

Parachute 'Bombs' Loaded with Live Pigeons—A War Secret Now Revealed

Winged "Spies" Often Brought Valuable Information

BY ROMNEY WHEELER

Harrington, Eng.—(P)—One night in mid-April a jet black Liberator bomber cut the night sky over Germany, winging toward a pinpoint objective on the navigator's map.

The target of the big ship piloted by Lt. Bruce Edgerton of Washington, D. C., was not an industrial plant or a military installation. It was a camp for slave labor. The dozen "bombs," which soon were to go plummeting down from 24,000 feet were among the top secrets of the war.

I flew with Edgerton and his crew that night on a deep penetration mission over Leipzig and Dresden, but only now am I allowed to tell the full story. For Edgerton's Liberator Midnight Mistress was one of the first ships to carry parachute "bombs" loaded with live pigeons.

Back in the waist compartment S. Sgt. Larue Shiple of Caldwell, Idaho, and S. Sgt. Charles W. Strain of Crete, Neb., pitched out a dozen cardboard cylinders, each containing a live pigeon. Like paratroopers, their parachutes snapped open on miniature static lines.

Each pigeon carried a small container on one leg with printed instructions in several languages and requests for information on nazi installations, troop strength and deployment which were to be fastened to the birds for relay to

approaching spearheads of Gen. Hodges and Gen. Patton.

Although the percentage of returning pigeons never has been disclosed officially, I learned later that a number of birds returned to their cages in England with valuable information. Others may have been lost and still others may have found their way into someone's cooking pot.

The pigeon parachute bombs were dumped on Germany—as presumably they later would have been dumped on allied prisoners of war camps in Japan—by the night flying 406th squadron of the Eighth air force which in the last 20 months of the war dropped millions of leaflets and patriotic newspapers on occupied Europe and Germany.

Sioux City Journal,
28 Aug. 1945-

PORTY FIVE, TRINITY COURT,
GRAYS INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.

June 21, 1945.

Major Robert H. Gaddy,
406th Bombardment Squadron,
APO 557,
U.S. Army.

Dear Major Gaddy,

I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of "The Aero-
plane" containing a condensed report of mine on the trip over
France and Germany which I was allowed to make in "The Night-Knight".

Going through my story, I notice to my greatest
disgust that your name was spelled wrongly. Please accept my sincer-
est apologies for this mistake.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you and
all members of the 406th for the kindness shown to me during my
stay at your station and during the trip over the Continent which
was one of the most instructive and enjoyable ones I have ever made.

Wishing you and your squadron the best of luck,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

H. J. Wolffsohn.

H.J. Wolffsohn.

Encl.

A Bomphlet Raid

THE ONLY HEAVY BOMBER UNIT of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. which was employed on night operations during the War is the 406th bombardment squadron. Trained by the Royal Air Force in night flying, the squadron was entrusted with "special tasks" of which, even today, only one may be revealed, that of dropping "bomphlets" over the Continent. During the 20 months of its existence, the 406th "bombed" more than 7,000 targets with 1,800 million leaflets and news sheets in some 230 operations by night. Unlike all the other U.S. heavy bomber squadrons, the aircraft of the 406th squadron did not "attack" their targets in formation, but singly and had often to face concentrated opposition from enemy fighters and anti-aircraft guns. Since Germany's unconditional surrender, the squadron has been operating exclusively by day.

In the early days of flying leaflet dropping was simple: the crews of the squadron's Boeing Flying Fortresses and Consolidated Liberators threw armfuls of leaflets through the open bomb doors and left the distribution to the wind and the slipstream. To-day, however, a laminated wax container is used which was developed after many experiments. The white-painted container, shaped like a bomb, is attached to a parachute which opens a few seconds after the container has left the bomb-bay. When fairly near the ground the bomb explodes in order to provide better concentration of the leaflets. Each container weighs between 300 to 350 lb. and holds between 60,000 and 80,000 news sheets or leaflets.

We recently had an opportunity of studying a number of the leaflets which were dropped over or behind the German lines or over towns inside the Reich, and must admit that their authors not only understand the twisted German mentality, but also the German language.

