

Information taken from personal documents of

Robert V. Pardue

B- 24 Bomber Pilot WWII

I. Stuttgart, Arkansas July 43

Robert V. Pardue received wings

Grade: 2nd. Lt.

II. Smyrna, Tennessee October 43

Army Air Force Pilot School (Specialized Four Engine)

Type of Plane: All types B-24

III. Mountain Home, Idaho October 21, '43 to Nov. 17, '43

Headquarters Army Air Base

801st Bomb Gp. (H)

Crew No 7-0-104

P	2D LT ROBERT V. PARDUE	(1024)	0806331
CP	2D LT WILLIAM R. JERNIGEN	(1024)	0813519
N	2D LT ROBERT E. SEMLER	(1034)	0692343
B	2D LT RICHARD K. CROWELL	(1035)	0690777
AEG	SGT LLOYD F. MCCARY	(748)	14176617
ROG	SGT WILLIAM E. EVANS	(757)	33284373

IV. Casper, Wyoming Dec. 1, '43

Attached to 351 Bomb Sqd.

331st Combat Crew Training School

AAB Casper, Wyoming

Crew #104

( List issued Jan. 26, '44)

P	2D LT (1024) ROBERT V. PARDUE	0-806331
CP	2D LT (1024) WILLIAM R. JERNIGEN	0-813519
N	2D LT (1034) ROBERT E. SEMLER	0-692343
B	2D LT (1035) RICHARD K. CROWELL	0-690777
E	S SGT (748) LLOYD F. MCCARY	14176617
R	S SGT (757) WILLIAM E. EVANS	33284373
AG	SGT (612) CHARLES B. HOLLEY	14019686
CG	SGT (748) EDWARD G. LANING	17108821
CG	SGT (748) STEPHEN (NMI) KOROLUCK	32626310
CG	SGT (612) RAYMOND C. THORNBURG	34594995

V. Document dated Jan.27, '44  
 Robert V. Pardue (Signature of officer for crew leaving base  
 Assigned to 2nd H B Processing  
 Topeka, Kansas  
 (Long list of items issued to each crew member)

VI. West Palm Beach, Florida February 6, '44  
 Movement orders:  
 South Atlantic Route to European Theater of Operation  
 8th Air Force

VII. Confidential March 9, '44  
 Headquarters Army Air Force Station 238  
 APO 639  
 (crew listed again)

VIII. 30 Missions over German occupied Europe  
 March 23, 1944 to November 11, 1944  
 Jernigen lost his life on Mission # 21--August 2, 1944.

30 MISSIONS OVER GERMANY  
(German Occupied Europe)

392 Bomb Group ENGLAND WENDLING AIR BASE, ENGLAND

#1 Brunswick --- 8 Apr. 44 Flight Time 7 hrs. 30 min.  
Light flak at coast going in, only very scattered flak until in vicinity of target. Had fierce fighter attack at l.p. just as we turned away from direction of Berlin. Looked to be about 100 enemy fighters. Some engaged in dogfights with our escort while others attacked the formation. 44th group was hit heaviest. At one time I saw 2 fighters and 1 B24 going down. More fighter attacks and intense flak on bombing run. One target was an airfield about 4 miles from Brunswick and we didn't get near as much flak as the planes that hit the city itself. On way back we hit only light scattered flak and no more fighters. Our group lost 4 planes. Eloranta was one and on his first mission. The 44th lost 14 planes.

Target: Airfield

#2 TUTOW --- 9 April 44 Flight Time 4hrs. 30min.  
Our target for today was in northern Germany on the Baltic Sea. Assembly was over field at 10,000 ft. which turned out O.K. but on the climb, we ran into scattered clouds and broke up formation several times. Finally after we were within 100 miles of the Danish Coast, they called the group back. A few planes had joined other formations and went on. They encountered heavy flak and fighter opposition. We lost 2 planes that ran together over field.

#3 MARQUIZE, FRANCE --- 10 April 44 Flight Time: 3 hrs.  
Today's target was an underground emplacement which left us over enemy territory 9 minutes. We carried 6- 1,000 lb. bombs and bombed from 23,000 ft. No fighters and very little flak. A very easy mission!

