

# WWII U.S. GLIDER PILOT'S BRIEFING

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS ASSOCIATION  
OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE



**SPECIAL EDITION!**  
**80TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**OF NORMANDY**

*First Glider Squadron to land in  
Normandy on 6 June 1944*



**This special edition covers: -**

- The intricacies of detached service that started in the Normandy operation
- A view of the first glider pilots to land in Normandy.
- The Letter: One that every man wrote home and hoped it would not be delivered.

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Contributors to this special edition include Jeff McGovern, Hans den Brok, Patricia Overman, Claudia Coggin and Pete Buckley, whose memoirs were invaluable to this research. A special thank you to the U.S. National Archives, the U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency, and the diligent efforts of the Leon B. Spencer Research Team for their work in the NWWIIGPA Digital Archives.

You are receiving this quarterly briefing as a valued member of the National World War II Glider Pilot Association. Our association operates as an independent 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with the primary mission of supporting the education and preservation of the history of World War II glider pilots and their remarkable contributions. The content within this briefing is diligently curated by our dedicated members, all of whom contribute their time and expertise voluntarily without financial compensation. Our aim is to provide you with exclusive insights into glider operations and other troop carrier narratives, accompanied by a wealth of information, captivating images, and historical accounts sourced directly from U.S. Military archives and other rare repositories not typically accessible to the public. If you wish to discontinue receiving these publications, please feel free to reach out to Claudia Coggin at [claudia.coggin@gmail.com](mailto:claudia.coggin@gmail.com). Your preferences are important to us, and we are here to assist you in any way we can. Thank you for your ongoing support and membership in our association.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The publication of this special edition marks the 80th anniversary of the Normandy invasion.

Every year as another Memorial Day comes and goes there is a special opportunity to take pause and remember the servicemembers who have paved the way for us today.

This edition is packed with curated data from logs and reports which gives great detail on the service path of an American Glider Pilot operating on Detached Service. In a time before electronic administrative accountability, I can certainly understand how hard managing movements for individuals must have been!

The sheer number of pilots we lost that day is gut-wrenching. I do not know the personal story of every GP in our database, and so with each new narrative it was to great disappointment when I would read “killed in action,” or “died in crash,” or any of the many possibilities encompassing those two phrases. But how touching to witness 80 years later the camaraderie of pilots such as F/O Morales for his co-pilot 2ndLt Ahmad who were separated after days of repelling a German attack on the town they were taking shelter in. How sad, to read that after the war

F/O Morales returned to that area to search for his missing friend—unfortunately to no avail.

Thank you, Claudia for sharing the letter written by your father. That was extremely touching and if I had it here in front of me there’d be a couple more tear-stains to add to your dad’s—thank goodness he never had to send it.

Thank you to all our authors for the hard work they’ve put into this content for the community to enjoy—Patricia, Jeff, Claudia, and so many others. This publication would be impossible without all the personal effort Patricia puts into the Layout.

As always, I invite you to reach out to us at the below email address so that we can share your insights with the rest of the membership in the following quarter’s issue.

[briefingeditor.nwwiigpc@gmail.com](mailto:briefingeditor.nwwiigpc@gmail.com)

Best,

Trevor Shimulunas

# NORMANDY

## INTRODUCTION OF SERIALS

By Patricia Overman

The Normandy invasion marked the first operation that involved the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in a vertical envelopment behind enemy lines on the Cotentin Peninsula. Troop Carrier (TC) Wings of the 50th, 52nd, and 53rd dropped and landed the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Four American glider missions lifted these divisions to the Cotentin Peninsula. Prior to the glider lifts, paratrooper drops comprised the first six serials. The 101st Pathfinders led the invasion, dropping at 0020 hours. They carried radio equipment to guide the lead plane of each serial into the drop or landing zones around Sainte-Mère-Église. The subsequent lifts included the main armada of paratroopers, transported by troop carriers led by the 78th TC Squadron of the 438th TC Group. The main objectives of the airborne forces were to secure the landing zones for the incoming gliders.

The airborne divisions' specific objectives were to capture crucial bridges and causeways and to neutralize gun batteries. These targets were essential for securing clear

routes for the invasion forces to advance from the beach area into the interior.

The Army Air Forces facilitated the drop and landing of infantry and their equipment across a total of eight drop zones or landing zones on the Cotentin Peninsula, particularly around Sainte-Mère-Église

### **The Glider Missions**

Glider pilots significantly contributed to the war effort by delivering combat infantry troops, equipment, and supplies, acting as a force. In the Normandy operation, this was accomplished using the American WACO CG-4A glider and the larger British Horsa glider.

To achieve their objectives, the American lifts comprised six missions, all codenamed after American cities: CHICAGO, DETROIT, KEOKUK, ELMIRA, GALVESTON, and HACKENSACK. A total of 292 CG-4A and 222 Horsa gliders were landed in three different landing zones: LZ-E near Heisville, LZ-W near Les Forges, and LZ-O near La Fièvre, all



surrounding Sainte-Mère-Église. The six missions comprised a total of eleven serials, #27 through #37. The first glider serial, #27, was led by the 434th Troop Carrier Group, with the 72nd TC Squadron followed by the 71st, 73rd, and 74th Squadrons. Seven minutes after the first planes of the 72nd took off from Aldermaston, England, the lead tow plane of the 437th TC Group began taking off from Ramsbury.

In the lead glider of the 72nd TC Squadron were Lt. Col. Mike Murphy and Lt. John Butler. In the lead glider of the 437th were Capt. Willis T. Evans and Flight Officer Ralph E. Toms.

This edition of the 80th focuses on the 434th TC Group as the lead glider mission of the Normandy liberation.

## THE ENEMY

The gliders and paratroopers encountered numerous obstacles, including flak, small arms fire, and mortars. The glider pilots faced additional hazards such as wires strung between posts and what appeared in aerial reconnaissance photos to be

bushes surrounding farm fields, which were actually full-grown poplar trees—as solid as stone walls! Although controlled crashes were the norm for CG-4A glider pilots, this was not advisable with the Horsa gliders. Many Horsa gliders had their hydraulic brakes shot out and could not stop before crashing into the deadly hedgerows which caused them to splinter into pieces. Additionally, many of the available landing areas had been flooded, leading to reports of some glider pilots and airborne troops drowning.

Once on the ground, the enemy was often hiding in the hedgerows. The glider pilots, who were under-armed, reported snipers hiding in the hedgerows shooting at them as they left their gliders. Intelligence reports indicated that the M1 Garand rifles used by some glider pilots required them to expose themselves to the enemy to return fire. According to the historical diaries of the TC Squadrons, glider pilots were either issued an M1 Garand or a Government Model 1911 .45 automatic pistol, but not both. Those equipped with the M1 Garand were at a disadvantage in close-range combat with the enemy.

## GENERAL SPECIFICATION - CG-4A

Crew 2

Capacity: varied by type of load , 13 troops

Length: 48 feet, 3-3/4 inches

Wingspan: 83 feet, 8 inches

Height: 12 feet, 7-7/16 inches

Wing span: 1,104 ft<sup>2</sup> (102.6 m<sup>2</sup>)

Empty weight: 8,370 lb (3,804 kg)

Loaded weight: 15,500 lb (7,045 kg)



## HORSA GLIDER SPECIFICATIONS

Crew: 2

Capacity: 25 troops (20–25 troops was the "standard" load)

Length: 67 ft 0 in (20.43 m)

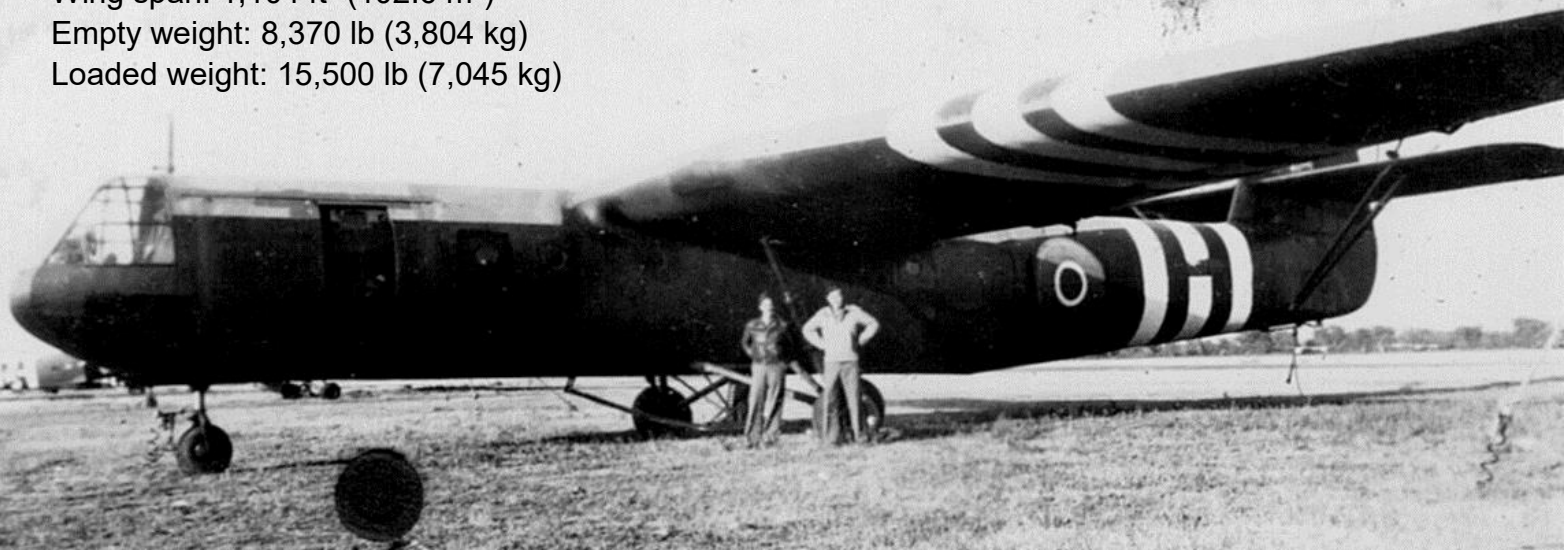
Wingspan: 88 ft 0 in (26.83 m)

Height: 19 ft 6 in (5.95 m)

Wing span: 1,104 ft<sup>2</sup> (102.6 m<sup>2</sup>)

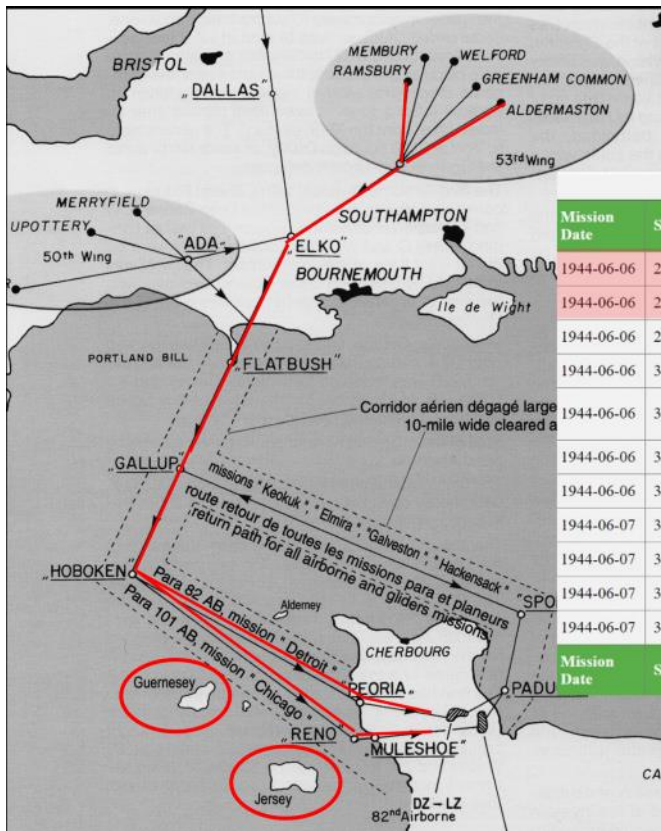
Empty weight: 8,370 lb (3,804 kg)

Loaded weight: 15,500 lb (7,045 kg)





A view of the lifts and the landing zones for each serial: There were two glider missions that occurred in the early morning of June 6th D-day. First lift, codenamed CHICAGO—434th TC Group—flew from Aldermastin England and the second lift DETROIT—437th TC Group—flew from Ramsbury, England. Their destination was the Cotentin Peninsula (Cherbourg) France. Serial CHICAGO landed in LZ E and DETROIT landed in LZ O. Both the 434th and the 437th flew only the CG-4A gliders.



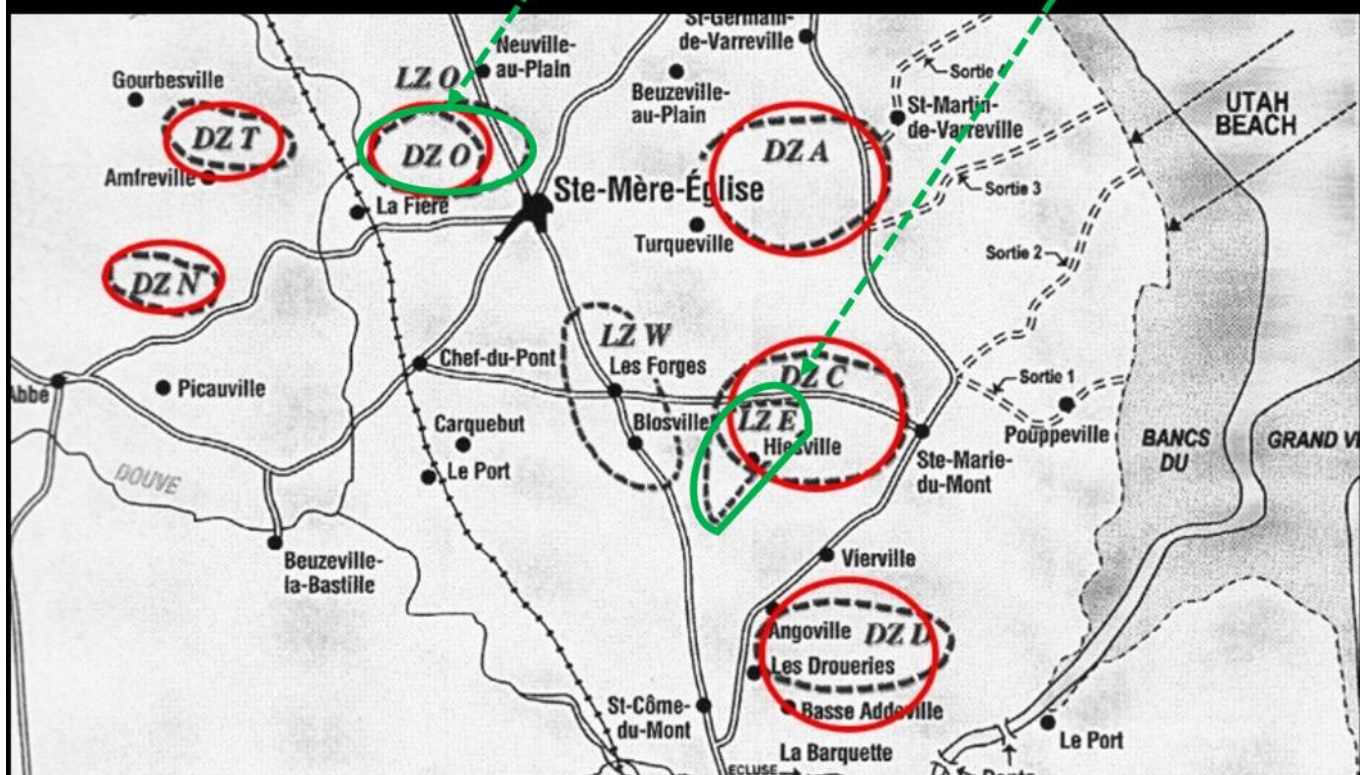
JUNE 6, 1944 DAWN LANDINGS  
MISSIONS CHICAGO AND DETROIT  
OT = Over Target

Mission Date	Serial	TC Group	subMission	Air Field	# CG-4A	# Horsa	Inf. Div.	Landing Zone
1944-06-06	27	434	Chicago	467-Aldermastin	52	0	101	E
1944-06-06	28	437	Detroit	469-Ramsbury	52	0	82	O
1944-06-06	29	434	Keokuk	467-Aldermastin	0	32	101	E
1944-06-06	30	437	Elmira	469-Ramsbury	8	18	82	W
1944-06-06	31	438	Elmira	486-Greenham Common	14	38	82	W
1944-06-06	32	436	Elmira	466-Membury	2	48	82	W
1944-06-06	33	435	Elmira	474-Welford	12	38	82	W
1944-06-07	34	437	Galveston	469-Ramsbury	32	18	82	W
1944-06-07	35	434	Galveston	467-Aldermastin	50	0	82	W
1944-06-07	36	439	Hackensack	462-Upottery	20	30	82	W
1944-06-07	37	441	Hackensack	464-Merryfield	50	0	82	W

