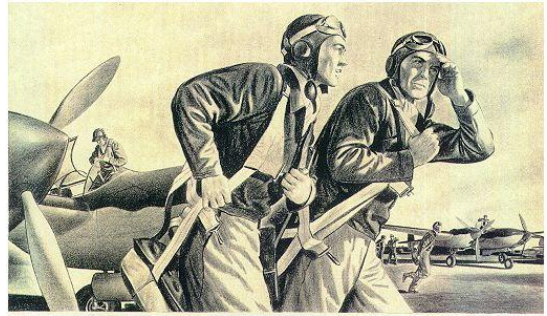




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Dear Friends and 367th Fighter Group members,

Most of you have already heard about the dogfight involving the 367th FG on August 25, 1944, either through the narrative of a squadron mate or the memories of a relative or by reading the Dynamite Gang book. The different reports help to have a better knowledge of the fight but thanks to the work of other people we will have additional and certainly new information. Thanks to my friend Eddy L. Rosier we will learn more on the German side. Thanks to Philippe Lantiez we will learn what happened to the pilots who bailed out in the second part of the article in NL # 10. Thanks to Alain Bodel who did a lot of research on the 474th Fighter Group (one of the 2 other FG of the Ninth Air Force flying the P-38 Lightning) we will have a link with Maj. Gardner's P-38.

Thanks to Claus and Bob Gronwaldt, we will discover the Bell mechanic in the Bell graduate page !

I wish you a wonderful year 2014. Don't forget the 70th anniversary of D-Day and don't forget that the 367th FG joined the gigantic battle in Europe almost 70 years ago.

25 August 1944, the big dogfight, part 1

On August 1944 the 367th FG had been operating from France for almost one month and was already operating from its second advanced landing ground (ALG) which was ALG # 2 Cricqueville, Normandy, very close to the Pointe du Hoc where the Rangers climbed the cliff on D-Day. After almost two months of hard fighting the allied troops managed to push the German troops outside of Normandy thanks to the breakout of Saint-Lô. The German troops escaped Normandy by the Falaise pocket around mi-august and crossed the Seine river on barges (see mission list of newsletter # 7), most of the time harassed by the allied fighter bombers. The German infantry was not the only target of the Air Forces. The enemy aviation was also under the pressure of the Allies in the air but also on the ground. The pressure on the airfields, occupied by the Luftwaffe, from the 8th Air Force heavy bombers as well as the 9th Air Force medium bombers and fighter bombers was kept really high. On August 22 the Gang led a dive bombing mission on airfields in the area of Laon in northern France, 90 miles north east of Paris. Each squadron encountered the enemy fighters. The ensuing dogfight turned into the advantage of the 367th FG. The 392nd FS claimed 6 enemy aircrafts destroyed,



Peronne airfield seen from 1200 feet. This airfield was the 392nd FS's target on August 25, 1944 (Eddie L. Rosier)

the 393rd FS one and the 394th FS 6 for the loss of Lt. Stanley Johnson of the 393rd FS who finished the war in a prisoner camp in Prussia (see URL in Books and Links in NL # 6). The pilots came back to their advanced landing ground very ecstatic. Three days later the group was again assigned



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to the same kind of mission in the same area. This time again, the Gang would meet the Luftwaffe for another dogfight which turned also into the advantage of the P-38's pilots. As we will see later, the toll paid by the 367th FG could have been more important than it really was. Each squadron was assigned an airfield but at a short distance of each other in order to give mutual support in case of attack by the enemy. The 392nd FS bombed the airdrome in Peronne, the 393rd FS dropped its bombs on Villiers-les-Guises and Rosière-en-Santerre airfields and the 394th FS launched its bombs on the Clastres (this airfield would be soon one of the next ALG of the 367th FG) and the Archer airfields.

The 394th FS had just finished its bombs run on the Clastres airfield and its auxiliary landing ground when the pilots spotted a large gaggle of enemy fighters. The 3 flights of the squadron engaged the Focke-Wulf 190's and in a very short time enemy and US aircrafts started to go down in flame and parachute started to pop up in the sky.



Another view of the Clastres airfield (Eddie L. Rosier)

Then as Red Flight finished its pass it made a wide turn. A swarm of 190's smothered it and the four Red Flight planes went in. Major Gardner was seen to bail out as his plane went down in flames. Captain Matheson leading the top cover singled out a lone 190 and followed it into a tight turn firing. He closed to about twenty yards before ceasing to fire and the plane exploded and went down in flames. After regaining altitude he dove down on another FW 190 which exploded near the cockpit as he closed to twenty yards firing continuously. Lt. Lezie damaged one and sent a second FW 190 spiraling down in flames after he had poured two bursts into its engine and canopy. Lt. Platt knocked out a FW 190. Lt. Tremblay hit the cockpit and wing root of another which immediately flipped over. He quickly made a 180° turn, losing sight of it but claimed a probable as he saw what appeared to be the plane smocking and in a straight downward dive.



Clastres airfield seen from 1200 feet a few years ago. This airfield was the 394th FS's target on August 25, 1944 (Eddie L. Rosier)

The monthly report of the 394th FS gives us the following information : *“three days later, August twenty-fifth, the group was again assigned to dive bomb airfields in the Laon area. Maj. Gardner led the squadron to Saint Quentin where our three flights split. He took Red Flight down on the Clastres field, Lt. Platt Yellow leader took his flight down on another field, and Captain Matheson, Blue leader, remained above with his flight as top cover. Yellow flight finished his bombing run first and joined the top cover. Yellow Flight was climbing up after their bomb run, they spotted about thirty FW 190's at low altitude. Calling them in, the flight jumped the Jerries. As the top cover dove to intercept, they saw four FW 190's go down.*



Cap. Matheson and crew. He was 394th FS blue flight leader acting as top cover on August 25, 1944 (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



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Lt. Lemley dove to the tail of a P-38 and drove away two 190's and damaged a third. He was jumped by more 190's, one of which shot out his right engine. Hitting the deck he came home on left engine, pumping the wheels and flaps down over the field, and landing with his right brake shot out. From the mission the following pilots are missing : Major Gardner, Lt Johnston, Lt. Dawn, Lt. Harrell, Lt. Brownley and Lt. Cooney. Our score was 8 FW 190's destroyed, 1 FW 190 probable and 2 FW 190's damaged. On the arrival of the 392nd FS and 393rd a mass dogfight took place. The group's final score was 20 FW 190's destroyed against six losses. Cap. Blumer of the 393rd FS was high man for the afternoon with five victories".

