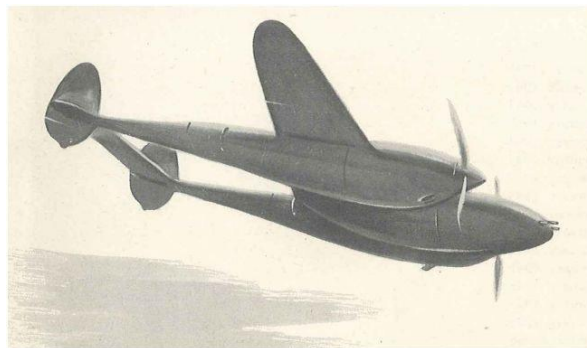




## 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group newsletter – Issue # 11 - July 2015

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Dear Friends and 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group members,

We saw in a previous newsletter that the 367<sup>th</sup> FG was stationed in different airfields in California before being sent to the European theater of operation. In this new issue we will try to have an idea of how were the two English airfields from which the outfit did its first missions, helped to prepare and support the invasion of France and helped the allied troops to go further into the French soil.

I try to find for each issue an article not especially related to a direct aspect of a mission but of course linked to the 367<sup>th</sup> FG. This time we will discover the amazing story of a flying helmet !

The pilot I talk about in the « Honoring the pilots » article is Lt. George White. This article can be linked to the article « Dogfight of June 17, 1944 » in NL # 6.

I have added one page at the end of this issue to bring some information on the article dealing with the big dogfight of August 25, 1944 (see NL 9 and 10).

If you have any information, pictures or documentation about the 367<sup>th</sup> FG do not hesitate to share with all of us.

I wish you a good reading and a good summer.

Olivier Le Floch

### Stoney Cross and Ibsley airfields

We saw in newsletter # 1 that the 367<sup>th</sup> FG final step of the trip from California to Europe was its airfield in Stoney Cross in the south of Great Britain. It was situated 15 miles west of Southampton and 17 miles south of Salisbury in the New Forest area in the Hampshire. Stoney Cross was built by the British Army and opened in November 1942. It was used first by the Royal Air Force (RAF) until the arrival of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG on April 5, 1944.

It was called station 452 by the USAAF and was first assigned to the 100<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. A short time later it was reassigned to the 70<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing on April 15, 1944.

Like a lot of airfields in UK, it had 3 runways. The main runway was aligned 07/25 (70 degrees and 250 degrees) and was 6000 feet long and 150 feet large. The 2 secondary runways were respectively aligned 01/19 and 15/33 and were about 4100 feet long for the first one and 4500 feet long for the second one. They were also 150 feet large. These runways were surrounded by 62 hardstands. As these hardstands were built close to the end of each runway, the P-38 Lightning of each squadron of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG were scattered on their own area of the airfield.



*Lt. Wilbur "Weiss" Alderman, 392<sup>nd</sup> FS communication officer, before one of the 2 big hangar in Stoney Cross (Carolyn Cobb and Clyde Deavers)*





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*Stoney Cross airfield looking north on April 30, 1944 (copyright@iwm.org.uk)*



*A part of the same picture as above enlarged to show the aircrafts. These aircrafts are the P-38s of the 367th FG (copyright@iwm.org.uk)*





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*First pilots of the 393<sup>rd</sup> FS to receive the Air Medal after their first 10 missions. The picture was taken in front of one of the main hangar in Stoney Cross (Lillian Dillon/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*

According to Roger Freeman in his book "UK Airfields of the Ninth: Then and Now" : "this airfield was the most distinctive of all wartime three runways airfields in Britain, the spur shape being dictated by the narrow rises on which it was built".

As the airfield was built in a wooden area, the living quarters and accommodations for the men were dispatched into nice places. Thanks to some letters or diaries written by men of the outfit, we can have an idea of the feeling they had when they arrived in Stoney Cross after a very long and boring trip.

Capt. Jack Reed, Flight Leader of 393<sup>rd</sup> FS and next Operation officer of the squadron, Group Operations officer and 393<sup>rd</sup> FS Squadron Commander at the end of the war wrote the followings comments in his diary. On April 4, 1944, we wrote: "We docked at Greenock yesterday and boarded the train at 16:30. Rode all nite and arrived at Stoney Cross about 18:00 tonite. I must say it's quite a place. Much better than we expected. We have a large well equipped field and good barracks. Each flight has a separate barrack. I have mine all

together".

On April 6 we wrote: "We are gradually getting organized. Have an excellent field to operate from. It was originally a glider field and has plenty of runway. Over 7000 feet for the long one. The dispersal areas are strung out for miles with 38s in every nook and corner. We have 85 assigned to the Group with 25 to each of the squadrons and we will use 4 ships per flight making a total of 16 per squadron on Ops. We are in the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force and will do ground support and dive bombing and strafing".

Lt. Ed Whigham, the Group radar officer wrote in his wartime service memories: "We arrived at Stoney Cross in the middle of the night and the next morning found a large airbase, temporarily operated by the Royal Air Force that was covered with brand new silver P-38 Lightnings. And we had our first breakfast of powdered eggs, powdered milk and bread that tasted almost like straw.



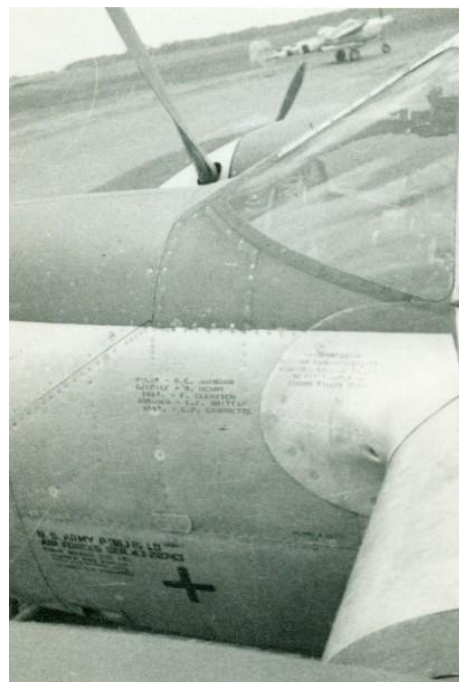


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Aerial photograph of the east end of Stoney Cross airfield looking north, the control tower, airfield code and technical site are to the right (copyright @iwm.org.uk)

Because of cultural differences between RAF and US personnel, there were occasional irritations and differences but those were transitory and minor. The RAF was in the war long before we came on the scene and their effective and courageous performance won the admiration of their nation and the world. When American Air Forces came to European Theater of Operations they learned much from the RAF and quickly came to admire their technical and fighting ability. But Britain had limited ability to provide the aircraft, pilots and other requirement for the air war against Germany and by 1944 the American Air Forces was moving toward the larger role. But the RAF was always there admirably modest in its claims and effective in action. More than the British army or Navy the RAF spoke a language that Americans understood.../...The village of Stoney Cross, the location of our air base, was only a few miles outside Southampton, one of Britain's major ports and a frequent target of German night raids.



Above, Lt. Ray Jackson, 392nd FS, ready for a new mission in Stoney Cross . On the right, his P-38 at the same place (Carolyn and Joe Cobb via Clyde Deavers/Archives 367th FG)





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*Stoney Cross seemed to be in the general area where the German bombers turned either east toward London or southwest to Southampton. Thus we had frequent air raid alerts. They almost never did damage to us but created confusion and disruption for local citizens. When serving as Officer of the Day, one had to make a nightly inspection of the guard posts scattered around our very large base. I can still remember those nightly inspections during an air raid amidst the glare of powerful searchlights and the loud, violent firing of the anti-aircraft. There was more danger from shell fragments of the ack-ack than from the enemy bombs”.*

In his first letter written from England to his family dated April 6, 1944, Lt. Eugene Fleming, 392<sup>nd</sup> FS, wrote: *“England and Scotland are very pretty – lots of green trees + rolling hills but believe me it’s plenty cold here. I’ll be glad when our sleeping bags catch up with us so we can sleep warm. Our stoves are not sharp. We have pretty nice quarters otherwise though. We have to walk about ½ mile to our mess hall and showers. Our latrines and a place to shave is nearby though. It’s a pretty good distance to planes although they are not the ones we hoped to fly.../...We have changed our money to English money. It’s a pretty easy monetary system to catch to. Everything is rationed over here even to the soldiers. We each have our ration card to get things at the PX with. I don’t think we are going to have much to spend our money on over here”.*

Lt. Ted Parmenter, 392<sup>nd</sup> FS, wrote also to his parents on May 17, 1944. He also complains about the weather and especially the low temperatures. He also speaks briefly of his quarters: *“My living quarters are good and are very comfortable. I have a small stove in my room and usually manage to have a small fire going. My roommate has a radio so we usually have a little entertainment. There is an American forces network that brings us all the favorite radio programs like Bob Hope, etc”.*

He also complains about the difficulties he met while flying: *“All of England looks alike when you are flying over it. Everything is so small and cramped together that it all looks alike from the air. The towns are the same, can’t tell them apart. I got lost yesterday and had to call for a homing to get back to the field”.*



*Unknown ground crew of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS in Stoney Cross or Ibsley (Claus and Robert Grondwald /archive 367th FG)*



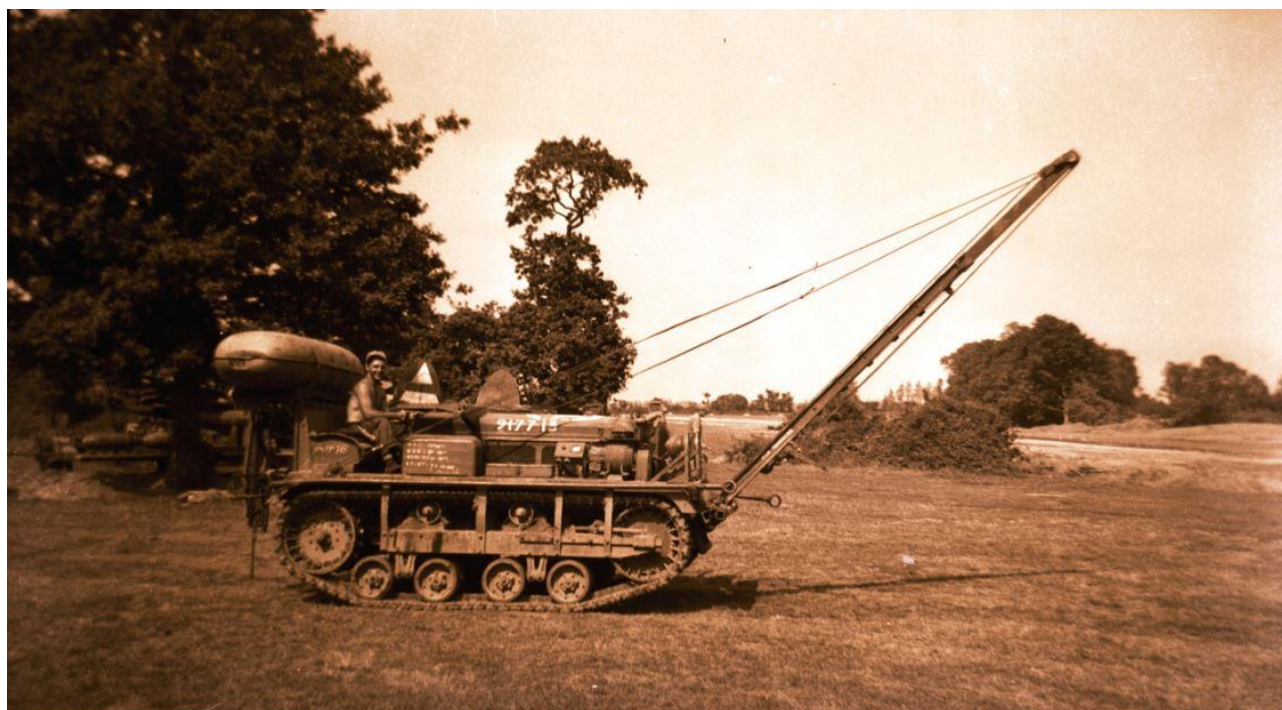


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Claus Grondwald, a crew chief of the 392nd FS, shared with me his most cherished memories of Stoney Cross.

They were sent to me by his son, Robert, and are as follow :

- 1) *The British maintained an artillery battery at the airfield manning “flak guns”. Every day at 4:00 the 30 or so contingent took an hour long break for tea and scones. For some reason the Germans never strafed the field during this time.*
- 2) *Every week or two weeks the Flight Surgeons gave each pilot a liter of whiskey. Since most of these pilots were still 19 or 20 they did not drink so they gave the whiskey (American or Canadian so the “e”) to their flight crews. Once a month each Flight would have a poker or black jack tournament and drink the whiskey straight as no ice was available.*
- 3) *The Germans were bombing Southampton pretty bad during this time. Dad remembers merely sitting outside his hut with the guys in the evenings watching the bombs go off not 15 miles away and thinking it was the 4th of July Fireworks back home.*
- 4) *It was at Stoney Cross that all the enlisted men in the FG had the bullets taken from them as they spent time off hunting deer, rabbit and fox to supplement the terrible English food. The airfield was considered “Royal Property” and thus the game belonged to the King.....*
- 5) *Claus added that they still being served horse meat which they (American soldiers) all detested. Claus also said that the first time the men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG ate horse meat, they were in the ship Duchess of Bedford during the crossing of the Atlantic.*
- 6) *On their first Liberty in Southampton they had more money than they could spend. They went from Pub to Pub buying up ALL the owners’ meager allotment of alcohol. The Brits did not mind much as the Americans avoided the warm beer, ale and stout leaving it for the locals.*
- 7) *They made the enlisted men stand guard duty at night. My Dad remembers one night when the bombing seemed pretty bad just North in Southampton. On cold mornings the crews put these big heater boxes under the engines to warm up the fluids. He dragged one of those boxes out to the guard station and crawled into in with a flash light to read a book. He swears a buzz bomb dropped not a mile from him that evening.*
- 8) *The Cletrac was very much a novelty for the flight crews. There was one specialist in the Squadron that was responsible for the pair of them, and he trained all the crew members on the operation of the vehicle. You actually*



Claus Grondwald, crew chief of the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS, conducting a Cletrac in Stoney Cross or Ibsley (Claus and Robert Grondwald /archive 367th FG)





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had to be recertified every six months, since their primary duty was to tow planes out of the hangers. Dad said when they had free time the mechanics would take turns just tearing through fields and pretending they were driving a tank. They enjoyed rocking them back in forth in a type of serpentine "zig / zag" driving pattern around large rocks and such. The secondary duty as mentioned in the research was to carry auxiliary fuel tanks for longer missions.

I have been corresponding for some years with Henry Cole, a volunteer Ranger of the Forestry Commission. He helps the public to discover the role of the five airfields of the New Forest area. He organizes tours in Stoney Cross and takes the visitors to the main key points of the airfield. He uses some pictures of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG to illustrate the visits.



Volunteer Ranger, Henry Cole, uses pictures of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG to illustrate the tour in Stoney Cross (Henry Cole)



Henry Cole and the public during a tour in Stoney Cross (Henry Cole)

Henry also sent me the following picture and drawing. This drawing is displayed in Stoney Cross and was inaugurated in January 2010. It shows the airfield on D-Day with the P-38 of the Lt. Owen Fincher "Arkansas traveler" coming back from a mission. The stormy weather did not discourage the unveiling of this drawing.



From left to right are Jim Mitchell (New Forest national park), John Levesley (FONFA, Friends Of New Forest Airfields ) and Alan Brown (author of lots of aviation books and ex paratrooper), (Henry Cole)



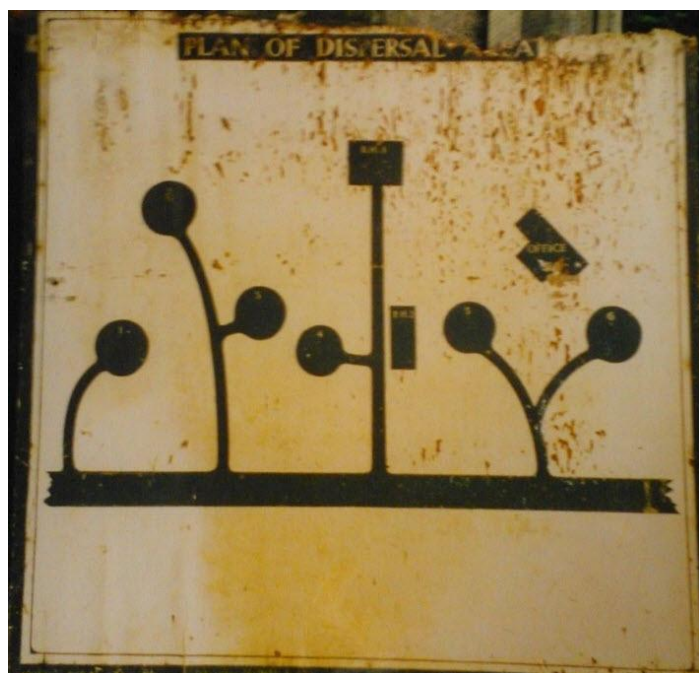
Stoney Cross in the 1940s

The panel is displayed in Stoney Cross where is the black cross on the drawing (Henry Cole)





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*The 3 photos are a part of the dispersal plan of the field in Stoney Cross . These plans were boards placed near the control tower showing where the various aircraft were to park. They were recently found lining a garden shed nearby (Henry Cole)*

After a few weeks of training from mid-April to the beginning of May 1944, the pilots started to master their twin-engine P-38. During the first months in the European Theater of Operation (ETO), the 367<sup>th</sup> FG flew more maximum effort mission than during the support mission they flew while the US troops were fighting in France or Germany. It was certainly a very amazing sight when 48 P-38s were taxiing and taking off and 96 engines roaring from the flight line to the runway !

After 3 month in Stoney Cross the outfit was busy packing their equipment before the move to the nearby station 347 in Ibsley on July 6 and 7. The P-38s were replaced by a medium bomber outfit equipped with B-26s which needed to be closer of the front line and improve their range. Stoney Cross and Ibsley were only separated by several miles. The first aircrafts of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG landed at Ibsley on July 6. The first squadrons to move were the 393<sup>rd</sup> and 394<sup>th</sup>. This move did not stop the missions, as the P-38s took off from Stoney Cross, attacked their assigned targets and landed in Ibsley. The first mission from this new airfield was flown a short time later as an urgent mission was assigned to the 393<sup>rd</sup> and 394<sup>th</sup> FS on the afternoon of the 6. On their side the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS pilots' took off from Stoney Cross for a bomber escort on July 7 and landed on the new field upon their return.

