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# The Humbles Crew

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The World War II Flight Mission Diary  
of Charles Eugene McBride

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As transcribed by James & T.J. McBride

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*“Keep the Show on the Road”*

**Frontispiece photograph: 547<sup>th</sup> BS Humbles Crew**

Front row (L – R):

S/Sgt. Rayford L. Foster (BT)  
S/Sgt. Carl M. Kalinowski (WG)  
T/Sgt. William B. Keith (TT)  
T/Sgt. Raymond Wardell (R)  
S/Sgt. Charles E. McBride (TG)  
S/Sgt. Lawrence W. Dunn (WG)

Back row (L – R):

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Keith M. Blackburn (CP)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Dale T. Milne (N)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Alfred T. Humbles (P)  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John T. Barton (B)

Aircraft:

B-17G 42-107058 BK\*C, "White Angel"

(Identification courtesy of Ken Decker)

## Foreword

It's difficult to know what goes through the mind of a soldier when faced with combat. For some, like the men of the 384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, there seems to have been a simple understanding, that the reveille horn was nothing more than a wakeup call to go back to work. That work was bombing Western Europe from the Atlantic Coast to Berlin, but it might as well have been making donuts for all the angst it seems to have caused them. Not that they didn't all have consciences that must've been plagued with doubt daily, but they had a job to do, to keep the ones they loved at home out of harm's way and free to live as they pleased, to defeat a juggernaut that threatened to consume the world if left unchecked, and they did it.

This is my grandfather's mission diary. I never knew about it before his death, but now nothing excites me more than reading and putting these entries down for all posterity. The A.T. Humbles crew of the 547<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) completed 31 missions, taking part in some of the most momentous events in history, and that was likely not even a glimmer of a thought for them. Grampa was a tailgunner, and must have had an interesting perspective on the action, to say the least, but for the most part his writings are matter-of-fact recaps of the day-to-day operations out of Grafton Underwood, with just a smattering of bias or opinion, indicating again the mindset of the airman whose dogged determination was to get the job done, leaving the editorializing for others, yours truly included, who have the luxury of time and low-risk employment.

I've collaborated with my Uncle Jim on this and we've copied Grampa's handwritten notes as faithfully as possible. Spelling mistakes aren't. And you might forgive the abundance of exclamation from a 22-year-old man whose normal day included living on oxygen at heights only Edmund Hillary was accustomed to and wearing thick wool and leather to keep German steel from piercing his derriere. I might have used excessive punctuation, too!!! The pages are transcribed exactly as we found them, with the exception of the header information, which includes a 384<sup>th</sup> BG Mission number I inserted after researching Fred Preller's site, [www.384thbombgroup.com](http://www.384thbombgroup.com), for matching accounts or records that seemed to correspond with Grampa's.

So... I hope you enjoy reading this and I hope, whenever he glances Earth-ward, that Grampa can look down and know how proud I am of him.

Thanks,  
T.J.

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**"Patches II"**



**"Satan's Playmate"**



## **Mission 1**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #88**

**Date** 11 April 1944  
**Aircraft** Ship 441 - Patches II  
**Destination** Sarau, Germany  
**Target** Fighter plane component factory FW 190's

We were wakened at 4:00a.m. and ate breakfast, were briefed at 5:30 and took off at 7:55 for the assembly point! We entered enemy territory and met no opposition of any kind! Our escort was with all the time, P47's, P38's & P51's, sure are attractive over enemy territory! Just after passing Hanover we saw our first flak bursts, which were moderate in amount, but very accurate! One plane from our group was hit and peeled off from the formation with his no.3 engine on fire!

Another plane crashed into a river, I saw five chutes come out, later on 8 were reported altogether!

We reached the target without further trouble and left it smoking and burning! We returned by way of the Baltic Sea, across Denmark & then over the North Sea to England.

The entire trip took us around eleven hours! We were only on oxygen a very short while as we were never over 15,000ft throughout the mission!

Much to our surprise & relief we saw no fighters during the flight! There was only one flak barrage to sweat out and it was only moderate!

Our Group was missing one ship but the 8th lost sixty-four on the day's operations.

8<sup>th</sup> Air Force  
384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
547<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy)  
Humbles Crew

## **Mission 2**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #90**

**Date** 18 April 1944  
**Aircraft** Ship 441 - Patches II  
**Destination** Oranenburg, Germany  
**Target** Component parts factory F.W.190's

This morning we were gotten up at 6:15. Ate at 7:00 and briefed at 8:00!

The courses are marked to & from the target on the map by colored strings! When the curtain in front of the map was pulled it ran nearly to Berlin! Boy did the fellows moan!  
Yours truly included!