Effect of Leaflets

We can well understand, for instance, why the German units in the Ardennes salient surrendered after they had read in Allied leaflets the true story of their abortive offensive and compared the facts explained to them with the claims of their superiors that their comrades were as far forward as Paris. Many German soldiers and even whole units intending to give up the fight did so only after surrender passes "were" dropped over their lines. Since VE-Day the 406th bombardment squadron has been delivering German language news sheets over Germany, Holland, and parts of France, and it is to continue this work until newspaper presses on the Continent are again rolling regularly. These news sheets are being prepared for camps of displaced persons and are printed in German, French, Dutch, and Russian, and are at present the only means of making these unfortunate people, who for long years practical help has been cut off from the World in their labour camps, familiar with what happened during this time and what is happening to-day.

Later, the full story should be told about the part which the 406th bombardment squadron played in keeping the people of France, and in particular the Maquis, informed of the plans of the Allies. In this connection we can only reveal that on D-Day aircraft of this unit dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets over Normandy with instructions for the civilian population and directions to the French underground army of resistance. The 406th seemed also to have been the "Liaison Squadron" between London and the Command of the Maquis.

We were fortunate enough to obtain permission to take part in a news sheet delivery flight.

The operation began, like the many hundreds preceding, with the briefing. Major R. H. Paddy, the present Squadron Commander, gave the targets to the assembled nine Liberator crews: six were to fly to Mannheim, one each to Reims and Mannheim, while the ninth had to drop its containers over Reims and Mannheim. The Meteorological Officer gave a survey of the weather.

We were briefed for the "ship," the B-24 M, "The Night-Knight," built by Henry Ford's Willow Run plant. The "M" has, incidentally, twin fins and rudders. At precisely 10.30 the skipper, Lieut. J. E. Bingham, obtained permission to go. After a surprisingly short run, the Liberator was airborne. The crew consisted of seven: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, engineer, radio operator and assistant engineer, of which the first five and the passenger had to stay in the flight deck, as during take-offs and landings no one is allowed in the lower deck where navigator and bombardier have their "offices."

At 11.05 we crossed the coast South of Clacton at a speed of 170 m.p.h. Twenty-five minutes later we had covered the 63 miles long stretch of water and reached the famous beaches of Dunkirk and the town itself. Here we were able to find proof of the devastation caused by Allied bombs to the

German Navy. In particular the submarine or E-boat pen attracted our attention.

Following up the coast, the pilot circled over Blankenberge and Zebrugge. Flying over Courtrai, Le Cateau, and a number of other places, all well known from the two Wars, we noticed hardly any destruction in the built-up areas, as Allied bombers had concentrated on the big aerodromes, in particular on Sisonne and Juvin-court, but also on the numerous landing grounds along the route.

After a test run over the target the Liberator swung round and approached the aerodrome again. The bomb doors were opened and at 12.48 the bombardier reported that the bombs had hardly three seconds after they had left the bomb-bay the parachutes opened; the containers floated gently down and touched the ground not far from the "customers," the representatives of the distributing authority. Reims aerodrome was also squarely hit, though not as badly smashed as the two other aerodromes mentioned previously. The German Air Force used it apparently not only as operational but also as repair base. Next to some workshops were heaps of destroyed German aircraft, Me 109s, Fw 190s, Ju 88s and Ju 52s.

"The Night-Knight" left Reims at 12.57 in the direction of Mannheim, 174 miles away. As predicted by the Meteorological Officer, the weather deteriorated; rain began to come down and high-flying clouds hid the ground while flying over the Champagne. After crossing the Moselle the Franco-German frontier was reached at 13.35; two minutes later Saarbrücken, the centre of the Saar industry and a priority target for Allied bombers, came into view. Most of the buildings were only empty shells, while many industrial plants were completely wiped out. From Saarbrücken to Mannheim no traces of bombing were noticed in the small towns and hamlets en route. In the industrial part of the latter, more devastation became noticeable. Port and railway installations, bridges and roundhouses, as well as repair shops, were completely smashed, and vast stretches of the town were made uninhabitable.

Return Flight

The first large German town on the return journey was Coblenz. It was deserted; a few sunken barges in front of it and debris strewn all over the place made the town still more desolate. Adjoining the barracks there was a huge prisoner-of-war camp. Along the roads by which it is enclosed armed vehicles were patrolling. From Coblenz to Cologne the pilot followed the course of the Rhine. While passing Bonn, another still bigger prisoner-of-war camp was noticed which stretched some three miles along the bank of the river. Approaching Cologne, the extent of the destruction grew with every mile, in particular among the industrial establishments, while many small villages were spared. The most significant example was a vast industrial plant three miles South-east of Brühl which was completely wiped out.

