

HEADQUARTERS 397th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
Hunter Field, Georgia

3 January 1944.

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 598th Bombardment Squadron,
397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF, Hunter Field, Ga.

1. A letter of appreciation for the part you played in the search and rescue operations conducted on 16 December 1943, for members of the crew of the YP-426, has been addressed to your Group Commander. A copy of the letter is attached.

2. I wish to extend you my own expression of appreciation and commendation for the manner in which you carried out the assignment given you. Such performance reflects credit to the service and to the command.

s/ Richard T. Coiner, Jr,
RICHARD T. COINER, JR,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

1 Incl:
Incl 1 – Ltr of Appreciation.

A TRUE COPY:

{SIGNED}
CHARLES COOKE,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Sq Historical Officer.

EXHIBIT "A"

HEADQUARTERS 397th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
A/RTC/18
Hunter Field, Georgia

3 January 1943

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation.

TO : Crew Members Concerned, 397th Bombardment Group.

1. A letter of appreciation for the part you played in the search and rescue operations conducted on 16 December 1943, for members of the crew of the YP-426, has been addressed to your Group Commander. A copy of the letter is attached.

2. I wish to extend to you my own expression of appreciation and commendation for the manner in which you carried out the assignment given you. Such performance reflects credit to the service and to the command.

{SIGNED}
RICHARD T. COINER, JR,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

1 Incl:
Incl 1 – Ltr of Appreciation.

HEADQUARTERS 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
Office of the Group Communications Officer

J/WR/1

Hunter Field, Ga.
8 January 1944

This office has continued the program of training in all phases of communications with special emphasis being placed on British Radio Procedure. Special examinations were given all Combat Crews and the average grade made was 82%. The Group Communications School has nearly completed its function as nearly 85% of combat crew personnel have been checked out in Code and Blinker.

Special instructions in the use of IFF and VHF equipment were given combat crews and communications personnel by the VHF-IFF Mobile Unit of 3AF. These series of courses lasted five days and attendance ran very high.

All teletype operators and teletype mechanics continued the training program set up in November and have been checked out in accordance with 3AF Memo 50-14. Every effort was made to secure direct teletype communication with our higher headquarters in order that all teletype personnel might receive additional practical training.

The Group Telephone System has been functioning on an 18 hour basis. The Squadrons have shortages of telephone operators so other communications personnel were trained in the operation of the Group Switchboard until these shortages can be supplied.

Group Communications and Squadron Communications sections were inspected by Major Fisher, AAF Field Inspector and Lt. Green, 3AF Comm Inspector. Reports of these inspections were satisfactory and discrepancies found have been corrected.

The 596th and 597th Squadron Communications sections are now on Field Maneuvers and will receive extensive practical experience with the operation of radio field equipment.

HEADQUARTERS 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FE/EGM/2
Hunter Field, Georgia

5 January 1944

Historical Report of Engineering Section, 397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF, for the period 1 December to 31 December 1943.

1. Lectures and meetings have been conducted in all Engineering sections to discuss failures and difficulties in Engineering, and how to prevent further failures and difficulties that may occur.
2. As there was a considerable amount of Hydraulic trouble a school was conducted in Hydraulics and personnel from each Squadron were qualified as Hydraulic Specialists.
3. Personnel from all Engineering sections attended Packing and Crating Schools.
4. A school in Aircraft Carburetors was held and personnel from each Squadron were qualified as Carburetor Specialists.
5. All Tech Supply Officers attended the Personnel Equipment School.
6. Methods were accomplished in checking Hydraulic Pump conditions before failures occur.
7. Engineering sections of the 596th and 597th Bomb Squadrons made preparations for change of station for the purpose of conducting maneuvers.
8. Monthly inspection was made by the Group Technical Inspector through the Group.

{SIGNED}
ELTON G. MORROW,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Engineering Officer.

HEADQUARTERS 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FE/FES/2
Hunter Field, Georgia

5 January 1944

Historical Report of Armament Section, 397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF, for the period 1 December to 31 December 1943.

During the month of December 1943, the major object of training was to qualify as many of the personnel as possible. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of the personnel went to the range and fired; fifteen percent (15%) qualified. The present status of personnel firing weapons is as follows:

Headquarters	96%
596 th Bombardment Squadron	96%
597 th Bombardment Squadron	92%
598 th Bombardment Squadron	97%
599 th Bombardment Squadron	89%

The estimate date of completion of all small arms firing is 15 January 1944.

All armament personnel have been trained in the correct procedure in loading AN-M-54 Incendiary clusters. Approximately 100 clusters were loaded during the month.

Ordinance sections were trained in fusing and loading 100 pound Demolition bombs. Each Squadron fused and loaded approximately 150 M30 bombs.

{SIGNED}
FRED E. SEALE, JR.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Armament Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR
PERIOD OF JANUARY 1944.

During the entire month of January, squadrons of the Group participated in maneuvers and demonstrations, and the routine training programs were necessarily subordinated because of this. From 1 January to 15 January, the 596th and 597th Bomb Squadrons underwent training in maneuvers at Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana, being attached to the First Tactical Air Division for this purpose. After a period of unfavorable weather, the combat crews flew several missions successfully. From 16 January to 31 January, the 598th and 599th Bomb Squadrons participated in demonstrations and maneuvers at Lawson Field, Georgia, Sheppard Field, Texas, Godman Field, Kentucky, and Atterbury Army Air Field, Indiana.

A team of III Bomber Command inspectors visited the group during the period 19-23 January, covering all phases of the unit's activities. Particular emphasis was placed upon stepping-up training activities as necessary to prepare the group fully to meet standards required for overseas duty. This was reflected in the varied training programs carried out by practically all departments and activities.

Making of transfers and reclassification work continued to occupy an important place in the adjustment of personnel shortages and overages. A total of 3 officers and 11 enlisted men joined the Group, and a total of 12 officers and 21 enlisted men were transferred out, for a net loss of 9 officers and 10 enlisted men.

{SIGNED}
THOMAS E. McLEOD,
Major, Air Corps,
Group Historian.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

The Group Intelligence Section participated in maneuvers throughout the month of January with squadrons of the Group. The Group S-2 and the Group Photo Officer, and part of staffs, accompanied the 596th and 597th Bomb Squadrons to Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana for the first half of the month. The Asst Group S-2, the Photo Interpretation Officer and part of staffs accompanied the 598th and 599th Bomb Squadrons during last half of month, at Lawson Field, Georgia, Sheppard Field, Texas, Godman Field, Kentucky and Atterbury Army Air Field, Indiana.

These field problems afforded excellent opportunity for Group and Squadron Intelligence Officers and men to gain practical experience in performing functions of Intelligence sections under conditions representing combat experience. Work was performed in the planning and preparation of strategic bombing and ground-support missions, in cooperation with Operations Officers and other section heads of group and squadrons. Briefing and Interrogating of combat crews, preparation of mission reports, processing of information, and keeping of ground situation and air situation maps received considerable attention.

Intelligence training was conducted at the home base, and in maneuver areas, as time permitted. Emphasis was placed on aircraft recognition training and security and censorship during the month. During the latter part of the month, a more extensive Group training schedule was adopted to provide coverage of all required training subjects. For January a total of 14 hours intelligence training were scheduled for all personnel; 20 hours for combat crews only; and 2 hours for combat intelligence personnel only. In addition individual squadron intelligence sections conducted additional intelligence training. All Group and Squadron intelligence officers, the Group Photo Officer and Photo Interpreter were scheduled for lectures, as well as non-commissioned officer section heads.

During the period 19-23 January, Lt Col H. A. Johnson, Asst A-2, III Bomber Command, inspected the intelligence offices of Group and Squadrons. Following the inspection, action was taken to correct conditions noted in preparation for POM check at a later date.

Several officers and men of the intelligence sections attended special schools during the month. During the period 10-15 January, 2nd Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake attended Air Ground Support School, Camp Davis, N. C. During period 17-31 January, Capt Gordon C. Hamilton, S-2, 599th Bomb Sq, attended the Escape and Evasion School, Washington, D. C.; Corporal Charles W.

Johnson, Hq Intelligence clerk, with two other men from squadron intelligence sections, attended Landfall Techniques School, MacDill Field, Florida, from 19 January to 26 January 1944.

{SIGNED}
THOMAS E. McLEOD,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

Key Personnel:

Major K. C. Dempster	S-3
Major W. D. Snyder	Group Bombardier
Captain E. W. Udick	Group Navigator
Captain W. Rafkind	Group Communications Officer
Captain H. T. Watson	Group Tactical Inspector
Captain G. D. Hughes	Assistant S-3

Mean average of 43 airplanes assigned; 30, or 72% flyable.

5492 pilot hours. 2746 plane hours. 89.29 plane hours per day. 2.08 hours per plane per day.

Average number of pilots assigned: 130. Average number of hours per day per assigned pilot: 1.36.

All Squadrons participated in maneuvers from Atterbury Army Air Field during this period.

Aircraft accidents: 1 (8 casualties).

Change in personnel: Lt Col F. W. Wood, Jr. transferred to 597th Bombardment Squadron.

{SIGNED}
GEORGE D. HUGHES,
Captain, Air Corps,
Assistant S-3.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

During the month of January the communications personnel received intensive field training while on maneuvers at Atterbury Army Air Field; especially all radio operator gunners, ground radio operators, and the telephone and teletype operators. Actual field equipment was used and much valuable experience gained in the setting up and the operation of this equipment.

The shortage of telephone operators was solved by setting up a Telephone Operators School. The necessary personnel (12 EM) were trained and reclassified as telephone operators.

A school for cryptographers was conducted by the Group Cryptographers for the purpose of training officers and enlisted men to complete the T/O of the Squadrons. A total of 2 officers and 6 enlisted men have already completed this course. Special emphasis was placed on AR 380-5 and other current security regulations.

The Group Communications School has continued its program of training and at present approximately 90% of all combat personnel have completed the necessary training in Code and Blinker.

The Group and Squadron Communications Sections were inspected by III Bomber Command Communications Inspector. Discrepancies as noted by the Inspector were corrected.

A shortage of communications personnel still exists and plans for further training and reclassifications are being formulated.

{SIGNED}
WILLIAM RAFKIND,
Captain, Air Corps,
Communications Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE ENGINEERING SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

Airplanes carried out scheduled maneuvers favorably, accompanied by Captain E. G. Morrow (Group Engineering Officer).

Monthly inspections were conducted by the Group Technical Inspector throughout the Group.

A school was held by III Bomber Command Headquarters on spark plugs, ignition, and electrical systems of the B-26 aircraft. Personnel were instructed on proper methods for reconditioning spark plugs.

A report on trouble caused by Vickers Pumps, on B-26 aircraft, was submitted to Major Kelly, ASC, Patterson Field, Fairfield, Ohio.

A school was held by a factory representative of Vickers Manufacturing Company on hydraulic and accessories. All Squadron Engineering Personnel attended the school on 14 January 1944.

A school was conducted by Captain E. G. Morrow, on AAF Form 41-B's. All Squadron Flight Chiefs, Crew Chiefs, and Squadron Inspectors attended this course.

A school on type A-2 lighting equipment and operation was conducted in this Group and all Engineering Personnel instructed.

A school on emergency refueling of aircraft was conducted in this Group and all Engineering Personnel instructed.

{SIGNED}
ELTON G. MORROW,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Engineering Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE SUPPLY & TRANSPORTATION SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

On 1 January 1944 this office made arrangements for movement of the 596th and 597th Bombardment Squadrons to Atterbury Army Air Field, Indiana.

On 2 January 1944 a meeting of the Base Project Supply Board was held with Squadron Commanders and Supply Officers as a result of moving orders received by 397th Bombardment Group. On or about January third a showdown inspection was held in accordance with POM, dated 1 August 1943.

On 15 January 1944 preparation was made for movement of the 598th and 599th Bombardment Squadrons to Atterbury Army Air Field, Indiana. The Group Commander and Group Supply Officer traveled on the 599th troop train to Atterbury Army Air Field, Indiana.

Inspection by III Bomber Command of 596th and 597th Bombardment Squadron Supply Sections.

Weekly inspections were conducted by the Group Supply and Transportation Officer of the Squadron Supply and Transportation sections.

Three hours of instruction on POM, AIR-POM, and IO & I was given by the Group Supply Officer to Squadron Supply personnel.

All requisitions of the four squadrons were edited by the Group Supply Officer.

{SIGNED}
CLAUD S. FUNDERBURK,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Supply and
Transportation Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE ARMAMENT SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY
1944.

Airplanes carried out scheduled maneuvers and put on demonstrations at various fields to show the effectiveness of Medium Altitude Precision Bombing.

Monthly inspections were conducted by Group Technical Inspector throughout the Group.

A school was held by the Squadron Armament Officers on caliber .50 machine guns, bomb racks, power turrets, and gunsights. All armament personnel, bombardier navigators, radio gunners, engineer gunners, flight chiefs, and crew chiefs attended this course.

Flight chiefs and crew chiefs were instructed in Position Firing and fired Familiarization Course on Towed Targets and Ground Targets at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The 3-A2 Gunnery Trainer (Jam Handy) was operated 14 hours daily with an average operating time of two hours per week for each Bombardier navigator, engineer gunner, radio gunner, and armorer gunner.

Sixteen airdrome defense crews fired the familiarization course on .50 Machine Gun (Heavy Barrel).

{SIGNED}
Earl Trull, 18042317,
T/Sgt, Hq 397th Bomb Gp.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE CHAPLAIN'S SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
for the period 1 January 1-31, 1944.

While the several squadrons of the 397th Bombardment Group were on maneuvers this month the personnel on the home base was reduced with a corresponding decrease in the Chaplain's personal contacts. The regular schedule of service was held and the usual publicity program and promotion activities were maintained.

Late in the month occurred a tragic accident when a plane of the 598th Squadron crashed killing four officers and four enlisted men. The Chaplain knew each one personally and corresponded with each of the bereaved families. While it is difficult to estimate what good can come from this sad experience the Chaplain has experienced a strengthening of friendship with many of the comrades of the men who were lost and in numerous instances there can be seen evidence of more thoughtfulness among the men as well as heightened care and determination in the performance of duty. We can only believe God knows best.

The Chaplain's promotion from 1st Lieutenant to Captain was effective December 29, 1943.

{SIGNED}
CLARENCE R. COMFORT, JR.,
Chaplain (Capt) AAC

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF, FOR THE PERIOD OF FEBRUARY 1944.

The month of February was a period of great activity for all squadrons and departments of the group, completing final training and organizing for movement overseas.

On 9 February 1944, the inspectors of the III Bomber Command arrived for final inspection. On 10 February the AAF inspectors arrived to begin POM check. Having satisfactorily passed these very thorough examinations, the personnel of the group felt they were well on the road to accomplish their primary mission.

New planes arrived for the squadrons, and were checked and placed into operation. Issuance of equipment, completion of physical tests, and last minute scrutiny of personnel records were the all-important matters before the group, and were completed with smoothness and efficiency.

On 24 February 1944, the Commanding Officer, Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr., with the Base Commanding Officer, Colonel L. L. Koontz, reviewed the troops of the 397th Group. Colonel Koontz delivered an address of commendation and delivered an inscribed trophy award to Colonel Coiner for the 397th Group. This commendation (copies of which are attached as Exhibit 1) warmly praised the personnel of the 397th for their exemplary conduct and spirit of cooperation while stationed for four months at Hunter Field. Colonel Coiner responded to the presentation and commendation, and expressed, for his men, the friendly feeling which they hold for officers and men of Hunter Field.

During the latter part of the month, the Unit Publication "Bomburst" was distributed by the Special Services Officer, Captain J. A. D'Andrea, in the form of a souvenir issue. This contains photographs of key officer and non-commissioned officer personnel and articles by certain staff members. Since this issue of "Bomburst" is a good representation of the 397th Group, copies are being attached as Exhibit 2.

