



RESTRICTED

78TH TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON
435TH Troop Carrier Group

JUNE 1944
.....
Auth:
Date: 1 July 1944
Initials: *MA*
.....

APC 183, US Army,
1 July 1944.

UNIT HISTORY FOR MONTH OF JUNE 1944

1. ORGANIZATION:

a. Same - 53rd Troop Carrier Wing

2. STRENGTH: (30 June 1944)

a. Officers: 73 Officers
34 Flight Officers
1 Warrant Officer
b. Enlisted Men: 279

3. DATE OF ARRIVAL AT AND DEPARTURE FROM EACH STATION OCCUPIED IN ETC:

a. No Change

4. LOSSES IN ACTION:

a. F/O Sylvester H. Kempen - Killed in action
F/O William P. O'Haver - Killed in action
F/O Norman T. Lund - Missing in action
F/O William T. McCabe - Missing in action
F/O Jacob Alexanian - Wounded in action
F/O Simon Vistuba - Wounded in action
F/O William J. Steele Jr. - Wounded in action
F/O William A. Dobson - Wounded in action - (Rec'd to duty)
F/O Thomas J. Murphy - Wounded in action
F/O Albert Rives - Wounded in action
2nd Lt David C. Adams - Wounded in action

5. AWARDS TO AND DECORATIONS OF MEMBERS OF UNIT:

a. Purple Heart
2nd Lt David C. Adams
Per SO #113, Par. 2, 168th Station Hospital

F/O Simon Vistuba
Per GO #3, Par. 4, Hq. 305th General Hospital

51 7

UNIT HISTORY FOR MONTH OF JUNE 1944.

The advent of June, 1944 saw feverish preparation under way for the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe. Operation "Neptune" was about to be accomplished.

Station 474, Welford Park, the "home" station of the 78th, was under close restriction. As part of its duties as Station Security Office, the S-2 section of the Squadron was on duty 24 hours a day, ready for any call to pass, on or off the field, any trips that were necessary.

The operation block was surrounded by barbed wire and guards were stationed at the entrance and a pass system was set up. These preparations were part of the safeguards set up for the security of operational planning. The personnel of the squadrons who had been briefed for the mission were segregated in a fenced area, enclosing the Officer's Mess, theater, squash court, and a number of small buildings.

The combat personnel were finally briefed at 1800 June 5. The 435th, flying its first operational mission, used 45 airplanes, 12 of which were supplied by the 78th. The squadron carried 190 paratroops of 3rd Bn., 501st Para. Inf., Div. Hq. & Div. Art. Hq., in addition to military equipment.

The planes took off at 2326 and returned at 0253, with the exception of one plane, flown by Lt. George F. Robbillard who returned at 0550, having made an emergency landing at an RAF field.

There were no losses, of either aircraft or personnel and only slight damage was suffered by the planes.

The second portion of operation "Neptune", a glider tow, was flown on June 6. The 435th used 51 planes. The 78th furnished 13 planes, 12 towing gliders and one carrying paratroops. This was a re-run for Lt. Volpi, who had missed the drop zone on the first mission and failed to drop his stick of troops.

Only 11 planes of the squadron returned, 2 of them being forced down in the Channel. Lt. Seymour Rutberg, pilot; Lt. Emmett Gaulding, co-pilot; T/Sgt. Jack L. Breckenridge, and Sgt. H. G. Woods, crew chief and radio operator comprised the crew of #099. Capt. E. E. Ours, Jr. pilot; Lt. J. L. Hill, co-pilot; Lt. D. C. Adams, navigator; T/Sgt. J. T. Franklin, Jr. and S/Sgt. S. L. Latona, made up the crew of #169. Both crews returned to the Squadron a day or two later. Only one man suffered injuries serious enough to require hospitalization. He was Lt. D. C. Adams who was left in the hospital at Hyde.

14 Glider pilots of the Squadron were loaned to the 437th TC Gp on detached service on 1 June 1944. These men participated in the invasion while attached to the 437th. 10 of them reported back on June 9 and were interrogated by Capt. Naff and Lt. Poe. On the 10th, 14 more glider pilots reported back from France and it was during their interrogation that we learned of our first casualties. F/O Sylvester H. Kempen and F/O William P. O'Haver were definitely reported as killed while F/Os Norman T. Lund and William T. McCabe were thought to have suffered the same fate. The two latter are reported as missing in action.

Six other GPs were injured either in glider crack-ups or by enemy action. They are Flight Officers Simon Vistuba, Jacob Alexanian, William J. Steele, Jr., William A. Dobson, Thomas J. Murphy, and Albert Rives. F/O Dobson returned to the squadron from the hospital on June 20.