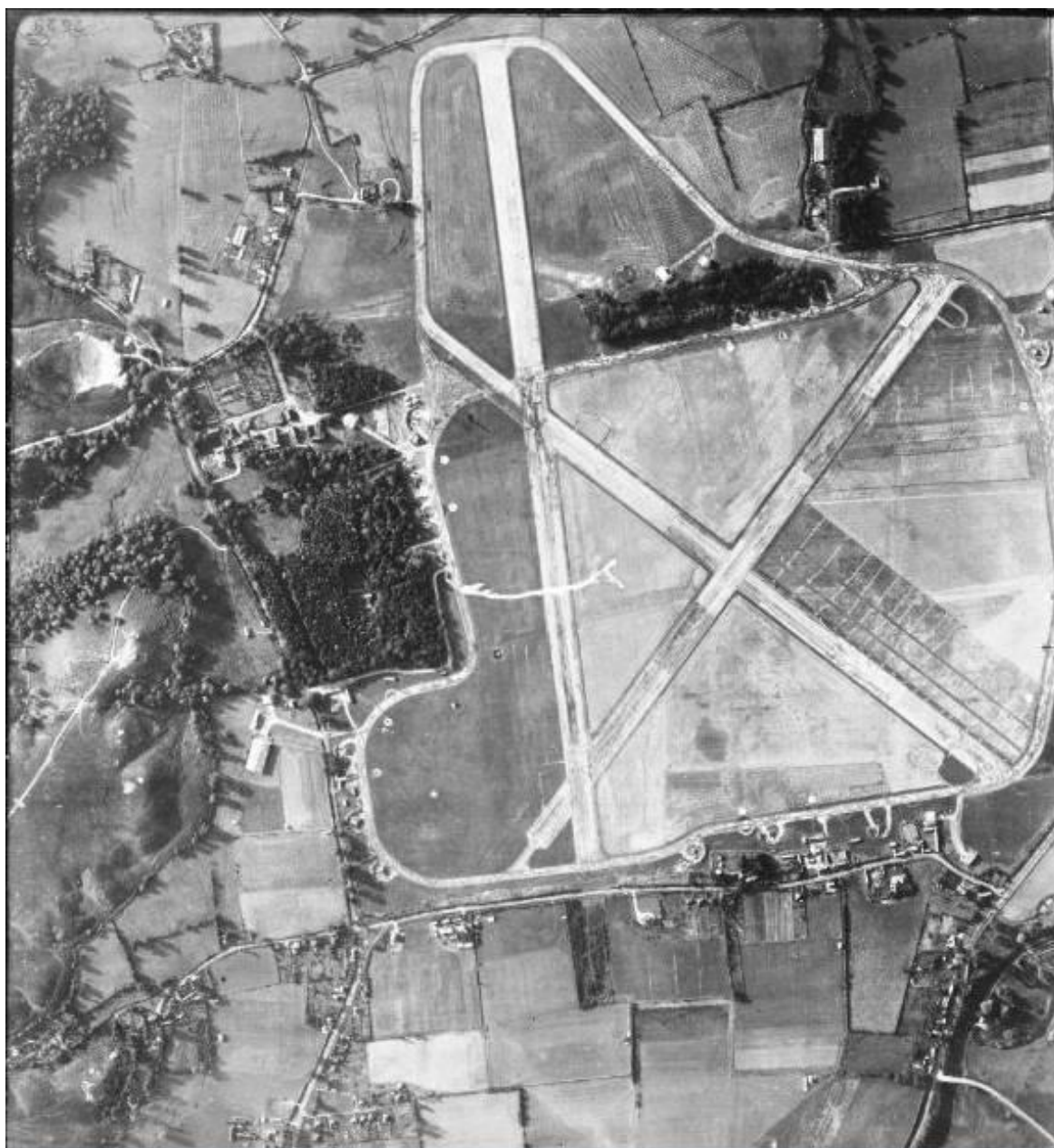




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As most of the airfields built in UK during WWII, Ibsley had 3 runways. According to Robert Freeman in his book "UK Airfields of the Ninth: Then and Now", the three runways were aligned 01-19 (north/south), 14-32 (north west/south-east) and 05-23 (south-west/north-east) and were respectively 4800 feet, 4200 feet and 4050 feet long.

The outfit stayed only 3 weeks in this airfield and less comments were found in the squadrons histories. Nevertheless the following statement was written in the monthly report of the 394<sup>th</sup> FS for July 1944: "*On the night of the fifth, our organizational vehicules loaded with equipment started the ten miles shuttle to Ibsley.../... the difference between SX and Ibsley was merely the difference between winter and summer. Stoney Cross, flat, treeless and sandy seemed foreign upon our arrival to the green valley in which our new station was situated*".



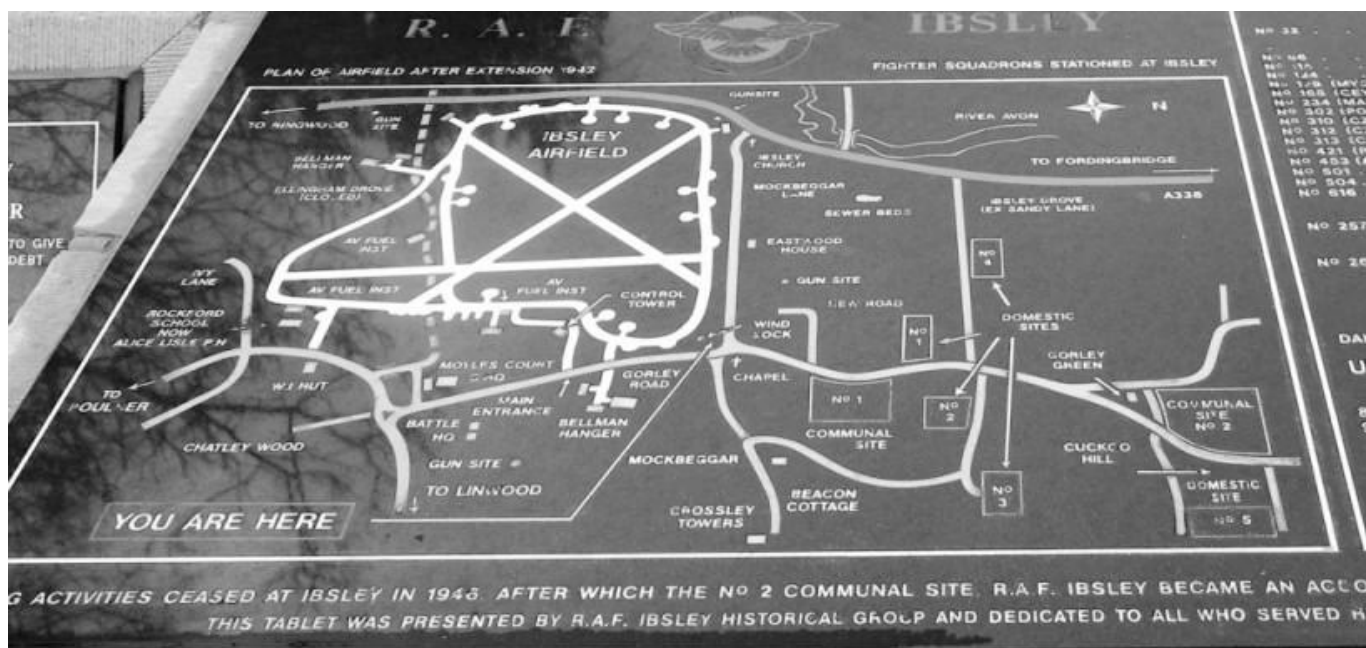
Ibsley airfield in September 1946 (copyright@iwm.org.uk)





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As in Stoney Cross, the enlisted men lived in Nissen huts. The officers of the 394<sup>th</sup> FS were billeted in a large house called the “Cuckoo Hill”. According to Henry Cole, this house was built in 1910 by an artist and designer called Heywood Sumner. He was a prominent artist in the 'art deco' period. When he died at the age of 86 in 1940 his house was taken over by the military to accommodate officers from RAF Ibsley. Unfortunately I don't know where the officers of the 2 other squadrons were billeted.



Map of the airfield in Ibsley (Henry Cole)



A cottage close to Ibsley (Carolyn Cobb via Clyde Deavers/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)





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Men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG playing volley ball in Ibsley (Carolyn Cobb via Clyde Deavers/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)



Nissen hut used by the men of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG at Ibsley (Carolyn Cobb via Clyde Deavers/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)



Cap. Grover Gardner and the pilots of the 394<sup>th</sup> FS in front of Cuckoo Hill in Ibsley (archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)





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### HONORING THE PILOTS – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. George S. White, 393<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron

The very little village of Dampierre-sur-Avre, 60 miles west of Paris, saw a special event on the evening of Friday, September 26, 1995. That day a dedication in honor of Lt. George White had been organized by the French association Forced Landing. The president, Mr. Jean Pierre and the vice-president, Mr. Jean-Luc Gruson, had been corresponding with the 367<sup>th</sup> FG association for some time and with Mickey Connelly, the widow of Lt. White. So, on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 1995, the members of the Forced Landing association, the mayor, Mr Alain Bilbille and the citizen of Dampierre-sur-Avre welcomed Mickey and her family. The American Air Attaché did also the trip from Paris to attend this ceremony.

