

GOING TO WAR

Personal Account

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**870th Bomb Squadron, 497th Bomb Group
20th Air Force**

Includes Section on Notes from Records

June 14, 1999

GOING TO WAR

On October 16, 1944, five B-29 aircraft departed from the Air Base at Herrington, Kansas (known as "old herring bone") with our combat aircraft and crew for SAIPAN. They were all from the 570th Bomb Squadron of the 497th Bomb Group. -A-22 piloted by Major

Hanley took off first. He was followed by Captain Arnold, A -27; Lt. Col Haynes, Squadron Commander in A-21; Captain Beard in A-24; and Lt. Hamilton in A-25. We were to land at Mather Field in Sacramento, Ca. All arrived safely.

Hanley and Haynes arrived on Saipan on October 23, 1944, while Beard and Hamilton arrived on October 24, 1944. Capt. Arnold and crew arrived on October 29, 1944, with some tall *tales* about why it took us so long to get there. We spent Oct. 17 through 21 at Mather field. A pickup truck carrying a light standard drove under our left wing. There wasn't enough clearance and the result, was a damaged left aileron. We had our crew chief and our assistant crew chief as passengers to Saipan, so they went to work and repaired the damage. In the meantime, the officers decided it was time to paint the 'Texas Doll' on the nose of the plane. This took a full day, and then I volunteered to paint the names of the crew members at their approximate positions. We had to requisition paint and brushes etc. to do this job. We also requisitioned such other needed items. These items were pillows, sheets and pillowcases which stowed nicely in the front bomb bay.

Departed Mather on the morning of 10-22-44 and arrived at John Rogers field, next to Hickham on the Island of Oahu in the afternoon. Here we enjoyed a cold Beer and our third or fourth night of attending the movie which featured John Wayne and Ella Raines in that great Western called Tall in the Saddle. Saw it again at least six more times while passing our time in the beautiful Pacific.

We departed John Rogers on 10-23-44 heading for Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. We didn't get there on the 23rd. A little while out of Oahu our number four engine started spouting black smoke. It turned out that an oil line had ruptured and was leaking oil on the hot manifold. (This is like having oil drop on your car muffler. It could just smoke or it could cause a fire). I remember Capt. Arnold yelling, "Hey Radio, how do I call Johnson Island?" I said, "hell captain, you can't do that". That was not a very smart thing for a Sergeant to say to a Captain; however, we were both briefed on strict "radio silence" and he was about to break radio silence. He agreed to have the Navigator give me the E.T.A. for Johnson, and I encoded the message and "called them" using CW

(carrier wave) transmission. This was an emergency. Twenty minute later we are landing on a 5500 foot long runway that was four feet above sea level. (Our training runways were 12,500 feet long), Arnold was a good pilot. He hit the runway about the 100' "marker", the brakes were hit hard, the plane went straight down the runway, and we stopped about 150' from the end. We turned around – off to the side - and were greeted by the islands three fire trucks and their crews who were immediately pumping foam in, out, over, and through #4 engine.

Next follows the saga of Johnson Island: - A Navy Captain (out ranks an army Captain) comes down the runway in a jeep. We all pop to attention while our Captain salutes the Navy's. They make small talk and the Navy gets a tour of the first B-29 to land on Johnson Island. Deep-sea fishing follows two days later. Meantime the Marines are put on guard around the plane. No one is allowed on board except the crew. The firehouse personnel (Navy) have a guy from Florida who lived quite close to Lake Butler, Fl. - home to Riherd, our Radar Operator. Firehouse offers us Fresh water showers. Marines offer us special area in a quonset hut for us to bed down. Barthold picks 18 of 20 correct winners in the football pool and in January receives his winnings. Riherd and Linke ask the Marine Sgt. to "help" them with a chore onboard the plane. #1 Marine gets to see inside of B-29. Sgt. replaces the Cpl. of the guard so Barthold can have help with radio. Soon the small band of Marines have all been inside the plane. Now the firemen are taken to see the repaired engine - one at a time. Now a Mine Sweeper comes in for provisioning. Navy sees that our crew, minus Shaw who will come over later, is invited on board just before a check run of about an hour is made. (The back end of the mine sweeper seems to be under water to me). This is the last relaxed fun we have for a long time. I enjoyed the last fresh orange I will taste until I return home. (No apples either). We know we will leave tomorrow to fly to Kwajalein. Captain Arnold studies the takeoff distance of 5,500 feet. The flight Engineer (Lt. Rock) calculates the weight of the plane. Right at the beginning of the runway is a short 50' of concrete at a 90^o angle to the runway. Pilot and Co-pilot figure out how to have engines wide open while "standing" on the brakes - then release the brakes on command, turn plane 90^o to left while in motion down the runway. This is worth about 200 to 300 feet of runway. Hope it works, since we have never taken off using 5500 feet of runway.