On 24 February 1944, Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr., with the first contingent of the air echelon, departed from Hunter Field in the newly-proven B-26 Martin "Marauders" for overseas duty. The following day, 25 February, the remainder of the air echelon, which was authorized to leave at that time, took off with the remaining planes for the same destination.

The remainder of the personnel in the group under the command of Major F. E. Ebeling, and the several squadron executive officers, acting for the squadron commanders who departed by air, remained at Hunter Field for the

balance of the month to complete final details and prepare for the day when they, too, would proceed on a journey to re-join the air echelon. Thus the month of February proved to be one of the most varied in the life of the group. Morale has continued high, and officers and men are in good spirit to perform whatever duties lie ahead.

{SIGNED}
THOMAS E. McLEOD,
Major, Air Corps,
Actg Gp Historical Officer.

HEADQUARTERS
THIRD AIR FORCE STAGING WING

G-C-k

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

IN REPLY REFER TO:

HUNTER FIELD, GEORGIA

3AFSW 201.22 (21 Feb 44)

21 February 1944

Subject: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 397th Bomb Group, Hunter Field, Georgia.

1. The Commanding Officer, his staff officers, non-commissioned officers, and all other military personnel of the 397th Bomb Group, Hunter Field, Georgia, are hereby commended for their excellent conduct, attention to duty, and observance of regulations while they were stationed at this base under the administration supervision of Headquarters Third Air Force Staging Wing from the period of approximately 28 November 1943 to 24 February 1944.

2. Military personnel of the 397th Bomb Group, which includes the 596th, 597th, 598th, and 599th Bomb Squadrons, have maintained rigid training schedules while at Hunter Field under many adverse circumstances and have performed their duties in a manner to bring credit to themselves and the favorable attention of this command. In addition, the cooperation extended by every member of the 397th Bomb Group toward the military personnel of this command while the Bomb Group was being processed and staged for overseas movement was accomplished in a superior manner never before equaled by any unit being processed or staged at Hunter Field, Georgia.

3. In token of the high regard this command has for members of the 397th Bomb Group, and in particular to its commanding officer, Colonel Richard T. Coiner, AC, this commendation is exemplified in the presentation of an inscribed trophy award which is hereby entrusted to the care of Colonel Richard T. Coiner, and given through this means to each member of the 397th Bomb Group.

4. The good wishes of this command will follow you wherever the missions of your group will take you. May your endeavors constantly be crowned with further success and achievement of credit.

{SIGNED}
L. L. KOONTZ
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF F/CSF/7
Office of Group Transportation and Supply Section
HUNTER FIELD, GEORGIA

MEMORANDUM)

5 March 1944

RE) Historical Report of the Group Supply and Transportation
Section, Headquarters, 397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF, for the period of
February 1944

1. Weekly meetings were held with the Squadron Supply and Squadron Tech Supply Officers
2. Movement Orders dated 5 February 1944, Washington, D. C. were received and explained to Squadron Supply personnel.
3. Weekly inspections were made of Squadron Supply sections.
4. This office supervised squadron activity in turning in training equipment listed in O.E.R., and TO & E.
5. Strict supervision was conducted by this office over Squadrons' Packing and Crating for overseas movement.
6. Arrangements were made by this office with Base Rail Transportation Officer for movement of Group personnel and equipment to Port of Embarkation.
7. Weekly inspections of Squadron Transportation sections were conducted. Group Motor pool was closed and Squadrons instructed to dispatch all vehicles from Squadron Supply rooms.
8. All buildings occupied by Squadron and Group activity were cleaned and turned over to Base except Group Headquarters Building and Squadron Area buildings.

{SIGNED}
CLAUD S. FUNDERBURK,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Supply &
Transportation Officer.

HEADQUARTERS 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
Office of the Group Armament
HUNTER FIELD, GEORGIA

Q/FES/7

MEMORANDUM)

5 March 1944

RE :) Historical Report of the Group Armament Section, 397th
) Bombardment Group (M) AAF, for period of February, 1944.

1. Orders were received to transfer all airplanes in the Group. Each airplane was given a one hundred hour inspection before transfer.
2. New airplanes were received and inspected. All planes are ready for bombing and gunnery. Only a few minor technical order changes are necessary before each is ready for combat.
3. Small arms were issued to all personnel in Group Headquarters.
4. All gunnery training equipment was returned to the 93rd Sub-Depot.
5. The table of organization for a medium bombardment group was changed to include a Group Ordnance Officer and two non-commissioned officers. This relieves the Group Armament Officer from Ordnance responsibilities.

{SIGNED}
FRED E. SEALE, JR.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Armament Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE CHAPLAIN'S SECTION
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
for the period 1 February 1-29, 1944.

In addition to the regularly scheduled services for each Sunday of the month there was held: (a) a memorial service for the brave men of the 598th Squadron killed the preceding month in a plane crash (held in Theatre # 3 with Colonel Coiner assisting and a large number attending), (b) four new planes blessed at the request of the pilots, (c) two adult baptisms at impressive services in the Chapel, (d) the preparation and distribution of the Group Chaplain's Prayer Book for wives, mothers, and sweethearts, (e) and the distribution of Testaments of the three faiths during the staging of the air Echelon. These above mentioned items are of more practical religious value than any number of formal worship services in the Chaplain's opinion and represent most satisfying labor expended.

The departure of the Air Echelon on two successive days was magnificent. The Chaplain (and Mrs. Chaplain) aided many families during these tense hours and would pay a high tribute to their courage and bravery. They smiled through tears. Their example in the hardest of farewells would make anyone proud. Such hardihood would shame any who display a failure of devotion to our country's cause. God bless them. It is a great privilege to be their Chaplain as well as the Chaplain of their men.

{SIGNED}
CLARENCE R. COMFORT, JR.,
Chaplain (Capt) AAF

HISTORICAL REPORT OF SPECIAL SERVICES OF THE
397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD
OF FEBRUARY 1944.

The physical training program was stepped up during the month of February. The departure of the air echelon accounted for more time being devoted to both calisthenics and recreation. The post physical training area accommodated the large classes very satisfactory.

The Group basketball team was entered in the Gold Medal Basketball Tournament. The playoffs are to start early in March.

Weekly orientation lectures were given throughout the month. Background of World War I and World War II, current events, English customs and their monetary system, and other topics were discussed at these sessions. Maps showing the latest positions of the Allies and their attacks on enemy territory helped in making the talks interesting.

The social functions of the Group called for weekly Squadron Dances for enlisted men at the Enlisted Mens Service Club. These affairs were very well attended. A Group officer's party was held February 13 at the Hunter Field Officers Club.

The 397th "talent group" provided the entertainment at the enlisted men's and officer's parties. The members of the "group" also participated in the weekly soldier shows given at the Enlisted Mens Service Club.

A souvenir issue of Bomburst, the Group publication, made its appearance the latter part of the month. This issue included pictures of the Group Commanding Officer, Group Staff, Squadron Staffs, the Marauder, and other pictures. The demand for extra copies exceeded the first run which was sufficient to provide one copy for each man.

New athletic equipment was distributed to the Squadrons for distribution among the men pending overseas shipment. Arrangements were made for the mailing of many periodicals (popular magazines and newspapers) to this Group when it reaches its proper destination.

Captain Joseph A. D'Andrea is the officer in charge of all Special Service events in the Group. Lt. Arnold L. Mahlum is the Assistant Special Service Officer. Corporal Raymond G. Nemoff is the Special Service non-com.

{SIGNED}
JOSEPH A. D'ANDREA,

Captain, AAF,
Special Service Officer.

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

The following is an Annual Report of Medical Department activities of the 397th Bombardment Group (M). As this is the first annual report in the ETO, the date of activation of the Group and the summary of the Early History of the Group is included.

ACTIVATION AND EARLY HISTORY

The 397th Bombardment Group (M) was activated on paper at MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida, 20 April 1943. The Group consisted of Headquarters Detachment, 596th, 597th, 598th, and 599th Bombardment Squadrons. Actually the first personnel gathered on 10 May 1943 at MacDill Field and the following day about 300 personnel, mostly officers, including the Group Surgeon and four (4) Squadron Surgeons, were sent for a months course in "Applied Combat Tactics" at the School of Applied Tactics at Orlando, Florida. The five (5) medical officers had a two (2) weeks didactic course at Orlando, mainly concerned in the problems and diseases Flight Surgeons could expect in the field. This was embellished by talks and lectures by Flight Surgeons recently returned from various War Theatres. Following this the Medical Officers and remaining personnel taking the course were sent for two (2) weeks in the field at Montbrook, Florida. During this two week period the Bomb Group started its first actual flying and the five (5) Medical Officers under the supervision of the local Flight Surgeon and Medical Dispensary Surgeon worked out some general medical problems that might be encountered while working with a Bomb Group in the field. This two (2) week period was important as it gave the Medical Officers a chance to become familiar with their respective Squadron flying personnel. Another feature of this two week period that was helpful from a medical standpoint was the fact that all our more seriously ill personnel or other casualties were evacuated by Air Evacuation Planes to the Air Force Hospital at Orlando. This gave us an early chance to see the effectiveness of Air Evacuation of casualties in the field. During the month period new personnel came from the 21st Bomb Group (Parent Group) and other groups at Elgin Field,

Florida, with individuals and small groups being added daily from all over the country.

Upon the return of the personnel taking the course at the School of Applied Tactics 15 June 1943, the training of the Group in all phases of activity began in earnest. The Medical Detachment at this time consisted of sixteen (16) enlisted men, four (4) Squadron Surgeons, the Group Dental Surgeon and Group Surgeon. In ten (10) days another group of twenty (20) medical enlisted personnel were added to the detachment from Lawsen General Hospital. The Bomb Group at this time was designated an O.T.U. or Operational Training Unit in the 1st phase of training. Medical Department activities at this time consisted of processing all personnel with overseas physical examinations and weeding out the unfit for overseas duty. At the same time, those with physical defects that needed corrections to make them eligible for overseas duty were being cared for. All personnel were being given the necessary immunizations required for overseas service. Flying personnel were being checked over with the required WD GO Form 64 examination in the case of officers, and the required combat crew physical in the case of the enlisted men. In the meantime, these flying personnel with a fear of flying, anxiety states, or lack of aptitude for flying were being weeded out. The Group and Squadron Surgeons were making every effort to know their flying personnel for future reference. In addition to this, the Medical Detachment personnel were being given lectures, practical demonstrations, training films and strips, in First Aid Procedures including treatment of wounds, control of hemorrhage, treatment of burns, fractures, evacuation of patients, pharmacology, and also Field Sanitation, including water supply, disposal of waste, mess hall sanitation and personal hygiene. Other topics taken up were Hygiene in the Tropics, Arctic, Desert and Tropical Medicine, Aviation Medicine, Venereal Disease and its prophylaxis, demonstrations and erection of sanitary devices, First Aid in Flight, Artificial Respiration, Insect Control, Malaria and its control and studies of various common diseases encountered in the Army. These lectures and demonstrations were usually carried out in small groups so the men could get personal instructions. Current AAF, 3rd Air Force, and 3rd

Bomber Command directives concerning medical training were used for these courses. References included TM 8-220, TM 21-10, TM 8-010, AR 40-205, FM 6-40, FM 21-10, amongst others and FS 8-3, 8-6, 8-35 and TF 8-155, 1-487, 1-313, 8-154, 8-150. Other manuals, film strips and films were shown but complete record of these is not available at present.

Other duties of the medical detachment personnel at this time were manning ambulances covering airplane crashes both on and off the field. At this early stage of training in the B-26, aircraft accidents were not uncommon. The Group and Squadron medical clerks were kept fairly busy with the weekly and monthly reports and were learning the proper procedures for handling aircraft accident reports.

The Bomb Group spent in the neighborhood of six (6) months at MacDill Field completing the first and second phase of O.T.U. training. During this time the flying, ground and medical personnel were becoming proficient in their respective fields. The personnel lived in barracks. The mess, general health and sanitation were good and there were no unusual epidemics or diseases encountered. A good many of the soldiers seen in sick call were suffering from Trichophytosis or "Athletes Foot" commonly seen in warmer climates, but this never had serious proportions. During this period, twenty six (26) flying personnel were killed in Aircraft Accidents, including Lt. Paul Johnson, Squadron Surgeon for the 599th Bombardment Squadron. He was replaced in two (2) weeks by Lt. Glenn L. Judson.

Medical training courses in Basic and Advanced Sanitation and First Aid were started for all flying personnel and ground personnel to meet all current training directives. These were kept up through all three (3) phases of training and were usually accompanied by practical demonstrations by the medical detachment personnel.

Second phase training was completed August 28th and third phase started on the 12th October 1943. The Groups first change of station came with the movement from MacDill Field to the Avon Park Bombing Range, Avon Park, Florida. While at Avon Park the personnel were medically reprocessed by the

Station Hospital Staff. Immunizations, blood types, Spectacle surveys, dental surveys including MD Form 79 for flying personnel, identification tags, first aid training, altitude training, instructions in treatment of gas casualties and overseas physical examinations were all brought up to date.

The stay at Avon Park was brief and 1 November 1943 the Group moved by Air, Rail and Motor convoy to Hunter Field, Georgia. These two moves in relatively short time gave the medical department a chance to work out standard operational procedures for group movements. Previously group SOP's had been prepared for operations in the field. While the group was at Hunter Field it completed third phase training and had its Pre P.O.M., and P.O.M. inspections and the air echelon was staged for overseas movement. During November and December of this period, the medical department, which was now up to full strength completed the prescribed courses in advanced first aid and sanitation for the flying and ground personnel. An excellent Air Force Film on first aid for combat crew casualties in flight was shown several times. Several malaria and venereal disease films were shown to all personnel with accompanying lectures by medical officers. The first aid and sanitation courses were accompanied by many hours of practical demonstrations in the field by the medical detachment personnel. In the meantime the medical detachment personnel completed, under the guidance of the medical officers, their training programs.

In January 1944 the 596th and 597th Bombardment Squadrons underwent training maneuvers at Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana; from 1 January to 15 January being attached to the First Tactical Air Division for this purpose. From 16 January to 31 January the 598th and 599th Bombardment Squadrons participated in demonstrations and maneuvers at Lawson Field, Georgia, Sheppard Field, Texas, Godman Field, Kentucky and Atterbury Field, Indiana. During this period the 598th Bombardment Squadron lost eight (8) men killed in aircraft accident while on maneuvers.

The medical detachment personnel were split up in January during the maneuver period. The squadron personnel made the trip to Atterbury Army Air Field with their respective squadrons in rotation, while the rest of the personnel

remained at Hunter Field. An extensive dental survey was made at this period in an attempt to get all personnel in Class IV prior to departure for overseas.

In February 1944 the Group made its final preparations for overseas movement. The medical detachment completed all the necessary immunizations and the MD Form 61's were brought up to date. All personnel physically unqualified for overseas were transferred out. Spectacle and dental surveys were completed and identification tags also made complete. During this four (4) month period there were no unusual diseases. The Group venereal disease rates were consistently low. In December there was the usual increased incidence in upper respiratory infection met with at this season of the year. The Group personnel lived in barracks and the messing and sanitary facilities were adequate. The final 3rd Bomber Command inspection was held 9 February 1944 and the final P.O.M. inspection 10 February 1944. During the period from activation up to the time of departure for overseas thirty-four (34) flying personnel were killed in aircraft accidents. All of these personnel were killed outright. In one plane, the tail gunner escaped uninjured and the rest were killed. In another, four (4) men parachuted to safety after the plane collided with a P-51, but the pilot and tail gunner went down with the plane and were killed. In the remaining planes that crashed all died immediately, so no medical aid could be administered.

