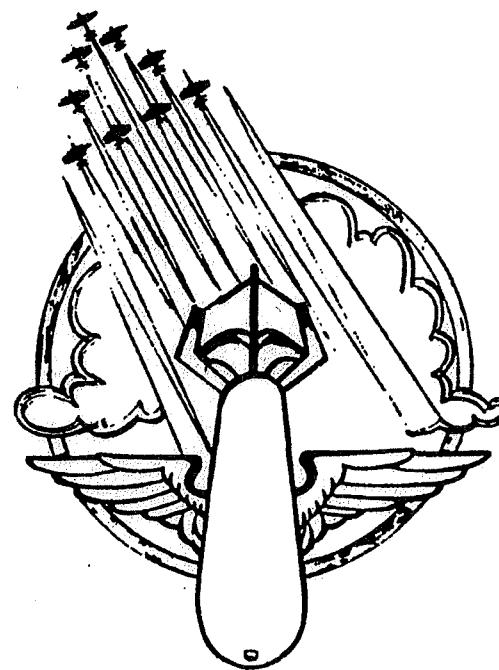


**612th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
SQUADRON HISTORY**





month our Squadron had despatched an equal number of aircraft, being tied for first place with one other. Due to losses in May we fell into second place for aircraft attacking the target since we lost several crews before they reached the target. Otherwise our record was equal in this department. Our abort record still remained one of the highest among the other squadrons, but to compensate for this, in a way, our Squadron losses still remained better compared with the other ones as we had lost only eight (8) crews up to this time.

Many known and unknown things had contributed to this record and too much cannot be said for some departments. To Engineering with its many unending efforts to keep them flying we could not give too much credit. And all other sections had made their contributions too toward this end. All were working to try and bring us to the top in all departments as regards this Squadron record.

Still the same old question over and over again --- when is the invasion going to start? On the 1st of June we all felt that it would just have to start in June and some wagered their pounds as to which would be the historical day. We were tired of waiting but confident we would play a part and more confident that our part would be a job well done. Then D-Day finally did come early in the morn of June 6th. To most it was just another day but one filled with eagerness to hear the news and the reports of our own crews brought back. We were all completely happy. Naturally rumors were forthcoming about getting home sooner but it was natural for all to feel as if the start towards the end was underway. One thing that many noticed was the absence of the usual gripes about work, etc. All of us realized that anything we could do was not enough and all went about with an air of determination to do a good job.

Many tactical missions to support the invasion effort found a large number of the crews moving rapidly towards completion of their tour of duty in June. Thirty-three (33) of our Squadron crew-members completed 30 missions or more and twelve more completed enough missions to return to the States for a leave before returning to the Squadron and combat duty. Appended to this months history is a complete list of all 612th crewmen who have completed their combat tour and also those who have returned to the States on leave before returning to combat duty with the Squadron.

Our operations did not go without loss during the month. Three of the Squadron crews were lost while on combat duty. These were the crews of 2nd Lt. Massey's, 2nd Lt. Atherton and 1st Lt. Myrtetus -- three very promising crews with Lt. Massey's already flying in a lead capacity.

On the 19th June Lt. Massey was flying in "Channel Express" on the mission to Bordeaux, France. His aircraft was leading the high squadron of one of the Group's boxes for that effort. The Group had not encountered enemy opposition of any kind when Lt. Massey's aircraft dropped down and out of formation. He was noticed by the Group leader and called by him on VHF. No answer was received and the aircraft pulled into a tight bank and nosed down in a spiral and began to disintegrate. No chutes were observed to come from the aircraft

and chances for any crew members surviving were slight. Lt. Kelly and his co-pilot Lt. Coyne were flying on Lt. Massey's wing. When asked what they were able to observe about the aircraft they both stated that they had seen smoke in the cockpit which could have probably been fire. This was the strangest case known in the Group to date in the loss of an aircraft.

The crew of Lt. Atherton's was lost on the huge 8th Air Force effort to Berlin which was flown on June 21st. This is another case in which the Group was only able to get indecisive facts about the loss. The only reports gained were as follows. Lt. Atherton's aircraft was observed to have feathered an engine and seemed to be experiencing difficulty in holding formation. Just after the I.P. was reached the Group ran into very heavy and persistent contrails and clouds. After passing through one layer of these it was noticed that Lt. Atherton's aircraft was missing from the formation and no further sighting of the aircraft was possible. A few of our other aircraft thought they had heard this missing aircraft call for QDM's later when they neared home again but it is now thought that they confused this with the case of Lt. Loughlin who was having trouble also.

