

## BOMBARDMENT--TWO YEARS IN ALASKA

### OUTLINE OF EVENTS IN WHICH THE 36TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON PLAYED A DOMINANT ROLE

#### FORWARD

This chronological history of the activities of the 36TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (HEAVY), 28th Composite Group, Eleventh AirForce, Alaskan Defense Forces, has as its aim, the providing of a suitable basis for friendly reminiscence sometime in the future. The history shall begin on December 7, 1941.

The 36th Bombardment Squadron (H), under the command of Major W. O. Eareckson, arrived at Elmendorf Field in pieces during the month of April and May in 1941. (Major William H. Prince assumed command in August). The B-18's assigned to the Squadron were flown from Lowry Field at Denver, Colorado, to Elmendorf during May. The organization was nearly complete by the end of May though reinforcements continued to dribble in during the following months.

The tactical missions, carried out by the Squadron during the relatively uneventful months before December Seventh, were limited to patrols along the Alaskan Coast from Seward to Point Barrow. It is significant to note that even before the Japs had delivered their treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor the Alaskan Command had instructed patrol units to warn all Japanese craft to avoid territorial waters.

The Squadron as a unit was functioning smoothly and the men of the Squadron were rapidly becoming acclimated as December became the present. Those men of the Squadron who were married had welcomed their wives and children and settled in Anchorage. The routine of training, patrol, and home life was well established. (9-1)

December Seventh marked a complete change in the purpose and intent of the unit. Overnight the personnel became grim soldiers and the command seethed with the desire to be at the enemy and also with rumors of imminent attack. The entire Alaskan Defense Command was immediately alerted. At Elmendorf, and all over Alaska, strict blackouts were enforced. The families of Officers and men were returned to the States soon after and all personnel were quartered on the post on a continual alert status.

The weather was very bad, even for Alaska. All ships were readied for flight and the combat crews were ready to take-off within fifteen minutes during the day and one hour at night. During this initial period all missions were flown in conjunction with the 73rd Bombardment Squadron, a medium outfit which also flew B-18's. Routine patrols were flown on alternate weeks by each Squadron South over Kenai into the Alaskan Gulf. After the initial excitement had been tempered with time each crew was allowed one day per week for rest. When the Squadron was not flying patrol they were on constant alert to perform interception missions on orders or information from the Aircraft Warning Service. At one time the AWS supposedly sighted some 30 enemy

aircraft South of Kodiak on a course toward Anchorage. The Squadron immediately put four ships into the air to intercept and destroy the enemy (B-18's) against 30 enemy ships. After several hours of futile flying had ensued the flight was ordered to return to their bases. AWS had made an error. Considering the difficulty under which the Warning Service operated and the heightened tension due to "war nerves" prevalent among the military branches no censure can be applied to AWS.

The 36th Bombardment Squadron was commanded at this time by Lt. Russell A. Cone (Cone succeeded Major Prince in August of "41" as Commanding Officer) and the flights were led by Lt. Robert Maupin and Lt. Thomas Mansfield. There was a shortage of navigators in the Squadron—four men to take care of the navigation problems that arose every day. These four men rarely found a day for relaxation—too much to do and not enough of them to do it.

An incident to illustrate the typical operation condition which occurred on December 12: A call from AWS resulted in orders for one flight to become air-borne. Lieutenants Dunlap, Speer, and Andrews were selected. Dunlap designated a north to south take-off and the flight started to taxi out to the North end of the runway. Dunlap reached the end of the runway and then changed his mind and taxied to the other end. There was little light and the presence of a rather heavy fog cancelled what effect that light might have had. There was no radio contact (radio silence) and Speer watched Dunlap taxi out of his sight in a few yards and assumed that he had taken off. He waited the requisite thirty seconds and then needed his own ship. Air-borne just over Dunlap's head caused more than one man to swallow his heart.

Icing conditions were always present and both men and ships suffered. Two P-30's flying air-alert over Turnigan Arm iced up suddenly and spun out of control. One pilot, Boothe, escaped by bailing out, landing on an ice-flow in Cook Inlet. Yarbrough, flying an O-49, landed in an ice-floe the next day and picked up Boothe, none worse for wear.

Inshore patrols south of Seward were run regularly through the prevailing bad weather. All patrols were flown to the maximum range of the B-18's. To make it possible to search greater areas flights occasionally landed at Yakutat to rest and refuel, returning to Elmendorf the following day. The holidays, Christmas Day and New Years Day were generally disregarded except for a few impromptu celebrations carried on by tired fliers.

1941 On December 26th Lt. Kamputi began patrol flight that ended on January 6th. Bad weather forced him to cancel his plans to return to Elmendorf, and he landed at Yakuta. The same weather grounded him there until New Years Day. The weather improved a little and he left the ground intending to complete his flight to Elmendorf. North of Yakutat he ran into heavy cloud bank but continued his flight on instruments toward the Elmendorf range. Because he could not trust the range completely he climbed to 18,000 feet but found that the range had faded out completely. He turned back toward Cordova and initiated a let down on the Cordova range. He broke out at 200 feet but found that the beam had split in the storm and carried him some twenty miles north of the field. He landed at dusk with fifteen minutes fuel remaining. Here he remained until January 6th when the weather again cleared and enabled him to proceed to Elmendorf without further incident.

1941 During the latter part of January several flight crews were based at Ladd Field so that they might prosecute the search for Colonel Carr. Col. Carr had been lost somewhere in the Yukon Territory while flying from Ladd to Whitehorse in a light airplane. During this period they flew over terrain that was either completely uncharted or very inaccurately charted at the best. Col. Carr was found safe at Fort Yukon.

On February 6th the entire Squadron was transferred to Kodiak. From here patrol flights were made regularly West, to Cold Bay and Umanak; East, to Yak-

utat; and south deep into the Gulf. The weather never seems to improve; flights are still being flown under low ceilings and with high winds. Winds with a velocity in excess of 100 mph have been encountered several times. It was, however, a little easier to fly out of Kodiak than out of Elmendorf.

The squadron's first "Intimations of Immortality" arrived in the guise of a B-17E on March first. The ship had been prepared for cold weather flying at Wright Field with the addition of windshield wipers, alcohol spray, winterized engines and other gadgets. With this ship the range of patrol was increased and flights of long duration previously unknown in Alaska were completed. Later in March three LB-30's were added to the organization's equipment. In May a B-17B was assigned that had previously been flown by the cold weather test squadron stationed at Ladd Field.

The four-engined ships were all equipped with radar. The radar installations facilitated the prosecution of search missions through weather that rarely presented to the pilot an opportunity to ascend above three hundred feet and still remain contact. During the latter part of March and April most missions were scheduled for take-off during darkness to return ten or eleven hours later in daylight. During the early part of May, Cone and Dunlap flew a B-18A to Cold Bay and Umanak for the purpose of testing the possibilities for future use of these fields for heavy bombardment. On May 15th Marks and Madison flew the B-17E to Umanak and landed there. These two flights marked the first landings of bombardment ships in the Aleutians Islands. Cone flew the B-17E to Umanak on May 27th and remained there until June 3rd, flying daily patrols. (weather permitting. He returned to Kodiak to organize the Squadron for active combat, following the attack on Dutch Harbor and Umanak.

June 1, 1942

The squadron, on this date, had earned an honored standing among the Alaskan Defense Forces. The majority of its members had spent over a year flying under adverse weather conditions, the lack of accurate charts, and constant icing condition, and lived with a relative lack of many of the civilized luxuries to which they had formerly been accustomed. The squadron brought on its original transplanting from the states, B-18's to be used for patrol and incidental aerial photography flights. On this date many of the B-18's had outlived their useful lives and had been committed to the grave of all honored craft--the junk heap. The current score in available aircraft: 1 B-17B, 1 B-17E, 2 LB-30's, 2 B-18's.

Plans were complete this time to augment the existing bombardment force in the Aleutians. The first flight of four B-17E airplanes were leaving Edmonton, Canada for Fairbanks, Alaska and points west. These four ships were being flown by veterans of the civil airways. Their crews were, for the most part, recent graduates of the various Air Corps Schools. The first pilots had an average of approximately 200 hours each in the Fortress. Three other ships were following by one day this initial flight.

June 2, 1942

Lt Ware, with his entire combat crew, broke through some bad weather that encircled Kodiak and landed. This was the first of the new Fortresses to arrive. The other five ships and crews were at Anchorage after a false go at the fog through which Ware had found a hole. One of the original seven, a ship piloted by Lt. Wilsey, had been held at Fairbanks for a 100 Hour inspection. Three of the original flight had passed through Fairbanks and on to Anchorage the day before. During the late hours of yesterday the three airplanes comprising the second element passed through Fairbanks and joined the three of the initial

Lawrence Reineke  
Collection

flight at Anchorage. Lt. Wilsey rejoined the main flight during the evening. Sleep for the weary travelers at Anchorage and preparation for their reception at Kodiak.

June 3, 1942

The six Fortresses left Anchorage at 11:00 AM this day and made an uneventful flight into Kodiak. The six pilots, Mickerson, (old timer), Hetrick, Adair, Wilsey, Joestenski, Mc Williams, landed at 2:00 PM local time. During the morning a report was made by a navy pilot that he had sighted several naval surface craft and identified them as Japanese. The atmosphere at Kodiak was one of tense expectancy and hurried preparation for immediate offensive action. The new ships were drawn into camouflage revetments as soon as they had landed and the removal of baggage and equipment was immediately instituted. The bomb-bay tanks were removed by the maintenance men and ordnance loaded each ship with six 500 lbs. demolition bombs. In the meantime Captain Cons, Squadron CO, revised crew assignments. The major change incorporated in this move was placement of older and Alaskan-experienced pilots as ship commanders. All former first pilots from the states were made co-pilots. The former co-pilots, Stevens, Hart, Giddins, Fowler, and Wheeler, were temporarily assigned to "B" Flight, a new division in the squadron and spent the next seven to ten days at Kodiak flying routine patrol missions with other pilots. Lt. Andrews took off in an LB-30 at 8:00 PM on a search mission.

