

Selections from TSGT. F.L Davis Diary
 January 1944 – October 1944
 15th Air Force
 483 Bomb GP.
 816 Bomb Sq.
 Also home address in 1944:
 3424 Stettinius
 Hyde Park
 Cincinnati, 8 Ohio

Sunday, January 2, 1944
 Met at 8 A.M. to learn we are shipping
 for Florida in morning. Got on train at 8
 P.M. Nice Pullman. Nice sleep.

Tuesday 4
 Went thru Chicago, Cincy. Boy was it a
 dark, foggy late afternoon when we hit
 Cincy. Was about as blue as I have been
 as I sat looking at the station platform &
 thinking I couldn't even call home.

Thursday 6
 Arrived at Tampa 11 A.M. A beautiful
 camp right on the bay in sight of the
 Tampa skyline. Processes as usual. Sent
 telegram home. Not quite as nice a
 Rapid City

Tuesday, January 11, 1944
 Saw Joe Louis box exhibition this
 afternoon. It was swell. Went to show
 starring Claudette Colbert and Fred
 McMurray. A warm day. Got Louis'
 autograph & sent it to Jerry

Monday, January 17, 1944
 Ground school all morning. Flew high
 altitude all afternoon. Ate at P.X. with
 Kaly. Went to chapel to hear recording
 of Scheherazade with Mo.
 3 letters from home. Thankful to God
 for my father.

Monday, January 31, 1944
 Lt. Kenny at hospital. He feels bad
 about us getting a new pilot. So do we.
 Poor guy. I feel sorry for him.

Tuesday, February 1
 Flew first time with Lt. Smithers. Nice
 flight but screwed up on compass. Went
 to see "Miracle of Morgan's Creek". A
 really great picture.

Thursday, 3
 Awoke being called "Staff Sergeant" by
 Kaly. A list of promotions was up and I
 was on it. Went to lunch with Mo and
 Montgomery. Flew last evening till 1:00
 A.M. 4 hrs.

Wednesday, March 1, 1944
 Flew to Savannah in afternoon.
 A damn nice camp with passes free time
 a plenty. Don't know how long we'll be
 here... Doesn't look like I'll get back
 home.

Thursday, March 2 through April 11,
 1944
 No entry

Wednesday, April 12, 1944
 My first raid over Yugoslavia. At the
 first sight of flak, felt helpless and
 important all at once. A beautiful day.
 Flak looked anything but sinister – Just
 billowy white puffs all around us.
 Prayers came often. Felt completely
 exhausted on landing. Saw no fighters.

Friday, April 14, 1944
 Up at 5:15 A.M. For H-Hour but flight
 was canceled. Read and wrote sort of.
 Jinned around all day. Wrote Dr. Mac.
 Have felt a strong resurgence of God in
 my heart the last few days. Had been
 straying away but was brought back
 stronger than ever with his help.

Saturday 15
 Another raid over Yugoslavia. Further
 inland over forested snow-capped
 mountains after cross Adriatic. Just like
 beautiful Christmas scene, yet here we
 were, going to bomb. My prayers to
 God were answered in that I felt him
 right there with me all the time.

Monday, 17

Played football in morning. Went to town with Monty in afternoon. Got a wonderful shower, shave. Packed up cleaning, went to Red Cross. Hitched a ride back to camp. Had a little wine in evening. Talked. To bed.

Thursday, April 20, 1944

Up at 6AM. Flew third mission over Northern Italy but couldn't drop bombs as there was an overcast. Came back disgusted but found out mission counted. One of my "slipped" days.

Friday, 21

Took off for Bucharest, Romania but were called back halfway there. Had some high explosive bombs. We really sweated out when landing. Slept in afternoon. Wrote home in evening.

Saturday, April 22, 1944

Moved today from Tortorella to San Severo. Plant, Smithers, Johnny and I flew up. The rest of the crew coming by truck. A clean, nice looking place.

Sunday 23

A "double-header today. Raided Weiner-Neustadt aircraft Factory in Austria. Saw Ju 88's. I shot at my first fighter coming in on our tail. Flak very heavy and accurate. Holes in wing tank, nose, tires. Just enough gas to get home.

Saturday, 29

Went to town with Mo, Monty and Koly. We took a shower and bought an Italian dictionary. All road around in a Hansom with two little Italian kids named Mike and Lenordo. Town full of kids running ragged and dirty in the streets.

Monday, May 1, 1944

Up at 4:30 A.M. expecting to fly. Mission called off so played Blackjack with Monty, Mo, Kolby, Beeler. Lost about \$20 – Mo lost \$30. Whew! Received 3 letters in evening. Wrote dad and folks, Nana. Made Tech Sergeant.

Friday, 5

6th mission over Turno-Severin, Romania. Flak very close. 5 ½ hours. Boy, I was sure tired. Flew with Swaks crew. Fortney had the G.I's. A beautiful spring day.

Saturday, May 6, 1944

7th mission. Same target as yesterday. No flak at all. Flew with Major Sperry as pilot.

Sunday, 7

The day is just ending now with a white misty sunset. Have just finished Hilton's "Without Armor" and am sort of strangely saddened by its effect. Such a beautiful, sweet and heart rendering, sorrow was A.J's.

Wednesday, May 10, 1944

Raid planned to Weiner-Neustadt, Austria. We were all ready to go in take-off position, when three of our engines went bad and we couldn't go. Wrote 4 letters – Nana, Betty, Uncle Mart, Played Blackjack – lost \$10. Boy how I hate that.

Friday, May 12, 1944

Up at 3:00AM for H-Hour. Picked up S.O.I (Signal Operations Instructions) at group, went out and pre-flighted 5043 "Carol Jean IV" Flew to Germany 10th Army H.Q. and dropped 1000 pound bombs. Supposed to go on another in the afternoon but had oxygen leak. Letters from Nana, mom, Betty. Card from Al Piers. Wrote home.

May 13

Another mission, Northern Italy near Verona. Caught flak in alternate doses. P51 escort. 6 hours 15 minutes. Boy but I'm tired. A letter from dad. Scheduled for tomorrow so am hitting the sack early.

May 14, 1944

Letters for mom and dad. Were supposed to fly but had to turn back with runway prop. Wrote folks, Nana, Red Cohen, Jean. Went to Mass in evening with Steve, Moe.

Wednesday, 17

Everything else dwarfed by P38 crash this afternoon. With his motor sputtering, he crossed over our tent. Somehow he lost flying speed, spiraled straight down, blew up as he hit. Saw the body, charred and flaming dragged out.

Went to Belgrade but cloud cover kept us from dropping our bombs. Didn't get credit for the mission even tho we were over the target and five hours in the air. Monty and I have just come back from cleaning our guns.

Friday 19

Flew 10th mission to North Eastern Italy. Bombed bridge. 4 ½ hours. Flak out of range. Had escort. Parade in afternoon. Several medals being awarded. Rained. Rations. Letter from dad

Tuesday, 23

Flew to same place this time our own crew. Awfully cloudy, made several attempts to find target. Flak way out of range. We all went to officers tent as it was Burnham's 21st birthday. Shot carbine and .45.

Wednesday, May 24, 1944

A clear, beautiful day. I feel closely aligned with our Lord. He has given me the greatest gift a man can have - the knowledge of his presence at all times if but we'll look for him. A couple of British gunners came in evening. We had French toast and wine.

Thursday, 25

Were supposed to fly but a last-minute order said no "F's" could fly and we had an F picked LP. Rations and sort of rested the rest of the day.

Friday, May 26, 1944

Flew to St Etienne, France. Bombed the marshalling yards. An 8 ½ hour trip - 1400 miles. Whew!! Really tired. When we came back saw flak but was out of range. Flew right over Anzio - could see front lines at close range.

Saturday, 27

Flew to Avignon, France. 1200 miles. This time 7 ½ hours. Went over to officer's tent in evening. I really lost my judgment when Burnham said we weren't supposed to come over there (crazy orders) and stalked out of there like and ass.

Monday, 29

Monty and I took a long walk out to ruins overlooking a big valley. Went to see Sonja Henie in "Wintertime" in evening. I am strangely depressed this evening. Feeling "man's inhumanity to man" very strongly.

Tuesday, May 30, 1944

Bummed. Read, took shower. Acquired a little pup from some Italian kids giving him a bath and pulling ticks by the dozen - He squealing like hell. Had a big secret meeting down at Group for certain crews. Can't even write what it was about.

Thursday, June 1

All hyped-up over prospective trip.
Spent all day getting our clothes together from supply.

