Lt. Col. William T. Seawell.

The oil tanks sunk deep in the ground were the targets for this mission and were successfully attacked. The Lead Bombardier for this mission was the 615th Squadron Bombardier, Captain A.C. Kuenning. The formation was the 94th "B" CBW.

The formation flew over the Normandy beaches and as they approached the town of Caen a Wing ahead of them ran into a barrage of flak. The 401st moved to the right to avoid it but ran into an even heavier barrage, knocking down a 612th ship, SC-N, Serial No. 42-97811, piloted by Lt. J.W. Myretetus. The lead ship, "OLD IRONSIDES" was hit by shrapnel, a piece smashing through the nose plexiglas. That was the end of the enemy opposition and the formation went on to Montbartier, bombed the storage tanks and headed back home.

On the way home the flight took them over the Bay of Biscay and the overcast forced them very low over the sea. Suddenly, to avoid hitting a wave, Lt. D.C. Knight lifted his B-17 up and his tail hit the lead ship amidships, bending it over at an angle. The lead ship pilot, Lt. Kalinski, had seen the raising aircraft under him and had also pulled his control stick back, saving both aircraft from ending up in the sea.

Both ships were very much bent and battered but both made it back to England, Lt. Knight landing on the first airfield he could find in the southern counties.

The lead crew was:-

- 1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
- Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell
- Capt. R.F. Causey
- 2nd Lt. E.F. Russell
- Capt. A.C. Kuenning
- S/Sgt. G.A. MacKellar
- S/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
- Sgt. C.W. Blodgett
- 2nd Lt. W.J. Otton
- Sgt. E.C. Blaka
- S/Sgt. A. McKenna

The other 615th crews on the mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. D.C. Knight and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.

Mission 101

Target : Laon/Couvron

28 June 1944

A Luftwaffe operational airfield was the target on 28th June, with the MPI selected as a center of barracks and buildings $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles SE of the field. Bombing, which was visual, was described as excellent with both Boxes hitting the MPI.

The 24 crews on this mission were briefed at 0130 hrs , the weather ship, under the command of Major R.J. White, getting airborne at 0325 hrs. The B-17 used as a weather ship was IY-A. By 0452 hrs the Group's 24 ships were on their way to the primary target under the command of Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, flying as co-pilot with Lt. F.A. Kalinski. By using a PFF ship as the Lead Ship they were able to avoid flying over the major cities and the known flak zones in the heavy undercast. The I.P. was about 25 miles from the MPI and the formation made several wide turns to avoid being too closely tracked by the anti-aircraft radar. They seemed to have succeeded because they found the flak over Laon not as heavy or as accurate as they expected.

Because of bad weather over Deenethorpe the returning crews were diverted to 2nd Air Division bases but were able to return to their own base by 1211 hrs the following morning.

The Lead Crew were:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
Lt. Col W.T. Seawell
2nd Lt. E.F. Russell
Capt. R.F. Causey
2nd Lt. A.A. Winograd
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
S/Sgt. G.A. McKellar
S/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
2nd Lt. C.R. Charleville
Sgt. E.G. Blaka
S/Sgt. A. McKenna

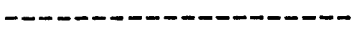
The other crews were:-

2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew.
2nd Lt. B.G. Konze and crew.

The following Officers were promoted during June 1944:-

Flt. Off. L.S. Rush	to 2nd Lt.
2nd Lt. C.A. Christian	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. H.B. Huegin	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. V.L. Ledray	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. M.F. Maloney	to 1st Lt.
1st Lt. H.S. Horn Jr.	to Captain
2nd Lt. B.M.H. Hirsch	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. C.J. Farr	to 1st Lt.

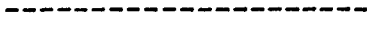
On 15th June 1944, Major R.J. White, the 615th Squadron Operations Officer, assumed command of the 615th Squadron, vice Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, who moved up to Air Executive of the Group.



The following new crews joined the 615th Squadron during June 1944:-

2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan	1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
2nd Lt. E.E. Johnson	2nd Lt. D.R. Charleville
2nd Lt. R.E. Brock	2nd Lt. E.F. Russell
S/Sgt. C.H.C. Seaton	2nd Lt. C.N. Minott
S/Sgt. J.V. Spiglanin	S/Sgt. G.A. MacKeller
S/Sgt. C.E. Loper	S/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
Sgt. J.E. LaBelle	Sgt. C.W. Blodgett
Sgt. S.W. Bragalone	Sgt. T. Davis
Sgt. J.A. Kunak	Sgt. E.C. Blaka
Sgt. R.J. Ollile	S/Sgt. A. McKenna
2nd Lt. B.G. Konze	1st Lt. V.L. Ledray
2nd Lt. J.N. Kolp	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney
2nd Lt. C.L. Stork	2nd Lt. J.M. Kane
2nd Lt. A.G. Kossuth	1st Lt. H.E. Hughes
S/Sgt. R.I. Gratz	T/Sgt. M.A. Anderson
S/Sgt. W.D. Jones	T/Sgt. M.J. Mecurio
Sgt. J.R. Quigley	Sgt. D.M. Sweepe
Sgt. F.K. Kolster	S/Sgt. K.M. Broch
Sgt. D.A. Jaranson	S/Sgt. J.A. Williams
Sgt. O.R. Bradley	
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith	2nd Lt. R.E. Schroeder *
2nd Lt. S.R. Cornelius	2nd Lt. W.E. Mountain
2nd Lt. E.C. Chambers	2nd Lt. E.R. Rice
2nd Lt. F.T. Hughes	Sgt. E.V. Crawley
Sgt. W.E. Dengler	S/Sgt. C.H. Davis
S/Sgt. F.W. Anthony	S/Sgt. W.F. Bryant
Sgt. F.M. Greer	Sgt. J.J. Owens
Sgt. A.J. Bartman	S/Sgt. C.E. Avery
Sgt. J.M. Webb	Sgt. D.W. Grimble
	Sgt. R.A. Myberg

* Crew missing in action.



July 1944

July, 1944, brought the gratifying news that the 401st B.G. had reached the objective it had been shooting for -- to lead the entire 8th Air Force in bombing accuracy during June.

The good news came in a telephone call from Major Gen. Robert B. Williams, Commanding General of the 1st Bombardment Division, who telephoned his congratulations to the Group's Commanding Officer, Colonel H.W. Bowman.

It was likewise announced in July that the 401st B.G. had tied with the 303rd B.G., stationed at Molesworth, for the first place in bombing results over the three months period of May - June - July. In this period both the 401st and the 303rd had 61% of their bombs within 1,000 feet --- which was the basis for the rating. The 303rd had 91% within 2,000 feet and the 401st 90% within the 2,000 foot circle.

The following news item was released to the IMPACT Magazine:-

"By dropping 73% of its bombs within 1,000 feet and 96% within 2,000 feet of the assigned MPI, the Flying Fortress Group commanded by Colonel H.W. Bowman, established a new record for bombing accuracy and efficiency during June, 1944 and set a standard never before equalled in the 8th Air Force.

Compact patterns, indicative of the tight formation flying, and superior concentration of bomb hits on aiming points are illustrated in the accompanying "before and after" photographs. Both tactical and strategic targets were bombed.

The bombing figures of the Bowman Group, as announced by the Operational Research Section of the 8th Air Force, take on added significance in view of the fact that more missions were flown by the 8th in June than in any other month since it became operational. Twenty-nine visual sightings were made of which nineteen were by ten different lead bombardiers bombing from an average altitude of 22,000 feet, were scored. Ten others were listed as evidence of fall in the target area where assessment could not be made because of smoke or partial cloud cover.

Missions were flown 21 of the month's 30 days. There were 8 PFF missions, or blind bombing of unobserved targets by use of instruments."

During July, it became known that the 1st Bombardment Division had received the Presidential Citation for the Oscherslaben mission it had flown on January 11th, 1944. It was during that great air battle that the 401st had turned in more claims than any other Group and probably bore the brunt of the attack. Of the 76 claims turned in, 63 were allowed as follows: 24 destroyed, 11 probably destroyed and 28 damaged.

During the month the 401st flew 521 sorties and put 517 aircraft over the target in 18 operational missions. Eight crews were lost during the month and a tail gunner was killed in action. One crew ditched in the English Channel but all members except the co-pilot were saved.

During the month it was learned that Captain A.C. Kuenning, one of the Group Bombardiers, likewise led the 8th Air Force in bombing for June and he was widely publicised for his outstanding job. He completed his tour during the month and was assigned to the 94th Combat Wing H.Q.

Colonel Bowman received the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross during the month for the mission when he led the Division to Le Bourget Airdrome at Paris, June 14th., and Major J. Pickoff, Group Bombardier, received the DFC, and Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal, the latter two both for meritorious bombing on two different missions.

Among the promotions was that of James P. Egan, Group Navigator, from Captain to Major.

Missions

July 1944

Mission 102

Target : Saumur

4 July 1944

On Independence Day, the 401st Bomb Group was assigned to demolish a railway bridge at Saumur, France, but due to 9/10th's cloud coverage at the target and at the last resort targets, bombs were brought back. Even a second run over the primary target was attempted but the undercast was solid. Briefing was at 0230 hrs for 26 crews with the weather ship, IY-A, getting airborne at 0354 hrs. 25 aircraft were on their way by 0507 hrs with SC-G delayed for half an hour with a minor fault but being able to take off and join the formation. All operational aircraft landed back at base just before midday.

No air opposition was encountered, but meagre, inaccurate flak was met on the second run over the target.

Major Leon Stann was the Wing Leader of the 94th CBW of which the 615th furnished the Low Squadron led by 1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. A. Di Siano and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. W.B. Huegin and crew.
2nd Lt. B.G. Konze and crew.

Mission 103

Target : Rely

6 July 1944

Two PFF ships for the day's mission landed from Polebrook just before midnight on the 5th, they were 600 and 687.

This turned out to be quite an eventful morning. 36 crews were briefed at 0300 hrs and the mission was cancelled before the briefing was over. The mission was then reinstated for a 0645 hr take-off but the fog was so thick that after a number of aircraft had collided it was held up again. The aircraft in the collisions were SC-A and IN-F, and IY-P and IN-H. The other aircraft finally managed to become airborne by 0746 hrs. Almost immediately IY-J landed with an oil leak and the crew took off in IY-G. A little later one of the aircraft in the collision, IY-P, took off. But the series of accidents was not yet over. The Group returned to base just before noon and SC-B ran off the end of the runway, nosed up, then righted itself. No one was injured in this incident.

The 401st furnished the Lead, Low and High Boxes of 12 aircraft each, including two PFF ships, to form the 94th "B" CBW. The target assigned was a "Noball" rocket installation at Rely, France.

Weather en route was 2/10 to 5/10th's broken, clearing CAVU at the target area. The Lead Box made its first bomb run at 25,000 feet but smoke and dust obscured the target. A second run was made but the target still could not be located. The bombs were brought back. A "Noball" target of opportunity was bombed with good results at Beaumetz-Les-Aires, France, by the Low Box.

The High Box, after making a second run over the assigned target, selected a target of opportunity near Enquignegathe, France. The results were good. No enemy aircraft or flak was encountered. The Mission leader was Maj. Carl Hinkle.

A bombardier, 2nd Lt. Joseph P. Kozlowski, was struck by a fragment of the propeller of an adjacent aircraft and killed.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. B.G. Konze and crew.

Mission 104

Target : Rennescure

6 July 1944

The second briefing of the day - for the second mission of the day - took place at 1430 hrs for 12 crews. All ships were airborne by 1705 hrs and back at Deenethorpe by 2115 hrs.

The mission leader, also for the second time that day, was Major C. Hinkle. The attacks against the "Noball" targets continues, and the 401st, furnishing 12 aircraft for the "B" Group of the 94th CBW, was assigned and bombed a rocket installation at Rennescure.

Although the assigned MPI was obscured, synchronization on intersecting roads in the center of the target area was selected with good results, the bomb pattern covering the entire target area.

There was no air opposition but meagre, inaccurate flak was encountered at the coast over Dunkirk. Lt. F.A. Kalinski flew as the deputy lead. The 615th crews flying the mission were:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.

Mission 105

Target : Leipzig

7 July 1944

The briefing for 38 crews was at 0200 hrs and shortly afterwards there was some excitement when IW-D, Serial No. 42-97322, caught on fire on dispersal 48, but there must have been very little damage to the aircraft because it eventually flew back to the USA almost a year later on Operation Home Run. A few minutes later Major Garland took off in the weather ship - IY-K.

The operational aircraft - minus the one that had caught on fire - were on their way to central Germany by 0538 hrs, with Captain K.H. Opie as the Air Commander.

The aero-engine factory of the MW plant NE of Leipzig was the assigned target for the 401st on this mission. Direct hits on all three buildings in the MPI area were made, as well as those in a wooded area nearby. The 401st furnished the Lead and Low Boxes for the 94th "B" CBW.

No enemy air opposition was encountered. At the target area, moderate to intense black flak was encountered. The 615th Squadron lost Lt. J.C. Neill and his crew in IY-P, Serial No. 42-37981 10 miles north of Magdeburg. It was known that his No. 3 engine was feathered and smoking badly. Bombs were salvoed and a W/T message informed the Group Commander that he was turning around and heading for home.

Major J. Maupin, the 612th Squadron C.O., flew in the PFF ship with Lt. C.J. Parr. The 615th furnished the Low Squadron in the Low Box, which was led by Lt. Gillespie.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. J.C. Neill and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.

Mission 106

Target : Belloy-Sur-Somme

8 July 1944

This was a Saturday morning but was still a working day for the 401st with briefing for 26 crews taking place at 0130 hrs. It was also a very early take-off with 25 of the 26 crews airborne by 0420 hrs, the odd one, SC-B, taking off at 0450 Hrs to catch up with the rest of the Group.

The 401st furnished two 12 aircraft Forces - "E" Force to attack the target at Montlouis and the "F" Force to attack Bellot-Sur-Somme. Capt. R.H. Kaufman and Major Jere Maupin were the two Force Leaders.

The targets were obscured by previous Wing's contrails, and there was some flak, but a short run was made on each target and the bombs were dropped with excellent results. Even though the bombs were somewhat scattered both MPI's were completely covered.

There was no enemy aircraft or flak, but some was observed south of the I.P. and over Calais on the way back.

The 615th Squadron was led by Lt. Kalinski as the High Squadron Leader of the "F" Box and Lt. Mann as the High Squadron Leader of the "E" Box. The weather ship on this mission was IY-K.

The Group was briefed for a second mission at 1400 hrs but it was cancelled just before take-off.

From this date the Group VHF relay ship, Serial 483, believed to have been a Folebrook B-17, was based at Honington.

The 615th loading list for this mission was:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.E. Johnson and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.

Mission 107

Target : Munich

11 July 1944

This was the first of what was going to be five bombing missions to Munich. 36 crews were briefed at 0430 hrs with the take-off of all 36 aircraft being completed by 0821 hrs. This was an attack to disrupt communications in the Munich area at the request of the Russian Army. This city was used as a supply depot to support the German front in Poland, and the Russians launched a gigantic push a few days later.

The 401st Group furnished the High Boxes of 18 aircraft each for the 94th "A" CBW and the 94th "B" CBW which flew lead and second respectively in forces of 7 elements assigned to this target. Bombing was carried out by PFF on the second run over the target. No enemy aircraft were encountered or observed.

The flak over the target area increased from meagre to intense on the second run but was a bit inaccurate. Fighter was excellent. Lt. Parr led the "A" Wing, and the 615th flew as the Lead Squadron. Captain W.E. Reigler was leader of the "B" Wing.

IY-C landed at Woodbridge (the long runway base for damaged aircraft) for unknown reasons but was able to fly on to Deenethorpe later on in the evening.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. W.E. Johnson and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. W.D. Huegin and crew.

Mission 108

Target : Munich

12 July 1944

The two PFF ships for the day's mission landed from Polebrook the previous evening and were Serial No.'s '600 and '601. Briefing for the 36 crews taking part on this second consecutive trip to Munich was at 0530 hrs. The weather ship, IY-P, was away by 0755 hrs with 35 B-17's becoming airborne by 0941 hrs, No. 36, and last ship, taking off at 0957 hrs.

The 401st Group furnished the Lead and Low Boxes of 18 aircraft each, including two PFF aircraft for the 94th CBW which attacked Munich again. Due to 10/10th's undercast, bombing was carried out by the PFF method.

No enemy aircraft were seen or encountered. Meagre to moderate flak, generally inaccurate, was observed along the route. Moderate to intense flak was encountered over the target area. Fighter support was good.

Major "Hi Ho" Silver led the 401st Box in a 615th aircraft piloted by Lt. C.J. Parr, the 615th flying as the Lead Squadron.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.

Mission 109

Target : Munich

13 July 1944

The briefing for the third attack on Munich was at 0230 hrs for 21 crews. The PFF aircraft for the mission was '600 from Polebrook that had come over to Deenethorpe the previous evening. 17 aircraft took off by 0555 hrs - after many changes according to the flying control logs - with the others taking off at various interval over the next half hour to catch up with the Group formation.

The weather over Munich - unlike the weatherman's forecast - was a solid undercast, so bombing was carried out by PFF techniques.

The 401st furnished the Low Box of the 94th CBW of 18 aircraft of which the 615th flew as the Low Squadron, led by 1st Lt. Gillespie. The Group Leader was Major Leon Stann.

Meagre to moderate flak, generally inaccurate, was observed along the route, but over the target area, flak was intense and accurate and was encountered for approximately 15 minutes.

Enemy opposition was met at one point along the route, consisting of 15 to 20 Me-109's and FW-190's. One attack made on the 401st resulted in the loss of Lt. W.J. Otton and his crew. The aircraft, after the attack, dropped back in formation and six chutes immediately came out. No fire was reported and the aircraft was in level flight when last seen.

During the same attack, Sgt. Page, tail gunner on Lt. Haskett's crew was killed. Even though severely wounded, he stuck to his post and succeeded in bringing down an FW-190.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Otton and crew. MIA
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.

Mission 110

Target : Munich/Stuttgart

16 July 1944

Briefing was again very early, taking place for 36 crews at 0230 hrs. All 36 aircraft became airborne within 34 minutes, the final one being airborne at 0600 hrs.

This was the 4th consecutive mission to Munich, with the 401st furnishing two 18 aircraft High Boxes - one for the 94th "A" CBW and one for the 94th "B" CBW. The primary target was overcast and the 94th "A" CBW bombed by PFF means. The 94th "B" CBW bombed Stuttgart, also by PFF means.

No enemy aircraft were encountered. Moderate to intense flak, generally accurate, was met at the target area. The fighter support was very good.

The 615th lost an aircraft, IY-P, Serial No. 42-97982, piloted by Lt. W.E. Johnson. Other crews reported that Lt. Johnson's aircraft apparently developed engine trouble due to flak and left the formation losing altitude, but later reports established that the aircraft was in the vicinity of the I.P. with fighter escort.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. W.E. Johnson and crew. MIA
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.

Mission 111

Target : Peenemunde

18 July 1944

The mission briefing was at 0100 hrs for 36 crews, which included four spare crews, and after the take-off time had been put back twice, the 36 aircraft taking part on this mission were airborne by 0533 hrs. While the 2nd Air Division attacked tactical targets in France and the 3rd Air Division attacked oil targets in Germany the 1st Air Division went after the Luftwaffe experimental station at Peenemunde. This was where they conducted trials with the V-1 and produced hydrogen peroxide for jet aircraft and the V-2. Strike photo's disclosed the accuracy of the bombing on the MPI.

For Captain A.C. Kuenning, 615th Lead Bombardier who flew with Colonel H.E. Rogner, who led the Division, it was another "shack" or "bull's eye". Captain R.F. Causey, Lead Navigator, again displayed his special talents for taking the Lead aircraft directly on to the I.P. and the MPI for the bombardier.

The 401st furnished the lead and Low Boxes of 18 aircraft each for the 94th "A" CBW.

Meagre to moderate flak was encountered over the target, it was the type referred to as black flak. Fighter support was described as unusually effective. Seven of the Group's aircraft received minor battle damage.

The following crews flew on this mission:-

1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 112

Target : Augsburg

19 July 1944

Two PFF aircraft, "Dimple L" and "Dimple Y" landed from Polebrooke just before midnight on the 18th July to lead the 401st on this mission. The briefing was again extremely early, taking place at 0200 hrs for 38 crews. The weather ship, IY-K, Serial No. 42-31069, taking off at 0434 hrs, was one of the original 401st ships and was nicknamed "LITTLE MOE".

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes comprising the 94th "A" CBW on an attack upon a Messerschmidt factory producing components for the Me-410's and the Me-262's (the jet aircraft) at Augsburg. Strike photo's disclosed results as follows:- 100% of the bombs of the Lead Box within 2,000 feet and 80% within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI; 85% of the bombs of the Low Box within 2,000 feet and 80% within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI; strikes of the incendiary bombs dropped by the High Box almost completely obscured by smoke and dust of the other two Boxes, but some flashes observed in the center of the target area, showing the area was well covered.

No enemy air opposition was met. Moderate, accurate flak was encountered at Aachen and at the target area. Three aircraft received major and twelve received minor battle damage.

The Wing Leader was Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell; the Lead Navigator was Captain N.D. Wood and the Lead Bombardier was Major J. Pickoff.

One aircraft, a 613th ship, was lost on this mission. It was IN-A, Serial No. 44-6129, piloted by Lt. William J. McKeon.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

The Lead Crew on this mission was:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell
2nd Lt. E.F. Russell
Capt. H.D. Wood
Major J. Pickoff
T/Sgt. G.A. McKellar
T/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
2nd Lt. D.R. Charleville
Sgt. T. Davis Jr.

Mission 113

Target : Leipzig

20 July 1944

26 crews were briefed at 0345 hrs for an attack on oil and industrial targets in Germany, the primary target of the 401st being the ball bearing works of Deutsche K.F. at Leipzig. They produced specialized ball bearings used in the manufacturing of aircraft engines. The 26 aircraft were airborne by 0742 hrs, eventually joining a force of about 1,000 aircraft on their way to drop almost 3,000 tons of bombs on Germany.

The 401st Group furnished the Lead and Low Boxes of the 94th "A" CBW. Because of 4/10 to 8/10th's cloud cover, bombing was carried out by PFF. The Low Box dropped on the assigned secondary target, Kolleda airfield, visually. Strike photo's disclosed that 95% of the bombs of the Low Box fell within 2,000 feet and 30% hit within 1,000 feet of the MPI.

No enemy air opposition was encountered. Moderate to intense, accurate flak was encountered in the Leipzig area, causing major damage to 3

aircraft and minor damage to 17 aircraft.

The Wing Leader was Major D.E. Silver and Lt. Ferdyn was the Low Squadron Leader for the same Box.

Two crews were lost on this mission. They were 2nd Lt. Jack L. Fredrick in SC-E, Serial No. 42-102917 and 2nd Lt. Kenneth R. Murgatroyd in IN-F, Serial No. 42-31037.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 114

Target : Schweinfurt

21 July 1944

The PFF aircraft for this mission arrived from Ridgewell at 2034 hrs on the 20th July. It was Serial No. '625 and coded "Cobley I". The Group was briefed at 0300 hrs and 26 crews took part. The weather ship was off at 0510 hrs and the 26 operational B-17's airborne by 0649 hrs. The 401st Group furnished the Lead and Low Boxes of the 94th "B" CBW for the attack on the ball bearing works at Schweinfurt. The target was bombed visually and crews observed that the results were excellent. Strike photo's disclosed that incendiary bombs, which both Boxes carried, blanketed the MPI and the target area.

No enemy aircraft were encountered. Moderate, black, accurate flak was encountered at the target. Fighter support was excellent. Two aircraft received major battle damage and 10 received minor battle damage.

Major R.J. White led the Wing, with Capt. R.F. Causey as Lead Navigator and Capt. A.C. Kuenning as Lead Bombardier. The Lead Pilot was Lt. C.J. Parr.

The Squadron loading list was:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. C.J. Parr
Major R.J. White
Capt. R.F. Causey
2nd Lt. G.E. Hansen
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
T/Sgt. J.L. Allen
T/Sgt. E.E. Bossley
2nd Lt. C.R. Blevins
S/Sgt. G.C. Kaniels

Mission 115

Target : St Lo

24 July 1944

The two PFF ships to lead this mission, '701 and '636, arrived from Polebrook on the night of the 23rd July. Briefing was at 0300 hrs for 40 crews but after putting the mission back one hour then telling all aircraft to taxi back to their dispersals, the mission finally was on and the 40 ships became airborne by 1026 hrs - 7 hours after briefing!

This was a tactical support mission for the US 1st Army and the briefed target was a rectangular area 1500 yards forward of the troops. The explicit instructions in the Field Order mentioned that sighting had to be visual and not to drop if otherwise. It had to be otherwise for visibility of recognition markers was impossiblr - hence no bombs were dropped, due to a recall order from Division.

The 401st furnished the Lead, High and Low 12 aircraft boxes for the 94th "A" CBW and also four aircraft for the Composite Low Squadron of the High Box of the 94th "B" CBW. Major L. Stann was the Wing Leader. Lt. Kalinski with Major D.E. Silver, High Box Leader, led the 615th Squadron.

Six aircraft received minor flak damage and one, IN-M, Serial No. 42-32005, piloted by Lt. Edward W. Coleman, was forced to ditch in the Channel with the loss of the co-pilot, Flight Officer Stewart L. Wilcox.

The 615th loading list was:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 116

Target : St Lo

25 July 1944

Briefing was at 0415 hrs with 39 crews taking part. The weather ship, SC-B, Serial No. 42-31662, took off at 0645 hrs to be followed by the 39 operatiol aircraft that became airborne by 0811 hrs.

Because of the tactical importance of the mission on 24th July, abandoned by order of the 1st Division, it was again assigned, but this time with excellent results. Each Box put their bombs on the MPI. The High Box did not drop due to smoke obscuring their assigned MPI.

The 401st furnished the Lead, High and Low Boxes of 12 aircraft each for the 94th "A"CBW. Major L. Stann was again the Wing Leader.

No fighters were encountered and only light flak was seen at the target. One aircraft received battle damage. The 615th put up the Low Squadron in the Lead Box, lt. Gillespie leading.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.

1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 117

Target : Merseburg

28 July 1944

The two PFF aircraft from Polebrook flew into Deenethorpe the previous evening with 401st crews. "Partnership L", Serial No. '636 piloted by 2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul and "Carlton Y", Serial No. '600 piloted by 1st Lt. C. J. Parr. The 39 crews of the 401st were briefed at 0200 hrs.

The weather ship, "Buzzard O" (IY-0) got a flat tire in the take-off position and changed to "Buzzard X"(IY-X) , getting airborne at 0515 hrs.

Then IW-Q, Serial No. 42-97478, went off the end of the runway on the take-off, but the crew were not injured and the aircraft undamaged. As the Lead aircraft took off, piloted by Lt. Kalinski and with Colonel H.W. Bowman as co-pilot and Division Leader, an engine caught on fire. The pilot flew straight on to Polebrook and the crew changed over to PFF aircraft '965 and caught up with the Group within a very short time. Lt. Kalinski was obviously fated to fly a three-engined aircraft that day because he lost an engine yet again over the target.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes comprising the 94th "A" CBW, which led the 1st Air Division. Because of solid overcast over the target, which was the Leuna Chemical Plant of the I.G. Farbindustrie, bombing was done by means of PFF. No observations were made.

No enemy air opposition was met. Moderate, inaccurate flak of the barrage and tracking type was encountered at the target. Fighter was good.

This was an end of an era for the 615th Squadron, being the final mission for the team of navigator and bombardier that had helped to make the 401st B.G. (H) the most accurate outfit in the 8th Air Force. Captain R.F. Causey had completed his tour but he volunteered to fly an extra one to team up with his friend Captain A.C. Kuenning on this Divisional Lead with Colonel Bowman, the Group Commanding Officer. Lt. F.A. Kalinski flew the Divisional Lead aircraft and Lt. C.J. Parr flew the Deputy Divisional Lead aircraft. Lt. J.E. Ferdyn led the Low Squadron of the Lead Box.

Division Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
Col. H.W. Bowman
Major J.F. Egan
Capt. R.F. Causey
2nd Lt. A.A. Winograd
Capt. A.C. Kuenning
T/Sgt. G.A. McKellar
T/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
2nd Lt. D.R. Charleville
Sgt. A. McKenna

Deputy Divisional Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. C.J. Parr
Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks
2nd Lt. G.E. Hansen
2nd Lt. C.C. Chaffey
2nd Lt. J.U. Ridley Jr.
T/Sgt. J.L. Allen
T/Sgt. E.E. Bossley
2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt
S/Sgt. L.A. Perez

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.

2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
1st Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul and crew.

Mission 118

Target : Merseburg

29 July 1944

The mission was led by two PFF ships from Polebrook, '701 and '636, at least that was the plan. '701 accidentally salvoed its bombs on runway No. 33 and was not able to take off - PFF '636 lost No. 3 engine and was forced to land at Polebrook less than an hour after take-off. Briefing was at 0250 hrs and was for 39 aircraft, 3 observer aircraft and a weather ship. The weather ship was airborne by 0527 hrs - this was IN-K - and the 3 observer ships and 38 operational aircraft were airborne by 0654 hrs. By the time the weather ship and one of the observer ships had landed at 0918 hrs the weather had closed the base and all aircraft were diverted for a number of hours.

The Group were assigned the synthetic oil production plant of I.G. Farbin at Merseburg, underlining the importance the 8th Air Force attached to this particular target.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes that made up the 94th "C" CBW. Because of undercast, smoke and haze over the target - and the fact that there was no PFF ship in the lead - the bombardier synchronizes on reference points just short of the target which were visible through a break in the clouds, and when fully synchronized dropped on the cross hairs placed in the smoke area of the approximate location of the MPI. Bombs were observed to fall on the approximate MPI and strike photo's disclosed huge columns of black smoke rising to 20,000 feet after the Wing had left the area.

No enemy air opposition was encountered. The flak at the target was moderate, accurate and of limited duration. Two aircraft received major damage and 20 minor damage from flak.

Lt. C.J. Parr, Leader of the High Box, assumed the Wing Lead after the Lead and Deputy Lead aborted, and the reports praised Lt. Parr for a splendid job of leadership.

The 615th Squadron put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 119

Target : Munich

31 July 1944

The two PFF aircraft for this mission came from Polebrook the evening before the mission and were '636 and '965. Briefing took place at 0530 hrs with 37 crews plus one crew for the the observer aircraft. The weather ship IV-K, Serial No. 42-31069, became airborne at 0810 hrs with the operational ships finally away by 0926 hrs.

The 401st Bomb Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes to make up the

94th "B" CBW. Because of cloud coverage, the PFF primary target was attacked, which was the center of the city of Munich. Crew observations indicated that the bombs fell in the built-up area.

No enemy aircraft were seen. Moderate, intense, accurate flak was encountered over the target. One aircraft received major battle damage and 26 received minor battle damage.

Major W.C. Garland led the Wing and Lt. Kaminski led the High Box.

The aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt. Jay D. Ossiander, IY-E, Serial No. 42-107092, was at first reported MIA. Later it was found that it had landed in Italy and that all of the crew were safe.

