

My Life
in the
SERVICE

Barksdale, La.

Prestrick, Scotland

Blythe, Calif.

Greiner Field N.H.

Cott, N.H.

St. Meyers, Fla.
Alumbury, England



Jefferson Barricks Mo.

Indiantown Gap, Pa.

★ MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE

THE DIARY OF
S/Sgt. Michael Reardon

3046 Gephyur Ave.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

A
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PUBLICATION

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Your experiences in the armed forces of your country are your part of living history. By all means **KEEP A DIARY!** Times without number, historians and writers have found more information of real human interest in the diaries of enlisted men than in the studied accounts of generals and admirals. This book, conscientiously kept, may prove to be the living record of your destiny five hundred years from now!

Because the events recorded in these pages are likely to be the most significant experiences of your life, and the ones most worth remembering, **DON'T TRUST YOUR MEMORY!** Few minds are endowed with the capacity to recall in retrospect the dates and details of even the most important events. Cherished memories are distorted or lost forever during the passing of the years. The very names of your closest associates and dearest companions may be forgotten.

The value of this record lies in the future; the time for you to create that value is now. The effort required is small, but eminently worthwhile. Resolve to make an entry, however short, **each** day. As your diary takes form you will come to count as lost that day in which you have not written an account of its happenings.

There is a place in this book for your personal identification data, for service information you are required to keep, and for the primary facts of your service record. Under the disciplined and strenuous regime of service life you will note changes in your physical measurements which you will want to record, and space is provided for this.

There are convenient pages on which to keep the names and addresses of the folks back home, the dates on which you wish to send remembrances, the gifts you have received. You will want to keep a record of places you visit and your impressions of them. Then there are the interesting people you meet while in the service . . . your buddies, your officers, interesting civilians; in this book you will find space in which to write about them and to note their home addresses so that you can look them up if you should want to after you are mustered out. Use the autograph section of this book for the signatures of your buddies, together with a characteristic comment from each.

And, by all means, **PICTURES!** One picture is said to be worth a thousand words . . . get as many pictures as you can, of people and places, for an **illustrated** diary is the best of all!



MOUNT
PHOTO
HERE

MY PHOTOGRAPH, taken _____
Where _____ When _____

IDENTIFICATION

Name _____

Rank _____ Serial Number _____

Unit _____

Stationed at _____

Religion _____

Date of Birth _____ Weight _____

Color _____ Color of Hair _____

Height _____ Color of Eyes _____

Birthmarks or Other Distinguishing Features _____

NEAREST RELATIVE OR FRIEND

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____



★ SERVICE RECORD ★
TRANSFERS AND CHANGES IN RANK



222

222

RD ★
N RANK



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★ PHYSICAL RECORD

ON ENTERING THE SERVICE

Date _____ Weight _____

Chest—Normal _____ Expanded _____ Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

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Date _____

Weight _____

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Date _____

Weight _____

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Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____

Date _____

Weight _____

Chest—Nor. _____ Exp. _____

Waist _____



CITATIONS, AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Blank lined area for recording citations, awards, and decorations.



MY BUDDIES

IN THE SERVICE

- ★ Name and Nickname • Where I Met Him • What I Liked and Disliked About Him • What We Did • Home Address • Picture

★ MY BUDDIES ★



Sgt. Paul W. McQueen
269 Belmont ST. Waymart, Pa.

Mt. Kenneth a Jeffers
Oriskany Falls, New York

Sgt. Walter D. Smith
Padroni, Colorado

Sgt. Harry R. Robinson
Penick Grove, N. J.

Sgt. Clayton Hammer
Cincinnati, Ohio

Sgt. Charles D. Wernner
1838 E. Shaver St.

Philadelphia Pa.

T/SGT. Fred E. Anderson
1629 1/2 Fernis Hunt

Orlando, Fla.



★ ★ MY BUDDIES IN THE SERVICE





★ ★ MY BUDDIE IN THE SERVICE



Sgt Herbert B. Thorne

T/sgt. W. Don. Woffleman
148 W. Jackson St.
York, Penna

T/sgt. Henry A. Clauser
19 Sellers Ave Millbourne
Upper Darby Penna.



★ ★ MY BUDDIE

IN THE SERVICE



Before I started this Diary

On Feb 14, 1941 I enlisted
in Hq. Bat. 53 F.A. Brig.
of the 28th Div. Since I
am writing this some 17
months later, it will be
rather vague. I remember
it was a cold morning
the day we arrived at
Indiantown Gap, Penna.
It was all very new to me,
and I was sure I'd like
it, for I was only a few
months past sixteen and
the change from school life
was present. I spent six
months in the Field Artillery.
It was a very nice experience
and I met some good guys.



MY BUDDIES

IN THE SERVICE



The life was tough and the going hard. I was a radio operator and a rather poor one.

We never did travel out of the state, and that was something I didn't like. I remember how I enjoyed all day truck rides.

Along around Aug. or Sept. I decided to transfer to the Air Corps, which I never regreted.

Was first shipped to Jefferson Barricks Mo. Only stayed a few weeks.

We then went to Scott Field, Ill. to a radio school. It was a 22 week course

and I spent 20 days in the hospital and 21 days at home. I was on furlough when war was declared, ~~so~~ so I don't know the immediate reaction of the soldiers at camp. The attitude of civilians toward soldiers really changed. I guess it will change again when the war is over.

It seemed my stay at Scott would never end; but finally the day came when we graduated and were assigned to a squadron. Thank God I got a heavy bombardment group.



★ ★ MY BUDDIES IN THE SERVICE



I was assigned to a new bombardment group, stationed at Barksdale Field, La. We spent six weeks in La. My first flying days were quite a thrill although I must admit I did experience "air sickness".

We went on to Ft. Meyer, Va. for our advanced training. Ft. Meyer was pretty nice that is, except the field.

I spent a month detached service in Calif. on the desert. It was really tough - hotter'n hell.

I have flown a good many miles and have been to the following cities.

Shreveport, La. - Dallas + El Paso, Texas - Albuquerque, N. M. - Blythe, Frisco, Oakland, Calif. - Tampa, Ft. Meyers, Florida - Dayton, Ohio - Chicago, Ill. - Prestwick, Scotland.



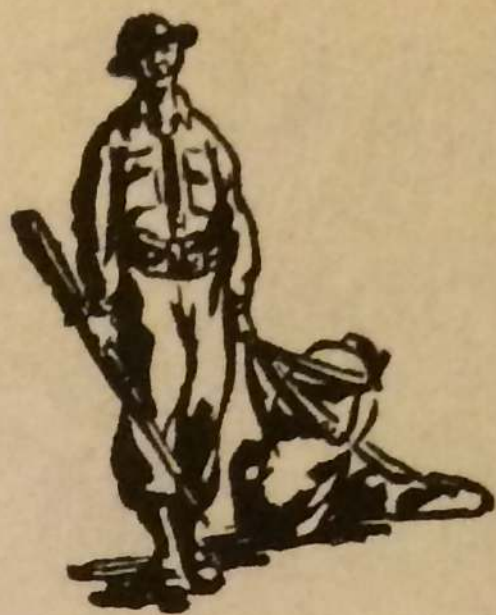
★ ★ MY BUDDIES IN THE SERVICE



Equipment - I own, besides G.I. req.

1. Leather flying jacket.
2. Wool lined flying jacket
3. Wool lined flying pants
4. " " " shoes
5. " " " hat
6. Summer flying hat
7. Emergency kit.
 - a:- 2 Rations of chocolate
 - b:- Waterproof match kit.
 - c:- 1 hunting knife.
 - d:- 2 fishing hooks & line
 - e:- compass
8. Bail out - oxygen & bottle.
9. oxygen mask
10. ~~bottle~~

IN THE SERVICE



Equipment I own besides GI req.

1. Leather flying jacket
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c:- 1 hunting knife.

d:- 2 fishing hooks & line

e: compass

8. Bail out - oxygen bottle.

9. oxygen mask

10. ~~bottle~~



OFFICERS

I H A V E M E T

- ★ Name and Address • His Rank • Home Address • His Picture if Possible • What I and Others Liked and Disliked About Him

★ OFFICERS ★





CIVILIANS

I HAVE MET WHILE IN THE SERVICE

★ Name • Address • Picture • Phone Number • How and Why Our Acquaintance Started • General Comment and Things to Remember

★ CIVILIANS



THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN THE DIARY OF MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE

This simple record of my daily experiences and thoughts has given me pleasure in the writing of it. If for any reason it leaves my possession, I would like to have it forwarded to:

Name Michael L. Reardon
Address 3046 Gephyra Ave.
City Pittsburgh State Pa.



Wed. Aug. 12, 1942.

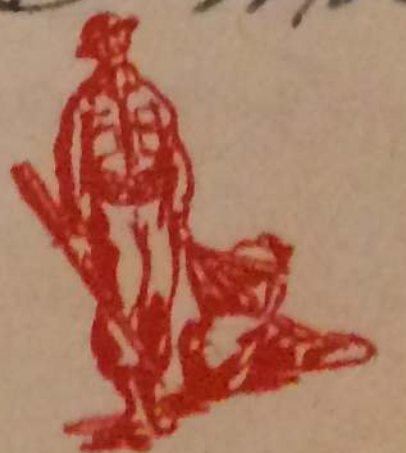
Flew this morning. Lt. Cox practiced landings. Flew to-night. Tried "corkscrews" (30° bank - 500 ft. dive - 30° bank in opposite direction - climb 500 ft.) Real thrill - two sick passengers.

Thur. Aug. 13, 1942. Got paid this morning (flying pay). Only got thirty nine dollars and I owe seventy. Paid half my debts - lost \$12 in a crap game. Damn my luck. Cleaned my rifle. Was on bombsight guard from mid-night till 6:00.

Fri. Aug. 14, 1942. Was only in bed two hours - got called to operations. More rain, no flights.

All actual heroes are essential men,
And all men possible heroes.

-E. B. Browning



Fri. 14, 1942. (Cont.) Ground crew left to-night. They went to New York - are leaving for England ~~at~~ by boat. Am glad were flying over.

Sat. Aug. 15, 1942. Barricks seems deserted since ground crew left. Got my eyes examined for new glasses. Eye drops have left me half blind. We got our new planes to-day. They are O.K. - ten fifty cal. guns in all. Went to town and got about half shot. Bed at 2:00.

Sun. Aug. 16, 1942. Was down around our new ship all morning. Got two shots in the arm -

don't know what there for. The Army really throws the needle to us. I think we leave here soon.

(Later) Sick as hell; got a terrific fever; left arm and neck are stiff as a board. No more shots for me if I can help it. Men are laying around talking about ancient dates - some are really ancient to.

Mon. Aug. 17, 1942. Didn't do a darn thing to-day. Went to the rifle range; but it was closed for repair. I have to sleep on the plane to-night, its sort of a guard duty. Oh yes, I signed the pay-roll - that is important.

America is the only place where man is full-grown!

—O. W. Holmes

Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier.—Samuel Johnson

Tues Aug. 18, 1942 Woke up about 6:00 this morning and looked around the ship for my shoes, which I didn't find. I had to walk up to the barracks (through the main gate) in my bare feet — met an officer and it proved to be most embarrassing. The gang razzed the hell out of me — "Fine guard, gets his shoes stolen." I heard it a million times. It turned out to be Red who swiped them.

I got the small German pistol that George sent me. We flew this afternoon — Lt. Cox — and Lt. Johnson (Ox) were checked out as first pilots by Maj. Cool.