#4 BERNBERG, GERMANY --- 11 April Flight Time 7hrs. 30 min  
Today we encountered light flak upon crossing coast and only very scattered flak till target. There it was plenty heavy. Had 3 fighter attacks right after the target. We only got one bullet hole. 3 planes were lost, one by flak, one ditched, and one got a load of bombs dropped on it. We carried 240, 25lb. fragmentation bombs. Target: Airfield

#5 ZWICKAU, GERMANY --- 12 April 44 Flight Time 6 hrs.  
Mission omitted from notes

#6 LECHFIELD, GERMANY --- 13 April 44 Flight Time 8hrs. 10 mi  
This target was an airfield for training bomber crews located about 20 miles south of Augsburg in Southern Germany. No flak until target. There it was light and not too accurate. At Augsburg was an intense barrage that looked like a great cloud. No flak on way out. Not a single enemy fighter seen. The target was completely destroyed. Not a plane was lost.

#7 CUXHAVEN --- 18 April 44 Flight Time: 8hrs.  
We were briefed for Brandenburg about 40 miles west of Berlin. But on the bombing run a matter of seconds before bomb release, we ran into a solid cloud layer and the formation broke up. It was every man for himself. Luckily, there weren't any enemy fighters around. We finally re-grouped and headed back. They picked out a secondary target and on that bombing run, a formation of B-17's came tearing toward us. So that one was off. We finally ended by bombing some shipping in Cuxhaven. Flak was scattered on the way in and over primary target, but fairly accurate. Over Cuxhaven it was moderate and we got some accurate flak from boats and barges in the channel. One plane missing.

21 April 44

Flight Time: 3 hrs. 30 min.

We were briefed for a mission into Germany, but it was scrubbed because of the weather. We took off with an overcast and were to form at 15,000ft., but the clouds were much thicker than anticipated, and there were severe icing conditions; therefore the assembly was raised to about 20,000ft. We loaded up with ice and stalled out in the clouds. It was a close call. Jernigen and I had a very hard time getting the plane level. We thought we were in a spin once. The plane stalled at 158M.P.H. By using full rated power we were able to finally get out of the clouds. There was no formation. Planes were everywhere. It was terribly dangerous in the clouds. Finally it was called off due to weather. We later found out that Bass's Crew spun in killing all but 2 men who were thrown clear. The officers were my best friends. All were married. Bass had a 2 month old baby. It's hard to take!

#8 HAMM, GERMANY --- 22 April 44

F. T. 5 hrs. 40 min.

Target today was the largest railway marshalling yards in Germany. Hamm

We took off about 1630 and weren't due back till after dark. It was an uneventful trip in. The sky was so clear that the smoke from preceeding bombing was visible for close to 100 miles. In fact, the lead navigator thought we were much closer and carried us over the Ruhr. That means flak, lots of it. All the planes made it through O.K. though and didn't hit much more flak until we were close to the target. Then it was pretty thick. The planes ahead of us did a good job, their bombs were still bursting down there and there were great columns of smoke rising. Our bombs didn't the target but the town itself. The flak was bad but don't think anyone got hit. Out of the target about 20 minutes the fighters hit. We saw them up high at 12:00, but kind of figured they were friendly. No one was watching too closely and then it happened. A 20 m.m. shell exploded down between my feet and Semler's head! It cut the throttle

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cables on #1 and #2 engines, tore loose an aileron control brace, and scared us to death, almost. No one was hit. It seemed that every gun on that plane started shooting at once. That it it tho'. It happened and was over in less than 10 seconds. Everhart, the lead ship was on fire, and the men were bailing out. Two more planes had engines feathered. But we formed on the deputy leader pretty quick and organized again. It was a long way back and we had a hard time keeping up with the power all messed up. It was sundown while we were still the enemy coast. Someone saw Everhart's plane explode but after eleven shutes had come out. It was his 28th mission. Soon as we were over mid channel we broke away and were going to try to get back before dark, but it just couldn't be made. The hydraulic lines were shot out, so Mac had to crank the gear down and Jernigen was ready to turn the flaps down. Mac figured out the right cables to pull for more or less power as was needed and got on the interphone. We weren't sure of our brakes, so had rest of crew to run back in the tail soon as we hit ti drag it and kill the speed. Now we were ready to land. Everything was normal. I called Mac when I wanted the throttles off and it was O.K. all the way around. We did have some brakes tho' afterall. It was one more nasty hole in the side of that plane. Everyone thought we did a good job. Enemy planes came in and shot up some of the other groups as they were landing. Quite a day!

