

D.DAY JUNE 6TH 1944. SEETHING AIRFIELD.

June 5th 448th Records.

“The B24’s had returned from a mission to France and the airfield was preparing for the following mission. It was about the time when the ‘Swing Shift’ were leaving their barracks and Nissen huts for the evening meal prior to going to work, when it was announced that effective immediately the Officer’s and Aero Clubs were closed for the rest of the day and that movies at the base theater were cancelled indefinitely.

All personnel were restricted to base and all airmen on a pass were recalled to their organizations. To those men who had already completed their duties for the day it seemed an unprecedented type of restrictions. The men had no knowledge of the events to come could sense great happenings. It seemed that the air was filled with tension.

It did not take long to discover that the big moment had arrived. The early morning take off was the first hint, and the radio announcements that followed some hours later established the fact.

1st mission briefed at 0030. 448th CO Col. Mason confirmed rumours and stated the 448th planned to hit targets in France in support of D Day.”

“Crew 21. June 6th. The excitement at briefing when the curtain was pulled back and we were told this was the day when the Allies would invade Europe is just not describable.

The briefing was very detailed because we would be bombing in such close proximity to our own ground troops. All Allied air traffic that day was routed in a gigantic circle with one way traffic,”

The order was given, YOU MAY BOMB EARLY- BUT NOT LATE.

If PFF (Pathfinder a/c) close up and bomb as a single squadron on PFF ship. Under no circumstances bomb on smoke trail of preceding PFF, if cannot catch up bring bombs back.

A total of 37 B24 Liberator bombers of the 448th Bomb Group took off in darkness for mission #1 the last ones left at 0318. But due to the darkness, weather and the thousands of a/c involved it was difficult to find the correct formation for some of the crews, and they joined other Bomb Groups, and as the 446th BG left the Buncher 7 minutes early it caused this group to miss Wing Formation.

D DAY JUNE 6TH.

Lt Col. Hubert J Judy Jr deputy Group Commander flying as group leader on 1st mission stated *“We saw large formations of landing craft assembled for invasion. Hugh formations of heavy bombers working in unison with invasion forces spell bad news for Hitler’s fortress.*



Lt Col Judy.

Other Quotes after they returned from 1st mission; “S/Sgt Thomas X Murphy enlisted bombardier, I never thought sky and water could hold so many machines. There were so many planes up; you could hardly see the blue of the sky. And the water below looked like a solid bridge of ship decks across the Channel”

Hank Kunstler Radio operator on ‘Little Shepherd’: “You could have walked across the Channel this morning it was so crowded with ships and barges of every conceivable type.”

Not to forget the large team of men involved getting the aircraft, bombs, ammo, fuel etc. ready in able for these aircraft to fly today.

T/Sgt John C Mele ammunition chief. “I’ve been waiting for this to happen for four years. My brother is in Italy and I’m looking forward to meeting him in Berlin sometime in the near future”

Cpl. William P Keenan, bomb handler: “With the invasion under way all the hard work, preparation and practise are paying off in big dividends. The work seems easier and the going smoother than ever.”

1st Lt Albert R Stainfeld, armament officer: “The surprising thing about it is that it was the real thing and not a dry run. Although our men have been working without rest, nobody seems tired. In fact everyone seems elated.”

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The 2nd mission on D Day had 12 B24’s and crews taking part and control tower log states 0636 first plane off. But due to the overcast at target area it was too dangerous to bomb with the troops close by.

William G. MaCabe, from Pilot Alfred C. Fox crew writes about their first mission as a crew, June 6th 1944;

“Last night we were told that we were flying this morning. We were awakened early and got ready to eat. For breakfast we had good fried eggs and hot coffee it sure did good so early in the morning, after we ate we went to briefing and they told us we were going to bomb some roads in France, then they told us the invasion was going to start at 0630, that sure did make us feel good.

This was our first mission and it made me feel a little uneasy, we took off and went over France but we could not drop our bombs because of the overcast. On our way over we could see lots of ships but we could not see the invasion coast.

The 3rd mission on D Day had 11 B24's and crews.

Joseph Hollywood engineer/gunner on Pilot Gaylord Fenton's crew 714th Squadron writes;

"Our 4th mission, Had a good idea something was going to pop. All passes were pulled, shows closed, and everyone was ordered to stay around their barracks. The whole field was on alert; we were on guard at the planes. About midnight they loaded up and took off later. Maximum effort. We were called out for the third mission of the day, took off at 11:05 and landed back at 5:00.

The invasion was well under way. There were hundreds and hundreds of ships of all sizes and shapes heading towards France it was a wonderful sight. A few warships were shelling the coast couldn't see much of France as there was an overcast. The first run in we couldn't see the target, Caen, so by that time our deadline was up at 1:50 to bomb, just didn't make it. Had to bring all our bombs back. No flak at all-no enemy aircraft.

Missions were going out one after another. Whole darn Air Force was up at once, we were supposed to hit a bridge in the town of Caen, a choke point over the river Orne. The others got it as far as we know. Temp minus 20."



Joe Hollywood back row 2nd from left. Pilot Gaylord Felton front row on 4th on right.

D DAY SEETHING AIRFIELD JUNE 6TH 1944.

The 4th Mission today, briefed at 1430 hrs., with 11 B24's and crews, target Coutances, the Fuel load was 2300 Gallons and the lead ship was a PFF.

Quotes after the mission;

1st Lt. Matthew J Foley, navigator on 'ICE COLD KATIE'; "There were so many planes in the sky we were packed in a very tight formation. It was like standing in the subway rush hour. The barges on the shore and in the Channel were so numerous it looked like there was no room for another craft."

1st Lt William E Byeru; "You could tell there was a lot of fighting going on below. Flashes of our naval gunfire slashed through the air, I could see fire of artillery battles going on between our beachhead forces and the German defences."

For ground personnel invasion month was a steady ordeal of long hours and intense effort. Armament and Ordnance had the burden of loading bombs and ammo often with only a few hours allowed for loading and sometimes the specification was changed at short notice. Engineering work was eased by comparatively small amount of battle damage suffered by the planes. Almost all ground members were called on for extra

effort. Mess personnel had to be prepared to serve meals at any hour of the day or night.

FROM 448TH RECORDS

Following is a list of targets and dates for the missions flown by the group during the month of June:

June 2	Beauvoir, France	June 17	Le Mans, France
3	Stella Plage, France	18	Fassberg, France
4	Sangatte, France		Watten, France
5	Sangatte, France	19	Haute Cote, France
6	Pointe et Raz, France	20	Politz, Germany
	Caen, France		Siracourt, France
	Coutances, France	21	Marienfeldt, Germany
	Coutances, France		Siracourt, France
7	Alencon, France	22	Guyan Court, France 100 th
10	Evreux, France	24	Melun, France
12	Concles, France		Haute Cote, France
	Porcaro, France	25	Britigny, France
14	Orleans Bricy, France	27	Criol, France
15	Cinq Mars, France	28	Saarbrucken, Germany
16	Renescure, France	29	Bernburg, Germany

Losses of personnel in operations were severe in actual number of crews which became Missing in Action, a total of 15 crews failed to return. (A normal crew numbered 10 men). June 22nd 1944 was the 100th mission flown by the 448th Bomb Group since their first on December 22nd 1943.