Righteousness exalteth a nation.
— Proverbs XIV: 34

Wed. Aug. 19, 1942 Went to a "first-aid" lecture this morning. Very interesting lecture — mentioned some of the things there is a shortage of in England Manchester, N. H. is starting to get cold. I wonder how the weather is in England. Thur. Aug. 20, 1942 Went to a lecture on "English operation of Radio". Why in the hell they spend six months teaching us the U.S. way and then send us where they use another method is beyond me. Laid around out at the ship rest of afternoon. Got a letter from Nora dated July 10, also got one from Mom. No flying to day.

Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof. — Inscription on the Liberty Bell

Fri. Aug. 21, 1942. Steve and I were in the supply room this morning and spotted a life raft inflater cylinder. Got to foolin' around with it and Steve fired it. — Left immediately.

Flew our new ship to-day. The boss took it to 30,000'. In the decent the top hatch blew down and knocked me on my . . . !!

Hurt my left shoulder. Our crew has its insigna on — its O.K.

Sat. Aug. 22, 1942. Didn't do a darn thing to-day. Was at Radio school this morning, it's a helluva mess and I can't get a thing out of it. Steve and I went to the show to-night saw some second rate "bucket of blood" picture. No insigna on our ship yet.

Just draw on your grit; it's so easy to quit—

It's the keeping your chin up that's hard.—Robert W. Service

I often get the urge to write to Bebe, although I know I don't care for her; but I would like to hear from her. To hell with it, it would only lead to trouble. Sun. Aug. 23, 1943.

Sun. Aug. 23, 1942. We flew some gunners down to Langley Field, Va. It was a swell flight, we flew over New York City. I spotted the Normandie laying on her side. Also saw the Empire State Building and G. Washington Bridge. No one else saw the Normandie, saw — I thought I did pretty good untill some one mentioned the "Statue of Liberty" — of all things to miss. I miss the Statue of Liberty.

The less there is of fear, the less there is of danger.—Livy

Stayed in Va. all night -
had a terrific rain storm
during the night.

Mon. Aug. 24, 1942. Flew
back this morning - didn't
miss the "Statue" this
time. We are scheduled for
an all night mission to night
Its a 2,000 mile hop out to
Indiana and back. Take
off at midnight, and am I
sleepy!

Tues. Aug. 25, 1942 Six more
days till pay day. ~~Our~~ Our
all night flight was cancelled
because number 2 engine failed
to put out required R.P.M. We
did go on a gunnery mission
in the afternoon. We went
out over the Atlantic to fire.
- I fired the top turret - right

Establish the eternal truth that acquiescence under insult
is not the way to escape war.—Thomas Jefferson

gun. Back plate on left gun
wouldn't lock in place. Guns
are very good. Would fire
short burst to make a splash
target then give the splash
a burst. Did pretty good. Shot
at Sea Gulls - make very
good targets and are very
hard to hit.

Made a bad landing -
(Lt. Cox) a smashed tail skid.
Received a letter from Mom
and one from a girl in Fla.,
who picked up a note I
threw out of a troop train
about three months ago.

Wed. Aug. 26, 1942. My ship
went to Middletown, Pa.
to have tail skid fixed. First
cross country I have
ever missed and it

Confidence begets confidence.—Proverb



would be to my home state
Had to stay to go to to Radio
lectures. Radio man in
England is the king pin.

Letters from home and Patsy
Maurer — a very nice girl
and pretty to. Will answer
to-night.

Met Lt. Simpson & Lt. Cox
going out to the plane with their
grips. (on way to Middletown)
I offered to carry bags — for
a slight sum. The officers
flipped to see who would pay
me. Lt. Cox lost — then I
flipped him, double or nothing.
Again he lost — so I made a
very easy half dollar.

Thurs. Aug. 27, 1942. Four
days till pay day. Attended
lecture on radio operation in

Almost everything that is great has been done by youth.
SO IS EVERYTHING THAT IS FOOLISH. —Disraeli

England. We are going to Scotland
I believe. A cleaning shop opened
up to-day and they had a big
celebration for the service men.
Lots to eat and drink.

Fri. Aug 28, 1942. Gave Group
radio operators 16 WPM. code
checks to-day. Only two passed
and I was one of them. I
never realized how stale our
operators have gone from lack
of practice. I've got to get "on
the ball" and learn the "Q"
signals. To-night is our
last night in town so
we celebrated. Met a very
nice girl and had a swell
time. Too much beer.

Sat. Aug. 29, 1942. Got a letter
from Mom and I think I'll
write home to-day.

When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the
citizen. —George Washington

Sun. Aug. 30-42

My ship hasn't come back from Pa. yet and every thing is moving. Loaded all the ships with 2,500 rounds of "ammo." Were in pattern of five. Two ~~tracers~~ armour piercing, two incendiaries and a tracer. It's the real thing. The big move should come soon. All our clothes are packed. Pay day to-morrow.

Mon. Aug. 31, 1942

(Entered on Sept. 3, 1942 in Newfoundland)
Was paid on Monday. Got \$191.00, after paying my debts and stocking up. I was left with \$140.01 ss. Was suppose to leave to-day; but didn't.

Tues. Sept. 1, 1942. To-day was it - plenty of excitement as we left. It was



When duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can. — Emerson

a long flight and I had plenty to do. Calibrated my transmitter for all required frequencies.

Sept. 2, 1942. Went to radio briefing class to-day. Getting all set for the big hop. Got in a big crap game - was \$9 short of \$300. Lost it all trying to get that \$9 Canadian money made the game confusing. They look like cigar dupons.

Sept. 3, 1942. Didn't do much to-day. Was all prepared to leave to-night when flight was cancelled. Hope we leave Gander Lake to-morrow - this is a hellish place!

Sept. 4, 1942. Flew the Atlantic to-day. Eighteen and flew

Independence now and Independence forever!

—Daniel Webster

the "drink" — not bad. Flew the ship over Ireland it was nice country. Landed at Prestwick, Scotland. Having trouble with English money.

Sept 5 to Sept 11, 1942. Flew to our permanent base from Scotland. We are somewhere above London. When I arrived here I was broke. I borrowed 1 lb. 9 shillings and got in a crap game.

Now about 140 dollars — feel much better now. Have been to town a couple of times, it's a small village and not very lively. The town has a lot of WAAF's in town. We have a lot of fun kidding them. Black outs here are complete. It

Even God lends a hand to honest boldness. — Menander

is very hard to get around at night. Ferries come over every night and drop flares. They can't find our field — but if they do?? A couple of nights ago a British night fighter got a German ship. The ferry fell like a torch and exploded when it hit.

Sept. 12, 1942. Didn't do much to-day. Had a date with "Dunk," she is going home Monday. Got mail to-day that the 409th. had flown over with them. Pop is pretty sick and it worries me.

Sept. 13, 1942. Flew over to that other American bomber sqdn. They have

Let it be your pride to show all men everywhere not only what good soldiers you are, but also what good men you are. — Woodrow Wilson

seen action. There was a B-17-E all shot to hell. God only knows how they got back. The bellie gunner was dead and both waistgunners hit. It had about four 20mm cannon hits on it and more machine gun bullet holes than I could count. Tail gunner had his goggles knock off by a slug. The bellie gunner was hit in the rump and the slug came out his chest. Talked to tail gunner. He says it's pretty hot over there now - more folk. 200's 190's than you can imagine. This flight got 13 of them and lost one Fortress.

Went to town again to night, saw Dunk.

A mysterious bond of brotherhood makes all men one.
—Carlyle

Sept. 14, 1942. Flew over to Colebrook again. A good many men bought ~~bicycles~~ bicycle there - for eight pounds or so (\$28). I think I shall get one when I get paid.

Sept. 15, 1942 - Had day off. Went in to town to night. Had a swell time. English beer is terrible. Took Dunk home from the dance. Hope we get a mission soon.

Sept. 16, 1942. Got ^{up} early for a change. Got lectures from experienced gunners to-day. There is quite a difference between lectures given by English and the Americans. The Americans give you the impression



Fear not.—Gen. XLII: 23

that it is impossible to shoot down German ships. Fast and furious with little chance of winning. Now the English are quite the opposite (as they usually are). They let you with the impression that it is suicide for a German ship to attack an American bomber. They are amazed at the number and caliber of our guns. They can't believe the small losses of the American outfit and the large number of Germans knocked down. I wonder how the Jerries feel toward the Yanks — they have taken a beating. The

Millions for defense but not a cent for tribute.

—Robert G. Harper

Yanks got 12 Jerry Folk Wolf 100 is on one trip and lost only one 17. As a matter of fact they have only lost two ships. I sure hope we do as good — and we shall.

Sept. 17, 1943. For once we get a good meal in England. Dinner was very good.

Damn, tomatoes and peas — peaches for desert. He just ate ham sandwiches till we couldn't move.

More gunnery lectures and movies on gunnery.

Got hell for not making my bed properly. Damn it burns me —

Safeguard the health both of body and soul.—Cleobulus

that Jewish b... of a
capitan has been trying
to clamp down on Combat
crews since he has been
here. We hold the ones
though.

I need a hair cut
very bad. To-day at the
moves an officer behind
me asked me to remove
my hat so he could see.
When I did and my
hair stuck up, he said,
"Aw, hell put it back on".

Had some Spitfires over
to-day. They buzzed the
field a few times and how
these English boys can fly.
Wait till they get some of
the Yank "Pee-shooter"
boys over here.



Valor is the soldier's adornment.—Livy

We got paid soon thank
God.
Fri-Sept 18, 1942. The day is over,
and here I sit. My restriction
starts to-day. I could easily get
to town; but I haven't any
money anyhow.

The Spitfires were over
again to-day. They attack our
formation from all angles,
it gives us plenty of practice
and a general idea of what
it will be like. They put
on a good show for the
boys on the ground.

We went up and our
number one engine "konked"
and we returned.

There are rumors that
we shall get two more guns
on the bottom.

Worth, courage, honor, these indeed
Your sustenance and birthright are.—E. C. Stedman

Sat. ~~Aug.~~ Sept. 19, 1942. Nothing of importance happened to-day. Was out the ship this morning. I made a good improvement on the interphone communication. I put the "press to talk button" in the waist gunners position on the back of their gun - they can now communicate with the rest of the crew and still keep both hands on the gun. Also detachable.

Wrote to Bebe - why?

Low ceiling to-night, don't think ferry will be over; but you can never figure out the Hun.

Plenty of planes around here. Powerful bombers, shifty fighters they give you a funny feeling - pride I guess you would call it.

Where liberty dwells there is my country.

—Benjamin Franklin

Just the sight of a B-24 does something to me. Its so darn smooth and maneuverable - boy what I'd give to fly one. Flying in it is the next best thing though.

No mail to-day.

Sun. Sept. 20, 1942. Rain - typical English weather; low, fast moving clouds. Drizzles continuously.

Flew this morning - only a short hop. Still restricted.

Mon. Sept 21, 1942. Flew out to the channel to-day. We were suppose to do some practice bombing - couldn't find the target, too cloudy. Lecture on "What to do in case of a crash in enemy territory." It makes a nice story: but its mighty hard to

It is better to lose a battery than a battle.

—General Zachary Taylor

believe.