#9 BRUNSWICK, GEFMANY --- 8 May 44 Flight Time 6 hrs. 30 m  
The target today was same as our first one, a month ago today, an aircraft factory 4 miles north or Brunswick, if visual, and the city of Brunswick itself, if P.F.F. We were deputy lead of the high block. Lotterhas was lead and this his 29th mission. Flak was meagre on the way in and fighter support was good. About ten minutes from the target enemy fighters hit. They grouped up high at 2:00 o'clock. We noticed the vapor trails way up there and were watching

when all of a sudden here they came diving head long through the formation, guns blazing. About every gun on our plane was firing and about that time Lanning yelled that he got one. It was fierce but lasted only a few seconds. I would judge there were 50 enemy planes. They never fail to attack when our fighter support is weakest. But our P 47's were breaking them up just as they came in. A minute or two after the attack Lotterhas feathered an engine, so we had to take over the lead. It was my first time to lead as much as an element in combat. It was announced over radio that bombing was P.F.F., so we were going to try to fly through all of the flak that marks Brunswick even if there is an overcast. They headed right into it, so all we could do was follow. We dropped our bombs on the smoke trail that marked the P.F.F. ship's point of release. Then were for doing evasive action as the flak was plenty close. We finally got our block back in position way past the rally point. We had no more opposition, although at one time I saw two planes going down up ahead. We struck one concentration of flak but were able to go around. The remainder of the mission was uneventful except for occasional flak and us trying to keep the block in the right position when landing. I found out that liked the way we flew pretty well. No planes were lost. Lottrthas made it back O.K.

# 10 ST. TROND --- 9 May 44 Flight Time: 6 hrs.  
Target today was an airfield in Belgium. We were lead plane on the high block. Capt. Holloman and Lt. Kennedy rode with us. Flak was light and inaccurate all the way. One other group got a lot of flak at one place. The target or M.P.I. of all three blocks was completely destroyed. Crowell did a perfect job with the sight. In all a good mission.

#11 TUTOW AIRFIELD --- 13 May 44 Flight Time: 8 hrs.  
We lead the high block on today's mission. (Northern Germany) It wasn't too bad, very long though. Encountered the usual light upon entering coast. We crossed over at

19,000 ft. and soon afterward let it down to 15,000 ft. We had one fighter attack, looked like 50 or 60 fighters came up low out of the clouds at 11:00. For a moment it looked bad, but a few of our P-47's dove in and scattered them. Luckily we weren't hit at all, but the group behind us got it a little. At the target, Cloud cover was about 80 percent and the field could hardly be seen. They made 2 runs at the target and then didn't hit it very well. The trip back to the coast was uneventful. The fighter cover was excellent. Sweden looked awfully good up there, but there was no excuse at all. Just off the coast we hit light but very inaccurate flak from a small island. No one was hit though. All planes returned.

#12 ST. AVARD AIRFIELD, FRANCE --- 23 May 44 F.T. 8 hrs. Today we were deputy lead for the group. McGregor was lead. It was a pre-dawn takeoff, and we were almost assembled by daylight. There was an undercast until we were well over the enemy coast. No flak was seen until the target. No fighters the entire trip. It was an excellent navigation, on course all the way. The target was hit perfectly, but the flak was moderate and accurate. Right after the target our #1 engine was hit and we feathered it. For some fool reason, we decided to unfeather it, but it wouldn't run. We liked to have never got it feathered again. We dropped out of formation and hung along close to it. #3 manifold pressure was varying about 20 inches and it was nigh impossible to fly a wing. But the trip back was uneventful. We came in and landed first. No planes were lost.

All during these days we were flying almost every day as training for lead crew. That is, before this last mission. They figured we were pretty good in the ole' 392nd. Even Gen. Johnson, the wing commander, knew us well. On the whole it was a very rosy outlook. I got my 1st. Semler and Crowell were to get theirs. Everyone knew of us and respected us. No one was jealous. But it was too good to last. Capt. Hollomon told us the night of the 23rd that we were to be

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transferred to the 489th Bomb Group as a lead crew. They had done all in their power to keep us, but to no avail. We moved over the next day and found it a new group not yet operational.

489th Bomb Group 24 May 44

It was plain to see that we weren't wanted very much. There were six of us new crews. The first day we flew lead it was a wing of 60 ships. Semler messed up on the navigation due to a number of reasons and as a result we were reprimanded. It wound up by us not leading anymore. We lead an element on a practice flight. I messed that up considerable and got a bawling out at critique. I didn't care for already I didn't like the attitude of the men in charge. They were a bunch of old cadet school men and ran the outfit the same way. An element lead suits me. In fact, I'd rather fly wing, But I'll make the most of it and let it go. I liked the lead at the other group but not here. Never!