The German unit met by the 367th FG was the II/JG6 which can be considered as a squadron (not in size but in its organization), JG being Jagdgeschwader or fighter squadron. The Commanding Officer was Hauptmann (equivalent to Captain in the USAAF) Willy Elsternmann. This unit was originally the III/ZG1 and next II/ZG26, ZG being Zerstörergeschwader or fighter – bomber squadron. This fighter-bomber unit flew the ME-210 and next the ME-410 with the huge 50 mm cannon. They were assigned to the defense of the German sky against allied heavy bombers. They had very good result against the American heavy bombers until the arrival of the "little friends", the fighters of the 8th Air Force. From this moment the losses started to be really heavy. After the invasion of France on June 6, 1944, the unit was renamed II/JG6 and was composed of the 5., 6., 7. and 8. Staffel (flight). Their new aircraft was the Focke Wulf 190 A8. With this plane the German pilots were true adversary for the allied fighter pilots but the training of the II/JG 6 pilots was pretty poor. The transition training was pretty fast as more or less ten days were allowed to the men before being sent to the west frontline. The II/JG6 landed on their new field in France on August 22. The airfield was at Herpy-l'Arlésienne, a few miles west of Rethel. It could have been compared to an advanced landing ground used by the 367th FG in France. The airfield was a big pasture and the men lived in tents or caravans. The flight leaders or Staffelkapitän, were Oberleutnants (First Lieutenants) Bernard Praffath, Kurt Friedman, Friedrich Stehle and Rudi Dassow.



FW-190 A8 being restored in Le Bourget Airport Museum. This model was flown by the II/JG6 pilots (Olivier Le Floch)



Same aircraft displayed in the museum after restoration (Olivier Le Floch)

Haupt. Elsternmann, the four Staffelkapitäne and Feldwebel (Fw., equivalent to staff sergeant) Fritz Buchholtz were the experienced pilots. They flew on the MTO and flew also in Germany to defend the sky against the allied bombers. Lieutenant Rudy Dassow had 22 victories, 12 being heavy bombers. The first mission from the new landing ground was flown on August 23 and was to cover the two Arado 234, the first jet engine reconnaissance aircraft of the Luftwaffe, during their take off and landing. The two aircrafts were stationed at Juvincourt to use the very long runway. The jet engine aircraft being in their infancy, the pilots could not ask full power too quickly to their engines in case of attack from allied fighters. A quick change of power would result in the loss of one or both engine which meant the loss of control and certainly the loss of the pilot's life. On August 25, the mission of the II/JG26 was a full squadron effort. Approximately 40 fighters took off at 12:30. The pilots of the 7. Staffel were assigned the top cover duty. A few minutes



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Part of the former Juvincourt airfield. The small cross on the right low corner shows the camouflaged blister hangar of the first reconnaissance jet of the Luftwaffe (Eddie L. Rosier)



later Fw. Buchholtz, who was among the pilots of the top flight spotted airplanes below and reported it by radio : "watch out to the aircraft below ahead". Hauptmann Elstermann answered : "US P-38s, they are only flying through". The leading FW-190's being already over the town of Bichancourt made a right turn in direction of Tergnier where the P-38s of the 394th FS were looking for target of opportunity. Hauptmann Elstermann ordered to launch their belly tanks. The FW-190's jumped the P-38s from out of the sun.

Elstermann thinking of an easy victory gave orders to attack without leaving a flight acting as top cover. So 40 FW-190s felt on the back of the 12 Lightning. Seeing that the enemy had the numerical advantage and being

conscious that the German pilots would be able to react to the first attack, the 394th FS called the 2 other squadrons for help. They came very quickly to the rescue of their buddies. The 392nd FS was the first one to reach the ongoing battle as written in the monthly report: "The next day, having completed a bombing run, scoring direct hits on an airfield, we answered the call of another squadron who had been jumped. Coming into the fight from out of the sun, Maj. Griffin led the attack and engaged an enemy plane, knocking it and then damaging another. Lt. Livingston destroyed one and made claim to one probable and Lt. Kines destroyed one and probably destroyed another. Lt. Plotecia laid claim to one destroyed and one probable. Such success takes its tolls



Blister hangar of the first reconnaissance jet of the Luftwaffe the former Juvincourt airfield. This hangar is now used by a farmer (Eddie L. Rosier)



Major Joe Griffin before his P-38 HELLZAPOPPIN II. He led the 392nd FS on August 25, 1944 . His ship was named after a Broadway play (Olivier Le Floch/Archives 367th FG)



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Cap. Larry Blumer, 393rd FS, became an 'ace in a day' after he shot down 5 enemy aircraft on August 25, 1944 (Jean-Luc Gruson/archive 367th FG)



Lt. Stanley Pacek, 393rd FS. He destroyed 2 enemy aircraft on August 25, 1944 (Olivier Le Floch/archive 367th FG)

