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Le document suivant est extrait d'un microfilm que j'ai acheté à la base aérienne de Maxwell aux Etats-Unis. Le coût par microfilm est de \$ 30. En m'aidant à acheter d'autres microfilms vous permettrez au site de diffuser encore plus d'informations sur le rôle des différents 'Troop Carrier Groups' lors de l'opération «Neptune».

FAITES UN DON – UTILISEZ LE BOUTON PAYPAL - MERCI



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: AUTH: CO 314TH TC GP :
: DATE: 14 June 1944 :
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Narrative statement of the crew of A/C #42-93002, 62nd TC Sq, 314th TC Gp, in connection with events of BIGOT - NEPTUNE #1.

The crew consisted of:

Capt Charles S. Cartwright, O-731943, Pilot
F/O Alma M. Magleby, T-926, Co-pilot
2d Lt Edward I. Osborne, O-805327, Navigator
S/Sgt Raymond H. Farris, 15114703, Crew Chief
S/Sgt Frank A. Deluca, 3245328, Radio Operator

We flew Number 7 position in our first serial on this mission, leading the third element of the first squadron. We reached the DZ in formation and have nothing to add to the mission report up to that time. Approaching the DZ our air speed was between 105 and 110 mph, altitude indicated 700 feet. Our altitude was the same as that of the leading element in our formation.

On seeing the stick leave the lead ship we gave the green light, but our stick did not jump. The jumpmaster, Capt Simmons, instructed the crew chief to tell the pilot that the plane was too low, and that he would not jump his men at that height. The intercom was damaged, and the crew chief could not reach the pilot through it, so passed the message to the navigator, who relayed it to the pilot. As soon as the message was received, we went up to 800 feet indicated, made a right turn, and began a second pass at the DZ. At this time the jumpmaster had come up to the cockpit to confer with the pilot, who said to him "Get the hell out, everyone except your stick has jumped". During this second pass we were hit by explosive flak - probably 40 mm - two rounds of which went through the plane; one round narrowly missed Crew Chief Farris, who was at that time in the door of the companionway, and the other went through the rear of the fuselage. Paratrooper No 17 in the stick was hit by fragments of this flak, which detonated two of the hand grenades in his pouch, seriously injuring him. We went over the DZ again, and again the troops did not jump, although they received the signal.

We turned for a third pass, and this time the navigator told the jumpmaster that there was going to be a forced landing. The stick went at once, and as it jumped the aircraft was near the DZ, a short distance south of it, going in a westerly direction at 750 feet altitude and 110 - 115 mph. The injured paratrooper, No 17, did not jump.

Immediately after the jump both engines went out, either at once or so closely together that it made no difference. The pilot turned the plane 180 degrees to the right in an effort to reach the ocean; saw that he would be unable to do so, and made a further 90 degree turn to the right (putting the aircraft on a south-westerly heading) hoping to reach the flooded area to the south of the DZ. The

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Narrative Account on A/C #42-93002 (Cont'd).

altitude was not sufficient to reach this area, so the crew took crash positions in the plane and it was set down in the available open field. On going in it clipped a row of trees, bordering the field. Both engines were on fire; A comparatively smooth belly-landing was made, the plane came to rest in the middle of the field, and the crew evacuated it with all speed. The wounded paratrooper got out by himself. The pilot, the crew chief, and the radio operator carried the paratrooper, who had collapsed close to the plane, further away, and then the pilot went back into the plane for a first-aid kit and supplies. He recovered a kit, but was unable to reach anything else. Upon return to the paratrooper, the pilot found that he had his own morphine, and was asking to have it administered; this was done by the co-pilot and navigator.

We then began to carry the paratrooper toward the hedge bordering the field, which offered the only cover close by. A short distance had been traversed when the aircraft exploded. The paratrooper, no unconscious, was placed in concealment in the hedge, and about 0245 we began travelling south in a zig-zag line, looking for a place to hide out. About 3/4 of a mile from the plane a dry ditch covered with brambles was found, and became the hideout for all of us.

We cannot positively locate the position of the crashed plane, but believe it was over a mile east of DZ "N". It was not in the flooded area, and we did not cross any large streams on our way to the coast, so we believe the crash was east of the Merderet River, probably in the vicinity of the village "Coquerie".

About an hour after we had hidden, we heard a voice say "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?", in an American accent, which was followed by the sign. We gave the correct counter-sign, and two US paratroopers - one with a badly injured ankle on which he could hardly walk - joined us. At dawn the uninjured one left to find his outfit. The whole crew, with the injured paratrooper, stayed where it was until 1400 hours on Tuesday 6 June 1944. During these hours we could hear a variety of firing of all types in all directions. We identified from the sound, machine guns, rifles, hand grenades, 88s and other large German guns, and naval bombardment in the direction of the coast.

