

# PART THREE

*1 9 4 5*





# CHAPTER NINE

## EIGHTH AIR FORCE

### HORSHAM SAINT FAITH

# ENGLAND



(V-MAIL)

Jan. 6, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

I just got back from London. I had eight letters and card in the mail when I got here.

I bought an overcoat, green pants, cap and some books while I was there. The books are on law and crime to go with my course. I have enough reading to last for some time. So far it has been very interesting and educational.

We have had a good rest from flying so are ready to get started again. I am tired from the trip but a good nights sleep will take care of that. We expect to fly in the morning provided the weather will permit.<sup>1</sup>

Will write an air mail as soon as I get the time.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

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<sup>1</sup> Jan 6, 1945 B-24 targets were Landau Marshalling Yards, Achern rail and communication centers, Kaiserslautern rail road, Zweibrucken marshalling yards, Rastatt marshalling yards, and Durrmenz. 283 B-24s participated with no losses for the 458th.

(V-MAIL)

Jan. 10. 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

I will stop studying for a few minutes and write a few lines. I got number sixteen in the other day. I wish the weather was better so they would go faster. Jack has a crew of his own so we are without a Co pilot. We should get a new one in a day or two. We were all sorry to see Jack leave but it is a good opportunity for him. No mail for the last two days so will expect some in the morning. That is if I can get the energy to get up and get it. Most of the time we get up just in time for lunch. See what a habit you will have to break me of. I only wish you had the chance to try.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

(AIR MAIL)

January 18, 1945

Dear Ruth,

It is about time to write a letter as I have neglected my girls for a few days.

How would you like a description of one of our missions? I checked with the censor to find out if I could describe a mission without going against the regulations. You better find a comfortable chair as this will take a few pages. We will just call this mission number "X". It is one our crew will remember for a long time.

it is evening just after dinner. We come out of the mess hall and stop to look at the bulletin board. Crew No.\_, which is ours, is alerted for a combat mission. Our name is well up on the list, so we know if a mission goes out, we will fly. Jack and I stay over to see the show while Jim and Paul return to the room. Jim has a book to read while Paul writes a letter to his wife. The only thing I remember is the news reel. It was on an air battle in the South Pacific. After the show we returned to the room where we had a little to eat and then to bed.

I just got to sleep, or so it seemed, when I heard a voice say, "sign here please." I slowly opened my eye into the electric light to see what it was all about. Paul signed the roster to the effect that we were awake. Paul asked the bomb and gas load. The answer was not encouraging. The gas load was heavy, which would mean deep into Germany. From the bomb load we knew the target would most likely be an oil refinery. The Germans need oil. For some reason a lot of it has been destroyed. What they have left is well protected which means lots of flak.

We roll out of bed and it is cold in the room. I can see my breath as I jump into my clothes. We step outside and there is frost with a thin sheet of ice on the puddles. Jack is in the lead with a flashlight as we start for the mess hall. There are fresh eggs on the table in place of the usual powdered ones. As you look about the room it is hard to realize that these men are going out to fight. There is laughter and jokes. This is just another day's work to be done. They have done the same thing many times before and will do it again. Paul looks at his watch and says "briefing in ten minutes." I drink the last of my coffee and we start for the briefing hut. We are checked as we enter. They make sure only the officers who will fly are entering that room. We all glance at the map as we enter but the curtain is still drawn. We will have to wait a few minutes before we know our target. There are some good natured ribs and jokes as we wait for briefing to start. The C.O. enters, along with two other officers. The time has come as the Sergeant rolls up the curtain. A low sound is heard as the men see our target for the day. A sound is the only way I can describe it. It is involuntary, more an escape of breath than a noise. We had been right - we were going deep into Germany.