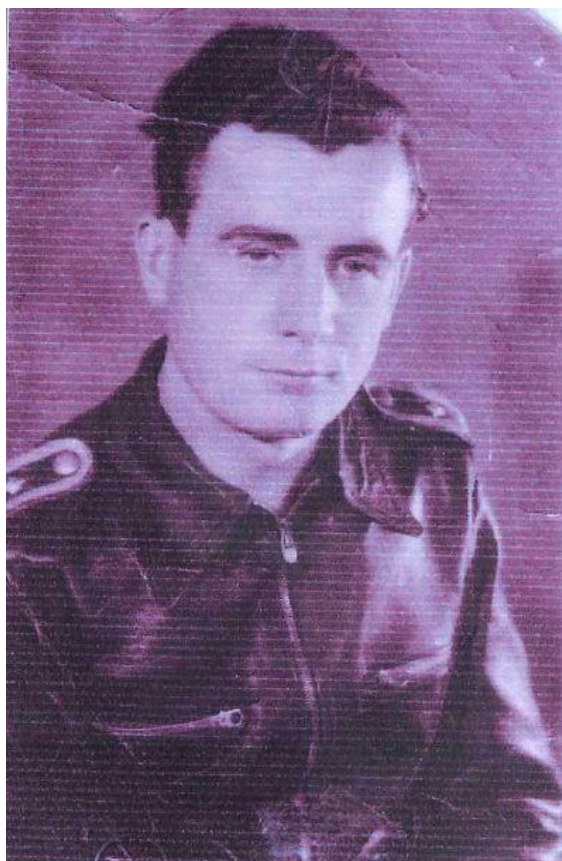
Eddie Rosier had a first hand account of the fight from Fritz Buchholtz. They meet each other several times and discussed of this fateful day. Fritz Buchholtz said to Eddie : "the pilots of the 367th FG were 'experten', very experimented pilots, and so we did not have any chance with only 20 hours in our log book on the FW-190. They were well trained to air to air combat in their P-38 and so they cut us to pieces".

and Lt. Eberhardt did not return".

The 393rd FS took off first from Cricqueville but was the third squadron to join the fight : "On the morning of the 25th the boys took off for a small landing field to the east of Guise to render it useless to the Jerries. While they finished up the task of 'beating it up' they were informed by R/T that the other two squadrons were in a fight with approximately 30 FW 190's, quickly forming up they returned to the scene of the fight (Saint Quentin) and proceeded to aid their buddies. Captain Blumer using altitude and diving speed knocked down five FW 190's with his wingman.

Lt. Awtrey remaining on his wing and keeping his tail clear throughout the entire story. 2nd Lt. Pacek garnered 2 more FW 190's and this was his third mission in combat. Lt. M.D. Jones destroyed another and one damaged, with Major Joy garnering a damaged. Lt. 'Murphy' Dobrowolski knocked down another one of the fleeing Luftwaffe making a total of nine destroyed and two damaged for our score in the show. Captain Blumer's comment on the field day was merely 'That ain't for me' and 'it wouldn't have been possible if Awtrey hadn't stayed with me' .

The ensuing battle became a huge dogfight. The 367th FG had 33 P-38s and the II/JG6 had an estimated number of 40 FW-190's that makes more or less than 70 aircrafts chasing each others in a small cubic area and under an altitude of 5000 ft.



Fw. Fritz Buchholz, II/JG6 (Eddie L. Rosier)



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When Hauptmann Elstermann ordered to jettison their drop tank, Fritz Bucholtz pulled the trigger and followed the leader of his flight, Lt. Friedman. But during each maneuver his FW-190 started to vibrate and went in a sharp bank and next went into a spin. Regaining each time the control of his ship, Fritz Buchholtz understood that his belly tank was hanging under the belly side of his FW-190. The only solution he had was to leave the area. Staying in the dogfight in a plane uneasy to control would have made him an easy target for the P-38 pilots. He said to Eddie *“The P-38’s pilots did a luftbery circle and left the circle by pair to dive and shot us down. Next they came back into the circle above”*.

Grover Gardner gave his statement of the battle in his encounter report written on October 2, 1944, after he was sent to UK to be debriefed by the Intelligence Services : *“On the twenty-fifth of August I was leading a squadron of twelve P-38’s on a dive bombing mission to the airdrome at Clastres, France. Eight planes carried bombs and four acted as top cover. After coming off the target I circled with my four planes, southwest of target at angels eight. I called the other two flights and set course for the secondary target. Some minutes later, just west of the secondary target, I saw between thirty and thirty five FW-190’s on my starboard side heading in the opposite direction and a smaller formation about 1,000 ft below. In all there were between fifty and sixty FW 190’s. I decided to attack the largest formation in an attempt to scatter the enemy and destroy as many of them as possible. I called a break to the left and made an attack on the larger formation. On my first pass I got hits on No. 4 man in a flight still turning. He broke down and away trailing smoke and claim is made as to destruction. I whipped back to the left in a climbing turn when I saw a single FW 190 making a turn in the opposite direction. I don’t believe he ever saw me. I pressed the tit and he flew right through ?? (this is number two I feel I knocked down). The FW’s 190 were broken up pretty well by now. Some singles, some pairs and still one or two four-ship formations. I started for and fired at the number four, three and two men of a four ship flight. Then my left engine was knocked out. I saw strike but the planes would break as soon as they saw a tracer. Instead of following I tried to break up the formation because they seemed to be depending upon their leader and just fly formation. I feel that I damaged the three ships in that flight”*.

The story of Maj. Grover Jerry Gardner, the Operation Officer of the 394th FS, was far from being over. After his left engine had been knocked out he feathered the propeller. He wrote the following statement in his evasion report : *“Was chased by 4 FW 190’s. Went into a dive and lost them. Climbed on one engine to about 1000 ft and then small arms knocked out the other engine, aileron and cooling. I switched from one engine back to the other, put the plane into a general dive with the power on, and continued for about ten minutes in an attempt to hit our lines near Paris. Could have made it in another five minutes, but was forced to crash land about 15 miles SW of Chantilly. I got out and hid my chute,*

but was surrounded almost at once and taken by about 30 Germans”.

