

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE

INITIALS

The month of May brought the news that every Etosan has been waiting these long years to hear. Victory in Europe which was declared on the 8th brought tremendous elation from this, one of the oldest stations in the theater. The Group took a holiday from all operations, and in the evening men celebrated by building a huge bonfire on the baseball diamond. Free beer and sandwiches were supplied for all and the day was not spent without incident even though the troops were restricted.

Further on in this monthly supplement the reader will find a short history of the highlights of the Group, during its battle against the Hun.

The 306th did very little during the 31 day period as far as operations were concerned. However plans were being set for the Group to carry on in the ETO on a special project. Personnel were being changed, and several of the old-timers left the organization.

Training was being continued for those on flying status, and a ground school program was in the making for others. As long as the Group was to stay on in England, the attitude of the men 'we might as well do something'. And they did.

1 May

A special leaflet operation by the 369th Squadron was scrubbed before take-off.

2 May

The 369th Squadron dispatched 8 A/C on a special leaflet operation to the following objectives: A/C #1, Mannheim - Weimar; #2, La Rochelle, La Pallice, St. Georges d' Oleron, St. Pierre d' Oleron; #3, St. Nazaire, Lorient; #4, Tessel; #5, Haarlem, The Hague, Dunkirk; #6, Utrecht and Rotterdam; #7, Wangeroege, Wilhelmshaven, Bremen; #8, scrubbed due to shortage of leaflets. All aircraft dropped their nickels without incident

Lt. Smith, who piloted A/C #7, encountered moderate and accurate tracking A.A. fire from the Wilhelmshaven area. Damage to the Fortress was slight.

3 May

14 B-17's were dispatched by the 369th on a special leaflet operation to the following areas: #1, Mannheim, Weimar; #2, Weissenburg, Nordlingen; #3, Plauen, Altenburg; #4, Gardelengen, Stendal; #5, Luneberg, Uelzen; #6, Magdeburg; #7, Pforzheim, Freiburg; #8, Landshut, Freising; #9, Salzwedel, Osterburg; #10, Brunswick; #11, Straubing, Plattling; #12, Chemnitz; #13, Hannover; #14, Amberg, Regensburg. All A/C, with the exception of #1 which didn't drop because of weather, released their loads without incident.

4 May

A special leaflet operation by the 369th Squadron was scrubbed before take-off.

5 May

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6 May

15 B-17's were dispatched by the 369th Squadron on a special nickel operation to the following objectives: #1 - #2 - #3 - Dunkirk; #4 - Mannheim, Weimar; #5 - Bremen; #6 - Hamburg; #7 - Hannover; #8 - Brunswick; #9 - Magdeburg; #10 - Chemnitz; #11 - Munich; #12 - Osnabruck; #13 - Bielefeld; #14 -

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Month of May 1945 Prepared by 1st Lt. D. A. Espar, Jr.

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Munster; #15 - Leipzig. All A/C dropped their leaflets without incident.