A Captain tells us the importance of our target. How much oil it is producing and how necessary it is for us to destroy it in order to cut the oil supply in Germany. He next tells us where we would encounter flak and where the German fighters are most likely to jump our formation. We

are shown a picture of the target and a large scale map of the target area. We were then briefed on the weather and the best way to get out of Germany in case we had to bail out over enemy territory. The C.O. gave us a short pep talk. I don't know if anyone heard what he said but we sat in silence. It was now time for the Chaplain. There is no place quite as appropriate for a Chaplain as this. A great church may have a holy atmosphere, but in this room, men sat in respectful silence, each waiting to hear those few words of prayer.

The time has come for special briefing. We separate to our different places. I received my times, route, etc. that are necessary for navigation. It is now time to get dressed. This is quite a process. When I finish dressing, I feel like a carpetbagger. Besides my flying clothes, there is a brief case, parachute, oxygen mask, shoes in case we have to fly in and walk out, a bag with maps and some odds and ends of equipment. I load up and struggle out to our ship. Each crew member is checking over his equipment. The guns are installed and we make sure there is plenty of ammunition. Although this has taken about three hours, it is still dark. A few of the planes have started their engines and you can see the red of their exhausts. Paul calls "everybody in" and we take our places. "Clear three" is heard and our first engine starts with a roar.

As we take off, the first signs of day are showing in the East. We climb to 10,000 feet which is the assemble altitude. I look out the side window to see hundreds of ships flying in a great circle. We find our place and wait for the time of departure. At last we circle for the last time and start on our course for Germany. I give a call to the crew, "Navigator to Crew - we are now leaving England. We will enter Germany in forty-two minutes." As we pass a point in the channel, I give the O.K. to test fire. The ship trembles as the guns spit lead into the sea. We are now at 14,000 feet and time to go on oxygen.

In a few minutes the enemy coast comes into view. It looks peaceful and quiet with the sea breaking on the beach. It is hard to believe that we are entering Germany. Suddenly this dream is shattered as flak bursts off our right wing. This is a lone gun and we soon pass out of range. Intelligence has planned a good course. We twist and turn but miss almost all the flak as we fly into the target. We hit prop-wash and I hear Paul say "You son-of-a-bitch, get over" as a plane drops in front of us. One wing stalls out as Paul and Jack fight the controls. We fall off in a start of a spin but they pull it out nicely and rejoin the formation. The questions then start to come my way. "Waist to Navigator." "Navigator to Waist - go ahead." "Pop<sup>2</sup>, where are we?" "How long to the IP?" "Is it time to throw chaff?" "Shall we put on our flak suits?" And so it goes as we approach the target.

Jim calls and says the toggle switch is out in the turret. I will have to toggle the bombs when the lead ship drops. Fifteen minutes to the target and we get our flak suits on. "Bomb bay doors open," and we are on the bomb run. I start to call off the minutes until bombs away. Seven minutes, five - four - three - two minutes. Boom, and the ship jumps as we get a hit under the bomb bay. Then it seems as if the whole ship falls on me. "Bombs away," and I hit the toggle switch. "Pilot to Navigator, Pilot to Navigator." As I hear this, I realize I have been out and wonder for how long. I

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<sup>2</sup>Arlin said he was called Pop because he was the oldest - 27 at the time of this letter.

answer "Navigator O.K." and start to move around to see if I am. I cut in pure oxygen to clear my head as I start to pick up some of the trouble from the interphone. Number four engine on fire, gas lines hit in the bomb bay, number two engine throwing oil, half the instruments gone, control cable cut on left rudder and the whole plane was full of holes. Jack got the fire out in number four engine and feathered the engine. Our engineer fixed up the gas line and we were back in formation. I checked on the crew and no one was hurt. I looked at my flak suit where three pieces had ripped holes. My helmet was gone so I looked under my table. There was a tear along one side and I knew the reason for my short sleep. The trip back across Germany was the longest I ever made. Would number two engine hold out? If it was to go, we wouldn't be able to hold formation. If you drop out of formation in the heart of Germany, you are duck soup for the German fighters. Yes, it held out. After we got out of German fighter territory, we dropped out of the formation and came back alone to save gas and our engines. The questions were coming again. "Pop, how long will we be in Germany?" "Pop, where are we?" "How long to the coast?" And thank God I could answer them. We were soon out over the water on the last leg home. Number two was almost out of oil but we could go the rest of the way on two engines. What a sight was the English coast! A good ship and a swell crew were coming back. It would take a lot to knock them out. I never hope to fly with a better group of men. It was a tired bunch of boys in the mess hall that night. As we came out we once more looked at the bulletin board. Crew No. \_\_, our crew, was to fly in the morning. I woke up at the same time. Yes, the same bomb and gas load. Fresh eggs for breakfast and when we walked into briefing, the same target.