MACR of Maj. Gardner written by Lt. Ross Lezie : *“I was flying Number Three (3) position in Blue Flight on a dive bombing mission to an enemy airfield. After hitting our target we went investigating for boogies. Major Gardner, flying Red One (1) called over the radio that they had jumped twenty five plus FW 190’s. Major Gardner’s flight made a pass with Yellow Flight going in next. I heard Major Gardner calling that he had three FW 190’s on his tail. He then called that he had been hit in both engines and was bailing out. We were in the Laon area, France, at the time”*.



Maj. Grover Gardner. This picture was probably taken in Normandy (Patrick Kelly/archive 367th FG)



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Maj. Grover Gardner. This picture was probably taken before the Cockoo Hill in Ibsley, the second air base used by the 367th FG in UK (Patrick Kelly/archive 367th FG)

It was thought for a long time that Maj. Gardner had bail out but he changed his mind when he saw that he could still control his ship and so tried to reach the allied lines.

Once on the ground, Maj. Gardner chose the wrong direction as he ran right into a castle occupied by the Germans. Some French eye witnessed the belly landing of Maj. Gardner and were interviewed by Alain Bodel, a French researcher who leads research on the 474th Fighter Group, one of the 2 other P-38s group of the 9th Air Force. Incidentally, on August 25, 1944, the 474th FG also encountered the German Air Force. The ensuing dogfight turned into the advantage of the Luftwaffe. Due to the heavy losses, this day is known as 'The black Friday' for the 474th FG. Maj. Gardner crash landed his P-38 in the area of this dogfight so his ship was first thought to be one of the 474th FG.

Renée Lenoir's statement was : *"I was in the village when an aircraft belly landed north west. As I was a member of the Résistance, I went there immediately to rescue the pilot. The aircraft was a twin-boom one, almost undamaged. The pilot had already gone. Witnesses stated they rushed to the plane with civilian clothes for the pilot to wear and evade. He had already run toward a nearby castle where Germans were stationing. He was captured immediately. I can't remember any detail about the aircraft, not even the color. The date was about one or two weeks before local liberation (liberation of the area was 31 Aug 44)".*

Lucien Lambert's statement added : *"I was standing into the village. I sighted an aircraft heading west to east at very low altitude. Both engines were running at very low round per minute and I sighted neither flames nor smoke pouring from the aircraft. I thought it was going to crash on the Mont César, but it did not and disappeared from sight, west*

of Mont César. Shortly afterward I was told the aircraft crashed west of Bailleul. I went there. The aircraft was a twin boom (P-38), almost undamaged, that's all I can remember so far. I was told the pilot had been captured when trying to escape".

A report written by the French Red Cross confirms that Maj. Gardner belly landed his ship in the vicinity of Bailleul. The report N° 493 for the dead or lost crews of the Armée de l'Air (French Air Force) was written by G. L'Herbier but was based on Mr. Georges Crucifix's statement: *"English or American plane shot down – Pilot taken prisoner. Town of Bailleul-sur-Therain. On August 25, 1944, around 12 AM, a Lightning P-38 called 'Captain Cocktail' with letters '4N-A' on the fuselage was forced to land. The pilot, thought to be Gardner was taken prisoner. It is said that he had been shot by the German in Beauvais but this hypothesis could not have been confirmed".*

Major Gardner's statement Cross tells us how he was captured by the German : *"One burst knocked out my left engine, feathered it. Was chased by 4 FW-190s. Went into a dive and lost them. Climbed on one engine to about 1000 feet, and then small arms knocked out the other engine, aileron and cooling. I switched from one engine back to the other, put the plane into a general dive with the power on, and continued for about ten minutes in an attempt to reach our lines near Paris. Could have made it in another five minutes, but was forced to crash-land about 15 miles south west of Chantilly. I got out and hide my chute, but was surrounded almost at once and taken by about 30 Germans. They conducted me to their bivouac area in a nearby woods, and there I was questioned by an English-speaking 1st Sgt, who used to live in the States, but who had left in 1939 to answer the call to arms of the Fatherland. He asked me whether I had come from France or England, so I gave my name, rank and number, and he questioned me no further. Another German non-com there asked me for my Polaroid goggles, but after I said 'No, they are mine', he insisted no further".*

To be continued in NL # 10.



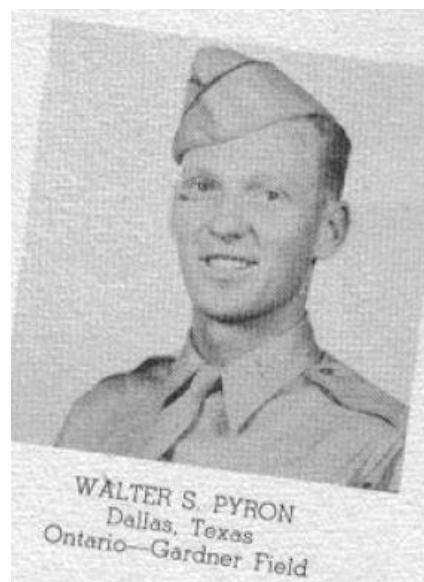
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HONORING THE PILOTS - LT. Walter S. Pyron, 393rd Fighter Squadron

2nd Lt. Walter Pyron was killed in action on August 4, 1944, in a small French village close to Angers in west of France. His flight spotted a German convoy and the pilots started to strafe the vehicles. As Lt. Pyron set an armored vehicle on fire by a long and steady burst he certainly focused too much on his target and pulled out of the dive too late and « muched » his P-38 on the ground in Saint Martin du Fouilloux. He had no chance to survive.