At 1400 we turned cautiously back toward the plane. Two fields away from it we stopped, and the co-pilot and crew chief were left in hiding, while the pilot, navigator, and radio operator went ahead, using a stone wall bordering the field as partial cover. The navigator finally reached the aircraft, but except for its tail assembly it was entirely destroyed, and he could find no food, water, or other supplies. In the meantime the pilot went to the place where paratrooper No 17 had been left the night before; the spot was located (a flak suit and mae west had been picked up and carefully concealed in bushes during the crew's absence, but the trooper had disappeared. It is our theory that he had been picked up either by French civilians or by our own men. As soon as these facts had been ascertained, the three other crew members re-joined the co-pilot and crew chief two fields away from the aircraft. After discussion a scouting trip was agreed on. The navigator went off in a northeasterly direction, the pilot in a southwesterly one. This was 1545, and an agreement to meet again in the same place at or before 1745 was made. The pilot approached a large stone farmhouse, which stood some distance on the other side of the plane, and observed several French peasants, including

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Narrative account on A/C #42-93002 (Cont'd).

children, who went out to look at the wreck. Deciding it was better not to communicate with them, he returned to the hiding place, to find the navigator already returned.

The navigator reported that about a ten minute walk from the hideout, in an easterly direction, there was a highway running generally north and south. He also reported that the sound of heavy guns was quite near along the highway to the south, although he did not observe any emplacements. He was afraid to cross this road, feeling sure that it was well posted by the enemy, so returned to the hideout.

The crew remained in the new hide-out until about 2000 in the evening, when American voices were heard shouting in the next field. The navigator went out toward the sound. A few moments later he turned and called for the crew. When the rest of us crossed to him, he told us that he had met an old school-mate of his, who was an officer in the outfit, and that he had arranged for jeep transportation to the beach. We began running across the field toward our troops, the navigator in the lead, when someone on our left front began shooting at us with rifles. We hit the dirt, and shouted the password. The shooting stopped, the navigator arose to continue his course, firing broke out again and the navigator was hit. He fell to the ground. A soldier from the 4th Division came toward us, and yelled at the rest to stop firing.

A first-aid crew came over, examined the navigator, and discovered him to have been hit in the fleshy part of the buttocks. There was no wound of exit observable; we do not know whether any bones were struck, but do not think so, and do not believe the wound was very serious.

We were then taken to a major and three lieutenants, leaving the navigator to be removed by stretcher. These officers apologized for incautious firing by their men. We got into a jeep with the major and headed for the beach; about 2½ miles from it, travelling along the road, running from the town of St Mere Eglise (co-ordinates: 35.2-97.0, 37.2-00, 40.7-03.5 Map reference sheet 6 E/3 and 6 E/5, France 1:50,000, 3rd Edition) the major turned off to the left, gave us directions for walking to the beach, and left us. Along this road our men were engaged in digging out snipers, and enemy observation posts, and French civilians were helping by giving directions, warning of mines, and other aid. Tanks were coming up along the road from the shore. Our forces from the beach, incidentally, were apparently already in touch with the paratroop and glider forces which had landed farther inland. It was approximately 2030 hours on Tuesday, 6 June 1944, when the major left us.

When we arrived on the beach, we had trouble making contact with anyone in authority who could help us, but finally found a Commander, US Navy, who was in charge of the sector. He put us on a boat and we left the beach about 2300 hours. We reported to the CO of an LCVP lying off shore, and after spending some time getting the ship off a shoal, travelled in it about 12 miles to the USS "Bayfield", a headquarters and hospital ship, where we arrived about 0230 on the morning of Wednesday, 7 June 1944.

At 0730 that morning we got up, having been fed and put to bed in the sick-bay on the "Bayfield" as soon as we arrived. About 0800 - 0830 a colonel arrived with

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Narrative account on A/C #42-93002 (Cont'd).

a rescued P-47 pilot, and we followed him to the USS "Ancon", another headquarters ship. (This craft was the headquarters for all that section of the beach, and many generals and admirals were present upon it, including General De Gaulle, who was observing the action and broadcasting messages to the French.) From this ship we transferred - via another LCVF - to LST 75, arriving about 1400 on Wednesday afternoon. This ship began to unload that night and finished the following morning. At about 2100 hours Thursday 8 June 1944, we left for the UK in a convoy of 40 - 50 ships.

We arrived off Portland about 1400 Friday afternoon, stayed on board until disembarkation Saturday morning, 10 June 1944. We then went through two straggler-and-survivor camps, the second at Weymouth. At the latter, we arrived simultaneously with 206 US glider pilots, who had just been brought back from the continent. From here we went to Southampton in trucks, where we arrived about 1800. The pilot immediately telephone our base and spoke to Lt Col Myer, who sent down at once; Major Falkner and Capt Roush picked us up at Stonycross Airfield near Southampton about 2130 on Saturday, 10 June 1944, and we arrived at our base about 2230 the same evening.

While we were on the continent, we did not observe any engagements with the enemy, although we heard much firing; we saw some empty gliders in the vicinity of Ste Mere Eglise, but we did not observe the town itself nor did we see any of our glider troops.

We found that our troops had been instructed to shoot at anyone moving around at night, whereas we had been advised to hide during the day and do our travelling at night if we landed in enemy territory. Instructions on such matters should be coordinated, in order to prevent avoidable injury from our own troops.

HARRISON LOESCH,
Captain, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.

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