After breakfast on October 27, 1944 the above mentioned plan is put to the test. It worked! We had about 100 feet of runway when the wheels came up off the ground. We were now airborne about 5 to 10 feet above the Pacific. We gained altitude for about five minute, and then called the tower for a clear runway. We roared back across the runway about 25' above the surface, but

lower than the top of the control tower at about 250 miles per hour. (Johnson had about 1,500 people on the island which was 5,500 feet long and about 3,000 feet wide. They all lined the runway when we landed, and they all turned out to witness the take-off).

We continue westward and cross the International Date Line and we land on hot sandy Kwajalein on October 28th. We left as early as we could on the 29th and finally arrived on Saipan. Our home was a new and unoccupied quonset hut for the enlisted men. Quarters for the Officers was about the same, but not as crowded. For our first few nights we had the hut to ourselves (no other crews as of this time). We had cots to sleep on but we did not have any mattresses or pillows for those sheets and pillowcases we ordered back at Mather in Sacramento. These problems were solved when we got our beer rations and located where the needed items could be bargained for - for the beer that is. There were four of us who bargained - Riherd, Linke, Simon, and Barthold. Shaw had not yet arrived and Pete was a loner who went his own way. There was the weak link in the Arnold crew. When a man is not a part of the team, the team is actually minus one man.

Nov 2, 1944 Truck A-27 Texas Doll

Took off in the morning and reached our target - Dublon Island- Midday in bright sunshine. Dropped our bombs with no flack and no opposition. Returned in early afternoon. NOTE: - This was a Japanese naval base that by this time was largely by-passed and. neutralized. We did not see any ships; however, they apparently received supplies and still controlled the base. This was considered a training mission.

Nov 5, 1944 Iwo Jima A-27 Texas Doll

A daylight mission of about seven hours (plus). Two, part of the Bonin Islands was the target. We were to bomb from 28,000 feet. We had trouble with our number 2 engine and we were the last plane over the target, flying at 20,000 feet. Our bombs hit the runway but in the meantime they were putting up some moderate flack. They had bursts on both sides of us but we were on our way out and were OK. Iwo is about two and a half square miles.

This was considered a training mission.

11-24-44 Tokyo A-39

First big raid on Japan. The target is the Musashino Aircraft Tokyo. The B70th had a seven-plane formation the 20 planes of the 497th. (869th had nine - four planes were from the B71st.) We did not fly the Texas Doll due to a rough engine. Went over target at 28,000'. Flack was light, but we

had 31 passes on the squadron by Tajos and Nicks. We scored one Tojo as a probable) At 0350Z after hitting the target Sam Wagner, the #7 ship in our formation was rammed in the tail by a Tojo. The plane went down at 35°10' N, 141°20' E. We thought our bombing was pretty good. We got a lot of opposition since we had 31 passes on our formation while the Wing only recorded 59 passes in total. A 13½ hour round trip.