June 4, 1942

At approximately 6:30 AM Lt. Andrews landed at Kenai with only a few minutes fuel. The landing was made on runway studded with barrels, placed there to prevent enemy aircraft from landing. An unbelievable landing was accomplished since the ship touched nothing in its landing roll. Five Fortresses left at 10:30 AM to intercept the enemy fleet. After cruising for several hours the flight sighted an enemy carrier when a portion of them broke out of a thick sea fog into a small opening. Captain Mansfield and his entire crew were lost in this momentary encounter. The exact details of their last few seconds are unknown for no one saw what happened after they were seen flying directly toward the carrier. The remaining five ships returned to Cold Bay and landed there at 8:00 PM. Cold Bay presented a complete lack of housing facilities and the exhausted crew were forced to sleep wherever shelter could be found. Col. Eareckson gave a pep talk that lasted for two hours. Captain Dunlap joined the flight at Cold Bay from Kodiak in an LB-30.

June 5, 1942

Andrews, returning from Kenai in the LB-30 topped off an exhilarating trip with an exciting finish. The right landing gear gave way during the landing and this ship joined others in the permanent repair department. No one was injured but Dick Leow found his tin hat crumpled—he didn't like it. (Thornbrough, in a B-26 was lost yesterday. A few life vests were the only indications found that pointed to his possible fate. Five B-17's, led by the radar-equipped LB-30, left the ground at Cold Bay at 4:00 PM to search again for the enemy. The mission was pursued until 2:00 PM without success and the flight landed on the new metal strip landing mat at Umnak. Two hours later, after waiting in vain for sandwiches, the entire flight again took to the air and returned directly to Cold Bay. The preceding day and a half are to be remembered vividly by all members of this flight because during this interval they had seen little or no food. McWilliams felt like offering a half interest in Hell to anyone who could have produced food at that time. Wilsey left Kodiak with a B-17E and found the rest of the

flight at Cold Bay. Wilsey's ship was held up at Kodiak for some minor repairs.

June 6, 1942

The flight took off from Cold Bay at 7:00 AM and landed at Umanak at 2:00 PM following an unsuccessful search for the Japs. It was on that day that the first P-38's landed at Umanak. An unfortunate misadventure befell this pursuit flight while they were enroute from Cold Bay. Soon after take-off they sighted a merchant vessel that the flight leader soon identified as Japanese. The skipper of the vessel, Russian incidentally, had but a few hours previously, been attacked by a Japanese sub. In his misguided zeal to avoid further attacks he defensively hoisted the Japanese colors, not realizing that his allies would mistake him for an enemy. However, the pilots of the P-28's were unable to see that the Japanese flags were a ruse to avoid the Japs and they at once instituted a strafing attack. One Russian seaman was reported killed in this attack but the rumor was false. The commander of the vessel was wrong and no blame can be attached to the Pea-shooters. (On June 4th a B-26 sank an enemy cruiser with a torpedo). The B-17's left Umanak at 4:00 PM and landed at Cold Bay again at 7:00 PM. Nickerson, in a B-17, was delayed several hours in his return trip to Cold Bay because his ship was stuck in the mud at Umanak. Andrews and Nickerson are Captains.

June 7, 1942

This day is one of rest for the physically exhausted crews of the entire flight. The morale is high but the energy reserve is low.

June 8, 1942

An eventful day. Six B-17's left Cold Bay at 8:00 AM. The mission was ambiguous for it consisted of circling at 12,000 feet above Dutch Harbor for hours. The flight finally landed at Umanak at 2:00 PM. Soon after landing a report was received that the enemy fleet had been sighted some four hundred miles west of Umanak. The ships were immediately readied for flight and the six left the ground in the face of threatening weather at 3:00 PM. The mission prosecuted above an overcast that was solid during the entire interval of flight. The search results were negative and the flight began its return to Umanak. They reached the island (an excellent bit of navigation) about 11:30 PM. Here they were faced with the difficult problem of letting down through the low overcast to make a landing on a field equipped with none of the modern safeguards for approaches made under instrument conditions. On top of the overcast every cloud was a blaze of beautiful color for the sun was just setting. But once in the clouds and day turned to insidious dusk. Deeper into the overcast and dusk changed to night. Visibility here was reduced to zero. Finally the ground was sighted as a dim outline just slightly blacker than the water. Coupled with the danger of landing on a relatively unknown field at night without runway lights and a very slim fuel margin remaining, was the additional hazard of low clouds, sea fog, and many ships milling blindly about trying to find an opening. There was an attempt made by ground crews to light the runways with searchlights but, in the ignorance of flight needs they shot the powerful beam downing into the eyes of the pilot flying the incoming ship. The safe landing of six four engined bombers made under these extremely adverse conditions is the highest tribute that can be paid to the outstanding ability and cool nerves of every pilot in those ships. The tribute of high courage can be extended to every man in those airplanes who saw and understood the precarious situation. I believe those men will recall this incident even beyond the many close calls they met in the face of enemy fire. So ended a busy day.

-6-  
June 9, 1942

All ships left Umanak after dinner and landed at Cold Bay at 9:00 PM where they spend the afternoon and night. This was the first opportunity for these men to obtain equipment. Their departure from Kodiak had been so sudden and unplanned that they had taken nothing but sleeping bags. They all expected to return in a day or so; many saw nothing of Kodiak for over two months. A few never returned. Officers and men drew warm clothing from the QM and some included a few necessary toilet articles in their bundles.

June 10, 1942

More rest for no mission was possible on this day. Temporary squadron duties were assigned during the afternoon.

June 11, 1942

The squadron loaded all equipment in planes and left Cold Bay at noon, landing at Umanak about 2:00 PM. Baggage was unloaded immediately and the bomb bays filled with six five hundred pound bombs (demolition). The Japanese had been reported at Kiska with a force of occupation. Speer and Ramputi, flying a search mission in the LB-30, innocently flew into Kiska Harbor and were astounded to find a myriad of enemy troops busily engaged in landing operations. The flight left the ground at 3:00 PM. and turned toward Kiska over six hundred (600) miles west. The weather at Kiska was low broken cloud formation. They flew into the harbor at an altitude of 3000 feet. During the run into the harbor the following surface force was tabulated: 4 cruisers, 6 destroyers, 4 transports, and other smaller vessels, probably tenders. The bombing attack was made by individual ship commanders. Near misses were reported but no confirmed sinkings were recorded. Col. Fareckson rode in the lead ship as command pilot and squadron leader. Capt. Dunlap flew as first pilot and ship commander in this ship. Major Cons led the second element. No shore installations were reported during this flight.

June 12, 1942

A flight of five took off at 3:00 PM from Umanak for another crack at Kiska. The weather was unusually good around the target. Area bombing was the tactic used by many believed that individual precision bombing would have been more efficient since visibility was excellent. 'Twas this day that first revealed concrete evidence of the Jap's determination to make Kiska a permanent base. Tent city had arisen on the shore of Kiska Harbor indicating that the transports had been emptied and troops with supplies had been transplanted to land. Bombing was accomplished at 1200 feet. Luschen made a run on a Cruiser outside the Harbor entrance and reported a direct hit. The Cruiser was believed either sunk or very seriously damaged.

June 13, 1942

Another day, another mission-- the damned war seems to be getting into a rut. The flight attempted low bombing in the outer harbor at Kiska with negative results. To most participants in the flight the day seemed wasted--SN&FU day. Co-pilots Wheeler and Fowler joined out fighting forces via C-53 transportation from Kodiak, the post of luxury. Co-pilots Giddens and Hart had reported here three days previously; Stevens still enjoys the hospitality of the Naval Air Station and the non-existent beauties at Kodiak. After a few months on the Islands even Kodiak looks like Los Angeles.

June 14, 1942

This is another of the days that will remain firm in the memories of the men who flew. Col. Kareksen lead a flight of three B-17's and three B-24's to Kiska. The navigators were both excited and discouraged for a good portion of the flight was made between cloud layers. The weather was bad; a ceiling that varied from 700 to 1200 feet prevailed over the harbor. Bombing was conducted from altitudes just under the cloud base with a number of near misses. .50 cal. fire from the surface vessels in the harbor cut the B-17's up quite thoroughly though no personnel were injured. Cone's ship, leading the flight, had the #2 engine shot out and his left tire pierced. Dunlap's ship had its hydraulic system punctured and rendered useless. All ships returned safely. Dunlap made a beautiful landing with "no brakes". The radio chit-chat will be good for a smile for it took Dunlap at least twenty minutes to explain "No Brakes".

June 15, 1942

Bad weather prevented any mission today. Several officers took the opportunity for relaxation in the form of a fishing jaunt. Their attempts were successful for they returned with a number of rock cod, sea bass, and a few unidentified species of salt water fish (small but numerous appearing creatures).

June 16, 1942

Mann and Stevens came in from Cold Bay in the old B-18A. No missions--rest relaxation, and increased participation in the hike to the rocks on the seashore about one and one-half miles from the Quonset area for the purpose of snaring the wily fish with medieval tackle.

June 17, 1942

Another mission reached Kiska. Visibility was good on this day and observations by crew members indicated that many vessels had left Kiska Harbor for parts unknown. Five vessels were the sole remaining occupants of the Harbor area. Shore installations were increasing rapidly. It was more and more evident that the Japanese intended to hold Kiska at all costs and to establish a permanent land base there. There is considerable conjecture among the local warriors about the Jap need for such a God-forsaken hole. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that they need a submarine operating base. Kiska is directly in the path of the great circle course from Seattle, to Russia and a sub-base would place the Japs in a secure position from which easy raids on our lease land shipping to the USSR could be carried out. Army photographers flying with the flight took the first pictures of the harbor and shore projects.

June 18, 1942

Today belongs to Gene, Brickett, Albanese, and M/Sgt Story. The tactical plan called for periodical attacks on Kiska spaced approximately one hour apart. Three flights of three airplanes each were scheduled for take-off and hour apart, with the initial take-off at 5:00 AM. The first flight consisted of B-17's, the second, same, and the third B-24's. Major Cone lead the first flight and they reached Kiska to find unusually good visibility. The attack was initiated at an altitude of 14,000 feet. The mission was one of individual precision bombing. Each bombardier selected his target and dropped his bombs. M/Sgt Story, Cone's bombardier and an experienced Alaskan man, dropped his bombs with perfect accuracy and seriously damaged a transport that was left burning furiously. The other ships in the formation recorded several near misses. The flight left the harbor at

Lawrence Reineke  
Collection

June 18, 1942

12,000 feet and returned to Unak with no damage to ships or personnel.