Lt. White had been killed during a dogfight on June 17, 1944. His P-38 crashed landed in a wood of the village. Mickey and her family were taken to the site during their visit in 1995

Jean Pierre and Jean-Luc Gruson attended a Reunion of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG in San Diego. They were the guests of Mickey.



*Unveiling of the plaque in honor of Lt. George S. White in Dampierre-sur-Avre. The plaque on the right is a plaque in honor of Lt Edward Blevins of the 358<sup>th</sup> FG. The plaque in honor of Lt. White is hidden by the little tree. (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Mickey Connelly during the unveiling of the plaque in honor of her first husband, Lt. George S. White. On her right is the American Air Attaché and on her left is Mr. Bilbille, the mayor of Dampierre-sur-Avre (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Plaque in memory of Lt. George S. White in Dampierre-sur-Avre (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*





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*Mickey Connelly receiving the American flag from the American Air Attaché (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*The American Air Attaché laying a bouquet in front of the 2 plaques honoring 2 pilots of the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force who crash landed in the same area (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*



*Mickey Connelly surrounded with her family as well as the Air attaché while the mayor reads his speech. (Jean-Luc Gruson/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*





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### Addendum to articles on the dogfight of August 25, 1944 (see NL # 9 and 10)

After reading the NL # 10, my friend Eddie L. Rosier recalled me that I had forgotten to speak about Lt. Helmut Göring. According to Fritz Buchholz, Lt. Göring was the first pilot shot down during the dogfight, so he was shot down by a pilot of the 394<sup>th</sup> FG. The most amazing thing is that this pilot was the nephew of Feldmarschall Hermann Göring, the commander of the Luftwaffe and high ranking leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich !



Recent issue of a French aviation magazine. The cover page is showing a P-38 of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG chasing a German FW-190 on August 25, 1944



The cover page of the book written by the late Jean Hallade is also showing a P-38 of the 367<sup>th</sup> FG chasing a German FW-190 on August 25, 1944





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### A VERY SPECIAL FLYING HELMET

I started my research on the 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group in 1998 after I discovered that the American pilot who perished in the crash of his P-38 in my hometown was from the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS (see article on Lt. Eugene Fleming in “honoring the pilots” in newsletter # 10). I soon got in touch with Vern Truemper and Jack Curtis who sent my email to Clyde Deavers. Clyde was a flight mate and a close friend of Gene Fleming and was also shot down during the same mission in the Loire Valley, France, on July 31, 1944. Clyde sent me a CD containing many pictures taken by his friend, Lt. Ray Jackson. These 3 pilots were among the original pilots of the ‘A’ flight. The other ones were Lts. Hugh Hallman, Henry Gillespie, Jimmy Paschall, Robert Moorhead, Ken Markley. The flight leader was Cap. Robert “Buck” Rogers. The pictures were taken during the months of training in California in autumn 1943 and winter 1943/44 as well as in UK and France. Clyde is on some of the pictures and we will see that one picture will be related to the following amazing story.

Some years ago I received a call from a friend, Guillaume, who had helped to prepare the exhibit in honor of Gene Fleming in 2004 (see newsletter # 10). He and his father are fond of WWII stuff. They collect USAAF clothes and material. Guillaume told me at the phone that Timothée, a friend collector, had just received a flying helmet he had ordered in the USA and that I should have close look on the pictures of this helmet he had just emailed me.

When I discovered the pictures I saw that “Deavers” was written on the flying helmet. We both agreed that we should have a close look at the pictures taken by Ray Jackson.



*The picture of Lt. Clyde Deavers flying helmet as I received it by email (archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*





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On one of the picture taken in California, either in Sacramento or Santa Rosa, Clyde is front of a P-39 with Gene Fleming and Ray Jackson. If one enlarges the picture on Clyde's helmet, one can see a horizontal clear band of fabric and a vertical stripe as if Clyde tried to enlarge a too narrow helmet. The flying helmet found by this young French collector and the flying helmet on the head of Clyde was the same !

I asked to the collector if we would let me buy this helmet from him. He agreed and so I have now in my home the flying helmet of Clyde.

How this flying helmet was in the hand of a person or shop selling WWII articles and clothes, I will certainly never know.



*When the picture is enlarged, one can see the fabric used to enlarge the flying helmet just above Clyde's fore head*

*Lts. Ray Jackson, Clyde Deavers and Eugene Fleming during their training on the P-39 after they where assigned to the 392<sup>nd</sup> FS in California. The size of the picture being reduced, we cannot see the helmet very well (Carolyn Cobb via Clyde Deavers/archives 367<sup>th</sup> FG)*





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### **367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group missions list – December 1944**

#### **1 December 44**

Group: bomber area patrol mission for 8 groups of B-26s, Lt. Slingerland leading 33 P-38s to Saarlouis. Target area was patrolled from 10H50 to 11H 05, one B-26 was seen to explode north of Saarlouis.

Group: fighter sweep mission to the Aachen – Coln area, Lt. Brooks leading 29 P-38s. Mission uneventful.

#### **2 December 44**

392<sup>nd</sup> FS: dive bombing mission, Lt. Paschall leading 16 P-38s. Target was a marshalling yard east of Düren. 16 direct hits were made on 3 trains of 20 plus cars and 1 train of 40 plus, destroying one engine, numerous cars and cutting tracks in several places. 2 direct hits were made on buildings in the yard. 5 miles SW of Neuss another marshalling yard was struck by 8 direct hits which destroyed 2 locomotives and split tracks in many places.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : armed reconnaissance mission , Maj. Matheson leading 9 P-38s to Düren. 7 miles N of Euskirchen, 10 bombs were dropped on a marshalling yard destroying 2 locomotives, 30 plus box cars, cutting rail lines and setting warehouse afire.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bombing mission, Lt. Beck leading 11 P-38s. Squadron attacked a train in a marshalling yard at Kall. 6 direct and 7 near hits destroyed 10 cars. The locomotive was strafed. At Kall near hits on group of 10 to 15 barges tied to the shore. They were also strafed.

#### **3 December 44**

No mission

#### **4 December 44**

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : area patrol mission, Lt. Brydges leading 16 P-38s. Elsaffthal and Oldenkirchen were the target area and they were patrolled from 13H42 to 15H12. Mission uneventful.

Group : fighter sweep-area patrol mission, Lt. Owen leading 33 P-38s. Once in the target area the controller sent the 393<sup>rd</sup> FS to investigate unidentified flight of aircraft SW of Bonn. They were identified as P-47s. The controller sent the 394<sup>th</sup> FS to intercept aircraft which were also identified as P-47s.

#### **5 December 44**

394<sup>th</sup> FS : blind bombing mission, Lt. Lewis leading 12 P-38s and one droop snoot to Euskirchen. Over Malmedy the droop snoot aborted to radio trouble. Marmite 2, the controller, vectored the squadron to the target where the bombs were released on his count through the overcast at 8000 feet.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : blind bombing mission, Lt. Dillon leading 16 P-38s and one droop snoot to Euskirchen. The bombing was also done with the aid of Marmite who vectored the squadron to the target. Bombs were released from 15000 feet.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : blind bombing mission, Lt. Grosse leading 12 P-38s. Marmite 2 vectored the squadron over Euskirchen and the bombs were released. Both engines of Lt. Olsen's P-38 cut out and his aircraft entered in the clouds. Both pilots and plane were never found.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : blind bombing mission, Lt. Owen leading 11 P-38s. Bombs were released at 15000 feet in the western outskirts of Euskirschen at the count of Marmite.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : blind bombing mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 15 P-38s. Bombs were released at 15000 feet on Euskirschen after being vectored to the target by Marmite 2.