11-29-44 Tokyo A-24 Wheel'N Deal

We took off about SPM in the afternoon in order to be over Tokyo around Midnight. Carried 20 bombs: 17 incendiary and three fragmentation clusters totaling 7,000 pounds. We went over individually at 30,000'. Our target was the slum area of Tokyo where the population was 135,000 per square mile. Over the target we had ten tenths cloud coverage, so bombing was by radar. There was some question about the radar working properly; however, I recall Guy (navigator) changing the range on the radar and saying, "1'11 be damned, I just bombed Yokohama." After our return and the debriefing, we were met by an Associated Press man who took our names and our home towns. This was for "home front morale". It led to a call by the Globe Democrat to Mom at 3006 Delavan Dr. and my picture and a short article about the St. 'Louis Boy who was on the first B-29 raid on Yokohama. On the mission, we had no opposition. Did not fly in the Texas Doll because a blister was being replaced.

12-13-44 Nagoya A-27 Texas Doll

We can chalk up a couple more firsts for ourselves on this one. The only good first we can claim is that we flew our first mission to the Jap mainland in the Texas Doll. (This was the first that our crew flew her to the Jap mainland). The other good first (?) was that this was the first mission with Nagoya as the target. We carried ten 500-pound bombs and the aircraft factory (Mitsubishi) received all ten of them. Had an excellent bombing run. We had some more firsts, but all of the bad variety. We were flying in a three-plane formation (dumb) with The 'Doll' to the left of the lead plane, slightly to the rear. Our gunners counted fourteen attacks by Tojos and Nicks. These passes came from above and out of the sun. They attacked us head on – 11 o'clock high. The front top turret was firing like crazy. These explosions were right above my head and I could hear the spent casings "tinkle down" into the bottom of the turret. We were hit, the cabin decompressed and a white mist appeared for about a second or two. Then, "Hey Radio, Holloman is hit." The bottom fell out of my stomach - and terror set in. This lasted two or three seconds and I was filling my walk around oxygen bottle and grabbing the first aid kit when someone else hollered" Dave was hit. Unfortunately, by the time I got around the turret and

moved past the navigator I could see the oxygen mask was not covering Dave's nose and mouth. When I finally checked him out it was too late. Now we worried about the plane. The nose area was a mess. Simon, tail gunner was wounded, our 'Doll was "wounded" also. The rudder was damaged, the right elevator and the left aileron had been damaged. The bomb bay doors had holes in them (no problem) and the horizontal stabilizers also had holes in them. This is what we rode in for seven more hours of anxiety and prayer. The magnetic compass and the radio compass was all that was working. Guy got up in the dome "shot some stars" (used his sextant) to get a fix on where we were. It was dark when we approached Saipan, and the ambulances were there to meet us. Everyone was shaken and scared out of several years' growth. Simon is OK. The Texas Doll will be in the plane hospital for a couple of weeks. I took a sleeping powder for the first time in my life - after debriefing. It didn't work. The only other first I want is to be the first to go home.

NOTE: - On 12-27-44 we again boarded the Texas Doll for a mission to Tokyo. About an hour from Japan our #1 engine started to give us problems and it had to be feathered. So, we have three "fans" to get us home. Our plane, just repaired and checked out was not flying so well. We skirted Iwo and kept moving away from a Jap fighter. (He, apparently, did not want to get out of sight of his beloved Iwo). As we approached Saipan, we had cracked rocker box covers on #2, and #4 was throwing oil. Twelve hours of flying and no credit for a mission.

1-3-45 Nagoya A-27 Texas Doll

Test hopped the plane twice this date and got the OK to fly a night mission to Nagoya. The squadron went on a daylight incendiary mission and we are to follow up with a midnight call. We took 15 fragmentation bombs to shake up the fire fighters. (That's the theory of it). We had ten tenths coverage of our target, so we had a radar run on Nagoya. We encountered a few bursts of Flack and suspected a night fighter might be in the vicinity. All went well. Fourteen hours and 30 minutes of flying.

1-9-45 Tokyo A-27 Texas Doll

Took off in the morning for Tokyo. Plans were for a group formation. There was ten tenths coverage all the way up to the Jap homeland. Then about thirty miles from the islands, the coverage lifted. Soon we found two other plane breaking out of coverage. Capt. Arnold said, "no more three plane formations." He chose to hit the secondary target and we bombed Ito Harbor and then made our way back through the soup to Saipan. 13 hours and 2 minutes.