#13 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM--- 31 May 44 Flight Time: 4 hrs. 30 mi  
A railway yard near Luxenborough was our target. It was the second mission for the 489th Group. We led the low element of the high squadron and one heck of a time doing it. We flew over the coast at 19,000 ft. and ran into a heavy bunch of cumulus clouds. They were up to about 30,000 ft., and we were forced to turn back, the whole division. A very uneventful trip--brought back bombs.

#14 PARIS, FRANCE --- 2 June 44 Flight Time: 7 Hrs.  
Target for today was an airfield about 10 miles south of Paris and the secondary, a field about 30 miles north of Paris. Our takeoff time wasn't until 1640 which was a bad beginning, starting that late. We assembled at 12,000 Ft. and climbed to 20,000ft. on our way across during which time the other group of the wing joined us. Our crew was deputy for the low block. It was dangerous enough to fly in that formation without anyone shooting at us. They were so close

together there was no room to overshoot. Before coming up to the coast, way ahead I saw 3 bursts of flak, like they were testing their guns. The bursts were right straight ahead and exactly at our altitude. Boy, did I sweat out the short time it took us to get in range. Then they started shooting in earnest. It was close too, but short and light. All went through it O.K. No more opposition until I.P. Then it came up moderate and very accurate. There was no evasive action taken either, and about that time one burst right under us with a loud explosion. I looked at the instruments and saw #3 and #4 engines had been hit and were putting out about 25 inches of manifold pressure. Then Evans, radio operator and Semler, navigator called up that they were hit. Jernigen got Lanning to help Evans, and Crowell helped Semler. He found that neither were seriously hurt. The target was just ahead, so we decided to hold the bombs. Then we discovered that the hydraulic system was out and couldn't get the bomb bay doors open. McCary went back and tried to crank them open but didn't make much progress. At the target the doors were still closed, so we had nothing to worry about just then. meantime flak was bursting all around. We circled Paris and headed for the secondary target with the flak still coming all the time. Our #3 began to smoke so that we decided to feather it, lest it catch fire. Then they got two doors open and Crowell kicked out 2 of the bombs. We were carrying 3-2000lb. bombs. We had already fallen out of formation, and the group had dropped their bombs. Finally we decided to drop the other bomb through the door. We did. The door came off and went down like a leaf. We were below and to the right of the formation, and we could see them being shot at. I saw 2 planes go down in flames. McCary shot flares for fighter assistance and shortly we had eight fighters around us. They really looked good! The main formation got flak all the way out, but we were able to dodge it until the coast. Then they were shooting

everything at us. We were throwing that old plane around with evasive action too. That's about all that saved us. Anyway, we did make it. Semler told us the course to follow and we came back letting down all the way. It was completely dark by the time we got to the field, and we were unable to see it or contact them by radio. We saw a field lighted up and circled for a landing. Just as we started turning on the final approach, all 3 engines cut out. We yelled, "Crash landing" and tried to head the thing around toward the field. I thought we were all going to die when that plane went down below the tree tops. I'll never forget those few seconds. We hit once and the force bounced us back up in the air, and for the next few seconds we went tearing our way through the countryside until we came to a stop on the runway-- of all places! By the time I could get out of the plane the flight deck was already clear. I think they were out before it stopped. We ran far enough to see that it wasn't going to explode and to see that we weren't all there. Lanning<sup>LW</sup> and I ran to the waist and found Holley<sup>BT</sup> unconscious and Thornburg<sup>TG</sup> badly hurt. The ambulances were there in a minute or two and the boys were soon in the hospital. By the time we could get there, Thornburg was close to death. He died at 3:00 A.M. with a broken back, broken arm and severe shock. Holley had a skull fracture and is still unconscious 4 days later. Evans<sup>R/O</sup> had his heel cut deeply by flak. Semler<sup>N</sup> got a small flak wound in the arm. It's pretty bad losing those boys, but it's the game we are in. The only thing we figured was wrong with the engines was a vapor lock due to a hole somewhere in the line. After seeing what we went through, I'm thankful to God that no more of us were hurt.

3 June 44

Today we got the good news that we were going back to the 392nd! Sure was wonderful for us. We got busy, closed things up around that place, and were ready to come back on the 4th.