The final staging for the flying personnel was held at Hunter Field from 20 February 1944 until 24 February 1944. All flying personnel were given a final physical inspection at the Station Hospital and a check-up in the staging line within the forty-eight (48) hour period prior to departure for overseas.

On 24 February 1944, Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr., the Group Commanding Officer, with the first contingent of the air echelon, in new B-26 Martin Marauders departed from Hunter Field for overseas. The Group Surgeon departed on the same day with the air echelon, the remainder of the medical detachment personnel including the Squadron Surgeons remained behind to go overseas with the ground echelon. The following day, 25 February 1944, the remainder of the air echelon departed for overseas after a thorough briefing on

Malaria, Venereal Disease, Insect Control, Personal Hygiene, and other medical problems which might be encountered on the Southern Route to England. Particular stress was given to problems which might be encountered if forced down at sea, in the jungle or on the desert. On the trip overseas the group left Morrison Field, Florida 25 and 26 February 1944 and proceeded by way of Puerto Rico, South America, Africa and then North to the final destination in Southeastern England arriving at Station 154, Gosfield, on the 7th, 9th, and 11th March 1944. The Group had one (1) plane crash and burn up on take off in South America but no one was hurt. One pilot was seized with a convulsion in mid-air after leaving Atkinson Field in British Guiana. The co-pilot took over and brought the plane back to the field safely. At first this seizure was thought to be on an epileptic basis, but subsequently he was returned to the U.S. and it was decided, anxiety, lack of sleep, tension and inability to digest his food because of the impending overseas move had brought on the convulsion. He has since been returned to flying in the Zone of Interior. No other illnesses of any consequences were encountered on the overseas move. There were no casualties and none of the personnel contracted Malaria or Venereal Disease. They had been well briefed prior to departure by their Squadron Surgeons and they were continuously briefed at every field en-route by the local Flight Surgeons as to the local diseases and methods of preventing them. They all took Atabrine tablets daily en-route and in the Tropics slept under mosquito netting. Aerosol Pyrethrum Bombs were used to spray the planes at departure and landing.

The ground personnel including the medical detachment personnel remained at Hunter Field until 13 March 1944 when they left by rail for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The final staging of the ground personnel took place at Camp Kilmer. The final physical inspection was held and three (3) ill personnel were left behind. On the 23 March 1944 the ground personnel of the Bombardment Group boarded the Italian liner SATURNIA in New York Harbor. The trip to England via Scotland was uneventful and the personnel arrived safely

at Station 154, Gosfield, East Anglia, 4 April 1944. There were no casualties or illnesses of any consequence on the trip over.

ETO-----MARCH 1944 to SEPTEMBER 1944

ENGLAND

The air echelon of the 397th Bombardment Group had all arrived at Station 154, Gosfield, England, by March 1944. Immediate flying and ground training to prepare the group for operational missions was instituted. The Group Surgeon at this time was the only member of the medical section overseas, but the medical section of the 304th Service Group and the 206th Medical Dispensary (Avn) had arrived a few days previously and were established in the Station Sick Quarters. The Station Sick Quarters were ample with two twelve bed wards, emergency surgery room, and suitable office space for the medical personnel. These sick quarters were of a similar pattern to those at all RAF Fields and American Fields located in England and were superior to any we had occupied in the U.S. Several lectures on first aid in flight, local health problems including venereal disease and personal hygiene were given at this time by the Group Surgeon. The main medical problem at this time was the frequency of upper respiratory infections amongst the flying personnel. This was mainly due to the usual seasonal incidence. Other medical problems were mainly concerned with improving the general sanitation of the station and establishing the officers and enlisted mens messes on a sound sanitary basis. The personnel were all housed in Niessen Huts and there was no crowding. On 5 April 1944 the ground personnel arrived at AAF Station 154, Gosfield, England, after a trip by rail from the disembarkation point in Scotland. The Squadron Surgeons and entire medical detachment set up for operation in the Station Sick Quarters in conjunction with the Service Group medical detachment. On the 15th of April 1944 the entire personnel of the 397th Bombardment Group departed from AAF Station 154 and transferred to AAF Station 168, Rivenhall, Essex, by air, truck and ambulance. By this time the medical detachment which had left its T/BA

equipment in the U.S., had received complete Group and Squadron T/BA equipment from the supply platoon and one (1) ambulance had been turned over to each Squadron. Medical supplies were readily obtainable on requisition through the 204th Service Group Surgeon. After preliminary reconnaissance four (4) Squadron aid stations and one (1) service squadron aid station were set up in Picket Posts in the new squadron living sites. The Squadron Surgeons, one medical NCO, one medical clerk, one ambulance driver and one ambulance aid man staffed these Picket Post aid stations. A medical charge of quarters was present at all times and the squadron surgeon lived in the Squadron site. The remaining four (4) medical detachment personnel in each squadron were assigned to duty at the Station Sick Quarters. This meant there were sixteen (16) squadron medical detachment personnel along with five headquarters detachment personnel working in the Station Sick Quarters in conjunction with the Group Surgeon and Dental Surgeon. At the same time the Service Group had twenty-four (24) medical detachment personnel and their Group Surgeon and Dental Officer working in the Station Sick Quarters working in conjunction with the 397th medical personnel. The Bomb Group used one 12 bed ward for their quarters sick cases and the Service Group another. A third ward was shared by both Service Group and Bomb Group officers. Sick, wounded or injured personnel were not kept at the Sick Quarters for more than seven (7) days. The more serious casualties were evacuated by ambulance direct to the 121st Station Hospital, about five (5) miles away. Hospital laundry was cleaned through the Station Quartermaster. It was felt that the above medical set-up functioned very well on the station. The Bomb Group Surgeon acted as Station Surgeon and the Bomb Group and Service Group medical personnel worked well together. The dispersed squadron aid stations in the squadron sites functioned exceptionally well. All personnel on the base were housed in Niessen Huts which were adequate and comfortable. The Bomb Group and Service Group each had a large consolidated enlisted mens mess and one large consolidated mess for officers which also housed a large comfortable officer's club. Standard British plumbing and latrines were used with adequate showers as well. These

were all indoors and presented no serious sanitary problems. The water supply was from a reservoir in a neighboring town and it was chlorinated at the source. Sewage disposal was by means of the Standard British Air Field Sewage Disposal Plant. British Standard grease traps of the "Baffle type" were used outside the mess hall. It was felt by this office that these never were entirely satisfactory for grease disposal. Garbage disposal was by contract with local farmers. Insect control was practically limited to fly control. Most British constructed bases had no screening in the messes, so flies were a problem to a certain extent. Fly paper, pyrethrum sprays and bombs were used and where possible screening was used to protect food. Fly born diseases presented no real problem. An extensive Venereal Disease control program was instituted under the Group Venereal Disease Control Officer. The use of individual mechanical and chemical prophylaxis was encouraged. Prophylactic stations were set up at the Station Sick Quarters and Squadron Aid Stations. These were supplemented with lectures, films and posters at frequent intervals. In the first two months in the ETO the station Venereal Disease rate was zero (0) and in the following two (2) months it was in the neighborhood of 30 per 1000 per annum.

During this period the base and Station Sick quarters were manned almost exclusively by U.S. military personnel. A small number of British civilians were used on the base under supervision of the Clerk of the Works to care for utilities, furnaces, plumbing, electricity and the sewage disposal plant; as well as laborers for care of the runways, etc.

The Station Dental care was very adequately handled under the supervision of the Bomb Group Dental Surgeon and the Service Group Dental Surgeon. The latter alternated between two fields caring for the Service Group personnel on each base. The regular T/BA Dental equipment was used.

The Bomb Group T/BA equipment, medical, was supplemented on the Station by British AtoZ Station Sick Quarters equipment which included beds, mattresses, blankets and accessory medical supplies and kitchen utensils and dishes. Hot food was carried from the consolidated mess hall in thermos containers and kept hot in the Station Sick Quarters kitchen prior to dispensing it

to the patients. No accessory nurses were used other than medical detachment personnel or have been used by this Group. A Veterinary officer has always been available for consultation on call from the 9th Bombardment Division (M).

On the 20th April 1944 the Bomb Group flew its first operational mission over enemy occupied France and subsequently during the rest of the month completed nine (9) operational missions. There were no casualties and no planes lost.

In May the Group flew twenty-nine (29) combat missions and the first casualties and fatalities were incurred. Two were killed by Flak and several wounded or injured in crash landings. A summary of Battle Casualties will be included further on in this report. The medical detachment now had five (5) ambulances in the Bomb Group and there were two in the Service Group. One ambulance was stationed with each squadron aid station and two kept at the Station Sick Quarters. The Squadrons would alternate covering the line with one (1) ambulance whenever flying was in progress. For missions one squadron ambulance with a squadron surgeon would be at flying control and one at the end of the runway for takeoff. These would remain throughout the mission. One half (½) an hour prior to expected time of return of the mission the other two squadron ambulances complete with drivers, aid men and squadron surgeons would report to the line, ready to remove any wounded or proceed to a crash landing. In the latter respect, medical personnel have been cautioned to keep their ambulances at a safe distance from crashed planes that catch on fire with live bombs. The Group Surgeon would usually station himself at the control tower with a jeep readily available. One surgeon remained at the Station Sick Quarters with two (2) ambulances available in case any casualties were brought in. Wounded were usually evacuated to the 121st Station Hospital after emergency treatment and plasma were given, if necessary. This S.O.P. for missions and casualties seemed to work very well.

In June and July the Group was very busy flying missions both before and after D-Day. In this period there were more casualties and some planes missing. In over two thousand (2000) sorties, this Group lost only one aircraft over enemy

territory setting the safety record for Medium Bombardment. The occupants of the lost plane were seen to parachute to safety after the plane was hit by Flak. By the end of July the Group had completed eighty-one (81) combat missions.

On 5 August 1944 the Group proceeded by rail, air and motor to Station 492, Hurn, England. Medical personnel were included in the Reconnaissance and Advanced echelon as well as the rear echelon. The physical set-up at Hurn was somewhat similar to that at Rivenhall, however, the Service Group had a separate Sick Quarters and their medical detachment worked independently of that of the Bomb Group. The Bomb Group was further augmented at this point by the 198th Medical Dispensary (Avn) with thirteen (13) enlisted men, a Flight Surgeon, Dental Surgeon, and Medical Administrative Officer in preparation for the cross channel movement. The four (4) squadrons continued to run their independent squadron aid stations and the Medical Dispensary (Avn) and Bomb Group personnel combined to run the Station Sick Quarters. Food, messing, bathing facilities, sewage disposal and waste disposal, water supply, laundry, etc were similar to Station 168. The Group continued to fly combat missions, completing 108 prior to departure for France. A P.O.M. inspection was held, immunizations were brought up to date, and final physical inspections held prior to the Group leaving for France, the end of August.

During our stay in England the Bomb Group had adequate officer's clubs and enlisted men's day rooms. The Red Cross and Special Service did excellent work providing entertainment, moving pictures, volleyball and other games for all personnel. The morale of the unit was good. The flying personnel had at least two (2) days leave a month and in most cases at least seven (7) days leave on rest at the 9th Air Force Rest Home during their stay in England. This served a definite beneficial purpose in relieving the tension of combat flying.

There were no serious epidemics or illnesses encountered during this period other than the usual incidence of infection in a temperate zone. During June following an evening meal at the consolidated mess, about three hundred (300) men came down with severe toxic food poisoning. The symptoms included diarrhea, vomiting, muscle cramps and in a few cases moderate shock and

delirium. Thirty-two (32) cases were evacuated to the Station Hospital and fifty-six (56) treated at the Station Sick Quarters, the remainder were treated at the Squadron Aid Stations. The following morning most of the men returned to duty and within two (2) days all were back to duty. The epidemic was attributed to bread pudding which was prepared too far in advance and cultures showed Staphylococcus Albus. Steps were taken to prevent future outbreaks of this sort.

Aside from battle casualties there were occasional bicycle and jeep accidents, but these were of a minor nature and no fatalities resulted.

ETO-----SEPTEMBER 1944 to JANUARY 1945

FRANCE

The Reconnaissance party, including a medical officer and two (2) medical detachment enlisted men, left for France on the 17th of August 1944 and the 198th Medical Dispensary (Avn) with its entire personnel left 21st of August 1944, to proceed by boat, truck and ambulance to Strip A-26 on the Normandy Peninsula. The main body of the Group including the ground and air echelon left 30th of August and 1st of September 1944 for France by boat and air. The Group and one Squadron Surgeon went by air and the remainder of the medical detachment personnel proceeded by boat. The Squadron now had a total of seven (7) ambulances and the Aviation Dispensary one (1). These along with all T/BA equipment and the necessary tentage were taken to France.

At Strip A-26 near Gorges, France, the entire Bomb Group and Services Group were housed in tents and all personnel were eating out of mess kits in Squadron messes. Rations for a few days were MCM, Ten in One (10 in 1), and later field ration "b" was obtained by the Quartermaster from a depot nearby. The airstrip had steel runways and was exceedingly muddy and was a considerable distance from the front so that only a few missions were flown and the Group only remained here two (2) weeks. During this time, the Medical Dispensary (Avn) had four (4) ward tents set up. One was used for sick call, two (2) for wards, and one (1) for medical personnel. The Bomb Group headquarters

medical detachment had one (1) ward tent set up for sick call, offices and supplies. The Aviation Dispensary had a mess tent, cook tent, two (2) supply tents and two (2) command tents set up in conjunction with a Dental tent, and a Command Tent used by headquarters medical personnel. The Aviation Dispensary Surgeon and Dental Surgeon, the Bomb Group Surgeon and Group Dental Surgeon lived in close proximity to these tents so medical aid was always nearby. The Service Group had a similar set-up on a smaller scale on the other side of the Airstrip. The Squadrons had their aid station set up in Pyramidal Tents in their respective sites. The Group standard S.O.P. for ambulances covering the line and the Sick Quarters was the same as in England. There were no casualties amongst flying personnel during this period. There were several casualties due to personnel investigating live German ammunition picked up as souvenirs. There were no serious epidemics and the Aviation Dispensary was able to handle about ten (10) to fifteen (15) bed patients, routinely, very capably. These patients were also fed by the Aviation Dispensary personnel from their own mess. More seriously ill patients were evacuated over rough roads to the 5th or 50th General Hospital located about ten (10) miles away. A goodly number of French people without any of their own medical aid available were treated by our dispensary or Squadron Surgeons.

At this station, pit latrines were used with standard covers. Soaking pit grease was used by the messes, and garbage was taken away by local farmers. Drinking water was obtained from an Engineering Water Point about five (5) miles away and hauled to our station in water trailers. It was chlorinated at the source. There was no serious insect problem. Hornets were prevalent and a source of annoyance to all.

On the 15th of September 1944, the air echelon left Strip A-26, and moved to Strip A-41 near Dreux, France. The ground echelon left the following day. The Medical Dispensary (Avn) personnel had left with the advance party in order to be set up to receive patients at the new post. Strip A-41 had been occupied by the Germans prior to the rapid advance of the Allies and it was damaged to some extent, but the runways were paved and the Group was able to become

operational immediately. The personnel of the Group were again housed almost entirely in tents. Squadron messes and mess kits were used and garbage was again disposed of by contract with local farmers. Water was obtained from the Service Group Chlorination and Filtration Unit set up in a fast moving clear stream nearby. The Medical Dispensary (Avn) was set up in a former German barracks building. There were numerous emergency calls for ambulances and medical personnel, because of road accidents on a nearby Red Ball Highway. A Railway Battalion operating near Dreux without medical personnel kept our Dispensary active. The Bomb Group personnel were being cared for as usual. Squadron Aid Stations were set up in tents as previously. Upper respiratory infections and Gastro Enteritis cases, as usual, formed the majority of cases in sick call and bed patients in the Dispensary. Several casualties and seriously ill patients were evacuated by ambulance to the 39th Field Hospital at Chartres. There were on two (2) slightly wounded flying personnel casualties incurred while at this Strip.