From Tues Sept. 22-42 to
Fri Sept 25, 1942 The last
three days are a whirl of
men, women, uniforms, music
and drinks. Wednesday was
our day off so "Cyp" and I
went to Cambridge (leaving
early Tuesday). We got about
half plastered and ended up
with two wild young English
girls. "Cyp" is still the
"virgin man" — I can't
see how though. Wednesday
we spent the day roaming
through English shops
in the afternoon we saw
a very good picture — "This
Was Paris" — an English
production. I believe. Went
to a club that night and

He went forth conquering and to conquer.—Rev. VI: 2

had a very good time.
Last night (Friday) "Yiff"
and I went to Huntington
and met some W.A.A.F.s

The English winter
is setting in. The air
is cold and moist; very
bad for flying — perfect
"icing" conditions. I'm
afraid our "bombing" will
be limited this winter.
God only knows how soon
we can complete our 30
missions and go back
to the states. By Easter
I hope.

Sat. Sept. 26, 1942 to
Mon. Sept. 28, 1942 Still
we wait! Why? We came
with the idea
that we would

Fight the good fight of faith.

—I Tim. VI: 12



get into the thick of it as soon as we arrived. Now winter is setting in and our work shall be limited. This morning a thick fog blanketed the whole area — these will become more frequent as winter comes on.

Our hut has a good gang in it. There are 29 of us in this single story building. It is heated by two small coal stoves (which we are using already). There is no certain time for lights out and no special time to get up. (Breakfast is around 7:00 — that gets us up.) We have one portable radio, which isn't too good. We are going to buy a new one this payday.

The greater the difficulty, the greater the glory.—Cicero

At night we have our usual "bull session" and Scall sings every now and then. He has a good voice.

To-day (Monday) a rain has cleared up the fog. Still poor flying weather.

Gambling still takes up the majority of everyone's spare time. Never a day passes that a crap game or "blackjack" game isn't played. I've been trying to find some good reading material — can't do it! English books are rather dull.

The food situation is pretty good. It does make one appreciate home. It is good wholesome food.

Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less.—Robert E. Lee

but rather scarce. Sweets are very hard to get. We are allowed two candy bars per week — usually stale. The boys have taken to making something "belly filling" themselves. We have had coffee, tea and ham sandwiches the last couple of nights. How they were obtained is a military secret. Many are the "emergency ration" cans that have been opened; for they contain a form of chocolate. They were packed in 1940 so naturally they are slightly stale.

When the lights go out at night and everyone is



We have room for but one loyalty, loyalty to the United States.

—Theodore Roosevelt

comfortably settled in bed, Dutch Scull will start to sing. He isn't a bit bashful and will sing any request song that he knows and he knows most of them. The songs they ask for are usually a little old and it is easy to see there is a particular night and a particular girl connected with each request. There are soon 29 quiet men thinking of a girl back home. Who do I think of? Yes, who is there back home for me?

Wed. ~~Sept. 29~~ Sept. 30, 1942. Made no entry for ~~Sept. 29~~ Sept. 29; there

The cause of freedom is the cause of God.—W. L. Bowles

was nothing important that
is worth recording. Flying
weather still poor. To-day
(Wed) we got paid —
what a terrific game we
had. I lost my 51 lbs.
in about three hours!!
That is about \$204 American
dollars. I'm afraid gambling
is in my blood; for I
can loose now and think
nothing of it. I do believe
I shall quite though for
I make enough now to
do two guys.

I am a Technical
Sgt.; official as of to-day.
So to-day was both
good and bad luck.

To lose gambling is
in one way a good thing,

The roll of honor consists of the names of men who have
squared their conduct by ideals of duty.—Woodrow Wilson

for it makes one think
It does me anyway.
Hope we get our
mission soon.

Oct. 1 to Oct. 4. Within
the last four days we have
had two raids cancelled.
We had the bombs on
the ship and all. (10-
500 LB.) special "ammo"
and a lot of excited guys.
Of which I was one. Oh
well — we'll crack 'em
yet.

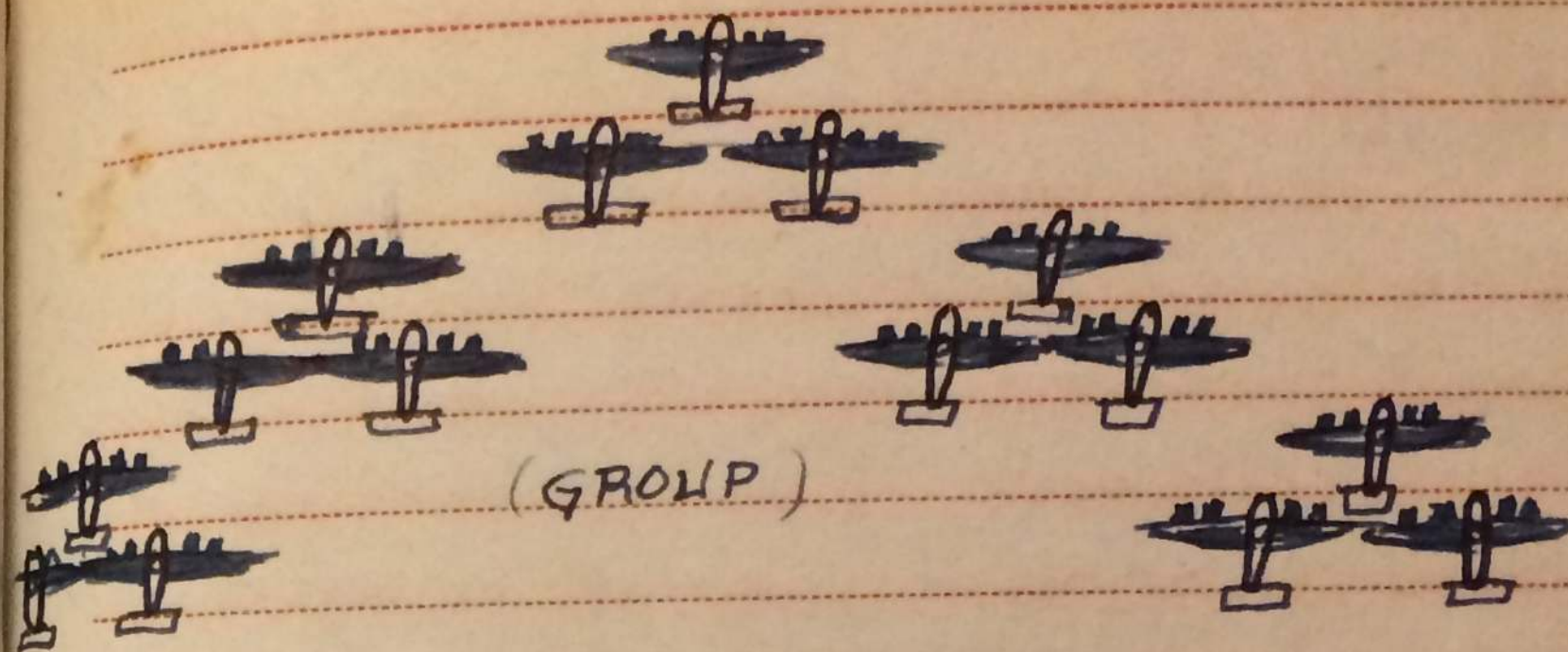
Have a lot of fun
listening to German
propaganda stations on
our new radio. They put
on good ~~or~~ music.

Got another typhus
shot. Got a letter from Pop —
feel swell now.

Our country! in her intercourse with foreign nations may she always
be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!—Decatur

Tues. Oct. 6, 1942. Flew a group formation to-day. God it was rough! The sky full of ships floating toward and away from us. Lt. Cox (C.P.) flew our ship. We were the left wing man of the fourth element and our flight leader kept crowding us over in to the right wing man of number two element. At time we were within five feet of our flight leader with planes drifting under us and over us. At times I could feel my muscles tighten as we drifted toward another ship. It's a real thrill and also a chill. The bombing was a success (practice)

The world was never more unsafe for democracy than it is today.—Stanley Baldwin



Got a letter from home to-day.

Wed. Oct. 7, 1942. Nothing important to-day. All combat men are now taking "vitamin" pills. Our pilot gives us one every morning — and sees that we take it. I guess it's to make up for the shortage of certain foods.

"Red" Rondeau was in Cambridge

Dare, will, keep silence.

—William Bolitho



last night. He was taking
a girl home and it was
a terrifically dark night.
The girl told him to look
out for a river; just then
he fell in. He has had
the whole gang laughing
to-day telling the story.
Says he was lucky, —
didn't get his hat wet!

Wed Oct. 8, 1942. Rain to-day.
Still no mission. I've
got my pilot a bet. I say
we will have a mission
Monday, for Monday
is my birthday and
with my luck we are
sure to have a flight
then.

Donellie took \$2400.00
off of McElister in a

And you can win, though you face the worst,
If you feel that you're going to do it.—Edgar A. Guest

black-jack game.
Got a letter from
Bettie Jean Fugley to-day.
Thurs. Oct. 9, 1942.

July 20, 1945

Thurs. Oct 9, 1942. I can't
remember writing that date
although I shall never for-
get it as an out standing
day in my life. It was
almost the last day of
my life.

Since this is the first
entry in all most three
years it will rather long
and yet not too clear for
already my memory is
forcing thoes unpleseant days

What can alone ennoble fight? A noble cause!

—Thomas Campbell

way back into the subconscious mind.

Oct. 9, 1942 untill two in the morning I read, finishing the book - "The Moon Is Down". Four in the morning the loudspeaker interrupted the sleep of 29 men - "All combat crews report to operations room immediately." We turned out, this was it - finally.

Briefing - "Targets Little men, railway yards and factories - altitude 26,000 ft." And more that I don't remember. We lay around and smoke. I don't say much because I have a hunch we are going to have trouble.



And though hard be the task,
Keep a stiff upper lip.—Phoebe Cary

We are issued our escape kits and I started for the plane - it was just beginning to get light. I can remember so clear that I thought "What a funny dawn - a green sky - I wonder what's in those escape kits? - Where the hell's that plane, Oh yes there it is. The ground crews still working. What an odd dawn - green." And so my thoughts ran, the crew was all together now. Cpp (tail gun) was cleaning the window on his turret - the rest of us were cleaning and inspecting guns, as a final check. I climbed into plane noticing

A republic may be called the climate of civilization.

—Victor Hugo

bomb load - ground crews
had written on them differ-
ent things like - Compliments
of Uncle Sam - Heres to you
and worse things.

The co-pilot had some
Hershey buds - funny I
should remember that.

I remember waving as we
taxied out for take off. A pencil
in my hand.

Airborne - I wrote it in my
log. I went back into the bomb bay
and pulled the safety pins out of
the bombs.

We circled for altitude and
formed our formation. We were
in the last element - left wing
man - lead position.

Fighters - FW-190's attacked
us as soon as we hit France.

Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears.

—Benjamin Franklin

Like flashes they passed wings
twinkling red as their cannons
fired. Our fifties were going - tracers
from lead ship passed over us.
The sky seemed full of fight.

The interphone crackled contin-
ually - "fighters six o'clock, high-
comming in" - fighters at three
o'clock - keep your eyes open -
fighters... fighters - Bomb
doors opened."

Thank God we are on the
run I thought - well soon head
for home.

Ha-Woop! - It hit. Funny
I thought that a 30 MM would
make more noise than that.
I was afraid to turn around and
look it sounded too close to the
pilot & co-pilot. The flight deck
smelled of cordite - we were on

What bosom beats not in his country's cause?

