

Daily Log of a World War II B-24 Pilot

by
2nd Lt. Robert E. Harrison
1944-1945
767th Squadron
Crew #81-R

Overseas Log of R.E. Harrison and Crew

Wellington A. Gillis
Pat R. Macarelli
Edward A. Loyko
Ernest E. Gilbert
Richard G. Bickel
Bertrand A. Benedict
John G. McGarr
Lester M. Friedman
Clarence E. Farris

October 1944 – June 1945

Part I

Thursday, October 5, 1944

Takeoff from Mitchell Field, N.Y. was made at 1140 into an overcast, based at 1500 feet. We broke through at 3000 feet and began contact flight by the time we reached Bridgeport, Connecticut. The flight was uneventful to Boston. While passing over Boston we circled the city for ten or fifteen minutes and continued on up over Portsmouth, Portland, and Augusta into Dow Field, Bangor, Maine. Landing time was 1405. Length of flight, 2:25. The crew was processed and then billeted for the night. We were briefed at 1900 and learned that we were headed for the Azores by way of Gander, Newfoundland. Briefing on weather will be at 0800 tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time 2:25

Total flying time 2:25

With the help of the Officer of the Day, I called Ruth. She had arrived home OK even though it was with only \$2. Makes me feel better to know all is well with her.

Friday, October 6, 1944

Weather briefing was at 0800, and although it wasn't good at the field it was expected to clear by noon. But at 1200 the flights were cancelled and we had nothing to do but hang around. Took in the afternoon show and wrote to Ruth at night. Weather briefing again tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Saturday, October 7, 1944

They didn't even bother to wake us this morning. Evidently the weather was bad at Gander. Except for some ground fog in the morning this was a beautiful day here. Just warm enough and the air was wonderful. Such a difference from the south.

Some of the crew went to a football game but I had to go to Link for a "letdown on the Azores range." Otherwise there was nothing to do.

Took in the show at night and wrote Ruth again. I imagine it will be some time before her mail catches up to me. But it will be something to look forward to.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Sunday, October 8, 1944

And still the weather is king. It rained most of the night and that is the state of affairs as I write this. It's a little past noon and I am sitting at the radio table listening to the rain and wind. More ships came in yesterday, and the field is quite filled.

I'm beginning to feel attached to this ship now and the crew is beginning to treat it like a baby. They came out in the rain last night to put the covers over the nose and hatches. I hope we can hold on to it when we get over there, but that becomes more doubtful every day.

And so the day dragged along with nothing to do and all the time in the world to do it. Took in a show at night, wrote to Ruth, and called it a day.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Monday, October 9, 1944

Same story today, broken only by the excitement of having twenty minutes of Link. It's nice to still be in the U.S. but hanging around like this is beginning to wear us out. There is so much to write home that it's beginning to get hard to write any kind of a letter.

Saw a special afternoon show and did my usual writing at night. At least we're getting a little sleep.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Tuesday, October 10, 1944

We love Dow Field. Still here and with no indication of leaving until Thursday at least. For a while, it looked as if we might get out tomorrow. But the latest reports say no.

Bought Ruth a compact and mailed it home and saw a show in the afternoon. What more is there to say?

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Wednesday, October 11, 1944

Well, things look a little better for tomorrow and we shall see how things work out.

Today was the same as any during the past week or so. Just hanging around, seeing the show, writing and into bed.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 2:25

Thursday, October 12, 1944

This was the day. We were briefed at 0700 and took off at 1150, when the weather cleared. Our destination was Gander, Newfoundland, a small ATC refueling stop on the eastern tip of the island. An hour after leaving Dow, we opened our orders – eventually we are to report to the Fifteenth Air Force at Gioia, Italy. The flight to Gander was uneventful. We didn't see much of the ground until we were in sight of our destination. We landed at 1635. The traffic pattern was not unlike the pattern we used to have at advanced. From then until 2330 we waited and waited for processing and orientation. The bed felt good. The field is not much to speak of and is 60 miles from civilization. Gillis wasn't feeling well and is to report to the hospital in the morning.

Today's flying time 3:45
Total flying time 6:10

Friday, October 13, 1944

It looks as though we're going to be here for the best part of a week. Gillis went to the hospital and they say he'll be there for a week or so. We didn't have to do anything until the 1300 briefing so I didn't get up until 0900. From then until lunch time I just dubbed around the field. It certainly is a rugged place. I can imagine how mean it will be in a few weeks. At briefing, we were given the low down on the crossing to the Azores. The usual stuff of what to expect along the way and at the destination.

Saw Gil again during the afternoon but otherwise, didn't accomplish very much. At night, I went to the show and then wrote to Ruth.

The four officers of each crew live in one room. The place is steam heated so it's not too bad.

Because of weather conditions there were no departures tonight.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Saturday, October 14, 1944

Today was a little different than the past few. I didn't get up until late and after visiting Gil for a while it was time for lunch. After eating, I went down to the small lake about 2 miles from the field and got myself a row boat in which I spent the next three hours rowing all over the lake. It was just the right kind of day – not too warm or too cold. It was fun and except for the few blisters that I acquired on my hands, I feel none the worse for it. There is also a nice lodge by the lake and if it weren't for the Army atmosphere – one would think it was some sort of hunting or fishing trip.

At night I wrote to Ruth and then went to the late show. I saw Gil again – and he's coming right along. Maybe he'll be out by the middle of the week.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Sunday, October 15, 1944

Winter is beginning to show up around here. It was cloudy and very windy today, and not exactly warm. It was 1000 before I climbed out of bed this morning – and I didn't do much of anything all day. Saw Gil, had lunch, went out to the ship, and then went to the show. After that Dave Harris, his co-pilot, and I played Ping-Pong until almost eight-thirty. Then we found out that our bunch (AQ-8 excepted) was scheduled for briefing and departure at midnight. I hope we can catch up to them soon. It's just so much longer that we'll be away from those we love by hanging around; so the sooner we get over there, the sooner we're coming home.

Wrote to Ruth again. I'd wish we'd get mail here.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Monday, October 16, 1944

Not much to write about today. Visited Gil in the hospital this morning. He should be getting out within a day or two. We're the only crew left of our bunch from Mitchell. The rest went out as scheduled last night.

I spent the afternoon out in the ship and at night went to the show before writing to Ruth.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Tuesday, October 17, 1944

Not an awful lot to say about today, either. Saw Gil this morning and he gets out tomorrow, but will be DNIF until Sunday. This afternoon, Mac and I played Ping-Pong for three hours or more and then went to the early show. I wrote to Ruth later.

The funeral for the boys who were killed Sunday night is to be held tomorrow morning.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Wednesday, October 18, 1944

Gill was released from the hospital this morning, and before lunch, he and I played a dozen games of Ping-Pong. I spent the afternoon at the Red Cross music room listening to some records. Before supper, Gil and I played some more Ping-Pong and then, with Mac, went to the canteen. I wrote to Ruth and got to bed fairly early.

Ruth and I have been married six months now. Time has certainly made its way along not so slowly. Hope it's the same way between now and the next time I see her and the baby.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Thursday, October 19, 1944

Not much doing today. Up late and then just hung around playing Ping-Pong and took in the show. Spent some time out at the ship.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Friday, October 20, 1944

Still waiting around. Same schedule today as yesterday except for the movie. I've been playing so much Ping-Pong that I'm picking up a few blisters here and there. One on my foot no less.

We learned today that ATC has sent a co-pilot up to fly in place of Gil. He was due here last Sunday, but was held up. Tomorrow, we'll see if Gil can't be released so that he can take off if we are scheduled. I don't want to leave him here now. We shall see how things turn out in the morning.

Wrote to Ruth – and that was all for today.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Saturday, October 21, 1944

Things turned out OK – although we're still here waiting to leave. There were departures tonight but we weren't listed.

The flight surgeon released Gil and we sent the ATC fellow on his way.

The rest of the day was the same routine – Ping-Pong – movie – and more Ping-Pong. I can't say very much for the pictures today. One of them wasn't bad – but the other isn't much to discuss.

Perhaps tomorrow will find us a little closer to getting to Italy – and a day nearer to coming home.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Sunday, October 22, 1944

Well, we almost left here tonight, but this time the ship was sick. The high winds the other night loosened the cables to the ailerons and the wheel was off center. The ship was grounded and we were taken off the departure list.

We all went to the show this afternoon and saw "Kismet" which was pretty good.

I wonder how far along the other fellows are – probably have reached Italy by now.

I wish to goodness that we could receive some mail. Hope Ruth is all right.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Monday, October 23, 1944

And today was the day – at least we knew we were scheduled to depart and that everyone was able.

I didn't get up until late this afternoon – I mean morning – and spent from then on, in the rec hall.

The departure list was posted early so we tried to sleep until briefing time. But I guess there was too much to think about.

Briefing was at 0230 GMT, so we got up an hour before and started to get ready.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 6:10

Tuesday, October 24, 1944

Briefing lasted about an hour, and as we weren't scheduled for takeoff until 0500 we had a little to eat. Takeoffs were late, and our ship didn't leave the ground until 0530. As GMT was three hours ahead of local time, there was still three or more hours of darkness. Everything went fairly well during the first couple of hours. The landing gear didn't want to come up, but after a couple of attempts, it did. About 2 ½ hours out – no, it was 3 ½ - we ran into weather, and for an hour we were on instruments flying through three or four rainstorms. There was no icing. About 45 minutes out of the Azores and flying at 1500 we hit a storm and called in for QDM and at the same time climbing to 5000. The approach at Lagans was rough, but it set down OK, although I thought the thing was falling apart on that steel mat runway. The island is pretty, but the army here is a rough deal. We landed at 1330 and after eating a few hours later, we were between two blankets and asleep by 1830. 1500 miles. I'm writing this in the air on our way to Marrakech, Morocco.

Today's flying time 8:00
Total flying time 14:10

Wednesday, October 25, 1944

Our stay was short at the Azores. We had briefing at 0700 and at exactly 0900 we took off. Gil was at the controls and he flew it on up to 7000 feet, passing through a rain shower and a thousand feet of clouds. It didn't want to climb, and come to find out, we took off with the cowl flaps open. The Solenoid on the landing gear stuck and started to burn, but after we found the trouble everything was all right. We set up the C-1 and flew on top of the overcast all the way to the African coast, where the clouds disappeared. Marrakech is about ninety miles inland and about thirty miles west of a chain of mountains having height of thirteen and fourteen thousand feet. The country from the sea to the field is flat with native ranches scattered about. The movies certainly help to take the strangeness away from the place. You certainly almost expect the things you see. We landed at 1540, were billeted, washed up, and ate. Twenty cents for supper. Then we went to a G.I. show and to bed. And were they hard. Goodnight.

Today's flying time 6:40
Total flying time 20.50

Thursday, October 26, 1944

They woke us up at 0600 this morning for route briefing which was at 0800. The weather was bad at times, so we didn't leave. I didn't mind, because this is a fairly nice place. There is nothing to do, but it's warm during the day and in all, it's better than gander. I imagine, though, that in a few days it would become tiresome.

We spent some time at the ship and then just walked around looking the place over. Half the field is French and of course the language is more or less the same.

I picked up some of the money they use and sent it home to Ruth when I wrote. It's fun listening to the language and trying to figure out the valuation differences in the money.

At night we went to the open air theatre. I had seen the picture before, but it was good and didn't mind seeing it over again. It was nearly midnight before we got to bed. I didn't sleep too well last night as the mattress is straw filled and quite hard.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 20:50

Friday, October 27, 1944

They didn't even bother to wake us this morning. Evidently the weather is still bad at Tunis. We stayed in bed quite late, and didn't do much when we did get up.

Spent some time at the ship and in the PX during the afternoon. I got up enough courage and had my hair cut. Then took a shower, had supper, and went to another movie. It was late again when I wrote to Ruth, but not as late as it was last night.

The weather is certainly nice around here. Not too hot during the day and just cool enough at night.

I think we'll leave here tomorrow.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 20:50

Saturday, October 28, 1944

We were up at 0500 for briefing and took off at 0745. The country we flew over was barren and desolate. We flew over Oran and Algiers and along the Mediterranean Sea. It was pretty but quite rugged. The mountains came up to four or five thousand feet on course, and up to ten thousand a few miles off course.

Two hours out of Tunis, we hit weather, with clouds up to 8000. We decided to fly over water, and stay contact. At two thousand we still flew in and out of clouds and hit some heavy rain showers. The clouds lifted to three thousand and it was fairly clear by the time we were a few miles out of Tunis. We landed, on a rough, dirt runway – at 1405. Then after the regular procedure with operations, we were billeted. Before supper, we went to the PX and then I wrote Ruth. We were all in bed by 1930. I was tired too. The bed was better than at Marrakech, but no pillow.

Today's flying time 6:20
Total flying time 27:10

Sunday, October 29, 1944

We had to get up at 0715 this morning after a very rough night as far as sleep is concerned. It was noisy and the blankets itched. We had briefing at 0815 – but immediately following it, I learned that our ship was grounded because of a defective hydraulic pump switch. Gil, a couple of the enlisted men and myself fooled around with

a softball bat and had a little game among ourselves. It was fun, and the first exercise I've had in quite some time.

Then, before supper I took a shower, or reasonable facsimile. The water was very cold. After supper, we took in the movie, which Ruth and I saw in Charleston, and then I wrote to her. It was after ten when I got to bed.

The field still shows the scars of battle – wrecked planes, holes in walls and there are still land mines around.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 27:10

Monday, October 30, 1944

Weather briefing was at 0915, so we didn't get up very early this morning. After a little delay in a mix-up of Form 1A's – we left the ground at 1025, bound for Gioia, Italy. Our destination, more or less. The trip was over water most of the way. We skirted around the coasts of Sicily and Italy. The base here is only a few minutes from Sorrento. We landed at 1355 and proceeded to unload all baggage and equipment from the ship. I guess this is where we part.

We're living in tents, writing by candle light and eating c-rations. The facilities here aren't so hot. We're allowed in town for a few hours at night so that's where the boys are. I didn't feel like going in so I'm just dubbing around. The ship has been taken away from us, and will be modified here before being sent to a squadron.

Today's flying time 3:30
Total flying time 30:40

Tuesday, October 31, 1944

Stayed in bed this morning such as it was. I didn't sleep very well and was tired all day. There was nothing to do but hang around and wait.

We were supposed to get mail at 1700 but at 1530 they told us to pack and move out. There was a plane waiting to take us to our base.

After packing everything in the truck, it developed a flat, and that, together with a little slow moving on my part and fast moving by Gil, we managed to get what mail there was waiting for us. I received five letters from Ruth, and one from home. NOS. 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.

A captain flew us about 100 miles north to our base. I don't know the name of it but we're with the 767th Bomb Sqdn., 461st Bomb Group. It was dark when we landed so we didn't see much of the place. There isn't much to see, I guess. They put us up in another crew's tent for the night.

Wednesday, November 1, 1944

The crew, in whose tent we spent the night, is at a rest camp in Capri. All except the bombardier, who came in about 2230. So after writing to Ruth, I slept on the A-3 bags. Not too comfortable, but I slept fairly well. We didn't do much today. Another crew is building a hut, and when they move out, we can take over their tent. Then, later on, we can perhaps build our own brick hut. It's hard to get any sort of material. Most of the "conveniences" are parts of wrecked planes, together with shell casings and old oil drums. During the morning we went through the whole personnel routine and met some of the squadron officers. They seem to be a nice bunch of fellows. Of course, there may be one or two exceptions. There are three other squadrons in our group. They are situated at different ends of the field. Our location is with the group – so we are better off in that respect. There is not much to the place; the only buildings being what have been here for years. After we get straightened out, things may not be so bad. Wrote Ruth a long letter tonight – it's good to have letters to answer.

Today's flying time

Total flying time 30:40

Thursday, November 2, 1944

Another day with not much accomplished. Mac, Gilbert, and I did fly for an hour or so this morning. We were up with the assistant operations officer in a stripped down B-24D. I flew as a co-pilot. We were "heading" a formation of seven ships from the squadron, up on a practice mission. I guess we'll get as much practice time as we will combat time.

We made out our papers for pay and per diem this afternoon. I don't know how much extra that will be. So far haven't spent any money in Italy.

The C.O. Major Donovan saw the officers for a few minutes. Just asked us a few questions and answered any we may have had.

At night, we all went to the show and then I wrote to Ruth. Also played a few games of solitaire.

The bombardier of our borrowed tent is away somewhere – so I was able to relieve the A-3 bags of another night, as a bed.

Today's flying time 1:25

Total flying time 32:05

Friday, November 3, 1944

Not very much to talk about today. We didn't do much, except dub around and try to pick up some odds and ends for our tent. Loyko and Mac came in with a hand pump and an oxygen bottle. We have all kinds of pipe and hose for the water and heating systems.

The group went on a mission this morning up into Germany – they didn't get to the target but picked on someplace else.

At night we were supposed to see Major Donovan, but at the last minute, it was cancelled. There was a party at the officers club, so we went there. The supper was good and then I just hung around the rest of the night, meeting and talking with the fellows in the squadron. Some South African nurses came – but they weren't much to look at. But the fellows danced with them. I didn't get back to the tent until almost midnight – and then finished my letter to Ruth.

Saturday, November 4, 1944

Today we started working on the tent. The other fellows moved out after noon time – and we moved in some of our equipment. Loyko installed the stove or at least part of it. He has to dig up a few more connections before we can put it into operation. We're still chasing Major Bennett for a truck to get some bricks – and it's beginning to look as though we might make it tomorrow.

At 1300 we had an hour and a half lecture and movie about ditching procedure – and the air-sea rescue setup around here. It was interesting, and something that is good to know. Hope we never have to use it.

After supper I went to the movies. It was a G.I. show and one that I hadn't seen before.

Jesse, the bombardier, came back tonight but we used one of our own cots – cheated A-3 bags again.

Sunday, November 5, 1944

Nothing much happened today. We slept in the borrowed tent again last night and this morning, moved a few things to the tent that is to be ours. It needs a lot of fixing up. We fooled around all morning with the stove and fuel system. The system is OK, but the stove is still causing trouble.

The boys acquired a truck about two to go after some pricks that the major had seen yesterday. He gave Pat the directions for getting there. It was almost seven-thirty when they got back with a load of bricks that weighed fifty or seventy-five pounds apiece. They didn't find the stuff they set out for. So – I guess that leaves us out in the open for a while as far as getting a hut is concerned.