The second flight instituted their attack at much lower levels with negative results. They reported, however, that the transport, hit earlier in the morning was burning furiously and beginning to settle at the stern. (Flights the next day reported that the transport rested on the bottom of the bay with only the bow showing above water).

Brickett and Albanese made the day for they became the Squadron's first live wound-strippers. Their respective injuries were both caused by the same projectile under rather unusual circumstances. The mishap occurred while circling to reengage the enemy. Small caliber anti-aircraft fire was plentiful but the two men ignored it. Brickett was crouched over his sight concentrating on his target below; Albanese was kneeling behind his gun, his arm resting lightly on Brickett's leg. A projectile (probably .50 cal.) entered the nose near Brickett's right foot, threaded through the calf of this leg, out and through his thigh, thence through Albanese's forearm, out again, and through the upper portion of the arm, and then out through the top of the ship. Both were taken to the hospital immediately following the landing. Their wounds were painful but serious only in that the injury incapacitated both for some time. Brickett returned to Unak in the latter part of August but Albanese, suffering with splintered bones, still remained in the hospital at Elmendorf and was eventually returned to the States.

June 19, 1942

No mission but the sauerkraut--and--weiner diet that has prevailed for the past two or three weeks is rapidly becoming the best hated portion of life on the Island. A change in menu would evoke heartfelt cheers from all our men.

June 20, 1942

No mission--bad weather. An article should be written glamorizing the anonymous member of a combat crew; the overshadowed, insignificant co-pilot. One B17 and one crew returned to Anchorage today--the ship for necessary repairs and the crew for essential relaxation. Anchorage is the metropolis of this part of Alaska and the desired mecca of all men tired of rain, mud, sauerkraut and weiners; in short Unak.

June 21, 1942

Today a new practice is instituted. Bomber command now plans to send a weather ship to Kiaka each day to record weather conditions over the entire flight distance and over the target. Such action will obviate unnecessary and incompleted missions that are predestined to fail because of bad weather and would also assist the commander in planning the attack before take-off. The value of a weather ship is evident and it is surprising that the service was not instituted sooner.

A routine mission followed but results were not observed. Bombing was through the overcast. It is doubtful that extensive damage was wrought since the target is concentrated and relatively small and the type of bombing is necessarily inaccurate.

June 22, 1942

No mission. Bad weather follows the activities of the Squadron, like Skookus; the husky, follows Col. Kareckson.

June 23, 1942

No mission. One interesting development gleaned via short wave radio--Tokyo radio reported five ships lost during the course of the Aleutian Campaign. The Navy must have gotten a couple for it seems certain that the Japanese radio would not be overzealous in transmitting news of losses and we haven't sunk all of them.

June 24, 1942

Dapt. Dunlap flew the weather ship today. Flew through soup for over four hundred miles. Found a 12,000 foot ceiling at Kiska and advised Cast One Victor, bomber command radio, of that condition. However, by the time the Combat unit reached the target about four hours later the weather had closed in and made an effective attack impossible. They dropped their eggs through low overcast and believed they hit the camp area through confirmation was not possible.

June 25, 1942

Today is experimental day. Several days have been spent checking a home-made incendiary bomb (gasoline-filled rubber casing with a black powder detonator) Three B-17's loaded with this type of bombs made a medium level attack on the shore installations. Some gunners reported smoke seen but no damage was reported by a succeeding flight. It was believed that most of the bombs dropped in the harbor. The bombs could not be declared either successful or unsuccessful.

June 26, 1942

The ADC (Alaskan Defense Command) fears an attempted invasion of the northern points of the mainland of Alaska. Enemy surface forces were reported near the Pribiloff and St. Lawrence Islands. Four B-17's piloted by Major Cons, and Capt. Dunlap and Marks, and Lt. Luschen were dispatched from Unnak at 12:00 Noon to Nome where they landed at 5:30 PM. Lt. Wernick commanded the extra combat crew who rode as passengers. Capt. Schneider with a group of maintenance men also rode. The four ships composed a striking and convoy force and were to await relief by a squadron of B-24's who were then on their way from the states.

The weather ship, B-17-B, from Unnak to Kiska was unable to reach its objective.

June 27, 1942

The squadron is now spread all over Alaska. We have ships and men at Unnak, Nome, Anchorage, and Kodiak.

Unnak weather was rain, rain, and more mud with sauerkraut and weiners spiced with canned salmon. It was rumored that our navy in considerable force was near. There was no substantiation of the rumor.

At Nome the crews were settled in tents. A few of them attempted to dig foxholes but were stopped at a depth of from eighteen inches to two feet by rocklike frozen ground.

Promotions hit like rain at Unnak. Capt. Marks, Dunlap, Schneider, Mason and Walseth (the latter three attached to the squadron) all received their majorities. John R. Smith, Ryan, Adair and Vials received notification of their first Lieutenantcies.

-10- June 27, 1942

The Squadron is now spread all over Alaska. We have ships and men at Umanak, Nome, Anchorage, and Kodiak.

Umanak weather was rain, rain, and more mud with sauerkraut and weinies spiced with canned salmon. It was rumored that our navy in considerable force was near. There was no substantiation of the rumor.

At Nome the crews were settled in tents. A few of them attempted to dig fox-holes but were stopped at a depth of from eighteen inches to two feet by rocklike formation and frozen ground.

Promotions hit like rain at Umanak. Capts. Marks, Dunlap, Schneider, Mason, and Walselth (the later three attached to the squadron) all received their majorities. John H. Smith, Ryan, Adair, and Fiala received notification of their first lieutenantcies.

June 28, 1942

At Umanak--Keiser piloted B-17 to Anchorage for repairs and rest for the crew. At Nome--the good weather that had been existent the day before disappeared and rain took its place. A system of alerts was established, making it impossible for a different crew to be absent from duty during each twenty-four hour period. Wernick's crew went into town of Nome to see the Natives in action. They reported steak dinners for the nominal fee of \$2.50 served in the quiet and restful atmosphere of the Polar Bar Grill. Civilization in the raw. Good whiskey is very reasonable and the assortment could be considered a minor miracle considering the difficulty of shipping such items from the states. There were many new and surprising things to be seen in Nome. Nome is proud of its boast that a greater tonnage of liquor is shipped in to their port each year than food (rumor).

June 29, 1942

No mission--bad weather--cr, business-as-usual status maintained.

June 30, 1942

Three 17's on standby for immediate take-off following a satisfactory report on conditions at the target from the weather ship. Negative report was reported.

July 1, 1942

Standby and no take-off. The best is not good enough for this weather.

July 2, 1942

Major Mason, weather ship, reconnoitered the islands of Attu and Agattu, the most remote of the Rat Islands group. He found extensive evidence of the Jap inhabitation of these islands. At Agattu the crew reported three transport and four war vessels, type undetermined. They encountered no opposition.

Seven B-24's flew a bombing mission to Kiska. Results unreported.

Andrews was assigned a special flight to the Pribiloff Islands to investigate the reported presence of a Jap destroyer in that vicinity. At the same time, two of the 17's at Nome were dispatched on the same mission. The vessel was easily located but failed to return proper identification. A

July 3, 1942

B-24's went to Attu--results unreported. B-17B was flown on the usual weather mission.

July 4, 1942

Capt. Cranston flew his crew in the old war horse, the B-18A, from Umanak to Kodiak for rest, mental relaxation, and recreation. Mason and Keiser were on standby-no take-off.

This day of flag waving, of spirited and patriotic speeches, of downtown parades of fireworks and merriment in the states, was passed in Alaska simply as another day. The day meant nothing more than to prompt an occasional remark as, "What a hell of a way to celebrate". The Nome detachment saw leaden skies and torrents of rain.

July 5, 1942

Mason flew the weather mission but returned short of his goal because of the usual inclement weather. Welseth and Keiser were on standby but no take-off.

Nome detachment ate and slept their unvarying routine. A U. S. sub entered the Kiaka harbor and successfully torpedoed several vessels and escaped unharmed.

July 6, 1942

Welseth flew the weather mission and relayed an affirmative report back to Bomber Command. Mason and Keiser in 17's and Ramputi in LB-30 left the ground at 8:10. Kiaka was bombed successfully. Keiser with his little imp returned for the third time with one engine out.

July 7, 1942

Major Hebert flew the weather ship to Attu. The flight required 11 hours and 15 minutes and he returned with plenty of reserve fuel. The B-17B is a light ship and is capable of greater range than the "E".

July 8, 1942

Ramputi flying a B-24 was weathered out of Umanak and landed at Cold Bay, RON. He had returned from a combat mission assignment with the 27th Squadron. WCCG 28th Comp. Gp. assigned Brown, Dowd, Drake, Osburn, to Squadron.

July 9, 1942

Ramputi returned from Cold Bay. He was glad to get back. The two 17's remaining at Umanak were both out for engine changes. The dreaded summer fogs seem to have started. The weather has been bad enough but old timers say that summer is accompanied by the worst flying weather of the year.

-12-

July 12, 1942

Ramputi flew weather in a B-24. Mann and Andrews flew some local bombing practice missions. At Nome four ships flew tactical formation practice and later flew a ground gunnery mission. This was the first and last local flight of all ships from Nome during the entire stay at that base. The compasses were swung on all ships during other brief flights.

July 13, 1942

No Mission—bad weather.

July 14, 1942

Speer flew weather mission. He was forced to return because of the weather.

July 15, 1942

Andrews took-off on weather flight but the customary bad weather forced him back. The soup in the meantime had soaked in at Unak and he and his crew hit the sack at Cold Bay that night. Nebert was caught outside while on a "slow time" local mission and belanded at Cold Bay, RON.

July 16, 1942

Andrews and Hebert returned from Cold Bay. Mann and Keiser both flew local missions. The detachment at Nome was relieved shortly before noon by the long awaited flight of B-24s. They left the ground at 1:00PM and landed at Unak about five hours later. The squadron is reassuming an appearance of a full combat squadron. The members of the crews who had spent so much time in Nome were relieved to return to their quarters here for even in the primitive conditions at Unak, they found fresh clothing and other personal effects. The entire flight had left Unak some three weeks before, packed for a three day sojourn.

July 17, 1942

Our second combat loss occurred today. Major Marks with his crew that included Lts Giddent and Mitts were lost over Kiska. Marks was leading a flight of 3 B-17s in an attack at 15,000 feet on Kiska Harbor. Andrews and Keiser were flying wing positions. They reported that Marks sighted several enemy aircraft and identified as float modified Zeros, and immediately initiated violent evasive action. The three ships were separated and the attacking aircraft singled out the formation leader and concentrated their attack on him. In a few moments his right engine burst into flame and his ship went down out of control.

Ramputi flew a combat mission in a B-24 with the 27th Squadron.  
Wernick flew several

Lawrence Reinecke  
Collection

July 18, 1942 (Con't)

He was accompanied by Lts. Ware and Daughtry. The MK at Umanak was bad as usual. The visibility was as low as 100 feet and a sea fog surrounded the island during the greater part of the day. Several days after the report of the loss, Major Walseth's ship was found on Cape Udak, the southwest end of Umanak Island. The ship had burned and the bodies of the crew were identified mainly by clothing and other articles near the bodies. They were buried near Nikolski village a short distance from the scene of the crash. These were the only burials in the Squadron--bodies are rarely found in our job. It was assumed that Walseth had made a landfall on Umanak and had endeavored to follow the coastline to the field. An unexpected land projection caught him. He crashed only twenty feet from the top.

Major Cene flew to Elmendorf for ship repairs and rest.

July 19, 1942

Dunlap made a determined attempt to find Walseth but weather balked the project.

July 20, 1942

Col. E, Ramputi and Keiser assigned combat mission. The best weather conditions in weeks prevailed. A curious coincidence occurred. All three ships returned on three engines. Keiser left the flight at or near Atka island when his #2 engine began to vibrate excessively. Col. E. and Ramputi continued on to Kiska. The Col. started to climb to altitude at Careloi island at 40 inches manifold pressure and 1800 rpm. The climb was continued to 22,000 feet. At that altitude the ship was turned over to the bombardier Dick Low, and he had a 60 mile run on AFCE. The #3 engine on Col. E's ship went out; oil was flowing freely on the top of the nacelle, the Col. thinking that the aerial engineer was firing the top turret asked the turret gunner to look at the engine and diagnose the trouble. Instead of the engineer in the turret (one of the other gunners had taken his place) answering with a technical analysis, these words came out over the interphone, "It looks like oil to me, Sir." The Col.'s face turned red and he barked, "What the hell did you think it was, feathers?" Ramputi's ship had #3 engine shot out by enemy aircraft (two made several head-on attacks) and his bombardier, McManus caught a piece of shrapnel in his heel. He completed the bombing run. McManus was hospitalized upon his return to Umanak. He was awarded the Purple Heart and returned to the States a couple of months later.

July 22, 1942

Schneider brought a ship back from Elmendorf. Dunlap, Speer and Keiser assigned on attack mission on Kiska. Dunlap returned prematurely because of an oxygen leak. Lt. Brown with the first replacement crew from the States, reported to the Squadron at Umanak.

July 23, 1942

Hebert flew "slow time" locally. Three R-17's and 12 20

-14-

July 23, 1942

It was rumored, with an air of authority behind the rumor, that this day was to be "B" day for the Navy. (The Navy planned to shell Kiska from off shore positions and had designated the secret date as "B" day).

July 24, 1942

Three B-17's and LB 30's on standby. Dunlap, Ramputi, and Andrews on standby with B-24's. The entire Bomber Command was assembled in the first mass military formation the air force had seen since reaching this Island of Umnak. Col. Erickson was presented the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery beyond the call of duty. He earned it.

July 25, 1942

Ramputi flew the trusty old LB-30 on a search mission for Walseth's crew. His ship has not been found yet. Three B-17's stand by no take-off.

July 26, 1942

Dunlap flew the LB-30 on search mission--found nothing. Three 17's on standby no take-off.

July 27, 1942

Three 17's on standby no take-off.

July 28, 1942

Three standbys on 17's. Andrews and Cranston returned from Elmendorf.

July 29, 1942

Cone, Cranston, Hetrick, Ramputi, and Wernick were assigned combat missions. Formation flew through soup for several hundred miles. At times ceiling was zero and visibility less than 50 feet. Climb to altitude was slow. The first flight met neither anti-aircraft fire nor fighter opposition. Bombs were dropped in formation through broken clouds. Results were not observed. Cone returned on three engines. Andrews flew LB-30 on photographic mission. Today is "B" day. Thirty minutes after the bombers delivered their eggs the Navy was scheduled to shell the Harbor and shore installations. In seven minutes they threw several tons of high explosives with doubtful results. They lost a couple of slow observation and fire control planes but that was the extent of the damage to our forces. The Naval exploit was widely advertised in the States--good morale fodder for the civilians it is assumed.

July 30, 1942

Luschen, Mann, Keiser, and McWilliams on a combat mission. Andrews flew photo mission again in the LB.

July 31, 1942

Three 17's on standby during the morning. Standby status was determined at noon and Cranston, Wernick and Hetrick were scheduled for practice bombing missions in the afternoon. Ramputi flew LB-30 on a photo mission. Bomber Command has requested that a mosaic of Kiska and other strategically important islands be made. Katz, Gilliland and Gary with their combat crews were assigned to the Squadron.

August 1, 1942

Andrews flew the photo mission to Kiska in the LB. The Base Photo Lab. Section on the island is small, under-manned and their facilities are being severely taxed in the effort to finish the large numbers of pictures taken daily. Mr. Speer, W.O. has borne the brunt of this load and commendation is due him for his unflinching energy. Three 17's were on standby during the morning hours. In the afternoon Cone, Mann, and McWilliams flew a local bombing mission--low level attacks.

August 2, 1942

Three 17's on standby. Andrews on standby for photo mission in LB. Weather prevented take-off. Keiser flew crews #6 and #3 to Kodiak for rest.

August 3, 1942

Ramputi, Wernick, and McWilliams flew combat. Andrews again flew the usual photo mission.

August 4, 1942

Speer in the LB, Andrews, Mann, McWilliams, in 17's flew patrol. Today the Japs attempted to assume an offensive again when they dropped several 100 lb bombs on the navy seaplane anchorage in Nasam Bay on Atka Island. Their accuracy was poor and no damage was recorded. The aircraft used in this attack was four engine flying boats, Kawunishi type.

August 5, 1942

Cone, Mann, McWilliams, Speer, Hetrick were scheduled as navigation and weather escort ships for P-38's. The Command has decided, following the attack on Nasam Bay yesterday, to send P-38's to patrol the area and prevent future attacks. The peashooters are incapable of any extended navigation or instrument flying. B-17's are to act as mother ships. The first two flights completed their missions without incident. McWilliams, with peashooter pilots, Ambrose and Long had more luck. Mac flew a short distance west of Atka and spotted two of the heavy Jap bombers. He immediately radioed their position and course to his peashooters, who were circling around Atka. They jumped to the kill. They attacked the two bombers and downed one immediately. The other turned tail and dropped into some low clouds. "Bird dog" McWilliams dropped through the clouds cover and flushed the quarry underneath. The Jap ship climbed above the clouds again, directly into the mouth of the Lion. Both the 38's were ready and number two honorable Jap bomber went down. Ramputi flew patrol in the LB. Katz and Gary with other crew replacements joined from Elmendorf, fresh from the civilization of the states.

August 6, 1942

The peashooter patrol is being continued. Andrews, Wernick, Hetrick, Cone and McWilliams scheduled. Weather was bad till afternoon. Ramputi flew patrol in the LB.

August 6, 1942 (con't)

Mann and Speer flew low level attack practice bombing missions.

August 7, 1942

Andrews in Lt. Hetrick, Speer and Ramputi in 17's flew patrol missions. Gons and Wernick flew combat missions.

August 8, 1942

Andrews in LB. Speer, Ramputi, Gons in 17's patrol. Keiser returned from Kodiak.

August 9, 1942

Ramputi, Luschen, Wernick completed combat mission. Andrews flew LB back to Kodiak.

August 10, 1942

Gons, Luschen, Keiser, Wernick, Ramputi completed combat missions.

August 11, 1942

The squadron, with the exception of Speer's crew and a few maintenance men were scheduled to return to Kodiak for rest and to give the ships a thorough check. Gons, Keiser, Luschen, Ramputi, Wernick were pilots on the returning ships and each carried an extra crew and baggage. Four ships searched Unalaska coast en-route to find a missing PBX. Negative findings. Four ships landed, at anchorage that were weathered out of Kodiak. One ship landed at Kodiak.

Speer remained at Unak and flew photo missions on every available opportunity for the next few days.

August 12-16 1942

During these next few days Speer flew several missions in an attempt to complete a high altitude mosaic of Kiska Island. Pursuits at Kodiak and Elmendorf were varied. The navigators seized the opportunity to swing compasses and check their equipment. All crews flew practice aerial gunnery missions at Elmendorf and several pilots flew transition. Some bombing missions were scheduled and flown on the practice range near Kodiak Island. All men relaxed in clean clothing, slept between clean sheets, and drank good liquor.

August 17, 1942

An investigating Congressional Committee landed at Unak this afternoon and interviewed Speer and other Commanders. Happy Chandler set foot in Unak and but pulled it out again quickly. The group returned to Cold Bay.

Major Walseth's body and those of his entire crew were buried at Nikolaki.

Lawrence Reinecke  
Collection

August 18, 1942

Speer flew photo mission to Adak.

August 19, 1942

Speer flew a 24 to Elmendorf with some Adak island photos for inspection by the army engineers and the ADC Commander. Andrews and Mansfield were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross; Mansfield posthumously.

August 21, 1942

Speer left Umanak in a B-24 at 12:00 for Kodiak with aerial photos of Adak. Adak photographs indicate that the island is to be occupied very soon. Major Kermit Roosevelt spoke on S-2 policies in the new mess hall at 21:00. Weather was as usual - rain and mud.