—Alexander Pope

fire - I looked. I shall never forget the odd color of the flame - orange. The Co-pilot was leaving his seat - the flames were licking his feet. The pilot worked like a machine - throttle back - salvoed bombs - pressed the bail out bell !!

Although I knew it was the end I couldn't believe it. I grabbed my oxygen mask, throat mike and ear phones and jerked them off my face. I didn't hesitate, I didn't wonder about the chute opening - I just jumped through the bomb bay first.

I was ~~being~~ rushed away by the wind - a brief flash as our plane passed over - my arms and legs spread and me spinning like a top. I looked at the ground. The world had gone mad, it was

spinning and leaning and rocking. With out thinking I pulled the rip cord. There was a sudden jerk - my whole body seemed to snap - my fall was broken.

30,000 and some feet below me lay the ground that I so wanted to be on. Only seconds ago we were flying and in no trouble.

I have never been in a world so quiet or so cold. So swaying of the chute and being more alone than ever before. I felt dizzy so I stuck the hose of the bail out bottle in my mouth. As I turned on the oxygen I noticed how my hand was shrivled with the cold. It looked like the hand of a very old man.



The sound body is a product of the sound mind.

—G. B. Shaw

Let brotherly love continue.

—New Testament

Except between Pete & Mucky!



Oxygen Mask.



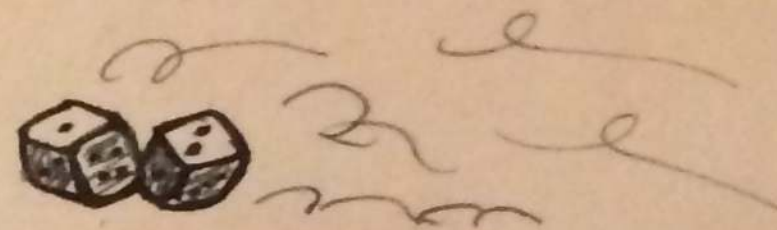
Waist Gunner



Top Turret.



20MM. HIT.



300LB. OF HELL

MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE

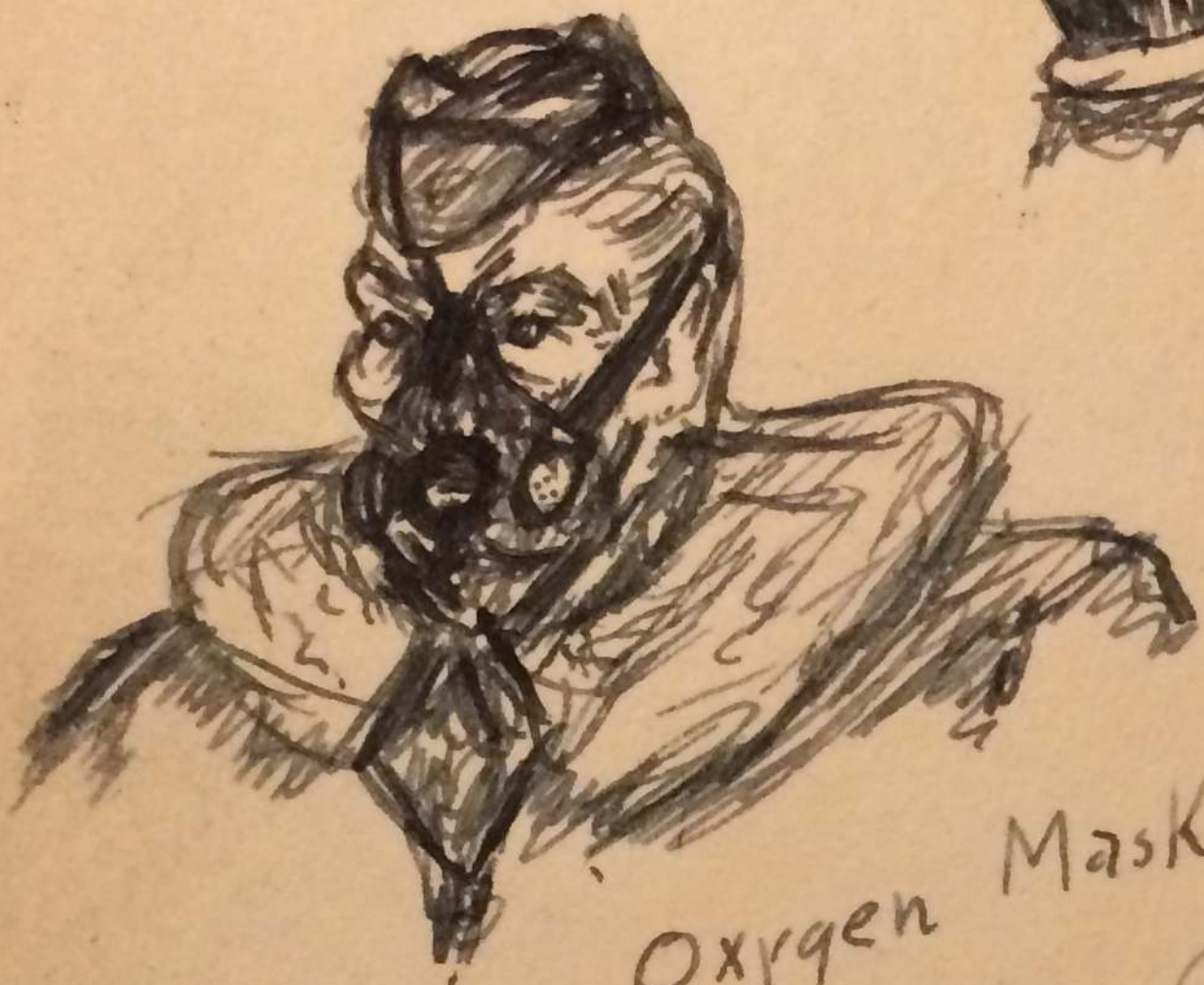


FIRE!





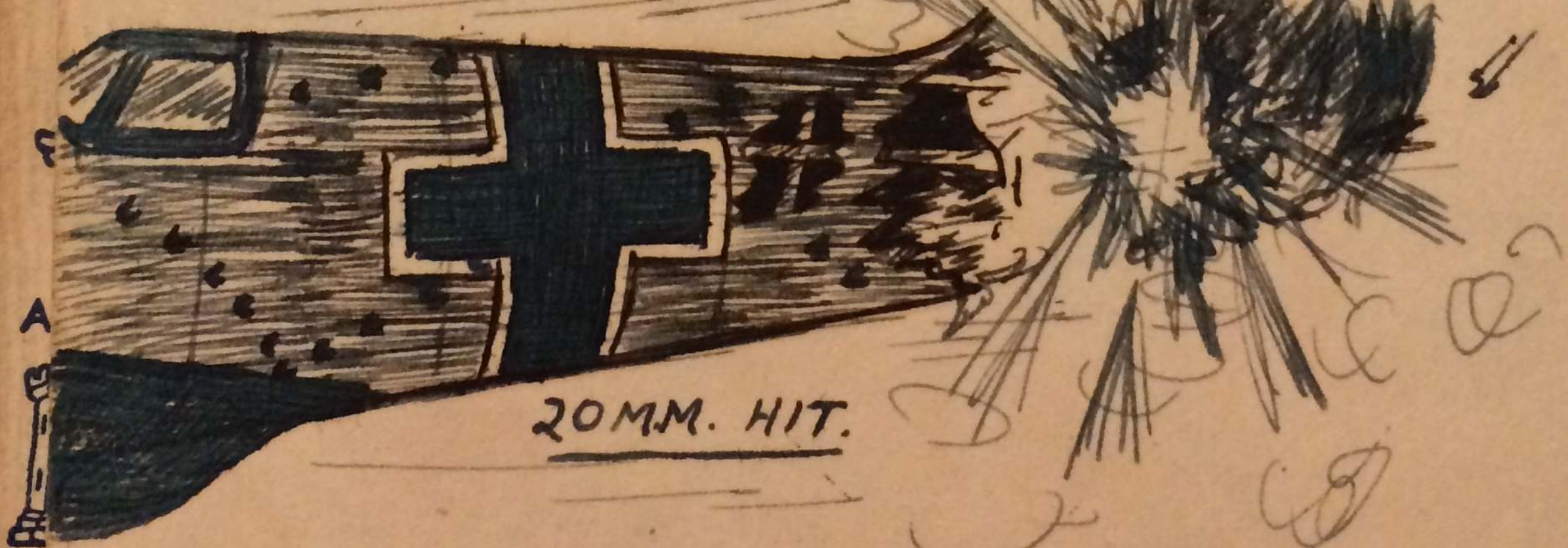
Waist
Gunner



Oxygen Mask.



Top Turret.



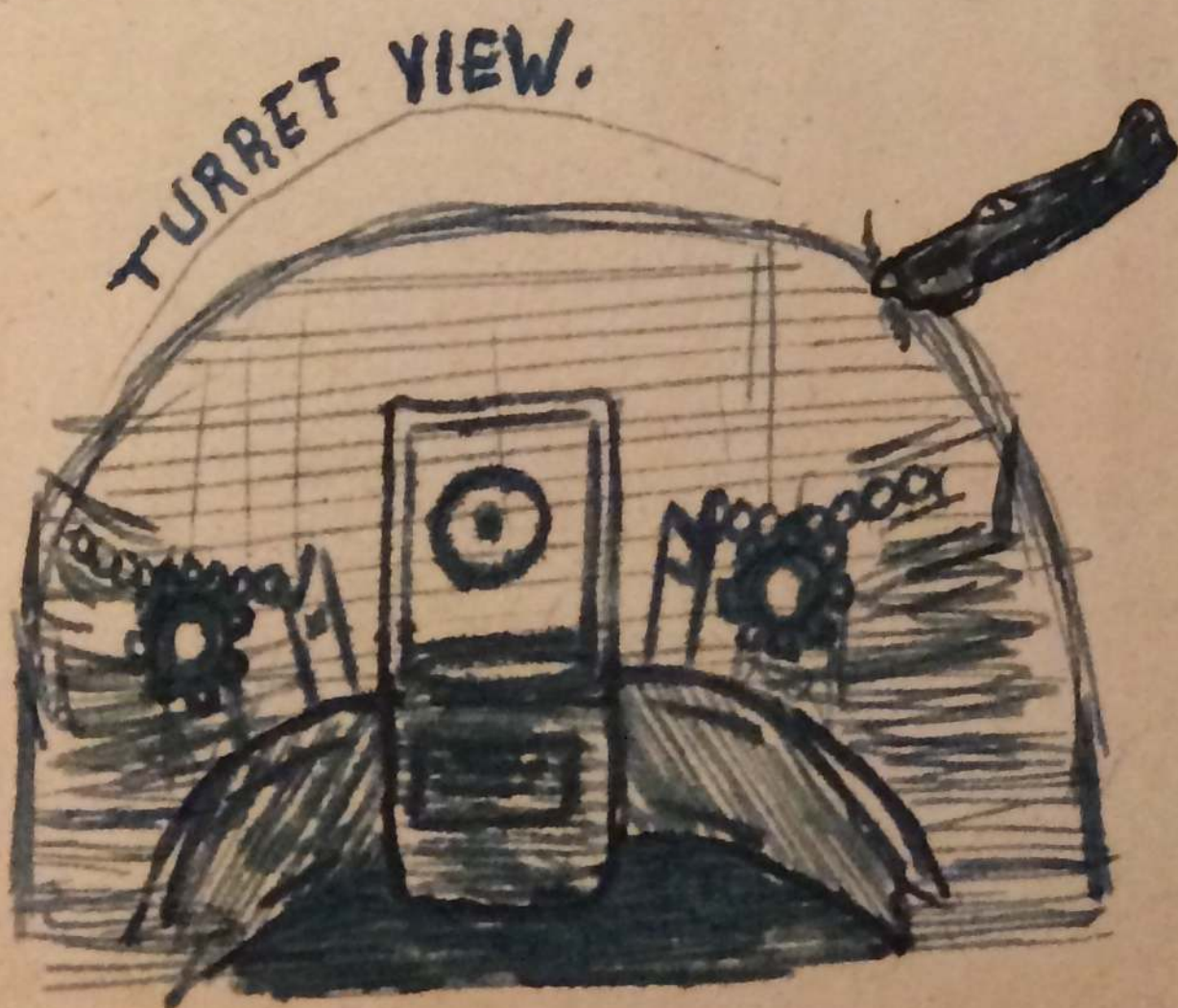
20MM. HIT.

