

On September 17, 24 of our aircraft took part in the opening phase of the combat operation "Market" dropping 295 paratroops in the vicinity of Groesbeek. The military object was to strengthen the operation against Nijmegen. The following day, the 18th, 20 of our planes towed gliders in single tow, formation, to the same area visited the previous day. The gliders towed were those of the 95th and 97th Squadrons of the 440th Troop Carrier Group. Four days of bad weather then intervened holding back the planned reinforcements of glider troops which were badly needed by the beleaguered ground forces. Finally, on the 23rd of September, all of our glider pilots flew CG-4A's, tugged by 21 of our planes as well as those of other squadrons in the group. Our glider pilot strength had been enlarged so that we had 49 men on our roster who piloted gliders. This was our mission #32 and another phase of the operation "Market". The landing zone on each of these three combat missions was approximately the same. The route flown was also similar in each case, namely from Fulbeck, across the Channel and over the Dutch island of Schouwen, south of Rotterdam, along the Maas River to Groesbeek, near the German border. The route back was a northward turn toward Nijmegen and then westward to England again.

Our first serious combat losses were experienced in these three missions. Of the four personnel missing in action, two, enlisted men and an officer, were seen to bail out of their plane along with the rest of its crew. No further word has been received concerning them. The full report of our losses is embodied in section d of pages 4 and 5 of this report. Our losses this month are the only ones we have had to date.

A large number of our planes were fired upon by ground installations, flak as well as small arms, during the Dutch operations, but we are very fortunate in having suffered no aircraft losses. In the glider phase of our operations, one glider pilot was lost, all the others safely evacuated and returned to us. Typical statements of these men as they returned from the combat zone and were interrogated will be found excerpted and attached as an appendix to this report.