Jesse's crew doesn't come back until tomorrow, so we decided to stay in his tent again tonight. It has more and better facilities than we would have in our own tent.

Missed Ruth a little more than usual tonight.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 32:05

Monday, November 6, 1944

There was a little change in the routine today. Our group, together with another, was awarded a citation this morning by Gen. Twining, C.G. of the Fifteenth. We had a formation at 0800 and from then until 1100, when the Gen. arrived we went through two dry runs of the ceremony and review. It was rather nice except that it was a little chilly out there in that field. Our group got it for a Ploesti oil field raid last summer. The Gen. stayed for dinner – and we had a good meal.

In the afternoon, I went into town – Cerignola which is about eight miles from here. It's nothing to talk about. I got my pay, visited the officers club, and went to the PX. The ride in was bumpy – the ride out was worse; for I became a little lost before getting back to the field.

Tonight we stayed in our tent – with no door, a hole in the roof, and an ailing stove.

Still no mail – perhaps it won't be too long.

Tuesday, November 7, 1944

I thought we might go on a practice mission today, but evidently operations changed their minds. Instead, we had two lectures – one for two hours, the other a half hour shorter. This morning's was just a general lecture on the tactics and operation of the squadron. This afternoon's session was with Headquarters – dealing with censorship, escape and evasion, and different things pertaining to intelligence. They were both really interesting, and, of course, material that we may need.

During the rest of the day we worked on the tent so that tonight we have a fairly good heating system and a partially built door. At least it won't be as cold as it was last night which was plenty rough. I froze. That's about all there is for today.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 32:05

Wednesday, November 8, 1944

A fairly strong wind came up last night and although it wasn't too cold, the stove pipe and tent pole got together and the noise kept me awake a couple of hours. The door also blew down and the fire went out before dawn. Don't we have fun though?

Today we dubbed around with the tent again after flying. They woke me up about 0745 and left for the line a half hour later. Just Gil, Gilbert and I flew. It was a practice formation mission. The air was rough and there was a 30 MPH crosswind. I tore up a tire on landing. The assistant operations officer rode as co-pilot. After lunch we had to go down to the line and check in with personal equipment. Then Mac and I went in to town. Gil and Loyko worked on the tent. We didn't stay in town long – just picked up a few things at the PX. Part of the ride back was made on the hood of a Jeep. We had

supper and went to the show. I wrote Ruth and we were all in bed by 2130. Last night it was a half hour earlier.

Today's flying time 2:00

Total flying time 34:05

Thursday, November 9, 1944

Last night was a good one as far as sleeping went. Everything was as it should be and I must have logged almost nine hours.

The day was just about the same as usual. We dubbed around this morning and at 1130, had to brief for a gunnery mission. After an hour or so while waiting for a few repairs on one ship, the field was closed because of the forty-five mile an hour cross-wind. Some of the ships that went up had to land at another field.

Gil, Mac and I took off for town after getting back from the line, and on the way decided to go on all the way to Foggia which is about thirty miles from Cerignola. We just looked around a little, bought some souvenirs and came on back. It was a rather cold and windy ride back and I didn't get in until almost eight. I received a couple of letters from Ruth today. They were older than the others that had come through. But who cares how old they are. The night promised to be a bad one, the wind was blowing up when we went to bed.

Friday, November 10, 1944

I don't know how accurate a report of the day's doings this will be because three days have passed since. Last night was terrifically windy and we thought the tent was leaving us again. It kept me awake for quite some time.

It seems to me that we had a lecture this morning and then this afternoon we were scheduled for a practice formation flight. It wasn't a very good afternoon and just before we were ready to take off – they cancelled it.

I just fooled around the rest of the afternoon and at night went to the show. The picture was "Lady's Courageous" and was pretty good. I wrote to Ruth afterwards.

I can't think of anything else that happened today.

Saturday, November 11, 1944

Today was one of leisure. Or rather more than leisurely if that is possible. After a rather cold night, during which my feet complained – we found that there was nothing scheduled for us, so we decided to go to town. Mac and Gil went to Bari, about 75 miles, while Loyko and I went to Cerignola, after dropping plans to continue on to Foggia. We dropped in at the "Club" and bought a few things at the PX including a mattress cover. After that, we went to a barber shop for a haircut and shampoo. Boy, was my hair filthy! Then we went hunting for the post office where I got a couple of money orders and

mailed Ruth the box I bought at Foggia the other day. At 1430 we saw "Tampico" at the Music Hall after which we left the mattress covers to be filled. It won't be a "beauty rest" but then this isn't exactly heaven either. We got a ride to within a mile or so of our squadron and did little walking before being picked up again. It was quite cold.

There was a USA show after supper that was very good. I lasted an hour and it was nine before I started writing to Ruth. Still no mail.

Sunday, November 12, 1944

This was just another day. We had a lecture this morning and as all morning lectures so, prevented us from accomplishing anything until after noon. Then they scheduled us for a practice gunnery mission. We were back at three or so and I found five letters from my wife waiting for me. It was swell hearing from her and it makes me feel good to know she's OK. It was supper time by the time I finished reading them and there was another show to see so we took that in after which I wrote to Ruth.

As I was getting to bed, Mac came in with 3000 bricks he had gone to get. So by the time the enlisted men and I had unloaded the things, it was going on midnight.

I don't know how things are going to turn out, but we're rationed 14 gallons of fuel each ten days and I don't think that will last us very long.

Today's flying time 2:15

Total flying time 36:20

Monday, November 13, 1944

This morning we had to fly. It was supposed to be formation, but we were split up just before takeoff and we went an hour or more looking for the formation. We had quite a time for ourselves, buzzing the various formations looking for our boys. When we finally did get them, it was just about time to start home. This afternoon they asked me to fly high and have Loyko drop some bombs, but I'm catching cold so they had him go with another crew. Mac, Gil and I went in to town to buy a few things. I met "Pop" Kain and we talked for a couple of hours. He graduated with me from Stuttgart. I got to ride back in a fire truck. The best ride I've had. Gil and Mac were doing errands for the PX girls.

There was no show tonight and I started Ruth's letter early, but the cold began to get over my eyes and I started to bed at 2015. We had all the beds drawn up around the fire which I think is just about done as far as the fuel is concerned. We also have no top on the tent. It should be rather cold tonight.

Today's flying time 1:40

Total flying time 38:00

Tuesday, November 14, 1944

Today was no good. It rained and blew last night and the fire went out early this morning. I was also awake with my cold for an hour or so. It rained all morning and the mud is beginning to become evident. After breakfast I went to the dispensary, had my nose sprayed and got some pills to take. At ten we had a target identification and at dinner I was notified we'd be flying formation. We did, but only for an hour – the weather was lousy and only three ships got off. The fourth crashed on takeoff. Everyone is OK though.

That was about all there was to the day. I have a nice head cold now. I had my nose sprayed this morning.

At night I went to the show and then fooled around with the stove until nine. I haven't been writing a very good letter to Ruth lately.

Today's flying time 1:05
Total flying time 39:05

Wednesday, November 15, 1944

Until supper time, this day wasn't too good. I guess it was mostly me. The night wasn't bad but they scheduled us for a gunnery mission and we took off at 1100. That wasn't so bad because we figured a 1300 landing would give us the afternoon to ourselves. We landed at one all right, but at another field. When we took off the wind was 35 MPH crosswind and they closed the field soon after. Consequently we sat on the other field until almost five. When it came time to leave we had to push the ship backwards in order to get out. We hit a little rain and then couldn't contact our tower. I landed south and the other ships behind me landed north. While on the other field, Benedict just about ran into a prop and on the gunnery mission, Friedman cut his finger.

But the day was saved when I saw the mail. Twenty-one pieces and fourteen of them from Ruth. It took me 1 ½ hours to read everything. Maybe I wasn't happy about the whole thing! There are only two letters missing now. It will take me a week or more to answer them at the rate I've been going lately.

Today's flying time 2:40
Total flying time 41:45

Thursday, November 16, 1944

This was a fairly easy day. Easier than we thought it was going to be. We were scheduled for a bombing practice mission at one, but at noon it was cancelled.

During the morning I had the flight surgeon check my ears and then I wrote a couple of short notes. After lunch I dubbed around a little while and then addressed fifteen or so Christmas cards. Somehow the day went by fairly fast.

The Italian workers started breaking ground for our “new” home. With a little good luck we may be able to move into it the middle of next week. I’d like to get my things unpacked and live halfway decently.

We went to the show tonight, but we should have used the time to better advantage. The picture was absolutely no good – and then some.

I wrote Ruth a fairly long letter. At least a little longer than I have been writing lately. I got to bed by ten.

Friday, November 17, 1944

Today was the day for Mac. They woke me up at 0415 this morning, but I was only going up as co-pilot on the weather ship. Mac, however, was going on a mission as the navigator on another crew. It was a long trip into Germany and he wasn’t back until 1600. I was only up for an hour and a half, but we went to twelve thousand and it was plenty cold.

The rest of the day was not much to speak of. After lunch we got a Jeep and trailer and went to town to pick up the mattresses and also our weeks rations at the PX.

I was back early and didn’t do much until supper except address a few Christmas cards.

At night we went to see an Italian road show. It was pretty good, especially two or three. The “chorus girls” were a scream.

The foundation for our house is nearly in. Slowly but surely, it’s coming along.

Today’s flying time 1:35

Total flying time 43:20

Saturday, November 18, 1944

Mac went on another mission today with the same crew he flew with yesterday. The rest of us didn’t do anything. We moved some brick for the hut and also got some lime. Loyko and I spent some time throwing knives. During the afternoon, I wrote a couple of letters and addressed some more Christmas cards. It was the first day that we have actually loafed through while we’ve been here. No one bothered us except someone came to our tent three times this morning looking for another crew.

After supper we all went to the show (all except Mac – he was in town). Then I found out that we are on tomorrow’s mission. So I wrote a very short letter home and got to bed by eight-thirty or a little later.

Sunday, November 19, 1944 Mission #1 – Vienna, Austria

After a good night’s sleep we were awakened in time to up and get to the 0615 briefing. The target was an oil refinery in Vienna – a hot target so they tell me. Another first pilot

came with us, but Gill also came. Everything went off OK on the ground and on takeoff. We were flying number seven spot – I mean number six. The formation wasn't too bad, but it wasn't too good especially after getting to the target. The flak looked pretty thick and one burst came close to our right wing. It wasn't too bad, but I'd just as soon be doing something else, back at Charleston, or somewhere. It took us six hours and forty minutes but we spent a lot of time circling around after we got back. My back is a little tired – very tired. The other fellow flew co-pilot up and Gill flew it back. I didn't think much about it until I saw the flak ahead of us.

There was a critique at seven tonight to talk over the mission. I received a letter from Ruth - one written on the seventh of the month. I wrote to her and got to bed before nine again.

Today's combat time 6:40
Total combat time 6:40

Monday, November 20, 1944

Not much doing today – there was nothing scheduled for us today except for a short lecture at two this afternoon. Gil, Loyko and I got a Jeep this morning and got some sand for the workers on our hut. We also moved some brick and that just about did it for the morning. During the afternoon we dubbed around and shoveled some dirt from the inside of our tent.

The mission today wasn't too good. Three ships didn't come back. One ditched and another landed at Foggia. The other, we don't know.

At night we went to a show and then found out that we're scheduled for the mission in the morning. Don't know anything about it or where it is. We'll see in the morning.

Today's combat time
Total combat time 6:40

Tuesday, November 21, 1944 Mission #2 - Sarajevo, Yugoslavia

It was windy last night and we were awake about three hours. No one woke us this morning and we thought the mission had been called. But at 0715 someone announced that the briefing was at 0800. The target was a troop concentration in Yugoslavia. Supposedly it was easy, but we did just about everything but hit what we were supposed to. The weather was bad and the bomb run was messed up. It was hard keeping formation. The flak was moderate, but accurate. We came back with a few small flak holes, but I guess that was the extent of damage to us. It was a five hour trip and at critique at night, the Colonel was pretty well peeved about the whole situation.

I wrote a fairly long letter to Ruth tonight, but I was tired and my eyes ached. We were all in bed before nine.

Today's combat time 4:50

Total combat time 11:30

Wednesday, November 22, 1944

There isn't much to be said about today. It rained and the wind blew hard last night, but it only kept me awake for a few minutes.

This morning we had a lecture out on the line at 1000 and Gil and I were scheduled for Link at 1100. We were twenty minutes late getting to it and were excused by the "good" Capt. Henry who was taking the time himself.

At 1300 we had another lecture that took up more than an hour's time. After that I got some water and five gallons of our fuel ration. I had quite a time getting it into the barrel. Quite a bit blew around over me. We needed some more rock for our hut and are using some that was meant for a hut for the fellows who went down in Yugo the other day. They are all safe although a couple of them are injured. Six of those who ditched were picked up too.

At night we took in the show or rather I did. Gil and Mac were in town. I had seen the picture but it was OK.

Thursday, November 23, 1944 Thanksgiving Day

Nothing much to talk about tonight. The mission was cancelled so no one had to fly except for a couple of practice missions. We had a lecture after lunch, but it didn't last very long. I dubbed around all day. Dug a little bit for our drain and didn't accomplish very much.

The Thanksgiving dinner was at five. We started at four to wash up and dress. It was the second time I put on my good clothes since leaving Mitchell. The meal was swell. We had everything and it was good. I spent a little time at the club afterwards listening to the radio, but the power wasn't very good and I finally gave it up. I came back to the tent about 1000 and wrote to Ruth. That just about covers the day – not very exciting.

Today's combat time

Total combat time 11:30

Friday, November 24, 1944

This should be a very short and sweet write up. There was nothing much to do as far as flying and ground school are concerned. In fact, there was nothing to do along those lines. I spent most of the morning writing a couple of letters.

Mac and Gil went to town. Loyko went out to requisition a few things and I dubbed around picking up some odds and ends and getting some more of our fuel ration. Late in the afternoon, I took a bath with the aid of a basin and pail. It was comical, but I feel much cleaner. Loyko and I also figured out our water system for the new hut. It's quite the thing if it works. There was a G.I. show after supper that we took in. It wasn't too

god. Then I wrote Ruth and that brings me to this point. So far, there is no one scheduled for the mission in the morning so I don't know what we'll have to do. There was no mail today.

Saturday, November 25, 1944

There isn't much to talk about today. There was no mission so everyone was on the ground this morning. We spent the time fooling around the hut. They're making progress on the thing and it's coming along nicely.

This afternoon we had to fly – just Gil Gilbert and me. It was a formation practice flight. I was supposed to fly number five, but four got off late so we took that position. It was all right. We flew until a little after four.

Tonight a mission was posted. We had the sixth position, but it's been called off. I imagine that it's because of weather.

I spent the evening writing to Ruth. There was no mail except for a letter from Mr. Davis. I hope I hear from Ruth soon or I won't be able to make my letters very long.

Today's flying time 2:20

Total flying time 45:40

Sunday, November 26, 1944

Today was much along the same line as yesterday except for one fact – I received a letter from Ruth. It was older than some I've received but at least it's something. It was two letters combined in one.

This morning was spent cleaning up the tent and area for an inspection that was due this afternoon. Loyko and I also fooled around a little while with the drain pipe for our shower. Gil was leveling the ground around the hut.

Again this afternoon we had to fly some more formation. Three spot this time. We fooled around for a couple of hours.

At night there was a show. I had seen it before, but saw it again. We're up for the mission tomorrow – one of ten ships. I wrote to Ruth, but it wasn't a very good letter. I wasn't thinking I guess.

Today's flying time 2:30

Total flying time 48:10

Monday, November 27, 1944

They woke us up about 0430 this morning and we were sorry they did when we went to briefing. The mission was to go to Brux – almost 600 miles into Germany – past Munich with its flak and fighters and the weather all the way up was terrible – until about 10

minutes before starting engines they called a stand-down. After unloading the bombs, they called a standby. Then they were going to have us drop the time bombs in the Adriatic but called another standby. Finally about nine the whole thing was called off.

Loyko and I went down to the line for some tubing and it was noon before we got back. In the afternoon I went into town for my ration.

Bennett wants us to move tomorrow. I don't think that we can do it. We want the floor in and the piping before we move into it.

Received a couple of more letters from Ruth and one from home. Wrote her a nice long one tonight.

Tuesday, November 28, 1944

No mission today. Weather kept us on the ground. It wasn't so very good here either. There were light rain showers on and off all day.

We had a busy time of it. We worked on the hut. During the morning I went around the post with a wheelbarrow picking up bricks and rocks to fill our drainage pit. By mid-afternoon it was filled and covered over with dirt. Gil worked on the windows and Ed put in the main part of our hot water system. It was quite a day. The Italian workers were going to start putting in the floor but it began to rain. There are new crews coming in and we have to be out tomorrow. I don't like to rush into the new place as it is now.

At night we took in the show and I wrote to Ruth. There was no mail today.

Today's flying time
Total flying time 48:10

Wednesday, November 29, 1944

It rained all night and part of the morning. The mud is beginning to be a problem. It's slimy and slippery.

We spent the day working on the hut. The floor is going in and the top is on. We were lucky enough to get a new canvas. Loyko installed a lot of piping underground for the water and we put in the stove and fuel line.

At night, Mac and Ed moved in and Gil and I stayed in the tent. The new crews came in, but they didn't put any in with us.

Tomorrow Gil and I will move to the hut. The floor would be finished and perhaps we will have running hot water. Who knows.

We had an engineering class this morning, and then a parachute lecture after lunch. The weather is really lousy and I pity the new boys as it's not very encouraging.

Thursday, November 30, 1944

Today was another 'good' one as far as the mud was concerned. It rained part of the afternoon. We didn't do much of anything all day. That is any one thing. Gil and I moved this afternoon. It wasn't very cold sleeping in the tent last night. We got the water set in temporarily and it's running pretty good. We have a little problem with steam, but we can take care of that in the morning. We haven't got the door in yet, but that will be done in the morning. They completed putting in the floor just before supper. We still have the sink and the shower floor to be put in yet. That will be done in a few days. It will be a week or more before we can get the shower fixed up. At night there was to be a show, but there wasn't enough power for the sound so we came back to the tent and I wrote to Ruth. Received two letters from her today.

Friday, December 1, 1944

We were up for a mission last night but it was cancelled out. Some of the fellows were a little high last night and their noise kept me awake part of the night.

There wasn't much done today. They started putting in the sink and Ed made some changes in the plumbing. We had a meeting or a ground school class right after breakfast.