1-19-45 Osaka A-25 Peace On Earth

Lt. Hamilton is now our Pilot and our plane is A-25. The bombs have been moved to the front bomb bay and we carry only one bomb bay tank in the rear bay. We were in a 17-plane Group formation. Target was the Kawasaki engine plant in Akashi, which is part of the Osaka area. We made it the Jap homeland but a prop governor froze (in effect giving us just three good engines) so we bombed the secondary target. The group, meanwhile, hit the target from 26,000' under perfect visual conditions. It got plastered. In the air for 14 hours and 3 minutes.

2-4-45 Kobe A-25 Peace On Earth

Took off at 2058Z (evening of the 3rd) for our target, which was that part of Kobe, which will burn the best. We led the right element of four planes. 497th had 12 planes and the 498th followed with 24 planes in two 12 plane formations. Bombs away at 0558Z on 2-4-45. It took nine hours to reach the target. We went in upwind at 28,000'. We had three attacks from 12 o'clock and one from 3 o'clock. We were over Japan for one hour and twenty minutes due to headwinds of 170 knots. Bombed by radar through nine-tenths coverage. Landed at Saipan at 1158Z for 15 hours of flying. This completes the record of the training flights and the first seven official combat missions. You have the record of the missions flown with the J. N. Campbell crew. I will include a couple of pages of comments and other information. Side notes, if you please.

SIDE NOTES: - Pages A through 'E at end of Missions.

NOTES FROM RECORDS OF S/SGT CARL H. BIRTHOLD - J.M. CAMPBELL CREW.

2-15-45 Mission #25 Plane A-21 THUMPER

Took off at 2030Z (2-14-45) for our target, a plane factory in Nagoya. We carried thirteen 500-pound general-purpose bombs. We were to lead the number 3 element of the second squadron of the Group formation of 24 planes. 22 took off! The wing had an assembly for the first time. Our #3 and #4 planes had to abort. Had to fly through some very bad weather; two thick cloud layers. The whole Wing formation got separated and we ended up over the coast of Japan in a four-plane "diamond" formation. A-2 was the lead, A-21 on the left, A-5 on the right and T-8 in the last spot. Made an up-wind bomb run at 30,000. Our plane had 12 to 15 fighter attacks on it, with R.G. Didier getting an Irving. Just after "bombs away" we were hit by flak. It entered the right side of the plane, went through the tunnel, and hit CFC man and LG (Smith and Banker). It blew out the left blister and LG was held in by a safety belt. (LG broke off the gun sight). As things calmed down, RG and TG fixed up our casualties. Up front the Co-Pilot, Engineer and Navigator passed out due to not having their oxygen masks in place. We dove down to lower altitude and the Bombardier revived the Engineer; Co-Pilot snapped back quickly when his mask was put on. Radio helped Navigator get back on board after some unplanned dreams. Returned to Saipan at 1130Z (2-15-45) for a 15-hour flight. Two who were wounded and Engineer went to the hospital for a check-up. Our four-plane formation hit the target with 46 of the 52 bombs we carried. General O'Donnell commended the crews of the "four plane formation. Thumper had I.F.F. and VHF shot out, so Radio had to work all the way home.

2-25-45 Mission #27 Plane A-21 THUMPER

Took off at 2100Z (2-24-45) for Tokyo. Carried 16 incendiary and one general-purpose bomb, all of the 500-pound variety. We were to fly lead plane for the group but on the way to the target, our Radar and the lower front gun turret went out of commission, we took the number three position in the formation. Weather was against us again, and we topped out of the clouds at 27,600'. Went over the target in a seven-plane formation. A piece of flak went through our horizontal stabilizer but had no adverse effect. As a result of this raid, one square mile of Tokyo was burned out. Returned to Saipan at 1135Z. 14 hours and 35 minutes of flying time.