August 22, 1942

The new bath house at Umanak was installed and opened for use. Convenient hours were scheduled for officers and men. This new order ends days of taking showers in a tent with water that is neither hot nor cold, and never the way you expect it to be.

LB-30 with Speer flew weather mission in good weather. Major Roosevelt continued lectures on Intelligence and Interrogations.

August 23, 1942

Four of our B-17's returned from Kodiak to Umanak and landed about 1530. Bomber personnel aboard included Colonel Prince, Captain Thompson, Capt. O'Brien, etc.

A new command instituted.

The weather between Umanak and Kodiak was excellent.

August 25, 1942

At Umanak a new thing has been added. Movies are being shown in the enlisted mess. This recreation has a distinct value as a morale builder. The men need some new outlet for their normal energies.

Speer flew photo mission in LB-30.

Andrews returned from Dutch Harbor in the B-18.

August 26, 1942

Keiser flew the weather mission to Kiska. Ft. Glenn closed in. Keiser was forced to land at Satellite Field. This is the new strip and has no facilities for servicing aircraft yet.

The men have been asked to pay a dime for the movies they see to defray the expense of showing such movies at Umanak. General Butler came in from Elmendorf today.

August 28, 1942

All flights on the alert status from 15:00 until 16:00.

Three B-17's were sent to Kiska on combat missions. The ships were piloted by Col. Ereckson with Wilsey and Madison as wing men. Take-off was late and return to the field was after dark. Madison landed first, coming in through a heavy rain safely. Colonel Ereckson landed about thirty minutes later with little difficulty. However, Wilsey is lost. Wilsey was flying on Col. Ereckson's wing until after dark when he was lost in a turn through some thick soup. He was evidently unfamiliar with the tiny islands they flew over and must have flown out to sea. At the last radio it was estimated he had between fifty minutes and an hour's gas left. There was no further contact. Several lights were directed in a vertical beam at the end of both runways to give all possible aid should he come within sight of the field. The fog was very heavy.

At 18:30 a B-24 attempting a forced landing, slipped on the steel runway and destroyed a tire. Damage was slight.

A P-38 pilot landing at the Satellite field overshot the runway and cracked up his ship.

August 29, 1942

An alert was called by the Bomber command about 14:30 and all pilots, co-pilots and navigators were requested to assemble at Bomber Command headquarters for a briefing. The briefing was conducted by General Butler and Col. Ereckson and the method of attack employing B-26's with other heavy bombardment was illustrated.

The navy had reported a strong task force of enemy vessels some three hundred miles north of Umnak. The briefing continued for about three hours, when a message was received that the task force was our own fleet and not the enemy as reported. The alert was cancelled. Hetrick and Wheeler flew the B-18 in a search mission attempting to locate Wilsey's ship. The search failed. They were unable to perform the search earlier in the day because a heavy ground fog persisted until nearly 18:00 o'clock.

August 30, 1942

Weather ship piloted by Hetrick left at 05:30. Wind velocity to within a hundred miles of Kiska was below 16 knots, but at that point they evidently hit a much stronger wind for after they let down through the overcast, they found themselves over water and Kiska nowhere in sight. At this time, the wind velocity was recorded in excess of 50 knots from about 80 degrees. The return flight was rough and the strong headwind persisted until the weather ship passed the island of Atka. They landed at the Satellite field after 11 hours and 15 minutes of flying with between 10 and 30 gallons of fuel in each tank.

Three B-17's escorted by P-38's took off for Kiska, but were forced back and also landed at the Satellite field.

August 31, 1942

The wind is strong today and the rain constant--no flying.

Dinner today brought a very unexpected treat--fried chicken. We haven't seen that kind of food for a long time at Umnak.

September 1, 1942

No flight. Weather bad.

September 2, 1942

Weather has been good today. Mission unknown.

September 3, 1942

B-26's essayed a raid on Kiska today. B-24's accompanied by P-38's also made the target.

September 4, 1942

P-38 reported a very successful raid on Kiska yesterday. Those peashooter boys are a bunch of bloodthirsty sons of guns. Lavin reported that he had knocked over a line of Japs with very little trouble. It was evidently a mess line. Quite a mess.

Wilsey's ship was reported crashed on the northernmost island of the Islands of Four Mountains. It was later determined that it was not a B-17 but a naval Patrol Bomber, PBX-2.

One of the peashooters was shot up a little on his trip over the target. Returned safely.

September 5, 1942

The PBX found on the Islands of Four Mountains was piloted by Ensign Smith a Naval Flying Observer who had previously been assigned to Liaison duty with our squadron for several weeks. He had made many friends.

September 6, 1942

A B-24 reported the sinking of a destroyer outside Kiska Harbor. The sinking was unconfirmed for the B-24 was flying weather mission alone. P-38 mission with 24's and 17's was cancelled because of weather.

September 7, 1942

Mission unknown.

September 8, 1942

The scheduled flights to Nazan Bay were cancelled because of the weather.

September 9, 1942

Peashooter patrol flown over Adak.

September 10, 1942

Today a landing was made at Longview on a field the Army engineers have completed in less than ten days. The work should almost be called a miracle. This field at Longview will put Kiska within the range of all types of aircraft.

September 11, 1942

Some of our 17's made a landing at Longview today. The runway is short, but operation of heavy bombardment is possible. B-26's will probably have considerable difficulty in operations from that runway.

September 12, 1942

Heavy bombers are now training for low altitude attacks, B-24's and the few 17's we have left are working on bombing runs below 100 feet.

This day will be remembered as the clearest and nicest day that we have seen since we first landed at Unak.

September 13, 1942

LB flew the photo mission to Kiska today accompanied by two P-38's. They ran into a little excitement out there when four Zeros attacked them. The only damage was a 20 millimeter shell in the bomb bay of the LB. No one was injured. A P-38 shot one Zero down in flames, and the gunners drove another Zero away before the flight left Kiska Harbor. Eight surface vessels were in the harbor but the LB carried no bombs; therefore, no attack was made on the surface craft.

September 14, 1942

The first major operation from Longview was conducted today. B-24's escorted by P-38's and P-39's on a strafing attack. The P-39's had their first experience in combat and did an excellent job. Colonel McCorkle was very pleased with the men in his P-39 Squadron.

September 15, 1942

17's are to be stationed at Longview to conduct photo missions and weather missions. We have only four ships now in commission. B-24's are right now necessarily carrying the heavy burden of combat today. Wish to hell we had more ships.

September 16, 1942

Impossible to reach Longview because of bad weather. Lass and crew assigned to squadron; Sweet co-pilot, Brahan navigator and McDonald bombardier.

September 17, 1942

Bad weather. No flying. Members of the Inspector General's Department were on the island today making a periodic inspection of personnel and administrative facilities.

It is hoped that the inspection will prove a stepping stone to better things and an increase in administrative efficiency out here.

September 18, 1942

17's landed at Longview with a proposed mission for the following day of photographing damage to shore installations at Kiska Harbor by the Fighter Sqdn.

For a Post that had been taken from an Island completely uninhabited and within the short period of fifteen days, it is a marvelous scene of industry and ingenuity. Living conditions, however to men who are accustomed to the comforts of civilization are terrible. Where motor vehicles have moved for any length of time, there is a quagmire of indeterminable depth. Tents have been pitched on the low hills of grass that are about two feet in height. The constant fog and rain that prevail at this island make living a wet and miserable existence. Type "C" ration is the only food available.

September 19, 1942

No mission. Weather bad.

It was reported that 8 Zeros had been shot down on September 14th. Maintenance of airplanes is very difficult here at Longview.

September 20, 1942

Three B-26's came in today. They are the first, and it is doubtful if they will be able to take off carrying a full load of bombs and a torpedo.

The following awards were made in the Squadron: PURPLE HEART:

Major Jack Marks, First Lieutenant Harold Mitte, Second Lieutenants Lyle Slocum, William Ware, James Daugherty, Francis Cornwell, John Giddins, and Irving Berman; Staff Sergeants, John Cane, Norman Holm, Oral Paul, Sergeant Leland Taylor; Corporals, Kenneth Nelson, Edgar Rogers, Jr., Edward Dwelis, Privates Hubert Smith, Theodore Alleckson, Edwin Battelson, Robert Brown, Consetto Castagna, Wilfred Mellenbrand, and John LeBar. AIR MEDALS:

Major Jack Marks, Captains: Frank Luscen, Frederick Ramputi, Robert Speer, Lucian Wernick, Lieutenants: Delbert Hetrick, Major McWilliams, John Smith, Walter Brickett, Hayes H. Clemens, Jr., Raymond Adair, James Ryan, Albert Wilsey, Jr., Donald Coakley, Raymond Fowler, Robert Jostenski, George Moser, Richard Leow, Harold Mitte, Phillip Sevilla, Thomas Armstrong, Lawrence Hanson, Septimus Hughes, Billy Moon, Jarvis Prichard, David Stevens, William Ware, James Hart, Billy Wheeler, James Daugherty, Master Sergeants: Richard Walker, Glen Lathom, Dale Puffitt, John Mahala, Norman Threwitt, Clair Halls. Staff Sergeants; Earl Fevinger, Jr., Norman Holm, Robert Hancock, Stanley McGorkle, Tom Alder, Alton Mahan, John May, Sergeants; Grady Anglin, Bernard Hovelmann, Oliver Clements, Earl Hollar, Walden McWhorter, Henry Washburn, Truman Corley, Lester Smith, Jr., Wallace Warner, Andrew Mitchell, Stanley Seger, Hubert McKinney, Jack Warren, Corporals; Alfred Paris, Edward Dwelis, Kenneth Nelson, Donald Froome, Aloysius Horstmann, Darwin Smith, Charles Seltzer, Johnie Burcham, Bernard Lane, William Yoakum, Henry Schloer, Roland Lorenz, Ivan Graves. Privates; Hubert Smith, Theodore Alleckson, Robert Brown, Consetto Castagna and Harry Arnold.

September 21, 1942

Missions for the squadron are limited to sporadic patrols and weather and photo missions from Longview to Kiska.

September 22, 1942

Mission unknown.

September 23, 1942

Weather bad. No missions scheduled.

-22- September 24, 1942

Hetrick returned to Kodiak for rest.