Walter was born on November 28, 1923 in Texas. He earned his wing with class 43J in Williams Field, AZ. After being buried in a temporary cemetery in France, his body was returned to his family in Texas. The reburial ceremony was held at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Dallas in July 1949.

The inhabitants of the village in France named a street after Lt. Pyron. Having no information about the circumstances of the unveiling of the street's plaque, I used the opportunity of a road trip close to Angers to go to Saint Martin du Fouilloux and to go to the city hall. Unfortunately, nobody was able to give me information about the loss of Lt. Pyron or the dedication. They only gave me a photocopy of bad quality certainly coming from an old yearly newspaper of the village.



2nd Lt. Walter S. Pyron in yearly book of Williams Field, Class 43-J (archive 367th FG)



This picture is thought to be taken on May 10, 1987, during the unveiling of the street's name. People are unknown (Saint Martin du Fouilloux city hall)



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On the photocopy it was also said that an exhibit had been organized in Saint Martin du Fouilloux for four days in August 1994 for the 50th anniversary of Lt. Pyron's death but no additional information are available.



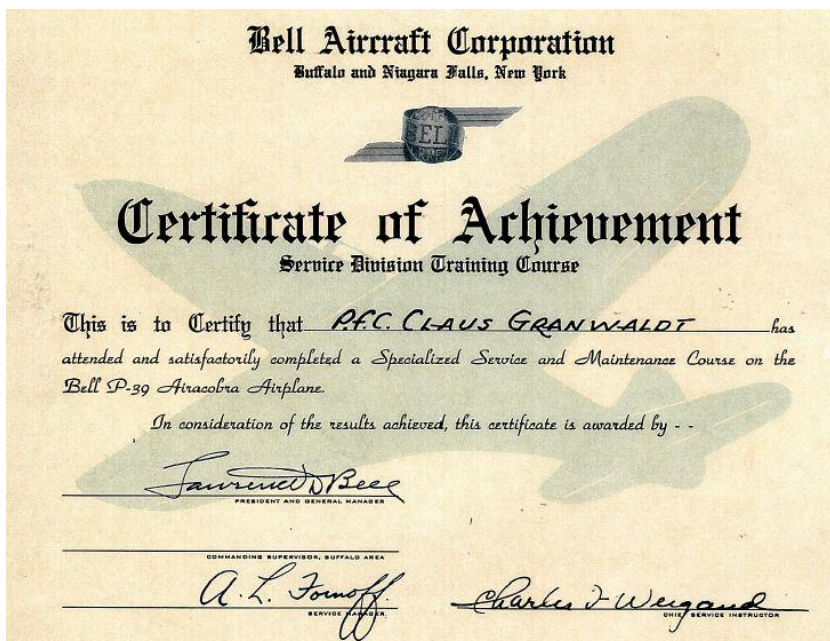
Street named after Lt. walter Pyron, 393rd FS, in Saint Martin du Fouilloux, France (Olivier Le Floch/archive 367th FG)



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BELL P-39 GRADUATE

I have been trying find former members of the 367th FG or their relatives for many years. Some time ago I managed to get in touch with Robert Gronwaldt, the son of Claus Gronwaldt, a crew chief of the 392nd FS. Robert sent me the Certificate his father received after he graduated from the Bell P-39 Airacobra maintenance school before being assigned to the 367th FG. I wanted to share with you this certificate but also the very funny P-39 graduate mechanic. Thank you Robert and Claus for sharing them with us.



Very proud mechanic ! (Claus and Robert Gronwaldt).



Claus Gronwaldt is 4th from the right, front row (Claus and Robert Gronwaldt).



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367th Fighter Group missions list – October 1944

All the targets were in Germany except for a few in Holland.

1 October 44

No mission.

2 October 44

393rd FS : dive bombing mission, Cap. Joy leading 11 P-38s and 3 P-38s of the 392nd FS to Aix-la-Chapelle-Cologne area. Unable to contact ground controller, 8 bombs were dropped on camouflaged German barracks 5 miles E of Düren and 6 also on barracks in the same area.

394th FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Cap. Matheson leading 12 P-38s to Düren. No bombs were dropped because target was obscured by an overcast.

393rd FS : dive bombing mission, Cap. Joy leading 12 P-38s and 4 P-38s of the 392nd FS to Germany. Targets were marked by "Seascout", ground controller. 16 bombs were dropped on target 1 and 8 on target 2. A light flack position and 2 trucks containing personnel were strafed and destroyed S of Düren. 8 bombs were also dropped on barracks 16 miles SW of Düren.

394th FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Hinkley leading 9 P-38s to Wurselin. At Geilenkirchen, 20 miles N of Aix-la-Chapelle, leaflet bombs were dropped and the other 3 released over Wurselin, 5 miles NE of Aix-la-Chapelle. 6 bombs were released on marshalling yard at Düren, 4 bombs on factory 2 miles E of Elsdorf, destroying 5 buildings. At 20 miles E of Cologne, single rail road track was cut by 2 bombs.

3 October 44

394th FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Gregory leading 12 P-38s to Cologne area. Army barracks were destroyed 5 miles SE of Düren. 2 miles N of Düren, one train with 20 plus passenger cars and another of 20 plus freight cars were strafed and locomotives were left steaming. Factory was bombed 2 miles SE of Düren with 2 direct hits. Locomotive with 10 plus passenger cars was strafed and bombed 20 miles W of Cologne. Marshalling yard at Euskirchen was bombed with 6 bombs destroying 1 locomotive and 8 box cars. In vicinity of Düren, a marshalling yard was strafed and 2 locomotives and 10 plus good cars were seen smoking. Locomotive with 50 plus freight cars were bombed and strafed.