Our crew were scheduled as spares, to go only in case another ship had to abort, or turn back! None of our own ships turned back so we, another ship, filled up a couple of empty spots in another Groups formation & went in with them!

We were told by the briefing officer that the flak would be meagre to moderate on the route in and intense over the target! It was just that, but was only moderate at the target instead of intense, as briefed!

The Group we were with sure were terrible formation flyers! The Group leader took us all over the country side before we released our bombs! When they finally dumped the bombs, some of our stuck and the Bombardier had to Salvo them!

Some of the flak was accurate over the target, but no serious results!

As we bombed at 24,000ft we had to spend about 5 hours on oxygen! This was another long haul and plenty tiresome!

Our Group didn't see any fighters, however, some were reported by other Groups!

The escort ships, P-38's, P-47's & P-51's were plentiful as usual and very good insurance against enemy fighters!

On the way back we could see all the fire started by Allied bombers, in practically all of Germany! It must have been a widespread operation!

The trip lasted about 8 or 8.5 hours & we were ready for the sack!

Our Group didn't suffer any loss, but the Air Force did! We sure sweat 'em out!

## **Mission 3**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #91

**Date** 19 April 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Kassel, Germany  
**Target** Component parts factory FW-190's

We were gotten up at 3:00 this morning, briefed at 4:00 for a plane parts factory at Kassel, Germany!

It looked to be a rough mission as the last trip there cost 12 planes! We were told there would be meager to moderate flak going in and it was halfway between the two! There was a pretty good barrage over the target! We got several bursts very close and could feel it hit the ship! One of these put about seven holes in the root of our left wing.

We dropped our bombs and could see that they were good hits!

The trip was supposed to last around 6.5 hours, and we spent 4.5 of that on oxygen as we were to bomb at 24,000ft Up to this point this was our shortest mission!

Our fighter cover was good which must have accounted for the fact that we didn't see a single fighter! No one was sorry!

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384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
547<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy)  
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## **Mission 4**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #92**

**Date** 20 April 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Cherbourg, France  
**Target** Rocket Emplacement

This afternoon we were alerted and told to be at Briefing at 1:30! However, there was no briefing for the gunners!

We got all dressed and ready to go without ever being told where we were headed! After we got up in the air, the Pilot and Navigator gave us al the low-down!

They said our target was to be some sort of rocket gun emplacement near Cherbourg, France! It was thought they might be used to shell London!

The mission was very short and saw some flak at the coast and over the target! It was very moderate and did no damage!

Our Group was only over enemy territory about 15 minutes! We were gone six hours and we spent four and a half hours on oxygen!

Would like to see a lot more missions like this one!

## Mission 5

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #93

**Date** 22 April 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Hamm, Germany  
**Target** Marshalling Yards

We were alerted late to-day and briefed for Hamm, Gr. The target was the marshalling yards or railroad yards.

Our secondary purpose was to try to get the Germans to think it was the RAF and flush up their fighters! The GAF has been hitting the RAF pretty hard and knocking down quite a few!

At briefing, we were told to expect moderate flak on the course in and intense flak if we got off course while passing the Ruhr Valley! That is one of the most heavily flak protected areas in Germany!

Enemy fighters were expected but our Group was unmolested!

At the target the flak was moderate, although we were hit by some pieces and picked up several holes in the wings and horizontal stabilizers! No one was touched although one hole was about 12ft from my position!

Our Group didn't lose a ship on this mission-

Coming back across the coast the Group Navigator lead us too near to Actend (sp?) and we caught a lot of unnecessary flak! No one was hit badly & all came through!

The formation was tight until the flak started to burst but then the Group spread out all over the sky trying to evade it!

One ship straggled for over half the trip and had to land at the first field because they were so riddled with flak! Over 150 holes were counted in the ship!

This mission gets us the Air Medal!

*In addition to these notes a loose piece of paper was included but was probably written some time later:*

<b>Pilot</b>	A.T. Humbles	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	<i>* May not fly with us anymore, in that case Pete is the Bomb!</i>
<b>Co-Pilot</b>	K.M. Blackburn	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt.	
<b>Navigator</b>	D.T. Milne	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt.	<i>(?) Dunn is injured and may not fly with us anymore!</i>
<b>*Bombardier</b>	J.I. Barton	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt.	
<b>Engineer</b>	W.B. Keith	T/Sgt	
<b>Radio Operator</b>	R.A. Wardell	T/Sgt	
<b>Ball Turret</b>	R.L. Foster	S/Sgt	
<b>Waist Gunner</b>	L.W. Dunn	S/Sgt (?)	
<b>Tail Gunner</b>	C. E. McBride	S/Sgt	
<b>Toggleer</b>	C.M. (Pete) Kalinowski	S/Sgt	

## Mission 6

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #94

**Date** 24 April 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Oberpoffenhofen, Germany  
**Target** Assembly plant for fighter planes

This was really a lulu! We got up at 4 o'clock briefed at 5:00 and were on our way to Munich by 9 o'clock!