Cologne, the test-target of Allied air power, was reached following the course of the wide autobahn which ends in a great circle from which roads into and through the town emanate. Shortly before, another autobahn branches off towards the East, but a few hundred yards farther on. The bridge over the Rhine has completely disappeared. The devastation in Cologne has been described before and there is no need to go into details. The only building which stood out among the ruins from 2,000 ft. was the Cathedral. The same devastation was observed on the East bank of the river among the industrial districts. In addition to the results of "area bombing" we were able to observe a few fine examples of precision bombing. There was, for instance, a road crossing of six streets. Not only the crossing itself was hit, but also each of the six streets, blocking in this way any traffic. Apart from the seven craters, no more was seen in the direct neighbourhood of the crossing. Leaving Cologne in the direction of Mönchengladbach, the outskirts of the town and the neighbouring small places showed hardly a trace of damage. Near Mönchengladbach the great aerodrome Y 56 was passed with many Allied operational and transport aircraft along the perimeter. Twenty-one minutes later we flew into Holland, in the direction of Rotterdam. For the next 23 minutes no traces of any damage were seen.

Rotterdam came into view. It seemed to us the first inhabited town for hours.

A quarter of an hour after leaving Rotterdam we crossed the coast West of Hoek van Holland. The nearest point on the English Coast was Orfordness, about 94 miles away. At a height of 2,500 ft. landfall was made 43 minutes later. Ipswich and its great aerodrome came into view and a little later Cambridge. Another 40 minutes later the Harrington base was reached. The total flight lasted a little more than 7 hrs 5 mins, during which about 1,200 miles were covered.

See article beginning on page 243.

Accompanied with
Aerospace Historian
Vol. 31 #4 Winter/December 1984

18 January 87

Dear Harold:

It seems rather odd to be addressing you that way after knowing you as Colonel or Robert or Bob. Furthermore, it is hard to realize that over 40 years have gone by since those days we were together at L. Heddington.

After a lull of many years following VE-Day, memories of the old airfield came alive when a dynamic young Irish-Englishman, with the help of several friends, formed the L. Heddington Association and began the laborious task of trying to contact people who had been with the 406th and 36th Squadrons, 8th AF Composite Command HQs, and other assigned units at the airfield. With an optimism and diligence that defies belief, he finally had made contact with several hundred people and many became dues paying members so that they could receive the newsletter "L. Heddington Leaflets" that he published and distributed on a quarterly basis.

In addition, Pat convinced some of us that a reunion should be held back at Leedington in October 1982 to dedicate a memorial to all the U.S. personnel that had been stationed there. It was a big hit with the local people and the media, including T.V. Later, it was followed by another reunion in October 1985 which was just as big a hit. After the first reunion, the memories became so vivid that I decided to write an article about it, which was published in AEROSPACE HISTORIAN. I am sending a copy to you in the hope it will bring back a few memories for you. Don't let the picture at the end deceive you. Since it was taken, I have lost a much-needed 40 lbs and feel much better weighing 175 lbs.

After retiring from the Air Force in the summer of 1974 I worked with industry until March 1985. Now, I keep busy as President of the Air Force Historical Foundation. It is a non-paying position, but I enjoy still being a part of the action.

If you have any questions about the Leedington Association or any of the old gang please let me know, and I will try to get the answers -

All the best
Gundy

INDIVIDUAL FLIGHT RECORD

(1) SERIAL NO. 0-412722 (2) NAME GARY Abbott (3) RANK Major (4) AGE 32
(5) PERS. CLASS 01 (6) BRANCH Air Corps (7) STATION 117 A-0 693
(8) ORGANIZATION ASSIGNED 8th Air Force Composite Command (9) ORGANIZATION ATTACHED 8th Air Force Composite Command
(10) PRESENT RATING & DATE Major 4-25-44 (11) ORIGINAL RATING & DATE Major
(12) TRANSFERRED FROM AAB Hamilton Field Ohio (13) FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS None
(14) TRANSFERRED TO 878th Bombardment Sq. (B) (14) TRANSFER DATE

[illegible]