E. N. 11/11/11



300 LB. OF HELL

MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE



FIRE!

I was scared and I prayed. The ground seemed to be staying away from me. What was waiting for me below?

I was glad I hadn't eaten for I was sick from the swaying of the chute. I tried but couldn't throw up. I forgot the ground and the coldness.

The last five or six hundred feet I was stunned at the speed the ground was racing up at me. I landed on my heels and fell back and hit my head. I was dazed. I gathered the chute and ran — escape, I must get away.

Not far off were woods and I ran in a long ways before I stopped.

I met two French wood-

cutters, who hid me and fed me the first black bread that I was to see so much of in months to come.

I wandered around France for three days, always traveling south.

On Oct. 12, 1942, my nineteenth birthday I was captured. It was in a small village. A girl rode up next to me and spoke in French, I didn't understand; but by tugging her blouse I believed she had civilian clothes. She rode ahead and motioned for me to follow her into a building. I did — the building was a police station.

The French police telephoned the Germans.

To God, thy country, and thy friend be true.

—Henry Vaughan

The right is more precious than peace.—Woodrow Wilson

It was a ~~very~~ couple of hours before the Germans arrived. I was searched, in my hands I held money and maps. I didn't know what to do with them.

Soon the room was full of French people who were anxious to see their first Yankee.



Democracy is better than tyranny.
—Periander

He who is not prepared today, will be less so tomorrow.
—Ovid

July 17, 1945 It is a cold
rainy afternoon ^{and} I have
spent the entire day
thinking of Mickey since
July 7, 1945. This is not
unusual at all. I love
Mickey very much -
bushels ^{and} bushels for
that matter. I found this
amazing fact to be so on
July 8 about quarter past
one A.M. when Mickey
^{and} I danced to the song
"The More We Get". In
the days that have followed
these words have meant
more ^{and} more to me.

I hate to think of
the day when I will
have to go back to
the hospital ^{and} leave

Be sure you are right, then go ahead.

—David Crockett, Motto, during War of 1812

Mickey here at home.
I always hate to say
goodnight. I wonder
what saying "goodbye"
for awhile will be
like. I hate to think
of it. I wish this
last year of school was
over so Mickey ^{and} I
could be married while
he has so much time
off "Mrs. Michael S.
Reardon" - sounds
wonderful doesn't it.
Golly, I don't even know
what the S stands
for! That that it matters
as just being Mickey
is good enough for
me.

I have written in

The nation's honor is dearer than the nation's comfort.

—Wilson

Mickie's Diary as
he wanted - probably
not as well as he'd
like but he knew I
love him ^{and} I guess he
knows I talk better
with my eyes than with
a pen. Anyway I'll see
him tonight & try to
do better.



Worse than war is the fear of war.

—Seneca

We give up the fort when there's not a man left to defend
it.—Captain George Croghan

Freedom exists only where the people take care of the government.—Woodrow Wilson

THE FOLKS BACK HOME



Name

Address

City

State

Name

Address

City

State

Name

Address

City

State

Name

Address

City

State

Name

Address

City

State



DATES TO REMEMBER



BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS I
WANT TO REMEMBER BY SENDING A GREETING OR GIFT

July 7, 1945
Rebe & Mickey
meeting after
34 case!

Date _____
Name _____
Occasion _____

Date _____
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Occasion _____

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Occasion _____



AUTOGRAPHS

Have Each of Your Buddies Write a Verse,
Sentiment, or Characteristic Com-
ment . . . and Sign His Name



From here to Hell
& Timbuctoo
I'll help to keep
all "nets" snafu.
(After you)

Signature Stefan (S) Pikel

Blank lines for writing a verse, sentiment, or characteristic comment.

Signature

MY DISCHARGE

FROM THE SERVICE

DATE _____

PLACE _____

RANK _____

COMMENT _____

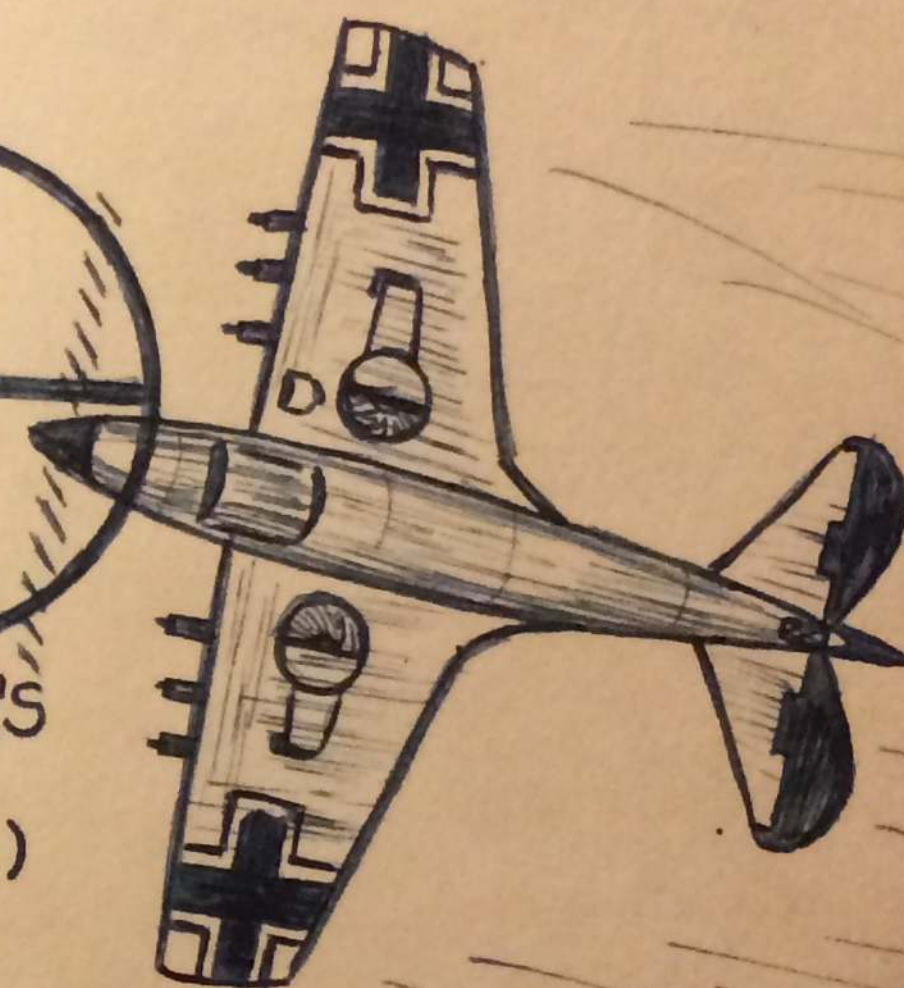


" Bombs "
AWAY

Devils Food



GUNNER'S
DREAM
(Belly up)



330TH.

SQ DN.