We were briefed for meagre to moderate flak from the coast to the target, with some places en route being exceptions!

They warned us to expect enemy fighters but that we would have fighter cover & support all the way!

Shortly, after crossing the Belgian coast we ran into some flak, which unluckily knocked down the lead ship in our squadron!

As it went down we could see no 4 engine and the wing behind burning! Two chutes came out of it shortly before it exploded in mid air! This was the same crew that had been in trouble two days before!

Just after we passed Paris, a ship pulled out of formation for no apparent reason! Three men bailed out, but only two of the chutes were seen to open. The ship seemed to be O.K. but no more men bailed out. It kept turning back towards the Channel, the last we saw of it, it was still going strong!

Approximately halfway to the target, we were jumped by about 5 F.W. 190's! They only made one or two passes, but one B-17 went down! Four chutes were seen to open & more were reported later on!

Just before we turned on the bomb run we saw the last of our fighter cover and saw them next about 2.5 hours later!

During that time, we had 1 hour and 40 minutes worth of Jerry fighters! FW190's, ME109's & 209's!

We made the bomb run in spite of the flak and fighters which were bothering us!

The target was well hit, so well in fact that Gen. Travis, wing comdr., complimented us for it!

Just before we started the bomb run, we lost the ship flying No.6 in our formation, he dropped back and was just straggling along for a long while! He followed for some time and then I saw him turn off toward Switzerland, wasn't sure it was him as there were several ships straggling! But we heard later on that that crew had made it safe to Switzerland!

Bob Belknap, from S.W.F.B in St. Louis, was a waist gunner with that crew! Also knew the tail gunner, Bob Jones very well!

Eight ships went to Switzerland that day. So many that the Swiss gov't protested to the U.S. & British gov't's about the violation of their neutrality!

The flak on the target and after the target was past, and even before the target, the flak was heavy and intense and even some experienced crews expressed the opinion that it was a rough mission!

Our No 1 & 3 engines had flak in them and No 1 had oil flowing or leaking out over the nacelle. No 3 had some damaged parts and wasn't in good shape at all! The formation was spread all over! Things in general were snafu!

Even though we had oil coming from No1 the pilot kept using it! We managed to come back with the Group, without further trouble!

About 20 minutes after the last enemy fighters left us we picked up some P-51's for escort! At first we didn't identify them at first, but we soon found out for sure!

Our Squadron lost three crews and the whole Group lost about six ships besides!

As we came over the coast, the engineer asked how far we were from the field as our gas was pretty low!

When we got to the field our pilot asked for landing priority as we were low on gas and two bad engines! They let us come in as soon as possible! There were a log of ships coming in with hydraulic systems out and no brakes! Several ran off the runway and two I know got out of control on the taxi strip, what confusion!

One just got stopped before it took off thru the woods!

The battle damage for to-day was tremendous! Nine ships & crews, thirteen injured and two dead! That was from our Group only! Almost every ship had some flak holes in them!

Hope that is the worst one we ever see!

## Mission 7

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #98

**Date** 29 April 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** "Big B" Berlin, Germany  
**Target** Fredrichstrasse Bridge

This is one we have been dreading to have come up! It is a long, rough heavily flakked trip! They got us up at 3 o'clock and were briefed at 4:30! The strings ran right to the bright red spot that encircles Berlin! One of the most heavily flakked areas in Germany, it ranks with the Ruhr Valley!

Everything went O.K. until we formed and were almost across the Channel! Then we lost three planes from our Group, among them the Group leader! The deputy lead moved up to lead position and we took the vacated spot! The remaining holes were filled by our spares!

Almost as soon as we hit the coast we had flak thrown at us in varied quantities! The deputy navigator must have lead us near all the flak fields! We were flying to the C.B.W. right and they avoided the flak, while we seemed to be getting it all!

It was overcast and our fighters seemed to be plentiful! However, as soon as they left us about halfway to the target, we were late and off course, we were attacked, at least one ship in our Group was, by a single M.E. 109! It passed under our formation and went behind us! For 10 or 15 minutes he played around back there, finally climbing to our level! Shortly after reaching our height he made a single pass at the No.6 plane in our low squadron and even tho the gunners tried their best the ship must have been hit bad, for it peeled away from the formation and headed for the clouds with the fighter after him! About that time a P-51 came batlin' down for the 109 & chased him away!

From this point until we were about one-third the way from the coast we were in flak almost constantly with short intervals being the exception! Over the target & on the bomb run, 15 minutes, we were in heavy flak and it was as bad if not worse than Oberpoffenhofen!