A local house of prostitution in Dreux created a Venereal Disease problem and eight (8) cases of Gonorrhoea were contracted before the house was effectively kept OFF LIMITS to all army personnel.

In October the Group had another change of station. On 4th of October the reconnaissance party moved from Strip A-41 Dreux, to Strip A-72, Mons-en-Chaussee, France. On 5th October and 6th of October the advanced echelon moved on to the new base. The move was made by air, truck and ambulance. This was the last move for the Group in 1944. The new Station was spread out over a considerable area. It also was a former German Base and various buildings and installations had either been previously bombed by Allied aircraft or partially or completely demolished by the retreating Germans. One problem on all these moves was the difficulty in securing adequate trucking for the extensive field equipment of the Medical Dispensary (Avn), and, to a less extent, that of the headquarters medical detachment. Four (4) two and one-half (2½) ton trucks were needed by the Dispensary and one by the Headquarters medical detachment.

The Medical Dispensary (Avn) set up a sick call and Sick Quarters in a former German building which was large enough to have two (2) twelve (12) bed wards, one for officers and one for enlisted men, in conjunction with a large room for emergency surgery, consultation, fluoroscopy and sick call. Running water with flush bowl latrines and hot water radiator heating was available in the same building. The headquarters medical detachment of the Bomb Group set up in this building in conjunction with the Aviation Dispensary. It was fairly centrally located and it functioned as a smooth running small hospital. Four (4) Bomb Group Squadrons and one (1) Service Squadron set up aid stations in their respective sites, which were widely dispersed about the field. The Squadron ground personnel lived in tents situated fairly close to their plane dispersal areas. The Combat Crew personnel of all four (4) Squadrons lived in one area in barracks buildings put up by the Germans. In this area they had a centrally located Combat Crew mess where a mixture of army and civilian mess personnel were used. The Squadron ground personnel had messes in tents in their respective sites. Mess kits were used, pit grease traps, and improvised mess rear cleaning facilities, with gasoline lines under the G.I. cans to heat the water. The headquarters detachment, Service Group, Station Complement, and attached units, were quartered in barracks or billeted in houses in small towns around the field. Latrines were of the pit type with standard Quartermaster boxes, unless the units were fortunate enough to have plumbing and flush bowl type latrines. In the Combat Crew area French squat type latrines were used. Showers were provided in four (4) different areas. Three (3) of these were improvised indoor affairs which functioned fairly well. One was the shower unit supplied to the Medical Dispensary as part of its Group Aid Station equipment.

In view of the approaching cold weather, an attempt was made to house as many personnel as possible. Tents were winterized and supplied with "Pot Bellied" stoves. Wood and coal were rationed out to all personnel for heating purposes. Drinking water was obtained from a deep well located in a neighboring town and chlorinated by the Service Group Water Purification unit.

The medical personnel of the dispensary lived in close proximity to the Sick Quarters and cook, supply, and mess tents were set up. Patients food was brought in hot and served on the wards.

The Group became operational the day after arrival and in spite of bad weather conditions in October, November and December, the Group was able to complete its 150th mission on the 27 December 1944. Casualties amongst flying personnel were light during October and November, but with the beginning of the air attacks against the German counter-offensive 23 to 27 December 1944, casualties were high and ten (10) planes with their entire personnel were missing in action on 23 December alone. Airplane crashes on take off and landings were more frequent, mainly due to bad weather conditions, and to battle damage. A few were due to the fact that many new inexperienced flying personnel were coming into the Group to replace more experienced crews that had completed their operational tour of sixty-five (65) combat missions. In view of the fact that the field was located not too far from the front it was occasionally used by planes of other Groups to drop off Flak casualties.

The Squadron's ambulances and Surgeons were kept busy covering the line on mission days. Wounded or injured were taken from the planes as rapidly as possible, after being given first aid. They were evacuated to the Medical Dispensary (Avn) where they were given plasma if necessary, and prepared for evacuation to the 39th Field Hospital in St. Quentin, fifteen (15) miles away. The less serious cases, who required less than a weeks hospitalization, were kept at the Medical Dispensary.

The following is a review of CASUALTIES sustained since the Group became operational 20 April 1944 up to the present, 25 January, 1945.

1. Number of Missions: 158
2. Sorties: 5442
3. Total number of Personnel dispatched on missions: 32,486
4. Total Casualties: 275
5. Killed in Action: 27
 - a. 13 from plane crashes.

- b. 6 from wounds.
 - c. 7 from drowning after crash landings.
 - d. 1 from parachute jump.
6. Missing in Action: 160
- a. Subsequently returned after escaping from enemy hands: 17.
 - b. Known to be Prisoners of War: 35.
 - c. Many more of the missing in action are believed to have parachuted from their planes and are now Prisoners of War.
7. Wounded in Action: 40
8. Injured in Action: 48 in Plane crashes.
9. Returned to Duty following Wounds or Injuries: 34
10. Position of Wounded or Injured in Plane

	PILOTS	CO-PILOTS	BOMB & NAV	RADIO G	ENGR G	ARMOR G
Wounded	1	8	11	7	8	5
Injured	8	7	7	10	9	7

11. Location and severity of wounds (47 wounds in 40 personnel)

	SLIGHT	MOD	SEVERE	FATAL	TOTAL
			SEVERE		
Head & Neck	2	3	1	4	10
Arms	2	7	0	0	9
Body	1	7	0	2	10
Legs	7	10	1	0	18

12. Location and severity of injuries (47 injuries sustained in crashes)

	SLIGHT	MOD	SEVERE	FATAL	TOTAL
			SEVERE		
Head & Neck	0	10	3	0	13
Arms	3	7	0	0	10
Body	2	3	1	2	8
Legs	6	10	0	0	16

Considering the total number of missions flown, 158, and the total casualties in the Group, 275, the casualty average is a little less than two (2) per mission. Actually the casualties usually occur in large numbers on special missions over targets where the Flak is heavy and accurate, or when fighter opposition is encountered. The Group had very many missions where no casualties occurred at all. It is felt that the B-26 is a very sturdy plane in combat and many were brought home safely with extensive Flak damage and without casualties.

The Body Armor or Flak suits worn by the personnel undoubtedly were instrumental in saving several lives. The Flak helmets used may have saved one or two of our personnel from serious injury, although two were killed when their helmets were pierced by large fragments of Flak.

Of the twenty-seven (27) killed in action all died almost immediately from their wounds or injuries. One that was hit by Flak in the shoulder died within two (2) hours, while on the way to the hospital after emergency treatment. Of the remaining eighty-seven (87) wounded or injured in action who were given medical attention, none died and thirty-four (34) have since returned to duty.

There have been 182 combat crew personnel who have completed their tour of duty of 65 missions and returned to the Zone of Interior presently. Five of these were suffering from border line Combat Flying Reaction.

Twenty-five (25) flying personnel have been sent to the Ninth Air Force Central Medical Establishment since the Group has been in the ETO, for review of medical problems on the recommendation of their Squadron Surgeons and Commanding Officers. Of these, fifteen (15) were suffering from Combat Flying Reaction, one (1) had a fear of flying, five (5) had medical disease and four (4) were recovering from injuries sustained in crashes. Twenty (20) of the twenty-five (25) cases were sent to the Zone of Interior. Of the five (5) remaining cases, three (3) were permanently disqualified for flying and remained in the ETO and two (2) returned to duty. Of the twenty (20) cases sent back to the Zone of Interior, twelve (12) were temporarily suspended from flying and eight (8) were kept on full flying status.

Eleven (11) members of the Group have recently been returned to the Zone of Interior on operational leaves. During the Groups period in France the combat personnel had an opportunity during September and October to get five (5) days operational leave in England and in November and early December two (2) days leave in Paris. This helped relieve the strain and tension of combat flying. The Red Cross and Special Service helped provide movies, volleyball, basketball games, and other entertainment to keep up the physical well being and morale of the personnel.

During October, November and December, the bulk of cases treated in the Sick Quarters were upper respiratory infections with Gastro Enteritis cases following next in line. There were the usual numerous minor injuries. One case of Jaundice subsequently turned out to be Vails disease and was evacuated to England. There were no epidemics. Scabies was fairly common and treated with Benayl Benzoate.

A rigid Venereal Disease program was instituted with emphasis on the use of mechanical and chemical prophylaxis and in spite of frequent exposures, the Group rate remained consistently low in France.

The Group finished the year in a series of missions in the last week of December. Casualties were fairly high due to the fury of the attempts to stem the German counter offensive, but the morale on the whole remained consistently good and the general health of the command was excellent. The entire medical personnel of the Bomb Group and Medical Dispensary (Avn) had a good year and gained much experience in handling combat casualties and working under field conditions.

{SIGNED}

ROBERT L. MCCOLLOM

Major, AC

Surgeon

397th Bomb Group

APRIL INSTALLMENT

Historical Report of Headquarters Detachment, 397th Bombardment Group (M)
(From 1 April 1944 to 30 April 1944)

* * *

For the members of the ground echelon, the month began somewhere at sea on board the SS Saturnia carrying troops from New York to Scotland. The air echelon which had arrived in the United Kingdom prior to the ground movement was busy in indoctrination and preparation for combat duty. Instructors from various groups in this command were present at station 154 to familiarize the newly arrived unit in combat procedure, tactics, navigation, communications and gunnery. While modifications were being made on the aircraft by the engineering and communications section, local "doughnut" missions were run daily.

The Saturnia anchored at Gourick, Scotland in the afternoon of Monday, 3 April 1944, but disembarkation didn't begin until the next morning. Three o'clock Wednesday morning, 5 April 1944, the main contingent of the Headquarters detachment arrived at Halstead, Essex. This contingent arrived in the first section of the rail movement that brought the Group from Scotland. Members of the advance air echelon assisted in unloading the cars and directing the movement by truck to AAF Station 154, Gosfield, Essex. Various sites on the field were assigned to the respective squadrons, and the Headquarters Detachment billeted with the 597th Bombardment Squadron. By authority ASFCKH 370.5, dated 20 March 1944, the boat movement of Headquarters detachment had transferred from the continental limits of the United States 22 March 44 and arrived AAF Station 154, 5 April 44 at 0315. Strength of the ship movement for Headquarters was 16 officers and 57 Enlisted Men.

The officers of the air echelon acting in the capacity of Headquarters and Squadron staffs were relieved by the regular assigned officers of the ground echelon, and the change was affected with the minimum amount of difficulty. OEL equipment and supplies began to flow in from various sub-depots in the United Kingdom, modifications on the aircraft were almost complete, and the combat crews were ready for their initiation in aerial combat.

15 April 1944 at 0930 the entire personnel of the 397th Bombardment Group departed from AAF Station 154 and transferred to AAF Station 168 Rivenhall, Essex. Twenty-seven officers and 65 Enlisted Men of Headquarters Detachment left AAF Station 154 at 0930, 15 April 1944 and arrived at AAF Station 168, 15 April 1944 at 1025.

19 April 1944, the Group participated in a diversionary mission as the 98th Combat Wing carried out an attack on a target in Belgium. Colonel Coiner led the first box with Major Snyder as Bombardier and Captain Udick as Navigator.

Eighteen B-26 Marauders emptied a load of bombs on a German Noball installation near LePlouy Ferme, France, on the 20th day of April, 1944. The attack on LePlouy Ferme was a double celebration for the men of the 397th Bomb Group. It was their coming out party marking their debut into combat and it was a birthday party, celebrating the completion of one year since the activation of the Group at MacDill Field, Florida. LePlouy Ferme summed up the work of over 1300 men for a year. It was graduation exercises for a year of schooling and training in the technique of survival and attack in the world of aerial warfare and it was the Group's matriculation day in the college of actual warfare from which all military units learn their most valuable lessons. Colonel Coiner led the box of eighteen with Major Snyder as bombardier and Captain Udick as Navigator.

21 April 1944, 37 B-26's dropped bombs on the gun positions at BERCK SUR MER. The first box was led by Colonel Coiner and the second box was led by Major Dempster. Major Dempster is the Group Operations Officer. Lead bombardier was Major Snyder and Captain Udick was the lead Navigator. The results of this mission were good and the gun positions were suspended category "A".

22 April 1944, 38 aircraft attacked a Noball target at VACQUERIETTE. Colonel Coiner led the first box with Major Snyder and Captain Udick as his Bombardier and Navigator. The results of this mission were poor.

23 April 1944, 37 aircraft attacked the Noball at RUISSEAUVILLE. The team of Coiner, Snyder and Udick led the first box and Lt Colonel Winingham led the second box.

25 April 1944, 41 B-26's were dispatched against the Noball Target installation at BONNIERES. No bombs were dropped as the target was obscured by clouds. Colonel Coiner and team led the first box and Major Dempster the second.

26 April 1944, 37 aircraft attacked the marshalling yard at GHISLAIN. Four Marauders bombed the target. Major Dempster led the first box.

27 April 1944, 37 aircraft bombed the defense works and coastal defense emplacements at OUISTREHAM-CAEN with very good results. Lt. Timberlake flew as observer.

28 April 1944, 37 B-26's were dispatched against the marshalling yards at MANTES-GASSICOURT, but failed to bomb due to ten tenths cloud cover over the target.

29 April 1944, the target for the mission was a repeat performance against the marshalling yards at MANTES-GASSICOURT. This mission was recalled

because of weather after it had penetrated approximately thirty-five miles into France. Lt. Col. Winingham led the first box and Colonel Coiner led the second.

30 April 1944, the missions for the month were ended with the attack on the noball installation at LOTTINGHEM. Lt. Col. Winingham led the second box. Results were good.

Changes in the strength of Headquarters Detachment included: 10 April, 1944, 1st Lt. Joe W. Coleman relieved from assignment Headquarters and transferred to the 597th Bombardment Squadron. (par 1, SO 74, Hq 397th, 6 Apr 44); 11 April 1944, 2nd Lt Benjamin J. Dontzin, 2nd Lt Robert J. Aker assigned Headquarters (SO 76, Hq 397th, 11 April 1944); 11 April 1944, S/Sgt Robert F. Coxey transferred to Headquarters from Headquarters Ninth Air Force (par 2, SO 78, Hq 397th, 11 April 1944); 18 April 1944, Captain Northrop asgd per par 4, SO 83, Hq Ninth Bomber Command and asgd to Hq Detachment (par 3, SO 83, Hq 397th, 18 April 44); 24 April 1944, Captain Northrop trnfd to 314th Sta Compl Sq as of 19 April 44 (par 4, SO 110, Hq IX BC, 19 April 44); 27 April 1944, Sgt Henry P. Kastner and Cpl Francis B. Barton asgd to 397th Bomb Gp (par 1, SO 115, Hq IX BC, 24 April 44); 29 April 1944, High incidence on sick call due to food poisoning from Enlisted Men's Consolidated Mess, Source undetermined; 30 April 44, Cpl Bower trfd this Group in compliance with par 8, SO 118, Hq IX BC, 27 Apr 44. The strength of Headquarters Detachment on 30 April 1944 was 29 Officers and 63 Enlisted Men.

During April S/Sgts Ellis and Turner were promoted to the grade of Tech Sergeant.

The Headquarters Detachment suffered no losses in action for the month of April, nor were any awards received by members of this detachment.