- 7 May The 369th Squadron dispatched 15 B-17's on a special leaflet operation to the following objectives: #1 - Hamburg; #2 - 3-4-5 and 6 - Dunkirk; #7 - Hilversum, Utrecht, Apeldoorn; #8 - Bremen; #9 - Leipzig; #10 - Munich; #11 - Magdeburg; #12 - Wilhelmshaven, Wesermunde, Oldenburg; #13 - Kiel, Lubeck; #14 - Nuremberg; #15 - Mannheim, Weimar. All A/C dropped on the assigned objectives without incident.
- 8 May 12 A/C were dispatched by the 369th Squadron on a special leaflet operation to the following objectives: #1 - Mannheim, Weimar; #2 - Bremen; #3 - Hamburg; #4 - Leipzig; #5 - Munich; #6 - Nuremberg; #7 - Magdeburg; #8 - Osnabruck; #9 - Oldenburg; #10 - Kiel; #11 - Lubeck; #12 - Salzburg. All A/C dropped their leaflets without incident.
- 9 May The 306th dispatched 24 A/C on plan observation flights to Western Germany. These tours were organized in order to show ground personnel throughout the United Kingdom some of the bomb damage done to the Reich. Needless to say passengers were highly impressed.
- 10 May 24 A/C were dispatched by the 306th to Western Germany on plan observation flights. All tours were accomplished without incident.
- 369th Squadron dispatched 12 B-17's on a special leaflet mission to the following areas: #1 - Bremen; #2 - Oldenburg, Wesermunde; #3 - Hamburg; #4 - Osnabruck; #5 - Kiel; #6 - Lubeck; #7 - Magdeburg; #8 - Nuremberg; #9 - Leipzig; #10 - Mannheim, Weimar; #11 - Munich; #12 - Salzburg. All A/C dropped their nickels without incident.
- 11 May The 369th Squadron dispatched 12 B-17's on a special leaflet operation to the following objectives: #1 - Osnabruck; #2 - Brunswick; #3 - Oldenburg, Wesermunde; #4 - Kiel; #5 - Halle; #6 - Lubeck; #7 - Regensburg; #8 - Weimar, Mannheim; #9 - Freiburg; #10 - Salzburg; #11 - Augsburg; #12 - Plauen. All A/C dropped their nickels without incident.
- Light flak was observed by 4 - 369th A/C in the Ostend area, but no damage was sustained.
- 12 May 7 A/C were dispatched by the 369th Squadron on a special leaflet operation to the following objectives: #1 - Weimar, Mannheim; #2 - Beckum; #3 - Kletze; #4 - Frankfurt; #5 - Augsburg; #6 - Munich; #7 - Halle. All A/C dropped their nickels without incident.
- 25 A/C were again dispatched by the 306th on plan observation flights. No incidents were recorded.
- 13 May The 306th dispatched 20 A/C to Barth A/D on an operational reversal mission. 603 American P/W's were evacuated to A-70 without incident.

Outstanding in the aerial war waged by the 8th Air Force against the Nazi enemy is the record of the 306th Heavy Bombardment Group. Starting operations on the 9th of October, 1942 with a mission to Lillie, this veteran outfit was one of the first to engage the Hun in combat. A series of exceptional successful bombings during these early days stamped the 306th as one of

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Squad No. 3 Squadron 306th Bombardment Group (H)

Month of May 1945 Prepared by 1st Lt. D. A. Espar, Jr.

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the most dependable groups in the theater. Although losses at the time were great for the entire command, the amount of damage and destruction inflicted on German targets was so tremendous that the existence of the 8th Air Force passed from an experimental to a standard war-making organization.

An interesting but costly mission occurred November 9, 1942, on which date higher Headquarters ordered a 7,000 foot job on the heavily defended submarine pens at St. Nazaire. In spite of the terrific anti-aircraft fire encountered over the target, the 306th, led by Col. Overacker, plowed through and bombed with good results. It was this raid that definitely established high altitude as the most practical method of attack.

One of the most outstanding acts of bravery ever demonstrated by any man was accomplished on Jan. 3, 1943, when the group again went to St. Nazaire. Major Lanford led, and enemy fighters gave plenty of opposition. The Fortress piloted by Lt. Cramer couldn't make it back across the Channel and consequently ditched. As the big bird settled in the water, attacks by the German aircraft continued on the hapless B-17. T/Sgt. Arizona T. Harris, flying in the top turret, kept firing his guns as the plane slowly sank below the surface of the water. His action, besides driving off the fighters, brought to him, posthumously, the Distinguished Service Cross.

On January 27, 1943 the 8th made its first assault on an objective in Germany itself. To lead this mission the 306th was chosen and Col. (now Gen) Armstrong flew at the head of the group. Wilhelmshaven was the target and an interesting comment by crews was that the fighter opposition in the Reich was not of the same calibre as that of the "Abbeville Kids". The operation proved that it was possible to bomb, eventually, any spot on continental Europe.

Another act of heroism which probably goes unsurpassed in the annals of the 8th Air Force history occurred on the group's seventh raid to St. Nazaire, May 1, 1943. Heavy undercast caused a gross error in navigation when the 306th, led by Col. Putnam, mistook the Brest peninsula for Land's End on the return. Having let down over enemy occupied territory to 500 feet, the formation encountered intense and accurate A.A. fire. In the course of the confusion that naturally followed, three members of Lt. Johnson's crew in the 423rd Squadron were injured seriously and three baled out of the plane, then on fire. S/Sgt. M. H. "Snuffy" Smith displayed the greatest gallantry and self sacrifice in putting out the fire and giving first aid. He was given at a later date the highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A popular figure on the base was Capt. William J. Casey, who impressed all with his courage in helping buddies in distress ward off German fighters. On several occasions "Wild Bill", seeing a B-17 in trouble or straggling, would leave the formation and expose his aircraft to continuous attacks by the Luftwaffe. His actions saved many lives, and Casey was legend to the field. Great sorrow was expressed when this character went down in one of the group's roughest missions, Bremen, April 17, 1943. However, the group was soon to find out that Casey was a prisoner of war, which fact brought about considerable elation.