OT 0400 101st  
OT 0407 82nd

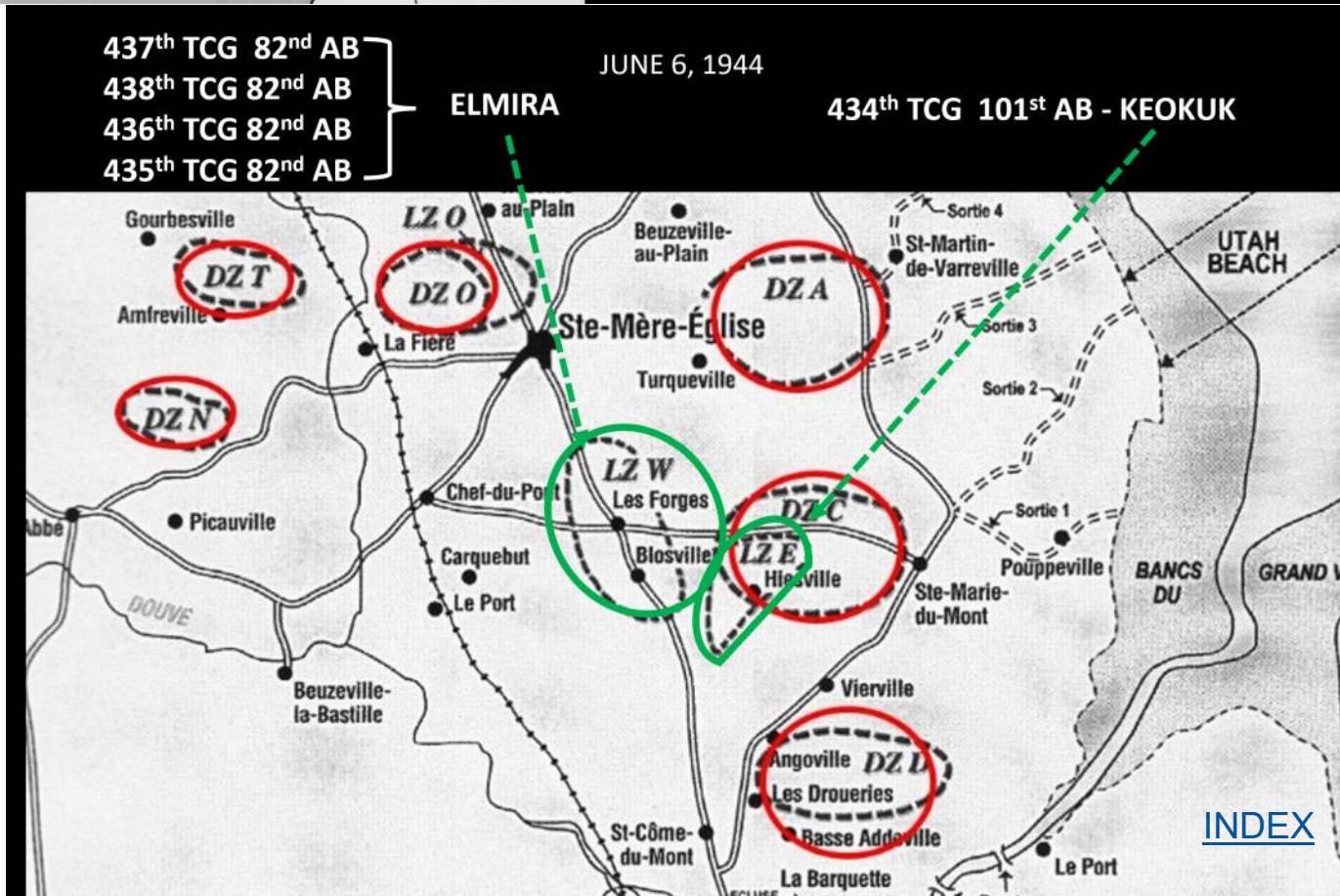
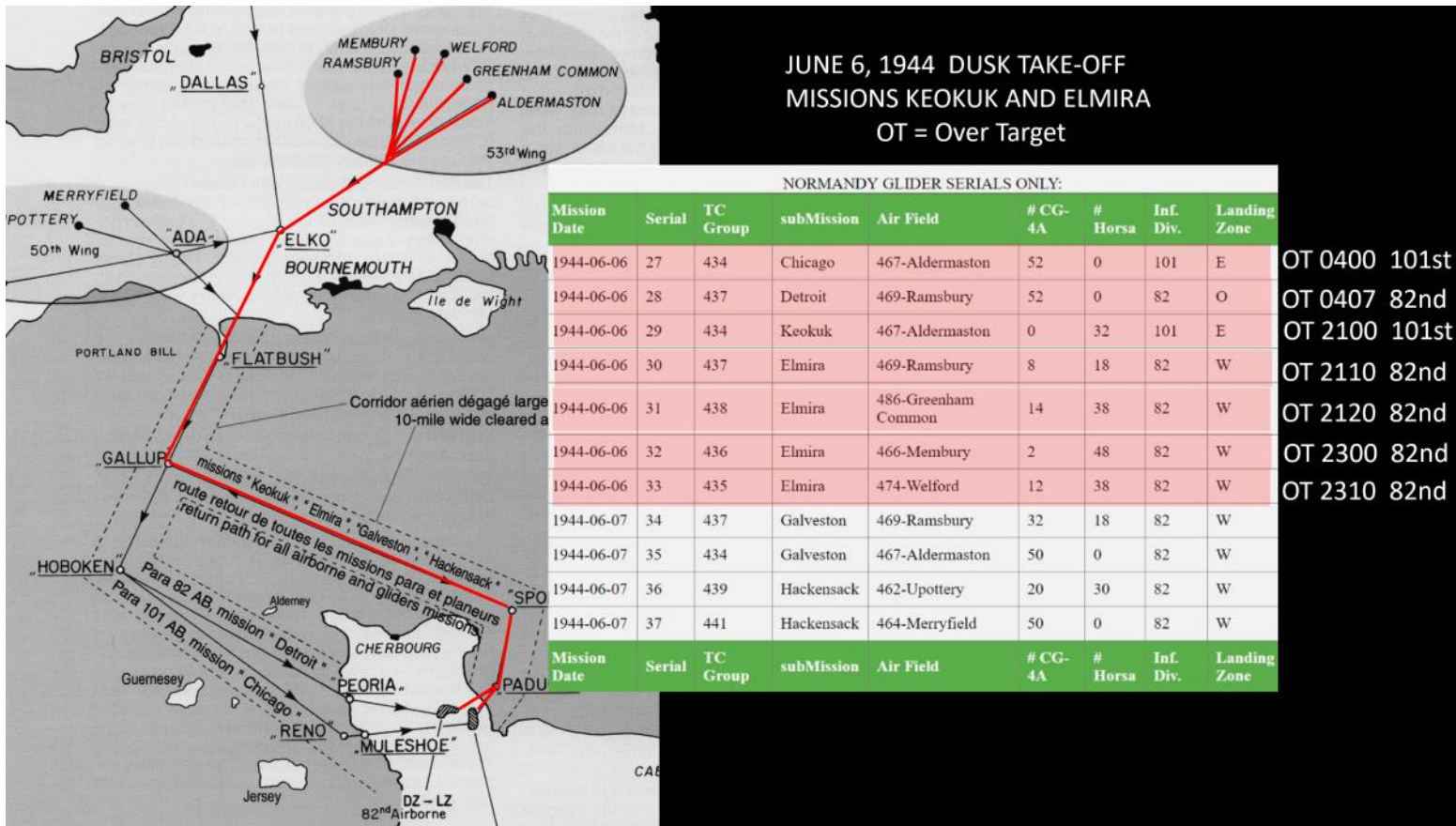
437<sup>th</sup> TCG 82<sup>nd</sup> AB  
Detroit

434<sup>th</sup> TCG 101<sup>st</sup> AB  
Chicago

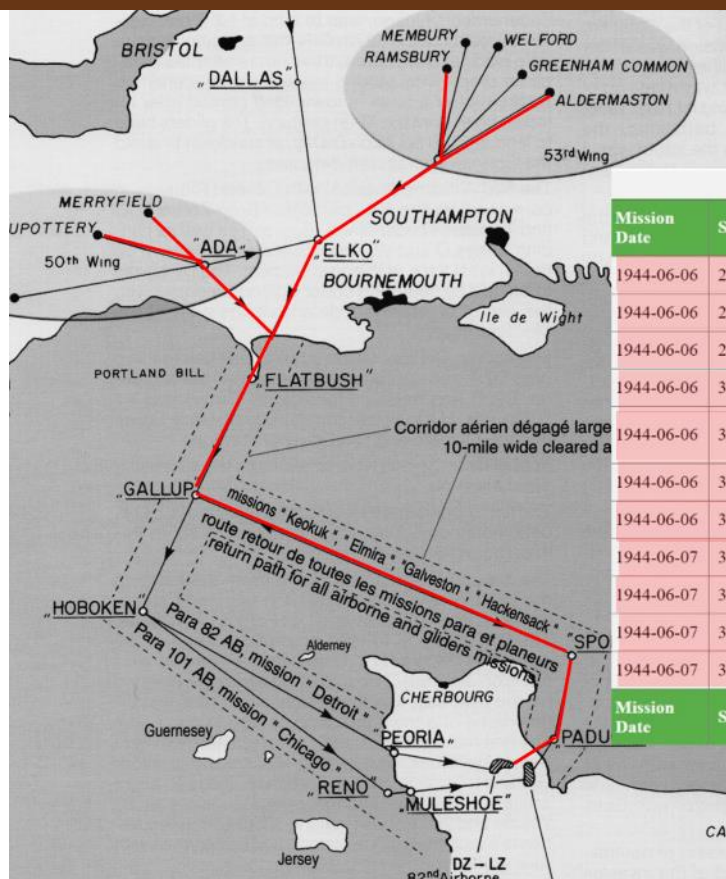




The next lifts to the Cotentin Peninsula were two glider missions codenamed KEOKUK and ELMIRA that occurred in the late evening of June 6th D-day. Mission KEOKUK landed in LZ E flown by the 434th, which this time was only flying the Horsa Gliders. Those flying mission ELMIRA (4 serials) all landed in LZ W with a mixture of CG-4A and Horsa Gliders.







# JUNE 7, 1944 MORNING TAKE-OFF MISSIONS GALVESTON AND HACKENSACK

NORMANDY GLIDER SERIALS ONLY:

Mission Date	Serial	TC Group	subMission	Air Field	# CG-4A	# Horsa	Inf. Div.	Landing Zone
1944-06-06	27	434	Chicago	467-Aldermaston	52	0	101	E
1944-06-06	28	437	Detroit	469-Ramsbury	52	0	82	O
1944-06-06	29	434	Keokuk	467-Aldermaston	0	32	101	E
1944-06-06	30	437	Elmira	469-Ramsbury	8	18	82	W
1944-06-06	31	438	Elmira	486-Greenham Common	14	38	82	W
1944-06-06	32	436	Elmira	466-Membury	2	48	82	W
1944-06-06	33	435	Elmira	474-Welford	12	38	82	W
1944-06-07	34	437	Galveston	469-Ramsbury	32	18	82	W
1944-06-07	35	434	Galveston	467-Aldermaston	50	0	82	W
1944-06-07	36	439	Hackensack	462-Upottery	20	30	82	W
1944-06-07	37	441	Hackensack	464-Merryfield	50	0	82	W
Mission Date	Serial	TC Group	subMission	Air Field	# CG-4A	# Horsa	Inf. Div.	Landing Zone

OT 0400 101st  
OT 0407 82nd  
OT 2100 101st  
OT 2110 82nd  
OT 2120 82nd  
OT 2300 82nd  
OT 2310 82nd  
OT 0700 82nd  
OT 0710 82nd  
OT 0900 82nd  
OT 0910 82nd

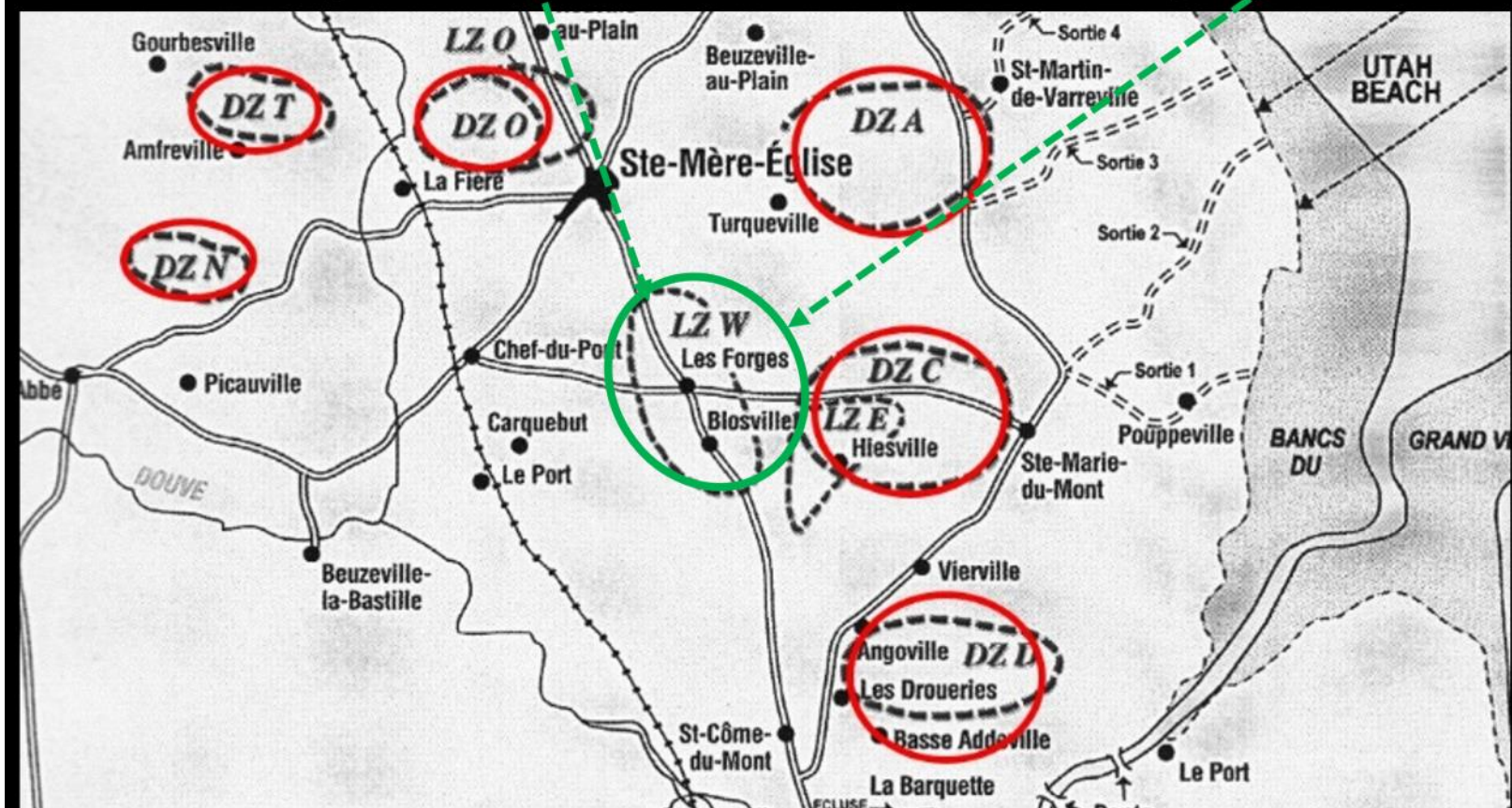
437<sup>th</sup> TCG 82<sup>nd</sup> AB  
434<sup>th</sup> TCG 82<sup>nd</sup> AB

GALVESTON

JUNE 7, 1944

439<sup>th</sup> TCG 82<sup>nd</sup> AB  
441<sup>st</sup> TCG 82<sup>nd</sup> AB

HACKENSACK



# GLIDER PILOTS ON DETACHED SERVICE

## TCC GLIDER PILOTS ON DETACHED SERVICE IN OPERATIONS NEPTUNE AND WILDOATS

By Jeff McGovern



F/O Thornton Schofield (Schofield Collection)





F/O Schofield being cut out of his CG-4A, 17 Sep 1944 (U.S. Army Signal Corps, U.S. National Archives)

## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most well-known photograph of a Glider Pilot (GP) from the 435th Troop Carrier Group (TC Gp) is of 36-year-old Flight Officer (F/O) Thornton C. Schofield of Newark, New Jersey. For Operation MARKET he was on Detached Service (DS) to the 437th TC Gp when he had a mid-air collision with another CG-4A being flown by a wounded 36-year-old F/O Lloyd R. Shufelberger

(437th TC Gp), just above their Landing Zone. While F/O Schofield survived with a broken pelvis and other injuries, F/O Shufleberger unfortunately died of his wounds shortly after the crash. Operation MARKET was F/O Schofield's third and final combat flight of the war, all three of which were flown while on DS rather than under his own unit—the 75th Troop Carrier Squadron, 435th Troop Carrier Group. For Operation NEPTUNE he



flew with the 434th TC Gp and for the Southern France assault, Operation DRAGOON, he flew with the 440th or 441st or 442d TC Gp. Throughout the campaign in Europe, except for Op VARSITY, a varying number of 435th TC Gp GPs were put on DS to support other TC Gps. Some only flew one DS mission and one, F/O Schofield, flew all his combat missions while on DS. At least one other 435th GP flew three missions while on DS, 24-year-old F/O Wyatt H. Dodd. However, for his fourth and last mission, Op VARSITY, Dodd flew with the 435th.

The IX Troop Carrier Command's GPs were put on DS perhaps more than any other airmen in the Ninth Air Force/First Allied Airborne Army. Detached Service was not the same as Temporary Duty (TD) i.e., when an airman was temporarily ordered to do something different than his normal duties e.g., attend a school, pull guard duty, or serve as mess officer. While on TD, the airman's assigned organization still accounted for and was responsible for him. Being put on Detached Service was an altogether different creature. For IX Troop Carrier Command (IX TC Cmnd) and its three Troop Carrier Wings (TC Wg), deciding to put their Glider Pilots on DS was a numbers game. The GPs were a resource that was moved from one organization to another (and then sometimes to another) to meet specific operational requirements. From the perspective of eight decades later, GPs serving on DS is one of the tougher nuts to crack when reconstructing an individual GP's WWII career. It is tough due to several factors that include: a lack of surviving Special Orders that moved the GPs between Groups; a lack of complete or surviving flight manifests and pilot Interrogation Check

Sheets that detailed their roles, chalks, serials, etc.; and that during the war there was a lack of close attention paid to the attached GPs by the *attached to* Groups' administrative staffs. They were not their GPs, and they would only be with them for a very short duration before they returned to their assigned Group/Squadrons. Diligently adding these temporarily assigned men to an already heavy paperwork load appears to not have been a priority.