Compiled 20 June 1944

By

1st Lt TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE

Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

MAY INSTALLMENT

Historical Report of Headquarters Detachment of 397th Bombardment Group (M)
(From 1 May 1944 to 31 May 1944)

* * *

Considering the missions flown and the objectives destroyed, the month of May was obviously a month of preparation for the long awaited D-Day. This month, the 397th Bombardment Group attacked targets ranging as deep as Paris, Chartres, and Liege, with the emphasis placed on the destruction of the enemy's communications and supply lines, coastal defenses, airdromes and Noball installations. During the month, one thousand five hundred and twelve tons of bombs were dropped on the enemy's Fortress Europe by this group alone. Among the medium bomber units of the Ninth Bomber Command, the 397th Bombardment Group placed second in the bomb results for the month of May. Considering the 397th to be the newest Marauder group in the United Kingdom, these facts show the amount of training carried over by our combat personnel.

Sir Stafford Leigh-Mallory, Air Vice Marshall and Commander in Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, accompanied by Brigadier General Samuel E. Anderson, Commanding General, IX Bomber Command, visited this station in the middle of May.

During May, this Group set an all time IX Bomber Command record in dropping bombs within a two thousand foot circular area. Likewise, this Group placed second within a circular error of 4,000 feet. In over two thousand sorties, this Group lost only one aircraft over enemy territory setting a new safety record for medium bombardment. The occupants of the lost plane were seen to parachute to safety after the plane was hit by heavy flak on the run to target.

The Group missions for this month included:

1 May 44. 38 a/c attacked the MANTES-GASSICOURT marshalling yard with good results.

2 May 44. 36 Marauders dropped on BUSIGNY marshalling yards with excellent results. Major Dempster led the first box and the team of Coiner, Snyder, and Udick paced the second.

4 May 44. 33 a/c attacked gun emplacements at ETAPLES with poor results.

8 May 44. 24 B-26's attacked railway bridges at OISSEL. Results were fair.

9 May 44. The first box led by Colonel Coiner and the second by Lt. Col. Winingham attacked the Noball installation at LE GRISMONT. Results were poor, as 18 a/c dropped on target out of the 40 dispatched.

10 May 44. 37 a/c bombed with excellent results the marshalling yard at CREIL.

11 May 44. Major Dempster led the first box on the airfield at BEAUMONT-LE ROGER. 34 a/c bombed the target with good results.

12 May 44. 36 B-26's attacked the gun emplacements at ETAPLES with poor results. Major Dempster flew window.

13 May 44. The coastal defenses at GRAVELINES were attacked by 21 aircraft. Four aircraft bombed on a casual target. Mission scored fair results.

15 May 44. 36 a/c dispatched on the airfield at DENAIN-PROUVY. All aircraft returned without bombing due to weather.

19 May 44. The gun emplacements at ETAPLES-ST CECILY were attacked by 37 aircraft with fair results.

20 May 44. 32 Marauders bombed the gun positions at ST. MARIE AUBOSC. Results were poor.

20 May 44. 12 out of 37 a/c dispatched dropped on the gun positions at VARENGEVILLE SUR MER with excellent results.

22 May 44. Major Dempster led the second box and 34 a/c dropped on the Coastal defenses at ST. MARIE AUBOSC for fair to good results. (See Ex 1)

24 May 44. Dempster again led second box. 34 aircraft dropped on the Coastal defenses at ST. MARIE AUBOSC for fair to good results.

24 May 44. 37 Aircraft dropped on the port area at DIEPPE with good results. Lt. Timberlake flew as observer.

25 May 44. With Colonel Coiner leading first box and Major Dempster included in this formation, 36 B-26's attacked the railroad bridge at LEIGE with good results.

26 May 44. Of 27 a/c dispatched on the airdrome at CHARTRES, all dropped with poor results. Lt. Timberlake flew as observer.

27 May 44. 37 Marauders attacked the LE MANOIR railway bridge with excellent results.

27 May 44. Of 36 aircraft bombing the ORIVAL railway bridge, the results were good.

28 May 44. 29 a/c dispatched against the railway bridge at LIEGE-RENORY for excellent results. Major Dempster was in the second box.

28 May 44. 13 a/c dropped on the railway bridge at MAISSONS-LAFITE for good to excellent results.

29 May 44. 31 Marauders bombed a railway bridge at CONFLAINS. Results were fair to good.

29 May 44. 31 B-26's bombed the noball target at BEAUVOIR for fair results.

30 May 44. Major Dempster led box I and of the 24 a/c dispatched on MEULAN highway bridge, results were excellent. Lt. Timberlake flew as observer.

31 May 44. 35 aircraft dropped on the ROUEN highway bridge for excellent results.

As of the 31st of May the Headquarters detachment had a strength of 30 officers and 64 enlisted men. During the period 1 May-31 May 1944, this Group

had no change of station. There were no losses in action among the personnel of Headquarters Detachment.

On 6 May 1944, T/Sgt Estrella was transferred to the 597th Bombardment Squadron. 21 May Captain Ward was transferred from Headquarters, Ninth Bomber Command to Headquarters, 397th Bombardment Group where he became Group Transportation Officer.

Awards to members of Headquarters Detachment included (sec 5, par 1, GO 41, Hq, 9th AF, 18 May 1944.) Air Medals to the following:

Col. RICHARD T. COINER, JR.
Maj. WALTER D. SNYDER, JR.
Capt. EARL W. UDICK
S/Sgt Robert F. Coxey
Sgt Earle C. Fox.

The first Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster was awarded (sec 5, GO 41, Hq, 9AF, 18 May 1944) to Major Kenneth C. Dempster.

Per par 1, section 9, GO 146, Hq 9th AF, 23 May 44, Air Medals were awarded to the following:

Capt. GEORGE D. HUGHES
1st Lt BENJAMIN D. DONTZIN

Compiled 20 June 1944

By

1st LT TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE

Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

EXHIBIT ONE

MAY 23, 1944

FROM: COMBOMCOM NINE 23/1120B
TO : CO, 397TH BOMB GROUP
CO, 1ST PATHFINDER SQUADRON
INF CPY TO CO, 98TH COMBAT WING
CONFIDENTIAL BT

IX BC M897A THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ATTACK OF 22 MAY AGAINST ST
MARIE AUBOSC C/D REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT ON BOTH THE
PATHFINDER SQUADRON AND THE 397TH BOMB GROUP. IT IS AN
OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY AND TEAM
WORK. I CONGRATULATE YOU BOTH.

ANDERSON

JUNE INSTALLMENT

Unit History of: Headquarters Detachment,
397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF

For Period of: 1 June - 30 June 1944

* * *

D-Day

For a month and a half previous, the 397th had fitted its task into the plan of the Ninth Air Force, upturning rail centers, battering bridges, striking with all the intensity of the Marauders at the vital communication lines and coastal defenses of Hitler's West Wall. Through the latter part of April and all through May, the B-26's of the Group had been preparing for a day, the day that had been coming ever since the Allies began mounting strength and determination for revenge of Dunkirk and the last bitter stand on the beaches of Western Europe. And as June came to 1944, the expectancy of the past few months was keener than before, and the men of Station 168 were tense for the day that could not be far in the offing.

Finally, the day came on the first Tuesday in June. The five days preceding had seen the Marauders over gun emplacements at Octeville Sur Mer and Camiers, and on the day before the planes had departed for a GAF operational headquarters in France but were recalled because of weather. On the ground, guards were posted over secret materials stored in the Operations Block while conferences were held behind locked doors. From the huts to the line, all over the base there was the calm presaging a big event. The signal for action was given on the sixth.

In the cool damp darkness of the early morning, the moment arrived. And even as the invasion armada was moving closer to the shores of Normandy, air crews of the 397th were turning out of their bunks and moving to the briefing rooms, there to learn the details of the D-Day missions. There were to be three boxes of 18 planes each. Each was to attack a separate defended locality in the Normandy area. It was an important mission and the airmen were well aware of that. In the briefing room, the crews listened to their commanding officer, Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr, and heard from Brigadier General Samuel E. Anderson, commanding general of the IX Bomber Command. And they bowed their heads as the Group Chaplain, Captain Clarence R. Comfort, Jr, still clad in pajama tops after a sudden call from bed, led them in prayer (See Exhibit I for text of prayer.)

The day was yet in its infancy as they went out to their planes, the B-26's standing in readiness, striped black and white with their invasion markings and bellies loaded with bombs. And the preparedness of the planes and their bomb loads spoke for the men who had worked for hours before hand pre-flighting the Marauders and wrestling with the 250 pounders that filled the bomb bays.

At 0407 the second box led by Lt Colonel Berkenkamp was off the runway. Seven minutes later, Lt Colonel McLeod's first box was off, followed by

the third box with Major Allen leading at 0421. They were on their way despite the drizzle of rain and prevailing bad weather conditions at the base, and for the men who remained behind began the traditional air force routine of sweating them out.

By the time the news of the Invasion had broken behind the lines, the Marauders were ranging over France. By 0620 they were dropping their bombs on Les Dunes Verreville, Madeleine, and Beau Guillot, while the air crews were catching glimpses of the spectacle of the Allied landings on the beachhead. Fifty-one planes bombed from altitudes varying from 4,000 to 7,000 feet with poor to good results and by 0836 the last plane had landed at the home base.

Routine life was broken that day for the men of Headquarters detachment. All enlisted men who could be spared from their normal duties went to work either loading bombs or helping in the consolidated mess.

Three war correspondents were assigned to the 397th for the D-Day missions. William W. Wade of International News Service and Roelif A. Loveland of the Cleveland Plain Dealer flew with the Marauders while Frederick D. Graham, representing the New York Times, missed the flight when the plane to which he was assigned aborted.

Later in the day, the second mission was flown. At 1705, two boxes were dispatched for Trouville coastal defenses and 36 planes dropped on the primary target for fair to excellent results.

Other Missions

The next day the Marauders were over enemy territory twice. In the morning, 37 planes were dispatched against Le Mans Railroad Bridge, but weather prevented 29 planes from making the attack. One Marauder was attacked by a FW 190 in the vicinity of Mamer and the enemy aircraft made four passes at the 397th plane. In the evening, 38 planes of the Group led by Lt Colonel Dempster attacked marshalling yards at Flers with excellent results. One flight bombed a target of opportunity at Conde Sur Noireau.

On the eighth, 397th planes were dispatched against Rennes Railroad Bridge, but were forced to hit targets of opportunity with fair to excellent results. On the 10th, a coastal defense battery at Quineville was the target of 32 Marauders bombing with fair to excellent results. The excellent results of the five flights bombing a highway bridge at St. Lo on the twelfth brought the group a commendation from General Anderson. Bombing by 6's from 3000 to 4300 feet, 35 of 37 aircraft dispatched bombed the bridge. (See Exhibit II for text of commendation.)

With the exception of three Noball installations, the targets for the Group the rest of the month were communications lines, fuel dumps, and strong points in the enemy's lines. (For a complete list of missions flown this month and names of Headquarters men who participated, see Exhibit III.)

Visit by Assistant Secretary of War

The 397th was host to the assistant Secretary of War for air on 13 June 1944. Taking time out from a busy schedule that brought him from the Pentagon Building in Washington to London for invasion conferences, Mr. Robert A. Lovett, inspected the base and the group at the request of the Group Commander. It was a reunion for Mr. Lovett and Colonel Coiner, since the Colonel was associated with the Assistant Secretary for 16 months from 1941 to 1943, first as assistant executive, then as executive.

Under motorcycle escort, the Assistant Secretary arrived in his official car and went directly to station headquarters. He was warmly welcomed by Colonel Coiner, who presented the Group's Squadron Commanders and various other Group officers. Accompanied by Colonel Stovall and Captain Sheffield from USTAAF, Mr. Lovett inspected the Operations and Intelligence buildings; then the Bombsight Vault, and finally the briefing and interrogation rooms on the base. During the course of the visit, Brigadier General Samuel E. Anderson arrived to pay his respects to Mr. Lovett.

A brochure of pictures and notes covering Mr. Lovett's visit on the base was by the Group's Public Relations Office for the Assistant Secretary's files.

Strength

Changes in the strength of Headquarters Detachment for the month brought the strength of the detachment on the last day of June to 32 Officers, 95 Enlisted Men, and 1 Civilian.

1 June, 2nd Lt Richard M. Spangler was transferred into the detachment. 14 June Capt. Francis D. Meinke was transferred from Headquarters, IX Bomber Command and went on detached service with the 1st Pathfinder Squadron (Prov.), and on the 14th Capt. Meinke was reassigned to the 597th Bombardment Squadron. 2nd Lt Herbert J. Hartson, who had been on an attached basis with Headquarters, was assigned to the Group on 18 June. 1st Lt John H. Shaffer was reassigned to Headquarters from the 599th Bombardment Squadron. On the 26th and 29th of the month, a total of 32 enlisted men were assigned to Headquarters.

Promotions

Promotions announced during the month included: 2 June, Sgt Grant O. Amundson to S/Sgt and Pvt Wilbur G. Dabbert to Pfc; 15 June, 2nd Lt Charles H. Schultz promoted to 1st Lt as of 15 May 1944, 16 June, 2nd Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake to 1st Lt as of 15 May 44; 29 June 44, S/Sgt Frank G. Yernell to T/Sgt, Sgt J.C. Bowden to S/Sgt, Cpls Howard Tindel and Edwin J. Thayer to Sgt; 30 June, Capt Earl W. Udick to Major, effective 24 June 44.

There were no casualties in Headquarters Detachment during June.

Decorations and awards to members of Headquarters Detachment are listed in Exhibit IV.

Station 168
Rivenhall (Essex)

Compiled by
1st Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake
Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

PRAYER FOR D-DAY

Prepared at the request of Colonel Coiner by Chaplain Comfort.

Lord God of Hosts, the God of battle, whose Almighty hand forth to the conflict leads us, hear our prayer in this silent moment before the storm. We come to our God to ask for strength and power. Give to these men of the air steady hands, keen eyes and clear heads. Oh God, bless their weapons, and these wonderful ships for their appointed use. Give Thine own presence to fly with them upon their mission and make the crew members to know that the God of Justice and Omnipotence is very near them. Let them mount up with wings like eagles, unwearied, sustained by a calm trust in destiny. Unite our hearts with those at home so that each binding link is forged for eternity; so that in life and in death Lord, love may live on and God's Love may hold us in the hollow of his Hand. We pray that the armed might of all our forces, working in harmonious cooperation, may prove to be invincible, and that we shall breach the enemy stronghold in Europe to bring speedily the day of victory. Merciful Father each individual stands before thee, asking forgiveness of sins, seeking the courage of pardoned, inspired men. Grant it in loving kindness, and consecrate them for this task, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Given at briefing 3:25 A.M. 6/6/44.