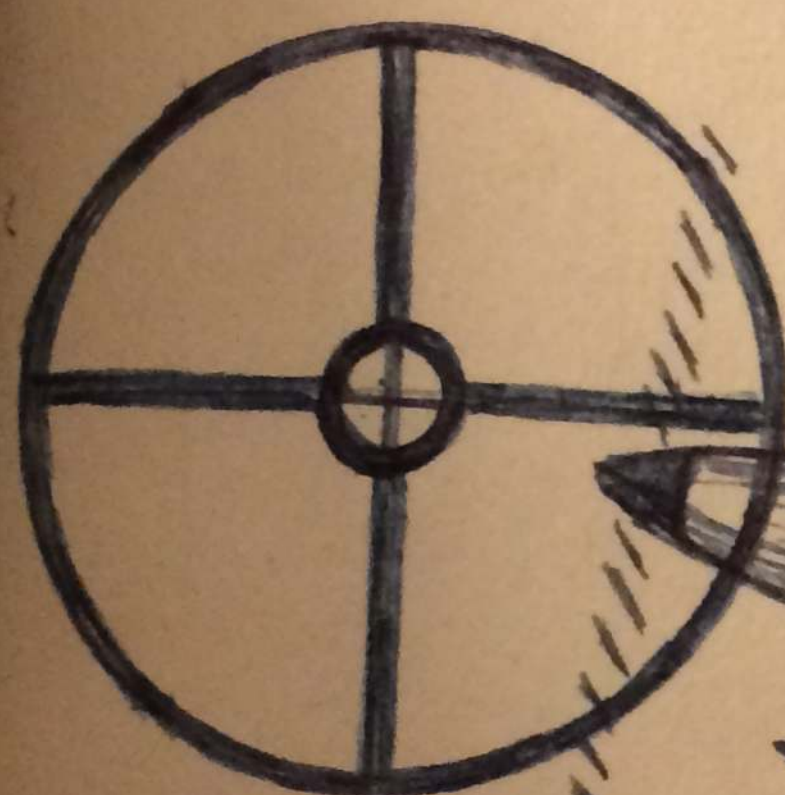
Submarine Officer's Badge

LARGE
ICE

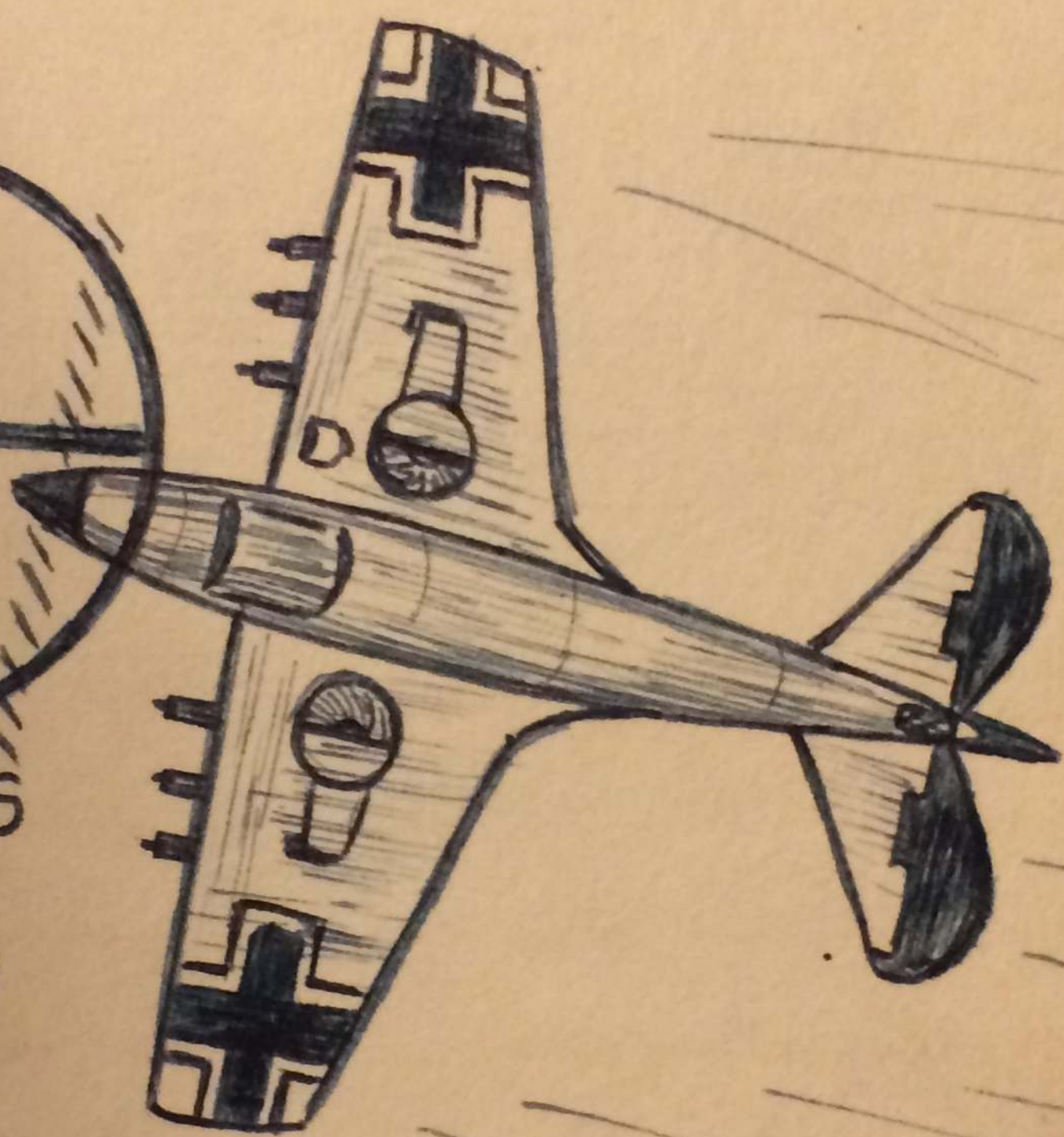


Devils Food

" Bombs "
AWAY



GUNNER'S
DREAM
(Belly up)



330 TH.

SQ DN.

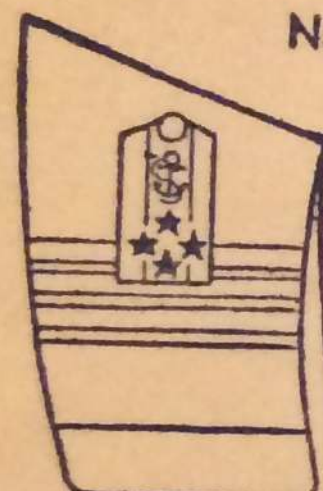




Naval Aviator's Badge (his wings)

NAVAL

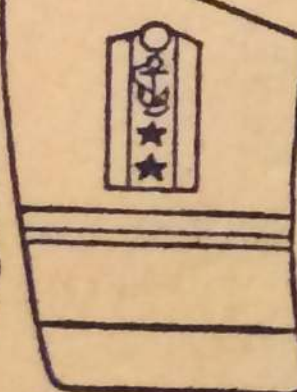
INSIGNIA



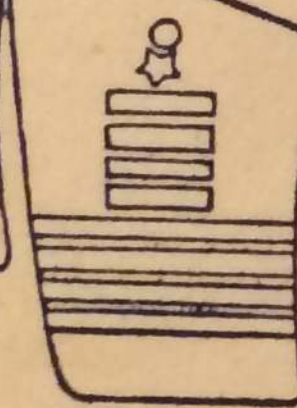
Admiral



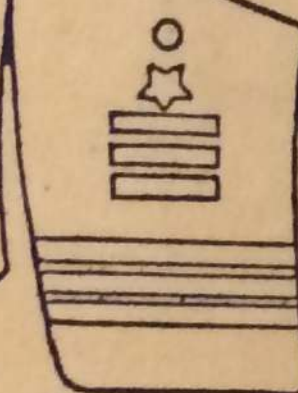
Vice Admiral



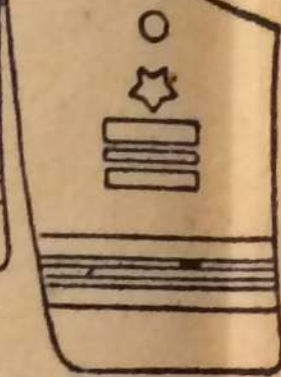
Rear Admiral



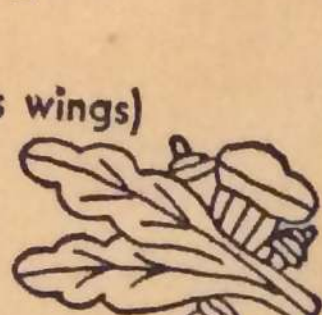
Captain



Commander



Lieut. Commander



Supply Officer



Med. Officer



Dental Officer



Boatswain's M.



Gunner's M.



Carpenter's M.



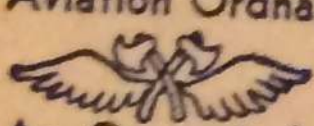
Aviation Mach. M.



Aviation Metalsmith



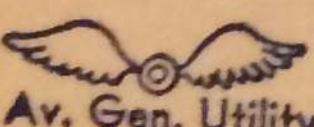
Aviation Ordnanceman



Av. Carpenter's M.



Aerographer



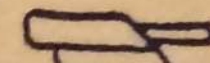
Av. Gen. Utility



Quartermaster



Machinist M.



Turret Capt.



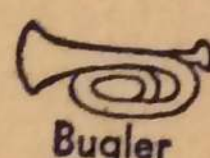
Storekeeper



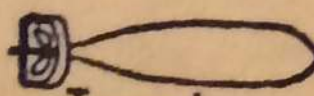
Comm. Steward



Cook



Bugler



Torpedoman



Fire Controlman



Petty Off. 2nd Class



Petty Off. 1st Class



Chief Petty Off.



Pharmacist



Electrician



Chaplain



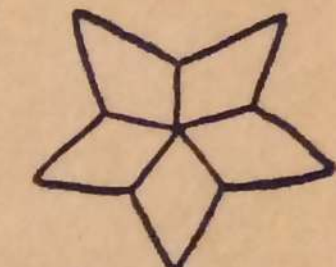
Boatswain



Machinist



Gunner



Line Officer



Radio Electrician



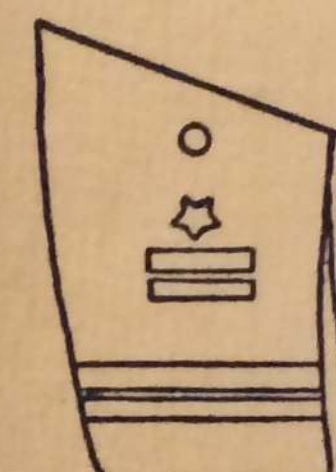
Civil Engineer



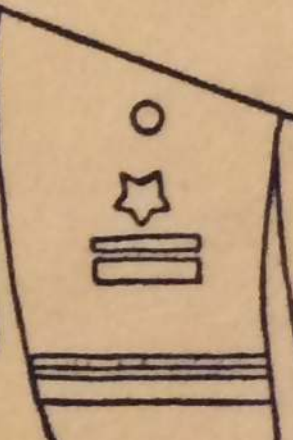
Pay Clerk



Carpenter



Lieutenant



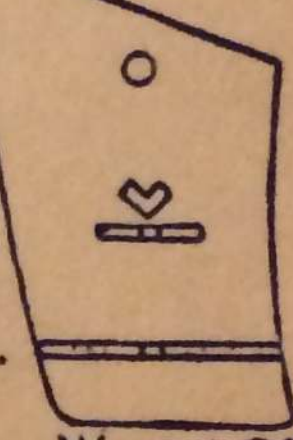
Lieut. Jr. Grade



Ensign



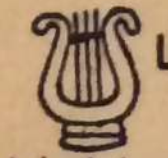
Chf. Warrant Off.



Warrant Off.



Yeoman



Musician



Elec. M.



Metalsmith



Radioman



Petty Off. 3rd Class



Signalman



Submarine Officer's Badge

My Buddies

Sgt. Paul H Mcqueen. 269 Ballmont St, Maymast, PA

Before I start this diary

On dec 14, 1941 I inlisted* in KG Bat. 53 F.A. Brig of the 28th div. since I am writing this some 17 months later it will be rather vague. I remember it was a cold morning the day we arrived at Indiantown Gap Panama. It was all very new to me and I was sure I'd like it, for I was only a few months past sixteen and the change from school life was pleasant. I spent six months in the field artillery it was a very nice experience and I met some good guys.

The life was tough and the going hard. I was a radio operator and a rather good one.

We never did travel out of the state and that was something I didn't like. I remember how I enjoyed all the day truck rides.

Along around Aug or Sept. I decided to transfer to the air corps, which I never regretted.

Was first shipped to Jefferson Barricks Mo. Only Stayed a few weeks.

We then went to Scott Field Ill to a radio school. It was a 22 week course and I spent 20 days in the hospital and 21 days at home. I was on furlough when war was declared so I don't know the immediate reaction of the soldiers at camp. The attitude of civilians toward soldiers really changed. I guess it will change again when the war is over.

It seemed my stay at Scots would never end; but finally the day came when we graduated and were assigned to a squadron. Thank God I got a heavy bombardment group. I was assigned to a new bombardment group stationed at Barksdale Field LA. We spent six weeks in LA. My first flying days were quite a thrill although I must admit I did experience "Air Sickness".

We went on to Ft. Myers Fla. For our advanced training. Ft. Myers was pretty nice that is, except the field.

Spent a month detached service in Calif. On the desert. It was really tough – hotter'n hell.

I have flown a good many miles and have been to the following cities. Shreveport, LA – Dallas & El Paso, Texas – Albuquerque N. M – Blythe, Frisco, Oakland, Calif. – Tampa, Ft. Myers, Florida – Dayton, Ohio – Chicago, Ill. – Prestwick, Scotland.

Equipment I Own Besides BT Req.

1. Leather Flying Jacket
2. Wool lined flying jacket
3. Wool lined flying pants
4. Wool lined flying shoes
5. Wool lined flying hat
6. Summer flying hat
7. Emergency kit
 - a. 2 rations of chocolate
 - b. Waterproof match kit
 - c. 1 hunting knife
 - d. 2 fishing hooks & line
 - e. Compass
8. Bail out – oxygen bottle
9. Oxygen mask
10. *crossed out*

Wed. Aug. 12, 1942

Flew this morning. Lt. Cox practiced landings. Flew tonight. Tried “corkscrews” (30deg bank – 500 ft. dive – 30deg bank in opposite direction – climb 500 ft.) Real thrill – two sick passengers.

Thur. Aug 13, 1942

Got paid this morning (flying pay) Only got thirty nine dollars and I owe seventy. Paid half my debts – lost \$12 in a craps game. Damn my luck. Cleaned my rifle. Was on a bombsight guard from mid-night till 5:00.