The 615th loading list for this mission was:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander and crew. (Landed in Italy)
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew.
1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.

Promotions during July 1944:-

2nd Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. W.J. Mann	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. H.E. Mason	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. J.V. Ridley Jr.	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. L.S. Rush	to 1st Lt.
2nd Lt. E.C. Gillespie	to 1st Lt.

Awards and Decorations:-

Bronze Star

M/Sgt. M. Kotvia
M/Sgt. G. McDevitt
M/Sgt. H.A. Simons
M/Sgt. I.R. Stiltz

DFC

T/Sgt. W.D. Sartor
T/Sgt. M.A. Anderson
S/Sgt. F.L. Cope
S/Sgt. C.J. Wilson
S/Sgt. P.N. Knapp
1st Lt. A. Di Siano
S/Sgt. A.E. Smith
1st Lt. D.C. Knight
S/Sgt. W.E. Mackowiak

The following new crews joined the Squadron during the month of July:-

1st Lt. H.V. Dow
 2nd Lt. W.B. Woodward
 2nd Lt. A.B. Ainsley
 2nd Lt. R.J. King
 S/Sgt. G. Carr
 M/Sgt. L.A. Adams
 Sgt. R.D. Macchietto
 S/Sgt. E.A. Sokolowski
 Sgt. A. Machasick

1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth
 2nd Lt. R.E. Morrow
 2nd Lt. W.R. Kunstman
 2nd Lt. R.W. Vucha
 S/Sgt. L.K. Halderman
 S/Sgt. R.C. Comer
 Sgt. G.T. McKeon
 Sgt. C.M. Tarr
 Sgt. C.W. Cook

2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett
 2nd Lt. T.A. Davis
 2nd Lt. S.A. Howze
 2nd Lt. K.D. Buvinghausen
 S/Sgt. B.J. Lynch
 S/Sgt. M.P. Urban
 Sgt. W.D. Hutchinson
 Sgt. E.L. Page KIA
 Sgt. O.A. Eudaley

2nd Lt. W.E. Johnson
 2nd Lt. K.R. Powell
 2nd Lt. R.E. Malloy
 2nd Lt. J.J. Loverro
 T/Sgt. J.T. Murtha
 S/Sgt. J.B. Maire
 Sgt. C.G. Gore
 Sgt. C.D. Nolen
 Sgt. L. Rapoport

1st Lt. G.L. Melofchik *
 2nd Lt. J.W. Pratt
 2nd Lt. R.C. Tyson
 2nd Lt. H.K. Grisham
 Sgt. L.B. Tracy
 Cpl. H. Pressman
 Cpl. L.P. Wheaton
 Cpl. J.W. Bozarth
 Sgt. M.H. Crawford

2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. *
 2nd Lt. T.A. Hayes
 2nd Lt. W.H. Green
 2nd Lt. W.M. Mencow
 Pvt. W.E. Brereton
 Sgt. J.G. Dunn
 Sgt. T. Monarcky
 Sgt. J.J. Rearden
 S/Sgt. B.K. Cook

2nd Lt. J.D. Ossiander
 2nd Lt. R.D. Cooper
 2nd Lt. O.L. Stork
 Sgt. D.E. Rouse
 Sgt. A.J. Virgona
 Sgt. P.W. Reagan
 Sgt. A.L. Anderson
 Sgt. T.R. Higdon
 Sgt. G.W. Clarke

2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul *
 2nd Lt. D.L. Benett
 2nd Lt. T.P. Ellington
 2nd Lt. J.N. Moon
 T/Sgt. D.O. Kotila
 S/Sgt. F.J. La Point
 Cpl. K.W. Mark
 Cpl. F.M. Cornwell
 Cpl. H.E. Mapes

2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan
 2nd Lt. E.A. Cox
 2nd Lt. J.R. Sassaman
 2nd Lt. J.R. Ramsey
 S/Sgt. G. Brown Jr.
 S/Sgt. A.E. Raciti
 Sgt. J.P. Daley
 Sgt. J.L. Storm
 Sgt. W.L. Cross

1st Lt. M.R. Wingard *
 2nd Lt. R.J. Abresch
 2nd Lt. R.F. Sullivan
 2nd Lt. W.E. King
 Sgt. E.C. Ciogna Jr.
 Sgt. J.C. Rutledge
 Sgt. P.M. Winzey
 Cpl. E.A. Chiariello
 Cpl. B.M. Ingram

2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann
 2nd Lt. A.C. Walter
 Flt.O. C.W. McGaslin
 2nd Lt. J.J. Schultz
 S/Sgt. J. McKenna
 Sgt. W.H. Roach
 Sgt. J.J. Tamburine
 Sgt. M.C. Waer
 S/Sgt. J.E. Mais

* Crews MIA.

August 1944

August, 1944, saw the Luftwaffe come up in force during one of the Group's operations, causing the loss of three crews. The fighter attack occurred on the mission to Weimar on 24th August. In the vicinity of Ulzen-Salzwedel, from 30 to 50 Me-109's and FW-190's attacked the 401st formation. Three aircraft, two of which became stragglers, were shot down and a third left the formation when it was hit by 20 mm cannon fire. Four aircraft received major flak damage and one piloted by Lt. Carson came home with as much battle damage as any aircraft ever to return to home base during the height of the Luftwaffe attacks earlier in the year. Two of the aircraft lost were in the same element, and this element bore the brunt of the attack.

On a mission in support of British and Canadian troops in the Caen area on 8th August, the Lead ship in which Major J.W. Maupin, the Air Commander, was riding, received a direct flak burst. The pilot, Captain Frank P. Ball, was struck by flak in the shoulder and five of the crew members bailed out, Major Maupin coming down in the direct fire of an artillery barrage. He was flown back to England that night and was at his Squadron area only 8 hours after bailing out over France. Four of the crew went down with the ship.

On the mission to a bomber assembly plant at Schkeuditz, Germany on 16th August, the 401st ran into as severe a flak barrage as the Group had ever encountered. Eight aircraft received major flak damage and twenty-three received minor flak damage. One co-pilot was killed and two crew members were wounded.

On the first mission of the month, two 615th Squadron aircraft collided over the target area and went down in the first mishap of this kind the Group had experienced.

During the month Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks, Group Operations Officer, finally received a long-sort after transfer to a fighter Group, becoming the C.O. of the 1st Scouting Force. Major D.E. Silver, completed his tour and went back to the United States on a 30-day leave, and was then appointed the Group Operations Officer. His position as Assistant Group Operations Officer was filled by Capt. Robert Stelzer.

Capt. Clyde A. Lewis, on returning from leave in the USA, was made acting C.O. of the 615th Bomb Squadron in place of Major Ralph J. White who had completed his tour and returned home to the United States on leave.

During the month 96 crew members of the Group completed their tours and went home and many of the old pilots, including Capt. Kirkuff, Capt. Wysocki, Capt. Locher, Capt. Curry and Capt. Lewis returned after leave at home. Other outstanding personnel who went home during the month included Major James Egan, Group Navigator, Major Silver, Major Stann, the 613th Operations Officer, Major McCree, 612th Operations Officer, Captain Alvah Chapman, 614th Operations Officer, Captain Smith, 614th Navigator and Captain Haberer, 612th Navigator.

Several evaders and other crew members who came down in France returned to the Group with amazing experiences to relate.

August 1944

Missions

Mission 120

Target : Chartres

1 August 1944

The Group were briefed for an operational mission at 0630 hrs, and, after some delays, they were all airborne by 1150 hrs. The weather ship was IY-K. Ten minutes after the last aircraft had taken off a B-17 crashed just outside the base near the Weldon - Stamford road. The bomb load exploded on impact killing all the crew and it was some time before its identity became known. It turned out to be an aircraft from 544th Sqdn. that had just taken off from its base at Grafton Underwood, home of the 384th B.G. (H).

The 401st furnished three 12 ship Boxes with Major J. Maupin as the Wing Leader and Capt. V.K. Cammack and Lt. J.F. Irwin as the other Box Leaders. Bombing was fair by two Boxes and poor by the other. Air opposition was encountered, and meagre inaccurate flak was encountered at the target, yet one lucky burst resulted in two ships going down. Aircraft IY-Q, Serial No. 42-39873, piloted by Lt. G.J. Melofchik, was hit by flak and collided with IY-D, Serial No. 43-37859, piloted by Lt. R.B. Sproul, cutting its tail assembly off. Both ships went down and only one chute was seen to come out of the tail section of one of the aircraft, but as far as the later records show there were no survivors from either crew.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. G.J. Melofchik and crew. All KIA.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. R.B. Sproul and crew. All KIA.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 121

Target : Strasbourg

3 August 1944

A very late briefing considering the ones during July, with 39 crews taking part. This could well have been due to the weather conditions because the airfield was declared "Red" at 0900 hrs and at 1230 hrs, which was about an hour after the operational aircraft had taken off.

Some spares, and one aircraft that had aborted, were landing late in the afternoon when seven RAF Lancasters came roaring across the field at an altitude estimated at 10 to 50 feet and cut right through the landing pattern.

The target assigned was a large marshalling yard north of Strasbourg. Its strategic and tactical importance lay in the fact that the yard, forming a nucleus of several radiating lines between France and Germany, is also a clearing house for the whole industrial district.

Bombing was excellent with each of the three Boxes of 12 aircraft each, hitting their respective MPI's.

Fighter support was good during the entire mission. No air opposition was encountered. Flak was encountered but of generally poor tracking type of fire. One aircraft received major battle damage and 6 received minor battle damage.

Major D.E. Silver was the Wing Leader with Major J.F. Egan the Lead Bombardier and Lt. C.H. Minott the Lead Bombardier. Lt. F.A. Kalinski was the pilot of the Lead Aircraft with Major Silver.

The 615th Squadron put up the following crews:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
2nd Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 122

Target : Anklam

4 August 1944

The two PFF ships, '600 and '636, arrived from Polebrook and were part of the 39 operational aircraft and weather ship that were briefed at 0530 hrs for this mission. Fog shut the field down and take-off was over one hour late, the 39 aircraft becoming airborne by 1011 hrs.

Col. H.E. Rogner led the Division from a 401st ship with Captain C.A. Lincoln and Captain R.D. McCord leading the other two Boxes of the 94th "A" CBW. Strike photo's disclosed that the G.P. bombs dropped by the Lead and Low Boxes covered the assigned MPI on the airfield at Anklam runway, all bursts within 2,000 feet of the assigned MPI. Incendiary bombs dropped by the High Box blanketed the assigned area.

No air opposition was encountered, however, crews reported seeing contrails, travelling level with the formation some thousands of feet above it, which, they believed were jet aircraft. No flak was observed near the Wing formation.

The 615th Squadron not only furnished the Division Deputy Lead, but also the High Flight of the Lead Box, High Box and two aircraft in the Lead Squadron of the Low Box.

The Squadron put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
1st Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew. (Major L. Stann co-pilot and Deputy Division Lead)
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 123

Target : Nienburg

5 August 1944

39 crews briefed at 0530 hrs including the two PFF ships from

Polebrook, '687 and '947. All aircraft were airborne by 0933 hrs and on their way to the primary target, an underground storage plant.

Strike photo's indicated the MPI's of the Lead and High Boxes were covered and crews observed explosions with columns of black smoke rising after they had left the target area.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes that made up the 94th "C" CBW. Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell was the Wing Leader with Captain Camm-ck and Lt. Connolly the other two Box Leaders.

No enemy air opposition was met, but, again, crews reported contrails high above their formation which could have been jet aircraft.

Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. F.A. Kalinski
Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell
Major J.F. Egan
2nd Lt. L.F. Russell
2nd Lt. C.C. Chaffey
T/Sgt. G.A. McKellar
T/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
2nd Lt. D.R. Charleville
Pfc. A. McKenna

The other 615th crews were:-

2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.

Mission 124

Target : Genshagen

6 August 1944

The Group was briefed for an operational mission to the aero-engine plant at Genshagen, home of the Daimler-Benz company, for 39 aircraft and 3 observers. All aircraft were off by 0754 hrs except for IW-B and SC-J, both had flat tires. The PFF aircraft was '687 from Polebrook.

Lt. Col. E.W. Brown was the Wing Leader with Captain F.P. Ball and Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell as Box Leaders. Bombing was done visually with excellent results, with the strike photo's disclosing concentrations of hits within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI. The assigned MPI itself was blanketed. The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes that made up the 94th "B" CBW. No enemy aircraft were encountered.

The flak damaged nine aircraft, killing one tail gunner, and one aircraft was lost. The tail gunner was T/Sgt. Alex Garen Jr., on Lt. H.J. Ochsenhirt's crew. The aircraft that went down was IW-K, Serial No. 42-31369, piloted by Lt. J.J. Sauerwald.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.

1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
1st Lt. J.E. Ferdyn and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 125

Target : Hautmensil

8 August 1944

The Group were briefed at 0640 hrs for this mission, 39 aircraft, one weather ship and 3 observer aircraft crews taking part. All ships for the mission were airborne by 1035 hrs.

The mission was to support ground troops near Caen. Major Garland was the Wing Leader and Major Maupin and Lt. Connolly the Box Leaders. The target was covered with smoke and the Lead Box did not drop bombs. The Low Box dropped on the eastern edge of the target area. Major Maupin's aircraft, piloted by Capt. Ball, received a direct hit by flak and the bombs were salvoed. Others in the High Box dropped on the Leader and some of the bombs fell among Canadian troops, killing 25 and wounding 131. Five bailed out, including three wounded, and four went down with the ship. The aircraft that went down was from the 612th Squadron, SC-T, Serial No. 43-37510.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

2nd Lt. R.W. Calloway and crew.
2nd Lt. L.S. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
1st Lt. E.C. Gillespie and crew.
2nd Lt. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 126

Target : Luxembourg

9 August 1944

27 operational crews and one weather ship crew were briefed at 0330 hrs and were given two operational plans - Plan "A" and Plan "B". At 0600 hrs Wing Operations advised that Plan "A" was to be put into action. This meant that the weather ship was recalled by Wing Operations. All aircraft were airborne by 0742hrs.

This mission was briefed for another target but due to a weather front up to 25,000 feet through which the Wing were flying, it was decided to select a target of opportunity - Luxembourg marshalling yards. Bombing results were described as excellent with a concentration of hits on the choke points near the roundhouses.

The 401st Group furnished two 12 aircraft Boxes comprising the 94th "B" CBW, of which Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell was Wing Leader, flying with Capt. F.A. Kalinski. The Wing Navigator was Lt. Eaton and the Wing Bombardier was Lt. Minott. Capt. Lincoln led the Low Box.

No enemy air opposition was met but meagre to moderate flak was encountered along the route. Two aircraft received minor battle damage. Fighter support was good throughout the entire mission.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

Capt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Calloway and crew.
2nd Lt. L.S. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.

Mission 127

Target : Brest

11 August 1944

This was a day of visual attacks on rail targets, fuel dumps and troop concentrations over the Brest Peninsula in France. For the 401st it was support of the ground troops and the tactical bombing was used as a means of allowing American troops and supplies to filter through the lines. Even with a scattered pattern, bombfall for the Lead Box was directly on the MPI - 90% within 1,000 feet, 100% within 2,000 feet, while the Low Box had an excellent pattern, well concentrated.

One PFF ship, '991, came in from Chelveston at 0830 hrs, and the other, '658, came in from Thurleigh at 0839 hrs. 26 crews were briefed at 0930 hrs and after a number of delays they became airborne by 1345 hrs. The 401st furnished the Lead and Low Boxes of 12 aircraft each to form the 94th "B" CBW which was led by Lt. Col. E.W. Brown, flying with Lt. Connolly. Lt. Parr flew as Leader of the Low Box with Lt. G.E. Hansen as Lead Navigator and Lt. J.H. Ridley as Lead Bombardier.

No air opposition was met, but flak was encountered at Brest, which was meagre and fair for accuracy. Ten aircraft received minor flak damage. There were no casualties.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Calloway and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. L.S. Cooper and crew.

Mission 128

Target : Elbeuf

13 August 1944

This was a major and visual attack by 1,200 four-engined B-17's and B-24's in support of the ground troops on coastal batteries and choke points behind the enemy lines in France. Briefing for the 37 crews was at 0700 hrs and, after a delay of one hour, all aircraft were airborne by 1018 hrs.

The 401st target on this mission were the road intersections to cut off retreating German troops in the vicinity of Elbeuf, France. The bombing results of all three Boxes was described as good. Bombfall was slightly to the left of the MPI. The Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes for the 94th "B" CBW, led by Major W.C. Garland, flying with Lt. Lincoln.

The 615th Squadron was represented with the Low Box Leader, 1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and Lead Navigator Lt. W.E. Eaton, and the Lead Bombardier, Major J. Pickoff. No air opposition was seen or met, but flak was encountered along the route at one particular point. Eleven aircraft received some minor flak damage.

The 615th crews on the mission were:-

1st Lt. L.A. Mitchell and crew.
2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew
1st Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Calloway and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.

Mission 129

Target : Hagenau

14 August 1944

The PFF ship for this mission, '947, landed from Polebrook the previous evening, and, with 38 401st crews, took part in the briefing at 0430 hrs. IY-K, the weather ship, took off at 0616 hrs followed by the 38 operational aircraft at 0758 hrs.

The briefed primary target was abandoned due to cloud coverage, but the secondary target, an airdrome used by the Luftwaffe, was attacked. Interpretation of strike photo's disclosed that approximately 75% of the Lead Box bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI, between 50% and 60% of the Low Box hits were within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI. Although smoke obscured the strikes of the High Box, results were excellent, bomb-fall covering the target area.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes making up the 94th "B" CBW with Major Jere Maupin as Leader, flying with 615th Squadron's Lt. C.J. Parr. Lt. Hansen was Lead Navigator and Lt. Chaffey was Lead Bombardier. Major Garland and Lt. Irwin were Box Leaders.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. Heenan and crew.
1st Lt. W.J. Mann and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.

Mission 130

Target : Schkenditz

16 August 1944

Two PFF ships from Polebrook were used on this mission, they were '600 and '965 and touched down at Deenethorpe the previous evening. 39 crews, plus the crew of a weather ship and an observer ship, were briefed at 0300 hrs with the weather ship becoming airborne at 0505 hrs. By 0644 hrs all the other ships were also airborne and on their way to the primary target, an airdrome at Schkenditz. The airdrome was a bomber assembly plant.

The assigned target was located in flat open country about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles NW of the city of Schkenditz, with an MPI - a large repair hangar - was attacked only by the Low and High Boxes of the 94th "A" CBW. Lead aircraft of the Lead Box, of the same Wing, was hit by flak during the bomb run on the primary target and the bomb release mechanism was damaged. A run

was made on the secondary target, but again a damaged salvo bar was discovered to be out, so the Deputy Lead took over and bombed Halberstadt airdrome with excellent results. However, the Low Box and High Box bombed the primary target, with the former securing excellent results of 95% of the bombs within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI. The High Box Leader also had a tough break with his AFCE and PDI shot out by flak during the bomb run, dropped his bombs manually. Even then, 90% of his hits were within 2,000 feet of the assigned MPI.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes making up the 94th CBW, led by Major R.J. White flying with the Lead Pilot Lt. C.J. Parr. Lt.'s Hansen and Ridley were Navigator and Bombardier respectively.

No air opposition was met, although crews did report seeing contrails of jet aircraft. Flak of both barrage and tracking type was encountered along the route and over the target. Eight aircraft received major battle damage and 23 received minor battle damage. One co-pilot was killed and two other crew members were wounded.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.

Mission 131

Target : Yvoir

18 August 1944

The 1st Bomb Division went after bridges, airfields and fuel dumps on the 18th August, a double-boxed-girder bridge type of railroad bridge being the assigned target for the 401st B.G. The briefing was at 0300 hrs for 39 crews of operational aircraft, one weather ship crew and one observer crew. The weather ship, SC-B, took off at 0505 hrs with the Group taking off by 0644 hrs. The Group were led by '600 and '965, two PFF aircraft from Polebrook.

The target was located but two of the Boxes had to make a second run. Also clouds were partially obscuring the bomb run and coupled with a ground haze gave the bombardiers a big problem. The high Box managed to get good coverage on the bridge and the Lead Box had a few stray bombs on the target. The Low Box had the best pattern - but they missed the bridge. The bridge was believed to have been knocked out.

Flak was encountered by the Low Box only when about ten bursts of flak from Liege hit the formation and caused minor damage to five of the twelve aircraft. No enemy fighters were met and the fighter cover was good.

The Wing was led by Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks, flying with Capt. Gruman. The Low Box Leader was Capt. F.A. Kalinski with Lt. E.F. Russell as Lead Navigator and Lt. Minott as Lead Bombardier.

The 615th put up the following nine crews:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
Capt. F.A. Kalinski and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.

1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 132

Target : Weimar

24 August 1944

The Group was stood down because of bad weather for five days and then on 24th August they were back on operations, this time to a factory 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles NW of Weimar that was engaged in the production of V-2 rockets. 39 crews were briefed at 0350 hrs and all aircraft on the mission were airborne by 0808 hrs.

The three bombardiers, with some difficulty because of smoke from a previous Wing, located their MPI's and the bombing was very good. All of the bombs from the three Boxes were within the 2,000 foot circle and most were within 1,000 feet.

Then, for the first time since May 28th, the Group experienced a fighter attack. Approximately 30 to 50 Me-109's and FW-190's made determined and aggressive suicidal attacks, directed primarily against the Low Box, and at times when there was a gap in the friendly fighter cover. At one time there was an interval of 20 to 25 minutes of no friendly fighter support. Three planes were lost to these attacks; they were IW-C, Serial No. 42-102394, piloted by Lt. P.W. Finney; IN-G, Serial No. 43-37511, piloted by Lt. M.M. Cain and IN-P, Serial No. 42-97344, piloted by Lt. M.S. Fish. Three of Lt. Finney's crew were KIA - they were S/Sgt. W.H. Snyder, T/Sgt. E.S. Smith and Sgt. G.B. Hill.

During these attacks S/Sgt. William C. Mathies, radio operator, was KIA and two other crew members were wounded.

Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell led the Group with Lt. Col. A.C. Brooks and Capt. J.R. Locher as the other two Box leaders. Lt. Col. Seawell flew with Lt. C.J. Parr.

The nine 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
1st Lt. C.J. Parr and crew. (with Lt. Col. Seawell as Air Commander)
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 133

Target : Peenemunde

25 August 1944

The Group were briefed at 0515 hrs for a mission to Peenemunde, the experimental station for the Luftwaffe for flying bombs and jet aircraft. 39 crews were briefed with the PFF crew having to travel by road to Polebrook to pick up their aircraft - Serial No. '687. Lt. Col. E.W. Brown led the mission with Capt. J.A. Gruman and Lt. C.J. Parr the other two Box leaders. The Group put up the 94th "C" CBW.

The briefed 401st target was the hydrogen peroxide plant producing fuel for rocket-propelled aircraft. All three Boxes were able to bomb visually and all three produced good to excellent results with 80% of all the bombs within 1,000 feet of the MPI and 100% within 2,000 feet. No enemy aircraft was encountered and the flak was encountered in the target area. The crews met moderate to intense flak which was also generally very accurate causing battle damage to 25 of the 36 aircraft in the formation. Two of the aircraft received major battle damage.

The 615th put up the Low Box of nine aircraft as follows:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
1st Lt. C.L. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 134

Target : Henin - Lietard

25 August 1944

Briefing for the second mission of the day was for 12 crews at 1330 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 1555 hrs. The target was an oxygen and chemical plant at Henin - Lietard, France, near the Belgium border. Although small in size, employing only 300 men, it did produce quite a large quantity of synthetic ammonia and liquid oxygen. It was presumed that good bombing would evaporate the oxygen and eliminate the workers, but the results were only reported as fair.

The 401st furnished two 6 aircraft sections for the 94th "C" CBW, which bombed in Squadrons. The Group was led by 1st Lt. C.A. Lincoln. There was no enemy air opposition, ground or air. The fighter cover was excellent, providing top and side cover all the way in and out.

The one crew put up by the 615th was:-

2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.

Mission 135

Target : Terte/La Louvierre

26 August 1944

A short mission was flown by the 401st on August 26th after heavy fog had prevented their take-off earlier on an assignment in Germany. The 94th CBW were given the task of bombing the liquid oxygen plants at Terte, La Louvierre and Willebroeck in Belgium, but this was only a cover mission for a very different kind of operation. This was known as "Batty", and was a B-17 with T.V. guided bombs on an attack in Holland. Unfortunately the bad weather and the undercast prevented any bombing on either mission. The bombs were brought back.

The Group put up two 12 aircraft Boxes, Force "A" and Force "B". Capt. F.A. Kalinski led Force "A" and Capt. J.A. Gruman led Force "B". The entire mission was made without incident.

The seven crews put up by the 615th were:-

2nd Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew. (with Capt. F.A. Kalinski)
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.

2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 136

Target : Berlin

27 August 1944

The Group was briefed for a mission to Berlin with 39 crews attending the briefing at 0600 hrs. There were a number of delays and the airfield was declared RED at 0940 hrs, closing it down for a short while. It was a delay of only ten minutes, the first aircraft becoming airborne at 1000 hrs.

The primary visual target was to have been the plants of the Focke-Wulf and Henschel aircraft works located on the outskirts of Berlin. The formation reached Denmark to find a wall of high cloud in their path and a message was received to turn back. The bombs were brought back to Deenethorpe.

The 401st furnished the complete 94th "A" CBW, led by Major Jere Maupin. Lt. R.H. Fowler and Lt. C.J. Parr led the other two Boxes.

The 615th Squadron put up the following nine crews:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
1st Lt. W.H. McIlraith and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
1st Lt. C.L. Parr and crew.
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 137

Target : Coubronne

30 August 1944

Just before midnight Gee-H ships '016 and '743 landed from Grafton Underwood. Just after midnight the third of the Gee-H ships to lead the day's mission, '777, landed from Kimbolton. At 0530 hrs the 36 crews were briefed for the mission and all aircraft were airborne by 0836 hrs. The field was declared RED a few minutes later and the weather ship was told to land at Ridgewell or Manston.

The target was a V-1 launching site that was to be attacked by Gee-H and H2X methods. The three Boxes of 12 aircraft got into extreme difficulties after penetrating enemy territory due to very bad weather conditions with clouds up to and above the briefed bombing altitude. The CBW Leader made an effort to get below the clouds to bomb but the clouds so omnipresent that the formation began to break up and lose contact with each other. Only the Leader of the High Box dropped his bombs on the Gee-H method and due to the poor visibility only three other aircraft of his Box dropped with him. Most aircraft returned to base with their bombs.

The Wing was led by Lt. Col. B.K. Voohees flying with Lt. W.M. Heenan.

The nine 615th crews on this mission were:

Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. W.M. Heenan
Lt. Col. B.K. Voohees
2nd Lt. J.M. Kane
2nd Lt. G. Jacobson
2nd Lt. R.E. Brooks
T/Sgt. J.V. Spiglanin
S/Sgt. C.E. Loper
Cpl. J.E. La Belle
2nd Lt. E.E. Johnson
S/Sgt. S.W. Bragalone

The other crews were:-

2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Transfers

Captain A.C. Kuenning assigned to the 94th Combat Wing as from 27th August, 1944.

Major R.J. White, Captain R.F. Causey, Captain F.D. Grinham, Lt. Cummings, Lt. D.C. Knight, Lt. Chambers and Lt. Huegin were transferred to the Casualty Pool - 12th R.C.D. - from 31st August, 1944.

Assignments

2nd Lt. R.L. Lehrman assigned as Radar Officer from 29th August, 1944.

1st Lt. Givens assigned as Squadron Adjutant as from 27th August, 1944.

Captain S. Wysocki, Lt. J. Taylor, Lt. Arnold, Sgt. D.E. Clare, Sgt. J.E. Beller and Sgt. H.F. McElligot returned from T.D. 2nd August, 1944.

New Crews

The following new crews joined the Squadron in August:-

2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway	2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper
2nd Lt. R.S. Lawson	2nd Lt. K.M. Spansel
2nd Lt. H.S. Weiss	2nd Lt. G.C. Ellis
2nd Lt. W.S. Griffin	2nd Lt. B.R. D'Agostini
S/Sgt. J.C. Dodson	S/Sgt. B.B. Sherrill
S/Sgt. J.C. Southerland	S/Sgt. M.W. Sexton
Sgt. A.G. Asheim	Sgt. H.J. Marroncelli
Sgt. F.S. Trendleman	Sgt. R.L. Lawrence
Sgt. C.C. Peltz	Sgt. C.M. Gue

New Crews (cont.)

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm
 2nd Lt. E.R. Child
 2nd Lt. W.C. McMullen
 2nd Lt. R.G. Burns
 S/Sgt. O.J. Kressler Jr.
 S/Sgt. T.J. Brown Jr.
 Sgt. D.P. Dunn
 Sgt. R.L. Wheeler
 Sgt. W.M. Duke

2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel
 Flt/O. R.J. Callahan
 2nd Lt. G.O. Ellis
 2nd Lt. L.D. Hoffman
 S/Sgt. J.A. Corcino
 Sgt. C.W. Beeson
 Sgt. T.H. Kelly
 Sgt. D.B. Wofford
 Sgt. K.W. Cobbs

2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart
 2nd Lt. L. Shapiro
 Flt/O. J.B. Miley
 2nd Lt. C.W. Mrozek
 Cpl. L. Andrews
 Cpl. E.E. Smith
 Cpl. J.B. Dailey
 Cpl. L. Allen
 Cpl. L.G. Livezey

2nd Lt. J. Udy
 2nd Lt. B.S. Hodkaday
 2nd Lt. O.R. McMahan
 2nd Lt. D.F. Youel
 S/Sgt. H.G. Knowles
 S/Sgt. J.B. Young
 Sgt. R.H. Albert
 Sgt. A.E. Warn
 Sgt. E.D. Oviatt

Notes:-

The July records stated that Lt. J.D. Ossiander had been forced to land in Italy with battle damage - in fact he had landed in Switzerland. Two of the crew, escaped from Switzerland and returned to England and were later returned to the USA. They were Lt. R.D. Cooper and Lt. Manolio.

When the two B-17's of Lt. Melofchik and Lt. Sproul collided over France on 1st August 1944 it was thought that both crews had been KIA. Some months later word came through that Sgt. H.E. Mapes of Lt. Sproul's crew had bailed out and had been made a POW.

September 1944

Fourteen missions, many of them in front of the Allied Armies advancing into Germany, and in direct support of these Armies, were flown by the 401st Bombardment Group (H) during September, 1944, which also saw it pass the 150th Mission since it's arrival in the European Theater of Operations.

All attacks during the month were made against Germany proper and while many Groups suffered extensive losses from enemy aircraft, the month's missions by the 401st were featured by no enemy aircraft attacks. Aircraft which were lost went down because of intense, accurate flak.

Marshalling yards to disrupt the enemy's flow of supplies to its front in the Ruhr Valley, were many of the month's targets. Others were in the Industrial Ruhr itself and still others were to synthetic oil production centers.

The month further saw the Group in excellent bombing support of the Allied airborne landings in Holland and on another mission -- to Frankfurt -- the 401st were the 8th Air Forces choice to carry "Braddock" bombs -- tiny incendiary instruments -- to be used by foreign workers within the Reich in acts of sabotage and disruption.

The Group had two outstanding artists headlining the USO Camp show Productions during September. The first was two concerts by Yehudi-Menuhin, world-famous violinist, who was accompanied by Marcel Gazelle, the Belgium pianist. Prior to the concert the artist was the guest of Colonel H.W. Bowman, the Base Commander at a reception and dinner at the Officers Mess.

Another well known personage to visit the base during the month was Marlene Dietrich who headlined a USO show given before more than two thousand five hundred officers and enlisted men in hangar No. 1. Miss Dietrich was picked up from Birmingham in a Fortress piloted by Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell and Captain F.A. Kalinski. The B-17, PAKAWALUP II, was lost over Germany the following day.

During the month two crews were forced to land in Belgium on their return from missions. One of the aircraft was beyond repair but both crews were safe and were flown back to Deenethorpe in C 47's.

The first fatal crash on take-off in 151 missions occurred during the month when an aircraft loaded with fragmentation bombs crashed at the end of the runway on the main Weldon to Oundle road and exploded. Eight of the members of the crew were killed instantly and the ball turret gunner lived only a few hours. Guards were immediately thrown around the area because of the unexploded bombs and the demolition crews dug for buried bombs for two weeks after the crash.

Despite suffering severe battle damage early in the month, the Group was able to put up 50 aircraft --- more than any other Group in the theater --- in a call for a maximum effort in support of the airborne landing in Holland.

One crew, returning with a badly damage aircraft, bailed out in

the vicinity of Deenethorpe and the aircraft crashed near Leicester.

Among those to complete their tours during the month were Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, Lt. Col. E.W. Brown, Major J. Maupin, Major W.C. Garland and Major J. Pickoff. Named as Acting Squadron Commanders until the regular C.O.'s returned were Major D.G. McCree, 612th., Major E.T. de Jonckheere, 613th., Captain A.H. Chapman, 614th. and Captain C.A. Lewis, 615th. Other new officers to come to the Group included Major James H. Havey who became Acting Group Operations Officer and Captain Wallace S. Harb who became Group Training Officer.

A Silver Star was posthumously awarded to Sgt. Edward L. Page, for his gallantry in action while on a mission over Germany, 13th July, 1944. He was a 615th Squadron tail gunner with Lt. H.E. Haskett. Sgt. Page was fatally wounded during a severe fighter attack but before he lost consciousness and died, Sgt. Page, who had been wounded in 35 different places, had destroyed an FW-190 that had fired continuously at his tail position.

Missions

September 1944

Missions 138

Target : Ludwigshaven

3 September 1944

39 crews were briefed for this mission to Ludwigshaven at 0400 hrs with the weather ship, IY-A, Serial No. 42-31077, taking off at 0500 hrs. The operational ships were all airborne by 0729 hrs.

The primary target for the 401st was the huge chemical industry of I.G. Farben. The Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes making up the 94th "A" CBW which led the 1st Bomb Division and was led by Colonel W.T. Bowman. PFF aircraft went along due to expected bad weather - and they were used. The target was covered by 9/10 to 10/10th's undercast but the bombardiers had one momentary visual check-point which greatly aided the bomb run and subsequent P.R.U. coverage showed that the G.P.'s hit the target.

As expected, Ludwigshaven furnished the usual intense and accurate flak and 25 aircraft sustained battle damage, five of them major.

The six 615th crews on the mission were:-

- 1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
- 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
- 2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
- 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 139

Target : Ludwigshaven

5 September 1944

Briefing for 40 crews, including one observer aircraft crew, was at 0415 Hrs with take-off completed by 0748 hrs.

This was the second attempt of the month to bomb the I.G. Farben Chemical Industry at Ludwigshaven. The 401st put up a Wing of 36 aircraft with

three PFF aircraft included in case bad weather was encountered during the bomb run. Major Jere Maupin flew as the Air Commander for the Wing, the "B" Combat Wing of the 94th. Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell and Major W.C. Garland led the other two Boxes. Bombing was by PFF but the results were unobserved.

There was no enemy air opposition and no casualties but 25 aircraft received minor battle damage. The flak was intense and accurate as the number of battle damaged aircraft would indicate.

The ten 615th crews on this mission were:-

- 2nd Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew. (with Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell)
- 2nd Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
- 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
- 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
- 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
- 2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 140

Target : Mannheim

9 September 1944

The briefing for the Mannheim mission was at 0400 hrs for 39 crews, three observer crews and one weather ship crew. The weather ship, SC-H, was away by 0627 hrs and the 42 other B-17's were all airborne by 0816 hrs. The weather ship completed its run to the coast and landed back at Deenethorpe at 0920 hrs.

The assigned target was the chemical works of the Mannheim plant of the I.G. Farben Industries, the specific target being the synthetic oil plant containing the hydrogenation stalls used in jet propelled and rocket bombs, but due to bad weather PFF bombing was carried out on the marshalling yards at Mannheim. The results were unobserved.

The 401st furnished the aircraft making up the 94th "A" CBW with Colonel H.E. Rogner as the Air Commander flying with a 615th crew piloted by 1st Lt. D.R. Charleville.

The flak over the target was moderate to intense and accounted for the veteran crew of 1st Lt. David Loughlin, flying their 31st mission. The aircraft was SC-G, Serial No. 42-97982 and was last seen dropping behind the formation.

The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

- 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 1st Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew.
- 2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
- 2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 2nd Lt. H.E. Haskell and crew.
- 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
- 2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
- 2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Note: Lt. D.R. Charleville had taken over the crew of Capt. F.A. Kalinski.

Mission 141

Target : Gaggenau

10 September 1944

The mission to Gaggenau was began with a briefing at 0400 hrs for 39 crews. Take-off was held up for 30 minutes while the early morning fog cleared and all 39 aircraft were airborne by 0746 hrs.

The Daimler Benz factory at Gaggenau, makers of the Me-109 engines, was the assigned target, which was bombed visually for a change. Crews reported dense black smoke beginning to rise as the formation left the target. Interpretation of strike photo's disclosed 50% of the bombs of the Lead Box were within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI and 95% of the Low Box within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI.

The Group furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes to make up the 94th "C" CBW, with Lt. Col. E.W. Brown leading the Wing.

No air opposition was met but meagre to moderate flak was encountered intermittently from Strasbourg to Karlsruhe.

Aircraft IV-P, Serial No. 44-6310, piloted by Lt. William B. Woodward, 615th Squadron, was hit by flak over the target area receiving a direct burst between No. 1 engine and the wing. Fire trailed a few yards back of the wing when the aircraft dropped out of formation. The aircraft then made several 360 degree turns before going into a steep dive. At 3,000 feet it went out of control. At least seven men pulled delayed jumps, and reporting crews said that all the crew had time to bail out. The only other casualty of the mission was Lt. Herman E. Weiss, navigator on Lt. R.W. Callaway's crew of the 615th Squadron, and he was wounded.

The Air Commander was Lt. Col. E.W. Brown with Major W.C. Garland and Major Jere Maupin leading the other two Wings.

The 615th put up the following nine crews:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
2nd Lt. W.B. Woodward and crew. MIA.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.

Mission 142

Target : Merseburg

11 September 1944

39 crews plus one observer ship crew were briefed for the mission to Merseburg at 0400 hrs with all ships except SC-B taking off by 0813 hrs. SC-B took off at 0846 hrs but was forced to land again ten minutes later with mechanical problems and was scrubbed from the mission.

The target was the largest synthetic oil refinery in Germany and was located at Merseburg. The 401st made up the 94th "B" CBW with Major W.C. Garland leading. Capt. R.D. McCord and Capt. C.A. Lewis were the other Box leaders.

The Lead and High Boxes bombed by PFF with unobserved results but the Low Box bombed the MPI of the 351st Group and plastered it with almost 100% of the bombs within 1,000 feet of the MPI.

Although no enemy air opposition was met by the Group the crews experienced moderate and accurate flak from the vicinity of Koblenz going in and coming out. There was also moderate and fairly accurate flak at the target. This flak accounted for the loss of one of the Squadron's crews between the I.P. and the target. Another crew lost two of its members who bailed out near the target when the plane they were in was severely damaged by flak, although the aircraft did manage to return to Deenethorpe. All other aircraft returned with a total of four men wounded. Three of the Group's aircraft received major flak damage and 22 received minor flak damage.

The crew that was lost was that of 1st Lt. Milton R. Wingard and it was later reported that Lt. Wingard had been made POW. Sgt. Billie M. Ingram, the waist gunner was reported KIA and the rest of the crew reported MIA. Apparently the flak burst was inside the cockpit on the co-pilot's side of the aircraft for flames were coming out of his side window. After the bombs were salvoed the aircraft appeared to be under control and no chutes were observed. The aircraft was IY-0, Serial No. 42-31091, one of the Group's original B-17's.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

1st Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew. (with Capt. C.A. Lewis)
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
1st Lt. M.R. Wingard and crew. MIA.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 143

Target : Merseburg

13 September 1944

Yet another mission to the Merseburg oil refineries of I.G. Farben with briefing taking place for 39 crews at 0345 hrs. The Group were airborne just after 7 o'clock with Major Jere Maupin leading the 94th "B" CBW of 39 401st aircraft. Lt. B.C. Konze and Lt. W.C. Mannix led the other two Boxes.

Due to an error in navigation and malfunction of the Mickey equipment the Lead Box made its turn toward the I.P. south of the course and when the Mickey operator stated he had picked up the target it was assumed that he was correct and the bombing was accomplished on the town of Gera which was south of the briefed target. The Low and High Boxes did hit the I.P. with no undue difficulties and managed to kill the course and ascertain their rate lines on a point surrounding the primary target and accomplished good bombing although the target itself was badly obscured by smoke.

The Group were hit by some accurate tracking flak at the target and three aircraft received major flak damage and 17 minor damage. One aircraft was also badly damaged by German fighters when it fell back out of formation. The 401st now had so many damaged aircraft that they were stood down until sufficient aircraft could be repaired for a mission. The tremendous work put in by the engineers can be gauged by the fact that a few days later, when Wing called for a maximum effort, the 401st put 50 B-17's up.

The 615th put up the following nine crews:-

- 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
- 2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
- 2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
- 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
- 1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

Mission 144

Target : Groesbeck

17 September 1944

51 crews were briefed at 0300 hrs with the take-off completed by 0639 hrs. During take-off IW-A, Serial No. 42-97872, piloted by Lt. F.E. Cook, crashed on the Weldon to Oundle road with the loss of all the crew.

The assignment was an attack on Groesbeck, Holland on a wooded area where the Germans had a concentration of tanks and gun positions. It was in support of the airborne landing in Holland that morning.

The 401st certainly did its part well that day for all of the eight Lead Bombardiers, ably assisted by their Lead Navigators, and the excellent formation flying, laid the fragmentation bombs right on their assigned MPI's. The Group put up four Boxes of 12 aircraft each and each Box split into 6 aircraft units for the bombing. Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell was the Division Leader and led Force 1 of the 401st formation. The other leaders were Lt. Konze, Lt. Col. Brown, Lt. R.R. Lockhart, Lt. T.D. Carroll, Capt. J.A. Gruman, Major J. Maupin and Capt. D.A. Currie. Each Force bombed visually.

No enemy air opposition was met and the flak was meagre.

The 615th put up the following twelve crews:-

- 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
- 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
- 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
- 2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
- 1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
- 2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
- Capt. C.A. Lewis and crew.

Mission 145

Target : Hamm

19 September 1944

The Group was briefed for this mission at 0630 hrs and the 39 operational aircraft and the observer aircraft took off in between times when the airfield was declared RED through bad weather. Just after the Group became airborne an RAF Spitfire crashed at the end of Runway No. 33 while trying to land. The return later that afternoon was even more dramatic with diversions for the 401st being given by the 1st Bomb Division and changed time after time. Eventually the aircraft of the 401st were spread out over East Anglia on twelve different airfields.

The assigned target was the marshalling yards at Soest with the

401st B.G. (H) furnishing the 94th "C" Combat Wing, led by Lt. Col. E.W. Brown. The Group history states that it turned out to be one of those "screwed up messes".

The weather ship made contact with Lt. Col. Brown on time just before the I.P. informing him that visual bombing was possible, however, in front of the Wing was a 10/10th's front towering up to at least 28,000 feet just beyond the I.P. area. The cloud was so thick that the Wing became separated and none of them were able to spot the target. They then all turned toward the secondary target located at the city of Hamm -- again marshalling yards -- but the Wing were unable to reassemble because of the bad weather. The Lead Box then dropped on a target of opportunity, but with poor results. The High Box did manage to bomb a secondary target, the Mickey operator having only seven miles in which to set up his run and bomb. Results were unobserved. The Low Box were without PFF equipment and finally jettisoned their bombs.

There was no enemy air opposition, and some flak was seen in the vicinity of Hamm; four aircraft received minor battle damage.

The 615th put up the following nine crews:-

2nd Lt. H.L. Oas and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
2nd Lt. M.L. Turk and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.

Mission 146

Target : Kassel

22 September 1944

This was an attack by the whole of the 8th A.F. on the armoured and motor vehicle factories at Kassel, Germany. 635 four-engined bombers dropping 1,700 tons of bombs for the loss of 3 aircraft MIA and 107 aircraft damaged.

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes comprising the 94th "B" CBW, led by Captain F.A. Kalinski of the 615th Squadron. 40 crews were briefed at 0700 hrs with the assembly on the Cottesmore Buncher at 11,000 feet. The crews were briefed for a low visibility take-off and in between the airfield being declared RED, the aircraft managed to become airborne by 1038 hrs.

A "round-up" was organized in the early afternoon when the control tower staff spotted two horses and 15 cows wandering around the end of runway No 23 and dispersals 23, 24 and 25.

Because of the bad weather over Kassel the Wing carried out a PFF attack on the marshalling yards. The Mickey operators reported that they had a good run and believed that good bombing was accomplished. Crews reported that columns of black smoke were rising from the target as the Wing left the area.

No enemy aircraft were encountered but contrails of two jet fighters were seen in the neighborhood. The flak at the target was moderate and one aircraft received major and four aircraft minor battle damage.

The nine 615th crews on the mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
1st Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 147

Target : Frankfurt

25 September 1944

The whole of the 1st Bomb Division, a total of 410 B-17's, bombed Frankfurt on this mission, the marshalling yards being the assigned MPI. 1,150 tons of bombs were dropped by PFF techniques on the area.

Briefing for 38 401st crews took place at 0400 hrs with assembly taking place at the Cottesmore Buncher at 11,000 feet. By 0750 hrs all aircraft were airborne and on their way to Frankfurt under the Leadership of Major Jere Maupin with 1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. of the 615th as Deputy Leader. The 401st made up the 94th "C" CBW.

This was Major Maupin's 25th and last mission of his first tour of operations. Later he would return and fly many more with the 401st.

The cargo dropped over Frankfurt by the 401st on this mission were not bombs. They had been chosen to carry "Braddock" bombs, a small incendiary device to be used - hopefully - by foreign workers for sabotage efforts.

The Luftwaffe were not seen but the crews reported that the flak over Frankfurt was moderate although no 401st aircraft were damaged.

Nine 615th crews were on the loading list:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
1st Lt. W.H. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 148

Target : Osnabruck

26 September 1944

On 401st Mission No. 7, 22nd December, 1943, the Group attacked Osnabruck, now, 141 missions later, they were paying a return visit. Briefing was at 0900 hrs and was for 40 pilots and co-pilots, made up of 36 operational pilots, 3 spare aircraft pilots and 1 observer pilot. The weather ship, IN-K, Serial No. 42-31072, was airborne by 1015 hrs with all the other ships becoming airborne by 1148 hrs.

The 401st made up the 94th "A" CBW, which led the Division, with Colonel H.E. Rogner as Air Commander and flying with 1st Lt. W.M. Heenan of the 615th Squadron. Capt. Gruman and Capt. Locher were the other two Box leaders.

The assigned target was the marshalling yards and, after a good number of PFF missions, the weather turned out to be CAVU for visual bombing.

But the bombing was not good by any of the Boxes. The Lead Box bombed over and to the right of the MPI, the Low Box did the same and the High Box bombed short of the MPI. All of the bombs were within the marshalling yard area however and extensive damage was caused.

No sign of the Luftwaffe - the 8th A.F. fighters no doubt keeping them occupied - and the flak at the target area was described as meagre and accurate causing minor battle damage to 11 aircraft of the 401st.

Lead Crew:-

1st Lt. W.M. Haskett
Colonel H.E. Rogner
1st Lt. C.W. Sellers
1st Lt. J.M. Kane
2nd Lt. C.C. Chaffey
1st Lt. H.S. Arnold
T/Sgt. J.V. Spiglanin
S/Sgt. C.E. Loper
2nd Lt. E.E. Johnson
S/Sgt. R.J. Ollila

The other eight 615th crews were:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 149

Target : Cologne

27 September 1944

Back to the industrial and transportation targets in western Germany was the Group's assignment for 27th September. Because of the expectation of bad weather the PFF and primary target were the same.

Briefing was at 0300 hrs for 39 operational pilots and 1 weather ship pilot. All aircraft became airborne by 0700 hrs.

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Boxes to make up the 94th "B" Group, led by Captain C.A. Lewis - at that time the acting C.O. of the 615th Squadron - flying with 1st Lt. W.M. Heenan, also of the 615th. Lt. Carns and Capt. Gruman led the other two Boxes.

Bombing was by PFF with results believed to be good to excellent because of the visibility of a few good check points. Lt. Chaffey was the Mickey operator and Lt. J.M. Kane the Lead Navigator.

The Luftwaffe were busy with the B-24's of the 2nd Bomb Division and the fighter escort and did not show up in the 401st area. There was some meagre to moderate flak at the target which caused minor battle damage to five of the Group's aircraft.

The ten Squadron crews flyin this mission were:-

2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
1st Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 150

Target : Magdeburg

28 September 1944

Briefing for the mission to Magdeburg, the Group's 150th mission, was at 0500 hrs and was attended by the crews of 39 operational aircraft and 1 weather ship crew. While taxiing around the perimeter track for the take-off a member of the ground staff walked into the prop of IN-F and was killed instantly. This happened just in front of the briefing room.

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons to comprise the 94th "A" CBW, led by Capt. J.R. Locher, Capt. McCord and Capt. Gruman were the other two Box leaders. The Lead and Low Box bombed visually and the High Box bombed by PFF techniques, all with good results.

The 1st Bomb Division met some opposition from the Luftwaffe, but not the 401st, they were met by moderate to intense flak over the target. IW-X, Serial No. 42-31863, landed on the continent with heavy flak damage and was written off as being beyond repair. The 615th lost IY-K, Serial No. 42-31069, piloted by 2nd Lt. E.H. Daves. It blew up after the No. 2 engine was hit by flak and no chutes were seen, although the aircraft was known to be under control until it exploded. Two other aircraft received minor flak damage.

The 615th loading list of nine crews was as follows:-

2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
1st Lt. D.V. Dow and crew.
2nd Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
2nd Lt. E.H. Daves and crew. MIA.

Mission 151

Target : Munster

30 September 1944

The briefing was at 0600 hrs and was for 39 operational crews and one weather ship crew. The weather ship left Deenethorpe at 0903 hrs with the other ships leaving by 1146 hrs.

That morning the Control Tower Log Books record one of the WWII mysteries. A B-17 in flames came from the North Sea, flew over the Wash and headed in the direction of Deenethorpe. It had obviously been abandoned by its crew. Some time later it was reported as flying over Liverpool and heading for the Atlantic, where it eventually disappeared.

The target was the marshalling yards at Munster with the 401st Group putting up the 94th "A" Group with Colonel H.E. Rogner riding with Captain Don Currie as the Air Commander. Major E.T. de Jonckheere and Lt. W.M. Fowler led the other two Squadrons. Bombing was done visually with the bombs of the Lead Squadron hitting the central portion of the marshalling yards. The results of the other Squadrons were excellent.

There was no air opposition from the Luftwaffe but as far as the 401st was concerned they were in the wrong place at the wrong time for the intense flak that hit them. Only 3 aircraft were lost to flak out of the 313 1st Bomb Division aircraft over Munster - two out of the three were from the 401st Group. They were SC-L, Serial No. 43-37632, piloted by Flt. Officer O.F. Nagle and IY-A, Serial No. 42-31077, "PAKAWALUP II", piloted by Lt. T.A. Davis. Two other aircraft received major flak damage and 24 others received minor flak damage. Although Lt. Davis was a 615th pilot his crew, that day, were from the 612th Squadron.

The eight 615th crews on this mission were:-

2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
2nd Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

The following new crews joined the Squadron in September:-

2nd Lt. E.H. Daves **	2nd Lt. G.W. McKay
2nd Lt. C.F. Crunk	2nd Lt. W. Higgs
2nd Lt. R.J. Mezydlo	2nd Lt. J.L. Reiney
2nd Lt. J.C. MacDougall	2nd Lt. R.L. Hecker
S/Sgt. H.C. McKenney	Cpl. S.T. Richardson
S/Sgt. W.R. Mayfield	Cpl. W.H. Butler
Sgt. P.J. Wheaton	T/Sgt. R. Luther
Sgt. J.C. Rollet	Cpl. W.T. Brunson
Sgt. M.A. Elston	Cpl. R.J. Cannizzaro

2nd Lt. L.A. Turk	2nd Lt. W.B. Woodward *
2nd Lt. J.M. Sinkking	Flt/O. J.S. Glidewell
2nd Lt. A.L. Cone	2nd Lt. O.R. McMahon
2nd Lt. M.L. Moore	2nd Lt. D.A. Eckers
S/Sgt. A.J. Vigona	T/Sgt. J.F. Lech
Cpl. S. Wieselthier	S/Sgt. A.J. Pedgarney
Pvt. J.E. Gremillion	S/Sgt. T.H. Schapport
S/Sgt. E.F. Swatski	Sgt. D.C. Steele
Cpl. P.J. Osborne	Sgt. J. Pasillas

* Crew MIA

** Lt. E.H. Daves was shot down with a 612th Sqdn. crew.

October 1944

One of the most severe losses since becoming operational occurred during October, 1944, on a mission to Politz, Germany, where the target was the huge synthetic oil plants. Five crews failed to return from this trip on October 7th, and seven other crew members were wounded, three seriously.

The weather was bad throughout the month and held operations to a minimum. Only twelve missions were run and most of these were pathfinder missions with blind bombing and the usual unobserved results.

Crews which failed to return from the Politz mission, where the flak was extremely accurate, were those of Lt. Robert W. James, 614th Squadron, Lt. Alexander Harasyn, 614th Squadron, Lt. Thomas K. Hill, 612th Squadron, Lt. Harry P. Silverstein, 614th Squadron and Lt. August J. Nelson, 613th Squadron. Two of these, Lt. Hill and Lt. James landed in Sweden and were interned.

Lt. Silverstein's aircraft received a direct hit in the right wing near the bomb-bay and the right wing caught on fire. The ship went into a vertical dive, a wing came off and it exploded. No chutes were seen. Lt. Nelson's Fortress received a direct burst of flak in the nose and most of the nose of the aircraft was blown off. The aircraft went into a vertical dive, hit the ground and exploded. During the dive some chutes were seen to come out of the aircraft. Despite the fact that no chutes were seen to come out of Lt. Silverstein's ship, all the crew did manage to bail out and spent the remainder of the war as POW's.

Colonel H.W. Bowman presented the Purple Heart to Mr & Mrs Peter A. McQueen of London, England, parents of Sgt. John C. McQueen who was killed on a mission to Schweinfurt with 1st Lt. B. Stimson's crew in April, 1944.

Major Albert E. Barrs, Group Courts and Boards Officer, was presented with a huge birthday cake one noon at the Officers Mess, in Honor of 38 years in the Army. A Jacksonville, Florida, insurance man in civilian life, Major Barrs had been in the Florida National Guard or active service since 1907.

"Hells Angel out of Chute 13" completed 75 missions without an abort during the month. The crew chief was Master Sergeant Curtis H. Brown. By the end of WWII it would complete 118 missions, and, not very far behind, were two 615th ships - IY-B with 112 missions and IY-C with 106 missions.

Two 612th Squadron Fortresses were written-off in crash-landings during the month. Lt. G.S. Schaunaman brought "Hangover Haven" in for a one-wheel landing and Lt. D.M. Schliemann landed "Twan-g-g-g" when his landing gear collapsed.

Missions

October 1944

Mission 152

Target : Nurnberg

3 October 1944

The first briefing of October was at 0415 hrs and was for 39 crews. Just over four hours later, at 0849 hrs, 38 aircraft were airborne, and, as the Flying Control Officer that morning put it - "after many trials and tribulations". Aircraft No. 39 got away at 0900 hrs in the hope that he could catch up with the rest of the Group.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons comprising the 94th "B" Group, which was led by Capt. F.A. Kalinski, flying with his former co-pilot, Lt. Charleville, who had now taken over Capt. F. A. Kalinski's crew. There was one PFF ship with each Squadron. Capt. A. H. Chapman and Major E.T. de Jonckheere were the other two Squadron leaders.

Because of 9/10th's undercast over the primary target, the secondary (PFF) target - the city of Nurnberg itself - was bombed. Glimpses of the target city on the bombing run enabled the mickey operators and the bombardiers to co-ordinate very well, and although the undercast prevented observations of results, bombing was thought to be good.

There was no sign of the Luftwaffe fighters on this mission, but moderate, inaccurate flak was met over the target with the result that one aircraft received major battle damage and 5 minor flak damage. Some meagre flak was also encountered in the Nancy - Strasbourg area.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-97636	1st Lt. D.C. Charleville and crew.
42-31983	2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
44-6146	2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-38458	1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
42-31488	2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38125	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 153

Target : Stargard

6 October 1944

The Group were briefed for a low visibility take-off. 39 crews attended the briefing and all aircraft were airborne, with the exception of IY-R, by 0814 hrs. IY-R had a blow-out while taxiing and the crew had to switch over to IW-J, getting airborne by 0838 hrs.

The 401st put up the 94th "C" Group, led by Capt. C.A. Lewis, Capt. D.A. Currie and Capt. W.S. Harb leading the other two Squadrons. The primary target was Politz but it was abandoned because of heavy cloud cover and a visual run was made on the secondary target, the airfield at Stargard.

No enemy fighters were encountered by the 1st Bomb Division, although the 3rd Bomb Division met heavy resistance from the Luftwaffe over Berlin. Flak was met in meagre to moderate amounts with fair to good accuracy from barges and boats adjacent to the Danish Peninsula. No flak was met over the

secondary target and only five aircraft sustained minor flak damage.

The nine 615th crews on this mission were:-

42-97636* 1st Lt. D.C. Charleville and crew. (with Capt. C.A. Lewis)
42-31485 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-37947* 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
42-107113 2nd Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
42-31983 2nd Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
43-38125 2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
43-38159 2nd Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
42-102659 2nd Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.

* PFF aircraft.

Mission 154

Target : Politz

7 October 1944

This was a maximum effort for the 8th Air Force with the 401st B.G. putting up 51 B-17's. Most of the targets for this day were oil refineries, and the one the Group went after was the big one at Politz. Briefing was at 0410 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 0809 hrs.

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons comprising the 94th "C" Group and 12 aircraft for the High Squadron of the 94th "B" Group plus PFF aircraft. The Group Leader was Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell flying with Capt. D.A. Currie. The Low Squadron Leader was 1st Lt. B.C. Konze of the 615th.

Although much cloud cover was encountered along the route to the target, weather over the primary target was clear, with the exception of smoke generated by an exceptionally effective smoke screen in operation over the synthetic oil plant at Politz. Bombing was done by visual means and the Lead Bombardier had much difficulty in synchronizing on the assigned MPI's because of the smoke cover. Some crews observed that bombs struck in the approximate area of the assigned MPI's.

The aircraft were in flak for nine minutes from Stettin to Politz. The flak was moderate but extremely accurate and five aircraft were lost, although two did make it to Sweden. In addition to the missing aircraft, three others received major flak damage and 40 received minor flak damage. Casualties included 45 missing in action, four lightly wounded in action and three seriously wounded in action. At least four of the five ships that were lost were lucky in that two crews were made POW and two crews went to Sweden.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-102674 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-31983 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
43-38125 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
44-6146 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-37551 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
42-31730 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38159 1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
42-102468 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
43-38077 1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
42-107113 1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
42-97737 1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.
43-38425 1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.

Mission 155

Target : Cologne

14 October 1944

Bad weather cut down the 8th Air Force activities for a week and then the 401st returned to Germany to attack Cologne with some 1,000 other four-engined bombers.

It was a Saturday morning, and, at 0500 hrs, 42 crews were briefed with two observer crews and one weather crew. By 0911 hrs, despite a gale, all operational aircraft were on their way to the assembly area.

The briefed target was the marshalling yards at Cologne and they were to be bombed visually or by PFF. As it happened so often in the past, there was 10/10th's cloud cover over the target so PFF techniques were used. However, only the High Squadron bombed by this means, with unobserved results. The PFF equipment of the Lead and Low Squadrons did not function properly on the bomb run, and so the Lead Squadron dropped on the smoke markers of the preceding Group.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group and Captain F.A. Kalinski was the Group Leader. Captain T.D. Carroll and Lt. B.F. Carns were the other two Squadron Leaders.

Scattered and meagre flak was observed along the route. At the target flak was generally moderate and off for deflection and only two aircraft received minor flak damage. However, a "friendly" B-17 carried out some test firing and used a 401st aircraft as the target - accidentally I have no doubt. A few 50 calibre holes were counted by the crew, who, I am sure, did not enjoy being shot at by one of their own kind.

The following nine crews flew on the mission:-

42-102674	2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-97636	1st Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew. (with Capt. F.A. Kalinski)
43-38125	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
42-31983	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-38159	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38458	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
43-38077	Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.

Mission 165

Target : Cologne

15 October 1944

This was an early briefing with 36 operational crews, three spares and a weather ship crew attending it at 0300 hrs. The weather ship was IY-J.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons to form the 94th "A" Group with Colonel H.W. Bowman as Division and Group Leader. The other two Squadron Leaders were Lt. W.C. Mannix and Captain F.A. Kalinski.

The Lead and Low Squadrons bombed by PFF means, and through breaks in the clouds crew members reported observing strikes in the marshalling yard. The High Squadron did not drop due to a malfunction of the bomb rack in the lead aircraft and the bombs were brought back.

No sign of the Luftwaffe on this mission yet again and only meagre flak was observed in the target area. Four aircraft received major flak

damage and one minor damage. Two men were wounded, one seriously.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

Lead Ship

Deputy Lead Ship

43-37947

44-8258

1st Lt. D.R. Charleville
 Colonel H.W. Bowman
 1st Lt. E.F. Russell
 1st Lt. C.C. Chaffey
 1st Lt. H.D. Fishbeck
 1st Lt. C.H. Minott
 T/Sgt. G.A. MacKeller
 T/Sgt. P.C. Madden
 1st Lt. E.E. Johnson
 S/Sgt. A. McKenna

1st Lt. W.M. Heenan
 Capt. F.A. Kalinski
 2nd Lt. D.E. Walters
 1st Lt. J.M. Kane
 1st Lt. R.E. Brock
 T/Sgt. J.V. Spiglanin
 T/Sgt. C.E. Loper
 S/Sgt. S.W. Braglone
 S/Sgt. R.J. Ollila

Other crews:-

44-6146 2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
 43-38077 1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
 42-31983 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
 42-102674 1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
 43-38159 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
 42-31485 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
 42-31740 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
 43-38458 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.