Exhibit II

RIV V MON 03/14 R

FROM: 98TH COMBAT BOMB WING 14/1055B
TO : COBGAAF 397

RESTRICTED BT

Exhibit III

GROUP MISSIONS IN JUNE

June	Mission No.	
1	37	OCTEVILLE SUR MER Gun emplacements. 30 to 37 planes dispatched dropped on primary with gross to excellent results. Lt. Col Dempster, Lt Schultz, Lt Dontzin, S/Sgt Coxey flew.
2	38	CAMIERS Gun position. 32 of 41 B-26's dispatched dropped on target. Results – Gross to Good. Lt. Dontzin and Sgt Fox flew.
3	39	OCTEVILLE SUR MER Coastal Defenses. 27 of 40 a/c dispatched attacked target. Nineteen ships sustained flak battle damage and one crew member was wounded. Gross to fair results. Lt Shaffer, Lt Dontzin flew.
5	40	JOUY-EN-JOSAS (GAF Operational Headquarters). 41 a/c were dispatched, none bombed. Formation was recalled without attacking due to weather. S/Sgt Coxey and Sgt Fox flew.
6	41	1 st Box – LES DUNES DE VERREVILLE. Poor-good results. 2 nd Box – MADELAINE. Fair-good results. 3 rd Box – BEAU GUILLET. Gross results.
6	41A	TROUVILLE (C/D Btry). 36 of 38 a/c attacking with fair-excellent results. On 6 June following participated in flights: Colonel Coiner, Lt Col Dempster, Lt Col Winingham, Lt Schultz, Lt Dontzin, S/Sgt Coxey, and Sgt Fox.
7	42	LE MANS Railroad Bridge. 37 dispatched, but 29 failed to attack due to weather. One flight of six bombed with fair results. One Marauder was attacked by a FW 190 in the vicinity of MAMER, the e/a making four passes, after an exchange of fire on the final pass, the fighter did a complete spin and dove back into the clouds, believed to have been damaged.
7	43	FLERS M/Y. Four flights bombed with excellent results, one with gross and one with good. Box 1, flight 1, bombed target of opportunity at CONDE SUR NOIREAC On 7 June the following participated in flights: Lt Col Dempster, Lt Col Winingham, Major Hughes, Major Udick, Lt Shaffer, Lt Dontzin, S/Sgt Coxey, and Sgt Fox.
8	44	RENNES RR Bridge. Dropped on targets of opportunity. 19 a/c on ST GANTON RR Bridge. 12 on ST SENOUI RR Bridge. 6 on CHATEAURRANT M/Y. Fair to excellent results. One crew member wounded. Lt Col Winingham, Lt Shaffer, Lt Dontzin, and Sgt Fox flew.
10	45	QUINEVILLE C/D Battery. 32 a/c bombed with fair to excellent

results. Major Hughes, Lt Col Winingham, and S/Sgt Coxey flew.

11 46 1st Box – ST LO Road Junction.
2nd Box – ST LO Highway Bridge.
Recalled because of weather. Major McCollum, Lt Shaffer, and S/Sgt Coxey flew.

12 47 ST LO Highway Bridge. Five of six flights bombed with excellent results. One flight with good. Lt Col Dempster, Lt Col Winingham, Lt Schultz, Lt Dontzin, S/Sgt Coxey flew.

13 48 FORET D'ANDAINE Fuel Dump. 36 a/c attacked target with gross to excellent results. Lt Shaffer and Sgt Fox flew.

14 49 CHARTRES RR Bridge Embankment. 34 planes bombed.

14 50 ST HILAIRE Highway Bridge. 36 of 37 a/c attacked with fair to good results. One of a group of 4 ME-109's attacked the formation near CABOURG, firing 2 or 3 bursts with no effect. Three Marauders opened fire, apparently hitting the fighter as its engine began smoking badly and it disappeared in a vertical bank and subsequent dive.

On 14 June following participated in flights: Lt Col Dempster, Major Hughes, Lt Shaffer, Lt Dontzin, S/Sgt Coxey and Sgt Fox.

15 51 COLTAINVILLE Bridge. Gross to good results. Major Hughes, Lt Dontzin, and S/Sgt Coxey flew.

17 52 COLTAINVILLE RR Bridge. 39 a/c dispatched. 18 dropped on primary, 11 on targets of opportunity. 2 a/c were lost, 1 ditched in Channel near Brighton on return, 1 crash landed and burned at base. 7 crewmen missing from ditched plane. Gross-good results. Lt Col Dempster, Lt Shaffer, Lt Dontzin, and Sgt Fox flew.

18 53 MEZIDON M/Y. Recall because of weather.

18 54 BACHIMONT Noball. PPF mission. 31 planes dropped on primary.

On 18 June following participated in flights: Lt Col Winingham, Lt Dontzin,, and Sgt Fox flew.

21 55 GORENFIOS Noball. Recall because of bad weather. S/Sgt Coxey and Sgt Fox flew.

22 56 STRONG POINT (Grid Coord 0-090218) 34 of 39 a/c bombed. 1 a/c and 7 crewmen missing. 18 other a/c battle damaged. 1 crewman wounded. Lt Col Dempster, Lt Col Wingingham, Lt Dontzin, and Sgt Fox flew.

23 57 LAMBUS Noball. Gross results. Major Hughes, Lt Dontzin, and Sgt Fox flew.

24 58 MAISSONS-LAFITTE RR Bridge. 20 of 39 dropped on primary. 2 lost, 3 missing, 3 landed away from base. 1 plane attacked by 6 FW 190's after being ignited by flak. 32 other a/c flak battle

damaged. 1 crewman killed, 6 wounded, 33 missing. Results fair-excellent. Lt Dontzin flew.

30 59

THURY-HARCOURT Highway Bridges and Road Junction.

Weather bad. All planes failed to bomb.

30 60

CONDE SUR NOIREAU Road Centers. 15 of 33 planes dispatched bombed.

On 30 June, the following participated in flights: Major Hughes.

Exhibit IV

AWARDS TO MEMBERS OF HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT DURING JUNE:

Col Richard T. Coiner, Jr	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 156, 9AF, 4 June 44)
Lt Col Rollin R. Winingham	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 101, IX BC, 11 June 44)
Lt Col Kenneth C. Dempster	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 156, 9AF, 4 June 44)
	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)
Major Earl W. Udick	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
Major George D. Hughes	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 105, IX BC, 15 June 44)
1 st Lt Charles S. Schultz	Air Medal (GO 105, IX BC, 15 June 44)
1 st Lt J. R. Shaffer	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 95, IX BC, 5 June 44)
	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 105, IX BC, 15 June 44)
	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)
1 st Lt Benjamin J. Dontzin	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 105, IX BC, 15 June 44)
	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 105, IX BC, 15 June 44)
	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)
	4 th Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 114, IX BC, 29 June 44)
	Silver Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)
S/Sgt Robert F. Coxey	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
	4 th Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)
Sgt Earl C. Fox	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster (GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster

(GO 99, IX BC, 9 June 44)
3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
(GO 111, IX BC, 23 June 44)

* * *

The Good Conduct Medal was awarded to the following members of
Headquarters Detachment on 18 June per GO 5, Headquarters 397th Bomb Gp:

T/Sgt Charles R. Allison, Jr.
T/Sgt James E. Calaonia
T/Sgt Robert B. Irvin
T/Sgt Arnold B. Dodson
T/Sgt Fred F. Turner
S/Sgt Donald J. Frantz
S/Sgt David Jacobs
S/Sgt Grant O. Amundson
Sgt William P. Cagle
Sgt James Gaffney
Sgt Horace O. Jacobs
Sgt Stanley J. Kuziel
Sgt Dale L. Hammack
Sgt George J. Konloky, Jr.
Sgt Clyde L. Sunnquist
Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.
M/Sgt Henry C. Seymour
Cpl Louis Georgecocopoulos
Cpl Lawrence Girgenti
Cpl Leroy B. Lea
Pfc Wilbur G. Dabbert

JULY INSTALLMENT

Unit History of: Headquarters Detachment,
397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF

For Period of: 1 July - 31 July 1944

* * *

Although July, the second month of the invasion of western Europe, was characterized by weather unfavorable for flying, the group flew twenty-two combat missions during the month. Over enemy territory on sixteen different days during this period, the Group completed its eighty-second combat mission.

A number of the missions were in close support of the ground forces operating on the western front, while others reached behind the lines at road and rail communication lines.

The complete list of missions conducted by the Group during July follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Miss. No.</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Results</u>
6 July	61	DOL-RENNES RR LINE (RR Embk.)	Gross-Excellent
" "	62	FORET de CONCHES (Fuel Dump)	Area Bombing
7 "	63	USSY (Motor Transport Area)	No bombs dropped
8 "	64	SAUMUR (RR Bridge)	Gross-Excellent
8 "	65	SAUMUR (RR Bridge)	Not bombed
9 "	66	ABLIS (Target of Opportunity)	Excellent
11 "	67	CHATEAU de TERTU (Fuel Dump)	No photo coverage
12 "	68	FORET D'ECOUVES (Fuel Dump)	PPF, No coverage
16 "	69	BOISSEI le Londe (RR Emb)	Fair-excellent
16 "	70	NANTES (RR Bridge)	Gross-Good
18 "	71	DEMOUVILLE (Defended Area)	P.N.B.
18 "	72	CHERISY (RR Bridge)	Fair-Good
19 "	73	LA PASSONNIERE (RR Bridge)	Good-Excellent
23 "	74	ARGENTAN (RR Bridge)	PPF (No Cover)
24 "	75	LIVAROT (Ammunition Stores)	PPF (No Cover)
25 "	76	MONTREUIL (Defended Area)	Area Bombing
25 "	77	CLOYES (RR Bridge)	Good-Excellent
26 "	78	EPERNON (RR Bridge & Embkt)	I.B.
28 "	79	COURCELLES (RR Bridge)	PPF (No Cover)
30 "	80	CAUMONT (Defended Area)	PPF (No Cover)
30 "	81	CAUMONT (Defended Area)	PPF (No Cover)
31 "	82	MAYONNE (RR Viaduct)	PPF, Good-Gross

Headquarters Detachment had no losses in action during July.

On 13 July Captain William H. Bond was assigned to Headquarters from the 599th Bombardment Squadron (par 1, SO 146, Hq 397th Bomb Gp, 11 July 44.) 1st Lt John H. Shaffer was transferred to the 599th from Headquarters (par 6, SO 153, Hq 397th Bomb Gp, 19 July 44.) Sgt Earl C. Fox was transferred from Headquarters to the 599th on 25 July (par 2, GO 157, Hq 397th Bomb Gp, 24 July 44.)

The strength of the detachment on 31 July was 34 Officers and 100 Enlisted Men.

Six members of Headquarters celebrated promotions during the month. 1st Lts Henry C. Beck, Jr and James M. Snow were promoted to the temporary grade of Captain effective 1 July (SO 183, Hq ETOUSA, 1 July 44), and 2nd Lt Herbert J. Hartson was promoted to 1st Lt effective the same date. (SO 183, Hq ETOUSA, 1 July 44.) Effective 3 July, Major Kenneth C. Dempster and Captain George D. Hughes both advanced one rank (SO 185, Hq ETOUSA, 3 July 44.) S/Sgt Harold D. LaForge was appointed to the temporary grade of T/Sgt on the 15th (par 1, SO 150, Hqs 397th Bomb Gp, 15 July 44.)

The list of awards to Headquarters men during the month follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Order</u>
Lt. Col Rollin M. Winingham	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 120, IX BC, 6 July
Lt. Col Kenneth C. Dempster	4 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 120, IX BC, 6 July
Maj Walter D. Snyder	1 st Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 122, IX BC, 9 July
Maj George D. Hughes	2 nd Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 120, IX BC, 6 July
	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 131, IX BC, 20 July
Capt William H. Bond	4 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 122, IX BC, 9 July
1 st Lt Benjamin J. Dontzin	7 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 133, IX BC, 22 July
1 st Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake	Air Medal	GO 120, IX BC, 6 July
T/Sgt Ernest E. Claridge	Air Medal	GO 133, IX BC, 22 July
S/Sgt Robert F. Coxey	Silver Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 120, IX BC, 6 July

Preparations for another change of station were underway in the closing days of the month. From Station 168 at Rivenhall, the 397th was to go to Station 492 at Hurn.

The future base was visited by executives of the Group and a reconnaissance party was dispatched on 28 July. Headquarters men in the party were: Major William Rafkind, Captain Elton G. Morrow, Captain Fred F. Seale, T/Sgt Arnold B. Dodson, S/Sgt Victor A. Sindoni, Cpl Jack Hamilton.

{SIGNED}
 THOMAS E. McLEOD
 Major, Air Corps,
 Acting Group Historian.

AUGUST INSTALLMENT

UNIT HISTORY OF: HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT
397th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF

FOR PERIOD OF: 1 AUGUST - 31 AUGUST 1944

* * *

AUGUST WAS THE 397TH'S LAST MONTH IN ENGLAND BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE. IT WAS THE MONTH THAT SAW THE GROUP FLY ITS ONE HUNDREDTH COMBAT MISSION. AND IT WAS THE MONTH THAT SAW THE MARAUDERS CHANGE THEIR STATION FROM EAST ANGLIA TO SOUTHERN ENGLAND. DESPITE THE CHANGE OF STATION AND PREPARATIONS FOR OVERSEAS MOVEMENT THAT WERE MADE DURING THE MONTH, THE GROUP DIDN'T LOSE SIGHT OF ITS PRIMARY OBJECT IN THIS THEATRE OF OPERATIONS AND IN ALL 26 MISSIONS WERE FLOWN DURING AUGUST.

THE RECONNAISSANCE AND ADVANCE PARTIES THAT LEFT STATION 168 DURING JULY MET THE REAR ECHELON OF HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT ARRIVING AT STATION 492, HURN, HANTS ON 5 AUGUST. THE REAR PARTY DEPARTED FROM STATION 168 AT RIVENHALL, ESSEX AT 0945 ON THE FIFTH AND REACHED HURN AT 1845 THE SAME DAY. THE MAIN BODY OF THE DETACHMENT TRAVELLED BY RAIL, AFTER MARCHING FROM RIVENHALL TO THE TRAIN STATION AT KELVEDON. TRUCKS MET THE TRAINS AT CHRISTCHURCH AND TRANSPORTED PERSONNEL TO THE FIELD AT HURN, WHICH HAD BEEN A RAF BASE AND STILL MAINTAINED A NUMBER OF RAF PERSONNEL. (THE MOVEMENT FROM RIVENHALL TO HURN WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MOVEMENT ORDER #1, IX BC, 12 JULY 44 AND TWX IX BC Y564E.)

BEFORE THE PLANES LEFT RIVENHALL, THEY CARRIED OUT FOUR MISSIONS DURING AUGUST. THE SORTIES SERVED TO UPHOLD THE "BRIDGE BUSTERS" REPUTATION OF THE 397TH, SINCE THREE OF THE MISSIONS WERE AGAINST RR BRIDGES AND THE OTHER AGAINST A RR EMBANKMENT AT LE PONTE DE CE, CINQ MARS, COURTALAIN, AND EPERNON. TWO DAYS AFTER THE GROUP ARRIVED AT HURN, THE PLANES WERE IN OPERATION AGAIN.

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, THE GREATER SHARE OF THE TARGETS ALLOTTED THIS GROUP WERE RAILROAD AND HIGHWAY BRIDGES BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES IN FRANCE. OTHER BRIDGE TARGETS OF THE 397TH WERE LOCATED AT MANTES-GASSICOURT, PONTOISE, NOGENT, OISSEL, NOTRE DAME DE COURSON, ST. MARTIN, BRIONNE, AND LA RABELLERIE. AMMUNITION DUMPS, MARSHALLING

YARDS, AND TROUP CONCENTRATIONS WERE ALSO BOMBED AS THE GROUP CONTINUED ITS AIR SUPPORT FOR THE ARMIES ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

IN ADDITION TO THE GP'S, FRAGS, AND INCENDIARIES, THE GROUP ALSO DROPPED A NUMBER OF LEAFLET BOMBS ON THE ENEMY.

ON THE 16TH, THE GROUP CONDUCTED ITS 100TH COMBAT MISSION. COLONEL COINER LED THE GROUP AGAINST A RR BRIDGE AT NEUVY SUR LOIRE, BUT THE PLANES WERE FORCED TO TURN BACK WITHOUT BOMBING BECAUSE OF BAD WEATHER. THE 100TH MISSION WAS FLOWN LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE GROUP'S 1ST COMBAT MISSION. (FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF MISSIONS FLOWN IN AUGUST SEE APPENDIX 1.)