3-9-45 Mission #29 Plane A-23

Took off at 0816Z (this is 1816 Saipan time) for an incendiary raid on Tokyo. We were a Pathfinder plane and were to hit the target area before the main strike force. We carried 184

bombs, each weighing 75 pounds. We were to fly over Tokyo at 7,000 feet. On this mission we did not have any bomb bay gas tanks. Trip up was uneventful. Hit Tokyo at 1558Z (OIS8K - Saipan time on 3-10-45). Several Pathfinders were in ahead of us, so when bomb bay doors were open, you could smell the smoke. We spread over 3200 feet of fire in the target area. Had about ten searchlights bouncing their beams off of us from time to time; however, did not get any anti-aircraft fire. Indicated air speed over target - 265 MPH. Long easy return to home. Landed at 2312Z (0912K on 3-10 Saipan time). 14 hours 56 minutes. Recon pictures show 16.7 square miles of Tokyo burned out.

3-11-45 Mission #30 Plane A-21 Thumper

Took off at 0941Z (1941K 3-10) on a Super dumbo mission while the main strike force hit Nagoya. This was a rough trip because we flew up to the area at low altitude and most of the mission was flown at low levels. I (Radio) did more work than I have done since leaving the states. Contacted the sub by C.W (Carrier Wave) and later was in voice contact with Iwo Jima. Saipan was closed in when we got back so we landed at 'Guam at 0150Z on 3-12-45. (16 hours, 9 minutes flying time). Ate lunch at Guam and took off for Saipan at 0410Z, landing at 0450Z. 40 more minutes flying Thumper.

3-13-45 Mission #31 Plane A-35

Took off for Osaka at 0812Z (1812K). We flew up by ourselves with the rest of the Wing scattered around and about us. Carried 40, 500 pound incendiary clusters; Dropped bombs at 1614Z (0214K 3-14) from 6,700'. Seemed to be nine to ten tenths coverage (smoke?). It was a radar run. Reached Saipan at 2314Z (0904K 3-14). 15 hours 2 minutes flying time.

3-16-45 Mission #32 A-29

Took off for Kobe on 3-16-45 at 1105Z (2105K). Carried 17,240 pounds of incendiaries. Had a rough trip up due to flying close to the deck. Bombed from 6,700' at 1919Z. Had lots of turbulence while flying through the smoke from the fires already burning. We added some more flames to an already nice blaze. Played hide and seek with a few fighters on the way back from Kobe (in the Kobe area). Air operated bomb bay doors worked O.K. Landed at 0149Z (3-17). 14 hours and 44 minutes flying time.

3-18-45 Mission #33 Plane A-22 Miss Hap

Took off at 1100Z for Nagoya with the same bomb load as we carried to Tokyo (Mission 29). Flew

up at 5,000' and bombed from 5,600", Bombs Away at 1833Z with fires burning very nicely down below. Some of our group reportedly had a rough time; however, we may have lucked out since we had no opposition. Our radar was not working. Landed at Saipan at 0040Z. 13 hours and 40 minutes flying time.

3-21-45 Weather Mission Plane A-21 Thumper

Took off for Kobe and a Weather Mission at 0802Z. We carried 12500-pound bombs. Had an uneventful trip up and started our bomb run at 29,000 feet when the C.F.C. blister blew out. Everyone was on oxygen, so the decompression created only temporary inconvenience. Smitty (CFC) was a bit dazed, but handled the situation well. We proceeded to drop our bombs on Kobe and proceeded on over the Sea of Japan for another 150 miles. Had one night fighter shadowing us over Kobe on the way up, and another as we flew back over Japan on our return trip. I (Radio) had a busy night, sending back 25 weather messages. We landed at Guam (second time here) in the morning of 3-22-45 at 2250Z (3-21-45). 14 hours and 48 minutes flying time plus 40 minutes more to get to Saipan. (Number 4 engine used 45 gallons of oil on this mission).

3-24-45 Mission #34 Plane A-21 Thumper

Air-borne at 0801Z for another 6,500' run on Nagoya. Carried 29 500-Pound General Purpose bombs, 2 500-pound incendiaries and one photoflash of 5,000,000 candle power. Dropped our bombs at 1520Z. We had a brief encounter with the searchlights and some night fighters were nearby but we managed to out maneuver them. Came home at good speed and landed at 2141Z on 3-24-45. 13 hours and 41 minutes flying time.