It rained most of the day, but in the afternoon, Mac and I went to town for rations. I met John Hammond and also ran into Kain again.

I came back without Mac. He had to see the girls again. It was another wild ride. The truck I was in had to tow another and more than once we both nearly went off the road. The drivers weren't entirely sober.

At night, I wrote to Ruth and got to bed at ten or so. We're up for the mission tomorrow. The weather looks bad now, but perhaps it will clear.

Saturday, December 2, 1944 Mission #3 - Blechhammer, Germany

I was awake an hour or more before briefing which was at 0545. The target was oil refineries at Blechhammer. The takeoff was all messed up and I didn't get off with my flight. I couldn't find any of our ships in the air so tagged on to another group going in the same general direction. As it was, they were hitting the same target. It was a long cold ride. We had no heaters and my feet froze just as we hit the target. It was rough. The flak really came at us. We got a few small holes – one quite near Loyko. We came back more or less by ourselves and got in before some of the ships of our group. My back ached something wicked and I was tired. I hope all missions aren't like that.

There were two letters waiting for me from Ruth. That helped.

There was a critique at seven and there was some ear chewing. Wrote to Ruth and got to bed.

Today's combat time 7:30
Total combat time 19:00

Sunday, December 3, 1944

We stayed in bed this morning and didn't have any breakfast. Because the formation for the Cluster Award Dinner was at 1030, they had stopped serving breakfast at 0730. By the time I shaved and dressed it was time to eat. I wasn't very eager about the whole thing and just before it was time to leave, I had to "check on the enlisted men." Loyko also got out of it. We spent the afternoon writing letters. I had to taxi a ship later on and the four of us went out and with the help of some other people we picked up two barrels of gas. It will help to keep us warm for a while.

I didn't write too much – just a couple of letters and one v-mail. Ed and I also took down the stove pipe and cleaned it out.

There was no mail today except a letter from Innis.

At night I wrote to Ruth and we were all in bed before nine. There is a stand-down for tomorrow – weather I guess.

Monday, December 4, 1944

Nothing much to talk about today. Mac and Ed went to Naples, but Gil and I had to stick around. We were scheduled for a practice mission at noon. During the morning we fixed up around the hut. We leveled the ground and fixed up the doorstep. After lunch we went on a practice gunnery mission. While we were on the range I thought we lost an engine, but all the instruments began to go haywire and we found out that three of the generators were out. One more came on so we finished the range and came back on two. I let Farris fly the thing back.

I didn't do anything after that. Received three letters and two cards from Ruth. They were really nice.

At night we all went to the show – at least Gil and I did.

I wrote to Ruth and headed for bed. It's going to be a windy night. The tent is rattling like a boiler room.

Today's flying time 1:50
Total flying time 50:00

Tuesday, December 5, 1944

There isn't much to write about today. The night was windy and consequently I didn't sleep as well as I might have. Gil and I had Link at 0800 so we had to get up a little earlier than usual. After that was over, he and Mac took off for Bari. I took a sponge bath and shaved before lunch and then went to Cerignola. I got a couple of money orders

and then nosed around town and the PX. Picked up a few things including a babies bonnet and a little jacket. Both are pink so if it's a boy I will charge it up to profit and loss – better luck next time.

I met “Pop” Lane in the Red Cross. He left Latrobe a month or so before I did and graduated from Stuttgart with a 4-C.

There was no mail except a Christmas package from Ruth and a silhouette that she had made.

I wrote to her after supper and after a meeting that Gilbert and I had to attend.

We're not up for tomorrow's mission.

Wednesday, December 6, 1944

Before I got to sleep last night the mission was off so gave us another free day. We all stayed around here and worked on the hut. Gil made himself a desk; Mac fixed up the door and Loyko and I fooled around with the water system. He also put in a drain so that now we can use our astro-dome basin. It works OK.

At night there was a show. It was a mystery picture and after a half hour or so the power failed and we were left out on a limb. I don't suppose I'll ever know how the thing turned out.

There was no mail today. I still have a few of Ruth's letters to answer so they help out my writing quite a bit.

We were up for tomorrow's mission but it's a 'stand-down' so we'll probably have a practice flight.

Thursday, December 7, 1944

They called us this morning in time for an 0800 “briefing” for a practice formation flight. We were scheduled for three spot, but just before takeoff the flight leader had to stay on the ground so we flew two position. We were up a couple of hours.

This afternoon was more or less wasted. I helped a little – very little – with Gil on the clothes rack and lugged some more oil. That accounted for most of the time.

The Italians whitewashed the walls so everything in the hut had to be moved away from the walls and then put back.

After supper, Gil and I came back to the hut and I wrote to Ruth. As I write this, Mac and Ed are at the club gambling.

I received two letters from Ruth and one from home. That always helps make the day worthwhile.

Today's flying time 2:05
Total flying time 52:05

Friday, December 8, 1944

Not much to talk about today. Mac and Ed came in drunk last night. Ed was sick part of the night and I didn't sleep too well. I didn't bother to get up for breakfast. They had us scheduled for practice formation after lunch. Nobody was eager for it and we were late in taking off - or rather taxiing. The wind was up to 45 MPH – cross – and after the first three ships took off, the tower threw me the red light. After a few minutes they told me to go back to the hardstand. But the afternoon was more or less used up. I received mail including three letters from Ruth.

At night we went to the show. The picture was pretty good, but the sound wasn't so hot.

I wrote a long letter to my wife tonight. When I started I hadn't intended to write for long.

We're up for the mission tomorrow – five hundred pound incendiaries.

Saturday, December 9, 1944

They woke us at five this morning for briefing which was forty minutes later. It was raining and takeoff looked improbable to us, but Air Force had different ideas. Target was the yards at Linz.

We got off the ground OK and followed the flight up to seventeen thousand through clouds. Planes were all over and no one could find anyone else. Our flight went into a cloud bank and we were in it for 2500 feet or more. The flight broke up and we saw no more of any of them. Icing was terrific and then after flying around for a while we lost a turbo. Gilbert changed the amplifier, but by that time I had decided on going back. We went into the clouds at twenty-one thousand and didn't see anything until almost 8000. We ran into hail which broke the top turret glass and I called in for three fixes. By that time the mission was called off. I guess we were the first ship to get back in.

I wrote some letters during the afternoon and to Ruth after supper. We're up again for tomorrow's mission.

Today's flying time 2:50
Total flying time 54:55

Sunday, December 10, 1944

This was a repetition of yesterday. We were up at the same time and briefing was at 0535. This time we were headed for Brux way up in Germany. It was raining again and the sky looked terrible. We took off and flew around for an hour at 1500 feet or so. There were no breaks and they gave us a rendezvous point up the coast. Our flight headed up and at 5000 or so we went into the clouds. At nine thousand we were still in it.

The flight leader told us to go back down and assemble over the Adriatic. It was 1400 feet when we were finally in a position to see anything. We didn't find any of the flight. By that time it was 1000 and we decided to come back. We dropped our two time bombs and followed the coast back. It was rough in the pattern too, at 500 feet. It rained all afternoon and we stayed in the hut. We slept a while too. I'm tired. These instrument flights aren't much fun. The mission was eventually called off.

We saw a show tonight and I then wrote to Ruth.

Today's flying time 3:15

Total flying time 58:10

Monday, December 11, 1944 Mission #4 – Vienna, Austria

Briefing was at 0630 this morning – target, Vienna – everything went along fine and the weather was good. The formation was rough, but when we heard that there was a possibility of fighters in the target area, we pulled it in close. As we turned on the bomb run, I lost a turbo, but kept up OK. Then came the flak. It was wicked. The group ahead of us was hit and hit hard. The boys saw six ships go down in flames. I saw one and it wasn't a pleasant sight. It dropped like a rock. Boyer's co-pilot was hit as was Rawchuck's top turret gunner. We were in flak for a long time. The rally was rough, too. There were ships all over the sky. I've never seen so many at one time. My feet were freezing and it seemed like a long ride back. We ran into more flak over Yugo, too. It was getting dusk when we got back to the base – an hour later than flimsy time. The landing was OK. One wheel, but very gently. In all, it was a rough mission and we're glad to be back. At night I wrote a short letter to Ruth and got to bed after I shaved. My eyes were tired.

Today's combat time 7:40

Total combat time 26:40

Tuesday, December 12, 1944

Not much to log today. There was a mission scheduled for today, but it was cancelled just after briefing. We didn't do anything worthwhile. Gil, Ed and I were going in to town, but only Ed and I went in the morning. We caught a ride in OK, but it took us three hours to get back. Gil and Mac came in as we were waiting for a truck. I just got a haircut and we both got our PX rations. We also had a caricature done just for the laugh. I sent mine home to Ruth.

At night we all went to the show. The picture was good and quite funny.

I received two letters from Ruth. They're coming over irregularly now, but I guess there isn't any kick as long as I get something. The packages must be lost somewhere.

I was a little tired tonight and only wrote a short letter. It wasn't such a good day.

Wednesday, December 13, 1944

Today was much the same as yesterday. Gil and I Link at 0800 and that was all the work there was. We dubbed around during the morning and after lunch I decided to go into town again. I had a snapshot taken and picked up my rations for the week. I shouldn't have to go in again until next Wednesday or Thursday. By the time I got back it was about time for supper. I had something at the Red Cross in town and subsequently I wasn't exactly hungry.

There was no mail today. I wrote to Ruth and sent the picture along. It wasn't very good. The day was dark and it was going on for four when I had it taken. We were talking quite a bit tonight and I didn't write very much to Ruth. It was going on for eleven when I got to bed.

Thursday, December 14, 1944

This was a mean, wet day. It rained most of the time up until later afternoon. The mission was called off early this morning.

I did very little. I had planned to do some writing but managed to write a short note home.

We cleaned up this morning and listened to Gil play a clarinet. This afternoon, Ed borrowed an accordion and we all fooled around with that. At night there was a show that I had seen before, but we all went.

I wrote Ruth a fairly long letter for a change and after washing up, got to bed about ten-thirty. We're not scheduled tomorrow so I don't know what we'll be doing.

Received a letter from Ruth this noon.

Friday, December 15, 1944

There is very little to write about tonight. Slept pretty well last night until the trucks woke me. This morning I borrowed a trumpet and spent the morning fooling around with it. Gil had a clarinet and together with Loyko and the accordion, we had quite a time. During the afternoon, I wrote letters while Ed played the accordion. Mac and Gil went to town. The only mail today was a letter from Anne.

Tonight I wrote to Ruth and then played the accordion for a while. It's fun fooling around with it. Keep at it long enough and one could master it without taking any lessons.

Gil is playing in the orchestra at the group headquarters party. We're up for tomorrow's mission. Will probably be a long one.

Saturday, December 16, 1944 Mission #5 – Brux, Czechoslovakia

They woke us up in plenty of time for briefing which was at 0540. There were two missions on which we were briefed. The one we went on and one to northern Italy.

We've started for Brux three or four times, but we finally hit it today. It is a long haul up there. Formation was rough and we had a couple of hot running engines an hour or so before target time. One of the turbos acted up a little too.

There was plenty of flak at the target. If we ever had gone through the cloud they put up, we'd never had made it. As it was, we didn't get hit at all. There were supposed to be fighters in the area, but we didn't see any.

It was getting dark when we arrived back at the base. The whole trip took nine hours.

After supper we took in a short G.I. show. There was no mail today. Been kinds slow the past few days.

Today's combat time 9:00

Total combat time 35:40

Sunday, December 17, 1944

Not much doing today. Had a bailout lecture on the one this morning, but that's all. After lunch I took a shower and then wrote to Anne and Mr. Davis. Picked up some oil and then had Gil take some pictures. I'll have to finish the roll of film I have and send it to Ruth.

There was no mail again today. It's beginning to be a bad situation. Before supper, I started to reread some of Ruth's letters. It helps anyway.

The group was hit by fighters today. Our squadron lost four ships and one squadron lost all they had up. That's not encouraging and it brings the war that much closer.

We're scheduled for tomorrow's mission so I guess I'll get to bed. Just finished writing to Ruth. Makes me feel better.

Monday, December 18, 1944 Mission #6 – Blechhammer, Germany

Briefing this morning was at 0515 so we were awakened over an hour before. We only had three ships flying and the group had the grand total of fifteen. The target was Blachhammer – the same as yesterday. Naturally no one was happy about it.

We had the same ship as we had the other day and had the same trouble of hot running engines. The flak was light but fairly accurate. We had a piece come in at the half dech which cut an oxygen line. Another ship was hit and we haven't heard from the crew yet. A few of the ships didn't have enough gas to make it all the way back and had to go in to another field.

We have a total of six ships left that can be flown. Not so good.

The mail was fairly good today. A couple from Ruth and one from Lew among others.

We went to the show at night. The picture was "Follow the Boys" and was good. We went to bed early.

Today's combat time 8:05

Total combat time 43:45

Tuesday, December 19, 1944

Very little to write tonight. The main event of the day was the arrival of two more letters from Ruth. Other than that I can't say much. I spent the morning straightening up my clothes and rereading some of Ruth's letters. This afternoon I fooled around with the trumpet and the accordion. Also wrote a couple of letters.

Mac and Gil went to Bari and, as I write this, haven't come back. In all, everything was very quiet.

A couple of new crews came in and we also received three new ships for the squadron. They should help out considerably.

So far as I know, we aren't scheduled on tomorrow's mission. The enlisted men are on guard duty so if I flew it would be with someone else's crew.

Wrote Ruth a half decent letter tonight for a change. I was too tired to write much last night.

Wednesday, December 20, 1944

I suppose I can write something just for the records. There isn't anything of real importance to record though. We all went to town this morning and about all I accomplished was to get a haircut. Can't get rations at the PX anymore. The squadron will take care of it.

I came back early and picked up a couple of packages. Two from Ruth and another from Margie. One contained the light bulbs; the other we'll see on Christmas.

There was a show tonight, but I've seen the picture twice and didn't want to sit through it a third time. I wrote to Ruth and went to bed. There was no mail although I did get a couple of packages. One had the old APO number.

Thursday, December 21, 1944

There wasn't much doing today. There was a stand-down and the weather began to turn bad. The wing general was here at noon and that was just about the only excitement for the day. Mac and Gil went to visit Kesterson and I didn't see much of Ed all day.

I cleaned up my corner during the morning and then took a shower before lunch. We were supposed to have a meeting at two, but on seeing that it was just another parachute lecture, I decided not to go. I came back and wrote a few more letters.

That just about did it. There was no mail except for a couple of cards and a package of envelopes from Ruth.

At night I just wrote to her and went to bed about nine-thirty. We're not scheduled for tomorrow's mission.

Friday, December 22, 1944

Today was just a little different from yesterday. It rained most of the night and it was damp and dismal all day. During the morning we all hung around the hut. About ten or so they came to inform me that I was to go down to Gioia and pick up another ship. I flew QD with a co-pilot who is going to check out as a first. We had to fly low and then they wouldn't let us land so we came back. After lunch I went to the movies they had. The picture was good. I wrote a letter and started Ruth's before supper. We ate late and then went to the USO show. It was good and certainly a morale booster. One of the girls was from Massachusetts. More of the same would be very welcome.

I finished Ruth's letter and this is where I am now. No mail today. Things are rough all over, I guess.

Today's flying time 1:15

Total flying time 59:25

Saturday, December 23, 1944

And so another day passes and we're no further along now than we were yesterday. I had Link at 0800 this morning, but that was the only diversion during the day. It's getting cold and was damp all day. I read some of Ruth's letters, brought my log book up to date and then wrote a couple of letters.

Tonight the group orchestra was playing at the theater, but I didn't go. Wrote a fairly long letter to Ruth and spent the night in the hut.

I received a letter from her this noon and also another package arrived. It looked as though it had gone through plenty, but at least it got here.

There was another stand-down this morning and the weather for tomorrow doesn't seem to be any better. We're not scheduled so it doesn't make much difference to us.

Nothing much to do now except go to bed.

Sunday, December 24, 1944

Don't know what I can write about today. The main event was the arrival of two letters from Ruth and a couple more packages. The packages came late tonight or rather this afternoon and seemed to have been timed perfectly.

We loafed around all morning. There was a stand-down. It rained off and on during the day. I fooled around with the accordion during the morning and took a shower before lunch. I spent most of the afternoon listening to a radio in another hut. Heard some familiar musical programs and also the Boston Symphony.

We went to the show after supper. It was pretty good. From then until about eleven I wrote to Ruth and we just sat around and talked.

Oh, received a card from Edna – quite a surprise.

I guess there is plenty of Christmas spirit around depending on whether one drinks or not.

Monday, December 25, 1944

Another Christmas come and gone. I hope it's the last of its kind we have to see. It was better than last year in a way. It rained most of the day and although there was a mission, they had to land at another field because of the weather.

I opened my packages this morning. Ruth sent a lot of things that I've been running low on and can use.

I fixed a switch for my light and then during the afternoon read a little and started a letter to Ruth. Mac went to town and Ed was with the enlisted men most of the day.

We had a good meal at night and then listened to a two hour "Command Performance" broadcast. It was good. When we got back here I finished my letter to Ruth although it was going on for eleven when I did.

For me it was rather lonesome throughout the whole day. Most everyone was homesick during the program.

Tuesday, December 26, 1944

They decided that we had hung around long enough so as the planes came in this morning we were scheduled for a bombing practice mission for the afternoon.

This morning I didn't bother to get up for breakfast and didn't accomplish anything except to write a letter home. I had planned to do some writing during the afternoon, but that will have to wait now.

The bombing mission was high altitude and by PFF. The weather wasn't too good on the way back and we had trouble with a runaway prop. It was almost dark before we landed.

At night there was a show – not too good, but then it was a show. I wrote to Ruth a short letter afterwards.

Received another package from her and one from the church. Also another of her letters. Perhaps now that the rush is over, the mail will improve – maybe. We're scheduled on tomorrow's mission.

Wednesday, December 27, 1944 Mission #7 – Venzone Viaduct, Italy

We didn't have briefing until 0620 so we had a little more sleep than usual. There was nothing very unusual or exciting about the whole mission. Weather was good all the way and the target – a viaduct – was clear. We bombed from twenty-thousand, but our flight missed the target. And as we found out later, so did the rest of them. For a change, we were back at the field about three. We saw very little flak and no one had any trouble. There was a critique at night and there was some chewing done. I guess we'll be getting more practice in everything from now on.

I received a couple of letters from Ruth which, of course, are very welcome. Wrote her a fairly short letter at night. I was a little tired and other than to answer her letters, there was nothing to write.

