



**LOS ANGELES, Cal.**—Mrs. Dolly Briggs told police she pinned \$4,500 to her slip and laid it on a chair while she bathed. When she came out from splashing in the tub the slip and the \$4,500 were gone—which made it, police agreed, a mighty expensive slip.

# Featured

## SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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**JERSEY CITY, N.J.**—Fifty per cent of all hard candy purchased for the army is peppermint flavored, the Quartermaster Corps announced. In one month alone, the army bought 9,000,000 pounds of assorted hard candies. One-half was peppermint.



# This Is The Eighth Air Force

**L**AST week, over Germany, a young American kid had his arm shot off in the ball turret of a Flying Fortress. He bled profusely, there was no chance that he would live through the long flight home. They wrapped that American kid up in a parachute and dropped him out over Germany. Maybe a German doctor would get to him before he bled to death.

There is no way to tell with figures the year's history of an air force in which things like that are happening to the boy whose '37 Ford sits up on wood blocks in his Dad's garage.

Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, who helped Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz put the Eighth Air Force on an operational footing just a year ago, personally led the first USAAF heavy bomber raid on Europe last Aug. 17. Since that time he has taken the brunt of the responsibility for the experiments which have led to the acceptance of the Eighth Air Force as one of the most powerful striking forces in the world.

Sceptical British experts have been convinced that day and night bombers are essential complements of an effective air force and some have even gone overboard to claim that daylight precision bombing of industrial targets is more important than the gigantic RAF raids aimed at the will of the Germans to resist.

Many of the men who commanded the original bomber groups which operated from England left the theater early in the game to help out in Africa. A handful of colonels—Armstrong, Atkinson, Overacker, Walker—came, started the business, and left. Col. Armstrong, now general, went home and returned shortly after to take command of a new group.

The four units which have done more than their share of the hard work in the daylight bombing experiment didn't start operating until late in October and early in November of last year.

It was Nov. 9 before the Forts were joined by the B24s and struck with a force of 100 bombers at the locomotive works at Lille. There were four Fortress groups operating at that time. To these four outfits, still operating, goes the credit for the success of the experiment. Their original commanders have become well known.

Col. Stanley B. Wray, Col. Frank Armstrong, Col. Curtis LeMay and Col. James Wallace were responsible for many ideas that came to them through their command or through their own ingenuity, many of which have been accepted as standard procedure today.

The comparative handful of Liberators which trailed along on Fortress formations was commanded by Col. Leon W.

Johnson and Col. Ted Timberlake. Some have been relieved from their group assignments to do more important work in key positions.

In those early months, before the heavy bomber raids grew to major aerial offensives, Eighth Air Force news releases were filled with the colorful but small scale operations of the transferred remnants of the Eagle Squadron, still flying British fighters.

Sam Junkin, of Natchez, Miss., a RAF transfer flying a Spit, was the first American of the war to knock down a German plane while wearing a U.S. uniform.

Maj. Gregory Augustus Daymond, of Burbank, Cal., met Mrs. Roosevelt on her tour of the Isles—during which she came to the conclusion that American soldiers' socks were too thin—immediately after King George VI had pinned the first bar to the British DFC to the major's brand-new American uniform. The major had shot down seven German fighters while serving with the RAF.

2/Lt. Harvey Dalton Johnson, of Westville, N.J., was posthumously awarded the DSC after he crashed his burning plane into an empty field to avoid killing civilians in a London suburb. He could have jumped.

It wasn't until many months later, after Cols. Zemde, Peterson and Anderson began operating with their groups of P47s, that Eighth Fighter Command shook loose its Eagle Squadron tag and began to be felt as a power in its own right. Under the command of Brig. Gen. Frank O'D. Hunter they have done a workman-like job of sweeping France, Belgium and even parts of Germany. Capt. Charley London, Col. Chesley Peterson, Col. Arman Petersen, 1/Lt. Ed Beattie, August De Genaro and Maj. Eugene Roberts were the early standouts.

Heavy bomber heroes began to be heard of in the Fall, as the Forts hit again and again at the U-boat bases in France. A few like Red Cliburn and Bob Riordan brought their riddled Fortresses home time after time while the majority of them brought them home with a few flak holes, and the minority didn't come back.

Ground crewmen, with few chances to do anything but the unspectacular, all-important job of keeping the bombers in the air, slogged through the mud on the fields, learned to like their old-and-mild at the local pub, waited for their crew to bring their baby home and in a few cases distinguished themselves.

Pvt. Adam E. Gross, of Chicago, distinguished himself. The Germans located an American airfield one day last October and bombed it. It was the first taste American airmen had of the bottom end of a raid. Many of the bombs dropped that day were delayed action HEs and didn't go off right away. British bomb disposal squads got to work immediately. They wanted someone to drive the truck to cart the bombs away though, and Pvt. Gross was first in the line of American volunteers.