I hope you enjoyed this description and don't take it too much to heart as they don't all come like that. This has been a long letter for me to write, so will sign off and give you a chance to answer

Love  
Arlin





**(AIR MAIL)**  
**(This letter opened and re-sealed by the Army)**

Jan. 20, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

I have a little time before I hit the hay so will write a few lines.

I received a letter from Geo. today. Also a V-mail from you and one from Mom & Dad.

It warmed up for a few days and I got to go fishing. I got one that went about three lb. It is cold again so will have to wait until it warms up again before I can try it again.

The first of the week all our crew went to the skeet range and shot for an afternoon. Day before yesterday Jim and I got in some pistol practice. I made to good a score so I am on the pistol team if and when they shoot again. They just finished taking the championship for the Army here in Eng. I beat two of the team so I now get a special pistol and all the ammunition I want. I guess the flak isn't to bad as my hand is still steady. When I get my pistol and a little practice I should be able to improve my score.

I have finished the criminology course and have started on the penology. This will take some time as it is about three times as much material to cover. The Army is starting some classes in a number of subjects. If they have one or two that interest me I will take them. They should know by the end of next week what they will be.

How did Norma do in her Christmas part?

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

(V-MAIL)

Jan. 24, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

Just a line to let you know I am still O.K. The weather has been bad so have not been flying the past week. There is about four inches of snow on the ground with the temp below zero. To top it off the fog has moved in which makes it that much colder. In fact I am in front of the fire place and intend to stay there.

I shot two rounds of skeet and a round of pistol yesterday but it was to cold to get out today. I have a good pistol that has been worked over. I shot some good scores and with a little practice I should do better.

How did Norma do in her Christmas part? You never did say.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

(V-MAIL)

Jan. 25, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

How are my girls tonight? It is almost our wedding anniversary<sup>3</sup> and I am way over here. There is not much I can do except to say that I remember it and expect to be with you the next time it comes along. I expect your mother is with you by this time. it is sure swell that she can come and stay with you. If you ever want to send a telegram the code word in place of an address is AMORGY. Hello Norma how has daddys girl been today. Be sure and give Mommy a kiss for Daddy tonight when you go to bed.

Love Arlin

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<sup>3</sup>They were married Jan 28, 1940.

(V-MAIL)

Feb. 2, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

I just wrote a V-mail to Mom & Dad so will do the same for my girls. I am duty navigator tonight which means I will be up most if not all night. Jim is with me and is reading a book as I write this letter. If the information is not to late he will help draw up the maps. If it's late he will go back to the house and get some sleep. I know what I would do if he was duty navigator. He would have to do all the work at this time of the night. I am so sleepy now I don't know how I will keep my eyes open in a few more hr. Say hello to your mother for me. I hope she had a good trip on her way to Ukiah.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

(V-MAIL)

March 6, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

2nd Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

Believe it or not we didn't fly today. It is the first time in about two weeks. If we could only get a mission in every time we went up I would be home in no time.

Jim and I went to town this afternoon. We saw the show "When Irish Eyes Are shining." it was very good try to see it if you have a chance. After the show we had supper in town then came back to the base.

Honey it is almost that time but keep your chin up and I will be back after it is over and you are up again.

Love & Kisses  
Arln

(V-MAIL)

March 9, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

Yes the sun was out today. What do you think of that? It was the first time in so long that I can't remember the last time. We didn't even fly. Jim and I went to town this afternoon. I had to get some 1st Lt. bars as I have been wearing my old ones. I got my first on March the 4th.