The group suffered a great blow on June 26, 1943 when Lt. Col. Wilson flew with Capt. Raymond J. "Pappy" Check to Tricouville on the latter's 25th and last mission. The Luftwaffe attacked on the bomb run and a 20 millimeter shell exploded in the cockpit, killing Capt. Check. Lt. Col. Wilson, having volunteered to fly with "Pappy", was severely burned but managed to bring the plane back to base with assistance from Lt. Cassidy,

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pilot flying in the waist. Personnel mourned the death of "Pappy" Check for many months. Lt. Col. Wilson was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart.

During the early part of 1943, the 369th Squadron established the phenomenal record of completing 42 consecutive missions without loss. The string started on the first Wilhelmshaven raid and was broken on the July 29th mission to Kiel. This record stood until after D-Day, when of course, several squadrons in many groups broke it. However, the fact remains the "Fitin' Bitin" set up a most remarkable standard when the Hun was viciously trying to turn back American Fortresses.

Major Raper led the 306th on the first Schweinfurt raid August 17, 1943. This day also initiated the shuttle missions with the 8th dispatching other aircraft to Regensburg, thence to Italy. This group sustained the operation without a loss although it was one of the most costly affairs in the air campaign.

On August 24 the group attacked Villacoublay A/D near Paris. Major Riordan led, the A.A. fire was very accurate, damaging 17 out of 18. Lt. Klette of the 369th had 2 engines knocked out over the target, but he carefully managed to bring the plane back to friendly territory. As Klette approached the field, a hush fell over those gathered in front of the tower 'sweatin' him out'. Suddenly a gasp, and fire was seen to start from one of the two remaining engines. The crippled Fortress weaved crazily in the air. However, Lt. Klette meticulously guided his craft safely to its landing and for this display of high skill he received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The 306th participated again in a Schweinfurt raid Oct. 28, 1943, led by Capt. Schoolfield. Although the 8th was highly commended by both British and American Air leaders, the group suffered one of its greatest losses. Some crews reported that the scene looked like a parachute invasion because so many men were forced to bail out. However, the damage inflicted on the ball bearing plant in the town cut production 75%. Capt. Schoolfield, of the 369th, who received 4 Distinguished Flying Crosses during his combat tour, was awarded one of his clusters on that day.

First Air Division received the Presidential Citation for the Jan. 11, 1944 attack on factory airfields in central Germany. The 306th on its 100th mission bombed Haubstadt with Col. Robinson at the head of the group. Poor weather caused a recall in the fighter support, and as a result the Luftwaffe rose to intercept. A violent air battle ensued, but despite terrific losses, the 1st Division B-17s fought their way to and from the targets. The excellence of the bombing brought the aforementioned Citation.

After being briefed for several days to go to Berlin, the group finally made it, along with the rest of the 8th on March 6, 1944. Capt. Thompson led the formation encountered comparatively moderate opposition. Lt. Smith of the 368th was the only crew lost and his plane landed in Sweden.

The month of April, 1944 proved to be distinctive in the fact that two of the "old-timers" finished up. Lt. Col. Regan, C.O. of the 368th and Lt. Col. Buckley, C.O. of the 367th, both completed their operational tours and went home. Lt. Col. Lambert, holding a similar position in the 423rd, duplicated their action in May.

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Date: May 45 Prepared by: 1st Lt. D. A. Esper, Jr.

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The 306th did its share on D-Day by flying three ground support missions. Several crews engaged in two of the operations, but there was little complaining as the Hun stayed out of the air. The invasion coast had taken a terrific pounding for two weeks before the big day, and ground forces were highly impressed by the great destruction wrought by this now powerful implement of war.

In a tremendous combined assault on German oil production the 306th went after the big refinery in Hamburg on June 20, 1944. Lt. Col. Chalfant led, and the Jerry A.A. fire was intense. Bombardiers Lt. Franze and Lt. Tannella however, laid their eggs right on the aiming point. Smoke from the fires, started by bombing on the target, rose to 10,000 feet. Lt. Raster, Lt. Switzer, pilots, and Lt. Tannella each received the Distinguished Flying Cross for their performances on this raid.