Mission 157

Target : Cologne

17 October 1944

Briefing was at 0300 hrs with 39 crews in attendance. Take-off began at 0620 hrs and by 0651 hrs all 39 aircraft were on their way - yet again to Cologne with some 1,250 other B-17's and B-24's of the 8th Air Force to unload some 2,917 tons of H.E. on the marshalling yards.

Three squadrons of 12 aircraft each were furnished by the 401st flying as the 94th "B" Group. These included three PFF ships, one leading each Squadron. The bomb run was started on Mickey due to the 10/10th's undercast and things were going well until the lead PFF ship had a Mickey malfunction. There was no time to change leads so the Group bombed on the preceding Wing's smoke bomb. There were no observations.

There was one four-gun flak battery en route that proved to be very accurate and there was meagre to moderate flak over the target and one aircraft received major and 10 minor battle damage.

Captain C.A. Lewis was the Group Leader with Lt. R.M. Fowler and Captain T.D. Carroll the other two Squadron Leaders.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

43-37947 (PFF) 1st Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew. (with Captain C.A. Lewis
 and Major E.T. de Jonckheere)
 42-102674 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
 42-31983 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
 43-38125 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.

- 43-38159 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 43-38458 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 42-31730 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 42-107113 1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.

Mission 158

Target : Mannheim

19 October 1944

There was a delay of 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours between briefing - at 0500 hrs - and take-off at 1034 hrs. The 39 aircraft of the 401st, which included three PFF ships, comprised the 94th "C" Group, led by Major D.G. McCree and flying with Captain Don Currie. The other Squadron Leaders were Lt. G.W. Mercer and Lt. T.R. Cushman.

The Lead and Low Squadrons bombed Mannheim by PFF with unobserved results but the High Squadron, with Captain D.W. Fesmire, who had recently returned to the Group after a leave in the United States and who was on his 121st mission, bombed Karlsruhe with excellent results.

Again no sign of the Luftwaffe but flak was observed and encountered along the route and in the target area. Four aircraft received major and twelve minor flak damage. Two crew members were wounded, one seriously.

The nine 615th crews on the mission were:-

- 43-38125 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
- 42-102674 2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 42-102468 2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
- 42-31730 2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 42-97664 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 42-31983 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 43-37551 2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 44-6146 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 43-38159 1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.

Mission 159

Target : Hannover

22 October 1944

Bad weather closed down all 8th A.F. operations for the 20th and 21st October - and almost called a halt to this mission as well. The briefing was for 39 crews at 0700 hrs with the field in the RED condition until just before take-off. A diversion was arranged for the returning 401st ships late that afternoon, and, as the Control Tower Log Book puts it - "All operational aircraft landed under extremely rugged weather conditions. Visibility very low and aircraft had difficulty in seeing each other."

The assigned target was the marshalling yards at Hannover with Major D.G. McCree as the 94th "B" Group Leader and Captain D.A. Currie and Lt. W.M. Heenan as the other leaders. The three Squadrons made individual PFF runs on the target and all reported that their equipment was working very well and each believed that the bombing was successful.

Moderate to heavy enemy air opposition was expected but none was seen or reported. The flak itself was meagre to moderate over the target but proved to be generally inaccurate and only three aircraft received minor battle. Flak barrages were observed en route at Munster and Osnabruck.

The 615th put up the following ten crews:-

42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
44-6146	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-37551	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
44-8033	1st Lt. W.M. Heenan and crew.
42-102659	1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
42-102463	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. P.E. Campbell and crew.

Mission 160

Target : Hamburg

25 October 1944

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons comprising the 94th "A" Group, led by Captain F.A. Kalinski, flying with 1st Lt. Charleville, both of the 615th Squadron. Briefing was at 0600 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 1006 hrs. The weather ship was IW-K, Serial No. 43-38677 and used the code "Golfclub K".

The target was a group of factories producing various ordnance and vehicles and the PFF method of bombing again proved its value as 10/10th's undercast covered the target. Each Squadron made an individual Mickey run and although the operators expressed the opinion that they had made a good run the plotting by the S-2 personnel showed that their bombs all fell a little wide of the assigned target.

The Luftwaffe still failed to put in an appearance and even the flak was not very effective with only two aircraft MIA out the the 1,250 sent out to attack German targets. Nevertheless, the flak over the target caused major damage to one 401st aircraft and minor damage to 6 other aircraft. In the target area 6 to 8 vapour trails, as if travelling at rocket speed, were reported.

The nine 615th crews on the loading list were:-

44-8258	1st Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew. (with Capt. F.A. Kalinski)
42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
44-6146	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
42-102674	2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38159	1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
43-38468	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.

Mission 161

Target : Bielefeld

26 October 1944

The briefing for 39 crews was at 0630 hrs but take-off time had to be delayed because of the weather conditions. In between the airfield being declared RED and closed down for flying, 38 of the crews managed to take off. The last crew, a 615th Squadron crew, failed to get off and transferred from IY-X to IY-G only to find that the Control Tower closed the airfield down and would not allow them to take off.

The assigned target was an area depot of the German Army located at Bielefeld - to be bombed visually if possible and by PFF if necessary. It was decided to use PFF when the cloud cover was found to be 10/10th's over the target. Results were unobserved.

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The 401st Bomb Group put up three 12 aircraft Squadrons to form the 94th "C" Group. Major D.G. McCree flew as pilot in the Lead Squadron to check out Captain A.H. Chapman as Group Air Commander. Lt. W.C. Mannix and Lt. E.W. Mercer were the other two leaders.

No Luftwaffe and very little flak and the only real heavy loss by the 8th Air Force on this day was the result of a mid-air collision of two 452nd B.G. B-17's. Both crews were killed as a result. Otherwise, only 66 aircraft received battle damage out of the 1,225 bombers sent over Germany on this mission, and not one bomber was shot down.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-107115	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38458	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
43-38159	1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-37551	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
44-6146	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.

Mission 162

Target : Munster

28 October 1944

The weather was still very bad at Deenethorpe and take-off was delayed for two hours on this wintery Saturday morning. The briefing was at 0530 hrs and all aircraft were in the air just after noon.

The 401st Group furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons to form the 94th "B" Group, which was led by Major E.T. de Jonckheere, flying with Lt. E.W. Coleman. Lt. B.C. Konze and Major J.H. Havey were the other two Box Leaders.

This was a very minor attack for the 8th Air Force with 190 1st Bomb Division and 192 3rd Bomb Division B-17 attacking the Hamm and Munster marshalling yards. Bombing was visual and a few strikes from the Lead Squadron were seen well within the target area. Due to a partial overcast, strikes of the High and Low Squadrons were not observed but were believed to be close to the assigned MPI's.

Although the Luftwaffe failed to appear the flak more than made up for their absence. Two 401st aircraft received major flak damage and 21 received minor flak damage. Three crew members were wounded, one seriously. Some meagre but accurate flak was also met as the formation passed Texel Island.

At 1640 hrs SC-S, returning from the mission, made a high approach, came in, touched down and the right landing gear collapsed, causing it to skid off the runway to the right, ending up about 75 yards from the runway. A few minutes later IN-F burst a tire on landing but managed to turn left off the runway to keep it clear. At 1715 hrs all other aircraft had landed. The Control Tower Log Book put it very nicely - "All operational aircraft down in one fashion or another!"

Unfortunately, for this mission, the 615th loading list is missing. Only 1st Lt. B.C. Konze is recorded as flying this mission as one of the Squadron Leaders.

Mission 163

Target : Munster

30 October 1944

The last briefing for the month of October was at 0545 hrs and was attended by 39 operational crews, one weather ship crew and one observer crew. The weather ship took off at 0744 hrs with the rest of the ships taking off from 0915 hrs.

The 401st put up 36 aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group, led by Major D.G. McCree with Captain Harb and 1st Lt. B.C. Konze as the other Squadron Leaders. The assigned target was the oil industry at Gelsenkirchen but the deteriorating weather caused the recall of the 1st Bomb Division to look for secondary targets. Each Squadron had a PFF ship and it was used to bomb the marshalling yards at Munster through the 10/10th's undercast.

The Luftwaffe didnt show up, making it another month free from Jerry fighters. That could'nt be said for the flak - it was always over, under or all round the formation, and, on this day a few accurate bursts caused damage to four of the 401st B-17's.

The 1st Bomb Division had been turned back by the Scouting Force, which, interestingly, were at Deenethorpe from the Sunday to the Friday of this week whilst their own airfield at Steeple Morden was under repair. 15 P-51's occupied dispersals 27, 28 and 33. Later in the week, on Thursday 2nd November, as P-51 Serial No. 764 was taking off on Runway No. 33, it crashed. So many people came to view the crashed aircraft that MP's were brought in to chase them off.

The nine 615th crews flying the mission were:-

43-38125	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
44-6146	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-37551	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-38458	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.
44-8258	1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew. (PFF aircraft.)

The following new crews joined the Squadron in October:-

2nd Lt. F.N. Maire	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen *
2nd Lt. R.M. Deen	2nd Lt. H.A. Coats
2nd Lt. L.E. Lowry	Flt. O. M. Greenberg
2nd Lt. C.A. Nomberger	2nd Lt. J.L. King
Cpl. W.T. Mabrey	Cpl. H.R. Ferguson
S/Sgt. H.T. Barr	Cpl. R.A. Miller
Cpl. M.C. Floyd	Cpl. E.B. Heiss
Cpl. B.L. Landry	Cpl. L.N. McKnight
Cpl. J.F. Nowak	Cpl. A.A. Karcher

* Crew MIA.

November 1944

The first year of operations of the 401st Bomb Group (H) came to a close during November, 1944, when 12 missions were run. The weather was bad, and although the month started out fast with six missions in six consecutive days, standdowns became frequent when the weather closed in and operations were held to a minimum.

In the first year of operations 172 missions were flown. The first mission of the Group was to Bremen on November 26th, 1943, and the 172nd and last one of the operational year was to Merseburg on November 25th, 1944.

The mission to Merseburg on 21st November was the most costly of the month with two crews lost, although the month's final mission on 30th November to Bohlen, the oil refinery in the Leipzig area, caused more extensive damage and the crews more trouble than any other. On the Merseburg mission two crews were lost and a third reported lost, only to eventually return to Deenethorpe. Twenty-three aircraft received flak damage.

On the Bohlen mission, one of the 401st navigators, 2nd Lt. Carl L. Hoag Jr. received an "on-the-spot" Distinguished Service Cross from Lt. General Carl Spaatz, Commanding General of USSTAF and three other members of the same crew were recommended for the Silver Star for their heroism in returning home after being badly shot up. Although blinded in one eye and his vision impaired in the other, Lt. Hoag navigated the crew back. Sgt. Irving Gordon, waist gunner, who had two fingers severed, refused to leave his guns despite his injury since his aircraft was straggling and the pilot, 2nd Lt. George K. Cracraft and the co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Mertin Karant, each did heroic jobs in bringing the crew back to England.

Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, the Air Executive, finished his first tour and departed for a 30-day leave in the USA during the month. Major D.E. Silver, Group Operations Officer, became acting Air Executive until the return of Colonel Seawell - in fact he would return as the new 401st B.G. Commanding Officer. Major Leon Stann left the Group in November, being transferred to Glatton where he became a Squadron Commander. Major R.J. White, the C.O. of the 615th Squadron, returned from a leave in the USA and resumed command of the Squadron. Captain C.A. Lewis, the acting Commanding Officer, then resumed his duties as the 615th Operations Officer.

Captain D.W. Fesmire, the 613th Squadron Bombardier, completed his 123rd mission during the month to set what was believed to be an ETO record for heavy bombardment missions by one man. Also, during the month, Captain Howard D. Fishbeck became the first member of the Group to complete two tours of operations.

On 25th November a new PFF ship was being brought into the field from Burtonwood. The aircraft made a pass at the runway, bounced off and contact was lost. It crashed a few minutes later at Great Oakley near Corby, killing the crew of three - Lt. J. Mah, pilot, Cpl. H.D. Gorecki, engineer and Sgt. Sherman, radio operator.

November 1944

Missions

Mission 164

Target : Merseburg

2 November 1944

The 401st were part of a force of 210 B-17's of the 1st B.D. that dropped 469 tons of bombs on the oil refinery at Merseburg/Leuna on this mission. The briefing was at 0530 hrs and 39 crews attended plus one weather ship crew. The weather ship was SC-N and was airborne at 0727 hrs.

The 401st furnished three 12 aircraft Squadrons for the 94th "A" Group. Bombing was carried out by two PFF aircraft in the Lead Squadron and one in the High Squadron on the I.G. Farben chemical plant at Merseburg. No observations of results were possible, although bombs of the preceding Group were observed through breaks in the clouds to be striking in the target area.

Although the Group again missed the enemy fighters on this mission the Group behind them were attacked. Of the 210 aircraft in the formation attacking Merseburg 26 were shot down and 153 received battle damage, the 401st losing one aircraft with two receiving major battle damage and 25 receiving minor damage. Meagre to moderate flak was observed enroute to the target and on withdrawal, but intense, accurate flak was encountered in the target area. The damage to the 401st aircraft was caused by this flak.

After bombs away aircraft IY-N, Serial No. 43-38159, piloted by 1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr., of the 615th Squadron, was hit by flak near the No. 3 engine. Ten seconds later the aircraft went into a spin and dived out of control. Three chutes were seen to come out of the aircraft.

Captain A.H. Chapman, flying with Captain Ted Carroll led the Group with Captain R.M. Dempsey and 1st Lt. B.F. Carns leading the other two Squadrons. The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-102674	2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.	
42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.	
42-102468	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	
43-38159	1st Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. and crew.	MIA.
43-38458	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.	
42-31730	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.	
43-38425	2nd Lt. J. Udy and crew.	
44-8033	Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.	(PFF ship)
43-38077	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.	

Mission 165

Target : Hamburg

4 November 1944

Briefing was at 0500 hrs for 39 crews with the weather ship, piloted by Captain J.R. Locher, getting airborne at 0718 hrs. All operational aircraft were away by 0901 hrs with the exception of IY-B, which after several attempts to get airborne was scrubbed from the mission.

The large crude oil refineries at Hamburg were designated as the visual and PFF targets. Since there was a solid overcast at the target, bombing was done by means of PFF techniques, with no observations of results possible.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees, flying with Capt. B.F. Carns. The Low Squadron was led by Capt. P.E. Campbell with the Lead Navigator, 1st Lt. R.F. Whitney and the Lead Bombardier, 1st Lt. H.S. Arnold - all from the 615th Squadron.

No enemy air opposition was met and only meagre to moderate flak was encountered along the route and in the target area.

The Loading List for this mission is missing from the microfilm.

Mission 166

Target : Frankfurt

5 November 1944

The important marshalling yards at Frankfurt were again designated as either the primary or secondary target. 39 aircraft were briefed for the mission at 0430 hrs with all aircraft airborne at 0838 hrs. The crews were warned that very poor weather conditions were forecast upon their return, and this was the case with six aircraft having to land at other bases for the night.

Because of 5/10 to 7/10th's cloud coverage over Frankfurt, it was elected to bomb by PFF techniques, however, with visual assistance through some breaks in the clouds. Photo's disclosed that the majority of the bombs hit over and to the right of the assigned MPI, although some hits were observed in the vicinity of the main passenger station.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group, led by Major E.T. de Jonckheere, flying with Captain Tom Cushman. The 615th Squadron put up part of the High Squadron which was led by 1st Lt. B.C. Konze. 1st Lt. A.C. Wilhelm was the Lead Navigator and 1st Lt. A.G. Kossuth was the Lead Bombardier.

The Luftwaffe stayed clear of the 8th Air Force formation yet again but the flak at the target was moderate and accurate causing major damage to two of the 401st aircraft and minor damage to 8 others.

The nine 615th crews on this mission were:-

42-102674	2nd Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew. *
42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
44-6146	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38458	1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
44-6113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38607	1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.

* Lt. Grimm landed at Great Dunmow with battle damage - beyond repair.

Mission 167

Target : Harburg

6 November 1944

37 crews were briefed at 0345 hrs and all aircraft taking part in the mission were away by 0753 hrs. The 401st Group furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Captain A.H. Chapman flying with Lt. E.W. Mercer; 1st Lt. E.W. Coleman and Gaptain J.F. Goodman were the other two Squadron Leaders.

The assigned primary target, Harburg, which was the same as the secondary, was the home of large oil refineries so vital to the German War machine. Because of 7/10 to 8/10th's cloud coverage, the target was bombed by PFF, with some visual assistance obtained because of breaks in the clouds at the target area.

There was no challenge from the Luftwaffe but the flak was very evident, causing major damage to two 401st aircraft and minor damage to 10 others. It also accounted for the loss of IN-E, Serial 42-107009, piloted by Lt. R.H. Hilstad. An SOS was picked up from IN-E while they were over the North Sea with an escort of three P-51's. Everything was thrown overboard but it became obvious that they would crash into the sea just off the Dutch coast, so they turned their badly damaged aircraft - the "Lady Jane" - back to Holland and crash-landed at Enschede. The crew were POW's for the rest of the war.

Crews observed enroute, as they had for the previous few weeks, formations of rocket contrails, commencing at 20,000 feet and continuing up to at least 45,000 feet, with a 7% trajectory and levelling off slightly at the top. This phenomenon had been confirmed much earlier as the V-2 rocket on their way to England.

The ten 615th crews on the loading list were:-

44-8258	1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-97644	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
43-38125	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
42-97322	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.

Mission 168

Target : Merseburg

8 November 1944

41 aircraft were briefed at 0430 hrs and given two plans of operation, A and B. At 0545 hrs Operations advised that plan "A" would be put into effect with take-off commencing at 0655 hrs. Aircraft IW-X failed to take off but all others were airborne by 0741 hrs.

This was a return to the Leuna oil refineries at Merseburg with the 401st putting up the 94th "A" Group, led by Major Leon Stann, flying with Captain R.M. Dempsey of the 615th Squadron. Captain D.V. Kirkhuff and Captain P.E. Campbell were the other two Squadron Leaders.

For the fifth time during the month bombing had to be carried out by PFF techniques because as the formation reached the I.P. the 10/10'ths cloud and dense contrails completely obscured the ground. The bombing was carried out in Group formation with all radar instruments working perfectly. The Mickey operators believed they made a good run and believed the results to have been good.

The Luftwaffe remained on the ground yet again but considerable damaged was caused by the flak, which was moderate and accurate. Two aircraft received major and 23 minor battle damage. Lt. R.I. Steele, with two engines of his aircraft knocked out, made an emergency landing near Brussels. The aircraft was IN-T, Serial No. 43-37736, and was found to be beyond repair.

The 615th Squadron put up the Group Lead aircraft and crew plus eleven others crews. They were:-

Lead Crew

PFF aircraft 42-97947

- Capt. R.M. Dempsey
- Major L. Stann
- 1st Lt. C.W. Sellers
- 2nd Lt. A.L. Cone
- 2nd Lt. C.C. Chaffey
- 1st Lt. W.W. Dolan
- T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
- T/Sgt. O.A. Endalay
- 1st Lt. S.R. Childs
- Sgt. J.A. Elston

The other crews were:-

- 43-38425 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 43-38810 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 42-97664 2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
- 42-97780 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
- 42-31485 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew. (abort)
- 43-37551 1st Lt. H.V. Dow and crew.
- 42-31730 1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 42-102468 2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
- 42-107113 1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
- 43-37891 Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew.
- 44-8033 Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 169

Target : Metz

9 November 1944

The 1st and 2nd Bomb Divisions of the 8th A.F. went after the front line strong points and tactical targets in the Metz area in support of the ground troops. The briefing was for 39 crews at 0300 hrs with the weather ship, SC-T, getting away at 0509 hrs. The cross wind of 20 to 25 mph caused some problems put eventually all aircraft became air-borne, some crews having to change to ground spares.

The 401st were carrying 1,000 lb armour piercing bombs to attack some German pill-boxes that were holding up General Paton's new drive just south of Metz, France. The Group put up the 94th "A" Group and were led by specialized Gee-H equiped aircraft in case clouds obscured the target. And the clouds were there. A run was made by Gee-H but the bombs fell some 2½ miles away from the assigned MPI. Not one of the Group's better results.

The mission was of the type called a "milk run". No enemy fighters and very little, inaccurate flak near the target so there was no battle damage to record.

The Gee-H aircraft was supplied by the 303rd B.G. and the Group Lead was shared by Capt. D.A. Currie and Capt. B.F. Carns. The other two Squadron leaders were 1st Lt. B.C. Konze and 1st Lt. J.L. Cromer.

Once again, the 615th loading list is missing from the microfilm.

Mission 170

Target : Eschweiler

16 November 1944

A period of very bad weather set in after the mission on 9th November which finally came to an end on 16th November when 39 crews were briefed

for this mission at 0500 hrs, even then the take-off visibility was down to a dangerous 500 yards. The take-off of operational aircraft was completed by 0838 hrs and half an hour later the visibility became so low that the airfield was closed down. The weather did not improve a great deal and although five returning ships managed to land back at Deenethorpe the others were diverted to five other bases as follows:-

5 at Deenethorpe
6 at Carnaby
1 at Kimbolton
3 at Barkeston Heath
4 at Bottesford
23 at Ossington

The target was gun and enemy emplacements near the German town of Eschweiler, three miles inside the front line boundaries. Bombing was done by means of Gee-H because of 6/10 to 10/10th's cloud cover over the target area. Results were unobserved, but believed to be good.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group, led by Major E.T. de Jonckheere, flying with Capt. Tom Cushman. The High and Low Squadron Leaders were furnished by the 615th Squadron - led by 1st Lt. B.C. Konze and 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel.

This turned out to be the second "milk run" in a row with no sign of the Luftwaffe and very little flak. A few ground rockets were seen in the target area.

The eleven crews of the 615th on this mission were:-

43-38077	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.	
43-38779	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.	
43-38810	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.	
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.	
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.	
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.	
43-38458	2nd Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	
44-8258	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-37551	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.	
42-97664	2nd Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	
44-6152	1st Lt. B.C. Konze and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 171

Target : Merseburg

21 November 1944

Briefing for 39 crews was at 0415 hrs with all aircraft except three away by 0820 hrs. The three spares were used in place of them. The briefed primary and secondary target were again the same merseburg synthetic oil refinery plants the Group had been to so many times before. As usual a deck of clouds encountered at the I.P. and extending upwards from 18,000 feet to 30,000 feet caused the formation to become separated, necessitating a PFF run. No observations were possible.

The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group, led by Captain A.H. Chapman, flying with Lt. E.W. Mercer. Captain Harb and Captain Goodman were the other two Squadron leaders.

Although enemy aircraft were reported in the target vicinity, only one Me-109 appeared. It made an attack on a straggling flak-ridden B-17 of the 401st and succeeded in shooting it down. Subsequently the Me-109 was

shot down by one of the 401st aircraft, resulting in a claim. The B-17 shot down was IN-N, Serial No. 44-6104, piloted by 1st Lt. R.J. Keck.

Flak was described as intense and accurate at the target and along the route at Weimar. IN-Y, serial No. 42-97600, piloted by Captain F.E. Rundell went down after being hit by flak. A 615th aircraft, 42-107113, with 1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan at the controls, force-landed in Belgium. Besides the two aircraft lost 2 aircraft received major battle damage and 21 minor flak damage. Also, four men were wounded, one seriously.

Nine 615th crews flew this mission, they were:-

42-107113	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
43-38458	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.

Mission 172

Target : Merseburg

25 November 1944

The briefing was for 39 crews, the time, 0415 hrs, and for the 4th time in November it was another visit to the oil refineries at Merseburg. Again the primary and secondary target was the synthetic oil plant that had been continuously bombed by PFF - and on this mission it was necessary to once again use PFF techniques with unobserved results.

The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group which was second over the target, led by Major D.E. Silver, flying in a 615th ship piloted by 1st Lt. D.R. Charleville.

No enemy aircraft were seen and the flak, probably due to the new anti-radar chaff used for the first time by the 401st over Merseburg, did not seem to be able to get the range of the Group. Only four of the Group's B-17's received minor flak damage. Sadly, the mission was not without one tragedy. Sgt. Jack F. Irvin died from anoxia on this mission.

The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

Lead Aircraft:

PFF 42-97947

1st Lt. D.R. Charleville
Major D.E. Silver
1st Lt. E.F. Russell
1st Lt. C.C. Chaffey
1st Lt. C.H. Minott
T/Sgt. G.A. MacKeller
T/Sgt. P.C. Madsen
1st Lt. E.R. Child
S/Sgt. A. McKenna

the other crew were:-

43-38779 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.

42-31983	1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.	
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	
42-97636	1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.	(Spare)
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.	
43-38125	2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	
43-38810	2nd Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.	
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.	

Mission 173

Target : Misburg

26 November 1944

The 39 aircraft of the 401st was part of a force of 300 B-17's and B-24's that dropped 862 tons of bombs on the oil refineries at Misburg on this mission. Briefing was at 0500 hrs with the weather ship taking to the air - it was IW-L, Serial No. 42-40001, later to be named "Paris Express".

Because of a very effective smoke screen it was necessary to bomb by PFF techniques, although the weather was clear. Bombs were seen to strike in the target area and also to the left of the area. The Group put up the 94th "A" Group of the CBW, which was led by Major D.G. McCree. 1st Lt. D.R. Charleville flew the Lead of the Low Squadron formation. Captain Harb and Captain D.V. Kirkhuff were the other two leaders.

The Luftwaffe still did not make an appearance although the flak more than made up for their absence. One aircraft received major and 11 minor battle damage. Flak was also observed at Ewolle and Hannover.

The eight 615th crews flying on this mission were:-

43-38077	1st Lt. D.R. Charleville and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. P.J. Sullivan and crew.
43-38458	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm Jr. and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr. and crew.

Mission 174

Target : Misburg

29 November 1944

The evening before, Tuesday, 28th November, a number of B-17's were practicing night flying, and, while Flight Officer Cox was coming in to land IN-M, he crashed on Runway No. 23. Unfortunately, the civil engineering workmen had dug out a hole at the intersection of the other two runways - No.'s 28 and 33 - and filled them with ballast, so neither could be used.

At 0500 hrs 39 crews were briefed for the mission to Misburg but it was 0615 hrs before Runway 23 could be cleared of the crashed aircraft and the go-ahead given for the mission. Then, as take-off time approached, the control tower reported a huge cloud of birds on and over the airfield, and the Ordnance had to be called out to disperse them with shotguns.

Finally, 38 of the aircraft became airborne by 0957 hrs, and the odd one, IN-U, followed half an hour later, but in time to catch up with the rest of the formation. The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group with Captain J.R. Locher as the Group Leader, flying with Lt. Tom Cushman. The 615th put 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth as the High Squadron Leader.

Again no sign of the German Air Force and only meagre and inaccurate flak was observed enroute and over the target.

The 615th crews flying the mission were:-

- 43-38771 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
- 43-38425 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
- 43-38810 2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
- 42-31983 1st Lt. R.W. Callaway and crew.
- 43-37551 2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
- 43-38779 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 42-31485 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 42-102468 2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
- 42-31730 1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.

Mission 175

Target : Bohlen

30 November 1944

The Group were briefed at 0445 hrs, 39 crews taking part. Some extra information was added to the Control Tower Log Books for the mission. The bomb load was to be 20 x 250 lb. G.P.'s with aircraft IN-F, Serial No. 44-6313, loaded with "Long delay" fused bombs. The gas load for each aircraft was 2780 gallons and the assembly was to take place at 8,000 feet over the Cottesmore Buncher. Time of take-off was put back one hour but all aircraft - except IY-K, were airborne by 0951 hrs. IY-K took off, only to land a few hours later - it was a spare and was not required.

The last mission of the month, to an oil refinery at Bohlen, just south of Leipzig, was a costly one for the 401st. Major D.E. Silver led the "C" Group with Capt. Stelzer and Capt. D.A. Currie the other leaders. Bombing was visual, the first time in weeks, but an effective smoke screen covered the target area and results were only fair. Flak was intense and all aircraft but one were damaged, seven receiving major flak damage. After the target there were only 33 aircraft in the formation and by the time the formation reached Belgium there were only 21 - the others being forced to straggle because of feathered engines and other flak trouble. Luckily no enemy fighters were encountered. A radio operator, struck in the neck by a flak fragment, died a short time later and five others were wounded. The dead radio operator was T/Sgt. Dorsey W. Tyree, a 614th crew member.

Two crews piloted by Lt. E.L. Hansen and Lt. F. Carson Jr., landed in France, although at first they were reported as missing in action.

Once again, the 615th Loading List was missing from the microfilm so I am unable to give the names of the crews that took part in this very tough mission.

The following crews joined the Squadron in November 1944:-

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes | 2nd Lt. G.K. Cracraft |
| 2nd Lt. R.H. Spiva | 2nd Lt. M. Karant |
| Flt.O. J.F. Canale | 2nd Lt. C.L. Hoag |
| 2nd Lt. R.D. Davis | Sgt. R.L. Guerin |
| Sgt. L. La Course | Sgt. G.B. Fenwick |
| Sgt. O.R. Akins | S/Sgt. R.P. Jacquart |
| Sgt. R.H. Bill | Sgt. P.J. Schemel |
| Sgt. G.A. Reiher | S/Sgt. L.L. Hudson |
| Sgt. D. Chiu | Sgt. I. Gordon |

Crews (Cont)

2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber
2nd Lt. W.M. Higgs
2nd Lt. B.R. D'Agostini
Sgt. E.F. Gelerman
Sgt. D.D. Freitas
Sgt. C.W. Makseyn
Sgt. J.P. McKenna
Sgt. A.A. Achison
Sgt. C.I. Martin

2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm Jr.
2nd Lt. J.J. Regan
Flt.O. A.D. Coates
Cpl. H. Hunsgerber
Cpl. G.D. Kapson
Cpl. L.J. Geers
Cpl. C.H. Cox
Cpl. A.R. Chambers
Cpl. W.O. Boyer

2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr.
2nd Lt. M. Dunigan
Flt.O. P.B. Steinmann
Cpl. R.W. Carr
Cpl. B.D. DeLong
Pfc. L.O. Geiger
T/Sgt. E.O. Miro
Cpl. J.W. Foutch
Cpl. J.J. Kozyra

2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan
2nd Lt. E.O. Reinhard
Flt.O. M. Braslawsky
Sgt. D.F. Seeley
Sgt. H.M. Maudlin
Sgt. H.E. Anderson
Sgt. M.A. Caruth
Sgt. C.B. Corwin
Sgt. V.A. Carlson

1st Lt. M.F. Maloney
2nd Lt. E.C. Magee
1st Lt. J.J. Schultz
Sgt. M.A. Elston
T/Sgt. J.O. Dodson
T/Sgt. W.D. Jones
S/Sgt. C.W. Blodgett
S/Sgt. J.D. Roberts
S/Sgt. F.S. Trendelman

December 1944

Early in the month Colonel H.W. Bowman was lost to the Headquarters of the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe as Deputy Chief of Staff to Lt. General Carl Spaatz, Commanding General. His place was taken by Lt. Colonel William T. Seawell, former Commanding Officer of the 615th Squadron and with the Group since it was activated. Up to this date he had completed 26 missions and had been decorated with the D.F.C. with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Medal with three Clusters. He had graduated from West Point in the class of 1941 and had received his wings at Ellington Field, Texas, in March, 1941. At 26 he had become the youngest Group Commander in the 8th Air Force.