ON THE 15TH THE GROUP WAS ALERTED FOR OVERSEAS MOVEMENT, AND THE RECONNAISSANCE PARTY LEFT FOR FRANCE. ON THE 17TH THREE OFFICERS AND SEVEN ENLISTED MEN FROM HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT WERE IN THE ADVANCE PARTY. SEVEN OFFICERS AND 27 ENLISTED MEN IN THE ADVANCE PARTY LEFT HURN ON THE 21ST. (THESE MOVE WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH LTR, IX BC, 370.5, DTD 16 AUG 44. A COMPLETE LIST OF PERSONNEL IN THESE MOVEMENTS IS CONTAINED IN APPENDIX 2.)

MAJOR WALTER D. SNYDER WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE 322ND BOMB GROUP FROM HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT BY SO 211, HQ IX BC, DTD 29 JULY 44. THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES IN HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT. THE STRENGTH OF THE DETACHMENT ON 31 AUGUST WAS 32 OFFICERS AND 101 ENLISTED MEN.

COLONEL COINER WAS AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS ON THE 15TH. (GO 205, HQ IX AF, DTD 15 AUG 1944.) THE AWARD CITED COLONEL COINER'S "HEROISM AND EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT WHILE LEADING A GROUP OF B-26 TYPE AIRCRAFT OVER HEAVILY DEFENDED ENEMY INSTALLATIONS ON 25 MAY 1944." "DESPITE HEAVY AND INTENSE FLAK AT THE TARGET," THE CITATION CONTINUED, "COLONEL COINER HELD TO HIS COURSE DURING THE BOMBING RUN AND BY HIS SUPERB LEADERSHIP PLACED THE GROUP'S BOMBS ON THE TARGET WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS. ENGAGED BY HEAVY FLAK FIRE AS HE TURNED AWAY FROM THE TARGET, COLONEL COINER SUCCESSFULLY AVOIDED ENEMY FIRE WITHOUT LOSS. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS VITAL MISSION WAS DUE TO HIS CALM COURAGE, SKILL AND DETERMINATION UNDER FIRE. HIS ACTION REFLECTS THE UTMOST CREDIT UPON HIMSELF AND UPON THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES."

LT COL WININGHAM WAS AWARDED HIS 3RD OAK LEAF CLUSTER, MAJOR HUGHES WAS AWARDED HIS 4TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER, CAPT BOND WAS AWARDED THE SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER, AND S/SGT COXEY WAS AWARDED THE 6TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER (ALL BY GO 145, IX BC, DTD 4 AUG 44.) COL COINER WAS AWARDED THE SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER BY GO 150, IX BC, DTD 10 AUG 44.

APPENDIX ONE

AUGUST MISSIONS

* * *

MISSION NO.	AUGUST	TARGET
83	1	LE PNTS DE CE (RR BR) – LINE BOMBING TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED.
84	2	CINQ MARS (RR BR) – LINE BOMBING TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED.
85	3	COURTALAIN (RR BR). 14 A/C BOMBED, 20 A/C FAILED TO BOMB BECAUSE OF WEATHER. MAJOR HUGHES FLEW.
86	4	EPERNON (RR EMBKMT). LT COL DEMPSTER LED FIRST BOX.
87	7	NEUVY SUR LOIRE (RR BR) – FAIR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
88	7	FORET DE BLOIS (AMMO DUMP) – LINE BOMBING.
89	8	MANTES GASSICOURT (RR BR & EMKMT) – FAIR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
90	8	ST MALO/ST SERVAN (C/D BTRY). FAIR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
91	9	PONTOISE (RR BR & EMBKMT) – LT COL DEMPSTER PARTICIPATED. FAIR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
92	9	BEAUGENCY/ORLEANS (AMMO DUMP). NO BOMBS DROPPED (WEATHER.)
93	10	NOGENT (RR BR) – MAJOR HUGHES FLEW. 4 FLIGHTS HAD EXCELLENT RESULTS.
94	11	OISSEL (RR BR) – PFF MISSION.
95	13	LISIEUX AREA (ROAD CHOKEPOINTS) – GROSS-FAIR RESULTS. MAJ HUGHES FLEW.
96	13	CORBEIL (M/Y) – LT COL DEMPSTER LED BOX 1. GROSS-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
97	14	NOTRE DAME DE COURSON (HWY BR). FAIR-GOOD RESULTS.
98	14	ST MARTIN (RD BR). POOR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
99	15	ST MALO (GUN DEF). LT COL DEMPSTER LED BOX 1. FAIR-EXCELLENT RESULTS.
100	16	NEUVY SUR LOIRE (RR BR) – COL COINER LED BOX 1. FAILED TO BOMB (WEATHER).
101	16	BOX 1 – BRIONNE HWY BRIDGE. BOX II – PORT AUTHOU HWY BRIDGE. MAJ HUGHES FLEW. PFF MISSION. FAIR-GOOD RESULTS.

102	17	BRIONNE (RD BR). PFF. FAIR-GOOD RESULTS.
103	17	LA RABELLERIE (RR BR). PFF
104	20	FORET DE LA FONDE. PFF. MAJOR HUGHES FLEW.
105	25	KERDREIN (GUN EMPL). LT COL DEMPSTER FLEW.
106	26	COMPIEGNE FOREST (FUEL DUMP). MAJOR HUGHES FLEW.
107	26	ROUEN (TROOP AND VEHICLE CONCENTRATION). FAIR-GOOD RESULTS. LT COL DEMPSTER FLEW WINDOW.
108	28	BARISIS (FUEL TANKS) AREA BOMBING METHODS EMPLOYED.

APPENDIX TWO

MEMBERS IN RECONNAISSANCE PARTY FROM HURN TO FRANCE:

LT COL WININGHAM, 1ST LT HAUPT, 1ST LT TIMBERLAKE,
SGT GAFFNEY, SGT KUZIEL, PFC BOEKHOUT, PFC
CAMPBELL, PVT MCKEAN, PVT VALLAS, PVT PENDERGAST.

MEMBERS IN ADVANCE PARTY:

CAPT BECK, CAPT COMFORT, CAPT GREGOLINE, 1ST LT
DONTZIN, 1ST LT MAHLUM, 1ST LT WEINBERG, CWO
MERIWEATHER.

M/SGT SEYMOUR, T/SGT CALABRIA, T/SGT TURNER, T/SGT
TRULL, S/SGT P. JACOBS, S/SGT KEIL, S/SGT LAFORGE,
S/SGT RAIFORD, SGT HAMMACK, SGT JOHNSON, SGT SERA,
CPL ABNER, CPL DONNINI, CPL GIRGENTI, CPL HOLMES,
CPL LEE, CPL MARMORSTEIN, CPL MCGRATH, CPL NEMOFF,
CPL SWENSON, CPL VOLZ, PFC FORSYTH, PFC JOHNSON,
PFC LITTLE, PVT JACOBS, PVT KELSO, PVT WRIGHT.

SEPTEMBER INSTALLMENT

Unit History of Headquarters Detachment, 397th Bombardment Group (M)
1 September – 30 September 1944.

It was in September that the morning report of Headquarters Detachment changed its date line from England to France. Reconnaissance and advance parties of the 397th had already begun the occupation of the A-26 landing field at Gorges while the main movement of the Group on 1 September found itself in Marshaling area D-12 near Portsmouth, England. The movement began at 0800 on the 1st and the morning report carries the notation that the troops arriving at USA Camp D-12 at 1000, “made camp and issued rations to personnel.”

By ten o'clock in the morning of the 2nd, the Headquarters rear party was aboard the USCG LCI 350. LCI 350, however, hovered at anchor in Weymouth harbor for four days and four nights and it wasn't until 0445 on the 6th of September – 3 months after D-Day – that the LCI headed across the Channel for Normandy. The rear party of Headquarters Detachment arrived in France at 1535 on the 7th.

The men disembarked on the Normandy beaches and began a weary trek through a cleft in the dunes of the beach and along dusty ruin-surrounded roads to “Transit Area B.” Weighted by packs and field equipment, the men made the longest march in their history as a unit, and they fell out along the sides of the road many times in the course of the march. Sleeping under pup tents in “Transit Area B” that night, they were thankful for the restful ground beneath them.

But sleep was not long. Early in the morning, tracks from the new station arrived at the transit area and by 0430 the day following debarkation, they were introduced to A-26. It was a muddy introduction. The landing strip was little more than a path of level muddy ground in the midst of a sea of mud and in time the wire matting forming the surface of the runway was condemned as it broke under the pressure of 30,000 pound B-26's shoving it into the ooze beneath. Located at Gorge near the base of the Cherbourg peninsula in the Periers-Carantan region, A-26 had few conveniences to offer the men of the Group. All quarters were in tents arranged in a quadrangle on the sides of hedge-fenced fields. Only the Message Center and S-2 situation room had substantial accommodations, located as they were in the school building at Gorge. Other offices were housed in tents. Headquarters messed with the 597th Bombardment Squadron at A-26 and the food at the base was judged by many as being better than that in England.

As the Normandy rains continued to soak the field, it became more and more unsuitable for both men and airplanes. Despite bad weather conditions and despite the constantly fluid battle line that was nearly out of the range of the Marauders at the time they landed at A-26, four missions were added to the

Group's score at this base. All four missions were aimed at the stubborn German Brittany stronghold of Brest. Group mission 109 on September 1st took off for Brest, but did not attack when bad weather obscured the target. On September 5th, Mission number 110 led by Lt. Col. Dempster bombed the German fort with fair to excellent results. The next day Missions 111 and 112 were carried out against Brest, the morning mission scoring poor to excellent, the afternoon mission having unknown results. After the missions of the 6th of September, there followed thirteen days of operational inactivity for the Group.

It soon became apparent that A-26 was not to be the permanent home of the 397th Marauders in France, and on the 11th the advance party was on its way to landing field A-41 near Dreux. Part of the advance and rear movements were conducted by air, but the majority of the men in the rear party which left on the 14th traveled by motor vehicle. The combat crew air echelon flew to the new base in B-26's. The motor convoy traveled via the famed Red Ball highway and men piled on trucks and seated in jeeps and command cars glimpsed the ravages of war that lay in the wake of the battle. They were talking for many days of destruction in places like St. Lo, Vire and Argentan.

A-41 was an evacuated German airfield situated on the Dreux-Nogent highway. Battered by Allied raiders, hangers and buildings were in a badly damaged condition. However, the runways were in a good state of repair and office buildings were suitable for housing the Group headquarters. Because the landing field and quarters were situated on either side of a main highway from Dreux, the base became a popular Sunday afternoon target for the people of the city. Eventually, however, the road became so crowded with sightseers watching the planes and inspecting the field that it was necessary for security reasons to utilize local FFI guards to keep the people from lingering in the vicinity.

Dreux became the most popular after-duty spot for the members of the base. Convoys took men to the Cathedral on Sunday mornings and afternoons for Mass, and the Red Cross sponsored dances at the "La Salle des Fetes" in Dreux. French girls, some of whom said they hadn't attended a public dance in four years, were partners for the Bomb Group men, while the "Melody Marauders", a band composed of men from the base, furnished the music. At A-41, the 397th Public Relations office sponsored French classes for base personnel.

However incidental these things may be in the painting of the picture of group activity, nevertheless they serve to reflect the life that surrounded the aerial operations. In large, the move to France seem to react as a stimulus to the personnel, and the constant moves were bringing the Group to a high degree of mobility. Indeed, it seemed in September that the ground activity almost overshadowed the aerial operations of the Group which this month flew its lowest number of missions since April. Only eleven missions were flown, but one

important point is to be noted that while stationed at A-41, the Group's Marauders made their first appearance over German territory.

On 19 September the 397th employing area bombing techniques hit the marshalling yards at Bitburg, Germany. The next day the planes again using area bombing methods, struck at the Trier marshalling yards. On 21 September area bombing was employed against the marshalling yard at Garolstein. On the 27th the Marauders were dispatched against troop concentrations at Foret de Parroy but weather prevented an attack. The next day weather again prevented an attack on the same target. Mission number was carried out on the 29th against the German troop concentration at Bitburg with poor to excellent results, and the same day the final mission of the month was directed with fair to poor results against the warehouses at Julich.

A Ninth Bombardment Division Intelligence Report dated 30 September gave some idea of the damage inflicted on the Corbeil marshalling area by the 397th raid on 13 August. Citing an Operational Research section report, the IR said that the first flight of the 397th formation hit 5 railroad cars at the A.P. – five cars filled with 200,000 pounds of explosives. The explosion of these cars created an elliptical crater 360 feet long, 120 feet wide, and 60 feet deep. In the immediate vicinity were three trains with military equipment and about 45 Germans, 2 trains of tank cars carrying benzene and gasoline, while in another part of the yard were five other trains – a total of 15 trains, approximately 250 cars, destroyed by the explosion. ORS reported: "Those close to the explosion were thrown into an arc of wreckage 30 to 150 feet beyond the crater. Factories adjacent to the explosion were completely destroyed. Those farther away had roofs and windows completely blown out. This damage extended to 2500 feet from the crater and rendered everything inoperative."

Promotions in Headquarters this month went to T/Sgts Allison and Turner who were both made M/Sgts on the 29th. Lt. Dontzin was awarded his 8th and 9th Oak Leaf Clusters; Lt. Col. Dempster received his 6th Oak Leaf Cluster, and Major Hughes was awarded the Silver Oak Leaf Cluster on the 6th of September.

There were no losses or casualties in the Detachment during the month and the strength of the Detachment on September 30th was 39 officers and 73 enlisted men.

20 October 1944
A-72, Peronne

1st. Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake
Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

OCTOBER INSTALLMENT

UNIT HISTORY OF HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT, 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF, FOR THE PERIOD 1 October to 31 October 1944.

1. The group movement from AAF Station A-41, Dreux, France, to AAF Station A-72, Mons En Chaussee, France, was of main historical importance for the month of October. The reconnaissance party of the Headquarters Detachment departed 4 October 1944 from AAF Station A-41 and the entire personnel of the detachment (exclusive of the personnel that remained behind as a holding party), completed the move in three days. The main transportation facilities were supplied by organizational vehicles, with various section personnel, priority equipment and supplies transported by troop transport (C-47). The new field at A-72 had been recently evacuated by the Germans, with a P-38 Fighter Group occupying the field after the German withdrawal. Housing facilities for the officers and enlisted men of the detachment were available in Mons En Chaussee, a small French community adjacent to the field. There were two main building sites taken over by the various staff sections and the 198th Medical Detachment. Various other buildings and structures had been previously bombed by allied aircraft, and partially destroyed before departure by the retreating enemy. With remarkable rehabilitation, the group ran its first mission from the new field on 12 October 1944; one mission being completed before departure from A-41 on 2 October 1944.

A record of the movement of personnel for the Headquarters Detachment is as follows:

The reconnaissance party of five (5) officers and seven (7) enlisted men departed from AAF Station A-41 (Dreux) at 1100, and arrived AAF Station A-72 (Mons En Chaussee) at 1750, 4 October 1944. The following officers and enlisted men comprised the reconnaissance party:

LT. COL. WININGHAM	S/Sgt Sinconi
MAJOR MAJORS	Pfc Campbell
MAJOR RAFKIND	Pfc Johnson
1 ST LT. TIMBERLAKE	Pfc Hendrix
CWO MERIWETHER	Pvt Jacobs
S/Sgt Moore	Pvt Vallas

The advanced party of twenty (20) enlisted men departed at 1330, from AAF Station A-41 (Dreux), and arrived AAF Station A-72 (Mons En Chaussee), 6 October 1944. The following enlisted men comprised the advanced party:

M/Sgt Seymour	T/Sgt Calabria	T/Sgt Samet
T/Sgt Burke	S/Sgt Frantz	S/Sgt Jacobs
S/Sgt Johns	S/Sgt Ralford	S/Sgt Hammack
Sgt Sera	Cpl Sargenti	Cpl Lee
Cpl Prendergast	Cpl Holmes	Cpl McGrath
Cpl Semoff		Pfc Forsyth
Pfc Little		Pvt Deleo
Pvt Brigit		

One (1) officer and five (5) enlisted men departed AAF Station A-41 (Dreux), and arrived AAF Station A-72 (Mons En Chaussee), on 7 October 1944. This movement was composed of the following personnel:

MAJOR EBELING	M/Sgt Hardy
T/Sgt Word	Cpl Georgecocopoulos
Cpl Graves	Cpl Howard

2. Weather seriously hampered the operational activity of the group. In all, four missions were flown for the period covering 1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944. The objectives for the month were defended areas, highway and railway bridges in Germany. The following missions in which Headquarters Detachment personnel participated are listed below:

Mission # 120. 2 October 1944. Target: Kerbach Defended Area, Germany. No attack was made due to weather conditions. Captain Shaffer and S/Sgt Jerome.