392nd Bomb Group 4 June 44

Everyone seemed to be glad to see us back here. The Commanding Officer of the 489th called Col. Rendel and said that he didn't like our job, so Col. Rendel said to send us home and here we are!

6 June 44

Today is D-Day! Briefing was at 2200 last night. Take off was about 0300. We knew something was in the air, for they were loading the planes with fragmentation bombs. There were two flights today, but we couldn't manage to get on either.

#15 LISIEUX FRANCE --- 7 June 44 Flight Time 6 hrs. 30 min  
Target today was a "choke" point just south of the beachhead. The leadship was G.H. We lead the low squadron. Take off was at 1100, assembled at 15,000 ft. but had a hard time getting into formation. We climbed to 20,000ft. and stayed at that altitude during time over France. At the beachhead there were hundreds of boats of all sizes, certainly was a wonderful sight. We dropped a smoke trail of leadship. Target was hit squarely. No flak, no fighters. The perfect mission!

#16 MONTANAUBE --- 11 June 44 Flight Time 6 hrs.  
( La Possoneeve, France) Target today was a railroad bridge across the Loire River. We were to bomb in three ship elements at an altitude between 12,000 ft. and 5,000 ft. We carried 4- 2,000 lb. bombs. We were deputy lead for the group. Capt. Holloman was command pilot and Capt. Paddock was navigator. There was a 90% undercast from the coast into past the target. There wasn't the slightest possibility of bombing the bridge. We were strung out in 3 ship elements flying all over the Brest Peninsula looking for some place to drop the bombs at an altitude of 8,000 ft., a very dangerous thing to be doing. Finally they found a railway yard and dropped at it. Maybe someone hit it. But most of the bombs were dropped in fields. Bet that's one of the days the Jerries laughed at us and the

Frenchmen cussed us. We S'ed all over Brest trying to get back into formation; let down to 2,000 ft. over the channel. No flak nor fighters. A total faolure as missions go.

#17 POLITZ, GERMANY --- 20 June 44 Flight Time: 8Hrs. 40 mi Target today- synthetic oil plant at Politz in northern Germany about 60 miles N.E. of Berlin. We got up for briefing at 12:30 A.M., still daylight or twilight and it never did get completely dark in the north. Take off was at 0430. We led the low squadron. Trip was uneventful until we were past Denmark, just saw distant flak. At 13 degrees E and 54 degrees 08'N about 65 M.E. 410's pulled alongside our right side just out of range. We were really sweating, but they kept on going and pulled across in front of us, then lined up behind the group ahead of us. All of a sudden they let go with 20MM or a larger calibre shells, and the next instant B-24's were going down all over the sky. I saw 3 B-24's and 2 enemy fighters going down at one time. They literally wiped out one squadron of B24's. The attack lasted well over a minute, the flashes and smoke from shells looked like flak. Our navigatior said he saw 20 chutes at once. I saw one B-24 blow up at about 10,000 ft., just a mass of flame. About 90 seconds after the enemy started shooting a few of our P-51's came diving down from above and broke up the attack. The 410's didn't even try to fight back. They just tore for the ground. I saw a P-51 shoot down a 410. One B-24 in our group got a 410 too. The main dogfight was on our right and I couldn't see it. From reports I would say 1/3 of the 410's were shot down by our fighters. Those pursuit boys have my deepest respect. It takes nerve to come in like they did. What a fight that was! One I'll remember always. Sure hope I finish, will have a lot to tell back home. No more excitement until the target, there a cloud of flak. Sure looked bad, a barrage of heavy calibre stuff. The bomb run,(rather bombing heading) was about 10 minutes long and that aged me at least a year. Did a little praying too, as I have before. Crowell held

her right in there with flak bursting all around, which takes some nerve. We plastered the target dead center. He has since been complimented by several of the boys. There were some awful close bursts! We did violent evasive action to get out. Bell must have been hit kind of bad, for he headed for Sweden right after the target. We got #3 super charger out. Trip back was uneventful. Saw great clouds of smoke from hits south of Keil.

The group lost 4 crews 2 of which were from our squadron. We got about 9 flak holes. The 492nd lost 16 planes. Rough!

# 18 BERLIN, GERMANY ---21. June 44 Flight Time: 5 hrs. 10.mi Target for today was Berlin! We had to abort at enemy coast because of engine failure. We were lead of high squadron. Gann took over. Hated to turn back. Engine has to be changed.

The group bombed by P.F.F. and results unobserved. Flaks moderate and inaccurate. No fighters. All ships returned.