Today's combat time 5:45

Total combat time 49:30

Thursday, December 28, 1944

We loafed around today. We were scheduled for ditching and bailout practice, but because of transportation difficulties we didn't get out to the line. That was the main event during the morning and nothing was accomplished.

During the afternoon, I wrote some notes in answer to Christmas cards and began a letter to Ruth before the show. There was a meeting after the movie and I figured that we'd be up for the mission tomorrow and would want to get to bed early. And that's the way it was. The picture was "Christmas Holiday" and it wasn't bad. The mail situation was very good today – four from Ruth and one or two others.

It wasn't too early when we got to bed, but I guess we were all asleep by ten or so.

Friday, December 29, 1944 Mission #8 – Passau M/Y, Germany

I'm writing this six days hence so I may not have all the facts as straight as they should be. Today's mission was a mess from start to where it is now. The weather wasn't too good at take-off and we had an exciting time for a while getting assembled. The target was the marshaling yards at Passau, but we finally hit the second alternative via PFF. Some flights didn't even hit that and had to go to a target in Italy. In between our main and alternate targets, we did some circling and were riddled with flak. One of the boys was shot up pretty bad. On the way back, about 100 miles north we hit bad weather and the flights split up. Our flight finally turned back to Jesi, an emergency field operated by the South African Air Force. Everyone was trying to get in there when we arrived. It was four when we landed. The mud was terrific – a foot deep and sticky. After some

dubbing around we were taken in to town to a service squadron (U.S.) and they managed to feed us. I decided to sleep in the plane.

Today's combat time 8:00

Total combat time 57:30

Saturday, December 30, 1944

To go on with the story, the rest of the boys were put up in an old warehouse on the floor and some slept with "permanent party" which, by the way, were negro boys. They were the only Americans around. The meal situation was funny. We ate with anything that could be scraped up. They gave us eight blankets last night and although it was a little chilly, I didn't do too badly. I didn't get any breakfast this morning and got back into town a little before noon time. It's much nicer than anything in Southern Italy. We couldn't take off so we just roamed around town. There was a U.S.O. show during the afternoon. We had seen it, but it helped break the monotony. During the late afternoon I spent some time in the YMCA having tea no less and met a Scotchman with an English outfit. We talked for some time and I went back to the field with him. It was going on for ten when I went to the ship.

Sunday, December 31, 1944

Today we thought we might take off. It was cold sleeping last night and I didn't leave the plane all day. The boys came out about ten and we spent from then until late afternoon trying to get off. All the ships were hopelessly stuck and we had to be hauled out of the mud by a tractor. Five of the ships did get off including one with Gil. Capt. Poole decided to fly with me because he wanted to be the last to leave and my ship was in such a position that it would be the last. At four, the weather was bad and they wouldn't let any more ships off. We were stuck in the mud again anyhow. So back we came to town – pretty disgusted. The South African boys had invited the officers up to their place for supper and a New Year's party so some of us went. The meal was good and although I didn't drink anything but fruit juice, I enjoyed myself after supper. They had some empty beds so Capt. Poole, Mac, Beckman and I put up for the night. My bed was in a tent that was open all around and had no stove.

Monday, January 1, 1945 New Year's Day

I slept with all my clothes on. The camp was on a hill and it snowed during the night. I got up about nine and we hung around all morning and part of the afternoon. They haven't very much as far as luxuries go. We just roamed around looking for something to do. Everything was closed up. We looked like a bunch of freaks walking around in all kinds of clothing and flying equipment. My beard was getting very black and long. After supper we went to a stage show that was playing. It was British but wasn't too bad. It broke up the monotony a little. I can't remember what I had for supper – I think we stopped in some place and had tea and cakes. Loyko met some Polish fellows and talked with them for quite a while. When we got back to the negro squadron, we had to draw blankets once again. This time we slept in some rooms behind the orderly room.

Tuesday, January 2, 1945

It was fairly warm but again, I slept in my clothes. I made up my mind to get a shave the first thing this morning if the weather was bad. So after breakfast (some eggs on bread) we took off for town again and all of us got a shave. Then we started to wander around again. Mac and Beckman "flirted" with the girls and we spent more time in the "café" having tea and cakes. Lunch consisted of a pork chop on bread. During the afternoon, we thought we could get off and so we dashed off for the line again, but they talked us out of it. We came back to the squadron and after a good chicken dinner, we came in town to see a stage show, but the line was two miles long and then some. We decided not to wait so went over and had more tea. Then we went to the show. The picture was old but good. Tonight we slept on the floor of an old warehouse right next to a room the Negroes used for a bar and over the kitchen.

Wednesday, January 3, 1945

After spending most of the morning sitting around in the ship waiting for the tractor to haul us out of the mud, we finally dug ourselves out and at 1140 convinced the boys in the tower that it was OK for us to take off.

We didn't sleep at all last night between the bar and the kitchen.

We came back at 190 MPH and got here a little before one. It was good to get back. There was a lot of mail waiting and I'll have quite a bit of writing to do.

They haven't flown any missions and the weather has been pretty bad. I don't think that we'll be up for tomorrow's mission, but don't know for sure.

Wrote to Ruth tonight and now it's time to get to bed for some sleep, I hope.

Today's flying time 1:10

Total flying time 60:35

Thursday, January 4, 1945

Really slept well last night and didn't wake until 0730 this morning. After breakfast, I shaved and went to town. Gil says that they wanted me to fly about eleven. I didn't get back until about one. I got paid and then went to the post office and had some money orders made out. There was nothing at the PX to get and after some coffee at the Red Cross, had my hair cut.

During the afternoon, I wrote a couple of short letters and helped Ed install one of the tanks we brought back from Jesi. In all, I didn't accomplish very much. We did a lot of talking and that didn't help any.

After supper, I wrote to Ruth and we're up for the mission tomorrow. Got to bed about nine or attempted to anyway.

Friday, January 5, 1945

Today we did something that I've been hoping we wouldn't – abort. On takeoff we began leaking gas and it didn't get any worse, but it didn't improve. The bomb bay was full of fumes and I couldn't make up my mind. The mission was a short one to Yugo and I didn't want to miss it (Gil was riding as pilot with another crew). Finally, a prop ran away and that decided the issue. We were back before noon.

I spent the rest of the day reading the mail that came and also wrote a couple of short letters. At night there was a show – “Up in Mable's Room”. It was a riot. The group reached target all right and made four runs. There was an undercast though and according to orders, didn't drop the bombs. They got credit for the mission though so Gil is one up on us. I wrote to Ruth. We talked baseball for a while and it was eleven when I got to bed.

Today's flying time 1:35

Total flying time 62:10

Saturday, January 6, 1945

Not much to say about today. Something I ate yesterday didn't set very well and I was awake most of the night. At five this morning I had to get up and let it go. I went to the dispensary after I got up and got some pills. I was scheduled to fly, but Doc grounded me for the day. The weather wasn't too good and the flight was eventually called off. I didn't begin to feel good until late in the afternoon.

During the afternoon I wrote two or three v-mail letters and that is about all. Time just flies by whether I'm busy or not.

I didn't eat anything all day until supper. By then I was beginning to feel pretty good. I wrote to Ruth and then just fooled around. I guess it was going on for eleven when I got to bed.

Ed has an electric motor all fixed and as soon as the floor is put in we can have our shower.

Sunday, January 7, 1945

Six days passed since “today” and a lot has happened. I don't quite remember what happened today so this won't be any too accurate nor long. All I can remember is that around noon time I took a shower. On and off during the day I fooled around with Ed and the water system. During the afternoon I wrote a letter or two and started writing to Ruth before supper. There was a show although I can't remember what the name of the picture was.

I finished writing to my wife and got to bed. We're up for tomorrow's mission and in the same ship we had the other day. No mail.

Monday, January 8, 1945 Mission #9 – Southern Germany

And this was another messed up mission and costly as we found out later. We were supposed to go to Linz, but ran into clouds and weather in northern Italy. They decided to go on and climbed on up to above 25,000 feet pulling power like mad. Gil was riding with another crew and they began having engine trouble. Another ship was also having trouble and our #3 oil pressure wasn't doing so well either. Our windows frosted up and our flight became separated from the group. Gil finally dropped out. The lead ship also feathered an engine and in a little while, we dropped our bombs (somewhere) and we lost #3. We left the formation and headed home. Our gas was low and part way across the Adriatic I decided to head for Jesi - #1 scared us for a minute, but we reached Jesi and on the approach #2 ran away so Gilbert feathered that. We landed on two engines. So there we were back at our "alternate base." I was really sweating. My co-pilot was Clay, a fellow from group. We got ourselves set up and then went to see "The Desert Song."

Today's combat time 7:30

Total combat time 65:00

Tuesday, January 9, 1945

Nothing much to talk about today. I sent a message to group requesting transportation. They tell me that the engine will have to be changed. The weather is bad so I don't imagine they'll be up for us very soon.

We hung around the warehouse (I slept on the floor all night) and roamed around town for a while. We also spent some time in the café for "tea and crumpets."

Mac and Ed went out after a radio. I guess they managed to get one, but I won't say from where.

It's almost as comical as it was last week, but at least we know a little about what's going on.

At night we went to the small American Theater and saw "The Sky is The Limit" with Fred Astaire. It's old but I haven't seen it before and it was very entertaining. I also wrote a short v-mail to Ruth.

Wednesday, January 10, 1945

This morning there was nothing much to do. We went in to town fairly early expecting to get a shave. Most of the shops weren't open so we went down to the finance office where one of the boys was paid. After that we dubbed around town until lunch time.

I read a little and then we went back to town and got a shave. While we were at the café, a brawl started in which there was a chair throwing and a gun went off. No one was hurt.

We then took in another show – the South African one. The picture was OK, but the power wasn't too good and consequently the music which made up most of the picture was just no good.

I read for a while before going to bed. I have a cot tonight which will be much better than the floor.

Thursday, January 11, 1945

I stayed in bed reading for quite some time this morning. There was nothing to do so I just didn't bother getting up. After lunch we just hung around some more and I read a couple of more books. Really going in for it in a big way.

Loyko and the rest of them bought some turkeys which they were going to have about eight-thirty tonight. I didn't feel like having any. They went in to town early. I had supper and then went in. I wrote a v-mail to Ruth while at the café and then went down to the American Theater for the eight o'clock show. It was "Lost Angels" and was very good.

I got a message this afternoon saying that transportation was being sent for us.

Friday, January 12, 1945

Again this morning, I stayed in bed reading until Benedict came in and said that our ship was going to be ready this afternoon. I got up then and found out that it would be set to go after it had been serviced. So after lunch we went out to the ship. Someone had made a haul of parachutes and flying equipment. We "borrowed" some chutes and at 1520 we took off from there. Our oil was a little low and there was no oil on the field at the time so we left anyway.

When we got back to the base, we found that Gil's ship had not been heard from. The lead ship also went down at Vis, but the crew had come back yesterday. Our tent had caved in with the weight of snow and although the boys had put it back up, things were in a mess. In general, we feel low tonight. I wrote a short letter to Ruth.

Today's flying time 1:20

Total flying time 63:30

Saturday, January 13, 1945

No one knows just what did happen to Gil's ship. If I didn't try to come across the Adriatic he may be OK. We'll just have to wait and see what happens.

Today wasn't interesting at all. Kunkes, the co-pilot on the crew Gil is with moved in with us and he brought a radio. Ed and I got some fuel and we straightened up the tent. It was in a mess as a result of the cave-in.

During the afternoon I just dubbed around. Waited in line for rations and other than that, the afternoon just went by.

At night the orchestra played at the show and there was a couple of bond drawings. Then there was a brief talk about the doings of this group during the past year. They also had a short G.I. movie which wasn't bad.

No mail today except a couple of old pieces including one written by Ruth in October.

Sunday, January 14, 1945

A wet, dreary and lonesome Sunday describes this day. We had nothing to do except some ditching in the morning. I spent the rest of the day in the hut. The power was off until supper and we didn't have the benefit of the radio.

Since Monday there has been no mission because of the weather and today was no exception.

I had to make out a list covering the stuff we lost at Jesi and during the afternoon I wrote a couple of letters. We also fooled around getting some water into our tank.

At night I started a letter to Ruth and four hours later, I was still writing. On the third page though I couldn't put my mind to it. A couple of the enlisted men were in to talk over the results of an incident that took place yesterday. We straightened it out.

There was no mail – very discouraging.

Monday, January 15, 1945

And what am I to say about today? It was a very cold monotonous, uninteresting, dreary and wasted day. There wasn't anything scheduled and no further word about Gil. I mailed a package to Peggy and one to his mother that he had wrapped and addressed last week.

Ed and I fooled around with the water system and we have a panel with a couple of valves mounted that controls the hot and cold water.

I wrote a couple of short letters and more or less dubbed around.

It wasn't a bad day as far as weather was concerned and there was a mission.

At night I didn't go to the show. I had seen it and didn't want to see it twice. Wrote to Ruth and then listened to the radio for a while. We aren't up for the mission tomorrow.

Tuesday, January 16, 1945

Today was made bright by the arrival of two letters from Ruth – one of them being her "Christmas Letter." It certainly was good to hear from her again.

There was a stand-down again this morning. The weather became steadily worse during the course of the day and it's been raining for the past three or four hours.

We became ambitious today and worked on the hut exclusively. The Italians cemented in our sink and I painted the door, my window and desk. Mac and Ed did their windows and desk. It kept us busy and broke the monotony.

Four fellows from two crews who went down a month ago when the group was hit by fighters came back today. That's always a good morale booster.

There still hasn't been any word about Gil. We'll have to begin packing his things. I wish that we didn't have to do it. I still think that he's OK somewhere. We all hope so and that he'll get back here.

Wednesday, January 17, 1945

This was a very cold, wet and dreary day. It rained all day and is still coming down. We spent the day in the hut the best place on this kind of day.

I didn't accomplish very much during the course of the day. Cleaned up the hut in the morning and wrote four short letters in the afternoon. We had the water tank fill up our two supply tanks and now the water system is working fairly well. The steam has been eliminated.

Tonight I wrote to Ruth and then played a little solitaire. Right now I'm listening to the radio. I did a little reading during the day and also reread some of Ruth's letters. There was no mail and no word on Gil.

The Russians are moving again – Warsaw has been liberated.

Thursday, January 18, 1945

This is getting tiresome. Today we had the day off, officially, and I loafed just a little more than I have during the past week or so. This morning we fooled around some more with the water system and I got ten gallons of fuel. Then before lunch I went down and took a shower. During the afternoon I didn't even write any letters. I went over to see the enlisted men for a while and then reread some of Ruth's letters. It's the next best thing to getting mail. I didn't hear from her again today. Getting a little aggravated about the whole thing. Received a letter from Mrs. Dixon written Jan. 2 so at least I know that she's OK up through then.

Tonight I wrote to my wife and then listened to the radio. Mac and Ed burlesqued in a couple of dresses that Mac received from his mother for use in his "operations."

Friday, January 19, 1945

Fair, mild and not much change in activities. They did schedule me for a couple of lectures this morning that broke up the monotony a little. This afternoon was just

another. I packed most of Gil's stuff and put together his letters and pictures, then took them over to supply. They will keep his things for a month and then send them home.

There was no mail again this afternoon – very discouraging.

At night there was a fairly good show. At least it was good for some laughs – Abbott and Costello in “Lost in a Harem.” I tried writing to Ruth, but one sheet was the best I could do.

Got to bed by ten. We're flying tomorrow. Number ten, I hope.

Saturday, January 20, 1945, Mission #10, Linz, Austria

And it was a rough day. We briefed at six and took off two hours later for Linz. We were flying #3. Encountered cirrus on the way up and were in it for a thousand feet. It was cold, -58°F and one of my fingers just about reached the limit. My feet must have been cold too because one heel nearly killed me after we landed. Anyway, the target was rough. One ship caught fire and blew up. Another split in two. And we got a broadside too. Benedict was hit in the leg – it may be fractured. We counted almost 40 flak holes mostly in the waist section. The thing looked like a sieve. An oxygen line was shot out and Kunkes went dry as did Mac. We had to think fast, but made out OK. The bomb doors wouldn't close so we came back with them open. The landing was lousy – 25 MPH – and I leveled too high. Landed off the runway – got on it and skidded most of the way down it. We came back part way with A Flight – lost them coming down through the overcast and then came on in alone. Don't care if I never fly combat again.

Today's combat time 7:00

Total combat time 72:00

Sunday, January 21, 1945

I tried writing to Ruth last night, but just couldn't get my mind on it. They had a critique but it didn't last long. To (one “o”) top the day off, we had a rough wind storm around one. Hy and I got up and tightened up the ropes. I went back to sleep in a half hour or so, but woke again at three. This time it was really blowing. The wall moved each time the wind blew. Hy and I moved our beds out from the wall and it was some time before I got back to sleep.

We were scheduled for formation practice, lead ship. It was a little rough. We were down before three and missed the USO show. From then until supper I just fooled around not doing much of anything. Oh! We're going to Capri tomorrow after the show which was a good western for a change. I wrote to Ruth and then packed up my clothes that I'm taking tomorrow. The music tonight was good and it was midnight before I got to bed.

Two letters from Ruth today and they are swell.

Today's flying time 2:30

Total flying time 66:00

Monday, January 22, 1945

Well, our plans were changed today and consequently I haven't much to write about. We woke up this morning with two or three inches of snow on the ground and it's still coming down. It was a mean day, but the snow began to melt and it's gone now. It's getting cold and the wind is blowing like the devil.

The main event was the arrival of four letters from my wife. That was the only advantage of not going to Capri. If it is a good day tomorrow, I imagine we'll go then.

I didn't do anything today worth mentioning so I won't.

Tuesday, January 23, 1945

Today was wasted and nothing was accomplished. The plane for Naples was supposed to be ready to go at 1130. We waited around until after noon before we even got out to the line. There were about twenty-five in the ship and we had just started to taxi when the thing skidded into a ditch. One wheel went down so far that the nose wheel caved in and the plane rested on the bomb bay and left wing.

We were ready to take off in another ship when one taking off cracked up on the runway. The Colonel closed the field. I didn't feel like going then anyway. I saw Major Poole and asked that we be taken off orders until next week. He agreed to that.

There was a show tonight – not too good. Received a letter from Ruth and wrote her after the movie.

The Russians are still making good progress. We're rooting for them.

Wednesday, January 24, 1945

Another wasted day, another stand-down although the weather wasn't too bad. During the afternoon, I wrote four or five short letters. The morning was spent cleaning up the hut and generally fooling around. I guess I lugged a few gallons of fuel some time during the course of the day.

A couple of the enlisted men went in to see Benedict this afternoon. From what the doctor knows now, I guess they may send him home. He may also have a stiff leg permanently. I hope that they do send him home. He's going to be moved to Bari the first of next week. I should get in to see him before then.

The day ended with a letter to Ruth and I got to bed at ten-thirty. A little early for a change.

Thursday, January 25, 1945

Today varied little from the previous days of this week. This morning after the weather had cleared a little we flew some practice formation – lead ship again. Set up the C-1 on the radio compass and take it easy. We were only up a couple of hours until noon.

During the afternoon, I cleaned my gun and made a couple of trips to the “tailor shop” just getting around to getting patches put on my shirts. I also read a story before supper and then took in the show. It was an old picture I had seen before, but....

Soon after I began writing to Ruth the lights went off. I finished the letter and am writing this by flashlight. Guess I might just as well go to bed.

Three pretty nice letters from my wife today.

Today's flying time 2:00

Total flying time 68:00

Friday, January 26, 1945

Little change today – another stand-down with not much to do. We did have to go out to the line at ten to practice ditching and bailout. During the afternoon I read and wrote one or two short notes. At three I had to fly with a new crew on an orientation ride and at the same time, slow time a new engine. We didn't get off the ground until after four and it was getting dark when I landed.

The evening was the same as usual. I couldn't write a decent letter to Ruth to save myself. Wonder what she must think.

We haven't yet heard whether or not we're going to Capri this coming week. I'd just as soon go.

Tomorrow I'm going to try and go in to see Benedict. He's supposed to leave for Bari on Monday.

Today's flying time 1:15

Total flying time 69:15

Saturday, January 27, 1945

Today was a little different – at least the afternoon was. The morning was just about the same as they have been. There was another stand-down and I didn't have anything to do.

This afternoon Mac and I went in to town to the hospital. It's the first time I've been in town since before Christmas.

Benedict seems to be OK and, of course, he's much elated over the possibility of going home. We stayed not quite an hour and then went to the PX, but there wasn't anything that I needed except for a valentine for Ruth.

There was no movie tonight for some season or other, probably a breakdown of the machine.

The flight plan was changed and "C" flight went up for tomorrow's mission. McGarr and Farris are grounded, but they got us a couple of spare gunners. Hope there's a stand-down.

Sunday, January 28, 1945

They woke us up for briefing at five, but were informed of a stand-down when we reached the mess hall. Didn't make me feel badly. I didn't sleep any too well last night and was hoping that the weather would be bad.

A practice flight was scheduled, but called off before eight. At ten it was called on again. We had begun to taxi when the tower decided to call it off again because of weather moving in. A cold front hit at about one-thirty and it was miserable from then on - snow, cold and windy.

I stayed in the hut and did some writing.

Received five letters from Ruth. The doctor thinks she will have a boy. I prefer a girl, but that is one thing we can't help.

I didn't bother to pack tonight because I don't think that we'll go tomorrow.

Monday, January 29, 1945

Here we go again. Yesterday's storm continued on through most of the night. Although I had set the alarm for 0630, I didn't even bother to get up until an hour later. There was no ship going to Naples so I don't know when we'll go to Capri.

It was quite cold all day and I spent most of the time in the hut. I didn't even go to lunch (they say it was terrible anyway).

I did quite a bit of reading. I attempted a letter this afternoon, but gave it up as a bad job. There was a show tonight, but it was pretty bad.

I learned from Major Poole that the enlisted men will get their promotion this month. They'll be glad to hear that.

Received one letter from Ruth today. Mail has been good this past week just for a change.

Tuesday, January 30, 1945

Not much to talk about tonight - another stand-down and we didn't get off for Naples.

Just hung around the hut all day mostly reading. It was cold and the best place to be during the day was in by the fire.

Major Poole said that if we didn't go tomorrow, we'll probably go off orders.

At night I wrote to Ruth and stayed up quite late listening to the radio.

The Russians are beginning to press Berlin and the western front is showing signs of starting through, I hope.

Wednesday, January 31, 1945

I decided today that I didn't want to go to Capri. We got our orders this morning and went out to the ship. It was being fixed and come to find out group called the trip off. In the meantime, the ship was fixed, but the squadron decided that it was too late to go.

So I went in to town. I went to see Benedict and then picked up my pay. Got a couple of money orders and then came back.

There was no mail from Ruth today, but I did get a letter from home. The first time in a couple of weeks or more.

We were taken off orders tonight and put up for the mission tomorrow. Guess I had better get to bed.

Thursday, February 1, 1945

We were briefed for a place up beyond Vienna and I guess we would have reached there if things had gone right. During takeoff, a ship came in with a bad engine and piled up at the end of the runway. That held us up and we were 1.5 hours late getting off. We nearly didn't make it. The thing didn't want to fly and I had to yank it off at 105 MPH. We just hung in the air for a long time. Right away a turbo began acting up so after fooling with it for a while, I called it off. No use on taking a chance with something like that.

I didn't do anything all afternoon except read.

Tonight, after I finished writing to Ruth, they notified me that we had to test hop a ship. We dubbed around and couldn't contact the tower. Finally taxied down the runway in front of it. They gave us two red flares so we didn't go.

Today's flying time 0:35

Total flying time 69:50

Friday, January (I'll get it yet) February 2, 1945

Didn't bother to get up this morning until almost nine. An hour later we were on our way to test hop another ship. Farris was to be our engineer. We got off OK and then discovered that the wheels weren't coming up. Bickel discovered the hydraulic leak in the bomb bay. We had lost quite a bit of fluid by then. Ed held his fingers in the hole until we landed. Hy had to pump the flaps down. We landed with 35 °. There was just enough pressure for the breaks.

Didn't do anything but read all afternoon and then took a shower. Before supper, Mac put a match to the stove which was saturated. I was outside expecting the worst and Ed hid in the shower. She blew but plenty. Knocked a piece of tin through the door and lifted the stove two feet in the air. Flames went to the top of the tent and some of Ed's things caught fire. It ripped up the floor a little too.

There was a show tonight and then I wrote to Ruth. There was no mail.

Today's flying time 0:15

Total flying time 70:05

Saturday, February 3, 1945

Not much doing today. There was a stand-down and we are scheduled for a practice bombing mission. It was to be norm altitude, but when we took off at eleven, the ceiling was seven thousand. The target was hard to find and as the PDI wasn't working, we made toggle runs on the thing. Ed and the gunner bombardier didn't do too badly.

There was nothing to do in the afternoon so I wrote a couple of letters and read a little.

There was a G.I. movie which was pretty good. After that I wrote to Ruth and got to bed some time after eleven.

Still no mail. Situation is nearing the point of exasperation.

As far as I know the crew is going to Capri this week. However I'm not on the orders. I'd just as soon stick around here and come and go as I please for a week.

Today's flying time 1:40

Total flying time 71:45

Sunday, February 4, 1945

A rather quiet day as Sundays should be. Hy and I had an hour's Link beginning at eight. Other than that we had nothing to do. I spent most of the time in the hut. It wasn't a very good day.

Managed to write a few letters – not very long ones though.

There was no mail again today. No one is very happy about it all.

There was a show tonight. It wasn't the best, but was good for a few laughs.

We are on Capri orders for tomorrow. That is the crew is. I'm just going to kick around for a week or so. Go to Bari and Foggia – perhaps Naples.

Monday, February 5, 1945

Well, this day was a little different to say the least. The weather was good and we took off for Naples. I just wanted to see the town and planned to come back with the ship. The weather wasn't too good at Naples and we sweat out the landing. We ate at the rest camp mess and then went into town. It's a large city with street cars and buses such as they were. I'd like to roam around the place some time. I had lost my hat out the hatch when we landed and had to get another. I left the other boys and came back to the hotel to catch the truck for the field.

When we got back to the field, we had to wait because the mission was just getting in. Finally a ship cracked up on the runway and we had to go to another field. Some of us got a truck and came back in it. The plane got in about a half hour ahead of us.

Tuesday, February 6, 1945

Not much to talk about tonight. At present it's raining quite hard and I don't imagine tomorrow will be very good.

I didn't get up until eight-thirty and just loafed around all morning. After lunch, Cameron and I went in to town. We just went to the post office, club and PX. We were going to take in the show, but the picture didn't sound so good and we decided against it.

There was a show at our theatre, but after seeing the first few minutes of it, I left. Wrote to Ruth, took a shower and went to bed.

Tomorrow I'm planning to go to Bari, but I guess it will depend on the weather. It wouldn't be a very good trip in the rain. Hope the crew is having better weather than this.

Wednesday, February 7, 1945

Another day come and gone and I haven't much to account for. I just hung around the hut not doing much of anything. I did some reading and wrote a short note home.

I woke up after eight this morning and didn't feel much like going to Bari. Rawchuck wasn't up and he felt the same way. I thought I might go to Foggia, but only got as far as the line and then changed my mind.

Rawchuck and I plan to make it to Bari tomorrow.

At night I just listened to the radio and wrote to Ruth. Another fellow kept me company most of the day and night.

There was no mail this afternoon.

Thursday, February 8, 1945

Rawchuck and I left about eight-thirty and picked up a truck in town that was going to Bari. It took us to within three or four miles of the city. We had lunch at a transient mess

and then, after visiting the PX, we went looking for the Red Cross club. With the help of some captain and his Jeep, we finally got to it. From there we had some coffee and doughnuts at the coffee shop. Of course we did quite a bit of walking and looked the town over. It's not home or even comparable to Charleston, S.C., but then this is Italy.

We got another fast, wild ride back and it took us 2 ½ hours from the city to the base.

There was a show tonight after which I wrote to Ruth. Received three more of her letters. The baby may come a week or so early.

Friday, February 9, 1945

Not much to relate tonight. Had thought about going back to Bari, but I changed my mind this morning. Instead another fellow and I went to Cerignola. We spent some time looking at cameras and then, after having coffee at the Red Cross we went to the post office. Then we took in a USO musical comedy at the show.

From there we came "home." Tonight I did nothing but read some papers from home and write to Ruth.

I didn't get any letters from her today. At her last visit to the doctor, he again told her that he thought she would have a boy and that it may come early. Hope I hear as soon as possible.

Tomorrow I plan to go to Foggia, but we had better wait until tomorrow comes and see.

Saturday, February 10, 1945

Here we are again and with not much to talk about. Planned to get up early and get in the PX line, but didn't. I did get rations before nine though. It wasn't until ten before I finally made up my mind to go to Foggia. I went alone and got a good fast ride from Cerignola.

I didn't do much. Ate at the transient mess and spent some time at the club. I looked for something to send Ruth, but had no luck.

It was almost three when I left. Got another good ride and then got a haircut in town.

There was a short GI show tonight and then I wrote to Ruth. Received two swell letters from her.

She's feeling fine and everything is coming along nicely.

Sunday, February 11, 1945

Not too much to talk about tonight. I didn't do anything at all during the day. I had decided to stay "home" today and that's just what I did. It would have been too bad if I had gone anywhere because it poured all day.

I didn't do much except write a letter or two (one to Peggy) and did up a package to send to Gil's mother.

There was some good music on the radio all through the day and night.

I got a couple of letters from Ruth and one other one.

My foot locker arrived and I spent some time going through the stuff that was in it.

There was a show at night. I had seen it before, but sat through it again. Then I wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio. Tomorrow, Rawchuck and I plan to go to Foggia.

Monday, February 12, 1945

I didn't get up until after eight-thirty, but Rawchuck and I took off before nine for Foggia. We got rides OK, but had to detour and that road was plenty rough. We didn't do anything when we got there except sit around in the club. We played checkers and read. Then walked around for a little while. We started back after one and when we got back to Cerignola, decided to go to the show, but the picture wasn't much good and we didn't stay.

The crew came back tonight so we go back to work tomorrow.

I wrote to Ruth. It wasn't a very good letter. I guess there was too much going on and there wasn't much to write about.

There was no mail at all today.

Tuesday, February 13, 1945

I loafed around again today. We had nothing scheduled xaring the day except I collected two shots and a vaccination.

It was a swell day as far as the weather is concerned. I was out for almost an hour tossing a baseball around and that was just about all I did during the morning. After lunch and the shots we saw a surprise showing of "Winged Victory". It was a pretty good show, but long.

There was a party tonight, but we just went for the supper and then came back. We're flying tomorrow.

Mac found out that he has a dose of "clap" and has to go to the hospital for some shots tomorrow. We'll have another navigator on the mission.

Received three swell letters from Ruth and one from home and a couple of packages.

Wednesday, February 14, 1945, Valentine's Day. Mission #11, Moosbierbaum Oil ref

Had a very uncomfortable night. My arms ached and I thought too many things about the mission.

They woke us up at five. We had a navigator from another crew. The target was an oil refinery at Moosbierbaum, not far from Vienna.. We had pretty good weather up there although there was an under cast until we reached the target. The flak was off to one side and we hit the place fairly well.

The trip back seemed long. In all, the mission wasn't too bad. Wouldn't mind more like that.

I was quite tired so I wrote a short letter to Ruth and got to bed before ten-thirty.

Mac came back for a little while, but he has to go back again.

Today's combat time 7:10

Total combat time 79:10

Thursday, February 15, 1945

Not much happened today. During the morning I fixed my photograph album. I had a lecture during the afternoon and spent the rest of the time reading some papers that had come in the afternoon.

At night there was a movie, "Gaslight." It is the movie version of the play "Angel Street" that Ruth and I had seen back in 1942. It was very good, but not as good as the play.

I wrote a short letter to Ruth and then decided to go to bed. We're up for the mission tomorrow. Hope it's as good as the last one.

Have had a funny feeling during the past couple of days. I wonder if Ruth is in the hospital now?

Friday, February 16, 1945, Mission #12, Rosenhaim M/Y, Germany

We were briefed for a jet propelled air field up above Munich only to be bombed if a visual run could be made. Had the same ship as the other day and the take-off was OK. We had to assemble above the overcast. A visual run couldn't be made so we hit the Rosenheim marshaling yards. We had been briefed on fighters, but no flak. We saw neither. The trip back was OK until we reached the spur. Ceiling was down to two thousand and we nearly ran into a couple of flights of 17s. I never saw airplanes scatter as those big birds did. Then our flight had to go around twice before peeling and then I had to make two more turns before I finally got in. There were planes all over trying to get in – anyway at all.

There was a critique and then I wrote to Ruth. That's all.

Today's combat time 8:00

Total combat time 87:10

Saturday, February 17, 1945

If I remember correctly, there isn't much to talk about tonight. We had a lecture this morning, but that's about all. We did have a first aid lecture scheduled for one, but it was cancelled. I spent most of the day writing letters and "worked" a little on my album.

There was no mail from Ruth. Mail has been poor during the last few days.

Wrote to Ruth and took a shower after supper.

Mac is back from the hospital and is OK now.

Sunday, February 18, 1945

Other than a long first aid lecture this morning, we had nothing else scheduled. The mission got off OK, but came back before noon because of bad weather further north.

I spent the rest of the morning reading a couple of Sunday papers that had come in and listening to the radio. During the afternoon I wrote a couple of letters.

Hy and Ed played pinochle at night. They may have a chance to get to the Riviera if they can beat a few more people.

I wrote to Ruth, but didn't get to bed until after eleven.

Monday, February 19, 1945

Not much happened today. If there had been a stand-down, I was to have flown a practice formation, however the mission flew.

During the afternoon, they wanted me to go down to Bari and pick up a plane. It was very windy and the weather didn't look too well so they postponed the trip for a couple of hours. On the second attempt, we found that the Gioia was closed. I didn't mind one bit as I wasn't fussy about going down there.

I didn't do much all day except read. I was going to write, but didn't feel like it.

I did receive two letters from my wife which helped matters considerably.

Tuesday, February 20, 1945, Mission #13, Fiume, Italy

We didn't take off until after nine this morning. The target was Bolzano in Italy. We had to assemble above the clouds and everything went fairly well. Hy flew most of the trip. He's beginning to catch on pretty well. An hour before target time, they began changing the target from one alternate to another. The primary was covered by overcast. We started finally to Trieste, but ended up by bombing Fiume after making two runs over the

place. The four flights had split up and we were alone from there back to the base. It was rather cold up there today. We only saw a couple of bursts of flak.

At night I went to the show and wrote a short note to Ruth and then shaved.

I only hope we have more missions like today.

Today's combat time 6:10

Total combat time 93:20

Wednesday, February 21, 1945

Just another lazy day. I did absolutely nothing. And I do mean "absolutely." Didn't get up for breakfast until the last minute and then we cleaned up the hut. General Doolittle, Spaatz and Twining paid us a visit. They didn't stay for dinner however, but we enjoyed a very good meal including chicken and ice cream with cake.

I spent most of the day reading and wrote a couple of letters. I also tried to sleep for a while. I had very little ambition.

There was no mail again today – just keep it up.

We're flying tomorrow so I guess I'd better get to bed.

Thursday, February 22, 1945, Mission #14, Kemmen, Germany

We were briefed at 0500 for a marshaling yard a little south of Nuremburg. And the bombing was to be done from 13,000 feet! Everything went fine until we reached the Alps. We came down from nineteen to seventeen thousand feet and then we were in the clouds. On the other side, we came on down further. The weather was so bad that we became lost and the colonel decided to hit a target in the vicinity. On a sharp turn, our flight split and there were many near collisions. After bombing the place, we lost the group and had to climb to 23,000 in order to top the weather. As it turned out, the rest of the group was hit by flak on the way back. At one time, we were down to twelve thousand feet over Germany.

Two old letters from Ruth today.

Today's combat time 8:05

Total combat time 101:25

Friday, February 23, 1945

Not much doing today. Hy and I had to get up for Link at eight. There was nothing else scheduled except for a group meeting at eleven.

I had nothing else during the morning except clean up around the hut.

I received a card from Mrs. Benedict written on the 15th saying that I had a son. There was no late mail from home or from Ruth so that's all I know. I spent the rest of the afternoon going slightly crazy. I also received a letter from Marian Gillis so I wrote to her.

At night I wrote a fairly long letter to Ruth, took a shower and got to bed about eleven or so.

Now I can't wait until the mail comes in tomorrow!

Saturday, February 24, 1945

Not much happened today. That is until I got my mail late in the afternoon. Received a lot of it – five or six letting me know about my seven pound son. He was born at 1125 on February 13. Both he and Ruth are doing well. I was floating on air all night and the cigars are gone. Also had a little champagne to celebrate. It certainly made me very happy and it will be so much to look forward to.

There wasn't much doing all day. Hy and I went in to town to the show and the post office. I owe dad Dixon \$5 because of the fact that the baby's name isn't Beverly.

I wrote to Ruth tonight and then to bed fairly early. We are flying tomorrow.

Sunday, February 25, 1945 Mission #15, Linz, Austria

And so we were off to Linz again. The weather was bad over the base and we were hoping for a stand-down, but no. Climbing through the clouds, we lost the flight and it was an hour before we found it and the group. We had just about decided to tack on to the 484th and go on up with them.

The trip was uneventful and although the target was black with flak, we didn't get hit. I really sweat out the bomb run though. We saw a number of enemy fighters including one that crossed in front of us on the bomb run.

They are using both runways for takeoff and landing and it speeds things up considerably.

There was a show tonight, but I didn't bother about it. There was quite a bit of mail including one from Ruth written after the baby was born.

Today's combat time 7:20

Total combat time 108:45

Monday, February 26, 1945

Not much doing today. If there had been a stand-down I would have had to fly a bombing mission. There was, but they had a group practice mission so I didn't go bombing.

At noon, Hy and I went in to town. Didn't do much. No, I'm wrong! I just sat around writing letters all afternoon.

There was quite a bit of mail again today. I imagine that it will slacken off soon.

I finally wrote a fairly decent letter tonight to Ruth. It took me some time though.

Spent the rest of the evening listening to the radio.

Tuesday, February 27, 1945

Another quiet day. The weather was swell and I tossed a softball around for a while during the afternoon. The rest of the day I spent writing. Only two letters, but they were fairly long.

Mac has been sick with a cold during the past two days, but began to look alive again today.

The mail was slim, but I did get another letter from Ruth. She seems to be well and happy.

There was a show tonight so we took it in. Haven't been to one in over a week. Things are tough.

Wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio.

Wednesday, February 28, 1945

Not much to relate today. I had nothing scheduled all day and didn't know just what to do. We wouldn't be paid until sometime during the afternoon, but I wanted to go in to town and get some money orders. I borrowed \$70 and went in to the post office and then to the club. I was back by one-thirty and got paid.

It was a swell day. Tossed a softball around for a while and then just dubbed around.

There was no mail from Ruth today – just a couple of cards.

We're flying tomorrow so we didn't stay up very late. Ed and I listened to the radio until about ten-thirty.

Thursday, March 1, 1945, Mission #16, Moosbierbaum O/R

We were briefed for Moosbierbaum near Vienna. We were up with the lug wheels and flew deputy lead in B flight. It was good to fly on the right wing for a change and I enjoyed it. For the most part, anyway. We ran into weather and dubbed around for almost an hour. We finally got to the target, made a "dry run" and then came over it a second time. There was plenty of flak, but it was just a few feet low. We only picked up four or five small holes.

It was a long time to be in the air for that trip. We saw one or two enemy fighters too.

I didn't do much at night. There was a pretty good concert by a soprano after supper. Wrote a short letter to Ruth and got to bed around eleven.

Today's combat time 8:20

Total combat time 117:05

Friday, March 2, 1945

Just another day with not much to talk about. They caught me this morning for a practice bombing mission. It was ten-thirty before we got off and had to go up to 20,000. Before we came down, my feet were freezing. As it was we logged almost three hours.

There wasn't much to do the rest of the afternoon so I didn't do it. Could have written some letters, but didn't. Started Ruth's letter, shaved and then went to supper.

Benedict came in on a pass from Bari. He will be back here and will probably fly with us again. All the boys made S/Sgt. Gilbert is in for Tech. I'm glad that Benedict made it.

Finished writing to Ruth and then got to bed. She and the baby are fine.

Today's flying time 2:50

Total flying time 74:35

Saturday, March 3, 1945

Today was more or less wasted so I'm not even going to try and write anything. The morning just went by. Then after lunch I got some mail and ten papers so I spent more than two hours reading. By that time, most of the afternoon was gone. Spent the evening listening to the radio and writing to Ruth.

Sunday, March 4, 1945

Didn't wake up until almost eight-thirty. Went over to operations and they got me for a trip up to a P-38 base. The engineering officer wanted to get something. It didn't take long to make the trip and we were back by noon. We flew the cargo ship and that thing can really travel.

I wanted to write this afternoon, but felt sleepy. After lying down for an hour and dubbing around, I finally ended up by writing three v-mails.

There was a show tonight, but I had seen it so didn't go. Had hoped to write a decent letter to Ruth, but I guess there was too much competition.

Shaved and went to bed. We don't fly tomorrow as I thought we would.

Today's flying time 0:50

Total flying time 75:25

Monday, March 5, 1945

They wanted me to fly a practice bombing mission this morning, but I had “contracted” a case of the “G.I.s” and managed to get out of it. Perhaps I should have gone up. As things turned out I just wasted the day.

I did some reading during the day and in the afternoon wrote two or three letters. Didn't feel like writing though and Ruth's letter at night wasn't very much.

We were surprised to learn that we are up for tomorrow's mission. We got to bed by nine-thirty.

Tuesday, March 6, 1945

We got up and were briefed for “Big V”, but a stand-down was called before we got to the line. I had to fly a practice bombing mission and that took care of the morning. We only went up to 15,000 and then played around in the clouds a while. Loyko played co-pilot.

I didn't do anything in the afternoon except read a couple of papers and some mail. There was nothing from Ruth which was discouraging.

I went to the show after supper and it turned out to be pretty good.

Finished Ruth's letter in between radio programs and didn't get to bed until ten-thirty or so. We aren't up for the mission tomorrow.

No mail from Ruth today.

Today's flying time 2:10

Total flying time 77:35

Wednesday, March 7, 1945

Not much doing today. Wrote a letter or two in the morning and during the afternoon, I had to fly a practice formation mission. We flew a ship having one of the new formation sticks. They work very nicely. We led the flight and went down to Taranto. We weren't up for long, but it did away with the afternoon.

There was nothing doing after supper and I wrote to Ruth – a very sad this it was too. There was no mail from her today.

We're up again for the mission tomorrow. Weather doesn't look too good. There was another stand-down today.

Today's flying time 2:20

Total flying time 79:55

Thursday, March 8, 1945, Mission #17, Hegyeshalon, Hungary

We were up early this morning and found that the target was an easy one or was supposed to be. The weather was bad, but we took off and formed over in Yugo. We had no trouble except a little worry with the engine. We made two runs on the target as it was covered on the first one. We didn't have too much gas when we got back here.

The crew had to see a colonel just when we got back. He was making an investigation about a chute that we took from Jesi. I had signed for it and turned it in at our personal equipment. I don't think anything will come of it.

There was no mail from Ruth today. I felt quite tired and wrote a short letter to her.

Today's combat time 7:40

Total combat time 124:45

Friday, March 9, 1945

Not much to talk about today. The mission was rough and everyone was shot up. Two ships didn't come back, but one is at Vis.

Nothing was accomplished this morning, but this afternoon I went in to town with a couple of the fellows. We went to a premier showing of a new movie. We can now get our rations at the PX in town so I picked mine up.

Finally got a nice long letter from Ruth. It was written the first day she came home from the hospital. She seemed to be happy about having the baby to herself.

We're up for the mission tomorrow so I had better get to bed.

Saturday, March 10, 1945

We were up early and briefed for a Hungarian target. It might not have been so bad, but it was called off after we had reached the planes. I managed to get out of the practice formation that followed, but my freedom didn't last long.

After lunch I had to take up a ship to calibrate the airspeed indicator and to swing the compass.

We didn't get off the ground until after two and it was five when we landed.

Received a letter from Ruth, but my letter at night wasn't too good. We didn't stay up very late and the radio was off by nine-thirty. We're up again for the mission tomorrow.

Today's flying time 2:40

Total flying time 82:35

Sunday, March 11, 1945

Again we got up and again it might not have been a bad mission, but we stood down just after we got to the planes.

There was a practice formation and although everyone had to delay it as long as possible, we flew for 2 ½ hours. It wasn't what one would call a good formation.

I didn't do anything during the afternoon but listen to the radio. I started a letter to Ruth, but didn't finish it until after supper which I had in the hut.

I received two letters from Ruth today. The baby is fine and she feels swell.

We're up again for the mission tomorrow so I guess I better get to bed.

Today's flying time 2:30

Total flying time 85:05

Monday, March 12, 1945, Mission #18, Florisdorf, O/R, Vienna

Of course the target didn't make us feel too happy about the whole thing. It's at Vienna and is a fairly warm spot. The weather was OK and the trip up there was uneventful. We bombed from above twenty-six thousand and although there was plenty of flak, it didn't come too close.

We were to fly one ship, but the guns weren't clean so I decided to fly another. Evidently people didn't like it.

Now that we're passed the half way mark, I hope that the remaining missions go as well as the last few have.

There was no mail from Ruth and it took me a long time to write to her after supper. It seems to be getting more difficult each day to do any letter writing.

Today's combat time 7:30

Total combat time 132:15

Tuesday, March 13, 1945

Not much to talk about today. It was a wonderful day as far as the weather was concerned – warm and sunny.

I didn't accomplish anything during the morning except to clean up.

After lunch, Ed, Lebsack and I went down in the valley for some target practice. The target for the most part were small lizards at ten paces. We were out for over three hours. (Strange as it may seem they didn't want me to fly.)

Three letters from Ruth completed the afternoon.

There was a show at night which we took in and it took me three hours to write.

My ears are still ringing from the shooting.

Wednesday, March 14, 1945

Nothing worth mentioning happened today. I wasn't scheduled for anything this morning. Everyone else took off for town so Lebsack and I went in. We just picked up rations, got a haircut and walked around for a while. We got back fairly early. They had come around for me to fly so I'm glad that I was away.

There was no mail from Ruth. I spent a good part of the afternoon reading some newspapers and then started Ruth's letter.

We are planning on being up for the morning's mission so we got to bed fairly early. A feeling that it's Vienna again. By "The Beautiful Blue Danube."

Thursday, March 15, 1945, Mission #19, Weiner Neustadt, Austria

They woke us up at four this morning for briefing an hour and a half later. We were briefed for Vienna. Just before takeoff, they changed it to an alternate which would have been a five hour trip. But the weather was poor and we couldn't bomb visually so we had to go to another – Weiner Neustadt. We hit more weather and still some more on the way back. There was no flak and the trip was less than seven hours. We were back by two-thirty.

There was no mail although I did get a couple of packages.

Wrote a short letter to Ruth and got to bed fairly early.

Today's combat time 6:50

Total combat time 139:05

Friday, March 16, 1945

They didn't bother me at all today which was a very pleasant surprise. However, I more or less wasted the day. I didn't get up until after nine and by the time I cleaned up and started a letter home, it was time for lunch.

After that I read a couple of papers and what mail I received. I finally finished the letter I had started in the morning and then began Ruth's letter. It didn't turn out to be a very long one.

I've been leading a very lazy life and have almost twenty letters to answer. I had better get on the ball or I won't be getting any mail.

Saturday, March 17, 1945

Wasn't so lucky today. There was a stand-down and they got me out of bed at 0730 for a practice formation flight. We didn't get off until after 0930 and stayed up for a couple of hours or more. We had a ship with a formation stick and used it for a while. It worked

pretty well. It's very sensitive and I'll need a couple of hours of practice to get fully used to it.

Didn't do anything all afternoon but read my mail and pick up some identification cards at S-2.

Ed got his commission tonight. Perhaps I'll get a boost in the next month or so.

Wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio for a while.

Today's flying time 2:25

Total flying time 87:30

Sunday, March 18, 1945

Another stand-down today, but I didn't have anything to do all day. It wasn't a very good day to be out. I spent most of the day writing letters. Started Ruth's letter soon after four and finished early. I spent the evening reading and didn't get to bed until eleven-thirty or so.

We had to spend some time after lunch cleaning up outside the hut. McNarney is supposed to be around here sometime this week.

There was a show tonight, but I didn't feel like seeing it. There was no mail from Ruth.

Monday, March 19, 1945

A very dull day and I accomplished nothing whatsoever. I read all morning and continued after lunch. I was going to write some letters, but didn't get to them.

The only mail from Ruth (or anyone for that matter) was an old one that has been held up.

The mission flew today so we will be up tomorrow for number twenty.

I wrote to my wife and got to bed by nine-thirty, but stayed awake a hour listening to the radio.

Tuesday, March 20, 1945, Mission #20, M/Y Wels, Austria

They woke us up at 0530, but the briefing time hadn't been set because of a change in the target. We finally were briefed for Wels a little after seven. We were briefed to fly at 19,000 feet and let down two thousand for the bomb run.

We climbed to 24,000 and went through some weather that might have been avoided had we stayed down.

There was no flak so I let Kunkes take the rally and watched the bombs hit. It was the first time I had seen anything like it. We hit the marshaling yard dead center.

I was tired tonight and after the critique I wrote a short letter to Ruth, took a shower and got to bed.

There was no mail at all today. It has been skimpy the past few days.

Today's combat time 6:50

Total combat time 145:55

Wednesday, March 21, 1945

Not much of anything to do today. It was warm and sunny and a good day to start a tan.

I cleaned up in the morning, there was a class scheduled for ten, but it was cancelled because of the visit of Gen. McNarney. He came in the morning along with Gens. Twining, Bevens and Lee and stayed until after lunch.

During the afternoon I sat outside and listened to the radio while I wrote some letters.

The noon meal was very good, of course, but the supper was back to the same old stuff.

Stayed up rather late listening to the radio, reading and eating sardines.

Letter from Ruth today.

Thursday, March 22, 1945

There wasn't anything of any importance today. I wasn't scheduled for anything.

The bombardiers have been pooled now so that Ed won't be flying with us every mission. Only three fly with the flight, and there are five in Boyer's flight.

The mail was good today – four letters from Ruth.

They did have me schedules for a test hop at 0830 this morning, but it was postponed until one. As it turned out, the ship wasn't ready then either.

I spent the afternoon reading and started Ruth's letter.

Took in the show after supper.

We received our Air Medal today. We're due for a cluster too.

Friday, March 23, 1945, Mission #21, Kagran O/R, Vienna

So we got it again – back up to Vienna. It was the target that was supposed to have been hit yesterday/

The weather was clear all the way. We didn't see a cloud in the sky all the way and it was the same over the target. We were in the flak for six minutes and I was sweating

when we finally did get out. None of our squadron was hit except for a few small holes. I guess the group did lose one ship.

When we got back to the base we had to circle for almost an hour. The 484th messed up a couple of landings. Two ships bailed out their crews.

The critique was the same old story and nothing much was gained. I guess we missed the target.

We could see the Russian lines on the way back.

Today's combat time 7:50

Total combat time 153:45

Saturday, March 24, 1945

Nothing much about today to make it interesting.

Went to town this morning to pick up rations and to mail some packages.

Took in the sun all afternoon and did some reading – just wasted time.

Ruth, in one of her letters that came today, says that Mrs. Gillis has received a telegram saying that Gil is a POW. I hope so. At least he's safe and didn't try to come across the Adriatic.

She also writes that Bobby has gained two pounds in one month. He seems to be doing OK for himself. He certainly isn't like his father in that respect.

That just about did it for today. I had to see Poole this morning to straighten out a complaint that Bickel and Gilbert made to the Air Inspector.

Sunday, March 25, 1945

They were out to get me today, but nothing came of it. I was supposed to take a crew to Bari and then continue to the gunnery range. That was cancelled early. All I had to do was take the crew to Bari and come back. They found someone else to do that job.

I spent all day out in the sun reading and writing just a little. I also played a little softball and luckily I did because I was wanted to test hop a ship.

During the day, which was sunny and warm, I racked up a pretty good burn.

We took in the show at night, but it wasn't very good.

Wrote to Ruth, shaved and got to bed by ten-thirty. We are flying tomorrow.

Monday, March 26, 1945, Mission #22, Straszhof M/Y, Vienna

The marshaling yard we were briefed for is just east of Vienna. There was no flak at the target, but the rally was made right at the outer ring of "Big V's" guns. We flew by Budapest on the way up and everything went OK. The rally was terrific and the nearest flak burst just below us.

Then we flew through weather. Near Yugo, it got thick and we nearly collided and it was every man for himself. We ran into snow and rain, but broke out of the clouds over the Yugo coast. We were lucky enough to end up with Poole who was in the lead ship.

The war is going very well. With a little good luck, maybe the end isn't too far distant.

There was no mail today.

Today's combat time 8:10

Total combat time 161:55

Tuesday, March 27, 1945

It isn't worth writing anything today. I didn't do a thing. We weren't scheduled for any flying even though there was a stand-down.

I had an S-2 lecture in the afternoon that lasted an hour or so. Did some reading and then played two hand solitaire with Lebsack.

There was a good show at night – "Animal Kingdom" – then we played some more cards. It was late when I wrote to Ruth and it's now almost midnight.

Wednesday, March 28, 1945

Had to get up around seven for a practice gunnery mission. We didn't get off until nine and flew for a couple of hours. I didn't mind it and the enlisted men enjoyed firing the guns.

On the way back from the range, I let each one of them fly the ship. What a wild time!

The afternoon wasn't much to talk about. Wrote two or three letters.

There was no mail today although I did get a number of packages.

Russians are closing in on Austria and the western front has broken wide open.

Today's flying time 2:05

Total flying time 89:35

Thursday, March 29, 1945

No mission (3rd day), no practice, no ambition. Spent the morning reading papers from home.

During the afternoon I played some softball.

There was a show and we took it in.

There was no mail and I couldn't write much to Ruth.

The war news is good and I'm beginning to wonder if we'll finish our missions over here.

Friday, March 30, 1945

Another uninteresting day. Only one ship flew the mission, but I didn't have to fly any practice flight.

I spent the morning reading. There were four letters from Ruth that helped things considerably.

After lunch I played a couple of games of softball until about four.

After supper, we went to a Red Cross stage show. It was very good, but lasted longer than I thought it would.

Saturday, March 31, 1945

Not much to say about this day. I went in to town this morning for rations and a money order.

This afternoon took in the GI movie and then got paid. Had planned on playing softball, but there was no game.

Wrote a couple of letters.

Tomorrow we'll be flying. At least we're up for the mission.

Rumors beginning to circulate about what will happen after the war ends over here.