Fri. Aug 14, 1942

Was only in bed two hours – got called to operations. More rain, no flights. (Cont.) Ground crew left to-night. They went to New York – are leaving for England by boat. Im glad were* flying over.

Sat. Aug 15, 1942

Barricks seems deserted since ground crew left. Got my eyes examined for new glasses. Eye drops have left me half blind. We got our new planes to-day. They are O.K – ten fifty cal. Guns in all. Went to town and got about half shot. Bed at 2:00.

Sun. Aug 16, 1942

Was shown around our new ship all morning. Got two shots in the arm - don't know what there* for. The army really throws the needle at us. I think we leave here soon. (Later) Sick as hell; got a terrific fever; left arm and neck are stiff as a board. No more shots for mee if I can help it. Men are laying around talking about ancient days – some are really ancient to.

Mon. Aug 17, 1942

Didn't do a darn thing to-day. Went to the rifle range; but it was closed for repairs. I have to sleep on the plant to-night, its sort of a guard duty. Oh yes, I signed the pay-roll – this is important.

Tues. Aug 18, 1942

Woke up about 6:00 this morning and looked around the ship for my shoes, which I didn't find. I had to walk up to the barricks* (through the main gate) in my bare feet – met an officer and it proved to be most embarrassing. The gang ragged the hell out of me – “Fine guard gets his shoes stolen” I heard it a million times. It turned out to be Red w ho swiped them. I got the small German pistol that George sent me. We flew this afternoon – Lt. Cox and Lt. Johnson (Ox) were checked out as first pilots by Maj. Cool.

Wed. Aug 19, 1942

Went to a “First aid” lecture this morning. Very interesting lecture – mentioned some of the things there is a shortage of in England. Manchester, N.H. is starting to get cold. I wonder how the weather is in England.

Thur. Aug 20, 1942.

Went to a lecture on “English operation of Radio”. Why in the hell they spend six months teaching us the U.S. way and then send us where they use another method is beyond me. Laid around out at the ship rest of the afternoon. Got a letter from Nora dated July 10, also got one from Mom. No flying to-day.

Fri. Aug 21, 1942

Steve and I were in the supply room this morning and spotted a life raft inflator cylinder. Got to foolin around with it and Steve fired it – left immediately.

Flew our new ship to-day. The boss took it to 30,000. In the decent the top hatch blew down and knocked me on my ***!! Hurt my left shoulder. Our crew has its insignia on – its O.K.

Sat Aug 22, 1942

Didn't do a darn thing to-day. Was at radio school this morning, it's a helluva mess and I cant get a thing out of it. Steve and I went to the show to-night, saw some second rate "bucket of blood" picture. No insignia on our ship yet. I often get the urge to write to Bebe, although I know I don't care for her, but I would like to hear from her. To hell with it, it would only lead to trouble.

Sun Aug 23, 1943

Sun Aug 23, 1942

We flew some gunners down to Langley Field, VA. It was a swell flight, we flew over New York City. I spotted the Normandie laying on her side. Also saw the empire state building and G. Washington Bridge. No one else saw the Normandie, saw I thought I thought I did pretty good until some one mentioned the "Statue of Liberty" – of all the things to miss I miss the statue of liberty. Stayed in VA. All night – had a terrific rain storm during the night.

Mon. Aug 24, 1942

Flew back this morning – didn't miss the "Statue" this time. We are scheduled for an all night mission tonight. It's a 2,000 mile hop out to Indiana and back. Take off at midnight and am I sleepy!

Tues. Aug 25, 1942

Six more days till pay day. Our all night flight was cancelled because number 2 engine failed to put out required R.P.M. We did go on a gunnery mission in the afternoon. We went out over the Atlantic to fire. I fired the top turret – right gun. Back plate on left gun wouldn't lock in place. Guns are very good. Would fire short burst to make a splash target then give the splash a burst. Did pretty good. Shot at sea gulls – make very good targets and are very hard to hit.

Made a bad landing – (Lt. Cox) a smashed tail skid. Received a letter from Mom and one from a girl in Fla., who picked up a note I threw out of a troop train about three months ago.

Wed. Aug 26, 1942

My ship went to Middletown, Pa to have tail skid fixed. First cross country I have ever missed and it would be to my home state. Had to stay to go to a Radio Lecture. Radio man

in England is the king pin. Letters from home and Patsy Maurer – a very nice girl and pretty to. Will answer to-night.

Met Lt. Simpson & Lt. Cox going out to the plane with their girls (On way to Middletown) I offered to carry bags – for a slight sum. The officers liked to see who would pay me. Lt. Cox lost – than I flipped him double or nothing. Again he lost – so I made a very easy half dollar.

Thurs. Aug 27, 1942

Four days till pay day. Attended lecture on radio operations in England. We are going to Scotland I believe. A cleaning shop opened up to-day and they had a big celebration for the service men. Lots to eat and drink.

Fri Aug 28, 1942

Gave group radio operators 16 W.P.M. code checks to-day. Only two passed and I was one of them. I never realized how stale our operators have gone from lack of practice. I've got to get "On the ball" and learn the "Q" signals. To-night is our last night in town so we celebrated. Met a very nice girl and had a swell time. Too much beer.

Sat Aug 29, 1942

Got a letter from Mom and I think Ill write home to-day.

Sun Aug 30, 1942

My ship hasn't come back from PA yet and every thing is moving. Loaded all the ships with 2,500 rounds of "ammo". Were in pattern of five. Two armor piercing, two incendiaries and a tracer. It's the real thing. The big move should come soon. All our clothes are packed. Pay Day to-morrow.

Mon Aug 31, 1942

(Entered on Sept 1, 1942 in Newfoundland)

Was paid on Monday. Got \$191.00 after paying my debts and stock-ing up I was left with \$140 or so. Was supposed to leave to-day; but didn't.

Tues Sept 1, 1942

To-day was it – plenty of excitement as we left. It was a long flight and I had plenty to do. Calibrated my transmitter for all required frequencies.

Sept 2, 1942

Went to radio briefing class to-day. Getting all set for the big hop. Got in a big crap game – was \$9 short of \$300. Lost it all trying to get that \$9. Canadian money made the game confusing. They look like cigar coupons.

Sept 3, 1942

Didn't do much to-day. Was all prepared to leave to-night when flight was cancelled. Hope we leave Gander Lake to-morrow – this is a hellish place!

Sept 4, 1942

Flew the Atlantic to-day. Fifteen and flew the "Drink" – not bad. Flew the ship over Ireland it was a nice country. Landed at Prestwick, Scotland. Having trouble with English money.

Sept 5 to Sept 11, 1942

Flew to our permanent base from Scotland. We are somewhere above London. When arrived here I was broke. I borrowed 1 lb & 10 shillings and got in a crap game. Won about 140 dollars – feel much better now. Have been to town a couple of times, it's a small village and not very lively. The town has a lot of WAAFs in town. We have a lot of fun kidding them. Black outs here are complete. It is very hard to get around at night. Jerries come over every night and drop flares. They can't find our field – but if they do?? A couple of nights ago a British night fighter got a German ship. The Jerry fell like a torch and exploded when it hit.

Sept 12, 1942

Didn't do much to-day. Had a date with "Dunk", she is going home Monday. Got mail to-day that the 409th had flown over with them. Pop is pretty sick and it worries me.

Sept 13, 1942

Flew over to that other American bomber sqdn. They have seen action. There was a B -17-E all shot to hell. God only knows how they got back. The bellie gunner was dead and both waist gunners hit. It had about four 20mm cannon hits on it and more machine gun bullet holes than I could count. Tail gunner had his goggles knocked off by a slug. The bellie gunner was hit in the sump and the slug came out his chest. Talked to tail gunner, he says it's pretty hot over there now – more Folk Wolfs 190'2 than you can imagine. This flight got 13 of them and lost one fortress.

Went to town again to-night, Dunk.

Sept 14, 1942

Flew over to Colebrook again. A good many men bought bicycles there – for eight pounds or so (\$28) I think I shall get one when I get paid.

Sept 15, 1942

Had day off. Went in to town to-night. Had a swell time. English beer is terrible. Took Lark home from the dance. Hope we get a mission soon.

Sept 16, 1942

Got ^up early for a change. Got lectures from experienced gunners to-day. There is quite a difference between lectures given by English and the Americans. The Americans give you the impression that it is impossible to shoot down German ships. Fast and furious with little chance of winning. Now the English are quite the opposite (as they usually are) They let you with the impression that it is suicide for a German ship to attack and American bomber. They are amazed at the number and caliber of our guns. They cant believe the small losses of the American 17 outfit and the large numbers of Germans knocked down. I wonder how the Jerries feel toward the yanks – they have taken a beating. The yanks got 12 Jerry Folk Wolf 190's on one trip and lost only one 17. As a matter of fact they have only lost two ships. I sure hope we do as good – and we shall.

Sept 17, 1942

For once we get a good meal in England. Dinner was very good. Ham, Tomatoes and peas – peaches for desert. We just ate ham sandwiches till we couldn't move.

More gunnery lectures and movies on gunnery.

Got hell for not making my bed properly. Damn it burns me – that Jewish b- - - of a captain has been trying to clamp down on combat crews since he has been here. We hold the aces though.

I need a hair cut very bad. To-day at the movies an officer behind me asked me to remove my hat so he could see. When I did and my hair stuck up he said "Aw hell put it back on"

Had some spitfires over to-day. They buzzed the field a few times and how these English boys can fly. Wait till they get some of the yank "peashooter" boys over here. We get paid soon thank God.

Fri Sept 18, 1942

The days over and here I sit. My restitution starts to-day and I could easily get to town; but I haven't any money anyhow.

The spitfires were over again to-day. They attack our formation from all angles, it gives us plenty of practice and a general idea of what it will be like. They put on a good show for the boys on the ground.

We went up and our number one engine “konked” and we returned. There are rumors that we shall get two more guns on the bottom.

Sat, Sept 19, 1942

Nothing of importance happened to-day. Was out the ships this morning. I made a good improvement on the interphone communication. I put the “press to talk button” in the waist gunners position on the back of their gun- they can now communicate with the rest of the crew and still keep both hands on the gun. Also detachable.

Wrote to Bebe – why?

Low ceiling to-night, don’t think Jerry will be over; but you can never figure out the Hun.

Plenty of planes a round here. Powerful bombers, shifty fighters they give you a funny feeling – pride I guess you would call it. Just the sight of a B-24 does something to me. Its s o darn smooth and maneuverable – boy what Id give to fly one. Flying in it is t he next best thing though.

No mail to-day.

Sun Sept 20, 1942

Rain – typical English weather; low, fast moving clouds. Drizzles continuously. Flew this morning – only a short hop. Still restricted.

Mon Sept 21, 1942

Flew out to the channel to-day. We were supposed to do some practice bombing – couldn’t find the target, too cloudy. Lecture on “What to do in case of a crash in enemy territory”. It makes a nice story; but its mighty hard to believe.

From Tues Sept 22-42 to Fri Sept 25, 1942

The last three days are a whirl o f men, women, uniforms, music and drinks. Wednesday was our fay off so “EPP” and I went to Cambridge (Leaving early Tuesday) we got about half plastered and ended up with two wild young English girls. “EPP” is still the “virgin man” – I cant see how though. Wednesday we spent the day roaming through English shops in the afternoon we saw a very good picture – “This Was Paris” – an English production I believe.