We were never attacked again, directly, by fighters, but other Groups, off to our right seemed to be getting heavy attacks! We could see them trying to fight off the fighters, and the 20mm cannon shells bursting, as well as the conns winking in their wings!

There were several stragglers, one B-17 & 2 B-24's who felt the force of the fighter attack. The B-17 was attacked and went down, one B-24 was attacked by five enemy fighters in trail and it went down in flames fortunately, most of the crew got out! The other B-24 was hit and right away he dove for the clouds and got away I'm sure!

It is very hard to sit there and see them all alone trying to chase off the fighters!

The target was overcast and couldn't be seen so they just dropped them in the general vicinity! From the news report we did a pretty good job!

We were flying a pitifully poor formation, the high squadron was everywhere but in position. More than once they got too close to us! It is only by the Grace of God that we weren't attacked!

The 8th A.F. lost 63 bombers, but we only contributed one to that total! We had several flak holes, but none serious!

## **Mission 8**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #99**

**Date** 01 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Baix, France  
**Target** Airfield

This mission actually lasted about six hours, but we flew almost twelve hours!

They came around about nine o'clock and told us to hit the sack as we would get an early call! We did at 12:30 they woke us up and we went to eat and then to briefing!

We must have spent at least 3 hours in briefing!

It was to be part practice & part mission! The first part was practice at nite take-off & assembly in preparation for the Invasion!

The real mission started about 9 o'clock and we were headed for rocket emplacement! The weather officer told us it would be clear but we had a real thick undercast and couldn't see below us the most part of the time!

Flak was supposedly meagre to moderate at the coast and intense over the target! We didn't see a burst of flak all the while!

When we got to the target, it was so overcast that we couldn't bomb it! We had no P.F.F. ship along as this was only a Group bombing mission!

The Group leader decided to pick on an airfield which we had passed on our course!

The formation made a 360 turn over enemy territory and found a no drift heading to bomb on and released the bombs! Even with all this stooging around they missed the airfield almost entirely!

We then headed home and arrived there within an hour afterward! The briefing officer said we would only be over enemy territory about 50 minutes, which we only exceeded a very little!

There were no fighters or flak at all and can't say I'm sorry!

We landed about 11:30 and spent the rest of the day sacked up.

## Mission 9

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #101

**Date** 07 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Berlin, Germany (again)  
**Target** Railroad Station

Again we went to the "Big B"!

Another early morning awakening and briefing and off we go to bomb Berlin, the "Hub of Nazidom"

At briefing this morning, we were told that the target wasn't definite and it might be changed at the last moment to a seaplane base on the north western coast of Germany! However, at take off time the navigator told us it was definitely Berlin!

The flak was supposed to be meager to moderate from the coast, unless we happened too close to a big flak area around one of the larger towns! We had a good navigator to-day and the flak was as briefed.

At the target it was moderately intense!

All the way from the coast to target there was a heavy undercast, which pleased us greatly!

However, at the target it thinned out and we could see the ground.

The briefing officer told us we would see enemy fighters, but glad to say he was wrong! Not an enemy plane was to be seen by our wing!

The mission lasted eight hours, approximately, and of that time we spent 5.5 hours on oxygen! The only bad parts of the trip was a poor formation, especially over the target and shortly after; sweating out the flak; and a long, tiresome ride! The flak suit sure does get heavy!

No one was missing from our Grp. with but one exception! One ship in the low squadron had two feathered engines and had to jettison his bomb load & leave the formation! Might have gone to Sweden! Our ship got one big flak hole in the right wing, otherwise we were unhurt!

This was the Grp's 100th mission!

## **Mission 10**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #103**

**Date** 08 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Cherbourg, FR  
**Target** Anti Invasion works!

At 2 o'clock this morning we were waked and told to eat and go to briefing!

We were briefed at 3 o'clock to do a "grape-fruit" job on Cologne! However, before we were even ready to take-off it was scrubbed!

Back we went to the sack, at 12 o'clock we were again told to go eat and report to the briefing room! This time it was a short one to the Brist peninsula! It was supposed to be a short, milk run!!

It was briefed to be five hours long, three hours on oxygen. The flak was supposed to be meagre to moderate from the coast to the target, and intense on the target! There was no flak up to the target, where it was intense!

One ship received a hit and was demolished, while another got a direct hit on the tail and it was knocked off! It went down steady for awhile and then started to spin. One chute was seen to open!

The formation scattered to the four winds when the flak started popping! Things were sure a mess for a little while!

When the Bombardier tried to open the doors, for some reason they wouldn't open! The engineer had to crank them down! Just as they opened the lead ship released his bombs & so did we, it was instantaneous timing!