September 25, 1942

Mission unknown. The following promotions were made today: Captain to Major, Frederick L. Andrews; First Lieutenants to Captains, James W. Bennett, Jack O. Brown, Glen V. Keiser, Frank L. Muschen, Robert N. Madison, Edwin H. Wolf, Frederick R. Ramputi, Robert E. Speer, and Lucian K. Wernick. Second Lieutenants to First Lieutenants: Hayes H. Clemens, Jr., Donald V. Coakley, Raymond B. Fowler, Jerome N. Goodman, Lawrence F. Hansen, Robert F. Harris, Jr., James C. Hart, Robert V. Jostenski, John H. McManus, Billy M. Moon, George B. Moser, Leonard B. Mye, Jarvis B. Prichard, David M. Stevens, and Billy J. Wheeler.

September 26, 1942

Mission unknown.

September 27, 1942

Squadron is receiving some new ships--Thank God. However our pleasure in receiving the new ships is tempered by the fact that the ships have been used as training ships in the states. It is almost unbelievable to men who have been in combat that the powers-that-be should send old ships to fight the war.

September 28, 1942

Weather bad. All heavy bombardment ships are ordered to Unak and Adak for service immediately.

September 29, 1942

Mission unknown.

September 30, 1942

Three 17's are now located at Longview.

Hetrick landed at noon. Shortly after the landing, a Zero fighter was sighted over the field. This is the first indication that the Japs have any definite knowledge of our new station. Two days later, it was reported in the States that forces have occupied this advanced position. This news had been withheld up to this time to make sure the enemy would receive no information of the movement.

The Zero that flew over the field was pursued, but he got away in the clouds.

Ramputi and Hetrick took off at 16:00 on a photo mission of Kiska Harbor. At 28, 500 feet, there was a sudden explosion and the number 2 engine failed on Hetrick's ship. The waist gunner called a SOS over the interphone and the ship was dropped at nearly 4,000 feet a minute and reached a lower altitude. Investigation showed that the supercharger had failed and a portion of the turbine wheel had struck the lower turret, mortally wounding Private Curtis. It was impossible to remove Private Curtis from the turret while in flight, but he was taken from the turret immediately after landing. He lived for about two hours. This incident should give added weight to a previous recommendation that superchargers be protected by armor to safeguard personnel and equipment in case of future failures.

October 1 - 2, 1942

Weather, as usual, is bad. No operations. Hetrick returned to Unak enroute to Elmendorf. During landing at Unak the lower turret, shattered the day before by the turbine wheel, dropped completely out of its position. The ship was returned to Elmendorf the next day, minus both a supercharger and a lower turret.

October 3 - 5, 1942

Missions unknown. An estimated flight of three Jap aircraft dropped bombs on Longview during the early morning hours of the fourth. No damage except to nerves and sleep. Lass flew weather mission on the fifth.

October 6, 1942

Andrews, McWilliams, and Brown were scheduled for attack on Kiaka. The attack was made about 2:00 p.m. Keiser flew with Col. E. to observe the results of the raid and photograph damage. The Col. knows no fear and passed over the camp two or three times at low altitude.

October 7, 1942

Rain. Who won't remember the runway under six inches of water.

October 8, 1942

An attack was made again today and was concentrated on the submarine base. Damage inflicted was not great. Two P-38's were shot up but returned safely.

October 9, 1942

Bomber Command is determined to make use of all available daylight. Eight missions were scheduled to take off at one hour intervals during the day. Nearly all crews were scheduled for two flights during the day; one in the morning and another as soon as bombs could be reloaded, aircraft serviced, and the men given an opportunity to eat. The first two missions were accompanied by P-38's and P-39's to protect them from fighter opposition. Further protection for ensuing flights was unnecessary for no Jap peashooters were aloft during the day. In fact no enemy fighters had been observed during the previous week.

The second, fourth, sixth, and eighth flights were assigned to the 36th. (There were just six 17's in commission) Mann, Andrews, Hetrick flew the first mission. Andrews led attack on North Head at 2500 feet. Mann's ship was hit in the empenage section, just at the tail gunners escape hatch, with a 25 millimeter explosive shell. The gunner, miraculously, was saved though the fuselage around him was perforated in countless places. The elevator and rudder control cables were severed and the ships went into a steep climb, out of control. The practice of setting up the AFCE prior to entering the target saved them. The next flight was one ship short. Believe Wernick and McWilliams

flew these two ships. Both returned healthy. The third was flown with Col. E. and Mann in the lead ship with Andrews and Brown on his wing. During the entire day six of the eight scheduled missions were completed.

October 10, 1942

Three ships were put out of commission yesterday--one, bad spark plugs; two were damaged by AA fire. Hetrick's ship with pierced fuel tank and Mann's with severed cables. No mission in the morning but the afternoon saw the first ground level attack made on the camp using an approach on the island itself. Dunlap lead the flight with Hetrick and McWilliams as wing men. The initial point was some twenty miles north of Kiska. The approach was made 10 feet over the water (into the damned setting sun) past the east side of the Volcano, up the first cove over land, across Salmon Lagoon, and, suddenly over the camp area. The pilots and bombardiers of the wing ships were not sure where they were and the sudden appearance of the buildings of the camp was startling. (After arriving again at Longview everyone concerned in the flight commented on the uncanny accuracy with which Dunlap hit the camp area. He finally confided that he had been lost and was fully as surprised as anyone else when the camp popped into sight) The bombardiers had no time to do anything except toggle their loads out as quickly as possible. The bomb load consisted of four magnesium incendiary bundles followed by one hundred pound demolition bombs. Each ship carried a total of twenty bombs. Several buildings were left burning furiously. A tremendous column of smoke hovered high above the camp for a long time after the attack. Returned to base, McWilliams' ship out of commission.

Two ships left today for repairs at Elmendorf.

October 11, 1942

The squadron, because of lack of aircraft, is again in the position where weather and photo missions are the only assignments. Can't fly combat with only two ships. WX mission today. Brown ended today at Elmendorf with a damaged ship.

October 12, 1942

Keiser flew WX mission to Attu.

October 13, 1942

Keiser flew a photo mission over Tanaga Island. The engineers are searching for a possible landing site on this island.

October 14, 1942

This is the day for the B-26's. Today they flew their first mission with torpedoes. The pilots had been worried about getting off the ground with torpedoes on their ships. Their mission was not successful but they learned. Keiser flew with Col. E. on an observation mission. A .50 cal. slug came through the bottom of the ship, into the cockpit, bounced off the calf of Col. E's leg and fell to the floor at his feet. He picked it up and remarked that it was a quick way to pick up a souvenir.

Hetrick bombed Attu with incendiaries in an attempt to burn the few buildings left on the island since the Japs evacuated. This flight, insignificant as it was, gave Hetrick the only publicity he received through the press. A US War Correspondent used the story because of its reader appeal-- the target was a church and Sam Newman, the bombardier, was a devout Catholic.

October 16, 1942

Iuschen flew the WX mission.

Nicherson and Hughes returned to the States for further medical treatment. Col. E. and his radar school crews left Elmendorf in a transport enroute to Seattle, on their way to Washington, D. C.

October 17, 1942

Andrews and Hetrick returned to Umnak with two disabled ships. Kats flew the WX mission. Iuschen flew a local photo mission.

October 18, 1942

Brown flew the WX mission. Iuschen returned to Umnak. Col. Prince and Mann came in from Elmendorf.

October 19, 1942

Kats, Spear and Brown flew an attack mission on Kiska.

October 20, 1942

Mann flew WX mission. Brown and Spear flew combat.

October 21, 1942

Mann flew WX mission. Iuschen landed at Longview from Umnak but left again in the afternoon. McWilliams, carrying the vice-president of Pan American Airways, flew from Elmendorf to Kodiak.

October 22, 1942

McWilliams to Umnak.

October 23 - 31, 1942

Normal operations were conducted during this period. The writer knows nothing of interest in tactics that occurred during these eight days. General Buckner made his first visit to Adak on the 28th. Keiser brought Buckner and his aide from Elmendorf. On the 29th the new runway was completed at Longview and used for the first time by peashooters. Bomber Command planned a night raid at this time which failed, however, to materialize. The Plan: One heavy bomber to precede the main flight by one minute, dropping incendiary bombs on the camp. The main flight was to bomb by use of the light afforded by the burning incendiaries. Take-off was scheduled for five hours before sunrise so that the returning bombers could land during the day.

November 1 - 6, 1942

During the first four days of November rain fell in torrents day and night. During most of this interval the rain was accompanied by winds of velocities in excess of 60 miles per hour. To be abroad in this weather meant to be soaked to the skin within ten minutes regardless of the type of clothing one wore. The effect of the weather was no disagreeable that many men preferred to remain in their tents rather than face the elements during a dash to the messhall. Fortunately, some of us had had the foresight to provide themselves with canned delicacies including such items as soup, chili, preserved meats of all kinds and descriptions, jams, sweetbreads, crackers, fruit juices, etc., and with these unusual foods they prepared meals in their tents, thereby obviating the necessity of walking the half mile to the mess. The mess had little to offer except type "C" rations and after several weeks of this fare the men were more than eager to eat boned chicken with bouillon or consomme and crackers with caviar paste. However, these impromptu banquets were about the only bright spots during this dreary period.

A word picture of the E.O.Q.'s, Longview style, during these early months:

Into an excavation out into an embankment and overlooking a perpetual marsh (about two feet above the normal marsh level) were pitched three standard pyramidal tents. The three tents were interconnected by rolling the adjacent flaps together and tying them. The construction engineer forgot to include draining in his plans and as a consequence the tents were erected in an excellent reservoir some four or five feet deep. There was no flooring except a few pieces of heavy paper that the officers had scavenged and placed near their canvas cots. Power for the electric lights was furnished by a tiny generator originally intended to supply power for starting the engines of our ships. (Sometimes it worked but more often it failed). The tents were heated (within a short radius) by tiny metal stoves, the fires were fed with coal because there is no natural fuel on this island.

Then "The Rains Came" and that, literally. In the first few hours of down-pour the floors became damp and in a short time there was nothing but mud. The rolled flaps between the individual tents proved to be excellent traps for collecting gallons of water that drained in a steady stream into the corner of the tent. It was not long before the floor was entirely covered with two or three inches of water. Several men delved deeply into their bags and retrieved their lifevests. The need for drainage became acute and put into the rain went the hardy souls, armed with shovels to dig a couple of trenches five feet deep through about fifteen feet of embankment.