Lt. Col. Edwin W. Brown, 613th Squadron Commander, was named as Air Executive and Deputy Group Commander and acted as Group Commander until Colonel Seawell's return. Major E.T. de Jonckheere was named as the

613th Squadron Commander.

The worst fog since the arrival of the 401st in the ETO enveloped Deenethorpe during December. On one occasion the base was completely shut down for a period of three days and the week after intense fog hung over the base for seven days. Returning from the mission to Gerolstein on 27th December, pilots had an extremely difficult time in finding the runway. Ground fog and ground haze were so bad that Colonel Seawell, stationed in the caravan at the end of the runway, assisted Major Baldwin, Control Tower chief, who was in the tower directing operations. It took 2½ hours to land the formation under the most difficult conditions the Group had ever known - the fact that it was done without mishap speaks for itself.

On December 19th 36 aircraft went out on a mission to Schleiden. Two Squadrons bombed Coblenz and one Squadron hit Schleiden. Deenethorpe had been closed in with a dense fog before ETA and the formation was diverted. Twenty aircraft landed at a former RAF Coastal Command Base at Predannack on the Lizard peninsula near Lands End and 12 landed at the RAF base at Tangmere, near London. It was recorded that in both places the men of the 401st received excellent treatment, despite crowded conditions --- and at Predannack a detachment of WAAF's (the women's branch of the RAF) passed the hat among themselves and the money thus raised was split among the gunners. In addition, they gladly shared candy and cigarettes with the crews of the 401st.

On December 23rd the crews took off for Deenethorpe but before they got there the fog had rolled over the Northamptonshire countryside once again and closed the base down. Nineteen aircraft landed at Deopham Green and 13 others found their way to various 3rd Bomb Division bases.

Thirty-one 401st aircraft were loaded up on 3rd Bomb Division bases and sent on a mission to Coblenz in support of the hard pressed US Army that were fighting off the German offensive at this time. Later in the day 21 401st B-17's landed at Deenethorpe plus aircraft from Glatton and Polebrook but all the other crews were diverted to Lavenham where they had to spend a cold and very crowded Christmas. It was December 26th when the 32 "missing" crews finally got back to Deenethorpe, and for some it had been an absence of a week.

December 1944

Missions

Mission 176

Target : Kassel

4 December 1944

The Group were briefed at 0430 hrs for this mission. 39 crews and the weather ship crew took part. The weather ship was away by 0624 hrs and then the take-off was delayed for one hour for the operational B-17's. Not very long after the Deenethorpe aircraft were airborne a Grafton Underwood B-17, "Clinker D", gave out a "Mayday" call and tried to come in on the long runway. The pilot then radioed that he was not going to make it and bellied in about 1,000 yards N.E. of the field. Amazingly, with a full load of gasoline and bombs, they got away without any injury to the crew. The aircraft Serial No. was 43-38750.

During this phase of activity on the western front, the 8th A.F.

was assigned the task of destroying communications and transportation centers and choke points. The target for December 4th was a bottleneck at Kassel marshalling yards. Because of undercast bombing was carried out by means of PFF. No observations were possible.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Captain C.A. Lewis of the 615th, flying with Captain R.M. Dempsey, Lt. C.W. Utter and Captain E.W. Coleman being the other leaders.

No enemy aircraft were encountered and only meagre, inaccurate flak observed along the route. Fighter support was good.

The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

42-97636	Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew. (PFF ship)
44-8258	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew. (PFF ship)
42-31730	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
42-107151	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
44-6146	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr. and crew.

Mission 177

Target : Berlin

5 December 1944

The B-17's of the 8th A.F. attacked the munitions and tank works at Berlin/Tegel on this mission. The Group was briefed at 0400 hrs and was for 39 crews, and they were all airborne by 0805 hrs.

Although the strategic target of Tegel was assigned the clouds made it necessary to bomb by PFF - with the usual unobserved results. It was also a strange experience for the crews to fly over Berlin and find that the flak was meagre and inaccurate with no casualties and no battle damage as a result. Credit for this must go to some extent to the fighter escorts that day. For a loss of 17 of their own number they shot down a total of 91 German fighters with 7 probables and 28 damaged.

Captain D.A. Currie, who completed a second tour for a total of 40 missions, led the 94th "B" Group with Lt. R.M. Fowler and Major J.H. Havey the other leaders.

The ten 615th crews flying the mission were:-

44-3258	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew. (PFF ship)
43-38425	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38738	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
44-6588	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr. and crew.
42-102393	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.

Mission 178

Target : Merseburg

6 December 1944

The B-17's of the Mighty Eighth went after the German oil industry on this Wednesday morning, and the 401st Bomb Group put in a maximum

effort with 51 crews being briefed at 0330 hrs that day. The 51 aircraft were to form a Group plus 12 aircraft screening force. The Lead and High Squadrons carried 20 x 250 lb G.P.'s, while the Low Squadron carried 38 x 120 lb "Frag's". The Screening Force carried 50 boxes of "chaff" at 90 lbs each and IY-X, Serial No. 42-31485 ("Old Ironsides") carried bombs with long delay fuses.

After the weather ship, IW-L, had taken off at 0528 hrs all times were delayed for one hour but finally, at 0840 hrs, all aircraft on the mission were airborne.

It was a return to a familiar target, the I.G. Farben Industries synthetic oil plant at Merseburg. The 401st led the 1st Bomb Division and was led by Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees, flying with 1st Lt. Tom Cushman. The 615th led the High Squadron with Captain P.E. Campbell as the Air Commander. Capt. W.S. Harb was the other leader.

Because of solid undercast the bombing was carried out by PFF methods and no observations were possible.

The Luftwaffe did not put in an appearance on this mission and the only flak encountered was in the target area, moderate at first, becoming intense and fairly accurate later causing major damage to 3 aircraft and minor damage to 28 others.

The 13 615th crews on this mission were:-

43-38779	1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-38565	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-37551	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-39012	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
42-37636	Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew.

Mission 179

Target : Frankfurt

11 December 1944

This was the day that the largest force of bombers so far despatched on one operation by the 8th Air Force attacked Germany. 1,586 four-engined bombers and 841 fighters set out to attack bridges and rail targets over western Germany, dropping almost 4,000 tons of bombs for the loss of 5 bombers and 2 fighters. The 401st helped to drop almost 1,000 tons of bombs on the Frankfurt marshalling yards by H2X, to give "Mickey" its correct name.

The Group held a briefing for 39 crews at 0445 hrs and by 0827 hrs all aircraft were airborne. IW-G landed a few minutes later with mechanical trouble and the crew changed over to IY-A (a ground spare) and set off at 0905 hrs to catch up with the 401st formation.

The 401st put up the 94th "B" Group, led by Captain A.H. Chapman with 1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell as deputy leader. The other two Squadron leaders were Lt. R.M. Fowler and Lt. M.J. Christensen. Bombing was done by

the PFF method as 10/10th's cloud still precluded visual bombing. Results were unobserved.

There was a total lack of any opposition so there was no battle damage and no casualties. But mechanical problems almost caused the loss of the mission leader, Captain A.H. Chapman. Over the target his aircraft had lost two engines and he radioed he would try to make the airfield near Brussels known then as B-60. Word came through at 1700 hrs that they had made it and all the crew were OK.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

- 43-38810 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
- 42-97664 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
- 43-38125 1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
- 43-37551 2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
- 42-38425 2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
- 42-31730 1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
- 42-97931 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.

Mission 180

Target : Merseburg

12 December 1944

This was an H2X attack on Merseburg by 337 Fortresses of the 1st Bomb Division with the 401st putting 39 aircraft as the 94th "B" Group. Briefing was at 0430 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne at 0833 hrs. The specific target for the Group was the Leuna works and, as usual, the 10/10th's cloud made it necessary to use PFF techniques and bomb in Group formation.

Again, the enemy opposition was almost nil with only two aircraft receiving minor battle damage.

Major R.J. White of the 615th led the mission flying with Capt. R.M. Dempsey. Major Havey and Capt. C.W. Keeling were the other two leaders.

The 615th crews flying on the mission were:-

Lead Crew

42-97636

- Capt. R.M. Dempsey
- Major R.J. White
- Capt. R.F. Causey
- 1st Lt. C.W. Sellers
- 1st Lt. D.E. Walters
- 1st Lt. W.W. Dolan
- T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
- T/Sgt. R.W. Rowe
- 1st Lt. E.R. Child
- S/Sgt. J.M. Gremillion

The other crews were:-

- 42-31485 1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
- 44-8371 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
- 43-38425 1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.

42-31730 1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-38810 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-102468 2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.

Mission 181

Target : Kassel

15 December 1944

This was an H2X attack by the 1st Bomb Division on a tank factory at Kassel. The 39 aircraft of the 401st was part of a force of 318 Fortresses that dropped 933 tons of bombs after the I.P. had been reached by use of Gee-H. Briefing was at 0500 hrs with all aircraft airborne by 0902 hrs - then the airfield was closed due to the weather.

The 401st flew as the 94th "C" Group with Major D.G. McCree as the leader. 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and 1st Lt. T.H. Cushman led the other two Squadrons.

There was no enemy aircraft to be seen and only meagre and inaccurate flak at the target. No casualties - no battle damage.

The nine 615th crews flying on this mission were:-

43-39941 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
43-38779 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
43-38425 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
42-97664 2nd Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38551 2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
42-31730 2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
43-38810 2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-31485 2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.

Mission 182

Target : Koblenz/Stadtkyll

19 December 1944

The 8th Air Force went after tactical targets in an attempt to hold up the German counter-offensive launched in the Ardennes three days before.

Two Gee-H ships arrived at Deenethorpe early on - just after midnight in fact - and the crews attended the briefing at 0500 hrs for 40 pilots and one weather ship crew. The weather ship, IW-L, Serial No. 42-40001 getting away by 0725 hrs with the airfield then going RED and closing down. After delays of one hour then half an hour 35 ships managed to get airborne by 1015 hrs leaving the other aircraft unable to take off. Returning from the mission, with Deenethorpe RED, the 401st ships landed at Predannick, Benson and Tangmere.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, which was led by Lt. Col. E.W. Brown flying with 1st Lt. Tom Cushman. The 615th put up the High Squadron Leader, 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth.

Because of the adverse weather, Squadrons became separated in the target area. The Lead Squadron bombed Koblenz by means of PFF. The Low Squadron dropped on the smoke of another Group at Stadtkyll, as a target of opportunity. The High Squadron bombed Schleiden by means of PFF

No flak - no enemy air opposition - no casualties - no battle damage.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-97636	1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.	
007	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.	(Grafton Underwood G-H ship)
43-38758	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	
43-38125	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.	
44-6146	2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.	
43-38779	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.	
43-38810	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.	
43-38425	2nd Lt. G.E. Cracraft and crew.	
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	

The thick fog closed the base for two days and on the third day the 401st "strays" began to find their way home. The weather ship landed from Colerne. Three ships landed from RAF Benson. Seven aircraft plus a Polebrook stray landed from RAF Tangmere. Then all other 401st ships trying to land were diverted elsewhere.

On Saturday, 23rd, the ships at RAF Predannack attempted to reach Deenethorpe but were diverted to Deopham Green, but two landed at Watton and one at Leicester East. Then ships from Polebrook, Glatton and Grafton Underwood landed at Deenethorpe. A mission was flown on the following day, Sunday, 24th December, and at the end of it the Deenethorpe Fortresses were scattered over nine different airfields.

Mission 183

Target : Koblenz

24 December 1944

The diversions of December 19th caused the aircraft to remain away from base and the 401st took off from six different bases to take part in this mission. 31 crews were briefed at 0700 hrs and at 1130 hrs 46 aircraft were airborne, including 8 from Polebrook and one from Glatton - where the extra six appear from is not clear from the Control Tower Log Books. That night three 401st B-17's managed to return to the base; the others were located at Lavenham, Knettishall, Woodbridge, Deopham Green, Great Massingham, Bruntingthorpe, Boxted and Ridgewell.

The marshalling yards and factory areas of Koblenz were attacked causing much damage, and the bombing, to everyone's surprise, was visual. The bombs of the Lead and High Squadrons, however, actually fell to the right of the assigned MPI. Strike photo's of the Low Squadron were obscured somewhat by haze and smoke, but they did disclose hits in the vicinity of the MPI.

The 401st furnished a complete 36 aircraft Group for the 94th "B" formation, led by 1st Lt. M.J. Christensen, after Major A.H. Chapman had aborted.

While on the bomb run and over the target the Group were engaged for about 27 minutes by meagre but accurate flak. This caused battle damage to 22 aircraft wounded two crew members. Several crews also observed 6 to 8 jet aircraft, identified as Me-262's, which circled the formation.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

- 43-38779 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
- 43-38077 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 42-31485 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
- 43-38810 2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
- 43-37551 1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
- 42-102468 2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
- 42-102398 1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
- 43-38125 1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
- 42-97636 1st Lt. R.O. Duckworth and crew.
- 44-8007 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew. (Grafton Underwood G-H ship)
- 44-6146 2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
- 43-38425 2nd Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
- 42-31730 1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.

Mission 184

Target : Gerolstein

27 December 1944

At 0400 hrs the airdrome was inspected and found to be very icy on the runways and perimeter tracks and they were sprayed with sand and salt. Half an hour later 39 crews were briefed and given possible diversions to A83 or A41 - airfields on the continent. After a delay of one hour all ships were airborne by 0920 hrs .

The target was an important, even if small rail center for communication and transport, carrying traffic to the front line and was designated as the primary target on this mission. Bombing was by visual means, strike photo's disclosing the majority of strikes of the Lead and Low Squadrons in the immediate vicinity of the MPI, with the MPI covered. The High Squadron bombs were observed to be short of the MPI.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group of three 12 aircraft Squadrons led by Major A.H. Chapman, flying with Captain J. Mercer. Capt. Coleman and Lt. Christensen were the other two leaders.

The lack of enemy air opposition was noted but meagre, accurate flak was met at one spot causing major battle damage to one aircraft and minor damage to 9 others.

The nine 615th crews on the trip to Gerolstein were:-

- 43-38565 1st Lt. K.M. Spansel and crew.
- 43-38125 2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
- 43-38779 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
- 42-31485 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
- 42-102468 2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
- 43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
- 42-97664 2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
- 43-38810 2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
- 42-97869 2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 185

Target : Rheinbach

28 December 1944

39 operational crews plus one weather ship crew were briefed at 0630 hrs for an attack on the marshalling yards at Rheinbach, one of many such targets attacked by the 8th Air Force in western Germany on this mission. The other targets were rail and rod bridges.

A Gee-H equipped aircraft went along on the mission and it was used when the cloud cover over the target was found to be 10/10th's. Several

G-H fixes indicated that the bombing should have been in the right place.

This was another "Milk Run" for the Group, and no enemy opposition was encountered and all aircraft returned safely to Deenethorpe.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Captain C.A. Lewis flying with Captain P.E. Campbell of the 615th Squadron. The other two Squadron Leaders were Captain R.L. Stelzer and Captain E.W. Mercer.

The nine 615th crews flying this mission were:-

Lead Crew

42-97636

Capt. P.E. Campbell
Capt. C.A. Lewis
1st Lt. R.F. Whitney
Capt. R.F. Causey
1st Lt. D.E. Walters
Capt. H.S. Arnold
T/Sgt. M.L. Roberts
T/Sgt. C.W. Beeson
1st Lt. R.B. Morrow
S/Sgt. D.A. Jaranson

Other crews:-

44-8007 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew. (Grafton Underwood G-H ship)
43-38779 1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
43-38077 1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
43-38125 1st Lt. K.M. Spansel and crew.
43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
42-31730 2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-97869 2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr. and crew.

Mission 186

Target : Bingen

29 December 1944

The missions of the 8th Air Force were still concerned with the attempts to cut off supplies to the Wehrmacht and its offensive in the Ardennes, and so it was with the 401st's mission on this Friday morning.

The briefing took place at 0415 hrs and was for 39 operational crews and the weather ship crew. The G-H ship from Grafton Underwood, Serial No. 44-8007, and coded "Splashboard - Z", landed to take part in the mission at 0451 hrs. The weather ship was IW-L and it got away at 0814 hrs, with all operational ships except one becoming airborne by 0956 hrs. IW-B had blew a tire so the crew did a quick change to IN-K and were away at 1001 hrs.

The 401st put up the aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group, led by Major E.T. de Jonckheere as Air Commander with Lt. H.E. Haskey and Lt. J.J. Brown as the other two leaders.

Bombing was visual with the High Squadron putting 98% of the bombs within 1,000 feet of the MPI. The Lead Squadron missed the MPI by more than 2,000 feet and the Low Squadron missed the MPI by 4,000 feet.

Again the aircraft of the 401st returned home without making

contact with the Luftwaffe although meagre to moderate flak caused battle to 27 aircraft, one sustaining major damage.

The nine 615th crews flying the mission were:-

42-31983	1st Lt. K.M. Spansel and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 187

Target : Kaiserslautern

30 December 1944

The G-H aircraft for this mission came in from Molesworth and found that all the runway lights were out, and landed with great difficulty with the "Hi Light" only. 39 crews plus the weather ship crew were briefed at 0430 hrs, the weather ship becoming airborne at 0644 hrs. Take-off was then delayed for one hour but all operational ships were airborne by 1010 hrs.

The target, the marshalling yards at Kaiserslautern, was a tactical target and the 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group with the G-H aircraft along in case it was required. It was. Because of solid undercast the Group bombed by the G-H method in Group formation with unobserved results.

There was no opposition by the Luftwaffe or by flak and all aircraft returned to Deenethorpe safely. The mission leader was Captain D.A. Currie with 1st Lt. G.S. Schaunaman and 1st Lt. H.E. Haskett leading the other two Squadrons.

The ten crews from the 615th Squadron were as follows:-

42-97638	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-38941	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.	
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.	
43-38779	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.	
42-102468	1st Lt. K.M. Spansel and crew.	
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	
43-38758	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.	
42-31983	1st Lt. G.E. Cracraft and crew.	
42-31072	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grim and crew.	

Mission 188

Target : Krefeld

31 December 1944

The G-H ship for the day's mission, with the unlikely code name of "Whipecream - Y", flew in from Molesworth at 0357 hrs, about an hour before the briefing for 39 crews. Take-off began at 0800 hrs and by 0838 hrs all 39 aircraft were airborne and on their way to the asseby point.

Major A.H. Chapman led the 94th "A" Group with Capt. Coleman and Capt. J.G. Goodman the other two Squadron leaders. The 401st were on a tactical mission, bombing the marshalling yards at Krefeld. The clouds didn't completely obscure the target but it was not clear enough for visual bombing and the G-H aircraft took over. Unfortunately, from the bomb strike

photographs, it was obvious that the Group had missed badly with no hits anywhere near the assigned target.

The generally meagre and inaccurate flak was the only form of the enemy's defences and there was no casualties, no battle damage and all aircraft returned safely.

The nine 615th crews flying this mission were:-

43-38779	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
43-38125	1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
44-6313	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.

The following crews joined the Squadron in December 1944:-

1st Lt. K.M. Spansel	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf
2nd Lt. E.C. McGee	2nd Lt. B.L. Cosden
2nd Lt. E.P. Gross	Flt.O. D.L. Patrick
Sgt. C. Heaton	2nd Lt. G. Hashimoto
Sgt. L.J. Piccirillo	Sgt. J.B. Douglas
T/Sgt. M. Luchfield	Sgt. E.W. Palmer
Sgt. A.E. Wagner	Sgt. R.O. Banning
Sgt. R.E. Baker	Sgt. J.T. Bolen
Sgt. A. Bache	Sgt. P.L. Sparkman

January 1945

January, 1945, marked the completion of 200 missions by the 401st Bombardment Group (H) -- 200 trips over Germany and Occupied Europe that hammered German objectives ranging from the Western Front to Central Europe, war plants, marshalling yards, airfields, oil refineries military installations and troop positions.

The 200th mission was to Cologne on 28th January, 1945 and was led by Major William C Garland, Captain Robert L. Stelzer and 1st Lt. George S. Schaunaman. It was an epoch making event in the brilliant history of the Group and it marked the completion of 200 missions in 14 months and two days of operations. This was not a record but few bombardment Groups in the ETO had surpassed it.

January, 1945 saw another slashed when the 401st completed 30 consecutive missions without the loss of a single crew. This was a new record for the 1st Air Division at that time and, it was also believed, a new record for the 8th Air Force. In the course of 200 missions the 401st had hit Berlin and the Berlin area 17 times, and made more than than 20 trips to the Pas de Calais rocket coast and had been over most of the principle cities of the German Reich and Occupied Europe.

January 1945

Missions

Mission 189

Target : Kassel

1 January 1945

January 1st saw the Group flying its six consecutive mission, with 38 crews being briefed at 0450 hrs and all operational aircraft being airborne by 0834 hrs.

The 401st flew as the 94th "C" Group with Major R.J. White as the Air Commander. Capt. E.W. Mercer and Capt. E.W. Coleman were the other two leaders. The High and Low Squadrons bombed Kassel by PFF, the secondary target, the primary, the oil storage dumps at Derben being obscured by cloud. When a break in the cloud showed the MPI the Lead Squadron bombardier took over to make a visual assist run but the bomb release line had been passed. The Lead Squadron then proceeded to bomb the last resot target at Hademar. Breaks in the clouds enabled crews to observe strikes within the city area of both targets.

Flak was observed and encountered at four different places with moderate and fairly accurate flak at Kassel causing the most damage. Three of the crew members were wounded and 24 aircraft receiving battle damage. Capt. E.W. Coleman, pilot of IN-C, Serial No. 44-6454, was wounded in the leg by flak over the target and landed in Belgium.

The ten 615th crews on this mission were:-

42-97636	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
44-8033	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. K.M. Spansel and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. G.W. Sombart and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38125	1st Lt. L.E. Cooper and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38758	2nd Lt. R.B. Jones and crew.

Mission 190

Target : Hermulheim

3 January 1945

The whole of the 8th Air Force concentrated on the rail and communication centers throughout western Germany on this mission with over 1,100 four-engined bombers attacking. The G-H ship for the mission landed from Kimbolton just after midnight. It was coded "Havant-S".

Briefing for 39 operational crews and one weather ship crew was at 0430 hrs with Captain C.A. Lewis taking off in the weather ship at 0621 hrs. The weather ship was IW-L, Serial No. 42-40001.

The 401st furnished the aircraft for the 94th "A" Group with Major D.G. McCree as the Air Commander and Capt. R.M. Fowler and Capt. E.W. Mercer as the other two Squadron Leaders. Due to clouds G-H bombing became necessary and no results were observed. The three Squadrons bombed in the Group formation on the G-H aircraft.

The Luftwaffe was again absent and meagre but inaccurate flak was met in the Cologne area. It caused no damage to the aircraft or the crews.

The ten crews flying the mission were:-

43-38125	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38941	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
42-102398	2nd Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 191

Target : Koblenz

5 January 1945

The Group used a G-H aircraft from Grafton Underwood for this mission and it arrived about 2½ hours before the briefing. 50 crews were briefed at 0500 hrs, including 12 crews that were to act as a screening force. The screening force was under the command of Capt. E.W. Mercer.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group under the command of Capt. J.R. Locher flying with Capt. Tom Cushman. Capt. R.W. Fowler and Lt. R.S. Hayes were the other two leaders.

The primary target was a German fighter landing ground at Eudenbach, Germany, which was giving front line support to the German Army. The marshalling yards were the secondary target and were at Koblenz. The G-H aircraft was along in case it became necessary to bomb the secondary, and, as the landing ground was obscured by cloud a G-H run was started on Koblenz. The G-H failed on the run in and the Group went on to bomb by PFF.

Two Me-410's were observed near the formation and actually made a pass from a distance but caused no damage. This was the first encounter the 401st had experienced with the Luftwaffe for quite a while. Flak was sighted at three places but proved to be inaccurate at two of them. The other one was at the front line area and eight aircraft sustained minor battle damage and one major battle damage. Lt. R.S. Jones of the 615th was forced to land in Belgium and refuel, returning to Deenethorpe late that night. Lt. F.M. Garton, a 613th Squadron pilot, was forced to land in France where his badly damaged aircraft, 43-38160, was abandoned.

The eleven crews of the 615th flying this mission were:-

43-38779	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
42-102468	2nd Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38941	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
44-8371	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.
43-38753	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.

Mission 192

Target : Kempernich

6 January 1945

The briefing for this attack on the communications center at Kempernich was conducted for 39 crews at 0430 hrs. All aircraft except IN-B were

airborne by 0847 hrs. The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group under the command of Major D.E. Silver. Captain P.E. Campbell and 1st Lt. T.J. Harlan were the other Squadron Leaders.

A G-H type aircraft was included with the formation and because of solid overcast at the target it became necessary to bomb by this method. The three Squadrons bombed in Group formation with no observations possible due to the cloud.

Again no sign of the Luftwaffe and the only German aircraft destroyed by the escorting fighters were on the ground. There was no battle damage, no casualties and all aircraft returned to Deenethorpe safely.

The ten 615th crews flying this mission were:-

43-38646	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-97636	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
42-39012	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
42-39993	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-102393	1st Lt. M.F. Maloney and crew.

Mission 193

Target : Bitburg

7 January 1945

This was an attack on the communications center at Bitburg with the briefing for 39 crews at 0500 hrs. All aircraft were away by 0921 hrs after four crews had been forced to change to ground spares by mechanical faults. In the case of the 615th Squadron IY-A was replaced by IY-P.

The 401st flew as the 94th "C" Group with Major C.A. Lewis as the Air Commander; the other leaders were Lt. J.J. Brown and Capt. R.M. Fowler. As there was no G-H aircraft with the 401st Group, Major Lewis instructed the formation to bomb on the smoke markers of the two preceding Groups. However, conditions were such that the 401st Group Navigator, Captain R.F. Causey, of the 615th Squadron, was able to set up and accomplish a bombing run using only his Gee Box. From later photo's it was highly successful.

This was another mission without opposition of any kind and all aircraft and crews returned safely to Deenethorpe.

The 645th put up the following crews:-

<u>Lead Crew</u>	42-97636	
		Capt. R.M. Dempsey
		Major C.A. Lewis
		Capt. C.W. Sellers
		Capt. W.W. Dolan
		Capt. R.F. Causey
		1st Lt. D.E. Walters
		T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
		T/Sgt. R.W. Rowe
		1st Lt. R.J. Callahan
		S/Sgt. G.T. Kenna

Other crews:-

43-38779	1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
44-8449	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38758	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 194

Target : Euskirchen

10 January 1945

The field was almost snowed in by Thursday, 9th January but by working all through the night the Utilities managed to keep the runway clear for the mission to the German airbase at Euskirchen/Odendorf. The briefing was at 0600 hrs and 38 crews plus one weather ship crew attended. The Gee-H aircraft took off independently from Grafton Underwood to join up with the 401st at the assembly point.

The 401st put up the 94th "A" Group with Major Jere Maupin as the Group Leader. The Lead was taken over by Lt. Louis Lawrence when Major J. Maupin was forced to abort from the mission. The other two leaders were Capt. S.J. Lozinski and Lt. J.J. Brown.

The weather as usual caused lots of trouble but in the end the Group managed to bomb on Gee-H although one of the Squadrons bombed with another outfit. The crews were able to observe some strikes on the target through breaks in the clouds but no plotting of the bomb strikes was possible.

Some meagre but inaccurate flak was met on this mission and two aircraft returned with minor battle damage. One 614th aircraft, Serial No. 42-102669, piloted by Lt. R.B. Thompson, lost two engines over the target and made a forced landing at Grimbergen, Belgium.

The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

43-38779	1st Lt. W.F. Grimm and crew.
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
42-31485	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38330	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
44-8371	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 195

Target : Maximiliansau

13 January 1945

The 401st were briefed to attack the Rhine rail bridge at Maximiliansau on Saturday 13th January. The briefing for the 38 crews taking part in this mission was at 0530 hrs with the Gee-H aircraft again taking off to join the assembly from Grafton Underwood. The aircraft carried six 1,000 pounder bombs each plus 2,500 gallons of gas.

The Group put up the 94th "B" Group with Capt. R.L. Stelzer, Capt. T.J. Harlan and Capt. P.E. Campbell as the three Squadron Leaders. The bombing was visual with excellent results and the Squadrons led by Capt. Campbell and Capt. Harlan were commended for their job by Col. E.A. Romig, Commanding Officer of the 94th Combat Wing. There was no enemy air opposition but the flak was intense. Lt. Louis Lawrence, the pilot who had so ably taken over the lead of the Group when Major J. Maupin had been forced to abort on 10th January, was struck in the head and fatally wounded. His crew landed in France where he was taken to hospital. He died that night. Two others were seriously wounded and one lightly wounded. Two aircraft received major flak damage and ten minor flak damage.

One aircraft only landed back at Deenethorpe that night, not having received the radio message to divert to RAF Woodbridge. At 2000 hrs the Control Tower still had'nt located four outstanding aircraft, including one from the 615th Squadron whose pilot was Captain P.E. Campbell.

The 615th Squadron put up the following ten crews:-

43-38425	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-31730	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
42-97636	Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 196

Target : Cologne

14 January 1945

The 1st Air Division went after the road bridges crossing the River Rhine while the other two Divisions went after the oil refineries in Central Germany. The specific target for the 401st was the Deutz suspension bridge across the Rhine in the center of Cologne. Bridges are notoriously difficult targets to hit from the air - this one was still standing after the mission.

15 crews were briefed at 0600 hrs - these being the only crews on the base, all others being diverted to other airfields from the previous day's mission. 12 flew as the High Squadron of the 94th "B" Composite Wing and three flew with the 351st B.G. (Polebrook). All aircraft were airborne by 0940 hrs.

Meagre to moderate flak, which was accurate, was met at the front lines both going out and returning and fairly accurate meagre to moderate flak at the target completed the German opposition. Seven aircraft received minor flak damage.

Only two 615th crews flew on this mission and were:-

43-38779	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.

Mission 197

Target : Paderborn

17 January 1945

The 401st was part of a force of almost 400 B-17's that dropped 1,154 tons of bombs on the marshalling yards at Paderborn. The primary

had been Altenberken but solid undercast had been met at the target so the Group went in to bomb the secondary by Gee-H. Unfortunately the Gee-H had a malfunction so the PFF was used to bomb a railway workshop and main line station. No observations were possible.

The was no flak and no fighters - another "Milk Run" for the crews.

39 crews were briefed at 0600 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 1020 hrs. Each B-17 carried six 1,000 pound bombs and 2,600 gallons of gas. The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group with Major R.J. White as the Air Commander. Lt. J.J. Brown and Lt. W.R. Jennings were the other two Squadron leaders.