3-31-45 Mission 36 Plane A-21 Thumper

Took off at 1805Z (4:05 AM Saipan time) with 16 GP 500 pounders for Kyushu. The target was the Tachiari machine and aircraft factory. We lead the 870 Squadron (nine plane formation). 497th Grp. was over the island for an hour with no fighter opposition. We had an extremely tight formation. Ha 15 bursts of flak between the 871st and us and more bursts between us and the 869th. The bomb run was visual with "bombs away" at 0218Z. Returned to Saipan at 0918Z (4-1-45). Flying time 15 hours, 13 minutes. The Target was destroyed.

5-10-45 Hission #53 Plane A-21 Thumper

First mission after our R&R. Air-borne at 1637Z (0237K) for the Tokuyama oil storage and refinery. The bomb load was 19 500-pound G.P. bombs. We lead the 870th and the 497th Group on this

mission. The assembly was sort of mixed up: however, things fell into place and the bomb run began. Bombed from 19,800' on a clear day, with excellent results. There was no fighter opposition but there was lots of "Technicolor flak" from the naval ships firing at us. No damage to us and we returned to Saipan and landed at 0742Z. (1742K). 15 hours and 5 minutes flying time.

5-14-45 Weather Strike Plane A-21 Thumper

Left at 11:00 PM at night (2300K) with no bomb load. Flew to a point between Okinawa and Kyushu. When we got there, number one cut out so the mission was completed on three engines. I (Radio) had 25 weather messages to send. Otherwise this was an uneventful mission, which lasted 13 hours and 30 minutes.

5-16-45 Mission #56 Plane A-21 Thumper

Departed about 6:30 in the evening (1837K) 0837Z with 38 500# incendiary clusters for - our favorite town - Nagoya. We had good weather and some moonlight for our bomb run. I (Radio) sat in the back at the camera hatch and had a good vie~ of the fire. Tossed out several "B-29 images" of Rope to confuse the Japanese radar, which controlled the searchlights and anti-aircraft fire. 3 boxes of aluminum foil (3 spools per box) gives same return on Jap radar as a B-29. Returned to Saipan safely logging 15 hours and 38 minutes of flying time.

5-19-45 Mission #57 Plane A-39 Horrible Harry???

Took off at 0427K (Saipan time) with a load of 24 general-purpose bombs of the 500 pound variety. Our target was Tachikawa. We had a very good assembly and the formation had P-51 fighter escorts flying above us. Then we hit a front and everything was a mess. We couldn't use radar on the primary target so we ended up hitting Hamamatsu. Bombed at 21,000 feet from between cloud layers. Could not see the results. Landed at 1822K (Saipan time). 13 hours and 55 minutes of flying time.

5-25-45 Mission #59 Plane A-39

Air-borne at 0811Z for a second straight fire raid on Tokyo. We carried 39 500-pound size clusters (incendiary) and one photoflash. Bombed from 10,800 feet at 1452Z. Searchlights picked us up and stayed with us for about a minute (long, long, minute) until the third batch of radar Rope that I threw out finally confused them. Some flak bounced off the plane. We had an uneventful return trip. Total flying time was 13 hours and 36 minutes. Note: Riherd, Linke, Shaw and Simon

from the original Texas Doll crew were shot down outside of Tokyo Bay. (Lt. Swenson's crew) Riherd and Linke were picked up by a Sub on patrol. They finished the patrol on board our Sub. Shaw and Simon were also recovered and buried at sea.

5-29-45 Mission #60 Plane A-39

Took off at 1722Z for a fire bomb raid on Yokahama. This was a 3 AM night take off from Saipan. Bomb load about the same as for #59. We met the Group at the "formation point" and put together a good formation. Reached the target and dropped bombs at 0052Z. Newhouse hit 800 feet from the target. Excellent bombing results. There was a good amount of flak; however, we seemed to be at the place where none was going off. Returned to Saipan at 0745Z. Total flying time of 14 hours and 33 minutes. Note: - Early reports seem to indicate that 90% of Tokyo is burned out. (Mission #59). We flew the lead crew for the group on Mission #60.