DAY	AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL & SERIES	NO. LOADS	FLYING ASST (INC. 4 5TH PL TIME 5)	COMB'D FLO ² E CA	CO. PLO ² CP	QJAJ RED PILOT D.L. 30	FIRST PILOT		RATED PERS		NON-RATED			SPECIAL INFORMATION				
							DAY	NIGHT F M OR N	NON-PILOT	OTHER ADMS & SERVICS	OTHER CREW PASS/GR	45% BL INFN ¹	NIGHT	INSTRU- MENT TRAINER	PILOT NON-MIL A SCAPT			
3	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
24	B-24J	1					1:25							1:5				
25	B-24J	1					5:00											
26	B-24J	1					4:50							2:00				
29	B-24J	1					3:40							2:00				
30	B-24J	1					5:35							1:00				

44-38861-709

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Chief, Air Group,
Operations Group.

COLUMN TOTALS

35:30

4:15

(37) THIS MONTH	35:30	35:30
(38) PREVIOUS MONTHS, Y.	24:30	35:30
(39) THIS FISCAL YEAR	72:35	71:00
(40) PREVIOUS FISCAL YEARS	223:35	1,000:00 1962-63
(41) TO DATE	223:35	1,001:25 1962-63

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL FLIGHT RECORD

(1) SERIAL NO. 0-42722 (2) NAME GARRY Robert (3) RANK Major (4) AGE 32
(5) PERS. CLASS 01 (6) BRANCH Air Corps (7) STATION 11 A-6 639
(8) ORGANIZATION ASSIGNED 8th Air Force Composite Command
(9) ORGANIZATION ATTACHED Air Force COMAND WING GROUP SQUADRON DETACHMENT
(10) PRESENT RATING & DATE PLT 4-2-41 (11) ORIGINAL RATING & DATE PLT 4-2-41
(12) TRANSFERRED FROM _____ (13) FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS _____
(15) TRANSFERRED TO _____ (14) TRANSFER DATE _____

[illegible]

DAY	AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL & SERIES	NO. LANDINGS	FLYING INSTR. IN 1ST PILOT TIME	COMMAND PILOT C CA	CO-PILOT C CP	QUALI- FIED PILOT DUAL QD	FIRST PILOT		RATED PER.		NON-RATED		SPECIAL INFORMATION					
							DAY P	NIGHT P N OR HI	NON-PILOT		OTHER AERIAL & SERVICES	OTHER CREW & PASS GR	INSTRU- MENT	NIGHT N	INSTRU- MENT TRAINER	PILOT NON-ML AIRCRAFT		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
7	D-17G	3			1:25													4:45
8	D-17G																	1:00
9	D-17G																	1:30
10	D-24H	4			1:30	1:20		1:40							1:30			
11	D-24H	4			1:30										1:30			
12	D-17G																	1:00
13	D-24H	1					3:00											
14	D-24H	1						4:30							4:30			
15	D-24H	1					1:25											
16	D-24H	1						1:00							1:00			
17	D-24H	1					3:45							1:30				
18	D-17G	0			2:45										2:45			Combat
19	D-17G	1			1:25										1:25			Combat
20	D-17G	4			1:45													
21	D-17G	2						1:40										
22	D-17G	2						1:25										
23	D-17G	10					5:50	1:40	1:40	"CERTIFIED CORRECT"					2:10			
24	D-17G	1					1:45											
<div>AUGUST E. KELL, Capt., Air Corps, Operations Officer.</div>																		
COLUMN TOTALS					7:20	1:10	12:00	6:50	1:40						1:30	13:50	3:15	

AUGUST E. WEIL,
Capt., Air Corps,
Operations Officer.

(37) THIS MONTH		18:50	27:20
(38) PREVIOUS MONTHS THIS F. Y.		70:00	71:00
(39) THIS FISCAL YEAR		88:50	90:20
(40) PREVIOUS FISCAL YEARS	223:35	1561:45	1922:25
(41) TO DATE	223:35	1650:35	2020:45

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL FLIGHT RECORD

(1) SERIAL NO. 0-412722 (2) NAME GENTRY Robert (3) RANK Major (4) AGE 32
 (5) PERS. CLASS 01 (6) BRANCH Air Corps (7) STATION 111 A-6 639
 (8) ORGANIZATION ASSIGNED 8th Air Force Composite Command 406th Bomb Sq. (H) ATTACHED FOR P. TIME
 (9) ORGANIZATION ATTACHED AIR FORCE COMMAND WING GROUP SQUADRON DATE/NUMBER
 (10) PRESENT RATING & DATE Pilot 4-2-44 (11) ORIGINAL RATING & DATE Pilot
 (12) TRANSFERRED FROM _____ (13) FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS None
 (15) TRANSFERRED TO _____ (14) TRANSFER DATE _____