7 July '44

The group went to Bembery today and had fierce fighter attacks in target area by 75 ME 410's, FW190's and ME 109's. Our squadron flew with the A92nd and lost 6 planes. The 492nd lost **one** complete squadron.

#19 MUNICK, GERMANY --- 12 July 44 F.T. 8 hrs. 30 min. Target today -- the city of Munick. Take off at 0900. We were #3 of the lead squadron, leading wing. Lead and deputy lead were P.F.F. Glight altitude was 20,000 and bombing altitude was 23,000 ft.! No flak until a few minutes before I.P. where we hit some light and inaccurate flak. All over the target area there was an intense barrage of not too accurate flak. None were too close to us. A plane in the group got a direct hit over the target and blew up. It made a loop as it went down and made a big smoke ring. Strangely enough we flew right through the ring- gives you a funny feeling. The trip was uneventful, no fighters nor

any more flak. I listened part time to V.H.F. fighter channel and heard some real drama as bombers in trouble were calling for fighter assistance. We lost no planes today. There was an undercast all the way and results were unobserved. Our nineteenth mission.

13 July 44

We didn't fly today. The group went to Saubucker. In climbing up for assembly Guan's ship iced up and stalled out. They barely got it out. White's ship iced up and spiraled down, with them barely gaining control. Two crew members bailed out over the wash. Hunt crashed north of the wash killing all but one man. They lived in the room with us and were real men, Ole' Hunt and Roetzel. It's awful hard to realize they're dead. It's awful knowing they are dead and having to pack up their belongings. Only last night they were here in the room laughing and talking with us. Never had anything to strike me like this. Sullivan and Shelton are still grounded from flak wounds and they are broken-hearted. We are making the Germans pay though. That is one consolation; however slight. Yesterday I had the satisfaction of our dropping several tons of explosives on Munick.

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I've discovered some statistics that are rather alarming: This 392nd squadron has lost 30 crews and 5 have finished their missions. And has flown 126 missions.

The 492nd became operational about 2 months ago with 77 crews. Since then 55 have gone down! Some life this is. A guy has one chance in a hundred!

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End of First Notebook

#20 TROAFN, FRANCE --- 18 July 44      Flight Time: 4 hrs. 30 mi  
Target- an area southeast of Caen. We were going in as  
an individual squadron at 16,000 ft. or go down to 14,000 ft.  
to stay under clouds. It was a softening up for a big  
British drive. We let down to 15,000 ft. to go under one  
layer of clouds, but about 45 seconds before bombs away,  
another cloud layer rotted in and we were unable to drop.  
Soon as Crowell said we couldn't drop, we banked the  
formation around real steep and didn't get any flak. I hated  
to bring them back, but that was all we could do. The  
colonel agreed that we did the right thing.

# 21 CORBIE, FRANCE --- 2 August 44      F.T. 4 hrs.  
Target- AMIES- Railway bridge. In today's mission Jernigen  
was killed- by far the best friend I've ever had. It's  
plenty hard to take, a boy you've lived even closer to  
than a brother and to see him go in a second's time. I've  
always hesitated to make close friends over here, so it  
wouldn't be so hard to take if they were shot down. Jernigen  
was the one man I figured would last as long as I, so I  
turned myself loose. We were about as close as friends  
could be. I shared little things with him that I had never  
told anyone else, and he did the same with me. But he is  
gone now and I'll never allow myself to become as close  
to anyone else as long as I remain in the army.

About the mission--- We were leading the low, left block  
and bombing was at 22,000 ft. We carried 6- 1,000 lbers.  
No flak was encountered upon entering the coast, but  
shortly thereafter we got light, very accurate flak. The  
first burst was so close we could easily hear it, and  
the black smoke came back over the plane. By doing  
violent evasive action, we were able to get out without  
damage, but not without a few holes. As our A-5 and bomb  
sight were out, we turned it over to the deputy lead at  
the I.P. Due to neither of us remembering that #3 man  
had his radio on another channel, and he therefore not  
knowing we were changing lead, almost caused a crash.