Friday, 2

Briefing at 2AM. A most educational talk on Russia was given by Colonel. Were told our impressions made in Russia would be of the utmost importance in future diplomatic relations.

Saturday, June 3

Russia

Sunday, 4

Russia

Monday, June 5, 1944

Russia

Tuesday, June 6, 1944

Russia

Wednesday, June 7, 1944

Russia

Thursday, June 8, 1944

Russia

Friday, June 9, 1944

Russia

Saturday, 10

Russia

Sunday, June 11, 1944

Return flight to Italy, bombing in Romania on the way. 7 hour hop - really tiresome. So glad to be back to good chow tho. Found 21 letters and 6 packages? Sacks of candy, books, and my Bible!

Tuesday, June 13, 1944

H-hour 3 AM. Whew!! Flew to Berraffen-Hoppen Germany. 15 miles from Munich. 7 hours. Pretty tired. Wrote home. Plant Burman, Beeler, Burnham, came over for grilled cheese sandwiches.

Wednesday, 14

Up early. Wrote Aunt Eva and home. Read, rested. Discovered .45 was stolen while in Russia. Went to show in evening. Sort of irritable today. Don't like that a-bit.

Thursday, June 15, 1944

Up 3:30 A.M.. Suppose to fly but mission cancelled. Clean cool morning. Read my Bible, wrote notes on steps to achievement. Took shower and slept through hot afternoon. Wrote mom in evening. Felt fine all day. Trying hard to live up to resolutions to be as good a Christian as He would have me be.

Friday, 16

3:30 H hour. Flew to Vienna, Austria. Flak heavy. Did a good job of bombing. Has a beautiful spiritual experience over the target. Heard God's voice saying, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" when flak was heaviest. Relaxed all over and was not afraid

Saturday, June 16, 1944

To dispensary in the morning to get foot bandaged as last night, after getting too much Vermouth I tried climbing up on a table to make a speech. But I fell off cutting my big toe. Feeling sort of ashamed this morning. But no one (except me) was hurt and didn't suffer for it.

Tuesday, July 4

Raided oil fields in Romania. 2 Fock Wulf 109's and 1 ME (Messerschmidt) 109 made passes at us without any luck. A hot, disagreeable day.

Friday, July 7, 1944

Flew to Germany. Bombed synthetic oil and rubber plant. Flak at target and in route. 2 FW 109's. Cut right, smack, dab through our formation, between our ship and one on left wing. I could see the crosses on wings and pilots.

Sunday. 9

Had to turn back from mission to Ploesti, Romania as had bad super-charger. Went to church. Read most of the day. Wrote 4 letters.

Friday, July 14

Budapest Hungary, Flak was accurate and intense. Lewicki had legs shot up pretty bad. May have to amputate. We had three big holes. Beeler just missed by missile that would have laid his skull open. Had a direct hit but limped home.

Monday, July 17

A rather restless day. Tried to read and concentrate but seemed like I could not keep my mind on it. Trying hard to find what God wants me to do.

Tuesday, July 18, 1944

Today our squadron lost every ship it sent up. Were intercepted by 200 enemy fighters firing rockets of which 25 were shot down by our boys firing all guns all the way down. A most crestfallen camp was ours this evening. We all got so drunk. First time I have ever touched whisky and I'm sorry. Lt Smithers and Lt. Burnham flew with one of the crews who were shot down. It just so happened that the rest of us on our crew didn't fly.

July 19

Very bad hang over this morning. Loafed all day. Saw show in the afternoon. Felt better as the day wore on. Several letters from home made things seem much brighter. Want to

write Ann Long. P.S. – Just had a fight with Moyer and he has gone to the hospital.

Thursday, July, 20

Up early. Monty, Mo and I went swimming in the Adriatic after long bumpy ride. Nothing said between Moyer and I at all. He had a pretty bad cut over his left eye. Just sort of roamed around this evening. Halfway lonely, half refreshed for tomorrow's flight.

Friday, July 21

A restless, unsettled day. Slept poorly. Didn't get to fly and getting so fed up at staying on the ground. Want to get my missions in and go home. Sure seems lonely around here with all the old boys gone.

Sunday, July 23, 1944

John Ellis and I flew to Tarquinia and hitched-hiked to Rome. Got a hotel room and good meal at rest camp restaurant. Walked around city. Met 2 pretty girls and walked them home. I made a date for tomorrow.