(16) DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

PERS. CLASS	NO.	TO	A. F.	COMMAND	WING	GROUP		SQUADRON		STATION	MO.	YR.	(17) MONTH	DAY	YEAR	
						NO.	TYPE	NO.	TYPE							

DAY	AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL & SERIES	NO. LANDINGS	FLYING HRS. (INCL. IN 1ST PR. TIME)	COMMAND, PILOT & C/A	CO-PILOT C/P	QUALIFIED PILOT DUAL OD	FIRST PILOT		RATED PERS.		NON-RATED		SPECIAL INFORMATION			
							DAY	NIGHT	NON-PILOT	OTHER ARMS & SERVICES	OTHER CREW & PASS'OR	INSTRU- MENT	NIGHT	INSTRU- MENT TRAINER	PILOT NON-ACL AIRCRAFT	
																P
18	B-17E	1							1:45	1:00					1:45	Combat
1	B-17E	0							3:30						3:30	Combat
2	B-17E	1							3:20						3:20	Combat
2	B-17E	1														Combat
3	B-17E	0							3:30						3:30	Combat
4	B-17E	1							3:50	3:00					3:50	Combat
6	B-17E	0							3:15	1:00					3:15	Combat
7	B-17E	1							1:10						1:10	Combat
9	B-17E	1							1:25							
10	B-17E	1							1:30							
12	B-17E	1							5:10	2:00					5:10	Combat
12	B-17E	0							3:15						3:15	Combat
13	B-17E	1							3:20	1:00					3:20	Combat
15	B-17E	1							4:00							
15	B-17E	0							3:30						3:30	Combat
16	B-17E	2							4:40	3:55	2:00				3:55	Combat
21	B-24D	4							1:00							
22	B-24D	5	1:00						1:00							
23	B-17G	0							3:15						3:15	Combat
24	B-17G	1							1:35						1:35	Combat
24	B-17G	0							1:00							
24	B-17G	1							1:55						1:55	Combat
27	B-17G	0							1:00							
27	B-17G	0							3:00						3:00	Combat
28	B-17E	1							3:35	2:55					3:35	Combat
28	B-17G	0							3:15						3:15	Combat
29	B-17G	1							4:25	1:00					4:25	Combat
30	B-17G	0							1:45						1:45	Combat
31	B-17G	1							2:50	1:50					2:50	Combat
30	B-17G	0							1:10						1:10	Combat

INDIVIDUAL FLIGHT RECORD

(1) SERIAL NO. 0-412722 (2) NAME GADNY ROBERT (3) RANK Major (4) AGE 33
 (5) PERS. CLASS 01 (6) BRANCH Air Corps (7) STATION 3-113 607
 (8) ORGANIZATION ASSIGNED 8th Fighter Command (9) ORGANIZATION ATTACHED 606th Bomb Sq (A)
 (10) PRESENT RATING & DATE 1st Lt 25 Apr 41 (11) ORIGINAL RATING & DATE 1st Lt
 (12) TRANSFERRED FROM 8th AFHQ (13) FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS None
 (14) TRANSFERRED TO 8th Fighter Command (14) TRANSFER DATE 7 October 1944

(16) PERS CLASS 01 RANK 1st Lt BIC 0 A. F. 8th Fighter Command WING 1 GROUP 1 SQUADRON 1 STATION 3-113 MQ. YR. 1944
 (17) MONTH October 1944

DAY	AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL & SERIES	NO. LANDINGS	FLYING HRS (INC. IN 15' PL TIME)	COMMD. PLOT C CA	CO- PILOT CP	QUALI- FIED PILOT DIAL LOG	FIRST PILOT		RATED PERS.		NON-RATED		SPECIAL INFORMATION					
							DAY P	HIGH N OR NI	NON-PILOT	OTHER ARMS & SERVICES	OTHER CREW & PASS'GR	INSTRU- MENT	H GHT N	A-SIG- MENT TRANSFER	PILOT NON-ALL AIRCRAFT			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
31	3-113	0					3:15	1:00						3:15			Combat	

EXCLUDED COMMENTS:

URGENT 11 OCT 44
 Captain, Air Corps,
 Operations Officer.