The flak got bad too. We finally wound up in #3 position ourselves. The haze was bad and the lead was unable to locate the target and didn't drop the bombs. But #2 or us dropped for some reason and everyone in the formation dropped. They landed in some Frenchman's field. Another Snafued affair! About five minutes about 4 guns were shooting at the lead, and all of a sudden they turned on us with the first burst hitting us badly. Evidently, our #3 and #4 tanks were hit for gas was spraying **all** over the place. I figured we were going to blow up, but Lanning turned off the generators and Sibert got the radio off. I had everyone get ready to bail out, but warned them not to jump. We cut out everything except V.H.F. Gas was saturating everything. #3 engine had to be feathered. Fitz had our position and gave a heading for a flak free route to the Dover area. We went as fast as possible for fear we might run out of gas and have to ditch. The cross-feed seemed to be shot up. All over that part of the world seemed to covered with clouds. About the time Semler figured we were over land, #4 engine quit. That made two out on one side. We held it for a little longer and gave the word for everyone to jump. Everyone got out in a hurry including me. By the time I left tho', the plane was down in the clouds. Always thought I'd hesitate when the time came to jump, but now, bet I broke a record for speed. I pulled the rip cord as soon as I hit the slip stream and got a terrific jerk, but it **just** did open in time. I figure **maybe** Jernigen waited a little too long to pull his. The plane crashed and burned about a mile from where I landed. All and all, a very bad mission. Only on this mission did I realize the great responsibility on the pilot. It was up to me to decide whether or not to bail out over France or try to make England with the risk of it exploding at a lower altitude or maybe ditching in the channel and then whether to bail out or risk a crash landing. I figure we did the best thing as ordinarily no one would have been killed in the bail out. Of course, Jernigen might have lived had he had a greater distance to fall.

#22 4° 2' East --- 47° 8' North 11 August 44 F.T..7 hrs.  
Target -- Oil Dump

We led the high block. We went over coast at 15,000 ft. and let down to 12,000 ft. about 30 minutes inland. Everyone did an excellent job on navigation and bombing. Crowell did a perfect job of bombing. Not a single burst of flak and no enemy fighters. A perfect mission! Only eight more to go.

#23 PONT-AUDE-MER, FRANCE --- 13 August 44 F.T. 4hrs. 45 min  
Target today-- 3 MP.l.s --1. A crossroad 10 miles N.E. of of Liesiery, 2. a railway and road crossing 1 mile N.W. of Port Aundewer, 3. A road in 2nd bend of Seine River on South side.

It was a raid to try to prevent Von Kluge's Army from escaping across the Seine River.

Our first group lead turned out to be a wing lead. It went off well, assembly etc. was right on the button. We were pretty well on course all the way. No flak was encountered till after last bombs were dropped. Then four guns were laying it right in. We got a few holes with evasive action. No one was hit seriously at all.

The targets weren't hit too well but fairly good considering everything. A good mission!

#24 KOTHEN, GERMANY --- 16 August 44 F.T. 6hrs. 40 min  
Target - Kothen, Junkers Aircraft engines and works near Madenburg.

Today was a D.P. really and truly. When we saw the red cord stretched into the center of Germany, we figured it would certainly be a rough one. It's easy to imagine the sweating we did. We led the low block. Bombing was at 22,000 ft. We struck a few bursts of flak at the Zuider Zee as usual. None at Dumer Lake, most unusual. Next flak was at l.P., probably 4 guns. Over the target the flak was moderate and inaccurate, but some was close anyhow. Crowell plowed right on into it and ~~smacked~~ the target, as usual. All formations hit the target. We made a sharp turn and dived out of the flak even before the lead block. Although the

formation sometimes breaks up a hit, everyone likes that evasive action. While over our target, I saw a B-24 get a direct hit and explode all over Magdenburg. No one had a chance of getting out. A terrible sight. No more flak was encountered. No fighters were seen, although they were reported in the area. Our support was excellent! We were on oxygen about 6 hours. A long but fairly easy mission. Six more to go.

#25 KOBLENZ, GERMANY --- 25 Sept. 44 F.T. 6 hrs.  
Target today- railway yards supposed to be supplying front lines. We led the group with Maj. Holloman as command pilot. The whole trip was uneventful. There was an overcast all the way. We bombed by P.F.F. and results were believed to be good. Flak was modeeate and not too accurate. We made a sharp turn and got out after bombs away. A good mission.

#26 HAMM, GERMANY --- 30 Sept.44 F.T. 6 hrs.  
Today was our second time over the largest railway marshalling yards in Germany. Another group had Maj. Holloman as lead. Everything went O.K. except on bomb run when we hit prop wash and contrails. Undercast was about 9/10 and bomb run was made on P.F.F. At the last minute Crowell saw the target and made a few connections. Result-- the best hit made in the second division that week! Flak was moderate and fairly accurate. By a sharp turn after bombs away, we missed a lot of it. We did evasive action about all the way out and weren't shot at anymore. Our group lost two planes. A good mission. Fitz finished! Three more times!!!