The ten crews from the Squadron were:-

<u>Lead Crew</u>	44-8371 (PFF)	
		Capt. R.M. Dempsey
		Major R.J. White
		1st Lt. D.E. Walters
		Capt. R.F. Causey
		Capt. C.W. Sellers
		Capt. W.W. Dolan
		T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
		T/Sgt. C.W. Beeson
		2nd Lt. J.H. Gantry
		S/Sgt. C.H. Seaton

The other crews were:-

43-39125	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.	(G-H aircraft)
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
42-31891	1st Lt. J. Udy and crew.	
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.	
43-37551	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.	
42-97869	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.	
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.	
43-38810	2nd Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.	
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	

Mission 198

Target : Aschaffenburg

21 January 1945

The bad weather held up operations for three days and on the 21st January the Group was assigned a tank park at Aschaffenburg as the primary target with the marshalling yards in the same town if the weather demanded PFF bombing. It did! The briefing for the mission commenced at 0400 hrs and was attended by 39 crews, three of them spares. Take-off must have been very difficult because with the first aircraft away by 0733 hrs it was another one hour and twenty minutes before the last one was airborne.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group with Major D.G. McCree as the Air Commander. Lt. H.E. Haskett and Lt. J.J. Brown were the other leaders. The target was 10/10th's undercast necessitating PFF bombing and it was carried out in Group formation. Nothing could be seen through the cloud cover so no observations were made.

No enemy fighters and no flak was again the story for this mission and was obviously one to put into the "Milk Run" category.

The 615th put up the following ten crews:-

43-38077	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
42-97664	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
42-97869	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
44-6146	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38125	2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.

Mission 199

Target : Sterkrade

22 January 1945

The 1st Air Division went out on it's own on this Monday morning to attack visually the synthetic oil plant at Sterkrade, and the 401st was part of the force of 167 B-17's that dropped 402 tons of bombs on it.

Just after midnight two Gee-H aircraft landed from Grafton Underwood to lead the mission, they were "Splashboard -Z" Serial No. 007 and "Clinker-Y", Serial No. 008. Briefing took place at 0630 hrs and was attended by 26 crews. The weather ship lifted off at 0715 hrs with the comment from the control tower that "runway No. 23 is not too bad as far as slipping is concerned". Some delays followed but the 401st aircraft began to take off at 1000 hrs.

At 1111 hrs Lt. R.M. Deen radioed that his No. 1 engine had a runaway prop and his No. 2 engine was feathered. Then, at 1150 hrs, RAF Saltby advised Deenethorpe that IY-D, Serial No. 43-38125, had crashed 3 miles SE of their base. It was Lt. Deen's aircraft, that, with a full load of gas and bombs, had ran down into a railway cutting, tore up the steel railway lines, ran up the banking on the other side and finished up a twisted mass of wreckage - amazingly the aircraft did not burn and the bombs did not explode. Three crew members were seriously injured, but the fact that anyone could have survived this crash was truly incredible.

The 401st furnished two Squadrons for the 94th "A" Group with Major E.T. de Jonckheere as Air Commander and Lt. R.S. Hayes as the other Squadron Commander. The Lead Squadron carried out visual bombing with excellent results. However, the Low Squadron wasn't so fortunate when a small cloud drifted over the target and obscured their sighting angle. They bombed by Gee-H with the bombardier getting one visual check to help correct the bomb run. Their results were scattered but there was some hits in the assigned area.

Moderate to intense and accurate flak met the formation in the target area and caused damage to 20 aircraft, one receiving major damage. All aircraft returned safely to Deenethorpe with no casualties among the crews.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

43-38125	2nd Lt. R.M. Deen and crew. Crashed after take-off.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.

Mission 200

Target : Cologne

28 January 1945

The assigned target for the 1st Air Division on this first day of the improved weather conditions was Cologne. There were two targets, the Gremberg marshalling yards in the SE section of the city and the Hohenzollern bridge. The 401st were part of the force attacking the marshalling yards, with 39 crews being briefed at 0500 hrs. One formation monitor and one observer crew also attended the briefing.

The Group furnished the 94th "B" Group formation with Major W. C. Garland as the Air Commander with Capt. R.L. Stelzer and Capt. G.J. Schaunaman as the other two Squadron leaders. Bombing was by PFF with a visual assist and results were good with hits seen in and around the marshalling yards.

There was very little flak at the target. It was meagre but fair to good for accuracy and two aircraft received major battle damage and twelve received minor battle damage.

A big party was thrown at the base that evening to celebrate the Group's 200th mission. Among the guests were Lt. General James Doolittle, Brig. General Howard Turner and Colonel E.W. Romig.

The nine 615th Squadron crews on this historic mission were:-

43-38779	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.
42-107113	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
44-6148	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.

Mission 201

Target : Bad Kreuznach

29 January 1945

The Gee-H aircraft for the mission, "Clinker Z", landed from nearby Glatton at 0405 hrs. The crews of 39 operational aircraft, plus one weather ship and one monitor ship were briefed at 0430 hrs with the weather ship, IN-S, becoming airborne at 0617 hrs. By 0859 hrs the last two stragglers were off to catch up with the long gone Group.

During the night Deenethorpe had some visitors in the form of 16 "Halifax" aircraft of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The crews were billeted in the 615th Squadron area.

The aircraft of the 401st formed the 94th "A" Group with Lt. Col. B.K. Voohees as the Air Commander. Lt. J.J. Brown and Major E.T. de Jonckheere were the other two Squadron Commanders.

The primary target was found to be completely covered by 10/10th's clouds so a Gee-H run was started on the secondary target, but this failed so a PFF run was attempted. In fact this was started too late and the Mickey operator did not have time to get the target in his scope in time so the Group salvoed on Bad Kreuznach.

No fighters or flak were encountered and all aircraft returned to base safely. The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

44-8653	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.

42-97869 2nd Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
 43-38758 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.
 42-107113 1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
 42-31983 1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
 43-37551 1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
 43-38779 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
 42-102468 2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.

Lead Crew 44-8027 Gee-H aircraft

Capt. R.M. Dempsey
 Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees
 2nd Lt. Galmitz of 544th Sqdn., 384th B.G.
 Capt. C.W. Sellers
 1st Lt. D.E. Walters
 Capt. W.W. Dolan
 T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
 T/Sgt. C.W. Beeson
 2nd Lt. R.J. Callahan
 S/Sgt. C.H. Seaton

The following new crews joined the 615th Squadron in January 1945:-

2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett	2nd Lt. R.J. Callahan
2nd Lt. J.G. Stevenson	2nd Lt. B.L. Cosden
2nd Lt. C.W. Hamilton	2nd Lt. H.T. Connell
Sgt. C.P. Ely	S/Sgt. C.C. Peltz
Pfc. B.R. Hanes	S/Sgt. B.B. Weinstein
Pfc. J.H. Henley	T/Sgt. M. Luchfeld
Sgt. R.A. Spoor	Sgt. R.D. Banning
Sgt. O.H. Joyner	S/Sgt. E.F. Swatski
Sgt. F.W. Hartswick	S/Sgt. D.R. Dunn
2nd Lt. R.M. Deen	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith
2nd Lt. W. Janeczek	2nd Lt. W.A. Miller
2nd Lt. E.P. Gross	Flt.O. L.E. Andler
Sgt. C.E. Heaton	2nd Lt. A.R. Bissella
Sgt. L.J. Piccirillo	Sgt. R.A. Herchenroether
Sgt. R.A. Haakinson	Sgt. R.J. Dilz
Sgt. A.E. Wagner	Sgt. M.J. McDow
Sgt. R.E. Baker	Sgt. R.J. Woestman
Sgt. A. Bacho	Sgt. R.E. Rechters

2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens
 2nd Lt. E.L. Wilt
 2nd Lt. R.F. Harper
 Sgt. H.D. Whitlock
 Sgt. A. Huzinec
 Sgt. J.D. Graham
 Sgt. K.B. Wisdom
 Sgt. W.J. Brennan
 Sgt. F.E. Lewelling

Revised status of 615th Squadron personnel as of 17th January 1945:-

From Missing in Action to Killed in Action

11th January 1944	-	Sgt.	N.J. Fix
29th January 1944	-	2nd Lt.	R.L. Monfort
26th March 1944	-	S/Sgt.	F.A. Rothwell
28th May 1944	-	T/Sgt.	J.D. Agee
28th May 1944	-	S/Sgt.	L.R. Cooper
11th September 1944	-	S/Sgt.	T.H. Schapport

Promotions

From Captain to Major:-

Captain C.A. Lewis

From 1st Lt. to Captain:-

1st Lt. C.W. Stegemann

1st Lt. C.C. Chaffey

From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.:-

2nd Lt. R.M. Deen

2nd Lt. R.S. Jones Jr.

2nd Lt. J.B. Miley

February 1945

A party for all Enlisted Men and Officers of the Station in celebration of the completion of the Group's 200 missions marked the opening of February. Heading the list of dignitaries present for the occasion was Lt. General James H. Doolittle, Commanding General of the 8th Air Force, his first visit to Deenethorpe. With him was Brig. General Howard M. Turner, C.O. of 1st Air Division. Also present were Colonel E.A. Romig, C.O. of the 94th Combat Wing, Colonel H.E. Rogner, former Air Executive of the 401st, then C.O. of the 457th Bomb Group, and a number of other Group, Wing and Division Officers.

Seventeen missions were run during the month contrasting with ten operations in February, 1944. Several of the missions were in direct support of the powerful Russian drive on Berlin and among the targets were Dresden and Chemnitz. The mission to Gelsenkirchen on February 16th, which appeared at briefing as a short "Milk Run", turned out to be a rough one. Flak was intense at the target, and one of the lead aircraft, piloted by Captain S.J. Lozinski, a veteran of the Squadron and recently returned to Deenethorpe from leave in the USA, received a direct hit and blew up over the target. Another ship, piloted by 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen of the 615th was so badly damaged by flak the crew bailed out over enemy occupied Holland. A third aircraft, piloted by Lt. J.N. Donaldson, left the formation and was not seen again. Another aircraft, piloted by 1st Lt. G.W. McKay of the 615th had its controls shot away. The crew put it on auto-pilot and bailed out over England, the aircraft, IY-O, crashing at Bardney, Lincs.

Among the crew of Captain Lozinski's aircraft was a newcomer to the Group, on his second mission. Major Melvin C. Pfund, riding as co-pilot.

with the intent to better the training and operational efficiency of the 401st Bomb Group, a relatively new system was installed on the last day of the month. This was the designation of one squadron only to carry out the training and operational use of the lead crews and aircraft.

February 1945

Missions

Mission 202

Target : Ludwigshaven

1 February 1945

The briefing at 0515 hrs was for 40 crews, 39 operational and one observer crew and the first of these was airborne by 0830 hrs. About ten minutes later Lt. F.H. Babcock in IW-X went off Runway 23 when about one third of the way down, crossed the perimeter track and came to a stop beyond it. The aircraft was slightly damaged and the crew changed over to IW-D and took off about an hour after the accident.

This was a Micro-H mission to the marshalling yards at Ludwigs-haven and was of great tactical importance. It was used as a means of "Funneling" the German Army to the Western Front. The Lead and Low Squadrons bombed the primary with no observations of results possible, nor were strike photo's available due to a malfunction in the bomb release mechanism. The High Squadron was unable to drop with the Lead and proceeded to Pforzheim, a twin-line marshalling yard between Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, an assigned last resort target. Bombing was by PFF techniques. No observations or strike photo's.

The 401st B.G. furnished 36 aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group, led by Major J.W. Maupin flying the first mission of his second tour, the other leaders were Lt. M.J. Kochel and Capt T.R. Cushman.

The Luftwaffe again stayed out of the skies and the flak at the target was meagre and inaccurate causing minor flak damage to five aircraft.

The 615th put up the following ten crews:-

44-8371	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
43-38758	2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-97869	1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
42-37551	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-97664	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.

Mission 203

Target : Berlin

3 February 1945

The early morning briefing for 39 operational crews and one monitor was at 0300 hrs and were all airborne, after one crew had changed from SC-D to SC-B, by 0819 hrs. Two spares and one aircraft with its No. 4 prop

feathered returned to Deenethorpe a couple of hours later, the third spare having taken the place of the aircraft with the feathered prop.

The target for this mission was the Berlin Tempelhof marshalling yards, and the 937 B-17's were the largest force of 8th Air Force aircraft to attack a single target up to that date. 2,266 tons of bombs were dropped. The 401st put up 36 aircraft flying as the 94th "B" Group, led by Captain J.F. Locher, with Lt. C.S. Schaunaman and Lt. H.E. Haskett as the other two Squadron leaders. The weather over the target was clear but the preceding eight Groups had left the target area completely covered by smoke and fire. The 401st used the RAF grid with outlying checkpoints and the Lead and Low Bombardiers accomplished excellent bombing results while the High Squadron dropped short but they were still in the immediate area of the MPI.

As usual, Berlin meant a lot of flak and the Group encountered moderate to intense amounts which were accurate. Four aircraft received major battle damage and seventeen minor battle damage with two crew members wounded. One crew, piloted by Lt. M.L. King, lost an engine over the target and reported he was going to continue eastwards and land in Russia. One of the 615th crews, piloted by Lt. C.P. Djernes, short of fuel, and with his brakes out and two of his crew wounded, landed at RAF Woodbridge.

The ten 615th crews on the mission were:-

42-107113	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.	
43-38779	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.	
43-38077	1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew.	
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.	
44-8653	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-37551	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.	
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
42-97869	1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.	
43-38425	1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.	

Mission 204

Target : Giessen/Eisfeld

6 February 1945

The 1st Air Division put up 414 Fortresses to attack an oil refinery but the clear weather expected over Germany didn't materialise and one secondary and 13 targets of opportunity were attacked instead. The other two Air Divisions also found they were unable to find their primaries.

The 401st put up 48 aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group and a Squadron of the 94th "B" Group. The "A" Group bombed Giessen and the "B" Group bombed Eisfeld. Bombing was carried out by H2X with unobserved results.

Meagre and accurate flak was met in two different places and caused minor battle damage to five aircraft. Two aircraft landed on the Continent but returned to Deenethorpe immediately. Fourteen other aircraft landed away from Deenethorpe because of the poor weather conditions they found over the base.

The 94th "A" Group was led by Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell with Capt. W.S. Harb and Lt. J.W. McGoldrick as the other two Squadron leaders. Lt. R.S. Hayes led a Squadron of twelve aircraft in the 94th "B" Group.

The eleven crews put up by the 615th were:-

Lead Crew: 44-8449 PFF & G-H aircraft.

Capt. R.M. Dempsey
Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell
1st Lt. A.C. Wilhelm
Capt. C.W. Sellers
1st Lt. D.E. Walters
Capt. W.W. Dolan
T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
T/Sgt. C.W. Beeson
1st Lt. W.M. Higgs
S/Sgt. C.H. Seaton

Other crews:

43-38758 2nd Lt. J.R. Wolf and crew.
43-38779 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
44-6146 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
43-38077 1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
44-8259 1st Lt. L.A. Turk and crew. (PFF & G-H aircraft)
43-37551 1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
42-97869 1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
43-38425 1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.

Mission 205

Target : Lutzkendorf/Eisenach 9 February 1945

39 crews were briefed at 0530 hrs and IY-C was the No. 1 aircraft in take-off position. It began to roll down Runway No. 23 at 0904 hrs, only to find that it could not get its tailwheel unlocked. It ran off the runway and blocked it, so Runway No. 28 had to be used for take-off for the rest of the Group.

The briefed target on this mission was the compression house of the synthetic oil plant located at Lutzkendorf. The target was covered by 8/10th's to 10/10th's clouds, but the Lead and Low Squadrons bombed through a break in the clouds. Strike photo's disclosed bombs of the Lead Squadron were obscured by clouds, the Low Squadron's bombs hit in the smoke of preceding Group's bombs in the area of the assigned MPI. The High Squadron was unable to pick up the target and hence made an excellent PFF run on a Last Resort target, with only partially observed results.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group, led by Major A.H. Chapman. The other Squadron leaders were Lt. J.W. McGoldrick and Lt. C.S. Schaunaman.

There was no enemy air opposition and the flak was meagre to moderate and inaccurate. Seven aircraft received minor battle damage. Aircraft IN-R, Serial No. 44-6113, piloted by Lt. R.R. Scheller force-landed on the continent and was abandoned.

The 615th put up the following nine crews:-

42-31730 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-107113 2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
44-6146 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
42-102468 1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-97869 1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-37551 1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.

43-38810 1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38758 1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.

Mission 206

Target : Dulmen

10 February 1945

The 39 crews for this operation were briefed at 0445 hrs with take-off time to begin at 0645 hrs but delay followed and it was 1037 hrs before the last B-17 became airborne.

This was a very small mission with only 164 B-17's of the 1st Air Division flying over Germany to attack a secondary target at Dulmen, the primary and visual target being covered by clouds. The secondary target was a German Air Force Depot located at Dulmen. The Lead Squadron made a strictly Micro-H run on it, with no results observed or photographed.

The 401st furnished the 94th "C" Group, led by Major D.G. McCree. The 615th put up Capt. S.J. Lozinski as the Low Squadron Leader. There was no enemy air opposition and no flak. Capt. W.S. Harb was the other leader.

The ten crews of the Squadron on this mission were:-

42-31983 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-107113 2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
42-97664 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
44-6146 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
43-38779 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.
43-38077 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
43-38758 2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
43-38810 1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38425 1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.
44-8371 Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 207

Target : Dresden

14 February 1945

Bad weather closed in over the base for the next three days and on Wednesday it cleared, allowing the 8th Air Force to despatch 1,377 four-engined aircraft to Germany. They had a long way to go on this mission so the briefing was early, taking place at 0400 hrs.

The formation of 1st Division aircraft, of which the 401st was a part, attacked Dresden, Prague, Brux and Pilsen, the Group's target being Dresden and the MPI being the small marshalling yard in the center of the city. Bombing was done by PFF techniques due to 9/10th cloud coverage. However, a break in the clouds permitted the Lead Bombardier to see rails and buildings resembling round-houses in the target area, and, synchronizing, dropped his bombs visually. Although unobserved, results were believed to have been good.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Lt. Col. E.W. Brown, flying with Captain W. Riegler. The Luftwaffe were again nowhere to be seen and the flak was meagre and inaccurate but one aircraft received major flak damage and four minor flak damage.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

42-102468 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-97664 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
43-38779 1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.

43-38077	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.	
44-8653	1st Lt. H.E. Haskett and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
42-107113	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	
43-37551	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.	
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.	

Mission 208

Target : Dresden

15 February 1945

The Group were briefed at 0400 hrs and was for 36 operational crews, 3 spare crews and one weather ship crew. The weather ship, IW-L, was away by 0440 hrs and all other ships by 0805 hrs.

The mission was a repeat of the one on the previous day, and, once again, because of cloud coverage, bombing was done by means of PFF with the same unobserved results. The 401st put up the 94th "A" Group, led by Major W.C. Garland, with Lt. J.W. McGoldrick and Capt. J.F. Goodman as the other two leaders.

There was no air opposition, no damage and no casualties.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

44-6146	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
42-31983	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38758	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.
42-107113	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
43-38779	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-97869	1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 209

Target : Gelsenkirchen

16 February 1945

The Group were briefed for an operational mission at 0700 hrs, 37 Deenethorpe crews plus one lead aircraft crew from Kimbolton taking part. Assembly was to take place over the Kingscliffe Buncher at 10,000 feet. It was a day of trouble for the 401st starting with the weather, with the ceiling down to 400 feet at take-off. The spares and the one B-17 that aborted were diverted to other fields while the formation monitor, after making several passes at the field, came in after breaking out at 125 feet.

The marshalling yards at Gelsenkirchen, of great tactical importance to the Wehrmacht, was bombed through much smoke and haze, with results poor to fair with relation to the MPI. However, much damage was done to the city.

The 401st Group furnished the 94th "B" Group, led by Major C.A. Lewis, flying with Capt. Paul E. Campbell. The High Squadron Leader was Capt. S.J. Lozinski, flying with Major M. Pfund. Their aircraft was hit by extremely accurate flak in the nose at bombs away time. The nose appeared to melt off and the aircraft peeled to the left, broke in two at the waist and the wings came off. The entire incident was witnessed with great sadness by many ships of the formation.

The aircraft piloted by 1st Lt. E.A. Hansen of the 615th Squadron went down over Holland, not far from the target. Seven chutes were

seen to come out of the aircraft. A third aircraft, piloted by Lt. Jeff N. Donaldson, was last heard from at 25,000 feet near the Zuider Zee, proceeding towards Brussels, but that was the last that was known about its fate.

Another 615th ship, IY-0, Serial No. 43-38779, received major flak damage and could only fly straight and level, and could not find a hole in the clouds. The pilot, Lt. G.W. McKay, put the aircraft on AFCE and all the crew bailed out safely. The B-17 crashed at Bardney, Lincs.

The loading list is missing for this mission and the only known 615th Squadron crews that flew this mission were:-

44-8371	Capt. S.J. Lozinski and crew.	MIA (PFF aircraft)
43-38779	1st Lt. G.W. McKay and crew.	Crew bailed out.
42-97869	1st Lt. E.A. Hansen and crew.	MIA

Mission 210

Target : Nurnburg

20 February 1945

40 crews, including one observer crew, were briefed for this mission at 0500 hrs with all aircraft airborne by 0848 hrs.

Again communications of the Wehrmacht and other German forces were the target on this mission. It had added importance because of its tactical support for the Russian Army and impeded supplies and men from being rushed to or retreating from the Eastern Front. A continuence of bad weather made PFF bombing necessary, with unobserved results, although an exceptionally good run was made. A momentary break in the clouds permitted observations of strikes in the city.

The 401st Group furnished the 94th "B" Group, led by Major J. Maupin. the 615th Squadron put up 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel as the Low Squadron Leader.

The Group found no Luftwaffe opposition and some moderate amounts of flak were experienced over the target area, but there was no battle damage and no casualties.

The 615th put up the ten following crews:-

42-102398	2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.
42-107113	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
42-102468	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
42-31891	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. R.E. Jordan and crew.
43-38541	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
42-106992	1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
43-38425	1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.
44-6146	2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.

Spot Jammers:- S/Sgt. J.S. Allaire
Sgt. H. Fritsch

Mission 211

Target : Nurnburg

21 February 1945

40 crews, including three spare and one observer crew, were briefed at 0345 hrs and all aircraft were airborne without incident at 0751 hrs.

The whole of the 8th Air Force - 1,219 four-engined bombers - attacked the marshalling yards at Nurnburg on this mission and almost 3,000 tons of high explosives fell on it. Amazingly, although 362 aircraft received battle damage, not one aircraft was lost on this mission. Seven 615th

aircraft received minor flak damage.

The heavy cloud at the target made it necessary to again use PFF techniques for bombing and each Squadron made an individual run. The concentration of smoke markers and the plotting of the scope photo's indicated that good bombing was accomplished.

The 401st put up the 94th "B" Group and was led by Major E.T. de Jonckheere, with Lt. C.S. Schaunaman and Capt. R.M. Dempsey as the other two Squadron leaders.

The ten 615th crews on this mission were:-

- 42-102947 Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.
- 43-38758 2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.
- 42-31730 Flt.O. L.L. Berneburg and crew.
- 42-107113 2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
- 43-37551 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
- 44-6146 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
- 42-102468 1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
- 43-38077 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.
- 43-38160 1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
- 43-38425 1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.

Spot Jammer :- Sgt. H. Fritsch.

Mission 212

Target : Ludwigslust

22 February 1945

The briefing for Operation CLARION was at 0445 hrs and was for 40 crews, which included the 94th Wing weather ship crew. The weather ship was airborne about two hours before the operational aircraft took off, the last ship getting away by 0755 hrs.

Operation CLARION was a major attack on German road and rail communications by almost 1,500 bombers escorted by 800 fighters. The 8th A.F. were taking advantage of the good weather and went in at low level, the 401st bombing from between 10,300 feet to 11,300 feet. The three Squadron Bombardiers hit their MPI's with a superior performance, recording an excellent result in each case. There was no flak, it appears, over any of the 1st Air Division's targets because not one of their 454 B-17's received any flak damage and only one aircraft was lost.

The 401st flew as the 94th "A" Group with Major A.H. Chapman as the Air Commander and Lt. J.W. McGoldrick and Capt. J.F. Goodman as the other two Squadron leaders.

The 615th loading list for this mission was as follows:-

- 42-97395 Flt. O. L.L. Berneburg and crew.
- 43-38810 2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
- 43-37551 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
- 44-6146 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
- 43-38425 1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
- 43-38541 1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
- 43-38077 1st Lt. C.I. Park and crew.
- 44-6132 2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
- 43-38758 2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew.

Mission 213

Target : Ottingen

23 February 1945

The second day of Operation CLARION with the 401st putting up

36 aircraft to form the 94th "C" Group. Briefing was at 0345 hrs with all aircraft airborne by 0755 hrs after about twenty minutes delay with problems with two 613th Squadron aircraft. The weather closed in during the day causing many aircraft to divert to other airfields on the continent and in England, including Lt. S.R. Smith, Lt. C.I. Park and Lt. F.I. Eglin of the 615th.

This was another low-level mission with the clear weather over the target allowing visual bombing - but it was a target of opportunity, the primary at Hamburg being under thick cloud. The three Lead Bombardiers again turned in a very commendable performance and gained good to excellent results on their aiming points.

Still no sign of the Luftwaffe which, we now know, had plenty of aircraft and pilots but no gas, the 8th Air Force having destroyed most of it and the means to produce it.

The Air Commander for this mission was the 615th' own Major R.J. White, with Lt. C.W. Utter and Lt. J.W. McGoldrick as his other Squadron Commanders. There were ten 615th crews on the mission. They were:-

<u>Lead Crew</u>	44-8653	PFF
	1st Lt. L.A. Turk	
	Major R.J. White	
	1st Lt. A.L. Cone	
	Capt. C.W. Sellers	
	1st Lt. R.W. Thorpe	
	1st Lt. M.L. Moore	
	T/Sgt. C.J. Dupuis	
	S/Sgt. E.W. Palmer	
	2nd Lt. W. Janeczek	
	S/Sgt. F.J. Osborne	

The other crews :-

43-37551	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.	
44-6146	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.	
43-38758	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-37706	1st Lt. C.I. Park and crew.	
42-31730	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
43-38810	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.	
43-38160	2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew.	
43-38425	1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.	

Mission 214

Target : Harburg

24 February 1945

The 401st took part in the 1st Air Division's attack on the two oil refineries at Hamburg, the Group's target being Harburg. The briefing for 36 crews was at 0350 hrs, the spares being provided by Polebrook. The delays put the take-off back by about two hours and at 0825 hrs the Flying Control Officer in charge made the following entry:-

0825 hrs After many flat tyres, incidents accidents etc., all operational aircraft are off except IN-K ! Thank God!

The oil refinery at Harburg was bombed by PFF. Squadrons made individual runs in good formation. Crews reported that upon leaving the target area, they observed black smoke bubbling through the clouds to approximately 12,000 feet.

No enemy aircraft were encountered but the flak, which was moderate and inaccurate, became more accurate as the Group left the area.

The 401st flew as the 94th "A" group with Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell as thr Group and Divisional Air Commander. The other leaders were Capt. W. Riegler and Capt. Hayes.

The nine 615th crews on the mission were:-

43-38941	2nd Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew.
43-38758	2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
42-107113	2nd Lt. L.J. Stephens and crew.
43-38330	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
43-38425	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
43-37551	1st Lt. C.P. Djernes and crew.
43-38637	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38077	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.
42-97780	1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.

Mission 215

Target : Munich

25 February 1945

The mission briefing was at 0330 hrs, 37 crews taking part, and the take-off was completed in the dark. The bomb load for this mission was 6 x 500 lbs RDX's plus 6 x M17 IB's with assembly at 7,500 feet over the Cottesmore Buncher.

The marshalling yards at Munich were the primary target and they were bombed visually. A lot of smoke covered the area from the bombing that was taking place. This and the camouflage obscured the target, but strike photo's revealed damage in the target area.

The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group with Major D.G. McCree as the Air Commander. Capt. R.M. Dempsey and Capt. C.W. Utter were the other Squadron Commanders.

There was no enemy air opposition but flak, which was moderate and accurate, caused minor damage to 11 aircraft.

The loading list for the Squadron was as follows:-

42-102468	2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.	
43-37790	1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.	
43-38077	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	
42-31072	1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.	
42-107113	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
43-37551	1st Lt. A.R. Grimm and crew.	
43-38160	1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.	
43-38425	1st Lt. R.J. Callahan and crew.	
44-8707	Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.	(PFF & G-H aircraft)

Spot Jammers:- S/Sgt. P.L. Sparkman both with 613th Squadron.
S/Sgt. J.S. Allaire

Mission 216

Target : Berlin

26 February 1945

The 20 aircraft briefed at 0500 hrs were to fly as a screening force and to supply the spares for Polebrook and Glatton. All 20 aircraft were airborne by 0841 hrs with 12 of them flying as the 94th "C" Group, carrying 36,000 units of chaff, which were dropped as briefed.

The 615th put up the following aircraft and crews:-

42-107113 2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.
42-102468 Flt. O. L.L. Berneburg and crew.
43-37551 1st Lt. F.N. Maire and crew.
44-6146 1st Lt. G.K. Cracraft and crew.
43-38160 1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 217

Target : Leipzig

27 February 1945

For the second consecutive day the 401st experienced a partial stand-down with only 12 aircraft being briefed, and five of these were spares for Polebrook and Glatton that were not required. Briefing was at 0700 hrs with all 20 aircraft being airborne by 1032 hrs.

The Group furnished 6 aircraft to comprise the Low Section of the High Squadron of the 94th "B" Group, led by Lt. R.H. Steels, to bomb the marshalling yards at Leipzig. Bomb were dropped on the Lead aircraft of the 351st Group. The other aircraft flew with the 94th "A" Group.

There was no air opposition and the flak at Halle and at the target was meagre and inaccurate.

The 615th put up the following three crews:-

42-107113 2nd Lt. J.P. Moran and crew.
42-102468 Flt. O. L.L. Berneburg and crew.
44-6146 1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.

Mission 218

Target : Soest

28 February 1945

Two G-H aircraft landed from Molesworth just after midnight and took part in the briefing, with 37 other crews, at 0730 hrs. All aircraft were airborne by 1131 hrs to attack the marshalling yards at Soest. The 401st flew as the 94th "B" Group, led by Captain J.R. Locher with Lt. C. S. Schaubman and Capt. P.E. Campbell as the other two Squadron Commanders.

10/10th's clouds were found at the target so a G-H attack was carried out as planned. The target was considered to be of great importance to the Wehrmacht. No results were observed but Gee fixes taken by most navigators indicated that the bombing was poor.

Crews agreed that this was a real "Milk Run" with no enemy fighters and no flak, in fact only one aircraft was lost on this mission out of the 1,072 taking part; not one received battle damage of any kind.