4 October 44

Group: dive bombing mission, Lt. Hartwig leading 32 P-38s to Spich. 393rd FS was top cover and 392nd and 394th FS were armed with 2x 500 lb bomb each. Extremely bad weather caused the squadrons to considerable difficulty to find the target. In the vicinity of Siegburg, 6 bombs were dropped in marshalling yard. 6 more bombs destroyed 4 freight cars. Tracks were cut in 3 places by other 3 bombs. The marshalling yard was then strafed destroying 2 locomotives. In Cologne 2 locomotives pulling approx. 15 mixed cars a piece were strafed and destroyed. In marshalling yard at Delbrück, vicinity of Cologne 2 locomotives were strafed and destroyed. Train of 25 plus passenger cars heading SE from Whan, 10 miles SE of Cologne, was destroyed by strafing. Unidentified factory was destroyed by 8 bombs. 2 trains of 30 plus car were destroyed in marshalling yard 5 miles NW of Maastrich, Holland. A switch engine was strafed and destroyed at the same yard.

Group: dive bombing mission, Lt. Malone leading 32 P-38s to Düren. 394th FS was top cover and 392nd and 393rd FS were armed with 2x 500 lb bomb each. Single rail road track was cut 8,5 miles W of Dusseldorf. First class road leading to Cologne was bombed and several craters made. Factory 1 mile NW of Dusseldorf was hit by 2 bombs. At 6 miles NE of Dusseldorf single rail road track was cut. Rail road tracks, 10 miles NE of Düren, was hit. Assigned area at 9 miles NE of Düren was bombed by 22 X 500 lb bombs and fire and smoke arose.



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5 October 44

Group: armed reconnaissance mission, Maj. Rogers leading 34 P-38s to Germany. Aircrafts carried 66 X 500 lb bombs. The target area was completely weathered in and observations were impossible due to 10/10 coverage and solid overcast. The 394th FS which was near Cologne flew over the city and release their bombs from 14000 feet flying level, no result observed. The 2 other squadrons jettisoned their bombs on enemy territory before returning to base.

6 October 44

393rd FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Mason leading 11 P-38s. Target marked by red smoke was bombed. Target was reported by "Decline", ground controller, to be German counter attack N. of Bardenberg at approx. 6 miles NE of Aix-la-Chapelle.

394th FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Hinkley leading 11 P-38s to the Aix-la-Chapelle - Dusseldorf area. Bombs were dropped on marshalling yard 5 miles NW of Bedburg. 10 box cars were damaged and the track was cut. Bombs were also dropped on marshalling yard 13 miles NW of Düren. 35 plus box cars were destroyed and the track was torn up.

392nd FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Lt. Hartwig leading 12 P-38s. The ground controller was contacted for target identification. The target was supposed to be marked with red smoke but before the pilots started their bomb run, the German dropped red smoke on the American troops. The squadron was low on gas and forced to return to base.

393rd FS : dive bombing mission, Lt. Peschken leading 12 P-38s. Bombs were dropped on houses NE of Ubach.

394th FS : armed reconnaissance mission, Col. Young leading 11 P-38s to the Aix-la-Chapelle-Dusseldorf area. The target was designated by "Decline", the ground controller. All bombs were dropped on a strong point 10 miles N of Aix-la-Chapelle.

7 October 44

392nd FS : bomber escort mission, Lt. Hansen leading 11 P-38s. Mission uneventful.

394th FS : bomber escort mission, B-26s, Cap. Matheson leading 12 P-38s. Mission uneventful.

393rd FS : bomber escort mission, B-26s, Maj. Joy leading 12 P-38s. The 1st group of B-26s was met as briefed but the 2nd group of bombers was not met because leader could not contact them by radio and they could not be seen at the designated area.

Group : bomber escort mission and fighter sweep mission, Cap. MacCarthy leading 33 P-38s. The B-26s were escorted to the target. After the completion of the escort mission, the group went on a fighter sweep embracing the Bonn-Cologne area. The sweep was relatively uneventful encountering only flak.

8 October 44

Group : dive bombing mission in Frankfurt, Cap. Rogers leading 32 P-38s. 394th FS was top cover and 392nd and 393rd FS armed with 7x 500 lb and 12X1000 lb bombs. Barracks S. of airfield near Giessen were bombed and 8-10 buildings observed destroyed. Locomotive and approx. 15 passenger cars destroyed 6 miles E of Schotten. At Gießen, 4 direct hits observed on 2 sets of barracks comprised of 18 buildings.

Group : dive bombing mission on airfield at Bonn, Cap. Hunt leading 29 P-38s. 394th FS acted as top cover for the 392nd and 393rd FS. On S. corner of the airfield at Bonn – Hangolar, 20 bombs were released on group of buildings. On NE corner, 12 bombs were released on warehouses. Direct hit were observed on buildings on small airfield one miles NW of Wipperfurth. Rail road siding of 4 track wide was struck by 2 direct hits 7 miles NE of Bonn. Airfield 7 miles SE of Bonn was bombed with 2 bombs but no result observed.



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9 and 10 October 44

No mission.

11 September 44

Group : dive bombing mission in Aix-la-Chapelle area, Col. Young leading 32 P-38s. At Aix-la-Chapelle, 12 bombs were dropped on several warehouses marked by red smoke. "Booty", the controller, stated that the results were good. Factory at Aix-la-Chapelle was struck by 16 direct hits. Under the direction of "Brightside", 3 motor trucks were bombed. 14 x1000 lb bombs were dropped on building in vicinity of Aix-la-Chapelle, destroying it.

11 October 44

Group : fighter sweep mission in the Cologne - Grevenbroich area, Cap. Hinkley leading 29 P-38s. After sweeping the area and finding no target, "Sweepstakes", the controller, ordered the group to return as weather was closing in at base.