After we got out of the flak, things were normal until we got home!

Our waist gunner dug a piece of flak from a one-man dinghy! It came from behind the right waist window & angled down! We had about 5 holes in all, none serious!

One group from our base went to Berlin & didn't lose a ship, we got to the coast & lose three!

One crew that went down was from our squadron and on their second mission! They had to hit the deck and ditched! 3 men were picked up in a dinghy!

Reports were received that 8 men bailed out!

## **Mission 11**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #100**

**Date**            06 May 1944  
**Aircraft**        *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination**   Berlin, Ger.  
**Target**           (Recalled)

We were recalled from this mission just as we were over the enemy coast! Confirmation of credit was only verified last night!

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## **Mission 12**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #105B**

**Date** 11 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Ehrang, Ger  
**Target** Marshaling Yards

This was an afternoon job and was one of those where the gunners were not briefed!

The officers were briefed and they in turn briefed us! They told us our target was to be a marshaling yard near Luxemborg in Germany! We were to hit the center of the yards while two other groups were to hit either end!

We took off at 4:00 and were due back at 9:15.

The flak was supposed to be meagre to moderate at the coast but we didn't see any, good navigator, on the route in we were supposed to hit flak at Brussels, Leige, and several large towns, we didn't see a burst! At the target flak was to be moderate to none at all, there wasn't any! The whole trip was like that!

We were told to expect enemy fighters and there were none!

Our escort was wonderful, we had P-51's & 47's going in and every P-38 in the E.T.O on the way back. I never saw so many of them in all my days! It was perfect! This was a true milk run, no losses at all.

## Mission 13

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #109

**Date** 18 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Berlin, Ger (Again)  
**Target** General bombing of city

This morning at 5 o'clock to eat and be at briefing by 6 o'clock! As this was to be our 13<sup>th</sup> mission everyone was sweating it out!

For the fifth time we were briefed to fly to Berlin! What a mission to pick for your 13<sup>th</sup> one!

This time we picked a new route to go in & out on! It proved to be a very good one, too! The flak was meagre to moderate, according to the briefing officer! However, it was missing all the way to the target! As usual over Berlin it was heavy and we got our share of holes! The radio op. on a crew in our barracks got hit by flak, a bad wound but he'll be ok after a couple of weeks in the hospital! He had a near miss at Oranenburg, our second mission!

Just before we hit the target on the bomb run, we had a near collision with another ship in our squadron! It slid across into us and if the pilot hadn't seen it I wouldn't be writing now! It was only by the Grace of God and a good pilot that we came out unharmed!

There were supposed to be a lot of fighter opposition, but we didn't see any at all, although some of the fellows said they did!

Our route took us between Kiel & Hamburg and straight down to Berlin, from there out to the Baltic & back across Denmark & the North Sea to England!

When we landed the ground crew found a big piece of flak in the right tire! We had to bring our bombs back because the bomb bay doors goofed up! And if we would have had a flat tire things would really have been rough!

Just to list a few of our mishaps to-day:

- Had to change a set of spark plugs before take-off
- Defective ammo in ball turret
- Navigator pulled CO2 cartridge in Mae West
- Tail Gunner " " " " " "
- Near collision in mid-air
- Bomb bay doors failed to open and we carried bombs back
- Flak holes in ship, main tank & right tire
- Went to interrogation and set at table No.13!

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## **Mission 14**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #111**

**Date** 21 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Calais, France  
**Target** Anti Invasion installation

This was an ideal mission, we got up at 7:30 ate breakfast at 8:00 and briefed at 9:00!

It was a very short mission. The target was only 5 miles from the French coast across the Channel, where it is about 20 miles wide! Our bomb run started just after we left the English coast and continued across the channel to the target!

We weren't up more than four hours, all told! This, so far was our shortest mission!

The flak was supposed to be intense at the target, but there were only about 50 bursts at the very most fired at us!

There were no enemy fighters sighted and no ships lost!

From the time we left the English coast until we got to it on the way back wasn't more than 25 minutes!

We used a new type formation to-day. Only had a 13 ship group.

## Mission 15

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #112

**Date** 22 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Kiel, Germany  
**Target** Factory buildings

Another good start for a mission but no so good an ending! We go up at 6:00, briefed at 7:00 and took off at 9:00!

We were to bomb some war factories near the ship yards at Kiel! It was to be a fairly short mission, about six hours, with 3.5 hrs on oxygen! Most of the trip was over the North Sea, spending 42 minutes over enemy territory!

The flak was to be intense at the target! The IP was at the Danish coast and the bomb run was 14 minutes long! We had a little flak before we reached the target, but as we went over we had it! The flak was right on us! We got to hits, one of them got our waist gunner, Dunn, in the right thigh. About an inch deep cut, a grazing blow, that glanced off the wing in thru the window! The other hit the nose and almost got our navigator! One piece went through the armor plate and hit the pilots right rudder pedal slightly!