#27 COGLONE, GERMANY --- 14 Oct. 44 F.T. 7 hrs. 50 min  
Target today- another marshalling yards suppling the front. Another group lead with Maj. Holloman with us. Due to weather we had to assemble at 20,000 over the field, then we were in Contrails. It was a messed up mission from the start. We had only halfway assembled when leaving the field. The point of departure was changed to down near Maston. We arrived there

on time, but the division lead was late. We had to make three 360's while the rest of the division came up. We wound being 17 minutes later than they told us. But it was a good division formation after all. We got undercovered good at the I.P. and made the run on P.F.F. Undercast was about 9/10. Flak began coming up about 8 minutes before bombs away. It was very accurate and fairly heavy and had me scared half to death. We could hear the stuff bursting and feel the ship buck and that is some close, especially for 8 minutes. I figured we had had it! I was just about as scared as I've ever been, and we couldn't do a bit of evasive action. Man, but that was rough! We bombed by P.F.F. and I made an extra sharp turn to get out of that terrible flak. The whole group racked them up and stayed with us. We then found ourselves ahead of the whole division which we led until we were back over our lines. We did evasive action all the way out. Hard on pilots but they were thankful for it. We got a few more bursts of flak but no one was hit. We made it O.K. back home. Lots of the boys told me how glad they were of that sharp turn out of that flak. I've got quiet a reputation for that. It probably saved some ships and lives. Guess maybe I'm getting combat nerves for I was some scared on this mission. Man, but I'm sweating 'em out! We lost two more planes.

#28 HAMM, GERMANY --- 22 Oct. 44 F.T. 5 hrs. 30 min.  
 For the third time it was Hamm and this one was as easy as any as far as flak was concerned, none anywhere close. A group lead for us flying off the 491st, and they gave us a rough time in prop wash. We entered the coast over the Zuider Zee as in the old days before the invasion (D-Day). It was 10/10 undercast all the way. Bombs from 23,000 ft. Results thought to be good. Dovey was P.F.F. man and Holloman C.A. Light inaccurate flak at target and again at town of Ravolle. Not a plane lost in the 8th Air Force out of 1100 heavy bombers. A first class mission! Two more times!

28th October 44

No mission for us today, but we had a pretty narrow escape anyhow. Mac (McCary) was co-pilot. We were taking off on runway 01. We gave the plane full throttle and about 300 yds down the runway a truck crossed right out in front of us in the center of the runway. There were two things to do - yank off power and run off the runway, probably ruining a plane, or give emergency power and try to jump over the truck. We chose the latter. Mac added the power. About 100 ft. before the truck we pulled the thing off the ground. It somehow got high enough to clear the truck by a few inches. Then we almost went back into the ground but the plane barely stayed clear. That was something I'll never forget. It was one more close call! Pretty Quick thinking on Mac's and my part if I do say so. Probably saved a B-24 for Uncle Sam by risking a jump over the truck. I was nervous all the rest of the flight. Dangerous, this flying!

#29 MINDEN, GERMANY --- 6 Nov. 44 F.T. 5 hrs. 30 min.  
Target-- Canal at Minden. We were group lead. Col. Gilbert was command pilot. Assembly was O.K. Entered the coast over Zuider Zee. Encountered a few bursts of flak at I.P. No more whole route. Bombed P.F.F. Good mission. One more time!

#30 BOTTROP, GERMANY --- 11 Nov. 44 F.T. 5 hrs.  
A synthetic oil plant in northern part of Ruhr Valley was the target. We were deputy lead on the G.H. ship. Assembled at 20,000 ft. and struck ice on way up. Had quite a bit of trouble. Went in over Zuider Zee. Encountered light flak a couple of times around the target area. Flak was coming up, but not accurate at all. Chaff was really doing the stuff. Bombed G.H. with 9/10 undercast. Kept striking light flak on way out. At the coast coming out they threw a few bursts right at us. I peeled off and got completely out of formation. A good one and the LAST ONE!!

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To 5 November, 1944

Heavy Bomb Sorties 409,337

Lost - 6,197

Enemy Aircraft down - 11,257

Bombers lost 106 - From 30 October 44 to November 44  
to flak