Lt. Col. Chalfant led the group on Sept. 12 to Ruhland when the last great air battle between the 306th and the Luftwaffe occurred. As the formation passed near the northern outskirts of Berlin on the route in, the German fighters attacked in quick passes. Losses for the mission were high, and Lt. Donkin's A/C received very severe damage, necessitating a crash landing. His skill in bringing the Fortress and crew back to England netted him the D.F.C.

As the war was closing out against the Nazis in early 1945, the 306th pointed the bulk of its efforts to the destruction of the German Communication lines. Many successful missions were completed, and the group's bombing record soared to unapproachable heights. Maj. D. R. Ross, group bombardier, led the way with a series of excellent results, most notable being the attack on Bohlen, March 2, for which he received the D.F.C.

On many occasions the station has been honored by visits from high-ranking personnel. The King and Queen have inspected the various units and were present when Princess Elizabeth christened the 367th aircraft, "Rose of York", July 6, 1944. Too, Major General Ira C. Eaker, former commander of the 8th Air Force, has been on the field several times. On Feb. 21, 1943 he witnessed the inauguration of the first Aero Club in Great Britain. Again on the 15th of July of the same year Gen Eaker accompanied by Secretary of War H. L. Stinson, presented the Congressional Medal of Honor to "Snuffy" Smith.

And so it has been with the 306th, commanded in succession by Col. C. B. Overacker, Gen. F. A. Armstrong, Col. C. E. Putnam, Col. G. L. Robinson, Col. J. S. Sutton and Col. P. H. Upham, always striving toward the final victory. The group has been impressive with its record in both the strategical and tactical campaigns, and has been highly instrumental in the great progress of the 8th Air Force. To all its members go the congratulations and admiration of the United States Army

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Awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Clusters, the American Theatre Ribbon, the Asiatic Pacific Theatre Ribbon with four Campaign Stars, the European Theatre Ribbon with Campaign Star, the American Defense Ribbon and the Presidential Unit Citation with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Lt. Col. Felix M. Hardison of San Antonio, Texas, has been appointed the Deputy Commander of this veteran 306th Bombardment Group.

Col Hardison began his brilliant Army career upon his graduation from the University of Idaho in 1937. With reserve commission in the Infantry he entered a competitive examination with a thousand other officers, who were in reserve, for a direct commission. His papers placed him second from the top and in July, 1938, he was appointed a 2nd Lt of Infantry in the Regular Army.

Always interested in flying, Hardison applied for flight training and following examinations was accepted at Randolph and Kelly Fields. The "West Point of the Air".

In the summer of 1939 he received his wings and transfer to the Air Corps ---- and so another legend of World War II was born.

At that time there were only three existing B-17 bomb groups, the 2nd, 7th and 19th/ Assigned to the 7th, Hardison was among the first of the pilots to fly the old B-17 C's of "Mary Ann" fame. He also acted as test pilot on the then new B-17 E.

On the 6th of December the 19th was dispatched to the Philippines. Col Hardison was to follow immediately but the Japs were bombing or holding the stepping stone fields to the Philippines so the Southern route was taken and his plane finally landed in the Dutch East Indies where he joined up with the 19th who were evacuated from the Philippines.

Then followed the saga of the South Pacific -- this handful of men and planes, concentrating on Jap shipping, sank ship after ship. The price was high -- planes fell flaming into the Pacific waters, the same waters filled with the bodies of drowned Jap troops bombed out of their transports.

Col Hardison and his crew remained in the Dutch East Indies until they could hear the sound of Jap rifle fire in the distance. From there they flew to Java where their efforts were continued with the aid of the Dutch. The action was reaching a furious pitch. More and more Zeros clouded the skies and still they went on. In one ten-day period they sank twelve large vessels and badly mauled twenty others. On another occasion Hardison and his crew made twelve separate bombing runs on a flak firing Jap convey from an altitude of 1500 feet dropping two bombs at a time. Bombs were scarce and they had to make every one count. For this action, Hardison was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Participating in the Coral Sea and Solomon Island actions, they were finally recalled to the United States in the latter part of 1942.

