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NOVEMBER 1942

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379 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

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24 Nov 1942 - Jan 43

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124 NOV 1942

[REDACTED]  
 310TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF  
 379th Bombardment Squadron  
 A.P.O. 520

24 January 1943

SUBJECT: History of Rear Air Echelon.

TO : Headquarters, 310th Bombardment Group (M).

P.R.C.

The Rear Air Echelon from England, departed Hardwick with 25 Officers and 110 EM under the command of 1st Lt. F. J. Cole.

This echelon left Hardwick by motor transport to Diss on the 24th of November 1942; from Diss to Liverpool by train, arriving same day. At Liverpool boarded troop transport, H.M.S. Derbyshire, on the night of November 24th. And thus culminated an extremely eventful day--or should we say four days, for it wasn't until the morning of the 28th of November that the convoy was ready to move. So started the detachments second oceanic voyage.

The trip was notable for the inadequate quarters and more inadequate food which fell to the lot of the EM. Numerous attempts to improve the situation were completely ineffectual. The gastronomic situation reached an unhappy climax one night during particularly high-seas.

Other than an occasional depth charge and a man overboard, on one of the other troop transports, from the landlubber's eyes the journey was without excitement, until we entered the Straits of Gibraltar.

On the evening of the fourth of December we were treated with the sight of a lighted city for the first time in four months. Tangiers and later Ceuta were the marvels we beheld. The larger part of the convoy continued onward, while the H.M.S. Derbyshire and a few others dropped anchor in the harbor of Gibraltar. One ship was reported rammed that evening, in any case the morning revealed that one of the transports had its' bow stove in.

Late in the afternoon of the fifth, the Monarch of Bermuda and H.M.S. Derbyshire left the harbor with the escort of three British Destroyers. The next dawn found us near the African coast and soon the harbor at Oran came into view. We were safely moored against the dock at the French Naval Harbor of so much historic note, Mers El Kebir. That afternoon the detachment disembarked and proceeded by truck to the Ex-French Naval Air-base, twenty miles inland, Tafaroui. Sidi\*Bel-Abbes, the famed and colorful headquarters of the old French Foreign Legion of almost mythical proportions, was but ten miles to the south.

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Tafaroui will always hold a spot in the minds of all, for the quality of the comforts it provided. The full potentialities of mud were emphatically impressed on the personnel of the detachment. "Spam" rapidly fell from the top of the hit parade. What was perhaps more remarkable was the assignment of a M/Sgt., of years service, to work picking up cigarette butts in a Service Group's area. The powers of prevention of a Second Lieutenant is practically nil.

At periodic intervals a few planes of the Group would pass through. Amongst was Colonel Hunter, Commanding Officer of the Group. 1st Lt. F. J. Cole, Commanding Officer of the detachment, left for Telergma on the 18th of December by air transport. He left Lt. E.C. Knight, of our Squadron in command.

Sgts P.S. Hreinson, P. Dillehay, G. Maddox and H. F. Matousek left with Lt. Fisher, of Group, for Telergma by C-47. Lts. Nadeau and Reed, who were attached to the squadron for transportation, rejoined their respective organizations at Tafaroui. Lt. E.P. Meehan left with Major Bower, Commanding Officer of 428th Bomb Sq., in a B-25 for Berteaux. S/Sgt W.B. Krug, on January 12th gashed his leg with knife wheel opening can. He received immediate medical attention from dispensary at Tafaroui Air Base.

Shortly after midnight on January 13th, the detachment proceeded to the railhead at Arbal by motor transport. By 6:30 AM we were entrained and on our way. The "Quarante-Huit's", once again became associated with American troop movements. However, I'm certain they left no sentimental nostalgia in the minds of our men. Sgt. M/P. Knox, on January 14th, suffered a leg burn when a makeshift heating arrangement exploded in the mess flat-car.

Other than an alert, the evening of the 14th, the trip was happily uneventful. The train arrived at Telergma, early in the afternoon of the 15th. We then proceeded to Berteaux by motor transport in sufficient time to set up our pup-tents by nightfall.

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Attached is roster of personnel who comprised this detachment.

EDWARD P. MEEHAN,  
2nd Lt., A.C.  
Ass't Sq. Intel. Officer.

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