6-1-45 Mission #61 Plane A-39

Took off at 1652Z (5-31-45) - (0252K Saipan time on 6-1-45). Carried the same type of bombs that we used on the first Tokyo fire raid of 3-9-45. The bomb bays were filled to the brim with clusters - all destined for Osaka. This was not a good "mission decision" as the weather was very bad. Our assembly wasn't good, we went over the target with only 21 planes in formation; and not the best formation we have had. Anti-aircraft fire was heavy; however, there were only a few fighters. Bombing results were considered good. We landed at Saipan at 0710Z. Mission uneventful after the target. Flying time of 14 hours and 18 minutes.

6-5-45 Mission #62 Plane A-39

Took off at 0252K with 34 500-pound bombs for the city of Kobe. 33 were incendiaries and one was a frag cluster (nasty). We lead the number 2 element of an 11-plane formation. There was a surprising amount of flak over the target area. Kobe put up a good fight, but I would say it was her last. The place really burned. We returned to base without much ado. Made the trip in 14 hours and 9 minutes.

6-8-45 Photo Reconnaissance Plane A-39

Took off on a photo recon mission at 1604Z (6-7-45) - (0204 K Saipan time, 6-8-45)," At this time Nancy should be receiving her sheepskin from Washington University. Quite a difference in our activities. We really buzzed up to the Target. We went about 60 miles north of Tokyo and then came back over for our picture taking mission.

There was no opposition; no flak, no fighters. There was one fighter, a Tojo, but he chose to ignore us. Returned to Saipan, landing at 0518Z (6-8-45). Flying time was 13 hours and 14 minutes.

6-15-45 Mission #65 Plane A-39

Took off at 0307K in the morning for the city of Osaka. Our gift 500-pound incendiaries. The weather was not good. As a result, we would not have our P-51 fighters to go with us. So, we had to do without. We had 10/10 coverage over the target, solid cloud layers beneath us. There were no fighters or flak. Dropped our bombs at 1102K and about fifteen minutes later we almost crashed "head on" with a B-29 who was going the wrong way on a one way street. Had to run #4 engine on auto rich all the way back. Landed at 1659K. Flying time 13 hours and 58 minutes.

6-18-45 Mission #66 Plane A-39.

Took off at 1917K (7:17 PM. Saipan time 6-17-45). We carried 184 100-pound firebombs. (They actually weigh 70 pounds). This was to be an individual run up to the target and back. (This means our group and the other three groups of the wing would, in effect, go single file, up and back.) The target for the 73rd Wing was our old secondary target Hamamatsu. The other wings each had a "small city" target. We had about nine tenths cloud coverage beneath us so we could not see the results of our bombs. Bombs were dropped at 0219K and it was a radar bomb run. Returned to Saipan at 0819K. Flying time 13 hours and 2 minutes.

6-21-45 Radar Reconnaissance Plane A-31

Took off on a Radar Recon Mission to Sendai on the northern part of Honshu, at 0358Z. As with our Tokyo recon mission (6-8-45), we did not carry any bombs. The trip up was fairly fast and we almost got up there for our "cooks tour" before dark. Reached out target at 1220Z, flying at 10,000 feet. No opposition was encountered. We returned to Saipan just in time to witness the main strike force taking off on their mission to Kure. We finally landed after circling for thirty minutes, at 1814Z. Flying time was 14 hours and 16 minutes.

6-28-45 Mission #69 Plane A-39

Back on A-39 after an eight plus days of overhaul, engine inspections etc. Took off at 1833K on a night mission with the Target being Sasebo on Kyushu's NW tip. We had a smooth ride up with old "Horrible Harry" (never officially named) showing the effects of our ground crews' efforts. We dropped our 32 500-pound clusters at 0216K (6-29-45). From my camera hatch position I threw out some rope; however, the flak was meager and inaccurate. We came back without further ado

and landed at 0817K. Flying time was 13 hours and 44 minutes.

Note: - This was my 32nd mission of, which 30 qualify for rotation to the states. I was so informed after debriefing. CHB

June 14, 1999.