Went to a club that night and had a very good time. Last night (Friday) “Epp” and I went to Huntington and met some W.A.A.F’s.

The English winter is setting in. The air is cold and moist, very bad for flying – perfect “Iceing” conditions. Im afraid out bombing will be limited this winter. God only knows how soon we can complete out 30 missions and go back to the States. By Easter I hope.

Sat Sept 26, 1942 to Mon Sept 28, 1942

Still we wait! Why? We cam with the idea that we would get into the thick of it as soon as we arrived. Now winter is setting in and are work shall be limited. This morning a thick fog blanketed the whole area- these will become more frequent as winter comes on.

Our hut has a good gang in it. There are 29 of us in this single story building. It is heated by two small cook stoves (which we are using already) There is no certain time for lights out and no special time to get up (Breakfast is around 7:00 – that gets us up) We have one portable radio, which isn’t too good. We are going to buy a new one this payday. At night we have one usual “Ball session” and Scull sings every now and then. He has a good voice.

To-day (Monday) a rain has cleared up the fog. Still poor flying weather.

Gambling still takes up the majority of everyones spare time. Never a day passes that a crap game or “black jack” game isn’t played. Ive been trying to find some good reading material – Cant do it! English books are rather dull.

The food situation is pretty good. It does make one appreciate home. It is good wholesome food but rather scares. Sweets are very hard to get. We are allowed two candy bars per week – usually stale. The boys have taken to making something “belly filling” themselves. We have had coffee, tea and ham sandwiches the last couple of nights. How they were obtained is a military secret. Many are the “emergency ration” cans that have been opened; for they contain a form of chocolate. They were packed in 1940 do naturally they are slightly stale.

When the lights go out at night and everyone is comfortable settled in bed, Dutch Scull will start to sing. He isn’t a bit bashful and will sing any request song that he knows and he knows most of them. The songs they ask for are usually a little old and it is easy to see there is a particular night and a particular girl connected with each request. There are soon 29 quiet men thinking of a girl back home. Who do I think of? Yes, who is there back home for me?

Wed Sept 30, 1942

Made no entry for Sept 29; there was nothing important that is worth recording. Flying weather still poor. To-day (Wed) we got paid – what a terrific game we had. I lost my 51 lbs in about three hours!! That is about \$204 American Dollars. Im afraid gambling is in my blood; for I can lose now and think nothing of it. I do believe I shall guide through for I make enough now to do two guys.

I am a technical Sgt; Official as of to-day. So to-day was both good and bad luck.

To lose gambling is in one way a good thing for it makes one think. It does me anyway

Hope we get our mission soon.

Oct 1 to Oct 4

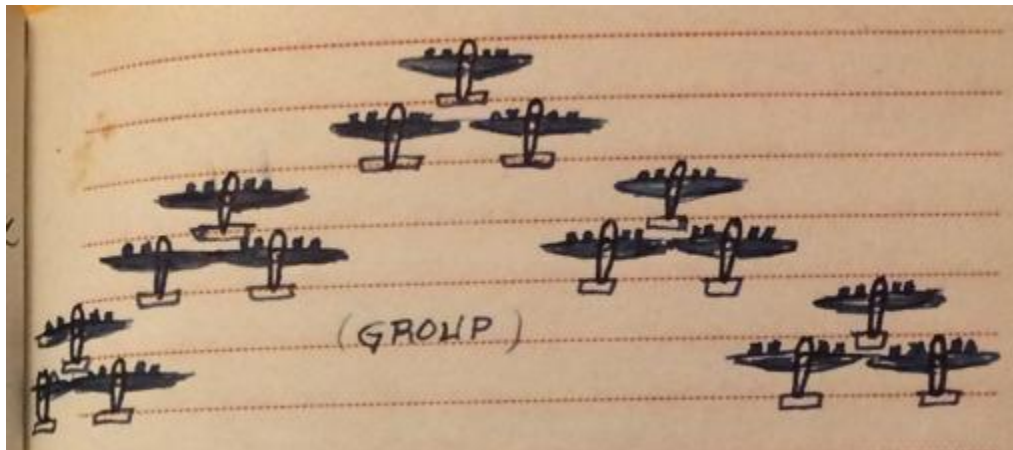
With in the last four days we have had two raids cancelled. We had the bombs on the ship and all. (10 - 500 lbs) special “ammo” and a lot of excited guys. Of which I was one. Oh well – we’ll crack em yet.

Have a lot of fun listening to German propaganda stations on our new radio. They put on good music.

Got another typhus shot. Got a letter from Pop – feel swell now.

Tues Oct 6, 1942

Flew a group formation to-day. God it was rough! The sky was full of ships floating toward and away from us. Ly. Cox (C.P) flew our ship. We were the left wing man of the fourth element and out flight leader kept crowding us over in to the right wing man of number two element. At time we were with in five feet of our flight leader with planes drifting under us and over us. At times I could feel my muscles tighten as we drifted toward another ship. It’s a real thrill and also a chill. The bombing was a success (practice)



Got a letter from home to-day.

Wed Oct 7, 1942

Nothing important to-day. All combat men are now taking “vitamin” pills. Our pilot gives us one every morning – and sees that we take it. I guess its to make up for the shortage of certain foods.

“Red” Rondear was in Cambridge last night. HE was taking a girl home and it was a terrifically dark night. The girl told him to look out for a river; just then he fell in. He has had the whole gang laughing to-day telling the story. Says he was lucky – didn’t get his hat wet!

Wed Oct 8, 1942

Rain to-day. Still no mission. Ive got my pilot a bet. I say we will have a mission Monday, for Monday is my birthday and with my luck we are sure to have a flight then.

Donellie took \$240 off of McCalister in a black-jack game. Got a letter from Bettie Jean Figley to-day.

Thurs Oct 9, 1942

July 20, 1945

Thurs. Oct 9, 1942. I cant remember writing that date although I shall never forget it as an outstanding day in my life. It was almost the last day of my life.

Since this is the first entry in all most three years it will rather long. And yet not too clear for already my memory is forcing these unpleasant days way back into the subconscious mind.

Oct 9, 1942

Up till two in the morning I read, finishing the book “The Moon is Down”. Four in the morning the loudspeaker interrupted the sleep of 29 men – “All combat crews report to operation room immediately”. We turned out, this was it- finally!

Briefing – “Targets Lille mar, Railway yards and factories – altitude 26,000 ft” and more that I don’t remember. We lay around and smoke. I don’t say much because I have a hunch we are going to have trouble. We are issued our escape kits and I started for the

plane – it was just beginning to get light. I can remember so clear that I thought “What a funny dawn – a queer sky – I wonder whats in those escape kits? – where the hells that plane, oh yea there it is the ground crews still working – what an odd dawn – green”

And so my thoughts ran, the crew was all together now. Epp (tail gun) was cleaning the window on his turret – the rest of us were cleaning and inspecting guns, as a final check I climbed into the plane noticing bomb load – ground crews had written on them deterrent things like – compliments of Uncle Sam – heres to you – and worse things.

The co-pilot had some hersey buds – funny I should remember that.

I remember waving as we taxied out for take off. A pencil in my hand.

Airborn – I wrote it in my log. I went back into the bomb bay and pulled the safety pins out of the bombs.

We circled for altitude and formed our formation. We were in the last element – left wing man – bad position.

Fighters – FW-190’s attacked us as soon as we hit France. Like flashes they passed winds twinkling red as their cannons fired. Our fifties were going-tracers from lead ship passed over us. The sky seemed full of light.

The interphone cracked continually – “Fighters six o-clock, high- coming in” – fighters at three oclock – keep your eyes open- fighters....fighters – Bomb Doors Opened.”

Thank God we are on the run I thought – we’ll soon head for home.

Ka-Wooop! – It hit. Funny I thought that a 20mm would make more noise than that. I was afraid to turn around and look it sounded too close to the pilot & co-pilot. The flight deck smelled of cordite – we were on fire – I looked. I shall never forget the odd color of the flames – orange. The co-pilot was leaving his seat – the flames were licking his feet. The pilot worked like a machine – throttle back – salvoed bombs – pressed the bail out bell!!

Although I knew it was the end I couldn’t believe it – I grabbed my oxygen mask, throat mike and ear phones and jerked them off my face. I didn’t hesitate, I didn’t wonder about the chute opening – I just jumped through the bomb bay feet first.

I was rushed away by the wind – a brief flashes our plane passed over – my arms and legs spread and me spinning like a top. I looked at the ground. The world had gone mad, it was spinning and leaning and rocking. With out thinking I pulled the rip cord. There was a sudden jerk – my whole body seemed to snap – my fall was broken.

20,000 and some feet below me lay the ground that I so wanted to be on. Only seconds ago we were flying and in no trouble.

I have never been in a world so quiet or as cold. Slow swaying of the chute and being more alone than ever before. I felt dizzy as I stuck the hose of the bail out bottle in my mouth. As I turned on the oxygen I noticed now my hand was shriveled with the cold. It looked like the hand of a very old man.

** Bottom Page Note: Excepted between Bebe and Mickey

I was scared and I prayed. The ground seemed to be staying away from me. What was waiting for me below?

I was glad I hadn't eaten for I was sick from the swinging of the chute. I tried but couldn't throw up. I forgot the ground and the coldness.

The last two or six hundred feet I was stunned at the speed the ground was racing up at me. I landed on my heels and fell back and hit my head. I was dazed. I gathered the chute and ran – escape, I must get away.

Not far off were woods and I ran in a long ways before I stopped.

I met two French wood-cutters, who hid me and fed me the first black bread that I was to see so much of in months to come.

I wondered around France for three days, always traveling south.

On Oct 12, 1942, my nineteenth birthday I was captured. I was in a small village. A girl rode up next to me and spoke in French, I didn't understand, but by tugging her blouse I believed she had civilian clothes. She rode ahead and motioned for me to follow her into a building. I did – the building was a police station.

The French police telephoned the Germans. It was a couple of hours before the Germans arrived. I was searched, in my hands I held money and maps. I didn't know what to do with them.

Soon the room was full of French people who were anxious to see their first Yank.

**** Next part is written by my grandmother.**

July 17, 1945

It is a cold rainy afternoon and I have spend the entire day thinking of Mickey Lina.

July 7, 1945

This is the most unusual of all. I love Mickey Very Much – Because he has and because he is for that matter! I found this amazing fact to be so on July 8th about quarter past one A.M. when Mickey and I danced to the song “The More I see you”. In the days that have followed these words have meant more and more to me. I have to think of the day when I will have to go back to the hospital and leave Mickey here at home. I really hate to say grounding it I wonder what saying “good bye” for a while will be like. I hate to think of it. I wish this last year of school was over so Mickey and I could be married while he has so much time off. “Mrs. Michael L Reardon” – sounds wonderful doesn’t it Fally. I wont ever know what the “F” stands for! N Ot that it matters as just being Mickey is good enough for me.

I have written in Mickey’s Diary as he wanted – probably not as well as he’d like but he knows I love him and I guess he knows I talk better with my eyes than with a peen. Anyway Ill see him tonight and try to be better.

****In “Dates to Remember” section:**

July 7, 1945. Bebe and Mickey – Meeting after 3-years

**** In Autographs Section:**

From here to Hell

Or Timbuctoo (Timbuktu)

I’ll help to keep

All “nets” SNAFU

(After You)

Signature: Stefan (X) Prekel

from here to Hell
& I'm in too
I'll help to keep
all "nets" snafu.
(After you)

Stefan (S) Pikel

Signature