Sunday, April 1, 1945, Easter Sunday

This was a messed up day all around. We were briefed at 0630, but the target was changed from Bruck – rather to there, from Linz. Consequently we didn't take off until noon. Everything went swell until we got over Yugo and then we ran into Cirrus at nineteen thousand. It was supposed to be five thousand higher. So we flew around in circles and finally came back, bombs and all. Of course there will be no credit for a mission.

We landed late, missed the show, but there was no critique.

Started Ruth's letter this morning and didn't write much tonight.

The clocks go ahead an hour tonight.

Today's combat time 5:40
Total combat time 167:35

Monday, April 2, 1945

Not a very interesting letter. OK. I'll start again. Not a very interesting day. There was nothing scheduled for me and I spent the day loafing around.

Did some reading and played a little ball during the afternoon.

The mail was pretty good with three letters from Ruth. The baby seems to be doing very well. Hope to get a picture in a few weeks.

Tuesday, April 3, 1945

Another uninteresting day except today we had to fly a little. There was a stand-down and I had to go down to Gioia to pick up a couple of new crews. We had to wait around down there for a while. When we got back here we were stuck on the line until almost two. Gilbert flew as co-pilot. Kunkes was sick. I let him fly it down there and he did OK.

There was no mail this noon and all I did during the afternoon was to play a little ball.

The movie wasn't too bad. They threw in a new VP film in Technicolor, no less. It was right to the point.

Today's flying time 1:00
Total flying time 90:35

Wednesday, April 4, 1945

Another stand-down, but I wasn't scheduled for anything and decided to go to town. We didn't get up until almost nine and had cleaned the place up in a few minutes when the inspecting party arrived. All was in good enough shape to pass.

Put off going to town until after lunch. Just picked up rations and a money order.

Tomorrow have to fly a practice flight – briefing at 0730 no less.

A letter from Ruth today. Wrote to her and got to bed rather late.

Thursday, April 5, 1945

Today was a little different to say the least. We had to fly a practice bombing mission for which they woke me before seven. We were down by eleven or a little after.

I didn't do anything during the afternoon except to write a couple of letters. At five I was notified that I had to fly some men somewhere. I didn't find out where we were going

until I was in the plane. It was up near where we spent New Years. Everything was very secret.

It was dark when we got back here. We were flying a cargo ship and I can't land them in the daytime let alone at night. What a landing! We bounced sky high and hard too. First time I've flown at night in six months.

Today's flying time 4:50

Total flying time 95:25

Friday, April 6, 1945

Another day wasted. Didn't accomplish a thing. Not even to writing any letters. Spent most of the day reading and talking with some of the boys who are going home tomorrow. All of Rawchuck's are finished and Cameron and Berkman go tomorrow.

Mail was pretty good today. Ruth enclosed a letter of hers written last October which had been returned.

There was a good USO show at night. We're up for the mission tomorrow. Perhaps we'll get away from 22.

Saturday, April 7, 1945

Thought that I might get another mission in today, but it was just a repetition of last Sunday. We didn't brief until almost ten. The target was in Italy and might have been rough. Took off at noon and although there was plenty of weather, we evaded most of it. A half hour before target, got a report that it was undercast and as it was to be visual, we abandoned the mission and came on back. Just another waste of time.

There was no mail today. There was no show either and as we're back up for the mission tomorrow, it's time to get to bed.

Today's combat time 5:30

Total combat time 173:05

Sunday, April 8, 1945, Mission #23, Gorizia, Italy

Today was it. We got the mission, but what a fight. It started off wrong when the duty officer overslept and didn't wake us until briefing time. We missed most of it, but managed to get a little breakfast. The takeoff was messed up, within an hour we ran into weather and scattered all over the sky. We got together again and got up above Florence as the weather thickened and the flights (intact) split up. We got together again at Ancona and went across the Adriatic to the target. Even then we dropped bombs all over the countryside and probably didn't hit anything worthwhile. In all, my 23rd mission took 18 ½ hours.

Mail from Ruth today and there was a good show tonight. Jack is home for ten days.

Today's combat time 7:30
Total combat time 180:35

Monday, April 9, 1945

Not much doing today. Mac flew on the secret mission. It's up in northern Italy somewhere. Probably to help the lines.

I wasn't scheduled for anything and just hung around not doing much of anything. Spent the morning reading and then wrote a couple of letters during the afternoon.

There wasn't much mail although I did get a letter from Ruth.

Wrote to her and took a shower. We have to fly a ferry trip to Rome tomorrow.

Tuesday, April 10, 1945

Mac flew again on another of those missions. We took off for Rome about ten landing about an hour later.

Rome is nice. A lot better than Naples and cleaner. It's huge and modern for Italy. I was only there for a few hours, but didn't get a chance to see very much. Sometime I might be able to get a chance to get up there again. We had a good meal at the rest camp hotel. We messed around getting the passengers together and getting cleared.

We didn't arrive back until after six-thirty. Managed to get supper.

We are flying tomorrow.

Today's flying time 2:10
Total flying time 97:35

Wednesday, April 11, 1945, Mission #24, Bronzolo M/Y, Italy

We briefed fairly early for an 0830 take off. There was something wrong with the fuel system in the ship we had and had to get a spare. We had a little turbo trouble on the way up, but made it OK. The flak at the target was light, but accurate. Our flight lost a ship and a man on Boyer's crew was hit pretty badly. We weren't in the stuff for more than thirty seconds.

Mac received a cable saying that his mother was seriously ill so he has permission to fly as often as he wants to. He's flying again tomorrow which will make 27 for him.

There was no mail today and I didn't write much of a letter to my wife.

Today's combat time 5:55
Total combat time 186:30

Thursday, April 12, 1945

Not much doing today. I went in to town for my rations this morning. I was back by noon. During the afternoon I took in the sun and wrote some letters. There wasn't anything else to do.

Mac flew on the mission. I guess it was a milk run.

There was no mail from Ruth, but I did get one from Mother. Jack married on the second of the month. I'm disappointed. I was hoping that he wouldn't. I guess they didn't see very much of him while he was home.

Friday, April 13, 1945

There was a stand-down today, but no practice flying at all. We just hung around not doing much of anything.

Heard on the radio this morning that Roosevelt died last night.

I read all morning and then read a couple of letters this afternoon (I meant to say I wrote a couple).

Again there was no mail from Ruth. Can't say that helps morale any.

The field was buzzed all day by P-51s, P-47s and a B-25. Really had a gay old time.

Not much doing tonight – just listened to the radio.

Saturday, April 14, 1945

Not much doing today. I spent the morning reading. They almost had us fly, but evaded that OK.

During the afternoon, I took in some sun and wrote a letter. It became cool so I didn't stay out there long.

Finally got another or rather one letter from Ruth. We fly tomorrow so I guess it's time I got to bed.

The war is progressing well. The Russians have Vienna and are on their way to Linz.

Sunday, April 15, 1945, Mission #25, 5th Army Front

We didn't brief until almost nine this morning. The mission is in connection with a 5th Army drive. Everything was planned down to the minute. Target time was just two minutes before the time bombing had to cease.

The weather was bad at takeoff and the assembly was a messed up affair. We didn't join the formation until almost an hour after takeoff. However, the weather cleared and the rest of the mission was good. I didn't see any flak. We plastered the target – one of our best jobs.

I saw part of tonight's show, but had to go to critique.

Four letters from Ruth, but I couldn't write to her tonight. I'm tired. Mission again tomorrow.

Today's combat time 6:05

Total combat time 192:35

Monday, April 16, 1945, Mission #30, 5th Army, Credit granted 3 May 1945

We briefed almost an hour earlier this morning. The takeoff and assembly was better than it was yesterday. However, there were some clouds in the target area and though we went over the target, no bombs were dropped. It was the same type mission as yesterday.

So we flew another six hours and received no credit. That makes three missions gained in six attempts. We aren't doing so well.

Received four letters from Ruth today, but still couldn't write her a half decent letter tonight.

We are on the mission again for tomorrow. It's probably the same kind of deal.

Today's combat time 6:00

Total combat time 198:35

Tuesday, April 17, 1945, Mission #26, 5th Army Front

Briefing was at nine and the target was the same as it was supposed to be yesterday. Everything went well on the way up and there was no flak at the target. We did see some after the rally. On the way back, Boyer's ship ran into a little trouble and he left the formation. The deputy lead had left before so I took over the flight lead. I don't care much for it.

The 47th Wing is moving out and the crews moved to other groups. Hatem is in the 766th and another crew we knew at Charleston is here with us.

Had another letter from Ruth, but couldn't write tonight.

Bickel has made T/Sgt.

We're flying again tomorrow. Paper says we are a tactical air force now.

Today's combat time 5:35

Total combat time 204:10

Wednesday, April 18, 1945

Briefing was to be at 0720, but a stand-down was called while we were at breakfast.

I went in to town this morning, picked up my rations and got back a little after noon.

There was some mail and I spent part of the afternoon writing home and to Ruth.

That's about all there is that is worth mentioning.

Unless I'm flying, the days are more or less wasted. The same boys are flying tomorrow as were up today so I guess there is nothing else to do but go to bed.

Today is the first of many anniversaries to come, of our wedding. I hope I can be with Ruth hereafter.

Thursday, April 19, 1945, Mission #27, Auisio R/R Bridge

Briefing was early this morning at 0515. The target was up in the Brenner Pass. And flak was listed as intense. I didn't feel any too good on the way up. I guess my stomach was nervous if that's possible. Well, it didn't turn out too badly. We must have caught them asleep because, although the flak was intense, it came late and we had rallied before reaching the area.

I saw Hatem at briefing. He has two less missions than I, but he will be flying lead. He has another son born the 12th of the month.

Mac has 31 missions and is in for the DFC and his promotion which he will no doubt get before I get mine. I should have it before the first of the month.

Today's combat time 7:00
Total combat time 211:10

Friday, April 20, 1945

Not much doing today. Mac flew again and I was awake fairly early this morning.

I had Link at nine and spent the rest of the morning cleaning up my corner.

I sat outside reading most of the afternoon and then visited her letter (Ruth's) before supper. Finished it and then played ball for a little while.

We're flying tomorrow so I guess there's nothing to do except get to bed.

Received a letter and two cards from Ruth – one for our anniversary.

Saturday, April 21, 1945, Mission #28, Attnang Pichiem M/Y

Briefing was at 0630. The target was near the Austrian line and wouldn't be too bad. However, the weather didn't look too good and it was worse before we got very far. So we headed for an alternate. Had to come down to sixteen thousand and that is where we bombed. There were clouds around the target area and our flight, along with two others,

made four passes before letting the bombs go. We missed by a half mile. The flights all returned separately.

No one was eaten out at the critique and one flight even did a very good job.

There was no mail and I only wrote a short letter to Ruth.

Today's combat time 6:55

Total combat time 218:05

Sunday, April 22, 1945

Spent a lazy day, although it had indications of being quite the contrary. Woke us at 0600 for practice formation. Kunkes went to the dispensary and got grounded. Fooled around and Cameron decided to fly co-pilot. The others had gone out to the ships. The tower told operations that the ship I was to have flown, had taken off. So that put me on the ground. But the good captain determined that I fly, scheduled me for calibration. Mac had gone to town and it was too rough so it was finally called.

It was windy all day and very dusty. I just sat around and read and listened to the radio.

I don't think we'll fly tomorrow. There was a stand-down today.

Monday, April 23, 1945

Not much to record today. Mac and Ed flew today and consequently I was awake early and didn't get to sleep again.

I just sat around not doing much of anything. Wrote a letter and then did some reading. Spent the afternoon outside reading some newspapers from home.

At night, there was a meeting and then I wrote to Ruth.

Being sleepy and up for the mission tomorrow, I think it is a good idea if I get to bed. We'll probably be up early in the morning.

Mac should finish up tomorrow. Ed is now even with the rest of us.

Tuesday, April 24, 1945, Mission #29, Rovereto M/Y, Italy

Another early briefing for a marshaling yard up in the Brenner Pass. It was to be rough having 18 guns or so. When we took off, the ship developed a gas leak and we had to go in. It didn't take long and I met the formation out on course.

We made two runs on the target, but saw no flak. Three of us were scheduled to hit the gun emplacement.

A lot of ships ran low on gas and by the time we were on our way home I was leading the flight. A total of four ships dropped out. I started in nine position, but reached three before the base.

Saw part of the show tonight and then went to critique. Mac finished up today and will be heading for home in a week.

Today's combat time 7:05
Total combat time 225:10

Wednesday, April 25, 1945

Just another day and I spent it loafing. I wasn't scheduled for anything and in the morning I went in to town and back in less than two hours. I picked up a Shick electric razor. Very much surprised that they had the things.

Started to spend an afternoon reading, but got into a softball game instead.

That just about did it. The rest of the evening was uninteresting.

Received a couple of pictures of Ruth and the baby. Couldn't see much of him, but Ruth looks swell.

Mac received his promotion or rather he went after it so that he could get on orders to go home.

Thursday, April 26, 1945

Today isn't worth mentioning. Rumors are flying about flying cargo missions in the near future.

This morning I had to fly a practice bombing mission. It only took a couple of hours and we didn't mind the flying.

In the afternoon, I started to read and get some sun, but ended up playing softball the rest of the afternoon.

At night there was a pretty good show so I started Ruth's letter before supper.

We're flying tomorrow so it's best I get to bed. Just hope that it isn't Linz or even Bolgano.

Today's flying time 2:00
Total flying time 99:35

Friday, April 27, 1945

Today was much the same as yesterday. Evidently a stand-down was called during the night because no one came around to get us up. I lost a couple of hours of sleep just waiting for someone too.

I had to fly a practice formation and it was after noon when we landed.

The afternoon was broken up by a training film at three which we had seen before. Consequently I accomplished nothing.

Started Ruth's letter early and then just sat around after supper.

There was no mail. Another stand-down has already been called.

Mac is going to Rome tomorrow.

Today's flying time 2:10

Total flying time 101:45

Saturday, April 28, 1945

Nothing doing today. There were no practice flights and it rained most of the day.

I spent most of the time writing letters and reading as that's about all there was to do.

There was no mail and I wrote most of Ruth's letter before supper.

The war news is good. The Americans and Russians have met up near Dresden and Berlin has been encircled and half of it taken.

Guess I'll get to bed early tonight. Another stand-down has been called for tomorrow.

Sunday, April 29, 1945

His is getting monotonous. Nothing doing today except for a practice gunnery mission this morning. We had a good time flying with B-17s and C-47s.

I spent the afternoon reading and wrote one or two letters.

There was no mail today which didn't help matters any.

There is another stand-down. I guess it's because of weather although it is OK around here.

Today's flying time 3:00

Total flying time 104:45

Monday, April 30, 1945

Another day wasted away. I was scheduled last night to make a ferry trip to Naples, but Cameron wanted to go so I got out of all practice for the day. As I'm writing this two days later, I'm not quite up to what happened the rest of the day. I don't think that much was accomplished/

We were put up for the mission that is up for tomorrow.

Tuesday, May 1, 1945

Briefing was at 0615 and the target was to be a milk run. However, a stand-down was called before we were halfway through the briefing.

So another day was spent reading mostly. A couple of letters came from Ruth with a number of snapshots and a picture of the baby. I was really pleased.

I also received notice of my promotion which took effect on the 27th of April. While overseas my pay is \$392 a month which will help the situation.

Wrote to Ruth after supper and that's about all. A stand-down has been called already and the rumors are still running wild.

Wednesday, May 2, 1945

Nothing much happened around here today. However Russians captured Berlin and the Germans in northern Italy surrendered unconditionally. So I guess as far as we are concerned here, the war is over. A mission was posted for tomorrow, but was taken down when the news was announced.

I spent the morning in town getting rations and a money order or two. The afternoon was more or less wasted – read a little and that's about all.

Wrote to Ruth after supper, but there isn't much that I can put in a letter.

Hitler has also been reported dead. Don't know how true it is though.

Thursday, May 3, 1945

Today existed mostly on rumors. They were thick and flying fast. Mac left this morning so the war is over for him. For a while anyway. Ed was going on orders to or three times as were a few others. They're off now and I guess the group is going to stay at 24 crews for a while. Perhaps go home that way. At which time I hope they drop me.

I spent the day running around trying to see what is going to be done about the DFC that I may get.

A letter from Ruth helped the situation. I guess combat missions are a thing of the past.

Wrote to Ruth at night. That's about all there is.

Friday, May 4, 1945

Not much doing today. The Germans are surrendering all over the place and I don't imagine there will be much left after this week is over.

Spent the morning reading and then played softball all afternoon.

Then, after supper, we had a game with the 764th and beat them, 4-3.

Other than that, there was nothing. No rumors either good or bad.

Saturday, May 5, 1945

Today was much the same as yesterday. I accomplished nothing this morning even though we were up before seven-thirty. We cleaned up the hut for inspection which came off sometime during the afternoon.

After lunch, I went out and played ball. After supper, we had another game with group and beat them 5-2.

Two more letters from Ruth and I wrote to her tonight.

Sunday, May 6, 1945

Not much to say about today. It felt like Sunday. The day was warm. Read in the morning and then played ball during the afternoon.

There are rumors that the war is finished. That's all.

Monday, May 7, 1945

The war in Europe is over. Official reports say that the surrender papers have been signed.

The day wasn't any different than the past few have been. Wrote a couple of letters this morning and then played ball all afternoon. Certainly getting plenty of sun.

We were supposed to have a game tonight, but the 765th called it off soon after supper.

I just wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio. Most of the fellows got drunk and this place is noisy at the present time.

Can't say that I'm excited about the war ending as it just doesn't seem to make that much difference.

Tuesday, May 8, 1945, V-E Day

We had a formation this morning at which the colonel told us (officially) that the war had ended and that today would be a holiday. There were plenty of drunks around last night and some of the enlisted men stayed that way all day.

I didn't do much – the same as yesterday. There wasn't much to the morning, but we played ball for a little while this afternoon. Then I sat in the sun listening to the V-E program until supper. Went to the show and then wrote to Ruth. Feel rather lonesome tonight and have a little headache.

There is still plenty of drinking and our enlisted men ran out on a bender. I want to get in my flying time one of these days soon.