#### **6 December 44**

Group: dive bombing mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 33 P-38s to Bonn. The 392<sup>nd</sup> dropped its bombs on a bridge at





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Nettersheim. The 393<sup>rd</sup> FS dropped its bombs on a bridge at Brück. The 394<sup>th</sup> FS released 10 bombs on a rail road bridge at Kreuzberg and due to bad weather released 10 bombs on secondary bridges at Dümpelfeld.

### **7 December 44**

No mission.

### **8 December 44**

Group: dive bombing mission, Cap. Pieper leading 40 P-38s in the area of Dusseldorf. 392<sup>nd</sup> dropped 22 bombs on a factory of 12 to 15 buildings at Gross-Vernich with at least 6 direct hits. 5 bombs were dropped on the small village of Odendorf destroying 2 plus houses and 2 trucks along the highway. At Brühl a column of 20 plus trucks was strafed, destroying 10 and damaging 4. The 393<sup>rd</sup> FS dropped 8 bombs on the marshalling yard and town of Elsdorf. A large factory was probably destroyed. On bedburg, 6 bombs dropped destroyed 6 buildings, 1 of them a factory. At the town of Bergheim, 6 bombs cut the road and left 6 buildings in flames. The 394<sup>th</sup> FS released 8 bombs at Dernau, 6 direct hits and 2 near hits destroyed a bridge and building. At 2 miles E of Kreuzberg, 8 bombs dropped and 4 direct hits and 4 near hits destroyed a power house and dam. A small supply dump was destroyed by 8 bombs at Lochmühle. Rail road track was cut at 1 mile of Brück by 8 bombs. 1 mile of Nonnenbach, 20 plus trucks were strafed, destroying 5 and probably destroying 5 more.

### **9 December 44**

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : bomber cover mission, Lt. Fincher leading 16 P-38s. Uneventful cover of 6 groups of B-26s in the vicinity of Saarbrücken.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : bomber cover mission, Lt. Greene leading 12 P-38s south of Oberstein. The squadron was unable to contact the bombers on the fighter bomber channel.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : bomber cover mission, Lt. Tjomsland leading 12 P-38s. The target area of Trier was reached 20 minutes late. An uneventful patrol was made of bomber route and 1 group of B-26s observed on way out of target area.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : bombing mission, Lt. Pinkerton leading 11 P-38s. The squadron was vectored over the target by “marmite # 2” and all bombs were dropped from level flight at 15 000 feet. After the bombing the squadron went on a fighter sweep to Oederkirchen and shortly afterward, the controller asked for a weather check. When controller was informed that clouds were building up E of target, he ordered the squadron home.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : bombing mission, Lt. Dillon leading 12 P-38s. The bombs were released under the control of “Marmite” on the town of Zulpich. No result could be observed as there was a solid overcast at 8 000 feet. Because of unfavorable weather conditions, squadron returned to base at completion of bomb run.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : bombing mission, Lt. C.J. Croker leading 12 P-38s. The squadron was vectored over the target in the area of Zulpich by “Disco # 1” and bombs were released from 15 000 feet. Results unobserved, weather at target had an overcast up to 6 000 feet.

### **10 December 44**

394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Maj. Matheson leading 11 P-38s. The target were gun emplacements and troop concentrations at Lendersborf. The weather steadily grew increasingly bad, the squadron leader recalled the flight.

### **11 December 44**

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 12 P-38s. Bombs were all released at a bridge at Mönchengladbach but no direct hits were made and it is believed that no damaged was rendered. However, 4 hits were made on road approach 30 yards from the east side of the bridge, cutting the road, and 2 direct hits were made on the west approach 15 yards of the bridge, cutting it. Lt. Hunter bellied his aircraft in a field after he jettisoned his bombs when one of his engines failed on take off.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bombing mission, Lt. Greene leading 11 P-38s. All the bombs were dropped on a bridge at Nideggen. The bridge is still standing, but is believed damaged beyond repair.





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394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. C.J. Croker leading 12 P-38s. 1 bridge was obscured by an overcast and 15 bombs were jettisoned armed by Yellow and Blue flights 3 miles N of Euskirchen. Red flight found a hole and bombed a bridge at Nideggen. 2 direct hits were scored on center of road bridge and 2 near hits. A lot of debris was observed and the bridge was probably destroyed. 2 direct hits and 1 near hit were observed on SE end of rail road bridge at Nideggen. 1 direct hit and 1 near hit were scored on road 1 mile W of Nideggen.

### 12 December 44

No mission.

### 13 December 44

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : level bombing mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 12 P-38s. The squadron was vectored over the target by "marmite # 2", all bombs were released from 10 000 feet in the immediate target area. It was believed to have been near Euskirchen. No result could be observed because of the overcast.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : level bombing mission, Lt. Pinkerton leading 10 P-38s. The bombs were released from 10 000 feet. The target area was reached with the aid of "marmite # 1" who vectored the squadron over the target, results unobserved due to overcast.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : level bombing mission, Lt. Leymley leading 12 P-38s. Target area of Nideggen was reached and "marmite # 1" vectored the squadron over the target (about 5 miles SE of Duren) and bombs were released from 10 000 feet. Results were unobserved due to the target area obscured by an overcast.

### 14 December 44

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Barnes leading 12 P-38s. Bombs were released on bridge at Nideggen. The controller had target marked due to the fact that friendly troops were within 1000 yards of target. 2 direct hits were made on west approach of bridge and 2 hits on east approach, the rest being near hits.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Col. Chickering leading 12 P-38s. The target was a bridge at Nideggen. The bombs were dropped from 3 000 feet. The bridge was also strafed. Although no direct hits were made on the bridge, both approaches to the bridge were cut.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Dillon leading 12 P-38s. 1 direct hit as observed on the extreme east end of the bridge at Nideggen. At least 3 direct hits were observed on the immediate western end of the bridge but due to dust and smoke from the explosions the extent of damaged could not be assessed. The remainder of the bombs were dropped in the vicinity of the bridge but hits and results being undetermined due to smoke and dust resulting from previous hits and poor visibility.

### 15 December 44

394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Croker leading 11 P-38s. "Marmite # 1" vectored the squadron to the target area of Rheinbach where the target was dive bombed. 22 bombs were released on 2 trains of 30 plus cars each, steamed up, heading E in marshalling yard. 4 were possibly direct hits and the rest were near hits. The Yard was also strafed, but due to intense flak and haze, results could not be determined of either the bombing or the strafing. 2 miles north of Euskirchen, 10 freight cars heading S were strafed by 1 flight but no result were observed.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 12 P-38s. The primary target was Bruck but due to 10/10 overcast in the area, at the direction of "marmite", targets were attacked in the vicinity of Durkin. 6 direct hits and 4 near hits were made in a marshalling yard at 6 miles N of Euskirchen. About 100 plus freight cars observed in this area, 16 were destroyed and 2 tracks severed. N of Durkin on a large factory in operation, 8 direct hits and 3 misses were made, extent of damaged unobserved. 2 direct hits cut a double track rail road at 1 mile N of Euskirchen, 1 direct hit on double track also split tracks.