Entertainment consisted principally of poker playing that went on until after midnight, to begin again early the next afternoon. As 1st Sgt. Paul Ruebush often bellowed heartily, "Well, boys, when the goin' gets too God-damned tough for the rest of 'em, it's just gettin' good for us".

Speer flew locally on the fifth and Keiser, flying the WX mission the following day, was weathered out of Longview and landed at Umnak.

November 7, 1942

Keiser returned from Umnak. McWilliams flew the WX mission to Attu. At Attu he found eight or nine single float Zeros, apparently beached in Holtz Bay. He investigated as carefully as possible and took pictures of them. He saw no sign of life on the island but when he returned he found a new hole in his right wing where a small caliber projectile had pierced it.

November 14, 1942 (Con't)

Speer's flight went through Kodiak to Elmendorf without incident. Keiser and Hetrick left the ground at 2:00 p.m. and headed toward Kodiak. Kodiak socked in just at dusk (about 5:00 p.m.) and Keiser turned toward Naknek. Darkness fell quickly and the two ships flew on top over the peninsula; the temperature was about 10°F and the airplane heaters were not operating. Keiser finally let down through a snow storm on the north-west side of the peninsula. Prichard, the lead navigator oriented himself and turned north toward Heiden. It was till snowing but there were no serious icing troubles. Landed at Heiden at 7:30 p.m. after circling for nearly thirty minutes before the runway lights were turned on. There was approximately eight inches of snow on the runway. McWilliams left Umnak at hour after Keiser had taken off but headed directly toward Heiden and landed there just at dusk.

November 15, 1942 - November 30, 1942

Keiser's flight spent two days at Heiden, living through a blizzard, and then went on into Elmendorf. The training schedule was immediately instituted and included such pursuits as: Transition, instrument flying, bombing practice, gunnery practice missions, bomb trainer, link trainer, and formation flying.

The temperature hovered near 0°F and on some days never went above 10°F. The aircraft were not adequately winterized nor were the crews thoroughly trained in cold weather operation and as a result everyone had trouble with the airplanes.

On Nov. 22 the squadron was ordered to return immediately to Umnak. The entire ADC was alerted. Our month of training at Elmendorf had been reduced to five days. A combination of bad weather and low temperatures prevented the squadron from getting back to Umnak as a unit, until the first of December.

December 1, 1942

Flying in the squadron during this entire period was limited to that necessary to give flying time to flight personnel. The squadron was kept on a continual alert status that actually meant nothing more to the men than merely existing. During the first week a ground alert was maintained wherein an entire crew, excepting the pilot and navigator at operations, were stationed in the ship from morning until night. This strict regimen was relaxed to permit crews to remain in their quarters subject to immediate call. No member of a combat crew was allowed to leave the squadron area during the day. Activities in a social sense, were limited by these rules. December seventh passed unnoticed.

No single factor has as great an effect on the morale of the flight personnel as being grounded and at the same time being kept on a continual readiness status. Patience is a virtue that is rarely present to any great extent in the makeup of a flier and, under circumstances that deny him the opportunity to exercise his skill, he is lost. All men hate inactivity, but the Air Corps is not accustomed to waiting. Men began to vie for the privilege of being champion "sack" man of the squadron and Hansen won with a total of twenty six hours in one stretch to be closely followed by Milliland and Katz with about 25 hours each. "Ossie" the legal eagle, (Osburn) opened a new field when he introduced to the officers his particular analysis of Culbertson's system for contract bridge. To play bridge, then, became the reigning passion. In a hut containing twelve men three tables of bridge could be started at any hour of the day and most of the night. Tournaments were started and wagers were made on the outcome of the many contests. Ossie and McWilliams were, in general, 5 to 1 favorites over any other team but when they split, to choose different partners and play against each other the odds became just about even.

December 1, 1942 (Con't)

During the third and fourth weeks in December terrific winds fanned a 10 inch snowfall into a continual blizzard. The average velocity of the wind during this storm was over 40 mph. Walking required the expenditure of as much energy as climbing a steep hill. Men dressed completely, including cover for their faces, when they moved at all during the height of the storm.

Christmas was celebrated in a satisfactory fashion because a few men had hoarded precious cases of whiskey for that day. New Years Day meant little other than the fact it elicited many wishes that the following New Years would not "still see me in this hell hole".

On January 20th, the squadron was ordered to report to Longview again.

January 21, 1943

Seven B-17's left Unak enroute to Longview. Pilots were: Keiser, Luschen, Brown, Andrews, Kats, Lass, and McWilliams. Six aircraft arrived at Longview in the afternoon; McWilliams did not.

The weather was uncertain; squalls were prevalent over the entire route and during the afternoon Longview was ringed by fog and clouds. The field itself was open during the entire day. From any point off the island, however, it appeared that the field was socked in. McWilliams was flying on Brown's left wing. Their flight was made down the south side of the chain to a point just east of Longview where Brown decided to go through an open pass between two small islands to the north side of Kulik Bay. They ran into a bit of soup but were determined to go on through. The navigator in Brown's ship called for a quick turn as he sighted land ahead. Brown made a fast climbing turn to the left. Mac was unable to roll into his turn soon enough and was forced to cross over. In the crossover he tore nearly half of Brown's right stabilizer and vertical fin off. Several members of Brown's crew, the last to see McWilliams's ship, said that he was climbing apparently straight and level, when he went out of sight. No trace of his ship or crew was found though PBY's searched the area for several hours during the remainder of the afternoon. Brown was unaware of the extensive damage to his ship though his engineer told him that a part of the vertical fin had been torn off. The rudder was useless and elevator was jammed in a level flight position. He knew, during his landing that they were not operating properly but, not until he was on the ground, did he realize the almost unbelievable extent of the damage.

January 22-23, 1943

The squadron was alert but there was no flying on the 22nd because of bad weather. On the 23rd Amchitka was bombed by a couple of Jap monoplanes. Some damage was inflicted on the new post for they had had little time to establish efficient anti-aircraft defense.

January 24, 1943

Brown flew WX mission; reported low clouds over Kiska; flew on to Attu and Agattu; returned to Kiska. He flew across harbor and drew a few stingers from the Japs. Luschen, Lass, Getrick, Ramputi, Kats, and Madison flew to Kiska. Ramp led the first flight, Lass the second. The island was socked in but--tried twice to get through small openings in the clouds but failed. Flight returned to the base with their bombs.

Gilliland flew the Amchitka patrol. Since the bombing of Amchitka by the Japs occurred it was deemed wise to establish a pushooter patrol over the area to prevent any recurrence of such attacks.

January 25, 1943

Gilliland flew the WX mission; searched the islands west of Kiska for fresh evidence of Jap occupation. He saw nothing to indicate that the Japs were existing. Kats flew the regular Amchitka patrol during the morning; Hetrick took the afternoon. Yesterday the Japs simply waited until our fighters left the scene of operations and then flew over the leisurely fashion and again dropped a bombs. Today, two missions were flown to forestall such an attempt. But,

January 25, 1943 (Con't)

fighters based on Longview cannot stay at Anchitka until dark, therefore the Japs will have at least an hour before dark when they can operate in comparative safety.

Ramputi, Lass, and Madison took off about 10:00 for an attack on Kiska but were recalled before they were fifteen minutes out. The flight circled Cape Adagdak for over two hours awaiting instructions that, first, directed to proceed to the target and then, fifteen minutes later, ordered to return to the base.

January 26-27, 1943

There was no flying on the 26th. However, this was the day of the party. Colonel De Ford, our new Bomber Command C.O., gave a party. Col. De Ford believes in friendly get-together among the officers of his command and we are enthusiastically in accord with his theory--particularly when combined with the method that he used this evening to promote good fellowship. With Col. Cork's experienced assistance in obtaining whisky, Col. De Ford located two cases of Bourbon. Into a ten gallon mess utensil he instructed an attendant to pour several cans of grapefruit juice. To this basic liquid he added a case of the precious whiskey and then served it in tin cups without a sprig of mint. Everyone has a rip-roaring time, singing songs, listening to jokes, falling over the portable organ, etc. The party had been held in the end of the large quonset hut that housed the officers' mess room, but at an early hour the Col. called an official halt to the festivities and remarked that for the rest of the night we were on our own. So we were, and with a vengeance. About ten men, in company with Col. Cork, went to the squadron operations hut and started all over again with a fresh supply of whiskey that miraculously appeared out of nowhere. It was not long before everyone was having a 'wonderful' (spoken in a loud tone) time. Pete was eager to have a confidential discussion with Col. Cork and began, somewhat vociferously it is true, to stalk him. Pete had been spending a quiet half hour drinking everything he could see and cleaning his fingernails with a bowie knife. Of course, the Col. couldn't be expected to know that Pete merely wanted to talk to him--the knife was too much. The chase went merrily on until someone opened the door as Col. Cork passed it on his thirty-sixth trip around the stove, Pete still at his heels but not grining an inch. On the lucky thirty-seventh Col. Cork made the other side of the room while Pete went through the door and made the mark on the great 'outdoors'. The party broke up about 0200, or 0300, or 0600, or sometime.

Ramputi flew the WX mission to Kiska the next morning but the weather would not permit combat operations. Most of the squadron were suffering from terrific hangovers anyway.

January 28-31, 1943

Ramputi flew the WX mission to Attu on the 28th. On the 29th Hetriak, and on the 30th Wadlington (a 21st Pilot) flew the weather missions. Both were ordered to return short of Attu. During the afternoon great excitement reigned; a submarine had been sighted off Cape Adagdak. A 17, flown by Lass, was dispatched to the scene and instituted a search immediately. They persisted in their search for over two hours. The bombardier finally sighted the conning tower and the ship rushed to the kill, dropping several depth charges. Someone remarked that there seemed to be about a dozen submarines within an area of about one mile radius; a

Reference Reel  
Collection

January 28-31, 1943 (Con't)

sharp investigation disclosed that the periscope 'feather' was actually only a whale doing his daily dozen. It is assumed that the first 'sub' attacked was sunk with all on board.