Tuesday, July 25

Went to St. Peter's. Saw and shook hands with Pope Pius XII. A beautiful, spiritual experience.

Sunday, July 30

Flew to Budapest. Pretty rough. Lost two ships. Very tired upon return but perked-up after a shower, shave and letters home.

Monday, July 31

Slept late. Paid, \$29.98. {month's salary per Chris} Saw "Action In The North Atlantic" with Humphrey Bogart in afternoon. Very windy and dusty. The boys went to Ploesti today.

Friday, August 4

Flew to Naples. Caught boat for Capri. Assigned to beautiful hotel room overlooking ocean with tile porch adjoining. Ate dinner on porch of Metropole Hotel overlooking ocean. Also music and dance with some Italian babes.

August 10

Last day at Capri. Spent most of the day at store with Maria after going swimming. Went to the Red Cross and had a really swell time in the evening.

Tuesday, August 15

Took off at 3:00 A.M. for coast of France. Was told invasion of said coast would begin in morning and we were per-invasion bombing forces. Saw terrific amount of ships and planes also actual invasion forces.

Saturday, 19

Took off again for Ploesti, got to 20,000 feet, 100 miles into Yugoslavia and because of oil leak had to turn back. We could have easily sat down and cried. It ruined the whole day for us as we would have gotten credit for two, both yesterday and today.

August 20

Flew to oil refinery in Poland – 7 ½ hour. 6 hours on Oxygen. A double header. Now have 43 missions and OH! How anxious we are to finish. Nice day. Intercepted by 25 ME 109's.

Tuesday, August 22, 1944

Flew 44-45 today to refinery near Blechammer, 8 ½ hours. Really long. Boy, really sweating 'em out now. Showered off, ate. Had cookies for dinner. Have been so thankful for divine help lately. Flying tomorrow.

August 23

Flew to Vienna area. Expected a lot of flak. Got hardly any. I was so scared on take-off – We just made it. Was ashamed of myself. Later I read "Let not your heart be troubled" He will be there! Won't forget the next time.

August 24

Took off but turned back when we discovered no fuel in #4 tank. Oh how I feel very exasperated. We all felt it as was a flakless double. Johnny and crew chief got busted for not checking tanks. Allies took Paris and Marseilles. Have 47 missions now.

Aug 25

Double to Czechoslovakia. No flak or fighters. This gives me 49 now. Am I sweating out tomorrow. It's not that I am afraid – It's just that I'm so awfully anxious to get thru!! Am smoking too much. Have to cut that out.

Saturday, August 26, 1944

Today I flew my 50th and last mission. All I could think of upon knowing I'd finished was "Thank you, God" It's a great and marvelous feeling to know I'm through. Am so tired from sweating 'em out the last 2 weeks.

Sunday, August 27

Slept late, blissfully ignoring H-hour. Sergeant Barger told me this morning I was scheduled to fly to England tomorrow. Boy, was I thrilled! Wrote letter home to dad. Had beer and great time in Bughouse with the boys.

Monday, September 11 1944

Shipping orders all day long. Finally heard mine (263-6) at noon. Got packed and at 4 P.M. boarded trucks for the docks. Our ship is the "Athos". A two stack troop transport with very adequate accommodations. Chow excellent. Slept well.

Wednesday, September, 13

Day dawned clear. Still in Naples harbor. About 5 P.M. we finally shoved off. As we sailed by Capri, the setting sun outlined it beautifully and wasn't entirely without thoughts of Maria there.

Sunday 17

In Straits of Gibraltar last night. The Ole Atlantic was a bit rough. I ate a little and didn't get sick. Laid on deck all day long and read "Ill Wind" by James Hilton.

Tuesday, September 26, 1944

Sighted New Jersey coast at 10A.M. What a beautiful sight! Chiseled steaks out of galley. Docked at 2 P.M on Staten Island. Ferried to NJ. Train to Camp Shanks. Steak dinner at 12 midnight in welcome.

Sunday, October 1, 1944

Absolutely the happiest day in or family's life. I arrived by taxi. Dad and mom were already at the door when I got on the porch. First thing dad did was come out and paddle my behind for staying out too late. Then came all their arms about me. All of us trembling, too overcome to speak. Mom so pretty, Jerry so swell and husky. Dad so happy. We all knelt and thanked God soon as hello had been said. At 2 A.M. Monday we were still talking. Nana over for dinner. What a dinner!