Identifying the TC Gp that F/O Schofield flew with in DRAGOON illustrates one difficulty in determining a GP's role while on DS. According to the 435th TC Gp diary for August 1944, he was sent to Italy with a second group of 435th GPs at the beginning of August and placed on DS with the 440th TC Gp at Ombrone, Italy. According to a letter F/O Schofield wrote in 1985, he flew with the 442d TC Gp out of Grosetto, Italy. The issue with his statement is that the 441st TC Gp flew out of Grosetto and the 442d TC Gp flew out of Follonica, Italy. We do know he was awarded an Air Medal for flying in DRAGOON, but we do not know for sure who he flew with because of conflicting information in existing documents and missing orders, manifests, and reports for the 440th, 441st, and 442d TC Gps.—documents that could officially identify his DS unit. All the 435th TC Gp GPs were placed on DS for DRAGOON, however this was an exception to the previous and follow-on airborne operations. The norm was to place a small, but sizeable percentage of GPs on DS who were awarded Air Medals with their assigned TC Gp, not with their DS TC Gp. The award of an Air Medal verifies a GP's participation in an operation, but not the details of his participation.

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

R E S T R I C T E D

G.O. No. 33, Hq. IX Troop Carrier Command, 5 July 1944, contd.

ARCHIE O. STEEN	T-60923	F/O	Ute, Iowa
CHARLES F. S. RENEY	T-121570	F/O	East Northport, N. Y.
CLIFFORD H. TALLEY	T-121461	F/O	Salinas, Calif.
ELMO L. THULETTS	T-276	F/O	San Bernardino, Calif. DS to 437th TC Gp
CHARLES J. VOLLMER	T-60935	F/O	Festus, Mo.
ERNEST D. McMILLEN, JR.	O-739302	2nd Lt	2nd Lt. McMillen, Jr. is missing in action. Next of kin Mrs. D. H. McCoskey, (Mother), 300 No. Washington, Lebanon, Mo.
JAMES M. REED	T-60830	F/O	F/O Reed is missing in action. Next of kin Mrs. Wesley Reed, (Mother), Rural Route No. 2, Waterford, Ohio.

77th Troop Carrier Squadron

HARRY EINSTEIN	O-448824	1st Lt	New Brunswick, N. J.
PAUL L. HURNEY	O-475556	1st Lt	Cincinnati, Ohio DS to 437th TC Gp
RICHARD I. LANSINGH	O-525806	1st Lt	Brooklyn, N. Y.
HERBERT B. CARTER	O-1283600	2nd Lt	Lafayette, La.
GEORGE COSTI	O-521514	2nd Lt	Philadelphia, Pa.
FLOYD W. RAND	O-538328	2nd Lt	DuBois, Pa.
GARNETT F. HOLLAND	O-538444	2nd Lt	Dimmitt, Tex.
JOHN C. HUMPHREY	O-538443	2nd Lt	Louisville, Ky.
GEORGE H. JOHNSON	O-538442	2nd Lt	Woodstock, Vt.
WARREN C. MILLER	O-538324	2nd Lt	McAllen, Tex.
ARLIE H. RICHTEL	T-121210	F/O	Arkmore, Okla.
ROBERT CAMPBELL	T-750	F/O	Seattle, Wash. DS to 437th TC Gp
CHARLES V. GAUNITT	T-1311	F/O	Weatherford, Tex.
ROBERT V. CAMPBELL	T-122668	F/O	Sigourney, Iowa DS to 437th TC Gp
OTHAIR S. GANTON	T-751	F/O	Ft. Worth, Tex. DS to 437th TC Gp
JACK W. CASSIDY	T-1115	F/O	Lone Pine, Calif.
JOHN H. CHRISTIAN	T-60716	F/O	Woonsocket, R. I.
WILBURT C. COHEN	T-402	F/O	Phoenix, Ariz. DS to 437th TC Gp
ROBERT R. CROSS	T-60716	F/O	Three Rivers, Mich.
VERNEILL H. DREPKO	T-614	F/O	Alamo, Tex.
JAMES P. DUTCHER	T-414	F/O	Okmulgee, Okla. DS to 437th TC Gp
JAMES C. GILFORD	T-123374	F/O	Thomasville, N. C. DS to 437th TC Gp
WILLIAM R. EDWARDS	T-769	F/O	Hollywood, Calif. DS to 437th TC Gp
EARL EVANS	T-412	F/O	Crandon, Wisc.
LAWRENCE W. KURLIN	T-120623	F/O	Reedsville, Wisc.
THOMAS M. LEATHER, JR.	T-121351	F/O	Waxahatchie, Tex.
FREDERICK M. LARSON	T-60519	F/O	Wichita, Kans.
CHESTER S. MILLER	T-60521	F/O	Blissfield, Mich. DS to 437th TC Gp
JAMES P. NIMMER	T-121269	F/O	Ashville, Pa.
LEWIS W. NELLE	T-60888	F/O	Lurbank, Calif. DS to 437th TC Gp
REINER PEDERSEN	T-455	F/O	Seattle, Wash.
CHARLES F. ROE	T-121681	F/O	Rock Hill, S. C. DS to 437th TC Gp
JOS. PH. P. THOMPSON, JR.	T-672	F/O	St. Louis, Mo. DS to 437th TC Gp
JAMES P. TOWNSEND	T-121435	F/O	Charleston, W. Va.
CLYDE N. SJOELD	T-124624	F/O	Port Carbon, Pa. DS to 437th TC Gp

IX TC Cmnd GO 33 (Air Medals for Op NEPTUNE)  
with highlighted 435 TCG GPs on DS (AFHRA)

R E S T R I C T E D

## DETACHED SERVICE

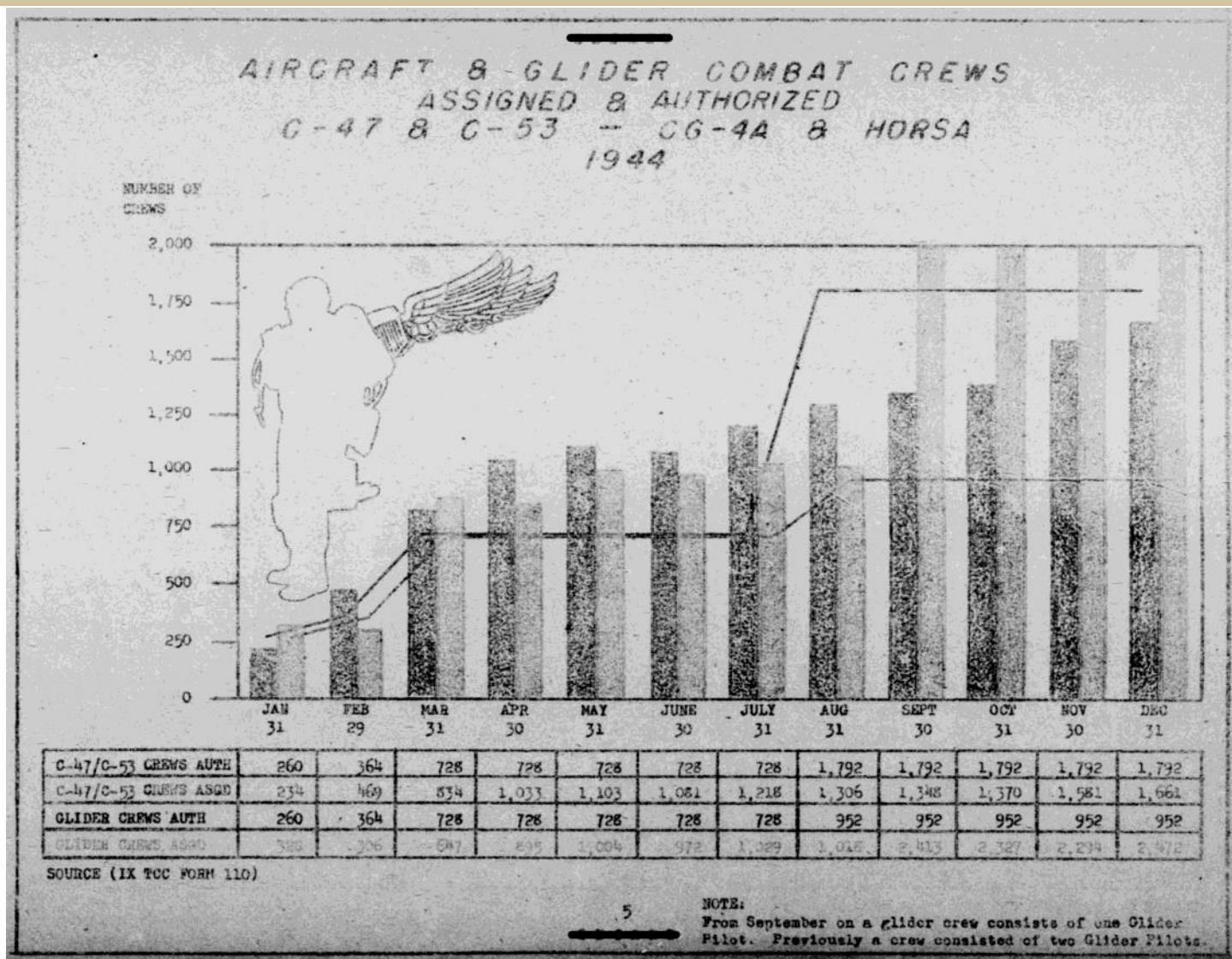
When a Glider Pilot arrived in the European Theater, he was either already assigned to a Troop Carrier unit or he was soon assigned to one after processing through a Ninth Air Force replacement detachment. Except for a handful of Glider Pilots most were assigned to Troop Carrier Squadrons (the others to a TC Gp, Wg, or Cmnd Headquarters). The Troop Carrier Squadron (TC Sq) from an average Glider Pilot's perspective was his home. It was who he regularly trained with; it was who he was most familiar with and they with him; it was his wartime family. It was also where the proverbial rubber met the road, the Squadron was the combat element of Troop Carrier forces.

Detached Service meant that the airman, for this article a GP, was detached from his TC Sq/Gp and attached to another TC Gp, but only for a set amount of time. Being on DS also meant that the GP's assigned Squadron was no longer responsible for tracking or taking care of him e.g., accounting for him in the daily Morning Report or feeding, housing, clothing, and paying him. The Group/Squadron that the GP was attached to while on DS was now responsible for those things. In addition to these responsibilities, sometimes the "*attached to*" TC Gp included, but mostly did not include, the attached GP in their recommendations of decorations for an operation, e.g. for an Air Medal. In general, for awards, but not always, it was the assigned Headquarters Sq/Group who did their best to track their GP's flying activities and who processed the recommendations. This lack of consistency on occasion led to some GPs not being awarded or caused a delay with being awarded an Air Medal. From October 1943 through March 1944, each of the IX TC Cmnd Troop Carrier

Squadrons were authorized by a Table of Organization (TO) thirteen glider crews per Squadron or twenty-six GPs, but in practice the number assigned varied from Squadron to Squadron. With four Squadrons in a Group, that meant 106 GPs were authorized for each TC Gp. The reason why each was authorized an equal number of glider crews was that each Troop Carrier Squadron/Group was intended to be capable of executing the same type of mission as any other Troop Carrier Squadron/Group.

In April 1944, Headquarters, Army Air Forces (AAF) authorized the IX TC Cmnd to expand its TO by roughly one-third the authorized number of power and glider crews and power and glider aircraft. This AAF expansion was just one element to ensure the success of the war's largest joint and combined ground, air, and naval assault i.e., Operation OVERLORD's assault phase, Operation NEPTUNE. For the TC Sqs, this increase meant the number of glider crews per Squadron was increased to sixteen, which equated to thirty-two GPs per Squadron or some 130 GPs in a single Group (with two GPs authorized for a Group Headquarters). However, as with the standard TO, some Groups had more and some had less GPs assigned. For example, by the late spring of 1944, over 210 GPs were assigned to the 434th TC Gp, at least 180 GPs were assigned to the 435th TC Gp, and some 160 GPs were assigned to the 437th TC Gp. At the end of May 1944, with the expanded authorized number of crews and the incredible effort to get them to the ETO, there were some 2000 GPs assigned to IX TC Cmnd units. That was enough pilots and co-pilots to fly over 900 gliders (not all GPs were assigned to flying positions).





The objectives of airborne operations shifted from operation to operation in the European theater (where the majority of WWII GPs were assigned). This meant, depending on the operation, that some TC Gps would need more GPs, and some would need less. When an operational plan e.g., NEPTUNE, required the Groups to execute more of one, than of another type of mission i.e., more paradrops than glider tows or vice versa, crews and aircraft would need to be moved between Groups to meet the operation's requirements. Combat or power crews within a Group were relatively plentiful (although not navigators) and they did not get put on DS that often. Glider Pilots however were a limited quantity and when there was a shortage of GPs in

one Group and an overage of GPs in a different Group, the GPs were moved between two or more TC Gps.

The shifting objectives of airborne operations also meant that there was no predictability as to what type of mission each individual Group would execute in a given operation. What the unpredictable nature of airborne operations meant to an individual GP was that he may fly into combat with men he was familiar with or he may be put on DS and fly with strangers that he may have met only 24-48 hours before an operation's H-Hour. Life for a GP on DS was anything but predictable, the last thing a soldier wants going into combat.

Headquarters, IX TC Cmnd published a Field Order for each operation which dictated the who, what, when, where, why, and how for that operation. The decisions of how many GPs to put on DS and from what Groups were made at Headquarters, IX TC Cmnd and then at each of the Headquarters for the TC Wgs. Once a TC Gp received the Field Order from its Wing Headquarters, the Group commander, the Group operation's officer, the Group's glider operation officer, and other key staff would read through the requirements and then parse out and assign tasks to the Group's four Squadrons. The Squadron commanders and their operations and glider operations officers would then decide, amongst many other details, which GPs would be flying with their Squadron and, if required, who would be sent on DS. The Group Headquarters would then generate a Special Order (SO) that authorized the individual GPs to go on DS to another Group or alternatively to attach GPs placed on DS from a different Group.

In personal terms, what did it mean for a GP to be put on DS? At a minimum he left his home behind (most likely a Nissen hut), he left most of his personal gear and clothing behind, he left his friends (unless they were also on DS to the same Gp), and he left his familiar power crews and glider mechanics. He had to carry with him everything he would need for 1) living in temporary quarters on another Station (most likely a tent) and 2) flying into combat, which included at a minimum his weapon and ammunition, helmet, "mae west" life preserver, flak gear, and for NEPTUNE, anti-gas CC-2 impregnated wool and HBT uniforms. His weapon and ammunition would, for security and accountability reasons, need to be carried with the GP at all times, as he was away from his

home station's armory. If you have ever served in the Army, you know that outside of a combat zone, this in particular is a real pain in the rear and would have added to an already stressful situation for the GPs on DS. The "duty" of Detached Service shows up in another official document, the Morning Report. A Morning Report was an exception-based report filled out each day by an Army organization, in this case a TC Sq, Gp Hq, Wg Hq, etc. They recorded the total strength and location of the organization, and it reflected any individual changes to the manpower of that organization over the last 24-hours. Some of the TC Sq Morning Reports record their GPs as being on DS to the ground airborne organizations that they flew into the LZs e.g., 321st Glider Field Artillery Battalion, 307th Airborne Medical Company, or 327th Glider Infantry Regiment. This reflects the confusion of what role GPs had and who they were "responsible" to after landing their gliders. A GPs role and chain-of-command after landing is a different, complex, and confusing story that is not within the scope of this article. Officially, the GPs were not placed on DS to ground airborne organizations, they were placed on DS by Special Orders to other Troop Carrier organizations.

#### **A NOTE ON SOURCES**

The analysis for this article drew on data from IX TC Cmnd award General Orders; IX TC Cmnd, 82d and 101st U.S. A/B and 1st U.K. A/B Division Field Orders; the Diaries and Special Orders from the 53d TC Wg and its Groups and their Squadrons; memoirs; unofficial unit histories; GP family members; fellow Troop Carrier historians; and the invaluable NWWIIGPA Data Base. To illustrate the workings of GPs on DS, this article focuses on the 53d TC



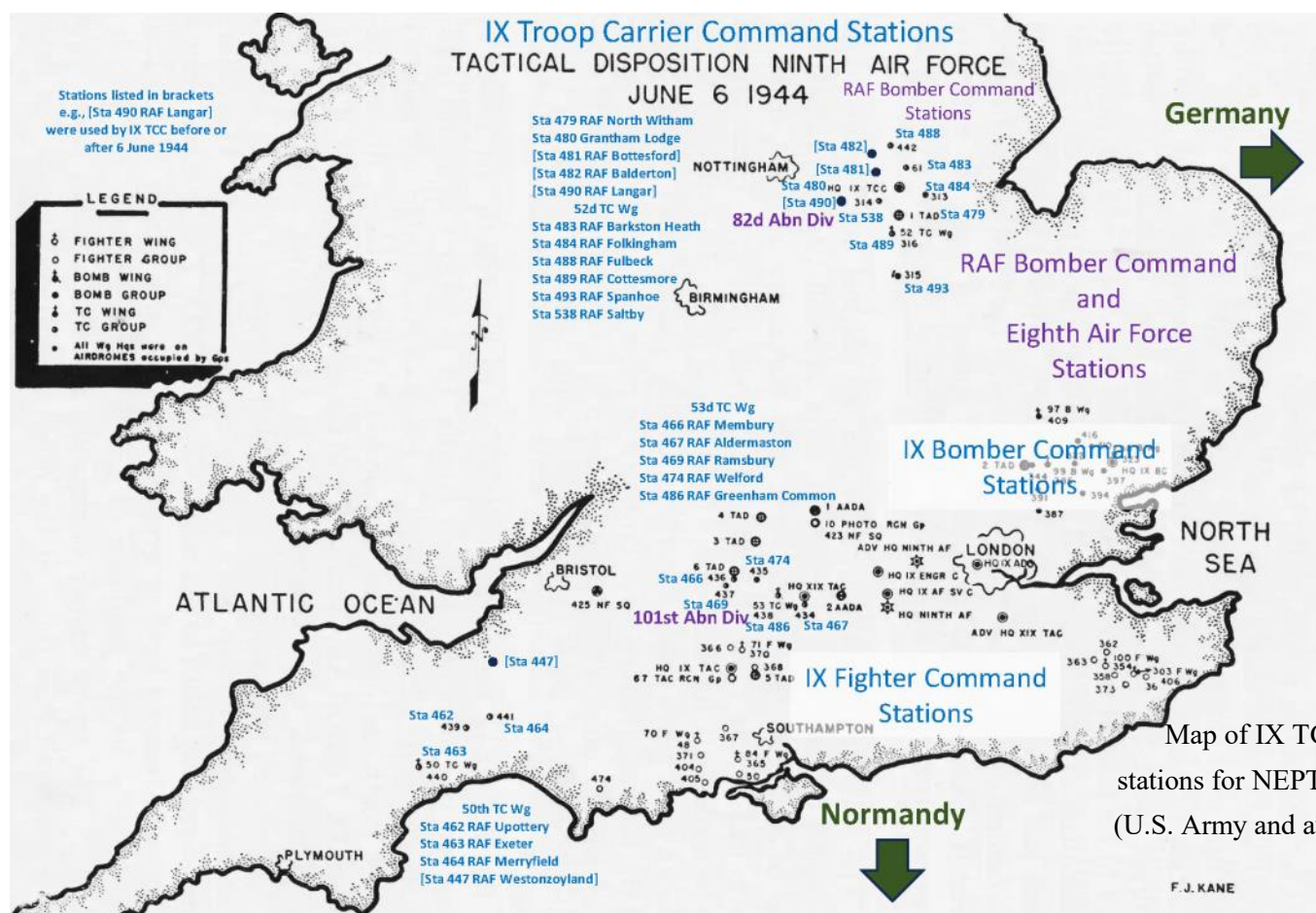
Wg and the 435th TC Gp and their experiences for Operations NEPTUNE and WILDOATS. Their experiences can be extrapolated to the rest of the war for the other IX TC Cmnd's Wings and Groups and their planned operations, executed and not executed. The ETO had the largest Troop Carrier force of all overseas theaters, and it also conducted the largest glider operations and because of that, how DS worked with the GPs in the China-Burma-India and

Southwest Pacific Theaters of Operations may have been very different. Due in a large part to their having shared the same leadership teams, the Twelfth Air Force's 51st TC Wg in the Mediterranean Theater operated similarly to the Ninth Air Force's IX TC Cmnd. One major exception was that the 51st grouped their TC Gps' glider detachments together at a Glider Training Center first in Sicily and then on mainland Italy.

## OPERATION NEPTUNE

Operation NEPTUNE's airborne component was, at its execution on June 6, 1944, the largest airborne operation ever conducted. The IX TC Cmnd was given the task of delivering the paratroop and glider forces of the 82d and 101st U.S. Airborne Divisions. In order to lift the elements of the two divisions into Normandy, the Allied Expeditionary Air Force plan-

ners, in coordination with the IX TC Cmnd's and the airborne divisions' planners, determined the U.S.'s airlift organizational requirements: one Troop Carrier Command (IXth), three Troop Carrier Wings (50th, 52d, and 53d), and fourteen Troop Carrier Groups (61st, 313th, 314th, 315th, 316th, 434th, 435th, 436th, 437th, 438th, 439th, 440th, 441st, and 442d).





To physically transport the airborne divisions' forces as required by the NEPTUNE plan, a minimum of 925 C-47/C-53 type power aircraft and some 292 CG-4A and 219 Horsa glider aircraft were required. Each power aircraft had a crew of four to five and each glider had a crew of two, pilot and co-pilot. For the glider force that meant 1022 GPs were required. Between U.S. industrial production and the Army Air Forces organizational capabilities and capacities, this force of men and machines were rather miraculously moved to and then assembled in the United Kingdom and then primed for combat mostly between February 1943 and May 1944, in less than five months.

For the U.S. component of NEPTUNE there were eleven glider serials assigned to six missions. Because of the distances between the Troop Carrier Groups' Stations (aka airfields) and the U.S. Landing Zones in Normandy, the commander of the IX TC Cmnd, Brigadier General Paul Williams, decided that the main glider effort would be conducted by the 53d TC Wg. Two of the 53d's five TC Gps, the 434th and 437th, would fly only glider serials and the remaining three (the 435th, 436th, and 438th) would each fly a paratroop and a glider serial. The 50th TC Wg would support the 53d and contribute two glider serials flown by the 439th and 441st TC Gps. None of the 52d's TC Wg's Groups would fly glider serials. The 53d TC Wg's five TC Gps needed 822 GPs to fly its assigned serials and the 50th needed 200 GPs. The scale and scope of Operation NEPTUNE's requirements is what set in place the practice of putting GPs on DS for NEPTUNE and the follow-on and what were even larger European Theater airborne operations.

The two 50th TC Wg Groups, the 439th and 441st, flew Mission HACKENSACK which included the last two NEPTUNE glider serials, numbers 36 and 37, both flown on June 7th. Each serial required 100 GPs, well within a TC Gp's authorized and assigned number of GPs. The 439th and 441st flew their serials without GPs put on DS to their Groups, nor did they send any of their GPs on DS to the 53d TC Wg for its serials. Unlike the 50th, the 52d TC Wg with no glider serials tasked did send at least 125 GPs on DS to 53d TC Wg Gps for NEPTUNE. None of them flew NEPTUNE's glider serials, however, they did have a major role in Operation WILDOATS.

The 53d TC Wg had some 1050 GPs assigned as of the first week of June, more than enough to fulfil its mission requirements of providing 822 GPs. However, when the numbers are broken down by 53d TC Wg Groups, the 434th and 437th, who only flew glider serials, did not have enough GPs assigned to meet their mission requirements. To fill out their ranks, the other 53d TC Wg Groups, the 435th, 436th, and 438th TC Gps collectively put 151 of their GPs on DS, roughly the equivalent strength of another whole TC Gp's Glider Pilot pool. Also put on DS to the 53d's Groups were two GPs from Headquarters, I TC Cmnd and three from Headquarters, 53d TC Wg.

The 53d TC Wg tasked the 435th to put fifty-one GPs, the 436th to put forty-eight GPs, and the 438th to put fifty-two GPs on DS. The leadership of the 435th, 436th, and 438th each then tasked their four Squadrons relatively equally for GPs, each of the twelve Squadrons furnished on average twelve GPs. The 435th was tasked to send two-thirds of them to

<b>OPERATION NEPTUNE - IX TC CMND GLIDER SERIALS</b>				
<b>MISSION SERIAL No.</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date Time</b>	<b>LZ</b>	<b>Number/Type Aircraft (Number Glider Pilots)</b>
<b>Chicago</b>				
27	434th TC Gp RAF Aldermaston	6-Jun-44 0400 Hrs	E	52 CG-4A (104 GPs)
<b>Detroit</b>				
28	437th TC Gp RAF Ramsbury	6-Jun-44 0407 Hrs	O	52 CG-4A (104 GPs)
<b>Keokuk</b>				
29	434th TC Gp RAF Aldermaston	6-Jun-44 2053 Hrs	E	32 Horsa (64 GPs)
<b>Elmira</b>				
30	437th TC Gp RAF Ramsbury	6-Jun-44 2110 Hrs	W	8 CG-4A (16 GPs) 18 Horsa (36 GPs)
31	438th TC Gp* RAF Greenham Common	6-Jun-44 2120 Hrs	W	14 CG-4A (28 GPs) 36 Horsa (72 GPs)
32	436th TC Gp RAF Membury	6-Jun-44 2300 Hrs	W/O	2 CG-4A (4 GPs) 48 Horsa (96 GPs)
33	435th TC Gp* RAF Welford	6-Jun-44 2310 Hrs	O	12 CG-4A (24 GPs) 38 Horsa (76 GPs)
<b>Galveston</b>				
34	437th TC Gp RAF Ramsbury	7-Jun-44 0700 Hrs	W	32 CG-4A (64 GPs) 17 Horsa (34 GPs)
35	434th TC Gp RAF Aldermaston	7-Jun-44 0710 Hrs	W	50 CG-4A (100 GPs)
<b>Hackensack</b>				
36	439th TC Gp RAF Upottery	7-Jun-44 0900 Hrs	W	20 CG-4A (40 GPs) 30 Horsa (60 GPs)
37	441st TC Gp* RAF Merryfield	7-Jun-44 0910 Hrs	W	50 CG-4A (100 GPs)
434 TC Gp tasked with three Serials / 435 TC Gp tasked with one Serial 436 TC Gp tasked with one Serial / 437 TC Gp tasked with three Serials 438 TC Gp tasked with one Serial / 439 TC Gp tasked with one Serial 441 TC Gp tasked with one Serial (434 TC Gp and 437 TC Gp flew only glider serials)				
* Tasked with flying a glider serial for Operation WILDOATS (along with 440th TC Gp)				

the 437th and the remainder to the 434th. The 436th was tasked to send all of them to the 437th. The 438th sent three-quarters to the 434th and the remainder to the 437th. The Special Orders authorizing the GPs movement to their DS organizations are dated to the first week of June, only a few days before Op NEPTUNE's D-Day.

For the individual GP this meant only a few days before D-Day he got all of his equipment issued and checked, packed-up, and then he and his equipment moved by truck to the new station. Upon arrival, he checked-in to the new TC Gp headquarters and then reported to his newly assigned Squadron. He then dropped his gear at his bunk and over the next few days got briefed on his role in the Group's mission and serials, inspected his glider and met his other pilot (if from another unit), met with his tow crew, and coordinated with the airborne glidermen he would fly into Normandy. This made it a chaotic start for Glider Pilots about to fly their first combat mission.

What role the arriving GPs would fulfil with their DS unit i.e., pilot or co-pilot and whether they would fly with another home station GP or with a GP from the *attached to* organization was determined by the *attached to* Gp and Sq leadership. For NEPTUNE, the 434th and the 437th each followed different practices for when and how they used their own GPs and when and how they used the attached GPs. I have yet to find any document that states why they operated differently. The leader of a military unit sets the tone and actions of their unit, so perhaps the differences rested with the command leadership styles of the 434th's commander, Col W. Whitacre and the 437th's commander, Col C. Hudgens.

The 434th TC Gp spread their own GPs somewhat equally throughout each of its three serials. For serial 27 it was made up of 80% 434th GPs (83) and (16) from 438th, (3) from 435th, and (2) GPs from I TC Cmnd (Lt Col M. Murphy and 2d Lt J. Butler). For serial 29 it was made up of 90% 434th GPs (58) and (2) 435th and (2) 438th GPs. For serial 35 it was made up of 70% 434th GPs (69) with (12) 435th and (19) 438th GPs. The 434th leadership assigned the roles for the GPs of the two contributing TC Gps differently. For the 435th, they kept their GPs together, letting them fly a chalk as pilot and co-pilot. For the 438th's GPs, the 437th's planners largely split them up and used them as co-pilots for a 434th GP.

The 437th TC Gp unlike the 434th front loaded their own GPs for its three serials, filling its last serial with a majority of attached GPs. For serial 28 it was made up of 100% 437th GPs (104). For serial 30 it was made up of 70% 437th GPs (36) and (14) 435th and (2) 53d TC Wg GPs. For the 437th's last serial, serial 34, it was made up of only 17% 437th GPs (17) and (48) 436th, (20) 435th, and (13) 438th GPs. The 437th did not differentiate in assigned roles between the GPs from the different TC Gps. Its leadership, unlike the 434th, kept most of the GPs on DS together i.e., Colonel Hudgen's planners let the 435th, 436th, and 438th GPs fly chalks together by their assigned TC Gp/Sq as pilot and co-pilot.

Once they landed, all GPs were directed to make their way back as quickly as possible to their assigned Groups/Squadrons in England (once they were released by the Airborne commander).

First U.S. Army directed the leadership of the 82d,



101st, and the First U.S. Army beachmasters to make sure this occurred. Glider Pilots were a limited resource that were needed for the next airborne operation. Additionally, once the GPs landed a change of responsibility took place, the GP's assigned unit, not the DS unit, started once again to

account for those present, wounded, and those GPs who were missing in action or killed in action. When they physically reported back to their assigned units this brought the GPs on DS back into the fold of their assigned units, effectively ending their DS duty.

## **OPERATION WILDOATS**

Operation NEPTUNE's last glider mission, HACKENSACK, is the usual stopping point for the narrative of the Troop Carrier's role in NEPTUNE. However, in mid-June three small glider resupply missions were flown and at least two plans created to deploy the 1st British Airborne Division. Only one of the plans, Operation WILDOATS, reached the point of near execution with the Division's paratroops and glidermen deployed by 12 June to their departure airfields and their Horsa and Hamilcar gliders loaded. The operation's objective was to assist with the Second British Army's encirclement of and then capture of the city of Caen. Operation WILDOATS' D-Day was set for June 14th.

The airlift component for WILDOATS consisted of two RAF Groups and nine U.S. Troop Carrier Groups pulled from across all three TC Wgs. The British 1st Airborne Division parachute elements were to be delivered to DZ "E" by the U.S. 61st, 313th, 314th, 315th, and 316th TC Gps. The glider elements were to be delivered to two adjacent Landing Zones by U.S. and British groups. The Royal Air Force's Number 38 and Number 46 Groups were tasked to deliver to LZ "A" 290 Horsa and 3 Hamilcar gliders, all flown by British GPs. The 435th, 438th, 440th, and 441st U.S. TC Gps were tasked to deliver 201 Horsa gliders to LZ "H."

To fly this operation the TC Gps needed 402 Horsa qualified U.S. Glider Pilots. The IX TC Cmnd could not depend on the returning GPs from Normandy to fly a second mission as it was unclear as to when and how many would return from Normandy. Nor did IX TC Cmnd need to depend on them, as they still had an additional some 900 Glider Pilots in England.

From this point, I will focus on WILDOATS' glider serials from the 435th and 438th as they are the two TC Gps that I have the most complete data to draw on. For the 435th and 438th, their GP strength on June 1st stood at somewhere between 180 to 200 GPs each. For the June 6th and 7th glider missions, the 435th and 438th TC Gps each deployed 151 of their own Glider Pilots, that left them each with only some 30 to 50 GPs available. For WILDOATS the 435th was tasked to fly 49 Horsas requiring 98 Glider Pilots and the 438th to fly 53 Horsas requiring 106 Glider Pilots. To execute their WILDOATS' missions each TC Gp required some 50 additional GPs. Most of the GPs tasked to fill out the 435th and 438th came from the five 52d TC Wg Groups, with a handful from the other 53d TC Wg Groups.

In IX TC Cmnd's great shuffle of GPs from TC Gps that did not fly glider serials for NEPTUNE to those that did, at least 125 GPs from the 52d TC Wg were

<b>OPERATION WILDOATS - 1st Br A/B Division</b> <b>(Scheduled for 14 June 1944 - Cancelled 13 June 1944)</b> <b>PARA/GLIDER SERIALS (w/402 IX TCC Glider Pilots)</b>				
SERIAL No.	Organization	Time	DZ/LZ	Number/Type Aircraft (Number U.S. Glider Pilots)
1A	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Keevil	0330 Hrs	A	Pathfinders 3 Stirlings
1B	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Keevil	0330 Hrs	H	Pathfinders 3 Stirlings
1C	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Keevil	0330 Hrs	E	Pathfinders 3 Stirlings
2	313th TC Gp RAF Folkingham	0420 Hrs	A	45 C-47/C-53
3	316th TC Gp RAF Cottesmore	0425 Hrs	E	36 C-47/C-53
4	316th TC Gp RAF Cottesmore	0430 Hrs	E	36 C-47/C-53
5	314th TC Gp RAF Saltby	0435 Hrs	A	36 C-47/C-53
6	315th TC Gp RAF Spanhoe	0440 Hrs	E	36 C-47/C-53
7	315th TC Gp RAF Spanhoe	0445 Hrs	E	23 C-47/C-53
8	61st TC Gp RAF Barkston Heath	0450 Hrs	A	54 C-47/C-53
9	440th TC Gp RAF Membury	0530 Hrs	H	50 Horsa (100 Glider Pilots)
10	435th TC Gp RAF Welford	0540 Hrs	H	49 Horsa (98 Glider Pilots)
11	438th TC Gp RAF Greenham Common	0550 Hrs	H	53 Horsa (106 Glider Pilots)
12	441st TC Gp RAF Ramsbury	0600 Hrs	H	49 Horsa (98 Glider Pilots)
13	RAF No 46 Gp RAF Broadwell	0530 Hrs	A	45 Horsa
14	RAF No 46 Gp RAF Blakehill Farm	0530 Hrs	A	24 Horsa
15	RAF No 46 Gp RAF Down Ampney	0540 Hrs	A	45 Horsa
16	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Brize Norton	0540 Hrs	A	39 Horsa
17	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Harwell	0550 Hrs	A	39 Horsa
18	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Tarrent Rushton	0610 Hrs	A	3 Hamilcar
19	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Tarrent Rushton	0550 Hrs	A	32 Horsa
20	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Fairford	0600 Hrs	A	34 Horsa
21	RAF No 38 Gp RAF Keevil	0600 Hrs	A	32 Horsa



put on DS during the first week of June to the 53d TC Wg's 434th, 436th, and 437th TC Gps. On June 7th and 8th, at a minimum (59) Glider Pilots already on DS to or assigned to the 436th, 437th, and 438th TC Gps were put on DS with the 435th and at the same time at a minimum of (56) Glider Pilots already on DS to or assigned to the 434th and 436th were put on DS to the 438th TC Gp. Of the 115 GPs on DS to the 435th and 438th, 83% or 96 GPs were put on DS duty a second time within a span of less than two weeks. (2) of the 52d TC Wg's GPs came from the 61st TC Gp, (4) from the 315th, (10) from the 313th, (36) from the 314th, and (44) from the 316th. The 61st and 316th GPs were sent to the 435th at RAF Welford and the 313th and 315th GPs sent to the 438th at RAF Greenham Common.

Why does drilling down to these numbers matter? The numbers represent people, Glider Pilots, who, except for a few, had never experienced combat and who were going into the fight led by or flying with airmen who were essentially strangers. It was decided at IX TC Cmnd and the TC Wgs to not use the 52d's GPs in the first (11) glider serials for NEPTUNE and I am sure amongst these GPs there was a sense of both disappointment and relief that they did not fly in NEPTUNE. A little after a week of settling into their first DS duty station and believing they were not going into harm's way anytime soon, these same GPs had to pick up and move to an unfamiliar station once again. As the feeling of disappointment and relief intermingled and settled in from missing the NEPTUNE missions, they were suddenly alerted that within a few days they would fly a combat mission, with strangers leading, providing support, flying with them, and towing

them into battle. Adding to what must have been already very stressful days, was the fact that they were directed to do so not by their own Sqs/Gps, but by a staff that they barely knew and who barely knew them. Moved on to their second DS unit, life was once again unpredictable for these GPs.

Because of developments on the battlefield, Montgomery decided on June 13th to postpone the encirclement of Caen and with that Operation WILDOATS was cancelled. The Glider Pilots on DS and the power crews and their aircraft soon returned to their assigned units/stations and for roughly the next thirty days, the IX TC Cmnd settled into training new replacements, proficiency flying, receiving new glider aircraft, and flying resupply and casualty evacuation missions. The next operations to use GPs on DS were TRANSFIGURE and DRAGOON, both to execute in August 1944. The first, like WILDOATS, was ready to execute, but cancelled at the last minute and the second was the assault on the Southern France.

## CONCLUSION

Of the 1022 GPs tasked with flying NEPTUNE's glider serials, 1020 were awarded an Air Medal, meaning they successfully flew their gliders into France. The IX TC Cmnd awarded 1008 GPs an Air Medal with General Order Number 33 (dated 5 July 1944), (10) with General Order Number 51 (dated 11 July 1944) and (2) with General Order Number 60 (dated 8 August 1944). One crew from the 434th TC Gp aborted between their station at RAF Aldermaston and the near-by city of Reading. These two GPs unlike the few other glider aborts did not re-fly their chalk. At the time of writing, I do not have any more information on this crew.

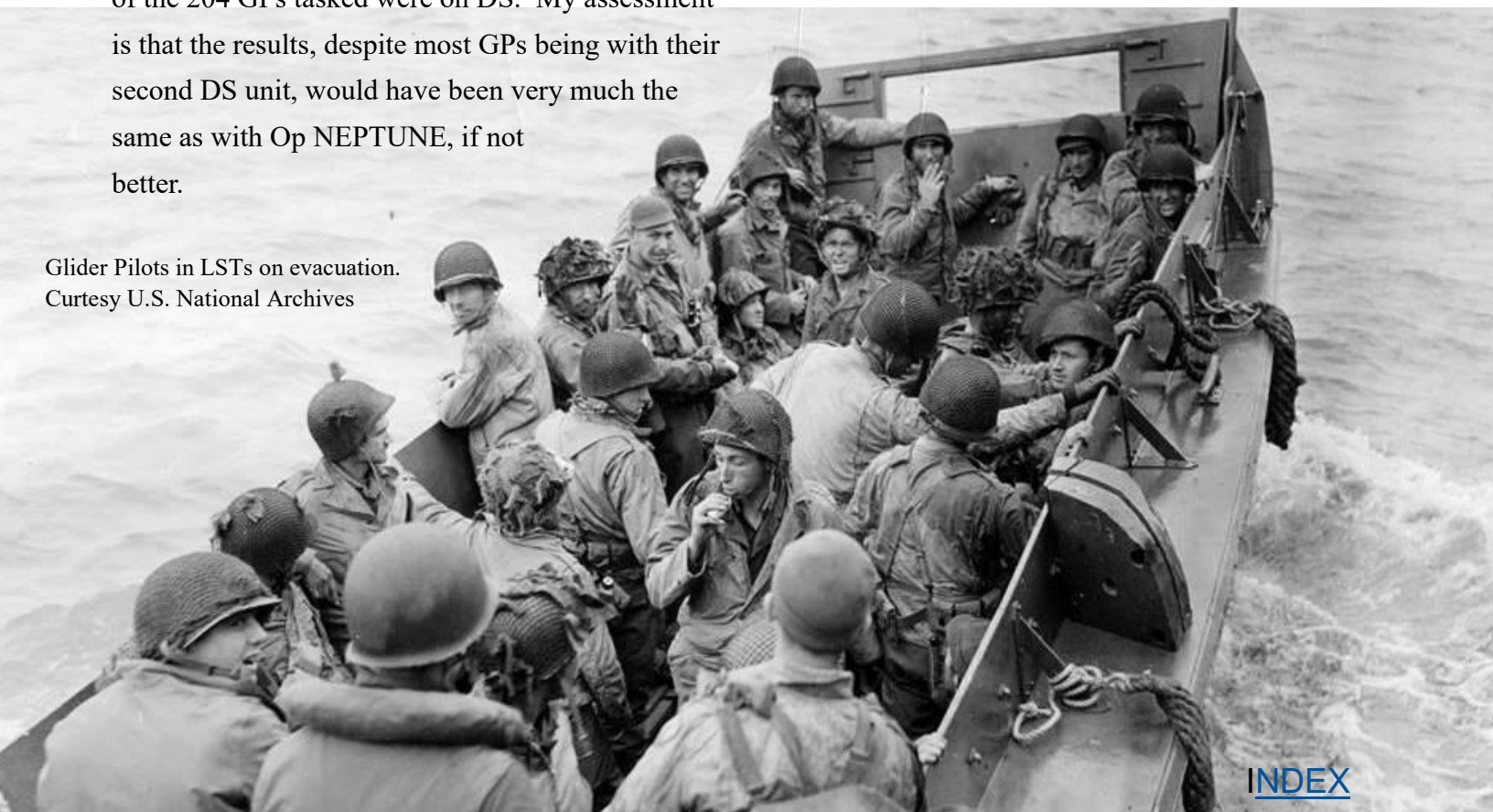
No glider operation in the European theater, beginning with NEPTUNE, was executed along clean and neat Troop Carrier organizational lines. Glider Pilots were put on DS and moved between TC Wgs and Gps when and where they were needed. This solution answered IX TC Cmnd's numbers problem, but in doing so it created uncertainty for a significant percentage of the Command's Glider Pilot pool.

Of NEPTUNE's force of 1022 Glider Pilots, 151 or 15% of them flew while on DS. This sizeable number of GPs, who in spite of the uncertainty of flying into combat on DS and who were about to experience combat for the first time, met this challenge head-on and like the non-DS GPs landed their gliders in enemy territory and delivered the airborne divisions' indispensable heavy punch. This achievement is a testament to their training and discipline.

If Operation WILDOATS did execute, (115) or 56% of the 204 GPs tasked were on DS. My assessment is that the results, despite most GPs being with their second DS unit, would have been very much the same as with Op NEPTUNE, if not better.

The Landing Zones were larger, and the fields not intersected by the same type hedgerows as on the Cotentin Peninsula. The Horsa gliders most likely would not have broken up upon landing as many of them did with the NEPTUNE landings. What is missing from the above narrative is the personal stories and anecdotes from the GPs on DS. Any assistance in filling out their experiences on DS will be greatly appreciated. I have not, as of yet, found any detailed recounting by GPs of their Detached Service. What I have found mentions DS in passing, as if it was not worth recounting. Glider Pilots flying on Detached Service was a significant part of all the airborne operations in the European theater and yet in the written record it appears as if it was water off a duck's back. Perhaps this speaks to the GPs training and discipline, a soldier does his duty to defeat the enemy and hasten their return home. ■

Glider Pilots in LSTs on evacuation.  
Curtesy U.S. National Archives





# FIRST IN: THE 434TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP NORMANDY REPORT

8 July 1944, Major Stephen R Parkinson S-3 Officer.

The 434th Troop Carrier Group was chosen to lead the gliders into Normandy in the dark on June 6th, 1944. This article will cover the glider pilots who flew those leading gliders into the unknown on D-Day. The 434th was the only group that participated in three glider missions in Operation Overlord: CHICAGO, KEOKUK, and GALVESTON. The unit was also the first to land Horsa gliders in mission KEOKUK.

## **The 434th TROOP CARRIER GROUP June Historical Diary**

*As the month started, first word was received that everything was set for D-Day although the exact date was not given. Colonel Whittaker, Colonel Garland, Major Chantry and Major Parkinson went the headquarters of the 9th Air Force for a briefing on the big picture while all departments labored night and day here to get details into shape for the briefings to crew members.*

*The officer's club was put under guard and the briefing room set up there with maps and photographs illustrating profusely the Cherbourg Peninsula and the landing zones thereon. Briefings were held Saturday, Sunday, and Monday June 3rd, 4th, and 5th, with crews marching to the briefings from their living areas where they were segregated under guard.*

*Equipment was checked and planes painted*

*with a distinctive striped insignia adopted for combat operations. It was expected that June 5th would be D-Day and Sunday night June 4th, found everything set but weather caused a day's delay. Morning briefings and rechecking of equipment help the hours of June 5th to crawl by.*

*Then early in the morning of June 6th 52 C-47s and CG-4As took off as a full moon came brightly through scattered clouds. One glider came loose while the plane circled for formation and crash landed near Reading without injury to its occupants. In the early dawn 50 planes returned. Second Lieutenant Raymond Howard, the sole power pilot of the 71st squadron was on detached service with the 74th squadron and failed to return. (The remainder of the 71st [power pilots] were on detached service with the 438th group and flew paratroopers in with the 1st wave shortly before the gliders went in.)*

*On this first lift ground fire was heavy though the resultant damage to the C-47s was considerably cut down by the overcast. Seven ships received bullet holes, but the entire group went through an excellent formation.*

*The T signal set up by Pathfinder paratroopers was not on the same field as had been planned. This resulted in several crashes of the CG-4As. Also the trees with foliage at top and long trunks were often as high as 70 feet when*

only hedges and low trees had been anticipated. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Murphy, on detached service with the group, piloted the first glider and crashed into some trees breaking his legs and killing the copilot and one of his two passengers. Captain Willoughby, pilot of the second lead glider, crashed and was severely injured and died as result some hours thereafter.

The KEOKUK mission with Horsas took off late in the afternoon and crossed over the scene of the beachhead established by the infantry and over the battlecraft bombarding the coast. Surprisingly the amount of flak and small arms fire against the towships was almost lacking. Only one plane received any damage, and all returned as scheduled.

Later interrogation showed that the enemy had held their fire for the gliders and then really gave it to them. Some gliders were riddled before hitting the ground and many glider pilots and airborne stepped out into a withering fire from Germans who had hidden themselves near the landing fields. Lieutenant Victor Warren, Glider Officer of the 72nd squadron, had organized a number of glider pilots from the CHICAGO mission and had felled trees to clear a path for the horsas. He was there with these same pilots to meet the incoming KEOKUK lift and to form a cordon of fire that enabled a number of crews to get out safely despite enemy action.

A few Horsas came down in the middle of a German counterattack and their crews missing. Most of the remaining crews from the second lift joined those from the first and returned to

the command post. Some were detailed to take prisoners back to the beachheads; others went to the nearby field hospital to guard against the sniping of wounded by the Germans. After an eight hour tour of duty here, they were put on a detail of guarding prisoners who were digging graves. Following this the remainder glider crew members from CHICAGO and GALVESTON missions went to the beachhead and embarked for England.

The GALVESTON serial took off early on D + 1 for a dawn release. Enemy fire was intense and more planes sustained incidental bullet hole damage on this serial than on the other two. One man, staff Sergeant Wallace of the 74th TC Squadron, a radio operator was wounded in the leg, but all planes returned safely to Aldermaston. After groups participating in this serial lost a number of planes and ditching crews could be observed as the mission was in process.

The formation flying of other groups as observed to and from the landing zone was not as of high caliber as that of the 434th at least as seen by a number of partial and some impartial observers. This may account for the small percentage of losses and damage experienced both on D-Day and D + 1 by this group.

The glider crews of GALVESTON serial came down to a variety of experiences. Some joined with the [glider] airborne, some the paratroopers and some with the infantry advancing from the beachheads. Most of them returned in fairly quick order to the beachheads.

Glider pilots began to return Thurs-



June 8th and more arrived at the base on the 9th and 10th some few were delayed for a variety of reasons and came back as late as the 17th and 18th. Flight officer Morales of the 74th and flight officer Gorman of the 72nd, to mention only two, had unusual experiences, details of which are attached. Both of these glider pilots later gave radio broadcasts to the United States from London, on their experiences.

Major Hensley of the 72nd squadron went on the army hour program together with a bomber and fighter pilot to tell of his experiences in leading his squadron on all three missions.

Shortly after the return the glider pilots who had come to us from the 315th and the 438th groups went back to their own outfits. The glider men of our own group dispersed to London despite the buzz bombs (doodle bugs, robot bombs or pilotless planes depending on the nomenclature preferred). Some few went to rest homes and came back with laudatory comments thereon.

A dull period set in after the excitement attendant upon D-Day. A few evacuation and resupply missions were scheduled but insignificant to keep many planes busy. Towards the end of the month a training schedule was received from Wing and it began to appear that old paths would be retrodden.

Highlights of what few operations were performed was the flying over the first whole blood taken to France. It was GI blood collected in the UK for soldiers in France and was flown over by Lieutenant Grady of the 74th. Other cargoes were 155mm shells, hand grenades,

ammunition, and signal equipment. Wounded were evacuated as well as fighter pilots, magazine pictures, etc..

The number of conflicting, dove-tailing, repetitive and ambiguous reports called for and the interdependence of various staff sections in doing this elicited considerable comment. At the end of the month reports, supposedly to be in 48 hours after D-Day, we're still in the process of compilation.

Rumors flew about the camp sending us from Yugoslavia to Norway and France to Burma with a liberal dose of various sections of the States thrown in. While a few of the wilder ones bolstered morale if only in dreams, the cumulative effect of this castle building in the land of your chosen rumor was detrimental to say the least.

After the first fine careless rapture subsequent to the good job done on D-Day, everybody being recommended for the distinguished flying cross, one began to think of the shepherd boy in Aesop's Fable crying "wolf!" for it became a mute question as to whether anyone would get even an Air Medal. The subject of what constitutes combat hours was battered about by high noncombatant echelons until it became constant only in changing.

The month ended with pride in accomplishments and the kind words which followed rapidly fading into the limbo of yesteryear and the future having been discussed so many times for so many places rapidly degenerating into a large and valuable, "so what!"

### The FORMOST 72nd TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON from their historical diary.

*The squadron had good cause to start the month with pride for as we went through the restrictions and briefings prior to D-day it was announced that the 72nd would lead both the CHICAGO and KEOKUK serials thus being the first squadron in the Troop Carrier Command to tow in CG-4A's and also the first to tow in Horsas.*

*One glider broke loose on the first lift but the squadron came through all three serials with a few bullet holes, but no serious damage to tow ships or their crew. The glider score was not so good. Lt. Shapiro and Lt. Butler were killed and F/Os Lavasseur, Boldwyn, Lau and Ketchas are still missing though it is believed that they were captured.*

*Lt. Warriner's leadership under battle conditions drew the highest commendation. Several glider pilots notably F/O Gormand had unusual experience and all acquitted themselves admirably in their baptism of fire.*

*6 June 1944—CHICAGO serial (Neptune)- (See Field Order #1, 2 June 1944)*

*Fifty C-47's and two C-53's with 52 CG-4As took off from Aldermaston for LZ on the Cherbourg peninsula at 0119 on 6 June. Forty-nine tow ships and gliders arrived over LZ at 0345. One glider aborted shortly after this take-off due to mechanical failure. One went down at about (26.0—93.0) when tug-ship was shot down over the town of Etienneville. One was released in the vicinity of the town of Graignes, five miles southeast of Carentan.*

*The forty-nine gliders which hit the LZ to a great extent made successful landings although some gliders crashed badly. The load for all gliders included 16 anti-tank guns, 25 jeeps, 22,134 pounds of combat equipment such as demolition kits, bazookas, rockets etc., 5376 pounds of ammunition were also carried as well as 155 personnel.*

*Machine guns with some 20mm fire was quite intense on the peninsula and just before the LZ it was inaccurate.*

*One crew of pilot, co-pilot, radio operator and navigator are listed as missing. Several planes were damaged slightly by bullets.*

*The mission was very successful.*

*Colonel Whitacre flew the lead ship with Major Hansley Deputy Commander.*

(U.S. AFHRA)



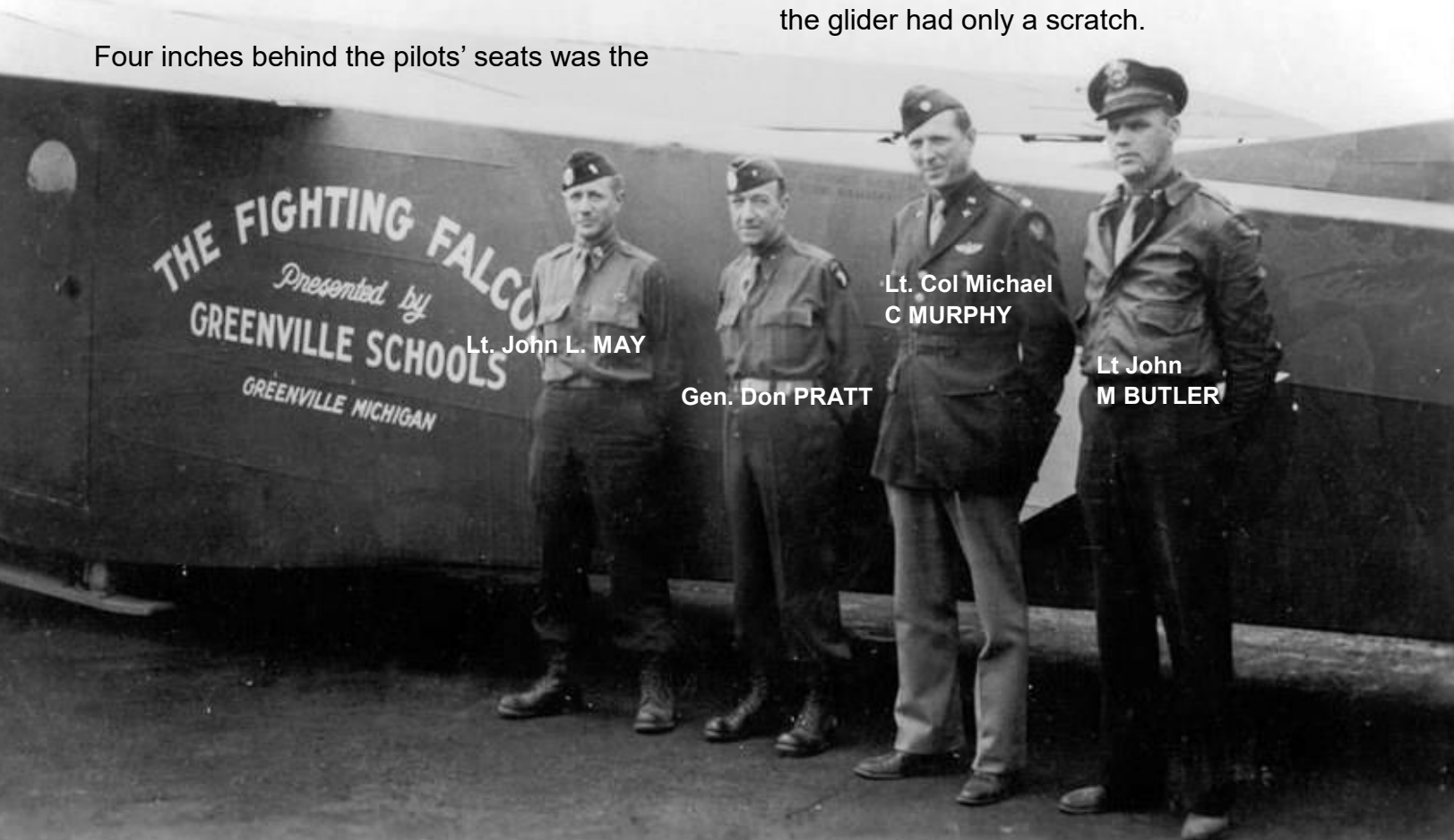


**Glider No. 1 the Fighting Falcon**, piloted by Lt. Col. Mike **MURPHY**, flying with the 72nd TCS, crashed into a line of trees on the edge of a field, killing the co-pilot, Lt. Robert **BUTLER**, and Brig. Gen. **PRATT**, the Assistant Division Commander of the 101st Airborne Division. According to Glider pilot Pete Buckley, *"The Pathfinder pilot on board the tow plane, Major Alvin E. Robinson (from the 74th TCS), warned Murphy, just before they reached the LZ, that the wind had shifted<sup>1</sup>. He replied, 'That it was too late to change plans.' 'Murphy's glider was overloaded and probably nose-heavy.'"* Steel plates had been placed under the pilot and co-pilot seats for protection from flak, of which Murphy was unaware. Whether that added much to the weight is unknown and is still debated today. The real Fighting Falcon was substituted by Col Murphy for another glider that had a Griswold nose that protected the cockpit.

General's jeep with General Pratt in the passenger's seat. Lt. May was in a jump seat behind the General's Command Radio Set, and several jerry cans of gasoline. From the time they took off Col Murphy, who was an experienced glider pilot and knew the CG-4A glider inside and out said that it handled like flying a freight train. Glider pilot 1st Lt. Victor Warriner, who was in chalk number two right behind Murphy, wondered why it took Murphy's glider so long to become airborne.

On landing Col. Murphy was unable to slow the glider down and it hit the "hedges" (a reconnaissance miss calculation) which were not bushes but mature trees. Murphy received a broken leg and Lt. Butler was killed. General Pratt sitting in the passenger's seat in the jeep was killed instantly and his Aid de Camp, 1st Lt John L **MAY**, who was sitting in the jump seat behind the jeep near the tail of the glider had only a scratch.

Four inches behind the pilots' seats was the



<sup>1</sup> Why was the wind significant

**Glider No. 2** was flown by 1ST Lt Victor B **WARRINER** who was the glider Officer of the 72nd TCS. He also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. After the war he was active in the Glider Pilots Association.

Also flown by F/O Robert B **KAUFMAN** who also flew Holland and in the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and the assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No. 3** was piloted by **Capt. Jack L WILLOUGHBY**, F/O ALBERT H **ALDER II**, copilot. They crash landed killing Jack WILLOUGHBY and injuring ALDER who was the first listed to receive the Purple Heart for Normandy. F/O ALDER went on to fly a glider in the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No. 4** was flown by **Arthur A VOGEL** and F/O Miles C **WAGNER**. F/O WAGNER's next mission was Southern France and F/O VOGEL flew the Rhine Crossing and the Battle of Burp Gun Corner on DS with the 435th TC Group. At the end of the war, sadly **VOGEL** was killed on the trip back to the United States.

**Glider No. 5**, was flown by Clarence Ace **BALDWIN** and F/O Remington Montross **KETCHAM** They were forced to make a landing shortly after take off in England. They were carrying one of the division radios. CHICAGO was out for both pilots but they were able to fly the next mission later that day, KEOKUK. Which means they were first flying a CG-4A glider then switched to a Horsa glider and again carrying 101st Airborne troopers but this time from the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment,

They landed at 9:00pm in daylight, ripped a wing off in a rough landing, and after exiting the glider were captured by the enemy and became **POWs**.



Flight Officer Gordon W MOHR

**Glider No. 6**, carrying the second radio, flown by F/O James **MALLOY** (referred to as the Red Headed glider pilot by the 101st) and F/O Gordon H **MOHR**, managed to land safely with no damage. If this radio had been lost it would have been a severe setback for the airborne troops. F/O MALLOY flew Holland and the Rhine Crossing on detached service. F/O MOHR went on to fly Southern France, Holland and Invasion of Germany where on 12 March 1945 he was on detached service to the 84th TC Sqd. 437th TC Group. Mohr wrote: *Red and I didn't stick together at all after daylight in Normandy. I believe he made his way to the command post that morning, whereas I stayed out in the hedgerows and fields, latching on to various paratroopers & glider infantrymen who were in some fire fights with the Germans, taking prisoners, etc. I never did get to the command post until dusk on D-day – found a spot to dig a fox-hole and went to sleep.*

**Glider No. 7** flown by F/O Arthur W **HOPPER** went on to fly Holland and Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. F/O Charles W **WALKER** in this glider went on to fly Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany .



F/O Norman BECK

**Glider No 8** was flown by F.O John A **GORMAN** who went on to fly Holland and the Rhine Crossing.

F/O Norman **BECK** also flew the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 9** was flown by F/O Paul J **MURRAY** who later flew Holland and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. Also flown by F/O Thomas J **BARNHART** who flew Holland and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 10** was flown by F/O Leo J. **LA PLANTE** who later flew the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. Flown also by F/O Robert H. **MONTGOMERY** who flew also Southern France and Holland.

**Glider No 11** was flown by F/O Roy C **LOVINGGOOD** and F/O William R **BOEHM**. **LOVINGGOOD** attended Navigation school and received Navigation rating in January 1945. He went on to fly invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.



F/O Charles H INGLISH

**Glider No 12** was flown by F/O Charles H **INGLISH** who also flew Holland and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. F/O **INGLISH** provided a vast number of 434th TC Group photos.

Flown also by Joseph J **MILLER** went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to a unit flying gliders.





First Squadron to land in France-June 6, 1944.

1st. Row - La Plante, Murray, Bocham, Ketchum,  
Malloy, German, More.

2nd. Row - Inglish, Moore, Lovinggood, Broche,  
Warriner, Willoughby, Beck.

3rd. Row - Montgomery, Kaufman, Walker, Barnhart,  
Wegener, Vogel, Alder, Hopper.

Squadron Code for the 71st Troop Carrier Squadron was CJ. All C-47 towing gliders would be wearing the CJ code on the nose.



### 71st TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON (SQUADRON CODE CU)



Flight Officer Oscar T RAINS

**Glider No 13** was flown by 1ST LT William **SNYDER** who also went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service. The other pilot was F/O Oscar T **RAINS** who also flew Southern France (Dragoon), Holland (Market) and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 14** was flown by F/O Stanley A **HIDECAVAGE** who was awarded the Bronze star for Holland and copiloted by FO E. C **FALWELL**. Both flew Holland (Market) .

**Glider No 15** was flown by 2ND LT Keck R **DAWSON** who also went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service. The other pilot was F/O James **RAGONA** he went on to fly Holland.



Flight Officer  
Mark Ashley Ronan, Sr

**Glider No 16** was flown by F/O Henry J **RINKOWSKI**. Copilot was F/O Mark A **RONAN** who flew Holland and the invasion of Germany on dethatched service.





Flight Officer Robert Jack PHILLIPS

**Glider No. 17** flown by pilot F/O Robert “Jack” **PHILLIPS** who also flew Holland and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany (Varsity). Jack was promoted twice before the end of the war holding the rank of 1st Lt in 1945. Also flown by F/O Gerald L **BELDING** who flew Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany (Varsity).

**Glider No. 18** was flown by F/O Lloyd **BENNETT** went on to fly Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany (Varsity). Also flown by F/O Joseph **MENDES**, Jr., who also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. (Varsity)

**Glider No. 19** was flown by 19 F/O Arthur C. **RUBERTI** who was wounded on 7 June and received a Purple Heart. He recovered and went on to fly in Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany (Varsity). Also flown by F/O Grant W **ROBERTSON** who went on to fly Holland.



Flight Officer Wyatt H DODD

**Glider No.20** was flown by F/O Wyatt H **DODD** who went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the Invasion of Germany, was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and then assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. Flew copilot in a C-47 during the Flying Pipeline. Also F/O Samuel **DERR** who went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the Invasion of Germany, was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and the assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.



Flight Officer David Raymond Allen



**Glider No.21** flown by F/O David R **ALLEN** (pictured on previous page) who also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service. Copilot F/O Harrison M **BAUMAN** flew on detached service to the invasion of Germany. (Varsity)

**Glider No.22** was flown by F/O John **BELASKA** also flew Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany (Varsity). Also flown by F/O William R. **CANNON** went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the Invasion of Germany, was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 23** was flown by 1st Lt Forrest D **HICKS** who also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany (Varsity) on detached service. Also flown by F/O Worth E **BAKER** who flew Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 24** was flown by F/O Hans E **LIEMAN** who also flew Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany. Also flown by F/O Louis P **HODGE** who flew Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service.



F/O RONAN, LIEMAN, HODGE



73rd TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON (SQUADRON CODE CN)

Capt. John P. Otte, --Synopsis of "D-Day" 73rd Sq'n., 434 T.C. Group

- June 4 - Briefing at 1330. Given route and assembly data. Told that take-off would be at 0130, June 5. Co-Pilot to be S.R. Winer. Lead ship to be piloted by Col. Mike Murphy. Advised to put on red Polaroid glasses on making landfall at Cherbourg and turn plane over to co-pilot for two minutes; then cut down and out. At flight line told that serial scrubbed on account of bad weather.
- Monday, June 5 - Briefing at 1330. Review of data; take-off at 0130 June 6. Marshalling to start on announcement over tannoy, code to be: "Will Capt. Hansley report to Col. Whitacre's office at 2100." Reported to line at 2100 with all equipment. Inspected load consisting of British 6-pound gun and two airborne, Corporal Orth and two privates.
- Tuesday, June 6 - Briefing at lead glider at 0000. Given final instructions. Greetings by Air Chief Marshall Leigh Mallory and General Brereton.
- Take-off at 0130, on course at 0220. Passed over occult beacons in order, H-D-G-L-C, turned to coast at occult "C". Landfall at 0350, put on red glasses gave ship to Winer, punched stop watch. Heavy shelling all around, not our vicinity. Began running into tracer fire, low and right of course on ships ahead. Soon getting bracket on elements just ahead; took several shots through flooring between feet. Tug pilot Jim Wendling, spotted landmark as we went into low cloud; he stays on course despite groundfire while rest of formation veering too far south. Tug broke formation headed over LZ perfectly. Stopwatch check 0400; cut and peeled onto downwind leg, easy approach, full spoilers and nose-high slip. Landed down-hill and down-wind. Didn't touch brakes in order to roll to end of field. Gained too much momentum in roll and hit tail of Capt. Warriner glider.
- Out of ship to find German vehicles going down road ten feet away, noise of vehicles drowned out noise of landings so they didn't stop. Given instructions to cover road intersection to right of LZ, near Hiesville. Covered until 0800 and left for Command Post for further instructions. Field being covered by mortar fire, but landing under our ship. Decided to return to crossroad and take cover; stayed until 1500 and wondered why I had not been relieved or ordered to move. Found that Command Post was deserted as situation had changed, Germans all through area. Moved under fire towards Hiesville, 1.2 kilometers away crawled in ditches until one of our jeeps came down road - climbed on rear and rode to Division Command Post in St. Mere Eglise.
- Out at 2030 to provide perimeter guard for incoming Horsas. Set up light machine gun, but no customers. Horsas badly banged up. Returning to CP came under fire from our own CP guards - pinned down for half-hour until recognized. Snipers active in area, heavy shelling, presumably ~~from~~ from our off-shore batterys. Dug in for night.
- Wednesday June 7 - Rounded up Pilots in area and moved Eastward 2000 feet to first field hospital area. Set up outpost guards for area and detailed guards for POW's. Sent latter out for grave digging detail, including latter for General Pratt. Winer and I visit Mike Murphy in hospital, he had broken leg, etc. hitting tree in down-wind landing.



Thursday June 8 - Moved from ST. Mere Eglise at 1300 guarding 350 POW to stockade. Arrived at Utah beach-head at 1630. Registered in and picked up K-rations, GP's dispatched to DWK 217 to board LST 217, rode around in confusion of landing craft for three hours - couldn't locate. Returned to beach and again dispatched to LCT, boarded at 2000, came along LST 515 which we boarded at 2400.

Friday, June 9 - Assigned to crewman's bunk in stern. Heavy bombing all around, at 0100 bomb 50 yards off starboard bow. Ship's crew unwilling to stay below and they closed us in shutting all bulkheads. To sleep at 0315. Weigh anchor at 0800, assemble in convoy. Advised that mine sweepers had been over area, but two ships lost day before and mine laying planes active last night.

Saturday, June 10 - Anchored in Weymouth Harbor at 1145. Boarded British sidewheeler at 1215 for trip to dock. Got transportation to Replacement Depot, fed there, and sent to Stoney Ridge by truck where I convinced CO to call for planes from Aldermaston to get us home. Arrived by 2145. Greeted with ration of whiskey which about did it and made debriefing virtually impossible.

On arrival at beach-head June 8 was approached by sergeant of ground troops just ashore who advised that his men lost all equipment, including weapons, on trip in. Asked if we could give him ours. I advised our men that I had no authority to order them to give them up, but that I was turning over my rifle, and other gear. All men did the same. Later advised by quartermaster that we were accountable for items as they were not "lost in combat". Took several weeks to clear us.



Captain John P OTTE, Jr



Flight Officer Samuel Robert WINER

Photos from Breathtaking Spectacle by Hans den Brok



**Glider No.25** flown by 1st Lt. John P **OTTE**, Jr. also flew Holland where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and participated in the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. His copilot S. Robert **WINER** also flew Holland. (both pictured on previous page).



A Breath-taking Spectacle  
Here den Brich  
Flight Officer Havey L. SEIPLE

**Glider No.26** was flown by Harvey L. **SEIPLE**. He also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany, where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. Also Willard P. **SELLECK** who also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany, he too was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 27** Although pilot F/O Harold S **BUNCH** survived Normandy sadly he died just over a month after D-Day. 73rd Historical Diary: 11 July 1944. At approximately 1630 hours this date while on the training area near Pangborn twelve glider pilots were injured, one fatally, by the explosion of a rifle grenade.

13 July 1944 F/O Harold S Bunch, T-60714, died as a result of injuries received in training accident on 11 July 1944.

Also flown by F/O George J **WALTERS** who also survived Normandy, then was killed in action in the invasion of Germany (Varsity) while on detached service.



A Breath-taking Spectacle  
Here den Brich  
Flight Officer Adam PUTZ



Flight Officer Jack BRANDT

**Glider No 28** was flown by F/O Adam **PUTZ** who flew Holland and the invasion of Germany, he too was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. Also flown by F/O Jack **BRANDT** who was wounded in Normandy but went on to fly Southern France, Holland and in the invasion of Germany, he too was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

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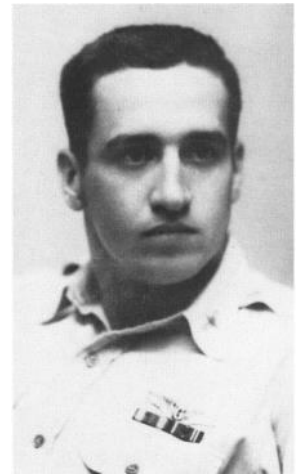


F/O Louis P. HODGE

**Glider No 29** was flown by F/O Hans E **LIE-MAN** and F/O Louis P **HODGE**. Both also flew Holland and were on detached service for the invasion of Germany.



F.O Bryon A SEWARD



F.O Levi ANDERSEN

**Glider No 31** was piloted by Byron A **SEWARD**. He flew the invasion of Germany on detached service. Also piloted by Levi F **ANDERSON** who also flew Southern France, Holland and the invasion of Germany (Varsity). Levi was killed in action during the Varsity mission.



F/O Edwin L BLANCHE



F/O Leroy BROBST

**Glider No 30** was flown by F/O Edwin L **BLANCHE** and F/O Leroy **BROBST**. Both went on to fly Holland and both were sent on detached service to the 435th TC Group and were paired up in the same glider. Both were killed from heavy enemy fire along with the 17th Airborne they were carrying except for one Airborne Trooper.



F.O Henry LYSEK

**Glider No 31** was flown by F/O Manning H **BOGUE** and F/O Henry L **LYSEK** both were listed as missing in Action from "CHICAGO" serial 6 June 1944; dropped per VOCO 53rd Troop Carrier Wing, 28 June 1944. as Prisoners of War. (**POW**)

**Glider No 33** piloted by F/O Thomas W **GREGORY** killed in training accident on 21 June. Also piloted by F/O Norman C **LANCASTER** who was injured in the training accident on 21 June.



HOWARD's copilot for CHICAGO was F/O Thomas C **DAVIS** whose next mission was the invasion of Germany on detached service with the 436th and was killed in action during the Varsity mission.

**Glider No 34** piloted by F/O Earl W **RISHEL** and F/O Charles O **BROWN**. Both went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service.



Flight Officer  
Hance A LUNDAY

Flight Officer  
Marvin BRYANT

**Glider No 36** was piloted by F/O Hance A **LUNDAY** who also went on to fly Holland and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service. Also flown by F/O Marvin **BRYANT** who went on to fly Southern France, Holland, and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 35** was flown by F/O John E **HOWARD** who was injured in combat but returned to the squadron on 15 June. He went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC. He never made it to the assembly point as he was killed in action.



**GLIDER PILOTS FROM 74th TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON  
AND TWO C-47 PILOTS IN FRONT**



Front Row Left to Right:  
Charles Smilinich, George Buckley  
Back Row, Left to Right:  
Torello Calvani, William Ryan, William  
Wells, Lynus Brown, William Bruner

Smilinich and Wells were C-47 pilots,  
Pictures taken at Aldermaston, Eng. '44  
Photo contributed by Geo. Buckle

**Glider No 37** was piloted by 1st Lt David J **KULL** also flew the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service. F/O Orville J. **LANDERS** also flew the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

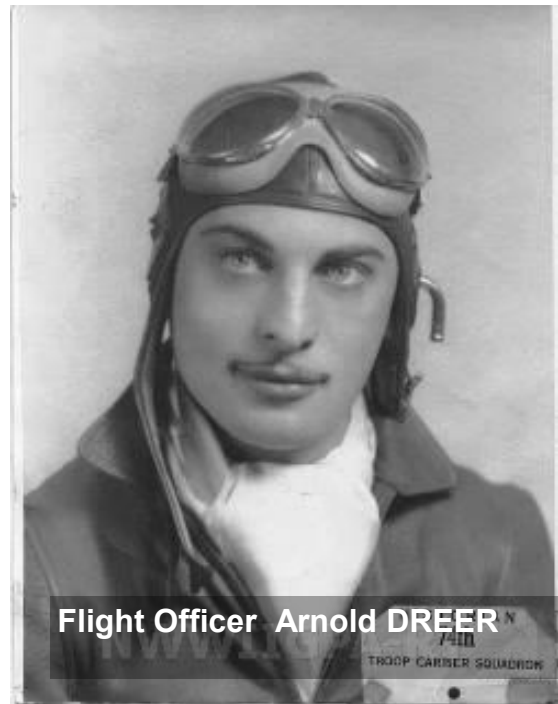
**Glider No 38** was piloted by F/O James G **MCGEE** also flew Holland and invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. McGee's copilot was F/O Edward N **BUPP** Jr who flew Southern France and Holland .

**Glider No 39** was piloted by 2nd Lt Leslie L **VAMPLET** who also flew Southern France and Holland . His copilot was F/O Earl W **WEST** who also flew Southern France.

**Glider No 40** was flown by F/O Lee T **STULL** and F/O Clinton **GRIFFIN**. According to the MACR two 101st Airborne passengers told: *"...landing at Houteville, and impacting something, which destroyed the glider as well as its cargo of a jeep and appurtenant items. The copilot (F/O Clinton H. Griffin) was killed by the impact. F/O Stull had a wound in his left temple from which blood flowed freely.*

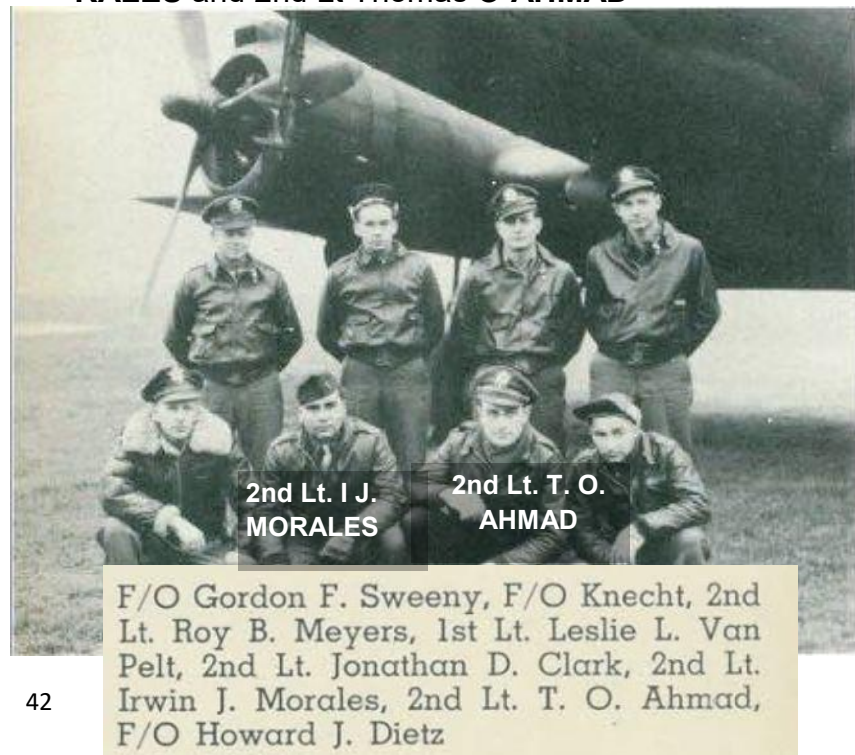
*His left leg was also injured in the landing, but an examination proved that no bones were broken. Lee Stull arrived injured at the farmhouse of Henri Levesque and family. He was taken to a doctor to get treatment. He was transported by horse and wagon to a German aid station where he received care, and became a POW. Stull was transported deep into Germany to Stalag Luft III. His last prison camp was Stammlager VII at Moosburg, Germany, near the infamous Dachau concentration camp. He was liberated in May of 1945."* GRIFFIN was on detached service from his parent unit the 89th TC SQD/438th TC GRP.

**Glider No 41** was flown by 2nd Lt Thomas R **GEISINGER** who also flew Southern France , Holland and the Invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.



Also flown by FO Arnold DREER who went on to fly Southern France, Holland and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 42** was flown by F/O Irwin J **MORALES** and 2nd Lt Thomas O **AHMAD**





**Glider No. 42**, ... off to my right, flown by F/O Irwin Morales and Lt. Thomas Ahmad, both of the 74th squadron, missed the LZ and landed in a swamp seven miles south of Carentan deep in enemy territory. They were twelve miles from the LZ at Heisville. Morales, with a small group of American paratroopers and glider infantrymen from the 101st and the 82nd Airborne who had missed their drop zone, held the town of Montmartin en Graignes for five days. Patrols were sent out each day to blow bridges, cut wires, commit other acts of sabotage in the area, and ambush any German patrols that were retreating back from the LZ areas north of their position. On June 10th, the Germans discovered their presence in town after Morales and the paratroopers had ambushed a motorcycle patrol killing four of the enemy. A large German force backed up by mortars and artillery, attacked the town and drove them out after a two-day pitched battle which killed nine of the troopers. Morales was able to get back to friendly lines. Lt. Ahmad was last seen by Morales during the attack, with other airborne men, guarding the left flank of their position near a church close to town. Ahmad was not seen again and was listed as missing in action and later killed in action. Morales, after his return to Aldermaston, received the Croix de Guerre with Palm from the French Government for his actions.

After the war in Europe ended in May, Morales borrowed a jeep and returned to Normandy. In the town where he, and the troopers had fought their pitched battle, the townspeople told him that after they were driven out by the Germans, they had counted the bodies of close to 500 of the enemy that they had killed. In retaliation, the Germans executed two priests and two nurses who had been caring for the wounded Americans. Twenty-five of the airborne men who had been captured, including the wounded in the church, were taken to a small farm just outside the town where they were lined up and shot in their heads. Their bodies were thrown in a ditch near a pig sty. The Germans, in a further act of revenge, burnt down most of the houses in town and shot over thirty citizens. Morales is quite sure his co-pilot, Ahmad, was one of the victims of this cold-

blooded massacre. This was later proved to be correct. Morales located Ahmad's grave in a temporary military cemetery between St. Lo and Carentan. (PB)

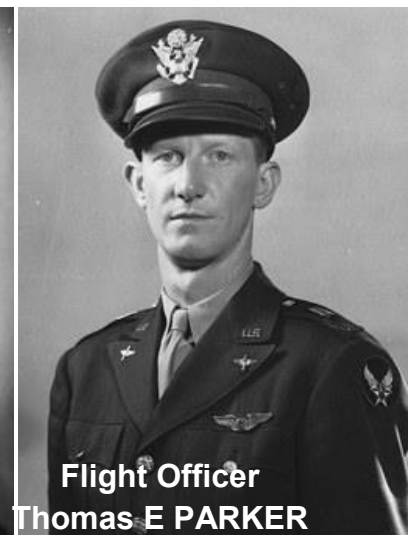
Documented by glider pilot Pete Buckley.  
<https://www.wv2gp.org/normandy/accounts/ErwinMoralesbyBuckley.php>

101st AB glider personnel were  
 Pfc Norwood **Lester**, 81st AAA,  
 Pfc George A **Brown**, 81st AAA

MORALES went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.



Flight Officer  
 Richard S BATLAN



Flight Officer  
 Thomas E PARKER

**Glider No 43** was flown by F/O Richard S **BATLAN** and F/O Thomas E **PARKER**. BATLAN also flew Holland and they were both on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 44** was flown by F/O Ronald M **STONER** who also flew Holland and the invasion of Germany on detached service with the 436th TCG. Piloted also by George F **HOHMANN** who went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.





**Flight Officer  
Robert BUTLER**



**Flight Officer  
E. Tim HOHMANN**

**Glider No 45** was the real Fighting Falcon and was so labeled (as you will recall glider #1 was replaced for the real Fighting Falcon because of the Griswold nose). So two gliders sported the name, Fighting Falcon. This, the real Fighting Falcon, was piloted by [F/O Robert BUTLER](#) (no relation to copilot Butler in glider #1) and copiloted by F/O Everard "Tim" H. **HOHMANN** ("Tim" was George HOHMANN's brother. They were in every unit together and flew in every mission and same serial together but never in the same glider.).

*On landing their glider slipped in over the tops of 60 to 70 foot trees, wiped out the gear and skids, and stopped with no casualties, right on target. (PB)*

They both went on to fly a Holland mission and the invasion of Germany on detached service. However, Tim was sent with his brother to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 46** flown by F/O Lenard B **HEWSON** and Gordon F **SWEENEY** "...landed one mile from the LZ in a small field going downhill. The glider hit a large tree on the left side which sheared off the wing and stripped the fabric off the left side of the fuselage. Sweeny was knocked out for a short time, but no other injuries were sustained." (PB)

HESWON went on to fly Southern France and Holland. Gordon F **SWEENEY** flew Southern France, Holland and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 47** was flown by F/O Roy B **MEYERS** and F/O Herbert V **CALLAHAN**. MEYERS who went on to fly Holland and invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal. We are looking for a descendent of Meyers. CALLAHAN flew Holland and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 48** was flown by F/O James R **DURDEN** who went on to fly Holland and on detached service on the invasion of Germany with the 436th. And F/O William S **NASH** also flew Southern France and Holland.

**Glider No 49** flown by [F/O George "Pete" E BUCKLEY](#) and F/O William G **BRUNER**



[INDEX](#)

**Glider No 48** was flown by F/O Lem C. **GREEN** and F/O Floyd H **MOSLEY**. GREEN, who was on detached service from his parent unit 89th TCS / 438th TCG, was injured, believed to have broken both legs. MOSLEY went on to fly Southern France, Holland and the invasion of the German homeland.

**Glider No 49** flown by [F/O George E BUCKLEY](#) who also flew Holland and on detached service for the invasion of Germany. Also flown by F/O William G **BRUNER** who went on to fly Holland and the invasion of Germany where he was on detached service to the 435th TC Group and assigned to the Provisional 435th GPIC receiving the Bronze Star Medal.

**Glider No 50** was flown by F/O Torello H **CALVANI** who flew Southern France and was on detached service for the invasion of Germany. And F/O William F **RYAN** who flew Holland and was also on detached service for the invasion of Germany.

**Glider No 51** was flown by F/O Robert J **KILE** F/O Richard **DELAGARZA** RC

*"...was flying slightly behind and off my right wing. The tow plane piloted by Lt. Raymond Howard, and Lt. Eston Kuhn, from the 71st squadron, received a fatal hit from flak and crashed in flames in a swamp five miles southwest of the landing zone. Lt. Howard, the pilot, was killed by the Germans as he crawled from the burning wreckage. The crew chief, Sgt. John W. Beckley, the radio operator, Sgt. Marvin Boetcher, and Lt. Kuhn, the copilot, were captured by the Germans. Lt. Kuhn was killed later in the day in a strafing attack on the German trucks they were riding in by one of our own planes near St. Lo. (PB)*

DELAGARZA went on to fly the Invasion of Germany.

Normandy—Operation Overlord.