The following 615th crews were on this mission:-

<u>Lead Crew</u>	'256 G-H (Molesworth)
	1st Lt. J.M. McGoldrick
	Capt. J.R. Locher
	1st Lt. L.G. Lewis
	2nd Lt. A. Gold
	1st Lt. G.E. Peterson
	1st Lt. G.W. Peek
	T/Sgt. G.L. Beck
	T/Sgt. J.R. Sheldon
	1st Lt. H.A. Miller
	S/Sgt. J.R. Lindsay

The other crews were:-

44-8648 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew. (PFF aircraft)
'537 Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew. (Molesworth G-H aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.
44-8707 1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew. (PFF & G-H aircraft)

The following new crews joined the 615th Squadron in February:-

1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart
2nd Lt. J.R. Althorff	2nd Lt. R.W. Taylor
2nd Lt. W.R. Brazzil	2nd Lt. M.H. Andrews
1st Lt. J.H. Barnes	1st Lt. R.W. Rowe
1st Lt. A. Folkerts	S/Sgt. H. Reiss
T/Sgt. G.J. Feigenbaum	S/Sgt. R.E. Raney
T/Sgt. W.R. Herndon	Sgt. V. Knight
S/Sgt. B.G. Wilson	Sgt. E.M. Pickering
S/Sgt. R.W. Watson	Sgt. M.M. Sumkler

Promotions

1st Lt. to Captain:-

1st Lt. H.E. Hasket
1st Lt. C.M. Minott
1st Lt. J.W. McGoldrick
1st Lt. L.S. Rush

2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.:-

2nd Lt. R.J. Callahan
2nd Lt. J.A. Coats Jr.
2nd Lt. A.K. Wolf

March 1945

A new record in the number of missions to be run in any one month since the 401st Bomb Group began operations was established during the month of March, 1945. Twenty-two operations were completed - two on one day - and a record number of credit sorties were flown - 754, while 746 aircraft attacked targets. A total of 14,246 bombs were dropped on targets and 69,870 rounds of ammunition fired.

Another record was set when 13 consecutive missions were run the latter part of February and the first part of March. This record was established on March 4th on the mission to Schwabmuchen. Nine consecutive missions were run in February and four through the 4th of March.

For the first time since August 24th, the Group encountered enemy air opposition - this on the mission to Berlin on March 18th. Six to eight

jet propelled Me-262's attacked the Lead Squadron between the I.P. and the target, coming in through the contrails and out of clouds until within 100 yards of the 401st formation. One aircraft was lost as a result of these attacks.

Five officers were promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel during the month. They were Major Jere W. Maupin, C.O. of the 612th Squadron; Major Eric T. de Jonckheere, C.O. of the 613th Squadron; Major William C. Garland, C.O. of the 614th Squadron and Major Ralph J. White, C.O. of the 615th Squadron. Major Richard B. Engel, C.O. of the 450th Sub Depot also made Lt. Colonel rank.

Changes in the Group during the month saw Lt. Col. E.W. Brown, Air Executive, and Lt. Col. J.W. Maupin called to Washington for assignment to A.A.F. Headquarters. Lt. Col. D.E. Silver, former Group Operations Officer, was named Air Executive and Lt. Col. W.C. Garland was named Group Operations Officer. Major Alvah H. Chapman was named C.O. of the 614th Squadron to succeed Major Garland and Major Donald G. McCree was named 612th C.O. to succeed Lt. Col. Maupin. Capt. D.T. Kirkhuff was named 614th Operations Officer and Major J.B. Strauss was named 612th Operations Officer.

March 1945

Missions

Mission 219

Target : Heilbron

1 March 1945

The two Gee-H aircraft for the mission, '125 from Molesworth and '592 from Grafton Underwood, arrived some hours before the Group was briefed at 0710 hrs. 40 crews plus a weather ship crew were at the briefing and the weather ship was airborne by 0810 hrs and the aircraft used was IW-L.

Just over 1,200 8th Air Force four-engined bombers attacked the marshalling yards in central and southern Germany on this mission with the 401st putting up a 36 aircraft formation as the 94th "A" Group. The Group Leader was a former 401st'er, Colonel B.K. Voorhees, of the 94th Wing H.Q.

Due to cloud over the target instrument bombing was once again employed with no observed results. The Lead and Low Squadrons bombed individually on PFF methods and the High Squadron used the Gee-H techniques.

No enemy fighters were seen and only meagre and inaccurate flak was observed. The only losses were two B-17's that collided over Belgium.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

Lead Crew: '592 (Grafton Underwood Gee-H aircraft)

Capt. R.M. Dempsey
Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees
Capt. C.W. Sellers
Flt. O. C.W. Grisham
1st Lt. R.W. Tearpe
Capt. W.W. Dolan
T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
T/Sgt. R.R. Rowe

Lead Crew (Cont.)

1st Lt. R.J. Callahan
Sgt. J.J. Settle
2nd Lt. R. Chambers (of the 303rd B.G.)

The other crews were:-

44-8653 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew. (PFF aircraft)
43-38077 1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.
44-8825 1st Lt. J.W. McGoldrick and crew. (PFF & G-H aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.
44-6313 2nd Lt. M. Levy and crew.
43-38680 2nd Lt. C.B. Young and crew.
42-31072 1st Lt. M. Maharick and crew.
44-6588 1st Lt. H.V. Nielsen and crew.
43-38758 2nd Lt. W.G. McKenney and crew.
43-37706 Flt. O. L.L. Berneburg and crew.
44-6306 2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.
43-38458 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart Jr. and crew.
42-102947 1st Lt. R.H. Steele and crew.
43-38607 1st Lt. R.S. Jones and crew.
'871 2nd Lt. D.E. Vermeer and crew. (Aircraft not known)

Mission 220

Target : Chemnitz

2 March 1945

Briefing was early, 0300 hrs, and was for the usual 36 crews, the three spare crews and an observer crew. With one crew aborting two of the spare crews only returned to Deenethorpe about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours after the take-off time of 0707 hrs.

The primary target for the 401st Group was the oil refinery at Bohlen, near Leipzig and the usual 36 aircraft formed the 94th "C" Group. The leaders were Major C.A. Lewis, Capt. C.W. Utter and Capt. C.S. Schaudaman.

There were clouds over the primary so the "Buckeye" Scouting Force advised the formation to bomb the secondary target, which were the marshalling yards at Chemnitz, by PFF method. No observations were possible.

There were fighters and flak in the area but none hindered the Group in successfully carrying out their mission.

The four 615th crews on the mission were:-

43-38941 2nd Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.
44-8653 1st Lt. M.J. Kochei and crew. (PFF aircraft)
42-31891 1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.
44-8812 1st Lt. W.W. Jennings and crew. (PFF & G-H aircraft)

Mission 221

Target : Chemnitz

3 March 1945

Another early briefing, this time at 0300 hrs for 38 crews. The reason for it not being 39 crews - a Group plus three spares - was that a Jeep had run into the horizontal stabilizer of IW-X, leaving a 2 foot hole in it. The crew changed over to a spare.

The primary target was an oil refinery at Ruhland but the clouds again covered the target and the PFF secondary - the marshalling yards at Chemnitz - became the aiming point.

Moderate flak was met in the Frankfurt and Dresden areas causing extensive damage to 21 aircraft, 4 major and 19 minor. No aircraft were lost however.

The three 615th crews flying this mission were:-

42-97780 2nd Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew.
44-8648 1st Lt. W.W. Jennings and crew. (PFF aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.

Mission 222

Target : Schwabmunchen

4 March 1945

38 crews briefed at 0300 hrs with the assembly at 14,000 feet over a Buncher in France. The load was 6 x 500 lb G.P.'s plus 4 x M17 IB's. The two Gee-H aircraft for the mission '036 and '024, landed from Ridgewell just before 0300 hrs.

The weather ship, IY-Q, Serial No. 43-38077, took off with Major A.H. Chapman at the controls at 0445 hrs.

It was a bad morning with one aircraft going off the runway at take-off, smashing the sodium and high light and blocking the runway. A short time afterwards IW-H's No. 1 engine caught on fire and could not be extinguished, forcing the crew to bail out.

This was the twelfth consecutive mission to be run and for a change the clear weather allowed the Group to bomb the primary target visually. It was an aircraft components factory belonging to the Messerschmitt concern.

The 401st furnished the 94th "A" Group, led by Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell with Capt. R.S. Hayes and 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel the other two leaders.

The six 615th crews flying this mission were:-

Lead Crew: '036 (Gee-H aircraft from Ridgewell)
Capt. R.M. Dempsey
Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell
Capt. C.W. Sellers
1st Lt. R.F. Whitney
Capt. W.W. Dolan
T/Sgt. A.J. Virgona
T/Sgt. R.R. Rowe
1st Lt. A.F. Coulet
T/Sgt. R.T. Foreman
1st Lt. R.W. Thorpe
2nd Lt. Christopher

Other crews:-

'625 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew. (Unknown Gee-H aircraft)
'024 1st Lt. R.S. Hayes and crew. (Ridgewell Gee-H aircraft)
44-8033 1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew. (PFF aircraft)
44-8550 1st Lt. H. Tausig Jr. and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8449 1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 223

Target : Siegen

7 March 1945

Two Gee-H aircraft, '110 and '198, both from Kimbolton, landed at Deenethorpe about an hour before the briefing at 0430 hrs. 38 crews were

briefed and all aircraft were airborne except IW-Q, who had a flat tyre, by 0822 hrs. IW-Q finally getting away at 0845 hrs.

The 401st put up the 94th "B" Group, led by Lt. Col. D.E. Silver with Capt. D.V. Kirkhuff and Capt. Hayes as the other Squadron Commanders. The marshalling yards at Siegen were the secondary PFF target and they were bombed with unobserved results.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

'198	1st Lt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	(Kimbolton Gee-H aircraft)
42-31891	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	
44-8825	1st Lt. W.W. Jennings and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8708	2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8550	Capt. A.R. Seder and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 224

Target : Essen

8 March 1945

A Gee-H aircraft for the mission landed from Nuthampstead at 0328 hrs, Serial No. '214. The briefing for the 39 crews was at 0800 hrs with all operational aircraft becoming airborne by 1140 hrs.

The primary target was the oil refineries at Bottrop in the Ruhr Valley with the marshalling yards at Essen as the PFF secondary, which, in the end was bombed in Group formation by PFF. No results were observed.

The 401st put up the 94th "C" Group with Lt. Col. D.E. Silver, Capt. F.A. Kalinski and Capt. C.W. Utter as the Group and Squadron Commanders.

The flak, the only opposition, was limited to five or six bursts over the target. T/Sgt. James T. Harper, a top turret gunner, was slightly wounded.

The 615th crews were as follows:-

43-38941	2nd Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew.	
44-8033	1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
42-31891	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	
44-8648	1st Lt. W.W. Jennings and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 225

Target : Hagen

10 March 1945

Just after midnight two Gee-H aircraft landed at Deenethorpe for the day's mission to Hagen, '238 came in from Molesworth and '155 from Kimbolton. 38 crews plus one weather ship crew were briefed at 0615 hrs. Each ship carried 34 x 100 lb. G.P.'s plus 2 x M17 IB's and assembly was at 14,000 feet over the Cotesmore Buncher. Major C.A. Lewis took the weather ship off at 0816 hrs and all other aircraft were airborne by 1011 hrs.

Five minutes after taking off IY-S came back to the field with two engines out and made what the control tower called "a pretty hot landing", eventually going off the end of the runway. The crew quickly changed to the spare PFF ship, IY-N, and were airborne within twenty minutes of landing.

The 615th' C.O. led the 94th "A" Group with Capt. Goodman and Capt. Kirkhuff as the other two Squadron leaders.

The Group dropped on the marshalling yards at Hagen by Gee-H methods and no results were observed.

The five 615th crews on this mission were:-

Lead Crew: 44-8155 (Gee-H aircraft from Kimbolton)
Capt. P.E. Campbell
Major R.J. White
1st Lt. C.L. Hoag DSC
Capt. R.F. Whitney
1st Lt. W.R. Thorpe Mickey Operator
1st Lt. Baney Gee-H Operator (379th B.G.)
Capt. H.S. Arnold
T/Sgt. M.L. Roberts
T/Sgt. R.R. Rowe
2nd Lt. J.H. Gentry
Sgt. C.P. Ely

Other crews:-

43-38941 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
44-8550 1st Lt. H. Tausig and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8653 2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew. (PFF aircraft)
44-8708 1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 226

Target : Bremen

11 March 1945

40 crews, two of which were observer crews, were briefed for the mission to Bremen at 0630 hrs, with all aircraft airborne by 1057 hrs.

The submarine pens and the factories in the docks area were the primary target but the 10/10th's cloud again made it necessary to bomb by PFF. Only meagre flak was met over the target causing minor battle damage to seven aircraft.

The 401st put up the 94th "B" Group. Leaders were Major D.G. McCree, Capt. A.R. Seder and Lt. A.D. Aschenbach.

The 615th put up the following crews:-

44-8153 1st Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew (PFF aircraft)
42-102947 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
44-8033 1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew. (PFF aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.
44-8812 Capt. A.R. Seder and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 227

Target : Swinemunde

12 March 1945

38 crews, plus two spare crews for the 94th "C" Group, were briefed at 0440 hrs. Pilots were briefed for a low visibility take-off, but all were airborne by 0832 hrs in a manner that pleased the control tower personnel.

The target was the shipping facilities, docks and ships at anchor in the Swinemunde harbour. This was a very long trip because the town of Swinemunde lies on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The weather was the type the crews now considered as normal for the ETO - 10/10th's clouds - and the Group went in on a PFF run. However, being on the coast meant that a good picture and an excellent run could be made with the H2X screen and good results were reported by the subsequent Air Division plotting and evaluation reports.

The lack of flak over the target and enroute can be judged by the fact that only 10 aircraft out the the 1,355 despatched sustained battle damage.

The Mission leader for the Group was Captain F.A. Kalinski with Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and Lt. M.J. Kochel as the other two Squadron leaders.

The 615th crews flying this mission were:-

44-8550	Capt. R.M. Dempsey and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8653	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8648	1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. H. Tausig and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-6947	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	

Mission 228

Target : Lohne

14 March 1945

Two Gee-H aircraft flew into Deenethorpe for this mission. '369 from Kimbolton landed just after midnight while the second B-17, '228, which should have arrived at the same time, got itself lost for three hours. Briefing for the 38 crews took place at 0745 hrs and all aircraft were safely away by 1040 hrs. With their 2,500 gallon load of gas each B-17 carried 34 x 100 lb. G.P.'s plus 2 x M17's.

Lt. F.R. Boddin and his crew, recently transferred to the 615th Squadron, was on a practice mission that afternoon, and, while flying over the nearby base of Podington, accidentally released two of his blue bombs. The crew reported that there appeared to be no unusual damage as a result. ("no unusual damage" ?)

The 401st put up the aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group with Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere flying as the Air Commander and Lt. M.J. Kochel and Lt. R.S. Hubbell as the other two leaders.

Intense ground haze caused the three Squadrons to start their run on Gee-H technique but later the Lead Bombardiers took over and bombed visually. The Lead Squadron hit to the right and short but the other two Squadrons hit the assigned target obtaining good results.

Meagre and accurate flak hit the Group at the target, but it was the only enemy opposition encountered. Nine aircraft received minor battle damage as a result.

The loading list for this mission is missing but two 615th crews did fly as leaders. They were:-

1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.
1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew.

Mission 229

Target : Zossen (Berlin)

15 March 1945

The 1st and 2nd Air Divisions of the 8th Air Force attacked a German Army Headquarters near Berlin on this mission, with the 401st putting up 36 of the 672 four-engined bombers. Briefing for the crews on the mission was at 0636 hrs, each Fortress carrying 2,780 gallons of gas, 6 x 500 lb G.P.'s plus 4 x M17 IB's. Assembly was at 9,500 feet over the Cottessmore Buncher. There was a hold up for a while as the visibility went to almost zero but at 1040 hrs take-off began. There were still a couple of hiccups as SC-X taxied off the hardstand and IM-F blew a tyre, but, in the end they were all away and heading for Berlin, the ultimate target.

The 401st formed the 94th "B" Group, led by Major A.H. Chapman with Capt. F.E. Campbell and Capt. R.F. Hayes as the other two leaders. At the I.P. the weather was clear and a visual run was begun on the assigned MPI

but it soon became obvious that this was a mistake. There was terrific ground haze and the bombing of the previous Groups had left the area covered with intense smoke. It resulted in all three Squadrons missing their MPI's.

Some meagre and inaccurate flak was met near Stendal and that proved to be the only opposition the formation met. Seven aircraft received minor battle but none of the crew were wounded and all returned safely to Deenethorpe. Even the dreaded Berlin flak seems to have lost their keenness to do battle on this mission with only two aircraft MIA and 107 suffering minor battle damage out of the 821 over the German capital that day.

The following six crews took part in this mission:-

44-8550	Capt. A.R. Seder and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8648	Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8033	Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8757	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. H. Tausig and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-38077	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	

Mission 230

Target : Molbis

17 March 1945

The 401st were assigned, and attacked, the oil refinery at Molbis on this mission. The 36 B-17's of the Group made up the 94th "A" Group, led by Lt. Col. D.E. Silver. Capt. J.W. McGoldrick and Lt. A.D. Aschenbach were the other two Squadron leaders.

Briefing for the mission was at 0400 hrs and was attended by 38 operational crews and a weather ship crew. The weather ship was a 614th B-17 coded IW-U and was airborne at 0614 hrs, the rest of the Group getting away by 0824 hrs.

There was 10/10th's cloud over the target and the Group, using PFF, bombed by Squadrons with no observable results. Very little flak was seen and none came close enough to do any damage to the 401st aircraft.

The loading list was again missing for this mission but two of the 615th crews, those of Capt. J.W. McGoldrick and Lt. A.D. Aschenbach, led a Squadron each.

Mission 231

Target : Berlin

18 March 1945

The usual 38 crews were briefed for this mission to Berlin at 0315 hrs and formed the 94th "C" Group. The leader was Lt. Col. W.C. Garland with Capt. J.W. McGoldrick and Capt. W.S. Harb as the other two Squadron leaders and all aircraft were on their way to "Big B" by 0747 hrs. Each B-17 carried 12 x 100 lb G.P.'s plus 8 x M17 IB's (incendiary bombs) and got into Group formation at 10,500 feet over the Cottesmore Buncher.

Over Berlin the formation of B-17's and B-24's were met by accurate flak and jet aircraft - a little different from the welcome they had received just three days previously. Of the 435 B-17's of the 1st Air Division over the target that day 5 were shot down, 8 received major battle-damage and 268 minor damage. The cost to the 401st was the loss of 2nd Lt. D. E. Vermeer, hit by jets near the I.P., two aircraft with major battle damage and 15 with minor battle damage. One returning crewman also suffered wounds.

The bombing run proved to be one of the most difficult experienced by the Lead Bombardiers due to the 3/10th's to 5/10th's clouds and heavy contrails and smoke obscuring the target. The bomb run was on PFF up until 20 to 30 seconds before bombs away when the Lead Bombardiers took over. The assigned target could not be found and the bombs were dropped on other aiming points with hits seen in one marshalling yard and other in the built-up area.

The five 615th crews flying this mission were:-

44-8550	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
43-38941	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	
42-97947	Capt. J.W. McGoldrick and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. W.W. Jennings and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-6947	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	

Mission 232

Target : Plauen

19 March 1945

The 1st Air Division were unable to attack their primary target because of 10/10th's cloud and attacked the secondary by PFF. The 36 aircraft of the 401st, forming the 94th "B" Group, were part of the force of 404 B-17's attacking Plauen by H2X.

Briefing was at 0445 hrs as Plan "A" and Plan "B", giving different times of take-off, assembly, altitude etc. Assembly was eventually at 11,000 feet over A-71 on the continent. Even with a full load of gas, it was arranged that two airfields on the continent could be used to refuel the Fortresses before returning to Deenethorpe, A-71 for the Lead and Low Squadron and A-73 for the High Squadron.

As a change from the previous day there was no opposition of any kind and all aircraft and personnel returned to Deenethorpe unharmed.

The Air Commander for this mission was Lt. Col. D.E. Silver with Lt. R.S. Hubbell and Lt. M.J. Kochel the other two leaders.

The six 615th aircraft on this mission were:-

44-8449	Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
42-97947	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.	
44-6947	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	
43-38941	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	
44-8550	1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. H. Tausig and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 233

Target : Hopsten

21 March 1945

The mission on this day was directed against the jet fighter air bases throughout Germany. Briefing for the 38 crews of the 401st was at 0330 hrs, the Lead Squadron carrying 12 x 500 lb G.P.'s each and the High and Low Squadrons carrying 38 x 100 lb G.P.'s. All operational aircraft were airborne by 0749 hrs.

The excellent visual weather allowed the three Squadron Lead Bombardiers to bomb without the aid of H2X or Gee-H for a change and they accomplished good to excellent bombing on their aiming points. The Group met some flak causing minor damage to two aircraft and major damage to one other.

Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere was the mission leader with 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and Capt. R.S. Hayes as the other two Squadron leaders.

The 615th Squadron put up the following crews:-

44-8825	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8708	Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8653	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8767	2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	
44-6947	2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.	

Mission 234

Target : Barmingholten

22 March 1945

1,300 bombers and an escort of 630 fighters attacked barracks, airfields and military bases, all visually, for the loss of one bomber and 3 fighters, the 401st's share in this mighty attack being the 94th "A" Group, ably led by Capt. F.A. Kalinski, 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and Capt. R.S. Hayes. Only one 401st aircraft suffered minor damage.

Briefing was at 0400 hrs with 38 crews attending. The Lead and Low Squadrons were to carry 34 x 100 lb G.P.'s and the High Squadron 6 x 500 lb G.P.'s plus 6 x M17 IB's. Take-off time was put back 90 minutes but all ships were airborne by 0956 hrs. Almost! At the end of the runway IY-W (001), an aircraft I have not been able to identify, came into contact with an English truck and damaged it's left wing tip and aileron.

The bombardiers did an excellent job of visual bombing and only one Squadron's bombs fell short of 100% within the 1,000 feet radius of the MPI. Meagre and inaccurate flak was met at the target causing minor damage to one aircraft.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

44-8708	Capt. P.E. Campbell and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
42-31591	2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	
44-8812	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8707	Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8259	1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6947	2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.	

Mission 235

Target : Gladbeck

23 March 1945

The whole of the 8th Air Force carried out attacks on rail targets in west and central Germany, the primary target for the 401st being a storage depot and railway siding at Gladbeck in the Ruhr.

Briefing for the 38 crews was at 0615 hrs, the 38 aircraft taking off in 27 minutes, the last one being airborne at 1012 hrs. The 401st put up the 94th "C" Group with Capt. D.V. Kirkhuff as the Air Commander. 1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel led the other two Squadrons.

The lovely weather allowed the bombardiers to visually bomb the target with all bombs falling within a radius of 2,000 feet of the MPI. On the bomb run the flak gunners got the altitude of the 401st just right causing damage of a minor short to twelve aircraft, but, as so often was the case, not one crew member was wounded.

The Squadron put up the following crews:-

44-8707 1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
44-8825 1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6947 2nd Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.
44-8648 1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 236

Target : Rheine/Salzbergen

24 March 1945

This was the day the British and American Forces crossed the Rhine on Operation VARSITY. The support given by the 8th Air Force was trully mighty - 1,749 bombers and 1,375 fighters were sent out to attack all the airfields in the north-west and west Germany, most Groups flying a morning and afternoon mission.

The 401st put up 36 crews on this morning mission with briefing at 0300 hrs. All ships were on their way by 0651 hrs. The leaders were Lt. Col. R.J. White, Capt. W.S. Harb and Capt. R.S. Hayes. Bombing was visual with good results. The flak turned out to be wickedly accurate on the bomb run with 18 aircraft sustaining battle damage. One, a 612th ship piloted by Lt. Campbell, crashed on the English coast while trying to land at an airfield. Seven of the crew were killed.

The six 615th crews on this mission were:-

Lead Crew: 44-8825 (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Major J.D. Strauss
Lt. Col. R.J. White
Capt. R.F. Causey
Capt. H.S. Arnold
T/Sgt. K.W. Cobbs
S/Sgt. M.H. Crugg
2nd Lt. J.J. Kelly
2nd Lt. C.R. Wollam
2nd Lt. E.P. Cross Gee-H Operator
1st Lt. J.H. Barnes Mickey Operator

Other crews:-

44-8812 1st Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
43-38941 2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.
43-39148 2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.
43-38707 Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.
44-8648 1st Lt. F.R. Boddin and crew. (PFF aircraft)

Mission 237

Target : Twente

24 March 1945

The 2nd Task Force of the day set out at 1500 hrs with 12 crews flying as the High Squadron in the 94th Composite Group. The target was the airfield at Twente in Holland. The Leader was Lt. A.D. Aschenbach.

Bombing was visual with excellent results. Four aircraft received minor flak damage. Two crews from the 615th Squadron flew this mission and were:-

44-8708 1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6947 2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.

Mission 238

Target : Berlin

28 March 1945

The Group were briefed for an operational mission to Berlin at 0400 hrs with 38 crews attending. The weather, IN-H, piloted by Lt. Col. D.E. Silver, was airborne at 0500 hrs with all other aircraft on their way by 0641 hrs.

The assigned target was an armament factory at Spandau, Berlin and was bombed by PFF methods. The Group flew as the 94th "A" Group, led by Major D.G. McCree with Lt. A.K. Wolf and Capt. R.S. Hayes as the other two leaders.

Moderate flak was observed at Kassel and meagre flak was met at the target. The target flak varied from inaccurate to accurate causing damage to 20 of the returning aircraft. One crew member was also wounded by the flak. The aircraft piloted by Lt. J.W. McCullough, IW-Y, Serial No. 43-37551, was hit by flak over the target. When last seen the left wing was smoking and the aircraft remained with the formation until it went into a spin down through the clouds.

The crews flying this mission were:-

44-8648	1st Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-6947	2nd Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	
43-38148	2nd Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
42-97947	Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	

Mission 239

Target : Bremen

30 March 1945

This mission assignment was to attack U-boat yards and any U-boat construction work in the port. Briefing for the mission was given to 40 crews at 0720 hrs and all aircraft for the operation were airborne by 1132 hrs.

The Group furnished the 94th "C" Group, led by Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere. 1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and Capt. R.S. Hayes were the other two Squadron leaders.

Because of the usual cloud the bombing run was began using PFF techniques, and then just before bombs away, the clouds broke and the three Lead Bombardiers tried to make the corrections for a visual run. But, in fact, they had left it too late and the bombing was not very good. Some bombs just touched the assigned area while two Squadrons put their bombs just to the right but completely over the assigned area. Nevertheless, the bombs did land right in the middle of the docks area.

As the formation flew over the target area the flak, which proved to be moderate and accurate, tracked them for about five minutes. It was the only enemy opposition but it caused major damage to three aircraft and minor damage to 20 aircraft. Two crew men also suffered flak wounds as a result of this barrage.

The five Lead crews of the 615th flying this mission were:-

42-97947	Capt. R.S. Hayes and crew.	
43-38941	1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	
44-8033	1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

44-8259 1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew.
43-39148 1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.

(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 240

Target : Weimar

31 March 1945

The crews went into the briefing at 0200 hrs on this Saturday morning, which meant that they had very little sleep before taking off just after 6.00 am. The usual 38 crews took part in the briefing; they were given the assignment of visually bombing the oil refinery at Merseburg. They found both the primary and the secondary targets covered by cloud and eventually bombed the number three target at Weimar by PFF.

The 401st put up the 94th "C" Group, led by Major J.D. Strauss with Capt. W.S. Harb and Capt. J.D. Gerber as the other two Squadron leaders. The Lead and Low Squadrons had all their bombs within the 2,000 foot radius while the High Squadron's fell far short and to the left.

Flak was observed on this mission but none hit the formation, all aircraft returning safely to Deenethorpe.

The loading list is again missing from the 615th records for this mission but Major J.D. Strauss did fly with a 615th crew, and Capt. J.D. Gerber was a member of the 615th.

This was the month that the 94th Combat Wing decided that in its three Groups, the 351st, the 401st and the 457th, all lead crews and aircraft would be responsibility of one Squadron only. In the case of the 401st the Squadron was the 615th. This meant that during the first two weeks of March a large number of crews and aircraft changed Squadrons. Therefore, the number of new crews joining the 615th is unusually high, many of them having already served with other Squadrons at Deenethorpe. The following are the new crews that joined the 615th during March, with, where possible, their former Squadron in brackets:-

1st Lt. F.R. Boddin (612th)
2nd Lt. J.H. Devlin
2nd Lt. A. Uhrain
2nd Lt. D.R. Miller
T/Sgt. R.G. Kornegay
T/Sgt. P. Richardson
Sgt. J.P. McKenna
S/Sgt. C.C. Noble
S/Sgt. T.E. Langham

1st Lt. J.S. Cole
2nd Lt. J.W. Spellman
2nd Lt. C.M. Hansen
Flt. O. T.H. Butler
S/Sgt. R.M. Crespi
S/Sgt. M.L. Alex
Sgt. C.F. Griggs
Sgt. R.H. Smith
S/Sgt. J.R. McClure

1st Lt. R.S. Hayes (614th)
1st Lt. C.E. Mead
1st Lt. C.B. Minor
1st Lt. R.W. Murphy
T/Sgt. W.P. Fuston
T/Sgt. J. Lucewicz
S/Sgt. C.E. Smith
S/Sgt. A.I. Pahl
Flt. O. F.S. Jenkins (M.O.)
Flt. O. Boorfershine G-H O.

1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell (614th)
1st Lt. A.F. Gouler
1st Lt. G.J. Moore
1st Lt. J.J. Du Bray (M.O.)
1st Lt. S.W. Flieg
T/Sgt. C.W. Poole
T/Sgt. R.D. Ross
Sgt. W.S. Bill
S/Sgt. J.L. Revette

M.O. = Mickey Operator (H2X).

G-H O. = Gee-H Operator.

1st Lt. W.W. Jennings
2nd Lt. C.J. Cornelius
1st Lt. W.M. Folks
2nd Lt. L. Baker
1st Lt. I. Sckloven
T/Sgt. J.W. Curtis
T/Sgt. R.T. Foreman
S/Sgt. T.R. Selzle
S/Sgt. D.L. Ewen

1st Lt. M. Levy
2nd Lt. V. South
2nd Lt. C.A. Hunt
Sgt. C.A. Crossley
Sgt. W.C. Lauderdale
Sgt. J. Moleski
Sgt. H.E. Ludwig
Sgt. J.W. Hudson
Sgt. R.J. Foley
Sgt. J.J. Stitt

1st Lt. M. Maharick
2nd Lt. W.W. Roberson
2nd Lt. R.E. Rowley
Sgt. G.W. Moulton
S/Sgt. W.H. Reed
S/Sgt. L.H. Lanier
Sgt. W.F. Moore
Sgt. M.R. Webb
S/Sgt. J.R. Hardaway
Sgt. W.E. Karre

2nd Lt. W.C. McKenney
2nd Lt. R. Burdich
2nd Lt. H.N. Levin
Sgt. R.A. Sunderlin
T/Sgt. L.M. Flynn
Sgt. J.W. Holland
S/Sgt. E.J. Nelson
S/Sgt. E.B. Piromalli
Sgt. I.A. Franzblau

Capt. A.R. Seder (614th)
1st Lt. L.W. Rubinoff
1st Lt. L.F. Stewart
2nd Lt. H.G. Hehir (M.O.)
1st Lt. F. Conway
T/Sgt. J.F. Backlin
T/Sgt. C.W. Antill
S/Sgt. C.D. Harris
S/Sgt. R.H. Affel

2nd Lt. K.D. Speer (613th)
2nd Lt. J.J. Kelly
2nd Lt. R.H. Simon
2nd Lt. L. Baker (M.O.)
1st Lt. W.M. Scanlon
T/Sgt. D. Yohay
S/Sgt. G.G. Cupp
S/Sgt. L.E. Thompson
S/Sgt. J.C. Averett

1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler (614th)
2nd Lt. D.D. Current
2nd Lt. R.C. AcAdams
2nd Lt. L.H. Oster
T/Sgt. W.J. Hendrich
T/Sgt. R.D. Wells
S/Sgt. J.E. Hughes
S/Sgt. C.W. Benedict
S/Sgt. J.E. Power

1st Lt. H. Tausig (613th)
1st Lt. D.F. Walker
1st Lt. A.S. Buchanan
T/Sgt. J.J. Fitzsimmons
T/Sgt. W.B. Johnston
S/Sgt. A.S. Katz
S/Sgt. D.C. Johnston
S/Sgt. E. Bucksbaum
(Co-pilot missed out)

M.O. = Mickey Operator (H2X)

Promotions

Major to Lt. Colonel:- Major R.J. White.