We have seven days off starting the 15th. I will try to find some of our relations. I expect Jim will go with me and after we visit them we will take a trip on into Scotland. We hear a lot about it so this will be our chance to see it first hand.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

**(V-MAIL)**  
**(Type written)**

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Here I am at the rest Home (no I am not having a nervous breakdown) and as I have some spare time, I decided to dig away at the typewriter. This is really a good deal--as close to being home as possible. I have been sent down to get away from it all, and I am. We all run around in civilian clothes, and boy somebody better try knitting the American Red Cross sweaters according to our figures. The pants are usually bright and baggy. All in all we are a raunchy outfit, and it reminds me of our old school days.

The food is out of this "GI" world of ours - five meals a day including juice served to us in bed by the butler. Rather than having the food thrown at us it is served for a change. The house is an old estate turned old hotel, turned flak farm. Its wonderful to have a soft sack again, and running water that you don't have to run to far for. There is a ball room which is really beautiful, that they now use for a gym. There are fireplaces in every room, and for a change they are all operational. It is really nice to be in a clean and tidy atmosphere.

We can play golf, tennis, badminton, baseball, and go horse back riding, skeet shooting and fishing. Think I'll take a crack at most of those sports. By the time that the five Red Cross girls are through egging you on to do these things, I'll have to go back and rest up at my base.

Well I gotta go, you have to dress for dinner - the only Army touch. Hope I have a letter from you when I get back to the base.

P.S. this is a form letter but true.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

**(AIR MAIL)**  
**AMERICAN RED CROSS**

March 16, 1945

Dear Honey,

I wrote a V-mail today but have some time before bed so will try to say a few more things before lights go out.

Jim Paul and I were in London on the 14th. We met a major Proctor who has been a member of Parliament for 14 yr. He took us through the House of Commons and the House of Parliament. We also visited the Supreme Court. You have seen pictures of Judges with their wigs. It is still true that they wear them. Maj. Proctor called Scotland Yard with the result that I spent my afternoon with one of the chief inspectors. We compared methods of police work in Eng. & in the states. Went over some of their cases and saw their system of work. It is one afternoon I will remember for a long time. If I am able to return to London I have an invitation to see what is called the Black Museum. It is a collection of articles such as guns, knives etc that have been used by criminals in England. Very few people have been admitted to view this. It is known all over the world but almost impossible to see. If I can I will sure try to see it.

We will have seven days at the Flak House. I expected to see our relatives but since we have been sent here I don't know if I will ever be able to or not. I have 30 missions at the present time so it should not be to long until I will finish up. I don't know as yet if I will be able to come home at once or not. Some times the Nav. get held over to work in the office. Just keep your fingers crossed so I can start back after I finish my tour.

I will not receive any mail while I am here so should have a good deal when we get back. I don't know just why but for the last month the mail has been very slow.

I am tired tonight as I have done a little of everything today. We started out with some skeet then got out the bow and arrows, after that we had lunch. We started the afternoon with a ball game after which Jim and I had a game of horse shoes. We were still going strong so we had a game of batmin and closed the afternoon with table tennis. We got cleaned up and had a nice supper. How is that for a full day? You would never think it was a rest home the way we get our rest. Oh yes we have orange juice in bed at 8:30 in the morning. What is the Army coming to?

This letter has lasted longer than I expected so I will better stop before I spoil my honey.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

**(WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM)**

FAF27 INTL=CD SANSORIGINE VIA SU CABLES 20 MAR 29 1945

NLT MRS RUTH HARGREAVES=  
=602 NORTH STATE ST UKIAH(CALIF)

=RECEIVED CABLEGRAM CONGRATULATION A VERY HAPPY EASTER  
LOVE DADDY=

ARLIN HARGREAVES.

(AIR MAIL)

March 28, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Ruth Norma and ?

I received your cable today with the good news. I am so glad it is a boy<sup>4</sup> even if I don't know his name. I got a box of cigars and passed them out this afternoon. Remember I want to know all the details so write a long letter as soon as possible.