Wednesday, May 9, 1945, Supply Mission to POW Camp Spittal, Austria

Although we got up at eight, we didn't have briefing until almost noon. We flew three ship elements – our ship was #2 in the first. I wore nothing but my O.D.s as we didn't go above 12,000 feet. The camp was in southern Austria and situated in a valley. We came down to a thousand feet above the ground with six thousand foot mountains on either side. The country up there is beautiful – pretty lakes, dense forests and nice looking towns. We passed over our targets at Villach and Hayenfront and saw how well our bombing messed up the marshaling yards. When we reached the camp, the ex-prisoners went wild when we dropped the supplies. We had to circle four times to get out of the valley. It was a very pleasant mission.

Two letters from Ruth today. The boys are still celebrating.

Today's flying time 5:05
Total flying time 109:50

Thursday, May 10, 1945

Not much to talk about today except to say that I went to town for my rations. It was a nice warm day so this afternoon I went to the show to cool off and then did a little reading.

There was another supply mission, but different crews flew it. I guess it was much the same as yesterday. I'd certainly like to fly another like it.

There was no mail today. Just finished writing to Ruth and I guess I'll just read for a little while.

Friday, May 11, 1945

Just another day. Hung around reading and sat in the sun a while. Had a short lecture by the colonel and had to have our personal affairs record checked during the afternoon.

At night, we played ball and lost to the 767th enlisted men 4-5. It was a rough game. Maj. Poole went to the hospital with a possible broken leg.

We've installed two B-24 heater fans in the tent to help the cooling situation. They work fairly well, but make quite a noise.

It's getting hot here and each day is the same as the previous one and a little warmer.

Saturday, May 12, 1945

Just another day and a hot one at that. Most of it was spent reading and writing. I managed to get two letters off which is quite a feat for me these days.

During the afternoon, I just lied around in the sun.

Sat outside after supper and wrote to Ruth. The evenings are fairly cool around here.

Maj. Poole is in Bari with a compound fracture. I don't imagine he will be around for some time to come.

Ed is flying on the supply mission this – or rather tomorrow. They've only been flying two ships a day from each squadron.

No mail today.

Sunday, May 13, 1945

A very quiet Sunday. Ed flew, Ed went to the beach and Yates to Foggia. I wrote a letter this morning and then laid in the sun all afternoon reading. There wasn't anything else to do.

At night there was a show, "The Princess and the Pirate." We then met our new C.O. I guess Poole won't be back. At least not for some time.

Received a letter from Ruth and wrote to her tonight.

We're going to fly another supply mission tomorrow.

Monday, May 14, 1945, Supply Mission #2, Wolfsberg POW Camp

Another supply mission. This time to Wolfsberg, not from the other camp. We took off at eleven and didn't have to fly formation. Just fly relative position keeping the lead ship in sight.

The trip wasn't as pretty as the last one and there was more room in the valley. We had to make three runs as some of the cases hung up. We were only three or four hundred feet above the ground. Each ship went in on its own.

There was a letter from Ruth today, but I couldn't write but one sheet to her and even that took me all night. It keeps getting harder to write every day.

We've been given 14 of the 484th ships. Hope that doesn't mean that we will have to fly them home.

Today's flying time 4:45

Total flying time 114:35

Tuesday, May 15, 1945

Just another day and w hot one at that. Wrote a letter this morning and then after lunch had to go through screening again. The rest of the afternoon was spent out in the sun reading. That's all there was to do.

After supper, we played ball and beat the group enlisted men 2-0. It was a good game even though I didn't hit a thing.

Took a shower and then wrote a short letter to Ruth. Received two from her today along with a couple of papers.

Latest rumors: And this one is pretty good. We're going to fly home. I've been assigned 76.

Wednesday, May 16, 1945

Just another day with not much worth mentioning. Went in to town this morning for rations. During the afternoon I read and took in the sun.

After supper, we went to the 864th and played the enlisted men. It wasn't as good a game, but we beat them 7-3.

No mail from Ruth today. Wrote her a short letter.

Some of the crew chiefs are being flown down to Gioia tomorrow. They think that they are going home. Perhaps so.

Thursday, May 17, 1945

We had to fly some of those ground crews down to Gioia. They woke me up at 0630 and take off was supposed to be at 0830. It was going on for ten when I got off the ground.

I had to stay up for three hours so after leaving Gioia, another fellow and I got together and flew over to Naples before getting back.

Spent part of the afternoon at the movies. Other than that, I didn't do anything else. There was no mail from Ruth and I wrote her a short letter. There just isn't anything to put in a letter.

Today's flying time 3:00

Total flying time 117:35

Friday, May 18, 1945

Not much to say about today. I just sat around not doing much of anything.

Wrote a couple of letters this morning and read a little. There are two copies of "Forever Amber" in the hut and they are in constant use by us and outsiders.

Received mail from Ruth and home plus some papers. Spent the afternoon outside reading and taking in the sun.

The evening was over usual. A letter to Ruth and then listened to the radio.

Benedict was flown from Charleston where he landed to Devens. He still has to have another operation.

Saturday, May 19, 1945

Another quiet day. It clouded up during the afternoon and we had a little rain which cooled things off.

There wasn't anything to do and that's what I did.

Wrote a couple of letters and read during the morning. After lunch there was a pretty good show, "Doughgirls," which we took in.

The rest of the day was insignificant. There was no mail.

Wrote to Ruth and listened to the radio.

No new rumors.

Sunday, May 20, 1945

Just another day. It was cloudy and cool until late in the afternoon.

For a change, I spent most of the day writing getting out the amazing total of five.

We have to be ready to leave here in four days. It may be more, but no less than that.

I'll have to fly tomorrow, I guess.

A little mail came in with one of Ruth's among it. That's about all.

Monday, May 21, 1945

(Saturday, May 26) Can't remember what happened during the day, but probably not much different than yesterday.

At night had to shoot a landing along with four others. The landings weren't much good.

Wrote to Ruth before going up.

Today's flying time 0:15

Total flying time 117:50

Tuesday, May 22, 1945

At breakfast this morning, Boyer told me that Kunkes and I were on orders to Rome. Operations had blundered, as usual, and Ed wasn't included. Hatem was on the same orders along with Andam. I packed very little and as things turned out, didn't need all that I did take. We got a nice room in one of the better hotels and spent the first afternoon at the PX, Red Cross club and its snack bar. Saw Hamlin, a boy I graduated with down there. The club is the best I've seen anywhere. The evening meal isn't served until seven-thirty. Kunkes and I took in a show at the RC theater and then came back to the hotel. He stayed downstairs and I didn't see him again until the next day. I wrote to Ruth, took a bath and got to bed about midnight. The mattress and sheets were quite the thing. As I expected, I didn't sleep too well.

Wednesday, May 23, 1945

Was at breakfast when Hy walked in. He had picked up a girl (which isn't at all hard) and had spent the night with her. We went down to the RC and went on a tour at 0915. It included the Roman Forum and St. Clements Church. All of it was very interesting. It included a certain amount of walking and my legs were tired when we got back at noon. We cleaned up, then had lunch at one of the other rest camp hotels. Then we went down to the PX and picked up our rations for the week. We had tickets for the opera 'La Traviata' which was at 1730. We had quite a time finding the opera house. I enjoyed the performance very much. It was over at eight-thirty and we got back to the hotel in time to eat.

Thursday, May 24, 1945

Kunkes didn't "sleep out" last night and I left him at breakfast and went down to the club. They had a shopping service and sent an Indian girl with me. I bought a pair of silk stockings (which are too dark, I think) and a string of pearls for Ruth. We were out until eleven or so. I met Hy at the RC and we spent some time at the snack bar. (Yesterday afternoon before going to the opera we took in an afternoon show). After lunch we came back to the club and went on another tour that included the Catacombs. They were very interesting as was the rest of the tour. Everything in Rome is so old. After supper, we came back to the club and hung around until nine and then went to see a USO show. It wasn't bad. I wrote to Ruth and it was midnight again when I got to bed.

Friday, May 25, 1945

Kunkes "slept out" again and I didn't see him until we went to the airfield late in the afternoon. I went on another tour this morning to St. Peter's. That church is immense and very beautiful. I struck up an acquaintance with an ARC girl from Hartford. It made the tour more enjoyable. We had lunch together and then did some shopping. Picked up

a bracelet for Ruth, cameo for her mother and a rosary for mother. By the time we got back to the club, it was time to check out and get out to the field. Boyer was flying the ship and we almost stayed there because of the weather. I hated to leave. There was so much more to see and do. There were five letters from Ruth waiting for me. We are supposed to leave here the 5th of June.

Saturday, May 26, 1945

Quite a letdown to come back to the field and it was just the same old monotonous routine. The wind and dust made everything dirty and annoying to say the least.

Spent the morning cleaning up and at one, had a ditching lecture and procedure practice. I spent the rest of the afternoon packing a box of books and manuals that I'm going to send home. I had taken in the movie before doing that though.

There was no mail and after writing to Ruth, I spent a couple of hours digging a cache under my cot. Going to try and keep my cokes cool.

Sunday, May 27, 1945

Just a quiet Sunday at home. At least until after supper. I spent the day writing mostly V-Mail, but at least the unanswered stack has vanished.

I had to fly at night – Cameron was with me and the flight was to give three navigators celestial practice. We flew between Foggia and Bari although we were supposed to go to Sicily. We were down before midnight.

No mail, no new rumors, no nothing.

Today's flying time 3:00
Total flying time 120:50

Monday, May 28, 1945

Just another day. Wasted away the morning and then in the afternoon went in to town with some packages of manuals and books. Picked up a money order for Ruth and came on back.

There is a lot of packing and dismantling going on. The newest rumor has us going to Westover Field. That would be too good to happen.

I guess tomorrow I'll take my ship up for a test hop. I imagine we'll be out of here this time next week.

Three letters from Ruth today. Helps the situation somewhat. She seems a little tired.

Tuesday, May 29, 1945

Didn't do anything this morning. We were alerted this noon and two crews are leaving tomorrow. The other squadrons are sending more.

This afternoon, I took the ship up for a fuel consumption check. We flew down to Bari and Gioia and stayed up a couple of hours.

Received a couple of letters from Ruth and wrote her a short note. Took a shower and just dubbed around for a while.

Today's flying time 2:05
Total flying time 122:55

Wednesday, May 30, 1945

Most of the day was spent packing. We are pulling out in the morning. It took all morning to get things together and packed. After lunch I sat outside for a while, but then began to clean out the hut a little. There were fires burning all over a lot and .45 cal shells exploding continuously.

There was no mail from Ruth, but I did hear from home.

After supper, we threw out some more stuff and I guess I'll be all set to go in the morning.

Thursday, May 31, 1945, Torretta-Gioia 0.25

We got up at 0500 this morning and got everything ready to leave. There were fires all over the place and shells popping in every barrel. We cleaned out the hut and took down the tent. We picked up all records and they paid us much to my surprise.

It was two when we took off for Gioia. There were six men of another crew with us and the ship was pretty well loaded down.

Gioia is much improved, but after three hours of waiting for the truck to bring the crew in from the line, we got stuck in a large "circus" tent all of us together.

We won't leave here much before Sunday or Monday.

I spent the evening at the open air movie with Bickel. He may process tomorrow and leave Saturday. I didn't write Ruth.

Today's flying time 0:25
Total flying time 123:20

Friday, June 1, 1945

I just hung around not doing anything. I started a letter to Ruth this morning, but didn't finish it.

Bickel processed this afternoon and he leaves tomorrow. We aren't even on the list for processing. It will probably be Monday or Tuesday before we get out of here. I don't want to sit around here for very long.

From all indications we're going to end up at Savannah. There are a couple of long hops to be made – 9 or 10 hours.

We went to the show again tonight and that just about covers the day.

Saturday, June 2, 1945

We just hung around again not doing much of anything. I read some during the morning and played cards later on. Bickel taught me a couple of games yesterday.

We got on one of the flights that will process tomorrow and will probably be on our way Monday morning. I hope so anyway.

The movie tonight is the same as last night's so I'm not going to go. Might as well get to bed and try to get some sleep. So far, I haven't done too well.

I'm carrying two passengers. One will get off at Trinidad.

I combined yesterday's letter to Ruth with today's.

Sunday, June 3, 1945

Today was a busy one. We began processing at eight and that took two hours although there wasn't much to it. Then the money had to be changed and that amounted to \$2027. And it was time to eat when that chore was done. After lunch we had to take the ship up for a check - another fuel consumption deal. When we got down, the boys had acquired a truck and we spent the next hour or more loading the ship. I had to do some more running around with customs and what not. Sooo, we ate and then got the dope on tomorrow – briefing is at 0530 and we take off at 0700.

I'm writing this while sitting in the ship listening to the radio.

Today's flying time 1:55

Total flying time 125:15

Monday, June 4, 1945, Gioia – Marrakech 9:20 (0.25) 9:45

We were up at four this morning and we spent a couple of hours cleaning and briefing. It was 0530 (CMT) when we took off. The flight was uneventful and the weather was good except for some showers between Tunis and Algiers. We didn't stop at Tunis and consequently it was a long trip and we pulled into Marrakech at 1445 or so. The place hadn't changed much and it wasn't bad. The food was good.

We're going out by way of the Azores and I will end up at Bradley Field. And then to Boston P.O.E. That sounds good.

We went to the show which turned out to be pretty good and then got to bed. Don't know what time we will be up in the morning.

Today's flying time 9:20
Total flying time 134:35

Tuesday, June 5, 1945, Marrakech, Morocco – Dakar, Senegal 9:45 (8:00) 17:45

We didn't brief until seven and were disappointed to hear that because of weather, we are going to Dakar and the southern route. That means we'll end up at Charleston P.O.E. Swell – as long as we get home.

Today's trip was over the desert and it seemed long and quite monotonous. There was no weather, but one of the engines is acting up a little.

We landed at Dakar about four-thirty and this isn't a bad place. I shaved, took a shower and had supper.

We have a long trip in the morning and we'll be getting up early so I guess I'll get to bed now. I'm not going to write Ruth any more.

Today's flying time 8:00
Total flying time 142:35

Wednesday, June 6, 1945, Dakar, Senegal – Natal, Brazil 17:45 (9:25) 27:10

We briefed at seven and took off a couple of hours later. Contrary to conditions on yesterday's flight, this was far from monotonous. We had weather most of the way. The last couple of hours we were on instruments and conditions at Natal weren't much better. However we made it OK and landed about 1830 CMT. The time here is three hours behind so we had plenty of time to get settled. It's a swell post – the best I've seen since Mitchell and Westover. We don't leave here until two in the morning of the 8th. There will be weather all the way too.

After supper, Ed and I nosed around and finally went to the show.

I'm dead tired – these nine hour trips aren't good.

Today's flying time 9:25
Total flying time 153:00

Thursday, June 7, 1945

Nothing much doing today. We just hung around and spent some money. The PX had silk stockings which went like hot cakes. I got five pairs for Ruth. I also sent her a wire

telling her I'd telephone Sunday or Monday. It would just fix things pretty if we were held up a couple of days. The ship had to have a 25-hour inspection puller, but that was done this morning.

I wouldn't mind being based at this field. It's very nice. Our quarters are good and the meals are the best we've had anywhere.

Briefing was at seven and it was there I found that we were scratched because they had decided to fix a flak hole.

So Widner, Zimmerlee and I went to the show. We can't reach the states now until Monday at the earliest. Best I get a letter out to Ruth.

Weather is lousy here.

Friday, June 8, 1945

This was a dull day and the weather didn't help the situation any. It rained most of the time and I guess it will be the same all night.

This morning Widmer and I got up in time to get in the PX line and managed to get a traveling bag that sold for \$8.50. I also picked up a couple more pair of stockings.

Other than that, we just sat around all day. I did some reading and spent some time waiting to get a haircut.

We had briefing an hour ago and take off for Belem instead of Atkinson. The weather will be N.G. I'm getting to bed now. They wake us at twelve-thirty.

I wrote a short letter to Ruth this noon. There's no telling when we'll get home now.

Saturday, June 9, 1945

We didn't get very far this morning. They woke us at one and it was raining. It had rained all night and I imagine that was the cause of a C-47 crashing a couple of miles from the field. It was going on for five when we tried to start the engines and #1 would only "rev" up to 1700. They cancelled our flight. The rest of the boys got off including Hatem and except Welling. He's been here five days with similar trouble.

We just hung around all day. I slept a little late in the morning, but we were in the day room at 0530 playing ping pong.

I bought a couple more pairs of stockings and a small photo album that I intend to keep for Bobby's pictures.

Went to briefing and then to bed.

Sunday, June 10, 1945, Natal, Brazil – Zandery, Dutch Guiana 27:10 (8:05) 35:15

This time we got up at three and were supposed to take off at 0500. It was after six when we got off. We had a little trouble with the engines. The weather wasn't bad for the first three hours or more, but then it got worse and I added two more hours to my instrument time. We were supposed to go to Atkinson, about 200 miles further north, but put in here on orders. I didn't have enough gas according to ATC. We got in between howers and it rained most of the afternoon.

This place is out in the jungle which is thick, but good. We passed over the Amazon River and the equator at the same time.

This base is OK. We had a good meal and then went to the show. We hope to leave by seven in the morning.

Today's flying time 8:05
Total flying time 161:05

Monday, June 11, 1945, Zandery, Dutch Giana – Porinquen, Puerto Rico 35:15 (6:40)
41:55

Had a good night's sleep and got up at five. We cleared off by seven and the trip wasn't too bad. After yesterday's two hours of instrument time I only logged one today. The only bad weather was near Trinidad. It wasn't a long trip either – mostly over water, but it didn't seem monotonous. We even picked up WBOS in Boston on the Lacuson. It was after one when we got in here and I don't mind saying that this would be the ideal spot to be stationed. The base is wonderful and have never come across a PX as they have. Our quarters are nice houses – the best I've ever been in – as good as living in a home of your own.

We went to the show and as we have to get up at 0330, it's best I get to bed.

States tomorrow!

Today's flying time 6:40
Total flying time 167:45

Tuesday, June 12, 1945, Borinquen, Puerto Rico – Savannah, GA 41:55 (7:00) 48:55

We were up at four and off the ground two hours later. For a change, there was no weather and I speeded up a bit. We did the last four hundred miles at 180 or better. It was a good trip and didn't seem to take long. It was certainly a good sight to see Florida. We landed early in the afternoon and went through a whirlwind shakedown and finished everything before five. We were even paid our per diem.

This isn't a bad base, but it's hotter than blazes.

I called Ruth and as usual didn't know what to say.

Tomorrow we go to Charleston and then I go to Devens. From there, that's another story.

Today's flying time 7:00
Total flying time 174:45