CO-JUN TOTALS

2:55

6:15 69:30 18:25

60:30

(42) TOTAL STUDENT PILOT TIME

(43) TOTAL PILOT TIME

(44) TOTAL PILOT TIME

(37) THIS MONTH 75:45 18:25 78:40
 (38) PREVIOUS MONTHS THIS F. Y. 147:55 5:15 157:25
 (39) THIS FISCAL YEAR 223:40 23:40 236:05
 (40) PREVIOUS FISCAL YEARS 223:35 1561:45 21:45 1922:25 7:50
 (41) TO DATE 223:35 1785:25 45:25 2158:30 7:50

AIRCRAFT						CARD NO. 1						CARD NO. 2						CARD NO. 3					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36						

Brian Gunderson

05-14-98

Accompanied with
Air Power History
Vol. 45 #1 Spring 1998

Dear Bob:

I received a telephone call a few days ago from Pat Carty in England in which he mentioned that he had talked to you about the possibility that the wreckage of Lt. Col Aber's B-17 had been located in the Wash area off the east coast of Norfolkshire. After some discussion, I told him that I thought that the 406th Squadron should not lead any effort to recover the wreckage (including some bones noted within the cockpit area). I've talked to several other people who knew Carle, including one who still corresponds with

Brian Gunderson

his sister in Wisconsin. He felt very strongly that it would not be advisable to bring the subject up with her due to her age and physical condition. She ~~has~~ had long ago made her peace with the situation and was pleased that his grave was in the cemetery in Madingley, near Cambridge. Pat told me he would inform me of any plans the British group who found the wreckage made to recover the wreckage (or some part of it).

I hope all is well with you and your lovely wife. I am enclosing a magazine with an article I wrote about U.S. leaflet operations conducted by the 406th/422nd Squadrons during W.W.II. Maybe it will bring back a few memories.

All the best, Brian

LS/GE/IS 9/6

Flying with Europe's Newsboys
by Leonora Silvian (of O.W.I.
Unit)

Long queues of bombers and fighters waiting to take off for attacks on German targets in Europe are a thing of the past at the great airfields in Britain. But I've just been to an American air base in the Midlands where Bomber Squadron 406 of the U.S. Eighth Air Force is still in business, continuing to unload on targets in Europe. Of course the squadron carries no explosives- it now has. The only bomber unit assigned to carry leaflets, 406 has been in operation since October, 1943. These "news-boys" are at present commanded by 25 year old Major Robert GADDY of Latta, South Carolina. In 30 months 406 squadron has carried out more than 2,300 sorties. Each bomber, a Liberator or a Flying Fortress, flies without escort. During the war the squadron dropped surrender leaflets and messages to friendly civilians in occupied countries. Now, the squadron delivers newspapers to the liberated countries and messages to displaced persons. Nine daily flights are made, and each plane carries 12 bombs loaded with some 5,000 leaflets.

Yesterday, I flew the route with a crew of Squadron 406. Our targets were Rheims and Mannheim. The crew were as excited as I - since until VE day they had done all their missions at night. When we got to Rheims we circled over the unharmed Cathedral and discharged the first load of eight bomb packets on the airfield.

From Rheims we flew over part of the floodlands of HOLLAND, over the well cultivated Belgian farmlands scarred only occasionally by bomb pits, and on to Germany. Trenches zig-zagged through the forests and fields in Germany.

Cities like SAARBRUCKEN and MANNHEIM are badly hit and, in fact, seem ravaged until one sees Cologne. But there is life in Saarbrucken and the railways and highways carry traffic. Cologne, however, is only a ghost city.

IS/GE/IS

GENERAL NEWS TRANSCRIPT - TWO

Flying with Europe's Newsboys
By Leonora Silvian (of O.W.I.
Unit)

In COLOGNE the spectres of the city which once housed more than 768,000 persons remain. There is mile after mile of shell-framed buildings without roofs, without windows, without backs or without fronts. Only the spire of the cathedral is untouched and an L. shaped cloister of buildings marked off with Red Crosses. Everything which we saw before and after Cologne escaped the memory - Cologne leaves the only impression.

END

7 lines