I only have three more missions but it looks like I may be put on a flying detail for a few weeks. I hope not as I want to finish and come home. Keep your fingers crossed so I can stay on combat duty. Yes I received the letter from Mrs. Denneson and sent her a V-mail. Also received your letter with the one from Mrs. Ashley this afternoon. The last I knew Stone was in the Army but he must have been given a medical discharge. He was in poor shape when he was drafted.

I am returning the clipping you sent with one I cut out of our paper. it seems to be the same one.

Give my son a kiss and don't forget Norma as she gets one to along with my wife.

Love & kisses  
Arlin

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<sup>4</sup> That would be me!

**(WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM)**

FAF32 INTL=CD SANSORIGINE VIA WUCABLES 21 APR 7  
NLT MRS RUTH HARGREAVES  
=602 NORTH STATE ST UKIAH CALIF

=HAVE FINISHED MISSIONS HOPE TO BE HOME SOON LOVE

=ARLIN W HARGREAVES.

(V-MAIL)

April 17, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

Still no orders but they should be in most any time so I can start on my way to the good U.S. Jim and I have been on pass so I couldn't write. It has been nice looking over Eng. on the ground in place of in the air. We try to stay away from the base in order to keep out of work. The Maj. saw me this afternoon so I will be on censor detail in the morning. If I get off in the afternoon I will go fishing.

How is our new son? Has he taken Fritz for a run? If I don't get home soon he will need a razor before I get to see him. Here is a kiss for Norma and be sure and help Moma.

Love and Kisses  
Arlin

(V-MAIL)

April 24, 1945

Mrs. A.W. Hargreaves  
602 N. State Street  
Ukiah, Calif.

Lt. A.W. Hargreaves 02056587  
752nd Sq. 458th Gr.  
APO 558 c/o P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

Dear Honey,

How is my honey and our new offspring? it will not be to long until we will be together again.

Don't write to this address as it would take to long for me to receive it. Don't expect to hear from me very often as I may not have much chance to write.

Paul and I were in London last week. We spent two nights but as we have been doing so much running around our money was about gone so had to return to the base. I also went fishing the first of the week and got some nice ones.

Love & Kisses  
Arlin

April 26, 1945

Dear Mom & Dad,

I have a few minutes before time to eat so will write a few lines. Remember Dad to have the boat ready as I will at last have some time off at home. I don't know just how soon I will be there but it will not be to long. I know Fritz will be ready for a run even if it is to soon for the season. It sure will seem good to be on Black Hill once more.

I saw your relatives<sup>5</sup> over here and they are all OK.

Love Arlin

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<sup>5</sup>The descendants of the Hargreaves who came to America in 1873. Wish he could have expanded on how they were, what they were doing, etc. But they are OK?

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

# WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS

- DL = Day Letter
- NL = Night Letter
- LC = Deferred Cable
- NLT = Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

FAG2 10 TOUR=UD OGDEN UTAH MAY 28 84;P 1945 MAY 29 AM 8 10

MRS A W HARGREAVES=  
=602 NORTH STATE ST UKIAH CALIF

=DEAR RUTH WILL ARRIVE ABOUT JUNE 1ST OR 2ND LOVE

=ARDIN.

1ST 2ND

MPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

## Notes for Chapter Nine

The notes shown on the previous pages and below reflect targets of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division, of which Arlin's 458<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was a member. At this time I do not have information as to the exact targets of the 458<sup>th</sup> so have included all B-24 targets of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division.

**March 18, 1945**, the day I was Born,; 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division B-24s struck Berlin, Oranienburg, and Velzen. 168 B-24s participated with no losses shown for the 458<sup>th</sup>.

**Apr 25, 1945** - Final Eight Air Force bombing mission of World War II. All bomber groups participated (including the 458<sup>th</sup> ) against airfield and rail targets in Czechoslovakia and Germany. 307 B-17's and 282 -24's dispatched with 6 bombers lost - all from flak. No bombers from the 458<sup>th</sup> were lost.