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393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Grosse leading 10 P-38s. The squadron was vectored to a factory 6 miles SW of Köln and 6 direct hits left factory in flames. A marshalling yard between Köln and Hürth was bombed with 14 bombs which destroyed 10 cars, damaged 5, and cut track in 2 places.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Maj. Matheson leading 11 P-38s. Since the primary target was obscured, “marmite” directed the squadron to Grevenbroich. 8 bombs dropped on 2 small sidings on western outskirts of town. 1 contained 1 locomotive with 10 cars and about 30 idle cars. Result to the locomotive were not observed but tracks were cut and cars damaged. 11 bombs were dropped on sidings on eastern side of town. A locomotive and 10 cars were strafed 6 miles SW of Düsseldorf, locomotive damaged and scattered hits made on cars.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Oldham leading 12 P-38s. As the primary target at Brück was obscured by an overcast they were assigned to “Disco #1” for a blind bombing mission. Bombs were dropped from 15 000 feet under his direction, no result seen because of weather.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Mason leading 12 P-38s. Bridge at Brück could not be attacked due to overcast. “marmite” vectored squadron N from target area and dropped bombs from his count from 10 000 feet. Target was believed to have been Buir. Buzzer effect noted in radio reception believed to be jamming.

### **16 December 44**

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Dillon leading 12 P-38s. The target was a bridge at Bruck. 16 bombs were dropped in the immediate target area but no direct hits were observed due to dust and smoke arising from first bomb dropped. Visibility was also poor but 1 bomb was seen to destroy rail road tracks on the approach to the bridge. At Kalenborn, 4 bombs dropped on rail road bridge, results undetermined. A bomb dropped along approach to bridge and among buildings, 1 hitting a warehouse which exploded resulting in a large volume of black smoke.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Pinkerton leading 12 P-38s. Target area was Bruck, but because of a solid overcast “Disco #2” vectored the squadron over another target and bombs were released from 10 000 feet. 2 pilots lost squadron in the thick overcast and returned to base.

Group: bomb escort mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 34 P-38s. Rendezvous was made with RAF Lancasters and they were escorted to target area at Seigen. Result of the bombing appeared to be excellent. On the withdrawal at 19 000 feet 16 Me-109s jumped the 394<sup>th</sup> and 10 FW-190s attacked the 393<sup>rd</sup>. Lt Hallett of the 394<sup>th</sup> chased a Me-109 and after making several passes at it, stubbornly clung to his tail. The enemy aircraft began to take violent evasive action. In an effort to dislodge Lt. Hallett and finally dove into the ground. Lt Barnes of the 393<sup>rd</sup> broke into the enemy who were attacking from 7 o'clock at 21 000 feet and destroyed 1 FW-190. Cap. Mason damaged 1 FW-190. 6 to 8 FW-190 dove thru the bomber formation and disappeared into the overcast without making an attack. The 392<sup>nd</sup> turned to assist but upon discovering a small number of enemy aircraft which were already being engaged, they deduced that they were decoys and turned immediately to the bombers to give them protection.

### **17 December 44**

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Grosse leading 10 P-38s. When the target area was reached the squadron leader called “Search light” and was directed to Trier and a marshalling yard at Konz. 8 bombs were dropped on 2 detached locomotives and 10 cars. Grayish smoke was emitted from the marshalling yard but no result of the bombs were observed. 6 bombs were dropped on a loading platform and a barge in the process of being loaded between Konz and Trier. The loading platform was destroyed and the barge was strafed and damaged. 4 bombs were dropped at Konz causing large fires with much thick, heavy, black smoke.

394<sup>th</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Cely leading 12 P-38s. The target was a bridge at Bollendorf. They were unable to locate the bridge or contact “Hoptide”. When “Hoptide” was contacted, bandits were reported in the area so all bombs except one were jettisoned (armed) in the vicinity of Klausen. No result observed. 4 Me-109 made a pass on the last 2 flights of the squadron. The pass was made from above so the last 2 flight turned into the attack. 1 Me-109 split S'd and the other 3 climbed into the overcast. The Me-109 which split s'ed was damaged before it could flee.





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392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Slingerland leading 12 P-38s. The target was a pontoon bridge at Bollerdorf. The squadron reached Bollerdorf flying at 11 000 feet when they observed 13 enemy aircraft circling at 21 000 feet. The aircraft appeared to be 9 Me-109s and 4 FW-190s. The squadron went in the luftberry climbing in an attempt to gain altitude on the enemy. Then when our squadron had reached 18 000 feet 4 FW-190S made a pass at our number 3 flight. In the ensuing encounter 1 FW-190 was destroyed and 1 FW-190 probable. The squadron was reformed and vectored to a large convoy of motor transport vehicles by "Planter". At Saint Vith (Belgium) a convoy of 75 plus trucks and approximately 50 tanks were dispersed along the road and hedge-rows. The convoy was headed west. One strafing pass was made on the column and 4 trucks were destroyed. Due to intensity of flak no more passes were made.

### 18 December 44

394<sup>th</sup> FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. C.J. Croker leading 12 P-38s. The scheduled target was Speichen. After flying 10 minutes on course the squadron aborted due to weather. All bombs were returned to base.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Dye leading 12 P-38s. The target was Trier-Koln area. In Euskirchen 12 trucks were sighted. 6 bombs were dropped destroying 6 trucks and 5 more trucks were destroyed by strafing. Also at this point 2 light flak gun positions were destroyed by strafing. At Euskirchen 20 trucks were camouflaged in the parking area. 8 bombs were dropped destroying 15 of the trucks. At 6 miles SE of Düren a train was observed parked on the track. 4 bombs were dropped and this resulted in cutting the tracks and destroying 3 plus cars. There was no locomotive on the train. 4 bombs were dropped on a factory at Grevenbroich but no result were observed. 1 light flak gun position was destroyed by strafing at 3 miles NW of Euskirchen.

394<sup>th</sup> FS armed reconnaissance mission with Lt. Orrock leading 12 p-38s. The target area was area between Aachen and Speichen. After passing Aachen the squadron contacted "Marmite" who vectored the squadron NE of Aachen. "Marmite" had no targets except those which were already claimed destroyed by the 392<sup>nd</sup> squadron of this group and those which were closed in by overcast. Boggies were then called in by "Marmite" in the Aachen area. These were investigated and found to be friendly P-47 aircraft. Having no definite targets the squadron proceeded to take targets of opportunity the location of which do not be definitely established. 4 bombs were dropped on an unidentified railroad track. The track was cut. 12 bombs were dropped on an unidentified town. No results were observed. 8 bombs were dropped on an unidentified cross road. No results were observed.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Good leading 11 P-38s. When the target area was reached weather prevented observation of the target and the controller was unable to assist the squadron because of the numerous units working in the area. Finally "Marmite" vectored the squadron to a hole in the overcast where they observed a large reservoir in the vicinity of Schleiden. Darkness prevented attack but artillery flashes were noted in the wooded area in the same location. 2 bombs were jettisoned (armed) SE of the reservoir. No result observed. The remainder of the bombs were returned to base.