12 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission to Aix-la-Chapelle, Maj. Rogers leading 30 P-38s. Bombs were dropped on buildings marked by smoke signal. "Booty", the controller, reported that the result was excellent. Buildings were bombed in Aix-la-Chapelle. Concentration of enemy were observed and strafed also in Aix-la-Chapelle by 6 planes. "Booty" reported again that results were excellent. At Aix-la-Chapelle, 14 bombs were released on five large buildings and same area was also strafed.

Group : dive bomb mission to Aix-la-Chapelle, Maj. Joy leading 28 P-38s. A concentration of vehicles marked by red smoke was bombed 5 miles NE of Aix-la-Chapelle. Buildings were bombed in the middle of Aix-la-Chapelle. Wooden area marked by red smoke was strafed. Before another pass could be made, bandit were reported 10 miles NE of Aix-la-Chapelle by ground controller and 394th FS. This squadron was approaching its target when it was jumped by 36 plus ME-109s. Lts. Ballard and Bridgeman shot down both POW). Lts. Jorgensen destroyed one Me-109 and Tjomsland destroyed one Me-109 and damaged another one.

13 October 44

393rd FS : bomber escort mission, B-26s, Lt. Morris leading 12 P-38s. Mission uneventful.

Group : dive bomb mission, Cap. Hansen leading 19 P-38s. The 392nd FS bombed buildings along road 13 miles SW of Cologne believed to be ammunition or fuel dump. At 16 miles SW of Cologne a single rail road track was cut. The 394th FS was ordered to Cologne and 20 plus vehicles were destroyed at Bad-Neuenahr-Ahrweiler. A double track rail road was struck by 2 direct hits.

393rd FS : dive bomb mission, Lt. Dobrowolski leading 12 P-38s. "Sweepstakes" provided a target at Aix-la-Chapelle and Hongen. 5 miles E of Alsdorf, a road was cut and 3 buildings were destroyed. In the NW part of Aix-la-Chapelle, 4 direct hits were made on a building. Jet propelled aircrafts seen from a distance and appeared to be on patrol of Aix-la-Chapelle. Lt. Baer was WIA (Wounded in Action) by flak, slight flesh wound in left leg.

14 October 44

393rd FS : dive bomb mission on the fortification and entrenchments S. of Aix-la-Chapelle, Lt. Eldryge leading 10 P-38s. The squadron was unable to see the target marked by smoke due to the overcast.

15 and 16 October 44

No mission.

17 October 44

394th FS : bomber escort mission, A-20s, to Euskirchen, Lt. Will leading 8 P-38s. Mission uneventful.



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18 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission in the area of Düren, Lt. Malone leading 31 P-38s. The target at Düren was bombed by the 392nd FS. At 11 miles NE of Düren, 8 bombs were dropped on rail road track with 2 direct hits. Rail road track was also bombed in the same area and 16 miles SE of Düren. The 393rd FS bombed rail road in the vicinity of Rheydt. The tracks were cut in 2 places. A train on 30 cars and 1 locomotive was strafed in the vicinity of Erkelenz, locomotive and 3 freight cars damaged. A building was bombed and destroyed 9 miles NE of Erkelenz. The 394th FS bombed Julich. 16 miles NW of Düsseldorf, a rail road track was cut. A train consisting of locomotive and 15 oil cars was strafed and cars left burning 3 miles W of Neuss.

20 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission, Lt.Col. Crossen leading 30 P-38s. The targets were rail road tracks and bridges SW of Cologne. At 6 miles NE of Düren, 8 bombs were dropped, 2 of which were direct hits and believed to have cut the tracks. Rail road tracks were cut by 2 direct hits 7 miles NE of Düren. At Kerpen, a rail road bridge was struck by 2 direct hits of 7 bombs. S. of Grevenbroich, a rail road bridge was bombed but damaged was not seen due to heavy ground opposition. 9 direct hit and 5 near hits were made on rail road and highway junction at Elsdorf. Train of 3 locomotives and 40 cars was bombed at Grevenbroich. No direct hits were made but before the train be strafed, the 394th FS called that it was attacked by 16 FW-190s. The enemy aircrafts came from 10000 ft when squadron was coming out of bomb run. The 392nd FS joined with the 394th FS and then 20 additional FW-190s came in. The encounter with the enemy aircrafts occurred in the vicinity of Brühl but the 367th FG and enemy aircraft had to move the fight because the enemy flak did not discriminate between them. The 393rd FS joined the dogfighter and its pilots destroyed 3 FW-190's.

The claims for the 367th FG were :

Group Head Quarter : 1 FW-190s destroyed (Lt. Col. Crossen)

392nd FS : 5 FW-190s destroyed (Lt Dye : 2 and Lts. Davis, Brydges and Dillon : one each) and 9 damaged.

393rd FS : 3 FW-190's destroyed (Maj. Joy : 2 and Lt. Eldridge : 1) and 2 damaged 2.

394th FS : 3 FW-190s destroyed (Lt. DeFrance), 2 probably destroyed 2 and 4 damaged.

The losses were the following :

Lt. Col. Crossen (Group) : KIA (see NL issue # 1 for details)

1st Lt. Sam Malone (392nd FS) : POW

2nd Lt. Lloyd Andrews (392nd FS) : KIA

2nd Lt. Sigurd Mathisen (392nd FS) : POW

2nd Lt. Robert Bradford (394th FS) : POW

2nd Lt. Robert Dawn (394th FS) : escaped the German and made it to the squadron for the 2nd time (cf article on the dogfight of 25 August 44 in this issue and in part 2 in next issue)

2nd Lt. James Edmondson (394th FS) : POW

Group : dive bomb mission, Maj. Rogers leading 23 P-38s. The 392nd FS acted as top cover for the 393rd and 394th FS. The 393rd FS dropped its bombs on rail road tracks between Neuss and Mönchengladbach, 3 direct hits observed. Remainder of 19 bombs were dropped in the same area but results were unable to be observed due to heavy antiaircraft fire. The 394th FS dropped its bombs on rail road tracks 6 miles SE of Düsseldorf, tracks were cut.