At Ftote, Texas, where they landed, General Olds flew in personally to decorate their Group with their five Battle Honors. Col Hardison had every man on his crew commissioned and was himself appointed as A-3 of the first bomber command.

In June of 1943 he was selected as Air Attache of United States to Sweden where he remained until December of 1944. Ordered home for a short

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Month of May 1945 Prepared by 1st Lt. D. A. Esper, Jr.

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rest, he returned to the E.T.O. and was shortly made Deputy Commander of this Group



Col. Hardison's wife Pricilla and their two daughters Felicia, 4 and Suzanne 2, live at 420 Theima Drive, San Antonio, Texas.

(article contributed by base PRO - Capt. William C. Van Norman)

Promotions for the month of May:

- 3 May - W. B. Winslow, 367th Flight Leader, to Capt.
- 4 May - R. H. Wessler, 423rd Squadron Navigator, to Capt.
- 4 May - L. E. Smith, 423rd Flight Leader, to Capt.
- 4 May - C. R. Dieter, 423rd Squadron Bombardier, to Capt.
- 4 May - R. H. Glacys, 306th Flight Leader, to Capt.
- 4 May - J. E. Martin, 306th Flight Leader, to Capt.
- 15 May - R. G. Schwein, 367th Squadron Bombardier, to Capt.
- 16 May - R. W. Griffith, 423rd Squadron Gunnery, to Capt.
- 21 May - A. A. Kester, 369th Squadron Navigator, to Capt.

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May 1945-306th BG Headquarters Squadron Diary

Note: this page is inserted by 306th BGHA in 2020 to help the researcher distinguish between the 306th BG War Diary and the diary kept by the 306th BG Headquarters Squadron.

Month of May 1945 Prepared by Capt. William C. Van Neman

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5	Captain Robert F. Morris, former 423rd Adjutant, assigned to this organization as Group Statistical Officer.
6	Captain Hubert R. Jones, Station Ordnance Officer on D.S. duty to H.M.S. Volcano in the Cumberlands for approximately 3½ weeks. (The British Admiralty call their land stations after ships).
8	The day we have all waited for and in our many different ways worked for has arrived. Today is VE Day. There is now peace in Europe. The once proud Third Reich took it's third strike for an out. All men and officers in Hq., 306 Bomb Group may rightly feel that each has done his share in the complete and devastating defeat of our enemy. The day was declared a holiday and as a dampener the men were restricted to the post. However, we all guessed that there was a good official reason for the restriction and everyone took it in good grace. The following day saw regular work going as usual.
10	Men of the organization were flown over Germany to view some of the terrific punishment meted out to the Nazis from our 8th Air Force.
11	Captain Walter P. Kuenstler, assigned from the 369th Bomb Squadron to this organization as the Group Air Inspector.
15	Captain Donald R. Rees, group bombardier, is promoted to Major. 1st Lieutenant John W. Kidwell, formerly of the 367th Bomb Squadron, is assigned to this organization as the Flight Test Maintenance Officer. Lt. Col. John S. Chalfant assumes temporary command of the veteran 367th Bomb Squadron.
16	Staff Sergeant John Arruda hit the jackpot with an indefinite period assignment to the Personal Affairs School at New York, New York, <u>U.S.A.</u>
18	Our good friend and dentist Captain Rex D. Stutznegger is going home.
23	Sergeants Tressler, Perry, Watson and Private Tropeano, all old timers, are all preparing to leave for the Z of I on their points.
26	Captain James R. Seaman, dentist, assigned to the organization in Captain Stutznegger's place.
28	Lt. Col. Charles D. Duy Jr., who has been with us all these years, has left for the Z. of I. It looks like all the veterans of the original ground echelon are slowly dribbling home. Organization released from assignment to the 8th Air Force and assigned to the 9th Air Force per letter USSTAF, subject "Assignment of Units" (No 42) dated 19 May, 1945 effective 16 May 1945. Organization attached to 8th Air Force for administration per letter USSTAF, subject, "Attachments of Units" (No 55) dated 19 May, 1945.
ed to	So ends our association with the 8th Air Force. It is just like losing an old friend whom you have made popular. Our best wishes go with General Jimmy Doolittle and the "8th" in their war in the Pacific.
30	1st Lieutenant Harold Taylor, another veteran, on his way home.
31	Major Edward T. Miassa, former executive of the 423rd Bomb Squadron, assigned to organization as Deputy for Administration.

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