We lost one ship to the flak, the crew all bailed out, except on man, although the ship wasn't visibly damaged!

It was pretty cold on this trip, had a new type tail turret and it's pretty breezy!

Our fighter protection was ample, but we didn't see any enemy fighters!

This is the halfway mark & gives us two clusters to the Air Medal!

8<sup>th</sup> Air Force  
384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group  
547<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy)  
Humbles Crew

## **Mission 16**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #113**

**Date** 23 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Saarbrucken, Germany  
**Target** Railway yards (P.F.F.)

At 1:30 this morning we were waked for this mission! We ate at 2:00 & briefed and 3:00!

This was the secondary target, we couldn't bomb the first an airfield, because it was overcast, so we went in on the secondary!

It was located near the southeastern border of France in Ger!

The trip lasted about 6hrs & a half, three hours on oxygen! This was the biggest disadvantage to the flight!

We were briefed for meagre to moderate flak over the entire route! Weren't briefed for flak over the secondary, but it was meagre and far below us! No one was even close enough to it to hear it explode! Almost a milk run!

Our fighter support was slim going in, but coming out they were plentiful, P-51's - P-47's & P-38's. They sure do look good zipping around us! The more we see, the better we like it!

Take-off was 5:20 & we got back about 12:30!

## **Mission 17**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #114

**Date** 24 May 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Berlin, Ger (again)  
**Target** Center of City

Again we went to the "Big B" and as usual we were to bomb P.F.F.

At 2:00 this morning they woke us for 3:00 briefing. We took off at 6:30 and didn't get back until at 4:30! It was a hectic trip! The route took us across the North Sea and then down to Berlin! The clouds were very heavy & thick and we had to climb above them!

Just before we reached the Danish Coast, a straggling group of B-17's were jumped by ME-109's & got one of the B-17's! Later on, just off the bomb run & away from the target some FW's jumped our group and one plane went down, also one FW 190 went down too! The pilot bailed out! We had one plane come in directly on our sqdns tail, but so many were shooting at him he wasn't too brave! They kept pestering us almost two hours!

The flak was negligible from the coast to the target, where it was the usual Berlin flak! No one got hit seriously, although one gunner was killed & another was wounded in the leg! One ship was lost from the Group!

The navigator was a little off to-day & on the return trip we got a lot of unnecessary flak! The clouds were thick under us!

This was the worst since Oberpfoffenhofen!

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## **Mission 18**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #126**

**Date**            05 June 1944  
**Aircraft**        *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination**    Cherbourg, Pinin!  
**Target**            Anti Invasion installation

This was one of those dream missions! Little flak, no fighters!

We got up at 2 o'clock were told to go back to bed, waked again at 3 o'clock & told we would be briefed at 5 o'clock!

It was a short mission and we were only over enemy territory a very few minutes, 15 to be exact!

Our target was an area in which excavation, indicating anti-invasion defenses, were photographed!

The trip was mostly over water and therefore we saw no flak until we started on the bomb run! It was supposed to be P.F.F., but the P.F.F. Bombardier was briefed for another target and we had to make a 360 turn over the enemy coast and make another run on our target! Just after we released our bombs and got the doors closed, we saw some meagre flak but it was below us about 500ft although they were tracking our lead squadron! No one was hit!

After that it was just a matter of flying back that we had to do! It was a very easy mission!

## **Mission 19**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #129

**Date** 06 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Caen, Fr. Invasion Day  
**Target** Road Junction

We were gotten up, for a second mission, one had already left as we were being briefed!

It was to be more or less a ground support mission, as the assault troops were hitting & had made landings earlier in the morning! We are in the second group of airplanes that went over that morning!

Our target was a road hub, supplying German troops! The idea was to break their supply lines & disrupt troop movement!

This was a four hour mission and we saw no flak at all and not a single fighter!

We were briefed for bombing visually and therefore had no P.F.F. ship! It so happened that we couldn't see the ground at all and all our targets were covered so we had to bring our bombs back & so may not get credit for this mission, for that reason!

They had us scheduled for another mission in the afternoon but had to call it off because of bad weather!

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## **Mission 20**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #130**

**Date**            07 June 1944  
**Aircraft**        *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination**    Conde-Sur-Noirreane  
**Target**          Road Hub

We were gotten up at six o'clock for this one and again it was to the area ahead of the advancing invasion force!

It was similar to our previous mission, except that we dropped our bombs!

The trip was an hour longer but just as easy! We saw no flak at all and again, no enemy fighters!

They had us up for another mission to-day, but scrubbed it for some reason!