Pfc Carmen D'Amanti, another ground man, distinguished himself too. After an explosion on the field, a bomber was left burning with men unconscious inside. D'Amanti went in the bomber and dragged the men out while the fumes from the gas tanks burned as they accumulated over his head, threatening to explode any minute.

It was in these early days that Maj. Harry Holt's squadron picked up the "Clay Pigeon Squadron" nickname. There was no particular reason for it, but somehow Maj. Holt's outfit always took the

to go out the next day with the possibility of not returning were the men who were convinced that they were on the right track. What they needed was more bombers for safety. They all lost friends, they got heart-rending letters from mothers and fathers of the lost men, but somehow they kept heart, even kept a sense of humor.

At night the men talked in their nissen huts.

"See what the paper says? Christ I'd feel like hell if I thought women were shootin' all that flak at us."

Or, "The only reason I dropped out of formation to help you was the 30 quid you owe me."

Whatever the conversation was it had a sharp American twist to it. Death makes fighting men think about religion. Some of them were very religious. In many cases Catholic priests were busy the early morning before a mission giving blessing to Catholic crewmen. Most of them are not particularly religious but believe vaguely in a comforting, God-given guidance which they somehow associate with home and the church they haven't been to since they were 15. Many more laughed at it and swore only by the ability of their pilot and the accuracy of their .50 calibers.

All the dogs in England who don't belong to anyone in particular found a home at the U.S. fields. There are from 20 to 30 dogs at every station, some with owners, some squadron or group property. Some just there.

Some of the dogs live the life of staff sergeants, eating the same food, sleeping in the same nissen hut, attending classes and, in at least five cases, going on raids with special home-made oxygen masks.

There was always some new piece of equipment for the men. The demand-type oxygen masks began to replace the old adjustable valve type. Many of the veterans didn't trust the demand masks, although if used properly they helped conserve the oxygen supply.

It was the same with Col. Malcolm Grow's steel-lined flak suit. Many of the men were sceptical. They didn't think it was practical, but as the lives of men were saved because they had the vest on, others became convinced that the suit was worth the work of the extra weight. Some still were not convinced.

The history of the first year is studded with individual heroes whose deeds make the peace-time headlines such as Corrigan, Wiley Post and even Lindbergh look a little pale. Many of them have had only

a few lines of notice, some of their actions have never come closer to print than the mimeographed citation that went with the award.

The crew of Old Bill, a Fortress piloted by Capt. Bill Whitsun, is probably the most decorated crew in the ETO. They have on their collective chests eight Silver Stars, two DSCs and seven Purple Hearts. The crew of the Liberator Shoot Luke has a few, too. They claim five DFCs, three DSCs, four Silver Stars, seven Purple Hearts, and a basketful of Air Medals.

There are still other heroes who have had a lot of publicity and deserved every line of it. The Mathis brothers, Mark and Jack, for instance. Mark swore to avenge the death of his brother Jack, who died a hero over his bombsight at Vegesack. A few raids later, after doing a job of bombing, Mark, too, was lost. There are sad stories like that. But there are brighter stories.

The story of Snuffy Smith is a happier one. Snuffy is one of the Eighth Air Force's favorite characters. He saved a Fortress and the lives of eight men, but a few weeks later he overstayed a leave a few hours, and his commander decided the little sergeant gunner was getting too cocky so he put him on KP.

Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, came to England and hung America's highest award for valor—the Congressional Medal of Honor—around Snuffy's neck while Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers and a platoon of generals looked on. Snuffy took medal, ceremony and all calmly.

A paragraph of proper names is packed with between-the-lines power in verbs and adjectives: Arizona Harris, Joe Boyle, Jack Ryan, Bill Casey, Jimmy Verinis, Ross Bayles, Bill Murphy, Bob O'Connor, Doug Venable, Floyd Thompson, George Stallings, G.I. Jones, Bill Calhoun, John de Russy, Robert W. Smith, Joe Strickland, Mack McKay, Bob Solitunik, Bill Hicks, Oscar O'Neill, Dick Willis, Henry W. Terry, Billy Southworth, Roy Sugg, William Sault—that is anybody's list, men who have died, men who are prisoners and men who are unconscious heroes still doing a job.

They are heroes who have performed deeds of a caliber which would, in ordinary times, make them national heroes. They are sergeant gunners and colonel observers.

The Eighth Air Force history is a story of men necessarily buried under the damnably cold heap of statistics the Allies are trying to pile higher than Axis statistics. When the pile is higher the airmen can go home, and if that American kid was saved by a German doctor maybe he can get a license to drive his '37 Ford with his one arm.

**By Andrew A. Rooney**  
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer