

6 AIR DISARMAMENT GROUP, DEPOT (PROVISIONAL)

MISSION

LINEAGE

6 Air Disarmament Group, Depot (Provisional)

STATIONS

Boreham, England

Chateau Chamant, France

Ebermannstadt, Germany

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Harold W. Orr

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The Headquarters Squadron made its dubious inception into army history by the formation of the 1st Air Disarmament Wing (Provisional), establishing the 6th Air Disarmament Group (Prov.) and its three squadrons on Special Orders No. 1, dated 1 December 1944.

At first there was just a mass of men from the Combat Crew Replacement Center groups, dumped into England after two years of invaluable work in Northern Ireland, now left with no apparent purpose. But somewhere at the top, it was decided to form a Disarmament Command and thus began the unique function of an organization that was always to remain provisional and die without ever attaining legitimacy.

In the initial phase of this formation, a comprehensive training program was set up and indoctrination into almost every part of things concerning Germany was begun. Classes were formed for subjects covering the most of German life, history and development. Language, custom, psychology, aircraft recognition, industrial organization - - all were included. The apparent idea of disarmament was to follow the army's advance, stripping the German Luftwaffe of its armament and equipment. This master plan was completely changed, however, by Field Marshal von Rundstedt's counter-offensive in December of 1944. So, winter for the group of eager disarmers was spent in England, the training relaxed, and anticipation began for the movement to the Continent, which existed only in a never-ending oscillation of rumors. With a purpose to prepare for the job of disarmament with complete self-reliance and independence in the field, field problems were studied and bivouacs planned and executed by the four squadrons.

One of Group's training phases prior to the Conquest of the Continent, was a 3-day bivouac outing near Chelmsford in mid-February. Aptly titled the 'Burma Road', the site was one of muck, mire and some moaning, In the American

The 6th Air Disarmament Group moved onto the Continent early in 1945 and experienced the rigors of living on the cold French countryside. Meanwhile at Boreham, the proximity of Chelmsford and London pleased the pass-goers, and non-fraternization existed only in the image of a future that seemed far, far away. The fog indoctrination was intense but finally the weather cleared, the Headquarters building became visible from the Hq.

Squadron site and in late February and advance party went to Chateau Chamant, near Creil, France to prepare for the Group's arrival. The Workhorses of the Air, C-47 s, daily carried loads of equipment and personnel to France. Convoy preparations were completed by mid-March of 1945 and on the 13th of the month a caravan finally wound its way to London, Southampton and crossed the Channel into, 'The Unknown.' By March 17, the squadrons were ensconced near Senlis in tents and awaited further orders. The expected operations in disarmament were soon to begin.

April brought the realization of Paris springtime to many, and frequent passes to that historical city, in some cases to take the Red Cross tours, served to ease the inconveniences of living in the field, washing in iron hats and eating in the former Chateau stable.

A frigid vigil was maintained at the estate of this French Chateau near Senlis, France for approximately six weeks. What was once a former Luftwaffe Fighter strip was transformed into a landing field for our L-4 Liaison planes and the grounds taken over by the Headquarter

Squadron, 28th, 29th and 30th Air Disarmament Squadrons of the 1st Air Disarmament Wing, which was also on the site. Having been a fancier of horses, Count Chament had built an elaborate stable block and this was used for mess halls, supply rooms and offices. Living conditions were of the hardest but here again Special Service and a city named Paris helped to counter-balance what hardships we might have encountered. Tent-life, in some respects, had its advantages but the gusto displayed in 'breaking camp' indicated a dissatisfaction for Boy Scout ways.

The Allied armies were ploughing their way steadily across the Vaterland, doing a pretty good job of disarmament as they went, but there was a need to complete the work, take inventory, assemble the arms equipment, engines, scrap and insure that the myriad installations of the German Air Force would never operate again.

The 6th Air Disarmament Group first entered Germany over the Moselle River on April 19, 1945 at OB25. The former Segel Flugzeuge (Glider Base) at Darmstadt-Griesheim afforded a stopping place for about ten days; then came final settlement for the Headquarter Squadron in the picturesque little Bavarian village of Ebermannstadt.

Orientation classes meet twice a week to discuss a current news topic or sit in on lectures concerning subjects in the European Theater of Operations. Two former inmates of the dreaded concentration camp at Dachau, Piotr Luczak and Brustin Ajzyk, were brought to this station to expose the grisly details of Dachau's crematoriums. With Pfc. Hans Winter as translator, they related the months of pain and suffering they endured in concentration camps at the hands of Heinrich Himmler's sadistic SS police. These classes are sponsored by the Information Education Section as are the I-E tours to Dachau, Munich and Berchtesgaden.

Personnel were once more reminded of the war on the night of April 27th, when a Nazi Night Fighter, who had done some previous scouting, let go a short burst at a convoy which was parked on the nearby Reich's Autobahn. Nobody was hurt, but it was a reminder.

In the trek from Darmstadt to Ebermannstadt was observed the wonderful job which the Air Forces had done and upon arriving at the destination on May 3, there was most notable the contrast between the larger, demolished cities and the pastoral serenity of a small obscure farming community. Operations began with the assignment of targets, the Group performing an administrative function between the self-righteous operation of the squadrons and the benevolent wisdom of the Wing. Reports from the squadrons, dispersed strategically in southwestern Germany, covered every phase of army routine and showed the initial stages of target disarmament, most of which was discovered in reconnaissance and liaison unrelenting in seeking out any vestige of G. A. F. power.

Approximately 440 targets were assigned to the squadrons in May; each representing a tentacle of that deposed monster that was to be so studiously dissected.

When Group took over this former Luftschutzpolizeischule (Air Raid Police School), there weren't enough rooms to house all personnel and essential squadron sections so it was decided that the first three graders would move in. With no apparent use for the attic floor, it was first used as a storage room. Later a few former bar-tenders who were able to procure beer through beer-gomeisters, got ambitious and decided the third floor would be a good place to drink in secrecy. They did such a good job of house cleaning and with the help of a few more school-mates, decorated one room and called it the Air Click Club. The end of the war in the ETO was celebrated at the official opening of the bar May 9, 1945. Later, wine and hard stuff were introduced to the menu. Snacks are made up any night a member can persuade the mess sergeant that his method of preparing pork and beans should earn him the Aroma Award.

The Special Service Section launched the Oracle on its stormy way in quest of hints and reminders that would be of interest to Group personnel on Memorial Day, May 30, 1945. It's a weekly mimeographed news letter that has frequently helped out the pencil-chewers in a crisis and exposed shady actions of the Group's problem persons. While not a scandalized sheet of the Winchell caliber, its editor has been known to receive comment that must be censored here. The Oracle's and the poor man's Ernie Pyle incidentally, is Staff Sgt. William Julisson, a struggling journalist from North Dakota who delves into cartooning in his spare time.

May conceded to the fair month of June and a rather permanent attachment was made to Ebermannstadt, in which there was a simplicity in beauty and peace. There were softball games, education tours, special entertainments, swimming and movies. Two Enlisted Men's Clubs were organized and one Officer's Club, all serving to keep Group personnel on the rational side during the ripening of Summer. The anniversary of D-Day was observed on June 6th.

The last four graders baptized their exclusive sanctum sanctorum on the night of June 23, 1945 amid gala settings, songs, photo flashes and beverages. The opening, which featured a short house-warming talk by Lt. Col. Harold W. Orr, marked the end of several weeks' labor and construction to which the majority of Buckdowns contributed. The Club is completely furnished with tables and easy chairs and boasts a unique bar. Gun pieces and swords of Old World vintage were donated by members and photos adorning the walls by the Photo Lab. A separate room has been set aside as a library and reading room and another for recreational purposes. Bar-tending duties are divided among the members. All the Special Service Enlisted Men's Council meetings were held here.

Throughout the Headquarter Squadron's nomadic expeditions into England, France and Germany, the task of driving ahead in contributing to the inevitable end of the war has been shared proportionately on the shoulders of each individual. During the off hours it has also been a task to provide the men with recreation. Taking the obstacles into consideration, the Special Service Section under the wholehearted supervision of 1st Lt. Frank H. Spence has done more than a wonderful job. CONCERTS at Nurnberg, Erlangen and Bayreuth were taken in by the music lovers of Group with enthusiasm. Through collaboration with the Motor Pool, many men saw such radio stars as Bobe Hope, Jerry Collonna, Jane Froman and Paul Robeson, going

to the scene by bus or command car. MOVIES were of the most entertaining and never failed in drawing a sizeable audience, many of the fans consisting of men from the smaller units stationed near our headquarters. BINGO games were conducted on many open nights and when the prize supply was exhausted, the EM clubs kept operating to help while away the spare hours. SOFTBALL drew a big turnout and enough personnel took up the sport to put four entrants in the Group Loop. They were the Brass Hats, Wheels, Buckondowns and the Villagers. Competition was close and the play wide open. Crippled by redeployment however, the Headquarter Squadron lost out in the eliminations to send a team to the Wing Softball Tournament at Fulda, Germany. PING PONG had its champs too, monthly tourneys being conducted to ferret out the table tennis experts. SEEING EUROPE was perhaps the most popular of extracurricular activities. In sojourning to Paris, Switzerland, England and rest centers the men were afforded the opportunities of viewing the spacious, lush-green valleys of Germany in all their scenic splendor. The quaint, old, rustic-hewed villages of France were the targets of many a Leica, Zeiss or plain old Brownie, while the ancient, rich traditions of England looked good on furloughs, even in the densest of 'soup' fogs.

With July came sight of the end of the disarmament job, and work on the final phases. Redeployment suddenly began in earnest and inactivation loomed ahead forebodingly. S-1 went to work with unequalled vigor, passing out the news of shipping frequently to certain low and medium pointers for transfer to CBI-bound outfits. July probably goes down however, as the month to remember in World War II. Every GI's favorite General, Ike Eisenhower, favored the lifting of the notorious Nonfraternization ban in mid-July and the morale, for handbook students, went up.

So, this was the beginning of the end of this experiment of disarmament. Few thought it had been a success, yet the results achieved seemed to signify that something of the effort was worthwhile. Certainly, if the German Air Force could now be declared impotent and dissolved, our small part in this undertaking gave us cause for satisfaction. There remains now the future, with its exciting promise.

485th Air Service Group, stationed at Berneck, Germany absorbed personnel from 6th Air Disarmament Group which inactivated following termination of disarmament operations throughout the American Zone of Occupation.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit History. *6 Air Disarmament Group Provisional, Headquarter Squadron, 1945*. Zerreich & Co. Nuremberg, Germany. 1945.