Heard to-day that the tour was indefinite, no going home!

## **Mission 21**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #131

**Date**            08 June 1944  
**Aircraft**        *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination**   Orleans, Fr.  
**Target**           Bridge & Marshaling yards

This was an early morning deal-got up at 2:00 & took off about 6:00! Our E.T.R. was 11:30!  
It was about 5 hours and a half long mission!

Our target was a bridge near Orleans, France and a marshaling yard!

It was supposed to be visual bombing, but when we got to our primary, it was just under the edge of an overcast and we couldn't bomb! We went to the secondary and it was overcast too! So we had to bring our bombs back again. However, we got credit for a mission!

We saw some flak off in the distance, the first in four days! Otherwise, it was a milk run!

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## **Mission 22**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #133**

**Date** 12 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Dinan, France  
**Target** Railroad bridge

We were gotten up at 2:30 and told to be at briefing at 3:00! We were briefed to bomb a railroad bridge which was carrying supplies to the German troops who were opposing our invasion forces!

The trip was to last about 5.5 hours and our E.T.R. was before noon!

Flak was to be negligible, none at the target & railroad guns along the front line! No sooner than we got to the lines and we started getting flak! It was only moderate, but very accurate and lasted only a few minutes on the way in & that was the last we saw of it!

Made the bomb run and all three groups hit the bridge! The bombs were all well grouped, but on returning to the base we learned there were two bridges and we hit the wrong one! Woe is me!

The return trip was made without event and at the English coast we broke away from the formation & brought our "hot" camera home!

An easy mission!

## Mission 23

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #135

**Date** 14 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Coullomiere, France  
**Target** Airfield

Another early morning mission, only this time we weren't briefed! Just picked up our clothes and went to the ship!

It was a 6:20 min trip and was uneventful & we had no trouble until we went to make our bomb run! On the first run the Bombardier couldn't see the target, for the clouds, so we made a second run! This time we had a dry run & as no trouble was encountered we made a third run, this time we couldn't see the target at all! As our gas was getting low, we couldn't make another run so we started home!

As we passed Paris we were caught in the flak on the edge of town! One ship was hit in the engine and dropped out! It was almost heavy flak and enough of it! After we left Paris we had no more trouble and came oh home!

One of the other groups from our base lost 2 ships, first ones in two weeks! This had all the earmarks of a milk-run but turned out otherwise! This was our first attempt at Group Lead!

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## **Mission 24**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #137**

**Date** 16 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Meaux, France  
**Target** Airfield

We were gotten up at 2:30 for this and got all ready to fly! Had even taxied out to take off & the mission was scrubbed! So back to the barracks we came!

About 2:30 in the afternoon, we were called out again & repeated the process, except we took off & proceeded on our way!

Our target was an airfield in northern France, north of Paris!

Our course took us over the Channel and into France! It was almost completely overcast, until we approached the target! The clouds broke up, but not sufficiently to allow good bombing! Our Group Bombardier had to use G.G (could be an H) equipment!

We were briefed to miss all flack except at the target, where it was moderate, but accurate! Our fighter support consisted of P-38's!

The trip back was uneventful and no ships were lost, although some gunners were wounded!

Our flying time was about 6:30 min.! The target was hit, but not to well by our group!

## Mission 25

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #138

**Date** 18 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Hamburg, Ger  
**Target** Oil Refineries

This one started at one o'clock in the morning & lasted until 2:30 this p.m.! We took off about 5:20 & assembled.

Our target was some important refineries which were major parts of Germany's gasoline supply! They were located in the southern section of Hamburg! Almost the whole 8th was on that target area!

We were supposed to bomb visually, but as we flew over the North Sea and down between Kiel & Hamburg the clouds were completely closed in and we ended up bombing P.F.F.! We could only see small patches of ground! Our Bombardier dropped by guess more than anything else & if we hit our target we were lucky!

Flak was to be meagre to moderate from the coast in, which it was! Luckily none of our Grp. was hit seriously & we came out O.K.! Our fighter support wasn't heavy but we did have some protection!

Our trip out was interrupted only by flak at some distance! The mission lasted about 6:30 min!

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## **Mission 26**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #140**

**Date** 19 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Pas de Calais  
**Target** Robot plane installation

This was just about the shortest mission we have made so far! Only lasted a matter of 4 hours & a few minutes! It was just a few miles in from the coast!

This was an afternoon mission, the group had gone out in the morning and some didn't drop their bombs! We went to the target and dropped P.F.F.