On the 31st Gilliland flew the WX mission to Attu. He ran into a hornet's nest there, for six Zero's jumped him. He needed his 24 and hit cloud cover; no damage to his airplane.

Keiser, Lass, Lewis, Luschan, Kats, and Madison flew a mission to Kiska on the 31st. Col. De Ford, flying with Keiser, led the formation. The flight was made contact to a point about 30 miles NE of Kiska. The flight was accompanied by mediums and peashooters. The Col. led the flight above the overcast at about 8000 feet but found that Kiska was covered by the clouds. They returned without dropping their bombs. This was Col. De Ford's first trip over Kiska.

February 1 - 3, 1943

Bad weather during these three days over Kiska. On the 2nd, Col. De Ford ordered a dress rehearsal of his new tactical plan. His attack plan makes use of three types of aircraft; peashooters, medium, and heavy bombers. The peashooters are to provide top coverage to protect the bombers should enemy air opposition appear. The attack is to be timed so that the mediums, carrying one hundred pound demos and smoke bombs, reach the target just one minute ahead of the heavies. The heavies are to break formation and attack the target at different altitudes and from different directions. The rehearsal did not work out exactly as it was planned. At a general bomber command meeting that evening, Col. De Ford analysed the attack, pointing out the errors and offering corrections for them.

February 4, 1943

Hetrick flew the WX mission. He was attacked by three Zero's off the east shore of Kiska. Two head-on-attacks were made and one from the rear quarter. This latter attack was quickly routed when Hetrick turned toward the attacking ship and brought his top turret, waist, and tail guns to bear. The combined fire was too much for the Nips. Weather was excellent.

An attack was made by six heavies, six mediums, and ten peashooters. Luschan led the attack. On his wing were Lass and Madison, all three flying 17's. The second element of 24's were flown by Ramputi, Katz, and Gilliland. The flight enroute to the target was memorable for at the halfway point Ramputi left the formation with a broken fuel line. With him went his two wing men and all the peashooters. It was not until Ramputi was forced to break radio silence to tell his followers that he was leaving the formation that they turned and again headed toward Kiska. In the meantime the first element accompanied by the two flights of medium bombers climbed to 4000 feet and approached the island from the north. The attack was nicely timed as far as these ships were concerned for the mediums went across North Head, dropping their smoke bombs, about 30 seconds before the heavies attacked. The heavies broke formation on signal from

February 4, 1943 (Con't)

Insehen and diverged. Their runs were well timed for they converged over the target. Insehen dropped no bombs (rack failure) but Lass and Madison attacked the sub base and a new transport in the harbor, respectively. Katz, who had flown wide open in an attempt to rejoin the main flight, followed Lass across the sub base about two minutes later. Gilliland with the peashooters on his wing came up a few minutes later but the attack was over and he did not drop his bombs. Five Zero's attacked the formation but did little damage. Three of them were hit but none were seen to crash.

February 5 - 7, 1943

No flying on the 5th. Keiser, WX to Kiaka and return on the 6th. On the 7th Lass flew WX mission. He returned direct from Kiaka.

February 8, 1943

Madison flew the WX mission to Attu today. Kiaka had a ceiling that did not exceed 600 feet. Madison circled the island about 500 yards off shore, crossed Little Kiska Island, and then proceeded to Attu. He reported that the top of the overcast was 2400 feet, suitable for time and distance bombing from the volcano. The ship drew fire from the big guns on North Head as they passed over Little Kiska. The WX at Attu was overcast at 1200 feet with TOWB at 4500 feet. He, Madison, after observing the island from an off-shore point distant about two miles, entered Holtz Bay to inspect the enemy activities there. He went directly into the harbor at 600 feet, encountering no opposition whatever. He turned to leave the bay, after observing that the enemy evidently was not prepared for defense, when, suddenly, all Hell broke loose. AA bursts appeared on all sides of the ship over a projecting ridge and hurriedly left the harbor. The Japs had waited patiently until he was within 500 yards before opening fire with their batteries. At that, they're damned poor marksmen.

Ramputi led a flight (Gilliland, Katz, Hetrick, Wadlington) of B-24's to Kiaka. They bombed from the volcano through heavy broken clouds. Pilots reported that their bombs fell in the camp area. AA fire was heavy but bursts were behind the flight.

February 9 - 10, 1943

There was no flying on the 9th. Ramputi flew the WX mission, covering Kiska, on the 10th, but was unable to contact the base by radio to report favorable weather. He returned to base and landed. The combat flight had taken off about an hour before he landed and was led by Speer in a 24 with Lass and Madison flying 17's on his wing. The second element of 24's were flown by Hetrick, Katz, and Gilliland. The attack was made at 5,000 feet in CAUV weather using formation bombing tactics. Madison, on the right wing of the first element made an individual run because he was unable to stay in formation with the 24's. The second element made an attack in formation. The results of the raid were satisfactory; several buildings were destroyed in the main camp area and a fuel dump was destroyed. Madison's ship was hit two or three times; none were in vital spots.

February 11 - 12, 1943

Gilliland flew the WX mission on the 11th but was forced to return short of Kiska by an active front, as was the attack flight flown by Ramputi, Stinson, Katz, and Lass. Two 17's failed to clear the ground because of engine trouble. There were no operations on the 12th because of foul weather.

February 13, 1943

Lass flew WX to a point south of Attu (avoiding Kiska because of CAU weather) where he ran into an active front and turned back. Speer, Stinson, Gilliland, Ramputi, and Hetrick flew the Combat mission. The attack was made at 7000 feet from the volcano. Speer made three runs over the target because his bomb racks failed to operate properly. Stinson, though he had dropped his bombs on the first run, stayed with Speer during the subsequent trips through the AA fire. No leader was going to lose that man. Clouds over the target proper made accurate observation impossible.

February 14 - 15, 1943

Madison flew the WX mission on these two days but was forced back by weather on the first day and was recalled by bomber command on the second. On the 14th, Constantine Harbor on Amchitka was attacked again by two single float Zero's and three double float Zero's. They did no damage to our defenses.

Today the first group of men to leave the squadron for reassignment to other outfits in the States left. They went aboard the troop transport, the St. Mehell which was anchored in the outer harbor at Longview. This move has been rumored for many months and the realization of those rumors was greeted eagerly by all the men. It means that after nine or ten months of combat service in this zone the men will be allowed to revisit the States for a period of time. Andrews, Keiser, Luschen, J. R. Smith, Leow, Prichard, Hanson, Fowler and Nye with seventeen enlisted men (all combat personnel) left in this group.

February 16, 1943

Madison again flew the WX mission with better results than on the previous two days. He saw two Zero's near Kiska and wasted no time in getting away from the vicinity of the island. The weather was unusually clear over the entire flight distance from Adak to Attu, only occasional rain squalls to break the sunshine. Ramputi, Katz, Gilliland, Speer, and Lass flew the attack mission. (Hetrick failed to clear because of engine trouble) The flight was forced to return because low clouds obscured the island and made attack impossible.

February 17 - 19, 1943

No operational flights were made on the 17th. On the 18th Ramputi flew WX mission. Bomber Command insisted that all flying officers be briefed thoroughly in surface ship identification after this mission was completed. Ramp found six surface vessels two or three miles off the coast of Attu under an unlimited ceiling. He was unable to identify them but assumed that, since they were so close to an enemy position, they were Japanese. He made a run at 10,000 feet but his bomb racks failed to function. AA fire was sparse but

February 17-19, 1943 cont'd

the bursts were unusually large indicating very heavy caliber guns. He turned back to base because his racks had frozen and he was unable to release his bombs. Our task force shelled Holtz Bay on this date. There was no attack mission on the 18th. On the 19th Gilliland flew the wx mission but was recalled by radio after he had been flying about an hour. Lewis and Wheeler were checked out in B-24's on the 19th.

February 20, 1943

Gilliland flew wx missions. Combat flown by Speer, Hetrick, Lass, Madison, and Stinson (Katz returned to base shortly after take-off). The five ships make individual runs from the north. Pilots reported that the raid was successful; most bombs dropped in the camp area. Lass's ship was hit in a couple of places, not seriously.

February 21-22, 1943

No operational flights were made on the 21st. On the 22nd Lewis flew the wx mission, reporting unfavorable wx around Kiska. However, the attack flight, Ramputi, Katz, Gilliland, Lass, Wheeler, Madison, took off but were forced to return to base because of bad weather north of Kiska and around the island itself.

February 23, 1944.

Lewis flew the wx mission, reporting favorable weather. The attack flight, Ramputi, Katz, Gilliland, Lass, Wheeler, and Madison, left the ground at 0915. The heavies were accompanied by six mediums and eight peashooters. Kiska was overcast and bombing was accomplished through the overcast in formation. No results were observed. The bombs load was unusual; it consisted of thirty one hundred pound demos and five phosphorus incendiaries.

February 24, 25, 1943

No combat flight was made on the 25th but Ramputi, on wx mission, reported good weather at Kiska. The weather at Longview prevented a combat flight. On the 25th the 404th began to fly missions in preparation for relieving the 36th. Beria, 404th, flew the wx mission. The attack flight, Lass, Lewis, (following men were 404th) Olsen, Davidson, Hahl, and Mc Learly bombed under a 3500 foot ceiling. Lewis's ship was damaged seriously by several hits from enemy AA fire. Lt. Pappas was hit in the stomach by shrapnel and died about ten minutes later. With his #4 engine out and his #1 engine on fire, Lewis was forced to land on the short runway at Anchitka. His hydraulic system was also out and he had no brakes for landing. The ship nosed up after it ran into the soft tundra off the end of the runway. Though all members of the crew were cut and bruised, none, except Lt. Pappas, were injured very seriously. A merchant marine midshipman, Matthew, who had begged a ride over Kiska, was riding with Lewis on this trip. He was treated for minor bruises and then returned to Adak in a BY where his Liberty ship was docked. He got more of a thrill than he had bargained for.

February 26-28, 1943

The squadron was relieved during these days by the 404th and returned to Umanak. Speer chauffeured General Buckner to Elmendorf Field from Longview. The 36th was scheduled for a month's rest and training at Umanak. This training was carried on when weather permitted until March 24th.

Lawrence Reineke  
Collected