## FIRST AMERICANS TO FLY Horsa GLIDERS IN COMBAT—KEOKUK

### 434th SUMMAY OF OPERATONAL MISSIONS

*6 June 1944—KEOKUK serial (Neptune)*

*Thirty-two C-47s towing 32 Horsa Carrying 40 jeeps, 6 guns, 1671 pounds of ammunition, 2400 pounds of rations and 157 personnel took off from Aldermaston 6 June at 1830 and arrived over the LZ at 2052. The LZ was in the CHICAGO serial through the route differed. All 32 Horsas reached the LZ though several cracked up landing. All tow-ships returned though one stopped at Warmwell to refuel.*

*A squadron of C-47s met the group as fighter escort and the trip was uneventful to the tow-ships with only one plane receiving bullet holes. It was later found out that the enemy held their fire for the gliders.*

*Major Parkinson flew the lead ship with Major Hansley deputy Commander.*

*The mission was highly successful.*

## GALVESTON THE LAST MISSION

*7 June 1944— GALVESTON serial (Neptune)*

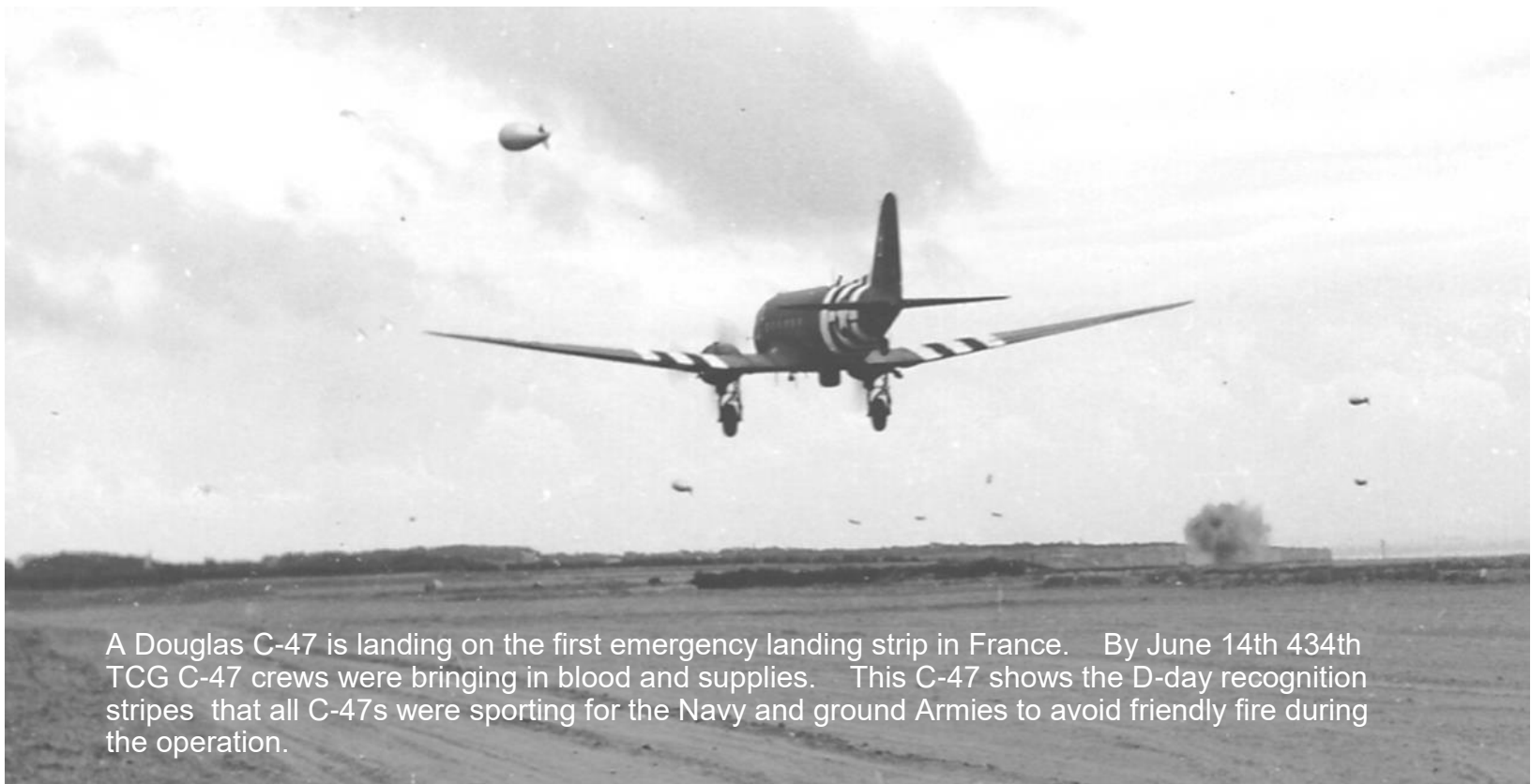
*Fifty C-47s and fifty CG-4As took off from Aldermaston at 0432 on 7 June for LZ on Cherbourg peninsula near previous LZ. They carried 251 personnel, 24 jeeps, 11 guns and 10370 pounds of ammunition in addition to other supplies. Forty-eight gliders were released at the LZ. One lost an aileron, cutting loose and landing successfully at “flatb ushe” (near coast of England). One landed at 37.2—95.8)a little north of LZ-W.*

*There were no navigation aids or markers at the LZ but gliders made successful landings.*

*Small arms fire was intense and many planes received small damage from bullet holes. One radio operator in the 74th T.C Squadron was wounded in the leg.*

*Col. Garland flew the lead-ship with Major Streaan Deputy Commander.*

*The mission was very successful.*



A Douglas C-47 is landing on the first emergency landing strip in France. By June 14th 434th TCG C-47 crews were bringing in blood and supplies. This C-47 shows the D-day recognition stripes that all C-47s were sporting for the Navy and ground Armies to avoid friendly fire during the operation.



RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS NINTH AIR FORCE

General Order  
Number 212

APC 696 US Army  
23 August 1944

BATTLE HONORS

1. Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 1943, the following units of the IX Troop Carrier Command are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy. The citation reads as follows:

\* \* \* \*

"The 434th Troop Carrier Group. For outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy on 5, 6, and 7 June 1944. On these dates, members of Group Headquarters, and the 71st, 72nd, 73rd and 74th Troop Carrier Squadrons of the 434 Troop Carrier Group completed 132 Powered Aircraft Sorties and 132 Glider Sorties in the troop carrier spearhead of the Allied Invasion of the European Continent. Notwithstanding the fact that all of the unarmed and unarmored aircraft of the 434th Troop Carrier Group were flown at minimum altitude and air speed, under unfavorable weather conditions, over water, and into the face of vigorous enemy opposition, with no possibility of employing evasive action, their glider carrying essential infantryman and urgent supplies were accurately released over pinpoint objectives. The outstanding courage skill and fearless initiative demonstrated by all of the personnel of the 434th Troop Carrier Group, both individually and as a closely knit combat team, contributed immeasurably to the success of the European Invasion and materially accelerated the collapse of enemy forces of the Normandy Coast. The victorious exploits of the 434th Troop Carrier Group are exemplary of the highest tradition of the Army Air Forces."

\* \* \* \*

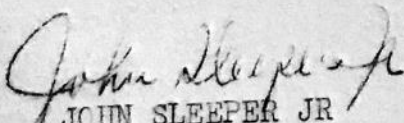
By Command of MAJOR GENERAL VANDENBERG:

V. H. STRAHM  
Brig. General, U.S.A.  
Chief of Staff

Official:  
S. F. CARTER  
Lt Col, A.G.D.  
Asst Adj General

RESTRICTED

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

  
JOHN SLEEPER JR  
Captain, Air Corps  
Adjutant.

The 9th Troop Carrier Command of whom the 50th and 53rd Wings fell under made some fundamental changes to their doctrine based on the results of the Normandy Operation. Due to the number of deaths caused in landing the Horsa glider and the difficulty in landing in small fields this glider would no longer be used in combat by American troops.

Again due to crashes and missed landings it was decided that glider operations should not be executed in the dark. After Normandy all glider landings occurred during the daylight hours.

The remarks by glider pilots in their intelligence report regarding the lack of weapons and the type of weapons issued was noted by Adjutant General Howland.

*Headquarters, IX Troop Carrier Command, Monthly Ordnance Activities Report, June 22, 1944.*

*Section 7. Tactical and Technical (AFHRA Historical Diary, IX TCC) paragraph b.*

*Pilots and co-pilots upon their return from France reported that the rifle cal. .30, M1, Garand was not the right type of weapon for fighting in areas in which they landed. The gliders landed in small fields in the darkness and in territory held by the enemy. These fields were surrounded by hedgerows and ditches from which snipers in hiding, fired upon the men as they were coming out of the gliders. The pilots and co-pilots need weapons with rapid fire power that can be manoeuvred quickly and give quick bursts in the direction the shooting is coming from. Pistols are also needed as an auxiliary weapon. In some cases gliders crashed in trees and buildings and the primary weapon may not be immediately available or may be lost in the crash. Pistols can also be used in close range fighting. It is estimated that 50 to 75 percent of our glider pilot and copilot casualties could have been averted if they had been armed with Guns, sub-machine and pistols.<sup>2</sup>*

*For the Commanding General: O W Howland  
Colonel, A G D Adjutant General*

In the end the number of glider pilots killed by enemy small arms fire, flak, mortars, phosphorescent ammo, glider crashes due to miscalculation of the intelligence information on the landing areas hedgerows, Rommel's Asparagus (the poles with wires) or the inadequate weapons issued by the AAF, a total of 48 glider pilots were killed in action in Normandy.

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The research for this article came from the National Archives and the Air Force Historical Research Agency WWII Squadron, Group, Wing and Command historical diaries. Also used were the excellent writings of George "Pete" Buckley. Many of the photos were from Hans den Brok, Netherlands, work on [\*A Breathtaking Spectacle\*](#). Information was also gleaned from the Digital Archives and the work of the Leon B Spencer Research Team. A special thanks to Patrick Elie in France for sharing files and his excellent [website](#).

It is worth noting that the Troop Carrier Groups kept their Horsa gliders and used them for Airborne orientation in training. In December of 1944, 25 17th Airborne troopers and two glider pilots were killed when their Horsa glider lost its tail during a routine Airborne orientation. [See Horsa Glider Accident](#) See also [related article same training mission](#).

The weapons problem was mentioned on the intelligence reports by many of the glider pilots who flew a Normandy mission. Not just by one Group but throughout the Groups. It seemed that the Command took notice and the following combat missions improved with better weapon options. This culminated when in the last combat glider mission (the invasion of German homeland) glider pilots were given a defensive and secondary-defensive position with an infantry objective. This was a paradigm shift in how they treated the glider pilots and was very much welcomed by them.

The 434th TC Group was tasked with paratrooper drops for the invasion of Germany, also known as the Rhine Crossing (Varsity). Since all the serials went in at the same time they did not tow gliders. Research seemed to indicate that their glider pilots were mostly sent to two Groups towing gliders. The 435th TC Group and the 436th TC Group. Hence all their glider pilots who participated in Varsity were on detached service.

In the article the pilot and copilot are not indicated. The order of each pilot's name is the same order as listed on the crew list or operations order which lists pilot first then copilot. However, that does not mean they actually flew as pilot and copilot. Often the glider pilots would flip a coin to see who would be the pilot to land the glider. During the flight the flying was shared by both pilots.



# THE LETTER FRANKLIN STICKNEY DID NOT WANT SENT

By Claudia S. Coggin

AAF Liaison Unit War Department Personnel		Separation Center	
Center		Texas	
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS 707 West Midland		Texas	
12. ADDRESS		HEIGHT	
Same as above		17. NO. OF DEPENDENTS	
18. RACE WHITE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/>		LBS. 2	
SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA		DUTY	
26. DATE OF ENTRY 30 Dec		Citation	
28. BATTLES North Norman		DATE OF ARRIVAL 12 May 44 26 Jul 45	
29. DECORATIONS Air Medal Badge		COLLEGE 47	
30. WOUNDS 25 May		FOR MONEY ORDERS WASHINGTON 25, D. C. OF VETERAN TO Only Discontinue	
31. SERVICE None		4. .30 Cal	
33. REASON Release (Demob)		42. FINGERPRINT	
34. YEARS 20		43. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER BEING SEPARATED Franklin B Stickney FRANKLIN B STICKNEY 1st Lt AC	
44. IMPROPER CONDUCT 36. KIND OF SERVICE Nat. Serv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		45. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) J A PARKINSON JR Capt AUS Asst Pers O	





United States Army  
Monday evening 9:30 p.m.  
June 5, 1944

To my darling wife -

Sweetheart this letter will be delivered only in case of my failure to return. Either capture or the other -

Tomorrow is D-day, tonight the boys in the first wave are going in - their planes and gliders are loaded and ready to go - They will take off about two hours from now. Paratroopers are going in ahead of them by two hours. Paratroops land at midnight and gliders at 2 o'clock a.m. These boys are going to have the roughest time of all. They are flying in anti-tank guns and airborne troops -

The whole picture is that we are taking the port of Cherbourg for supply to the army and the gliders are going to land troops to clean out the Cherbourg Peninsula - I am sending a small map I picked up so you can get an idea of the part I am





playing in the invasion. They have it divided up into 3 waves as far as the gliders are concerned - the first wave goes tonite on D-1, the second wave tomorrow on D day carrying heavy artillery an more airborne troops an landing at 9:30 tomorrow nite then the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave the one I'm in, we are carrying the 325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Company for more support in holding the peninsula, In my glider I have 13 men an a machine. they are the machine gun squad an me an my co-pilot will fight with them until we are evacuated back over here which they say should be within 24 hours - Boy I hope so an if I do get back you won't get to read this till the war is over - oh I hope so.

My co-pilot is ~~Mr~~ James W. Wallace, he isn't married, is from San Diego, Calif. his address is 4320 Maryland, San Diego. That might come in handy for you. He is a fine kid - no bad habits an in general a fine kid. I have complete confidence in him -

We have had several briefings an we know what the whole picture looks like an from everything they say it is bound to be a success an we should get back easy enough with no trouble. When we





United States Army



go in we are supposed to land our gliders in friendly territory behind our own lines so they should O.K. The figure we are very lucky to draw this 3<sup>rd</sup> wave but I have a lot of very good friends going in on the 1<sup>st</sup> wave an I hope they come out O.K.

There is one of the boys who is a good buddy here in the tent with me an he is going in in the glider right behind me an in case you get this letter you can write his wife an she can tell you a full account of our part as he is writing her a long letter to be sent in case he is missing. Her address is Mrs. A. F. Ogden Jr. 718-16<sup>th</sup> St. Ashland, Kentucky - you can write to her for more details. I do so hope you never get this letter except delivered by me personally.

Darling I guess a guy feels kinda' funny at this stage of the game but I guess all we can do is face the task an do the best we can - I have named my glider the Miss Claudia Kay - She'll come thru O.K.





Darling, I know you will be able to go on in case I don't come back as you always were a good one for that sort of thing - Please don't give up hope tho'. sweetheart and remember I love you more than anybody in the whole world. You'll will take good care of our daughter and raise her up to be a daughter we can both be proud of - and I know you will. I have complete confidence in your ability - Also will you please do your best to console Mother and Daddy, they are getting pretty well along in years and the shock will be pretty bad on them so do your best darling.

Sweet I can truthfully say that I have always been the best husband I knew how and I have never done anything to be ashamed of - Please be sweet and always remember that no matter what happens I love you more than all the world.

I will face the Lord with a clean conscience in event he sees fit to take me away from you and Claudia - I didn't think I would cry but I am and these are real tears -  
forever & ever  
Franklin





The Sweetheart this letter to be delivered only in case he did not survive Normandy was written by Lt Franklin B. Stickney, 87th Sq. 438th Troop Carrier, at Greenham Commons Airfield near Newbury, England, to his wife, Kay, on Monday, June 5, 1944, at 9:30pm. The letter that would be delivered to her if he didn't return. In the third wave of invasion Frank flew chalk # 41 and Wolansk was the pilot of the C-47 tow plane.

Sometime after returning to his base in England from Operation Neptune, Frank wrote his parents, Bess and "Slim" Stickney in Midland, Texas about his combat experience.

*Dear Mother and All—*

*Well, Mom you can stop worrying 'cause your little boy is back from the invasion safe and sound. Boy, this combat is really something tho'-After we landed and for about two or three hours I didn't know what was going on or couldn't realize that somebody was trying to kill me or something. I was just sort of dumfounded, but then I snapped out of it was getting mad.*

*About the closest call I had was when a German 99m.m. landed about 20 yards from me and killed four men in a machine gun position. That really made me sore and then we decided if they wanted to play that way we could too. The first German I killed was a sniper, I had followed him for about three miles and couldn't get a shot at him and he would hide and keep taking pot shots at me and another para-trooper who was with me. Finally we got him cornered in some trees and when he made a break for it he was about fifty yards away and running like hell. I leveled down on him and the first shot he just turned a flip like a jack rabbit and it bothered me just about as much to shoot him. You don't think about killing a man just like shooting ducks or something. I just got back to my base yesterday. I was gone 11 days in all—from D-day 'till the 17th—didn't shave, shower, or take off my clothes all that time. I really feel for those boys who have to stay over there all the time, they really have a tough job. But I tell you Mom I was really scared a few times over there and I wasn't so sure I would get back all right, but I when I felt that*

*way I just prayed to the Lord to watch out for me and I guess that's what he did, because boys got killed all around me and I didn't get a scratch. A bullet went through the front of my field jacket and cut a package of cigarettes in half that was in my pocket but didn't touch me so you can see someone was looking out for me.*

*I lost my pack and everything I had while I was over there, I had my camera in my pack and I lost that, also. That sure made me mad for I had taken some good pictures and they were in my camera. The only thing I got back to camp with was my rifle and trench knife. They were two things you never lay down anywhere in combat. But with all the experience I'm darned glad to be back—I wouldn't take anything for the experience but don't want to go through it again...*

*After Normandy Frank had more experiences in combat and earned three additional Oak Leaf Clusters. He flew in the invasion of the south of France (Operation Dragoon), the Holland invasion (Operation Market Garden), and the German invasion crossing the Rhine River (Operation Varsity). After Varsity, he participated as a C-47 copilot in the Flying Pipeline to carry supplies to where needed and return with French, British, Belgian, American and Dutch POWs and displaced persons.*

*Frank returned to the US on July 26, 1945, by ship. He left the Army Air Corps in late 1945 and returned to his prewar job with Mid-Continent Supply. Eventually owned his own general oilfield hauling trucking business in Andrews, Texas where he and Kay raised their family. Frank died in 1979 and is buried in his hometown of Midland, Texas.*

Stickney Collection-Accession # 2021-20

Silent Wings Museum, Lubbock TX.



# TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

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CARRIER AND COMBAT GLIDER HISTORY

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### ON THE CALENDAR

#### Upcoming missions:

##### **NORMANDY**

June 6-7, 1944

##### **LA LONDE**

June 10-13, 1944

##### **LUZON**

June 23, 1945

##### **SICILY**

July 9 & 13, 1943

##### **SOUTHERN FRANCE**

July 15, 1944

##### **HOLLAND**

Sept 17 - 26, 1944

##### **BASTOGNE**

December 23-27, 1944

##### **BURMA**

March 5, 1944

##### **REMAGEN**

March 22, 45

##### **RHINE CROSSING**

March 24, 1945



Glider pilots who hauled hundreds of America's airborne fighting men to the front are pouring back through depots of the ASC to pick up new gliders, fresh troops. Shown left to right, as they talk things over on an invasion craft are: Lt. Charles Ellington, High Point, N. C., Flight Officer Joe Gilreath of Fort Worth, Tex., and Flight Officer Kenneth Ensor, Plano, Ill.

Cover photo: Glider Pilots of the 72nd Troop Carrier Squadron before D-day

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