The group assembled and we headed for France, we didn't expect to get a lot of flak, although the area was is one of the most heavily flakked places in Europe! As we were going in we had a few bursts thrown at us, and that was all until we started on the bomb run, as it was "G" we were doing good evasive action! Again the flak came up, only this time it was more accurate and right on our course! Two of our ships had to drop out of formation on account of flak hits, but both came back O.K.! As soon as we left the target we headed for home, taking precautions against flak all the while, however we didn't get any!

## **Mission 27**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #142

**Date** 21 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Berlin, Ger.  
**Target** Main Railway Station

At 1:20am we were gotten up and told to eat and be at briefing at 2:30!

We found out at briefing that again our target was "Big B" for the sixth time! Of course it was appreciated by no one.

It was to be about a 9 hour mission, five of them on oxygen! Another D.P. of which we are so fond? Our course was across the N. Sea & down across Denmark & through Germany to circle around & come back in on the city!

The weather was fairly cloudy until we got to the bomb run and then the contrails got very thick! Couldn't see our low group at all, at times! They dropped P.F.F., but we could see the city through large openings in the clouds & contrails! Couldn't see where the (our) bombs hit, but did see the wings hit and they made a mess of part of downtown Berlin! There was a smoke cloud almost 20,000' high after our following wing dropped! We had pretty good fighter support & the only flak we encountered was at Berlin, itself. Where it wasn't as heavy as on previous missions! Our group lost no ships! The trip out was uneventful!

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## **Mission 28**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #144**

**Date** 22 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Lille, France  
**Target** Marshalling Yards

This was a 'quickie' and the gunners didn't get a briefing

It was a short raid to a railroad yard in France! It only lasted about 4:15 min and although we were supposed to see a lot of flak, we didn't see any burst that were dangerously close!

We didn't have any trouble with enemy fighters as we had a pretty fair fighter escort

Our lead bombardier dropped 3000yds short of the yards!

We went in across the narrowest part of the channel and went out over Belgium & Holland!

Our Group didn't lose any airplanes at all the only flak we worried about was just over the target!

I flew my first mission with another crew!

## **Mission 29**

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #146

**Date** 25 June 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Sens, France  
**Target** Bridge

Another "quickie" at 1:30 in the afternoon! We rushed down & got our clothes and went to the ship!

About 4:15 they started the engines and we taxied out & took off.

Had trouble assembling, but finally we got together and took off on course!

We went to a bridge south of Paris and bombed it good!

Our Navigator led us around most all the flak but we did get about 15 or 20 close bursts, but no one was hit or hurt!

We had good escort and didn't see any enemy fighters at all! The major who was flying with us called them over to us so we'd be sure to have protection!

The trip lasted 7 hours and it was a pretty nice flight!

No ships lost or no one wounded.

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## **Mission 30**

**384<sup>th</sup> Mission #14?**

<b>Date</b>	<i>No Date</i>
<b>Aircraft</b>	<i>Not Mentioned</i>
<b>Destination</b>	St. Omer
<b>Target</b>	Airfield

This was a quickie and we weren't briefed!

We were to bomb a rocket bomb emplacement, but the lead Bomb. missed the target and we bombed an alternate!

It was a short mission, 4.5 hours and no especial (sp?) trouble was anticipated!

We were briefed to expect flak from coast to the target as it was in the Pas de Calais area!

Everything went off O.K. until we started on the bomb run. We saw the other groups drop their bombs & we kept on going and passed the target without dropping!

Then they headed for the alternate and passed it up without dropping there either! We made a 360 and went back for it again and passed it again!

Next we tried for another alternate and couldn't bomb it so we made another 360 & made for the previous airfield we tried to bomb! We passed to one side of it and turned back into it and finally dropped our bombs, almost missing the target completely! By this time we were one of the last Grps over there! so we quickly headed for home! Flak only came at us one time and very meagre then!

## Mission 31

384<sup>th</sup> Mission #153

**Date** 1 July 1944  
**Aircraft** *Not Mentioned*  
**Destination** Leipzig, Ger  
**Target** Ball Bearing Plant

For a final mission, we picked on a long one!

We were gotten up at 2:30 and briefed for Leipzig, Ger the target being a ball bearing plant in the edge of the city!

The flight was about 7.5 hrs. long and oxygen 5 of that! As the briefing officer said we were back in big business, D.P's!

Everyone was expecting a long, hard mission and we were briefed to expect one! The flak was meagre to moderate on the way in and intense over the target! They warned us to expect fighters of any type!

All the way in we didn't get any flak close to our Group and over the target it was fairly intense although it was barrage type and not accurate! We go through it without a hole! That was all the flak we saw anywhere close to us! The whole 8th A.F. hit near Leipzig that day and did a good job too!

We lost several planes, not our Grp. but due to flak & collision mainly and not fighters for our wing didn't see a one! As we passed over our field the four of us who were finishing shot about 60 flares.

It's all over now!