Mission # 121. 12 October 1944. Target: Ahrweiler RR Bridge, Germany. Bombed with good to excellent results. Lt. Col. Dempster lead 1st box, and Lt. Dontzin flew window.

Mission # 122. 20 October 1944. Target: Geertruidenberg Highway Bridge, Germany. Bombed on PPF. Lt. Col. Dempster and Lt. Dontzin flew window.

Mission # 123. 29 October 1944. Target: Euskirchen RR Bridge, Germany. Bombed on PPF. Lt. Col. Winingham flew co-pilot and Lt. Dontzin flew window.

Colonel Coiner, Maj. Udick, and Maj. Bond flew abortive mission 6 October 1944. This mission not included in records as mission was recalled due to weather.

3. The following personnel changes were recorded for the period covered:

S/Sgt Maddox, reld fr asgd Hq 397 BG, 12 Oct 44, & trfd to 70th Replacement Depot, Station 579 for return to ZI, pp 11, SO 274, Hq 9th AF, dated 30 Sept 44.

Captain Murphy, reld asgd 599th Bomb Sq, 13 Oct 44, & reasgd to 397 BG, pp 2, SO 216, Hq 397 BG, dated 12 Oct 44.

S/Sgt Keil and Pfc Malo, reld fr asgd Hq 397 BG, 15 Oct 44, and reasgd 597th Bomb Sq, this group, pp 5, SO 218, this hq, dated 14 Oct 44.

S/Sgt Kijowski, reld fr asgd Hq 397 BG, 15 Oct 44, and reasgd 598th Bomb Sq, this group, pp 5, SO 218, this hq, dated 14 Oct 44.

Cpl McGrath and Pfc Moore, reld fr asgd, this group, 15 Oct 44, pp 5, SO 218, Hq 397 BG, dated 14 Oct 44.

4. 2nd silver OLC to Lt. Dontzin, per GO 7, 9th Bomb Division, dated 2 October 44.

7th OLC to Lt. Col. Dempster, per GO 7, 9th Bomb Division, dated 2 October 44.

6th OLC to Maj. Hughes, per GO 7, 9th Bomb Division, dated 2 October 44.

4th OLC to Lt. Col. Winingham, per GO 7, 9th Bomb Division, dated 2 October 44.

1st OLC to Lt. Schultz, per SO 12, 9th Bomb Division, dated 9 October 44.

7th OLC to S/Sgt Coxey, SO 12, 9th Bomb Division, dated 9 October 44.

Air Medal to S/Sgt Amundson, SO 12, 9th Bomb Division, dated 9 October 44.

5. Cpl Donnini and Cpl Hamilton to Sgt as of 1 October 1944.

Pfc Dabbert, Pfc Horn, Pvt Jacobs and Pvt Prendergast to Cpl as of 1 October 1944.

Pvt Fioto, Pvt Jenner and Pvt McKean to Pfc as of 1 October 44.

Capt. Bond and Capt. Morrow to Major as of 1 October 1944, with date of rank fr 1 Oct 44, pp 11, SO 275, Hq 9th AF, 1 Oct 44.

6. The strength of the Headquarters Detachment of 31 October 1944 was thirty-five (35) officers and seventy-three (73) enlisted men.

20 November 1944

A-72, Mons En Chaussee (Peronne, France)

{SIGNED}

1st Lt. Ted S. Timberlake

Sgt. Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

Pfc. Frank O. Forsyth, Jr.

NOVEMBER INSTALLMENT

Unit History

Headquarters Detachment, 397th Bombardment Group (M) AAF

For Period 1 November to 30 November 1944

* * *

For the first time since entering France, the 397th spent an entire month at one base. Settled down at airbase A-72, five miles southeast of Peronne, the group prepared for the winter, while at the same time undertaking as many missions as possible under the present weather conditions.

Enlisted men of Headquarters Detachment quartered in a former German barracks in the village of Mons en Chaussee turned their attention toward making a livable home out of their quarters. Officers quartered in various houses in the town, found in the month a different aspect from the previous few months when constant moves were in order for the group to keep up with the ground situation.

Now supporting the third, the first, and the ninth armies, the group had reached a point where it was well within reach of the battle lines, and the ground situation at the base was more permanent.

In many respects, life on the base was beginning to resemble the life in England. There was a movie theatre – one with leather seats – and movies were shown six nights a week. The Red Cross Aero Club was operating, and several parties were held in mess halls. On the 23rd, the Detachment celebrated its first Thanksgiving Day overseas. Gastronomically speaking, it was a gala occasion. There was nothing C-rationistic about the turkey or the trimmings that went with it. The mess hall was hung with Thanksgiving pictures and in the evening the enlisted men held a dance in honor of the occasion.

November rains mixed with a few hours of sunshine formed the background for the month.

* * *

In all, fourteen missions were carried out during the month, all in direct support of the northern and central armies of the armies on the western front.

On the fourth of November, the 397th in conjunction with the 410th Bombardment Group attacked the BAUMHOLDER Stores Depot. Thirty-four planes of this group dropped 149,700 pounds of bombs. Two planes accidentally dropped bombs inside the bomblines, two miles short of the target area, when a near flak burst caused the bombardier to push the toggle switch and another ship dropped on his plane.

The next day, the 397th following a pathfinder plane, attacked the ordnance depot at Homburg. The target contained ammunition and ordnance supplies earmarked for future use by German divisions in the Luxembourg, Metz, and Belfort sectors. Homburg is fifteen miles northeast of Saarbrücken, then under attack by the American Third Army.

The LANDAU ammunition depot was set as the next target of the 397th, but weather foiled three attempts made by the group. On the ninth, two missions returned from this target without bombing, and on the tenth, weather again intervened and the mission returned from the vicinity of the target without bombing.

One hundred and twenty-one thousand pounds of bombs were dropped on the MAYEN railroad bridge, fifteen miles west of Coblenz on 11 November. There was no visual observation of results because of clouds.

On the sixteenth, a mission was scheduled against the DUREN defended area. There was no attack. The mission was cancelled after six planes were airborne, and these six planes were later recalled.

The REICHENBACH ammunition dump was the target for the 18th of November, and the 397th took part in one of the greatest tactical air efforts of the war. Reichenbach was a German military camp east of the Third Army's zone of operations. Thirty-three planes dropped two hundred and fifty pound bombs for fair to excellent results. One gunner was killed and one bombardier was wounded on this mission.

Using area bombing techniques, twenty planes dropped 302 – 260 pound bombs on the MARIAEILER defended locality on the morning of November 19th. In the afternoon, the 397th bombed PIRMASENS ordnance depot. Fourteen planes failed to bomb because of cloud coverage, but twelve planes dropped. One box of the two boxes dispatched against BERGSTEIN defended village on the 21st dropped with undetermined results while the other box made no attack.

Nine miles north of DUREN, the defended town of ELSDORF was bombed by sixteen planes of the group on the 29th. Nineteen planes did not take off when a plane blew a tire and blocked the remaining planes on the perimeter track: Another defended town, STOCKHEIM, blocking the advance of the 4th, 8th, and 1st divisions of the First army, was bombed on the 30th.

* * *

The only awards to members of Headquarters during the November were the awarding of the 11th Oak Leaf Cluster to Lt. Dontzin and the 6th Oak Leaf Cluster to Captain Shaffer. (both, per GO 31, IX BC, 17 Nov.)

1 Nov. Private Walter E. Kelso was transferred from the group to the 1058th MP Co. (AVN.); 6 Nov. 2nd Lt Richard M. Spangler was transferred from Headquarters to 134th Repl Bn (AVN) (pp 23, SO 302, Hq IX AF, 28 Oct.); 22 Nov, Cpl Samuel E. Furman transferred from Headquarters to 98th Sta. Compl Sq., pp 7, SO 54, Hq IX BC, 19 Nov);

2 Nov. Captain Josiah G. Chatham (Chaplain) was transferred to Headquarters from the 90th Sta. Compl Sq., and Pfc William Luckett was transferred from the 90th Sta. Compl Sq to this group as the chaplain's assistant; 11 Nov Pvt Francis J. Rowan transferred from the 596th Bomb Sq to Headquarters, and Pfc James F. Beilfuss transferred from 597th Bomb Sq to Headquarters; 14 Nov. T/Sgt Clarence C. Cheek transferred from 597th Bomb Sq to Headquarters.

2 Nov. Cpl Lawrence Girgenti was appointed sergeant.; 17 Nov. Pfc James L. Beilfuss and Pvt Francis J. Rowan appointed corporals; 19 November, Sgt Dale M. Hammack reduced from Sergeant to private for cause; 20 November, Major Franklin E. Ebeling promoted to temporary grade of Lt. Colonel AUS eff 15 November 1944 (pp1, SO 320, Hq IX Air Force, dated 15 Nov 1944); 14 Nov. T/Sgt Gerald S. Samet reduced to grade of private for cause. Pvt Gerald S. Samet appointed sergeant from private with date of rank from 1 August 1942.

The morning report showed the strength of the detachment of 30 November as 73 Enlisted Men and 34 Officers.

{SIGNED}
TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE
1st Lt., Air Corps
Historical Officer

DECEMBER INSTALLMENT

UNIT HISTORY OF HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT, 397TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)

For The Period 1 December -- 31 December 1944.

1. For the month of December, the 397th Bombardment Group remained at A-72, Mons En Chaussee, France. The usual operational activity for the month was limited considerably by weather, with the Germans taking advantage of this change in climate to launch a strong counter-offensive in the 12th Army Group Sector. The attack began the 16th of December, under the protective cover of low fog and conditions unsuitable for our air forces to oppose the drive. However, on the 23rd of December, medium bombardment aircraft were out in strength, striking important communication zones directly behind the German onslaught. On this day, the mission to the ELLER RR Bridge in Germany, the group suffered its first major losses by enemy aircraft and anti-aircraft. After the turn off from target, on course to home base, approximately 25 single engine fighters attacked our formation. The group's records show a loss of eight B-26's to enemy aircraft encounters and two B-26's to heavy flak. Our gunners hit back for a total tally of four enemy aircraft destroyed, three enemy aircraft probably destroyed, and eight enemy aircraft damaged. This total does not include enemy aircraft presumably destroyed or damaged by the ten missing bombers.

25 December marked the occasion of Christmas, the group's "first" overseas. Two missions were completed against the break-through area, and the returning afternoon mission was diverted to other fields, because of weather conditions over the base. Most of the personnel celebrated the event with turkey dinners except those combat crew members who had the misfortune to spend the evening away from their base. Candle-light services were held for all denominations by Chaplain's Comfort and Chatham, and the aspect for Christmas at home in '45 was predominate in everyone's mind.

26 December 1944, at 2250 hours, an enemy intruder aircraft attacked this field, but inflicted no damage to personnel, aircraft, or ground installations. 27 December, the group flew and bombed the KALL Railhead, and this marked the last mission for the month of December and the year of 1944. Four days later the entire base celebrated the New Year – a year that will bring inevitable defeat to the enemy.

2. In all, fourteen missions were flown during the month. A total of 725 tons of bombs were dropped during the period covered. A summary of missions No. 137 through 150 follows.....

- 1 December – SAARLAUTERN Defended Area. Failed to bomb due to PPF failure.
- 2 December – SAARLAUTERN Defended Area. Poor results on PPF A/C.
- 5 December – HUCHEN Defended Village. Fair bombing on PPF A/C.
- 6 December – NIDEGGEN Defended Town. Poor results on PPF A/C.
- 9 December – (AM) – LOSHEIM Defended Town. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 9 December – (PM) – WEISBACH Defended Town. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 12 December – GEMUND Defended Town. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 13 December – HELLENTHAL Defended Town. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 15 December – RUTHEN Oil Depot. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 23 December – ELLER RR Bridge. Results undetermined on PPF A/C.
- 25 December – (AM) – VIANDEN Road Junction. Bombed visually by flights of six for excellent results.
- 25 December – (PM) – AHRDORF Defended Area. 18 a/c bombed visually by flights of six for undetermined results.
- 27 December – KALL Railhead. Bombed visually by flights of six for excellent results.

3. The following personnel changes were recorded for the period covered:

1st Lt. Robert J. Blotcher, attached and joined Headquarters Detachment, 397th Bombardment Group, par 2, SO 243, this Hq, dtd 8 Dec 44.

Lt. Col. Franklyn S. Allen, Jr., trfd fr 63rd Fighter Wing to asgd & jd Hq, 397BG, par 1, SO 244, this Hq, dtd 9 Dec 44, as of 9 Dec 44.

Lt. Col. Franklyn S. Allen, Jr., tdy to reld fr asgnt atch unasgd 127th Repl Btn AAF, sta 591, for return to Z. of I, par 12, SO 75, Hq 9BD.

S/Sgt Ralph D. Martin reld fr asgd Hq 397BG and trfd to 596th Bomb Sq, this Gp, par 7, SO 247, this Hq, dtd 15 Dec 44.

S/Sgt Lester V. Moore and Pvt Harry K. Wright reld fr asgd Hq 397BG and trfd to 599th Bomb Sq, this Gp, par 7, SO 247, this Hq, dtd 15 Dec 44.

S/Sgt Thad M. Ralford asgd and jd fr 99th Gen Hosp, under provisions of Sec II, Cir 69, Hq, ETOUSA dtd 13 June 44. M/R as of 18 Dec 44.

Sgt Carlos M. Sera reld fd asgd Hq, and trfd to 597th Bomb Sq, this Gp, par 7, SO 247, this Hq, dtd 15 December 44.

Cpl Joseph C. Volz and Pfc Carrol K. Little reld fr asgd Hq, and trfd to 598th Bomb Sq, this Gp, par 7, SO 247, this Hq, dtd 15 Dec 44.

4. The following awards and decorations were given to Headquarters personnel during the period:

Lt. Col. Dempster	6 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 37, 9 th BD, 8 Dec 44
Lt. Col. Winingham	6 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
Major Bond	7 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
Major Hughes	7 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
Major Udick	3 rd Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
Captain Shaffer	7 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
S/Sgt Coxey	8 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44
S/Sgt Coxey	9 th Oak Leaf Cluster	GO 46, 9 th BD, 22 Dec 44

5. The following promotions were recorded this month:

1st Lts. Benjamin J. Dontzin, Charles H. Schultz, and Herbert W. Yount were promoted to temporary grade of Captain AUS, effective 15 December 1944 with date of rank from 13 December 1944, par 1, SO 350, Hq, Ninth Air Force, dated 15 December 1944.

6. The strength of the Headquarters Detachment on 31 December 1944 was thirty-six (36) officers and sixty-eight (68) enlisted men.

20 January 1945

A-72, Mons En Chaussee, France

1st Lt. Tedsan S. Timberlake

Sgt. Charles W. Johnson, Jr.