21 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission, Col. Young leading 24 P-38s. 31 x 1000 lb bombs were expended in the target area. One direct hit on warehouse, 10 direct hits and 6 near misses on forest and fuel dump between Crevenbroick and Düren.

22 and 23 October 44

No mission.



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24 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission in the Daun-Mayen area, Lt. Mason leading 23 P-38s. The 394th FS acted as top cover for the 393rd and 392nd FS. The 393rd FS dropped 6 bombs on tracks 9 miles SW of Koblenz and 8 bombs on tracks and rail road bridge 7 miles N of Adenau. No result observed due to weather and flak. The 392nd FS released 6 bombs along rail road tracks in the vicinity of Höchstberg. In the vicinity of Ulmen, 8 more bombs were dropped. No observation could be made because of extremely poor visibility.

25 October 44

No mission.

25 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission, Lt. Schlipf leading 24 P-38s. The 394th FS acted as top cover for the 393rd and 392nd FS which bombed highways between Cologne and Aix-la-Chapelle.

27 October 44

No mission.

28 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission in the Cologne area, Maj. Matheson leading 31 P-38s. The 394th FS bombed a train of 1 locomotive and 30 cars, destroying them and cutting tracks. In a nearby town 2 bombs were released causing a large explosion. The 393rd FS bombed the Eschweiler – Cologne highway. A truck and one jeep were destroyed 10 miles W of Köln. One locomotive and 5 cars were destroyed 12 miles NE of Düren. 12 miles W of Köln, 1 locomotive and 25 cars loaded with ammunitions were destroyed. The 392nd FS dropped its bombs on highway at Erkrath with 6 direct hit and 1 truck destroyed. At Gruiten, 2 bombs were dropped on 2 locomotives destroying both of them. A marshalling yard was hit by 2 bombs but result undetermined.

Group : dive bomb mission in the Cologne area, Cap. Hartwig leading 26 P-38s. The 392nd FS hit one small factory 12 miles NE of Düren. At 13 miles NE of Düren, 4 direct hits and 4 near misses ere made on rail road and highway junction. 2 direct hits were made on Aubodon highway. The 393rd FS dropped 10 bombs at Kerpen, destroying 10 tank cars. 2 direct hits were made on factory at Frechen. Road and town were bombed 10 miles W of Köln with explosion and white flames.

29 October 44

Group : dive bomb mission in the Cologne area, Cap. Mason leading 28 P-38s. The 394th FS acted as top cover for the 393rd and 392nd FS. The 393rd FS bombed a rail road overpass 8 miles NE of Düren with 20 bombs and the target was probably destroyed. A train of 1 locomotive and 25 box cars was strafed 11 miles NE of Düren, destroying the locomotive and approx. 10 cars. The target of the 392nd FS was Merzewich. At Grevenbroich, 4 direct hits were made on intersection of double rail road tracks and small marshalling yard with 20 freight cars. 4 hits were made. No damage was observed concerning freight cars but tracks were cut. 4 bombed were dropped on train at Kerpen. Locomotive and approx. 4 freight cars were destroyed.

Group : dive bomb mission, Lt. Estabrook leading 30 P-38s. The 392nd FS acted as top cover for the 393rd and 394th FS. The 393rd FS made 20 direct hits on roads N. of intersection N of Düren. At Birkesdorf, 2 hits were made, causing black smoke. The 394th FS released its 16 bombs on a highway clover leaf at Langerwehe. No result observed due to flak.

30 and 31 October 44

No mission.

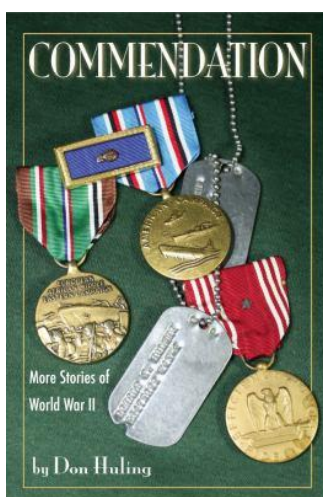


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Books and Links

COMMENDATION : More Stories of World War II by Donald Huling, Hither Page Press

We saw in issue # 8 the book « A trip on the drunken duchess » written by Don Huling, an enlisted man of the CNS of the 392nd FS. In this new book Don shares with us more stories of his life with the 367th FG. Another book to have in your 367th FG collection ! Thank you Don for sharing with us all these stories.



The new “white Lightning”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6McV4L_K7xA

After the belly landing of the famous P-38 White Lightning in a potatoes field by the son of Lefty Gardner a few year ago, the wreck was sold to the company Red Bull. A long restoration was carried out to make it flyable again. It is now in Austria and can be seen in air shows Europe . This video from inside the cockpit taken during the Ferté Alais' air show in France is really great !

A true love story

<http://www.myfoxmemphis.com/story/21202505/a-true-love-story-through-time#axzz2oIPXdBRd>

On Valentine's day 2013, a TV channel broadcasted the story of Ollie Morgan, the wife of Lt. Jack Morgan. Jack was killed during the very murderous mission over the Cotentin peninsula close to Cherbourg, France, on June 22, 1944.

69 years after Jack's death Ollie still tells goodnight every night to Jack. This is a very moving story.

Jack Morgan's name is engraved on the Panhandle War Memorial in Amarillo, Tx, like is Lt. Eugene Fleming's name of the 392nd FS. Both pilots earned their wings with Class 43-I of Luke Field, AZ, and reported to the 37th FG in Santa Rosa in October 1943.

Coming in the next Newsletter



- 25 August 1944, the big dogfight – part 2
- honoring the pilots, part 3
- missions list, November 1944