The loss of Lt. Myrtetus and crew was on the Group's 100th mission, which was flown on 25th June, at the time when they were lost. The Group had penetrated the enemy coast over the Invasion area and was just past the front lines when they experienced moderate and very accurate flak from the battle area. Lt. Myrtetus' aircraft evidently sustained damage and was observed to make a 180 degree turn and head back towards the coast. The other crews observed eight dark objects hurtle from the stricken aircraft and later they saw two chutes open below. They all expressed the opinion that all eight objects were parachuting crew members. Another crew had to turn back at this point due to extensive battle damage and they noticed Lt. Myrtetus' aircraft nearing the friendly Invasion territory. This crew reported that they saw two more objects exit from the stricken aircraft and it is further hoped that these were the pilot and the co-pilot bailing out. No further reports have been received of this crew, but the chances of survival appear to be good.

The large number of missions flown also brought about an increasing number of awards and decorations to our combat personnel. The majority of these were automatic awards for the completion of a required number of missions to either receive the Air Medal or Distinguished Flying Cross or clusters to either one.

The awards received in June included 40 D.F.C.s, 11 Air Medals, 2 Purple Hearts, two Oak Leaf Clusters to the D.F.C. and 59 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal. Also award has been made to a Squadron member for extraordinary merit and achievement on an operational mission. This was awarded to Lt. Carter for his splendid job of ditching his aircraft when it could not make it back to England from the mission flown to Dessau, Germany in May.

The text of the commendation, signed by Colonel H.W. Bowman, was as follows:

Mission 92Target: Hamburg18 June 1944

A change to strategic bombing saw the Group attacking Hamburg, Germany on June 18th. The target was one of several refineries located there. PFF bombing was necessary due to cloud cover although a break over the target area did provide strike coverage. These showed the bombing was a near miss on the marshalling yards used as a PFF aiming point. Flak was intense and accurate and accounted for some battle damage, but all crews returned to home base. Capt. Goodman was the Low Box Leader in the 94th CBW's "A" Group in which we furnished two groups of aircraft. Nine 612th crews flew the mission with loading as follows.

2nd Lt. F.W. Toussaint & crew	1st Lt. F.P. Ball & crew
2nd Lt. D. Loughlin & crew	2nd Lt. G.F. Carter & crew
2nd Lt. W.E. Massey & crew	2nd Lt. G.H. Linford & crew
2nd Lt. C.G. Ritting & crew	2nd Lt. J.A. Knost & crew
1st Lt. K.H. Opie & crew	1st Lt. M.J. Christensen & crew

Mission 93Target: Bordeaux/Merignac19 June 1944

Another long and successful mission was flown on the 19th June to Merignac airdrome located at Bordeaux, France. Bad weather forced the Group to 31,000 feet altitude at one point but the target was clear and all three M.P.I.'s assigned to the Group's three boxes of 12 aircraft each were hit with good to excellent results.

Enemy opposition was flak over the target which was of the moderate and very accurate type. This accounted for the loss of two crews and a third crew which was from the 612th was lost to unknown reasons. This was Lt. Massey and crew.

Lt. Opie was the Group Leader of the Low Box and his lead bombardier, Lt. Browne, gained very good results for the second time in as many trials. The following 612th crews participated.

2nd Lt. F.W. Toussaint & crew	2nd Lt. W.E. Massey & crew
2nd Lt. D. Loughlin & crew	1st Lt. F.P. Ball & crew
1st Lt. W.J. Kelly & crew	1st Lt. G.F. Bingham & crew
2nd Lt. J. Atherton & crew	2nd Lt. J.A. Knost & crew
2nd Lt. G.F. Carter & crew	1st Lt. K.H. Opie & crew

Mission 94Target: Hamburg20 June 1944

Back in good weather the Group went to Hamburg on the morning of June 20th. The weather was CAVU and both bombardiers of the Group's two boxes accomplished very good to excellent results on the oil industry target assigned. Again the flak was rough but all crews returned safely. The following crews flew the mission.

2nd Lt. C.G. Ritting & crew	1st Lt. F.P. Ball & crew
2nd Lt. G.F. Carter & crew	1st Lt. G.F. Bingham & crew
2nd Lt. G.H. Linford & crew	1st Lt. W.J. Kelly & crew
2nd Lt. J. Atherton & crew	