### 19 to 22 December 44

No mission

### 23 December 44

393<sup>rd</sup> FS bomber escort mission with Lt. Good leading 11 p-38s. Rendezvous time was 0940 but bombers were 45 minutes ahead of schedule and went to the target area unescorted. When the 393<sup>rd</sup> reached the target area, the bombers reported that they were at the target and being attacked by enemy planes. The squadron headed for the area as soon as possible but the enemy had broken off the attack and disappeared. The 393<sup>rd</sup> took out the first box and met and escorted the second box of bomber in and back to the rendezvous point.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS bomber escort mission with Lt. Fincher leading 12 p-38s. The squadron escorted B-26s to Euskirchen. 24 plus Me-109s attacked the B-26s, diving from 17000 feet down sun to bombers which were at 14000 feet. The 392<sup>nd</sup> turned into the enemy fighters and engaged them. In the ensuing dog fight, 11 Me-109s were destroyed, 1 probably destroyed, and 5 were damaged. Cap. James F. Fishburn was shot down. He managed to bail out and finished the war as a prisoner.





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394<sup>th</sup> FS bomber escort mission with Lt. Col. Chickering leading 10 p-38s. The B-26s were rendezvoused with as briefed and were escorted to Ahrweiler. The escort was uneventful.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS area patrol mission with Lt. Blumer leading 12 p-38s. Patrol over the area of Zulpich was uneventful.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS bomber escort mission with Lt. Dillon leading 12 p-38s. No bomber was sighted in the assigned area of Zulpich. While circling the area, a dog fight was observed between 4 P-47s and 4 FW-190s at 15000 near Schleiden. 4 FW-190s were seen circling at 18000 feet above the fight. The squadron climbed up sun above the 4 FW-190s and dove to the attack. Result : 3 FW-190s destroyed, 1 FW-190 damaged.

394<sup>th</sup> FS area patrol mission with Cap. Pieper leading 11 p-38s. The squadron patrolled the target area and result of the B-26 bombing appeared to be good.

### 24 December 44

394<sup>th</sup> FS armed reconnaissance mission with LT OWEN leading 12 p-38s in the area of Trier. Upon entering the target area the squadron was attacked from 4 o'clock above by 2 flights of 12 each FW-190's. The 22 bombs were jettisoned, armed, with no result observed. Results of the dogfight were 8 FW-190's destroyed, 2 FW-190 probable and 9 FW-190s damaged. Two of our aircrafts are missing. Lt. Baxter was last seen circling at 5000 feet with smoke coming from gondola A parachute was seen to open shortly afterward 2 miles W of Trier. Lt. De France was last seen on the tail of a FW 190 in a steep dive, no further radio or visual contact was made.

Lt. Baxter was KIA and Lt. De France finished the war as a prisoner.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS glide bombing mission with Lt. Slingerland leading 10 p-38s in the area of Trier. Due to the altitude and the light haze in the area the exact result of the bombing could not be determined but 3 fires were started.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS armed reconnaissance mission with Lt. Ewans leading 12 p-38s. Squadron contacted "RispaW" and proceeded on mission to attack small marshalling yard at Heimbach with 4 near hits. 4 direct hits and 4 near hits on 15 to 20 rail road cars without locomotive at Rimsberg, 8 to 10 cars believed destroyed. 2 direct hits on 3 rail road cars that were protruding out of the end of a tunnel at Oberstein, destroying the cars and blocking the tunnel. 2 direct hits on other end of the same tunnel, cutting tracks and damaging the mouth. Pilots believed that the train was seeking cover in the tunnel. At Oberstein, 2 direct hits were made in the center of 25 to 30 rail road cars.

394<sup>th</sup> FS armed reconnaissance mission with Lt. Hux leading 12 p-38s in the area of Trier. 2 marshalling yards at Wittlich were bombed and strafed. Yards contained 200 plus cars and 1 locomotive. Results were 1 locomotive destroyed and tracks cut. A cluster of buildings on a side of the marshalling yard at were bombed and strafed, no fire observed.

392<sup>nd</sup> FS dive bomb mission with Lt. Oldham leading 10 p-38s in the area of Trier. 10 to 12 barges were bombed at Spay by 4 bombs, but the extent of damaged was not determined. Bombs were dropped on 12 to 14 barges at Kestert, result undetermined. A small marshalling yard at Spay was bombed with 5 bombs falling among 50 rail road cars that were scattered in the area.

393<sup>rd</sup> FS armed reconnaissance mission with Lt. Pinkerton leading 12 p-38s. Squadron contacted "RispaW" and were vectored supposedly to a tank concentration in a wooden area at Lübertal, but they were unable to sight a target. They then were vectored to a concentration of 40 plus rail cars without a locomotive 4 miles NW of Kaiserslautern. 7 direct hits scored and 10 were observed destroyed and 3 were left burning with a red flame and emitting black smoke. 6 near hits were made on a small marshalling yard at Wolfstein with 6 to 10 cars therein, but no result observed.

**The mission list for December 1944 stops here as the last micro film I have is for December 24.**



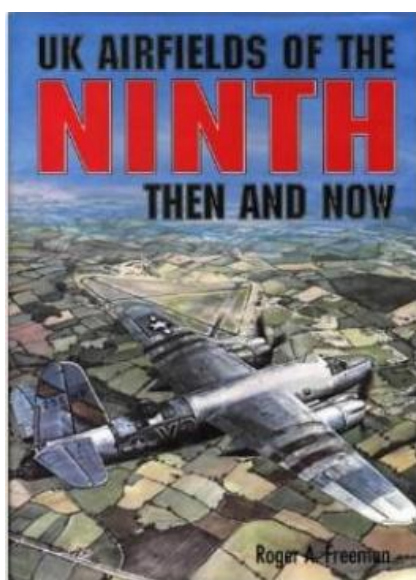


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### Books and Links

#### UK Airfields of the Ninth: Then and Now by Roger Freeman

In this book, the English writer describes all the airfields used by the 9th Air Force in UK. He has done a great job.



#### Stoney Cross & Ibsley

You can find on the web several sites on Stoney Cross and Ibsley airfields. Here are some of them :

<http://www.thenewforestguide.co.uk/history/forest-airfields/stoney-cross/stoney-cross-background/>

<http://www.new-forest-national-park.com/stoney-cross-airfield.html>

<http://www.hampshireairfields.co.uk/airfields/stx.html>

<http://www.new-forest-national-park.com/ibsley-airfield.html>

This one is really amazing. The airfield is seen from the sky :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgUMlbaD10c>

#### Coming in the next Newsletter



- Cap. James Peck
- honoring the pilots, part 5