1st Lt. to Captain :- R.S. Hayes and L.A. Turk.

2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. :- K.L. Speer, D.D. Current, L.W. Rubinoff, J.L. Hart,
C.S. Bennett, W.S. Knowles and S.R. Smith.

April 1945

The operational record of the 401st Bomb Group ended with its 254th combat mission to Brandenburg on 20th April 1945. On 21st April there was a "stand-down" which seemed ordinary, but when the "stand-down" extended into five and then ten days - and the Russians enveloped Berlin while the Americans swept forward along all fronts and linked with the Russians on the Elbe, the aircrews and ground staff at Deenethorpe knew that the job of heavy bombardment in the ETO had been completed.

Fourteen missions were run in April and were accomplished from 4th April to 20th April, and epitomised precision bombing at the highest level known by the 401st Group. In fact, bombing reached such a high degree of accuracy that approximately 76.6% of all bombs fell within 1,000 feet of the assigned MPI. Even prior to this time, the 401st Group had regained second place in the entire 8th Air Force's bombing, taking into consideration the preceding months.

Early in the month the Group received the 94th Combat Wing "Best Bombing Plaque" for leading the Wing in bombing accuracy during March. The presentation of the plaque was made to Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, Commanding Officer, by Brig. General J.K. Lacey, Combat Wing Commanding Officer. The plaque was to go to the Group which lead in bombing for the month and the 401st was the first to receive it.

Missions

Mission 241

Target : Unterluss

4 April 1945

This was a target of opportunity, an airdrome with only the Low Squadron bombing. Strike photo's were difficult to assess but fair results were recorded.

Missions were briefed on April 2nd and 3rd but both were cancelled. On Wednesday, 4th April, the usual 38 crews were briefed once again and this time the mission was on. Briefing was at 0250 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 0705 hrs. The primary target was the airfield at Kotenburg, Germany, with orders that any other airfield could be attacked if the primary could not be hit. The Lead and High Squadron made a number of runs over the target but were unable to bomb it. The Low Squadron carried out a run on what they believed to be an airfield but instead bombed, very effectively, an ordnance depot at Unterluss, causing extensive damage to the buildings.

Flak was observed at three different localities but none seemed to be aimed at the 401st and all aircraft and personnel returned safely to Deenethorpe.

The Air Commander was Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere with Lt. E.A. Post and Capt. R.S. Hubbell as the other two Squadron leaders.

The 615th put up the following five crews:-

43-39140 1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.

43-38941	2nd Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8648	1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8033	1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 242

Target : Ingolstadt

5 April 1945

The ordnance depot at Ingolstadt was the target on this mission with good to excellent results, particularly by the High Squadron, led by the 615th crew of Lt. R.S. Hubbell. 4 Me-262's attacked the High Squadron knocking down one of the 401st aircraft piloted by Lt. Thomas N. Curran. The top turret gunner was killed and the crew bailed out over France.

Briefing for 38 combat crews and one weather ship crew was at 0215 hrs with the weather ship becoming airborne by 0455 hrs. 35 combat ships were away by 0652 hrs but three were left behind. IN-V had a blow-out and this trapped IN-C and the turbo of SC-L went out on the runway - and was also late in loading its bombs.

The 401st put up the 94th "A" Group, led by Major D.C. McCree with Lt. R.S. Hubbell and Lt. A.K. Wolf as the other Squadron leaders.

The five 615th crews on the loading list were:-

44-8825	1st Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. R.S. Hubbell and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8033	1st Lt. E.H. Spuhler and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-39148	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	
43-38941	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	

Mission 243

Target : Luneburg

7 April 1945

The marshalling yards at Luneburg were bombed visually with a PFF assist and strike photo's indicated hits across the marshalling yard which was filled with a considerable amount of rolling stock. The primary target for the Group had been the airfield at Reinschlen but it was not visible so they went on to bomb the secondary target at Luneburg.

The briefing for the 38 crews was at 0230 hrs with take-off time at first being 0610 hrs, but times were moved up; at first it was 3 hours, then five minutes and finally another hour with all ships finally becoming airborne at 1047 hrs.

The Group furnished the 94th "C" Group of the Combat Wing, led by Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere with the other two leaders from the 615th Squadron - Lt. R.S. Hubbell and Lt. A.D. Aschenbach.

The loading list was again missing from the micro-film.

Mission 244

Target : Halberstadt

8 April 1945

Another early briefing. It was at 0240 hrs for 38 crews; it was 1519 hrs when they arrived back at base that afternoon to begin debriefing so the crews were putting in 16 to 18 hours work to complete a mission.

The primary target was again an airfield, this time at Lerbst, with the marshalling yard at Halberstadt to be bombed visually or by PFF if the primary couldn't be hit. It proved to be the case and Halberstadt

was bombed visually although there was a great deal of smoke from preceding Groups over the assigned area. However, photo's did show that damage to the target was heavy.

No fighters or flak were observed and all aircraft returned to the base safely.

The 401st furnished the 94th "B" Group with Major J.D. Strauss as the Air Commander and Lt. A.K. Wolf and Lt. E.A. Post leading the other two Squadrons.

The Squadron put up the following crews:-

43-39148	1st Lt. K.J. Hartsock and crew.	
44-8708	1st Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-6947	1st Lt. W.L. Tobin and crew.	
44-8653	1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8648	Capt. A.R. Seder and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 245

Target : Furstenfeldbruck

9 April 1945

38 combat crews and one weather ship crew were briefed at 0500 hrs with assembly to take place over the Cottessmore Buncher. The bad weather this Monday morning closed Deenethorpe down for some time and it was almost noon before the last ship became airborne.

The 401st was part of a force of 139 B-17's that attacked the jet airfield at Furstenfeldbruck, dropping 334 tons of bombs. The 401st bombing was excellent with 95% to 100% of the bombs within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. The Deenethorpe aircraft made up the 94th "A" Group, led by Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell. Capt. W.S. Harb and Lt. A.K. Wolf were the other two Squadron leaders.

Meagre flak was met at the target which proved to be mostly inaccurate; nevertheless, five aircraft received minor flak damage. None of the crew members were injured and all aircraft got back to Deenethorpe safely.

Five 615th crews went on this mission, they were:-

44-8550	1st Lt. A.K. Wolf and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8653	1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. C.S. Bennett and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-39148	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	
43-38941	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	

Mission 246

Target : Oranienburg

10 April 1945

On this mission the 401st were part of a force of 278 B-17's that dropped 797 tons of bombs on the German Army Headquarters at Oranienburg. The Group provided the aircraft to form the 94th "B" Group with Captain D.V. Kirkhuff as the Air Commander and Captain W.S. Harb and Lt. A.K. Wolf as the other two Squadron Commanders.

Briefing for the 38 crews was at 0645 hrs with the last ship becoming airborne by 1046 hrs. Visual bombing was again carried out but the results were not as good as they should have been under the circumstances. The Lead Squadron bombed to the right and over although the circular error remained practically within the 2,000 feet. The Low Squadron had excellent

results with 100% in the 1,000 foot radius. The High Squadron aimed at the wrong point near the target, hitting another depot and causing extensive damage.

The only opposition on this mission was some meagre flak from the Wittenburg area. At first it was inaccurate but then found the correct height and elevation and caused major damage to two aircraft. One of these, No. 43-38788, Squadron Code SC-T, piloted by Lt. C.P. Spence, made a wheels-up landing on the active Luftwaffe base of Fassberg. Two of the crew were injured, five escaped from their German guards and three were made POW.

The six crews from the 615th on this mission were:-

43-39941	1st Lt. K.J. Hartsock and crew.	
44-8812	1st Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8449	1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6947	1st Lt. W.L. Tobin and crew.	
44-8708	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8648	Capt. A.R. Seder and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

Mission 247

Target : Freiham

11 April 1945

This mission was accomplished with good results on the marshalling yards located near the underground storage depots at Freiham. Strike photo's disclosed that the Lead and Low Squadrons hit inside an assigned MPI area with the pattern of the High Squadron short but extending into the MPI.

Briefing for 38 crews was at 0500 hrs with assembly at Buncher Y (over France) at 16,000 feet. By 0842 hrs all aircraft were airborne. The 401st put up the 94th "C" Group with Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere as the Air Commander and Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and Lt. J.D. Gerber as the other two Squadron Leaders. It was another day of excellent bombing in visual conditions with 100% of the bombs within the 2,000 foot radius of the aiming point and at least 80% within the 1,000 foot radius.

The flak was sporadic and inaccurate at the target area and no one was injured and none of the crew received battle damage.

The 615th crews on this mission were:-

44-6132	2nd Lt. S.R. Smith and crew.	
43-38458	1st Lt. J.N. Shepherd and crew.	
44-6125 (?)	1st Lt. M. Maharick and crew.	
43-37706	2nd Lt. J.B. Evans and crew.	
42-31983	2nd Lt. J.P. Kerkes and crew.	
44-6588	1st Lt. M. Levy and crew.	
44-6146	2nd Lt. J.D. Tripi and crew.	
44-6842	2nd Lt. R.A. Shunk and crew.	
44-8767	2nd Lt. W.G. McKenney and crew.	
43-38160	2nd Lt. G.F. Snyder and crew.	
44-8708	Capt. W. Riegler and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 248

Target : Royan (France)

14 April 1945

This mission was to the gun batteries at Royan with the 401st furnishing the 94th "C" Group. Capt. A.R. Seder was the Air Commander and the other leaders were Lt. J.D. Gerber and Lt. E.A. Post. 38 crews were briefed for this mission at 0430 hrs with all aircraft finally off at 0619 hrs. One aircraft had a flat tyre, blocking in three other 613th ships,

but eventually all the trouble was sorted out and 38 aircraft were on their way.

Again the clear weather allowed visual bombing and the results were excellent with all bombs falling within 2,000 feet and at least 90% within the 1,000 foot circle. The crews reported that there was nothing in the way of enemy opposition and the mission was hardly more than a practice run.

Six crews of the 615th flew the mission. They were:-

44-8033	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-6947	2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew.	
44-8153	1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8825	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6454	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	
44-8550	Capt. A.R. Seder and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 249

Target : Royan

15 April 1945

This was another mission to the gun emplacements at Royan with the 401st putting up the 94th "A" Group. Lt. Col. B.K. Voorhees was the Task Force and Group Leader with Major J.R. Locher, Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere, 1st Lt. W.S. Knowles, 1st Lt. E.A. Post and 1st Lt. R.D. Speer as the other leaders. Bombing was by sections with four of the air sections getting excellent results.

38 crews and a weather ship crew were briefed at 0410 hrs with all ships becoming airborne for the operation by 0746 hrs - this time without the problems of the previous day.

Again the enemy opposition in the air and on the ground was nil and all aircraft returned safely to Deenethorpe.

The loading list for the 615th was as follows:-

43-38941	1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	
44-9646 (?)	1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew.	
44-8812	1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8454	1st Lt. K.D. Speer and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8653	1st Lt. E.A. Post and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
43-39146	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	

Mission 250

Target : Regensburg

16 April 1945

About 150 Fortresses of the 1st Air Division set out on an afternoon mission to destroy two important railway bridges at Regensburg. One was on the East of the city and the other on the West. The 401st records do not state which of these they attacked, except to state that the bombing was excellent with all three Squadrons putting 90% of their bombs within 1,000 feet of the aiming point.

Briefing was at 0815 hrs and was attended by 38 crews plus one observer aircraft crew. All ships were away by 1156 hrs without problems.

The flak was meagre at Nuremburg and over the target and sometimes the accuracy was good. It caused minor damage to two aircraft.

The 615th put up the following six crews:-

44-8550	1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8707	2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8648	1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8825	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-6947	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	
44-8812	1st Lt. M.J. Kochel and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 251

Target : Dresden

17 April 1945

The 8th Air Force went after rail targets in SE Germany and Czechoslovakia on this mission. The 1st Air Division went after the rail center and marshalling yards at Dresden with the 401st putting up 36 aircraft to form the 94th "A" Group. Major A.H. Chapman was the Air Commander with Lt. A.R. Wolf and Lt. J.D. Gerber the other leaders.

The briefing for the 38 crews and weather ship crew was at 0600 hrs with the weather ship, IW-A, getting away at 0735 hrs. All other aircraft were airborne by 0939 hrs. Bombing was fair to excellent, the High Squadron putting 98% of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the aiming point.

Some jet aircraft were seen to approach the formation but did not attack. Seven aircraft received minor damage and one major damage from the flak but there were no casualties among the crew members.

The loading list for the 615th was as follows:-

44-8653	1st Lt. A.R. Wolf and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8707	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8825	1st Lt. A.D. Aschenbach and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8033	2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew	(PFF aircraft)
44-8550	1st Lt. W.L. Tobin and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
43-39941	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	

Mission 252

Target : Traunstein/Freising

18 April 1945

This was a very long mission to the South-East of Munich to bomb a transformer station at Traunstein as the primary and a marshalling yard as the secondary. In the event the High Squadron bombed the transformer station - said to supply the power for Hitler's Bavarian reboult - while the Low and Lead Squadrons bombed the marshalling yards at Freising. The 401st furnished three ten-aircraft Squadrons for the 94th "A" Group and led the 1st Air Division. Colonel Eugene Romig was the Divisional and the Group Leader. The other leaders were 1st Lt. J.B. Hart and 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber. The 30 aircraft Group formation was a new policy starting with this mission.

Briefing for the 30 crews was at 0500 hrs with the weather ship, IY-L, piloted by Major C.A. Lewis getting away at 0733 hrs.

Meagre and accurate flak hit the formation at one point and IW-T, Serial No. 43-38646, piloted by Lt. E.A. Viehman, went down behind the German lines. One member, 1st Lt. James J. Stalzer, returned to Deenethorpe after walking to the Allied lines.

The six 615th crews on this mission were:-

44-8812	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
43-39148	1st Lt. W.L. Tobin and crew.	
44-8033	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	(PFF aircraft)

44-8653	1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8153	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell and crew.	(PFF aircraft)
44-8825	Capt. W.E. Coleman and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

with Col. E. Romig, 94th Wing C.O. as co-pilot.

Mission 253

Target : Falkenburg

19 April 1945

The 1st Air Division sent 284 B-17's to attack two marshalling yards with the 401st putting up 30 of the 143 aircraft that attacked Falkenburg. The three-10 aircraft formation made up the 94th "A" Group under the command of Major Strauss, with Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere and 1st Lt. J.D. Gerber as the other commanders.

30 operational crews and one weather ship crew attended the briefing at 0330 hrs and the weather ship, IN-J, was airborne by 0520 hrs. The other ships were away by 0704 hrs and assembled at 3,000 feet at the Cottesmore Buncher.

Visual bombing was carried out with all three bombardiers hitting their assigned MPI's, accomplishing good to excellent results. Patterns could have been better and their failing was attributed somewhat to inexperience with the new type of formation.

No opposition of any type was met and all aircraft returned safely to Deenethorpe.

The 615th loading list was as follows:-

44-8259	1st Lt. J.D. Gerber and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8825	Capt. W.E. Coleman and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8550	1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
	with Lt. Col. Jonckheere.	
44-8708	1st Lt. J.S. Cole and crew.	(PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

Mission 254

Target : Brandenburg

20 April 1945

The Eighth Air Force were to fly another two missions after this one, but it was the last mission for the 401st Bomb Group (H) in W.W. II. The last target for the Group was the marshalling yards at Brandenburg and the 30 aircraft from the Group made up the 94th "B" Group, with Lt. Col. E.T. de Jonckheere as Air Commander. The other leaders were 1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and 1st Lt. J.E. Hart, both members of the 615th Squadron.

The 30 crews for this mission were briefed at 0245 hrs with all aircraft becoming airborne by 0720 hrs. There was considerable flak over the target area and the aircraft piloted by Lt. Aubrey J. Bradley, Jr. received a direct flak hit near the target. A wing came off and the plane blew up, blowing some of the crew clear. The crew were flying their 33rd mission.

Excessive smoke and heavy haze confronted the bombardiers on this mission but despite this they made blink sightings on some outside checkpoints with their RAF Grid attachment and the bombs of the three Squadrons all fell within the assigned area.

The three 615th crews flying this last mission were:-

44-8707 1st Lt. W.S. Knowles and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8259 2nd Lt. F.I. Eglin and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)
44-8550 1st Lt. J.E. Hart and crew. (PFF & Gee-H aircraft)

The following new crews joined the Squadron in April 1945:-

2nd Lt. J.B. Evans	1st Lt. K.J. Hartsock
2nd Lt. R.E. Ryan	Flt. O. K.W. Locke
2nd Lt. G.L. Wright	2nd Lt. J.N. Zneimer
2nd Lt. V.C. Choquette	2nd Lt. R.A. Dodge
Sgt. P.B. Gallotello	S/Sgt. H.E. Dee
Sgt. H.A. Harris	S/Sgt. V. Browne
Sgt. C.D. Lewis	Sgt. F.C. Mendez
Sgt. S.W. Holland	Sgt. D.S. Anderson
Sgt. L.C. Hoobler	Sgt. J.J. Strukel
2nd Lt. J.P. Kerkes	1st Lt. M.H. Lovell
2nd Lt. R.C. Wendling	2nd Lt. J.M. Gerant
2nd Lt. W.B. Koch	2nd Lt. G.B. Price
2nd Lt. W.M. Inman	2nd Lt. R.T. Phinney
Sgt. R.J. Gulbransen	S/Sgt. E.M. Stevens
Sgt. J. Stringer	S/Sgt. R.S. Knower
Sgt. L.C. Meroon	S/Sgt. J.L. Revette
Sgt. P.R. Allen	Sgt. R. Broadbooks
Sgt. S. Ostrowsky	S/Sgt. E.R. Martineau
1st Lt. W.L. Tobin	2nd Lt. J.J. Tripi
1st Lt. V. Ganhape	2nd Lt. H.L. Hardin
2nd Lt. C.L. Turner	1st Lt. A.R. Simmon
2nd Lt. N. Moreau	1st Lt. R.G. Billman
Sgt. W.J. Kantor	Sgt. G.H. Walker
Sgt. J.N. Bertram	Sgt. L.R. McCarthy
Sgt. W.J. Erzar	Sgt. R.D. Magoon
Sgt. Van Camp	Sgt. G.D. Parker
Sgt. J.J. McAlister	Sgt. W.A. Tustin
1st Lt. J.N. Shepherd	2nd Lt. R.A. Shunk
2nd Lt. T.J. Skiffington	2nd Lt. E.L. Fagan
2nd Lt. H.G. Van Eck	Flt. O. E.S. Kammerer
Sgt. R.F. Alles	2nd Lt. K.L. Hayman
Sgt. J.F. Collins	Sgt. C.L. Hutchison
Sgt. A.L. Davis	Sgt. M.N. Tague
Sgt. M.A. Marcolies	Sgt. G.E. Esham
Sgt. D.E. Herrold	Sgt. C.L. Rein
Sgt. M. Bellfond	Sgt. B. Patterson

2nd Lt. G.F. Snyder
Flt. O. J. Waltershed
Flt. O. T. Jentsch
Flt. O. E.W. Kaulkin
Sgt. J.J. Metzcer
Sgt. L.J. Close
Sgt. V. Lacy
Sgt. R.C. Kramer
Sgt. C.E. Barbour

May 1945

The Final Chapter

The final chapter of the Group History was written by Captain Gordon R. Closway in May, 1945. I know of no better way to end the 615th Squadron History than to copy his last entries in the Group History word for word.

May --- VE Day --- Movement Orders --- Movement to the USA!

What a month and what spirit there is among the men of the 401st at this final Chapter -- final at least so far as the ETO is concerned -- is being written.

Our operational tour ended April 20th, 1945 when Mission 254, to Brandenburg, was run. 254 missions in 17 months --- and with a bombing record second to none.

The first few days of May were quiet -- and then came a restriction on the morning of May 7th. We knew it was all over -- but had to wait the final word which came from Prime Minister Churchill at 1500 hrs on May 8th. VE Day was here at last -- the war in Europe was over -- this was it.

VE Day was celebrated rather quietly on the Base. We had a huge display of fireworks from the Tower at 2300 hrs on May 7th and at 1900 hrs on May 8th the entire Station personnel marched to the Flying Control Tower for a formal observance. There was a speech by Colonel Seawell, our Commanding Officer, followed by religious services with the men dividing into groups for Protestants, Catholics and Jews. Protestant services in front of the Tower were in charge of Chaplain Ward Fellows, Catholic services were conducted from a portable altar set up by Chaplain J.E. Burke with a B-17 in the background and the Jewish services were conducted by Mr W. Meier of Kettering. Following the services there was a beer party but by nightfall, all was quiet, another fireworks display concluded the entertainment.

On Monday May 14th, we went back to Army life. Bugle calls were heard, drill and calisthenics were in order and reveille was at 5.45 am and Taps at 2230 hrs. After our hard training and our strenuous operational tour, this was hard to believe -- and hard to take -- but no one complained and soon we were a fully fledged garrison outfit -- waiting for the next word.

That word came soon. On Tuesday May 15th a Field Order came through notifying us that we were to be moved, immediately -- and of all places -- the UNITED STATES. Reveille and the regular calls continues but drill and Calisthenics were abolished for everyone had to work -- plenty of it. Crews were taken on celestial missions and instrument checks, airplanes were tuned up for the overseas hop, fuel consumption checks were made and they were weighed for balance. A whirr of activity followed the first announcement and from the standpoint of glee, this was a bigger day for us than VE Day itself.

Between the end of operations and the announcement that we were going back to the USA for regrouping, we ran three observation trips over the Ruhr Valley and down to Frankfurt for ground personnel. The vast damage to German cities was impossible to believe unless it was actually seen from low altitude. This series of trips proved a grand reward to the ground men who had laboured unswervingly for 17 months and 254 missions, and they took credit along

with the combat crews for the results they now observed.

Four other trips were made by the Group to Linz, Austria for the purpose of evacuating French and British prisoners of war. Skeleton crews were sent to the big Nazi airport, only recently taken by the 3rd Army, and each of the 30 airplanes brought back 30 former prisoners. The prisoners were taken to an airport at Orleans near Paris and the British prisoners were brought back to England.

The month also saw the promotion to Colonel of Lt. Col. W.T. Seawell, Commanding Officer since December 5th, 1944 when Col. Bowman left to become a member of General Spaatz's staff. It was also announced during the month that Colonel Bowman had left USSTAF to return to the United States where he has become Public Relations Officer for the USAAF, directly under General Arnold.

Preparations for the trip home reached a high pitch near the end of the month. There was the usual processing, the physical examinations, checking of equipment and inspections, then more inspections. Inspectors were also at the Station from Army Air Force Headquarters in Washington, from USSTAF from 8th Air Force, ATC, UK Base and 1st Air Division.

It was announced that each Squadron would send 19 planes home, each plane loaded with its regular crew plus ten ground personnel. Airplanes were fitted with extra dinghies, there were ditching drills and the airplane checked carefully by Air Transport Command which is in charge of overseas movement. Personnel not going by air were scheduled to go by boat.

The Medics were in there pitching. Everyone got more shots - - just to be on the safe side -- and finally everything was in readiness.

Then the usual "scrubs". One delay followed another until at long last at 1100 hrs on Memorial Day (a memorable day for us) the first airplane piloted by Colonel Seawell took off for America. 16 B-17's left the Station the first day. By the end of the month the 78 planes with crews and passengers were on their way. The route was via RAF Valley, Wales, and the usual North Atlantic crossing with stops scheduled at Iceland, Greenland, Goose Bay, Labrador and Newfoundland.

Ground personnel packed up -- and were set to evacuate the Station by June 10th at the latest.

OKINAWA --- HERE WE COME !!

I also include the last entries of the Flying Control Log Books.

- 1225 ALL DEENETHORPE A/C OFF FOR VALLEY AND HOME RUN !!
- 1226 FOLLOWING MSSGE SENT TO F/C OPS, "NO F/C FACILITIES NO SERVICING AIRFIELD CLOSED TFN" !!!

James D. Gilbride
1st Lt. AC

615th BOMB SQUADRON AIRCRAFT

The original aircraft of the 615th Bombardment Squadron (H) were B-17G's in olive and grey factory finish and in natural metal finish from March 1944. The Squadron code letters were IY. The letters E, I, U, V, Y and Z were not supposed to be used because they could have been confused with other letters and numbers, but one 615th aircraft was coded IY-E in error. The letter was not used again when this aircraft was shot down on 31st July, 1944.

The letters were in yellow on the camouflaged aircraft, no doubt as a result of the 401st staying at Bassingbourn when first arriving in England. The usual color was light grey but Bassingbourn aircraft used the yellow markings and Deenethorpe followed suit. The 401st identity letter was a blue letter S on the 1st Air Division white triangle on the vertical tail of their aircraft.

A change in the color was necessary in March 1944 when the natural metal finish aircraft began to arrive at the Groups. The white triangle, the Divisional insignia, was changed to black with the 401st letter S white and Squadron codes also in black.

The last of the identity markings on aircraft of the 8th Air Force came into use in August 1944 when Combat Wing markings were applied to the fin and rudder. The 94th CBW - Polebrook, Glatton and Deenethorpe - were assigned a diagonal stripe, the 401st color being yellow. This yellow band was difficult to make out on the natural metal finish aircraft so it was edged in black.

In March, 1945, the 401st sent some of its PFF aircraft to Alconbury to have Gee-H equipment fitted and on 14th March the last mission led by another Group's PFF aircraft was flown. The 94th CBW then decided that in its three Groups, 351st, 401st and 457th, all lead aircraft and crews would be concentrated in one squadron at each base, thus having radar experts in three squadrons instead of being spread over twelve squadrons. In the 401st the squadron chosen was the 615th and over the next two weeks there were a great many changes of crews and aircraft to carry out this order.

One of the early 615th aircraft, IY-X, 42-31485, OLD IRONSIDES, was eventually declared "war weary" and was used in 1945 as a VHF relay aircraft. It operated over the North Sea and flew mainly from Polebrook.

A final change of aircraft took place at the end of WW II when all PFF and Gee-H aircraft were transferred to the 305th Bomb Group at Chelveston. This was one of the Groups chosen to remain in Europe after the end of hostilities.

ORIGINAL

615TH SQUADRON AIRCRAFT

<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>History</u>
42-31069	IY-K	LITTLE MOE	MIA on 28 September 1944 with Lt. E.N. Daves - Magdeburg.
42-31077	IY-A	PAKAWALUP II	MIA 30 September 1944 with Lt. T.A. Davis - Munster.
42-31091	IY-O	MAGGIE	MIA on 11 September 1944 with Lt. M.R. Wingard - Merseburg.
42-31193	IY-B	LITTLE BOOTS	MIA on 29 January 1944 with Capt. R.W. Beers - Frankfurt.
42-37809	IY-G	CAROLINA QUEEN	MIA on 11 January 1944 with Lt. H.J. Chapman - Oscherslaben.
42-37833	IY-F	OMAR THE DENTMAKER	MIA on 26 March 1944 with Capt. W.M. Rumsey - Watten.
42-37843	IY-H	DRY RUN	MIA on 14 June 1944 with Lt. R.H. Schroeder - Le Bourget.
42-39873	IY-Q	STORMY WEATHER	Collided mid-air with 43-37859 on 1 August 1944 - Chartres.

REPLACEMENT

615TH SQUADRON AIRCRAFT

42-31414	IY-J		On 27 January 1944, the pilot, after landing, retracted the undercarriage instead of flaps. Aircraft deemed to be beyond repair.
42-31485	IY-X	OLD IRONSIDES	Declared "war weary" and used as a VHF relay aircraft.
42-31518	IY-G	DOOLITTLES DOUGHBOYS	MIA on 20 February 1944 with Lt. E. Gardner - Leipzig.
42-31521	IY-M	BADLAND BAT	MIA on 29 April 1944 with Capt. G. Gould - Berlin.
42-31619	IY-L		MIA on 24 May 1944 with Lt. J.E. Whitman - Berlin.
42-31730	IY-B to IN-O	MORNING STAR	Flew 112 missions - to ZI.
42-31983	IY-G to IN-G	MARY ALICE	To ZI.
42-37981	IY-P	BELLE OF BARBARY COAST	Delivered 27 May 1944. MIA on 7 July 1944 with Lt. J.C. Neill - Leipzig.

<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>History</u>
43-37859	IY-D		MIA on 1 August 1944 with Lt. R.B. Sproul - Chartres. Mid-air collision with 42-39873.
43-38077	IY-Q to IW-K	TAGALONG	Delivered 5 August 1944. To ZI.
43-38125	IY-D		Delivered 5 August 1944. Attempted to land at Saltby with two engines out. Crashed 3 miles SE of Saltby, Lincs on 22 January 1945.
43-38159	IY-N	WOLF PACK	Delivered 10 August 1944. MIA on 2 November 1944 with Lt. H.L. Oas Jr. - Merseburg.
43-38160	IN-A to IY-A		Delivered 10 August 1944. Force-landed in France on 5 January 1945. To ZI.
43-38425	IY-K	NET RESULT	Delivered 4 October 1944. To ZI.
43-38758	IY-P to IN-P		To ZI.
43-38779	IY-O	ROUGH BUT RIGHT	Delivered 6 November 1944. Abandoned by crew near Bardney, Lincs, after returning with battle damage on 16 February 1945.
43-38810	IY-N to SC-V		Delivered 6 November 1944. To ZI.
43-39148	IY-Q		Delivered 21 March 1945. To ZI.
44-6146	IY-R to IN-R		To ZI.
44-6310	IY-P		Delivered 23 July 1944. MIA with Lt. W.B. Woodward - Gaggenau.
44-8153	SC-Q to IY-O		PFF aircraft. To 305th B.G. after end of hostilities.
44-8258	IY-A		PFF aircraft. Delivered 5 October 1944. Abandoned on the continent 11 December 1944.
44-8259	IW-G to IY-K		PFF + Gee-H aircraft. Delivered 18 November 1944. To 305th B.G. after end of hostilities.
44-8371	IY-M	BADLAND BAT II	PFF aircraft. Delivered 1 December 1944. MIA with Capt. S.J. Lozinski on 16 February 1945 - Gelsenkirchen.
44-8449	IN-P to IY-F		PFF + Gee-H aircraft. To 305th B.G. after end of hostilities.
44-8454	IN-C to IY-T		PFF + Gee-H aircraft. To 305th B.G. after end of hostilities.