

COMBAT MISSIONS
As Recorded In Diary

(1)

1943

- October 10 Had a great time on raid watching AA and the Zeros. We lost two B-24's but one crew is safe except for Pilot and Co-Pilot. Zeros shot at men who bailed out and probably killed them.
(2)
- 11 Another raid as an observer. Went back in the Waist to man the tunnel gun and nearly froze to death. Many less Zeros today but the Ack Ack was very accurate. Japs raided us last night, got two merchant vessels.
(3)
- 15 Took crew up for first time on combat mission to Kahili. An old Pilot went along as Co-Pilot. Saw no Zeros at all. Very little Ack Ack. Dropped 20-100 lb. Frags.
(4)
- 19 Was in C-3 position in raid on Kahili. Our Squadron carried 1,000 lb. bombs, the others 100 lb. Frags. Eight and Forty, respectively. Ack Ack was pretty accurate. A good many ships were hit. Also (can't *quite a* read) few Zeros. We think we hit two of them but they did'nt go down.
(5)
- 22 Ran into a lot of weather on the way up. Dropped bombs, not many of them hit the runway and we could'nt see the results for the dense clouds. No Zeros attacked. I was Co-Pilot for Major Mc Neese. 8-1,000 lb. My Crew was complimented by Colonel.
(6)
- 23 Went up to Kahili again with same load. Had whole crew with me flying in C-3 position. Had a pretty good run and bombs hit pretty good. Zeros around but none got near us. P-38 escort.

SQUADRON FORMATION
JAVELIN DOWN

	A-1	
A-3		A-2
	B-1	
B-3		B-2
	C-1	
C-3		C-2

Bico Cheney

SEA SEARCHES AND CONVOYS

As Recorded In Diary

#3)

1943 November 7 Went on Convoy flight at 4 AM. Found Convoy and circled around til 12 Noon and flew back. No Subs seen.

(4)

17 Had to get up at 2 AM and went on Convoy Escort. Five vessels. Took off 30 minutes late. Had a little trouble finding Convoy but found them OK. Ceiling was practically Zero when returned. Got in OK with almost an instrument landing.

(5)

21 Got up at 3 AM took off at 5 AM on a Sea Search. Scraped a wing tip but took off anyway (On a Pole) Saw nothing at all except bad weather. Landed at 2:45.

(6)

23 Flew another Convoy Search. Took off at 3:30 AM. Found Convoy OK. Nothing exciting occurred. Am a little behind on sleep now.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(7)

1943

December 12 Took off 8:30 flying B-3. Target A,B,C,D all under over-cast so we dropped on Kahili. 12-500 lb. Don't know what we hit. A little Ack-Ack. No damage. No Zeros. Mission took 6 hours.

(8)

14 Took off 7:35. Flew C-2 as two planes dropped out. Made individual PDI run on Solana. Salvoed 12-500 lb. Had Bombardier off of a new crew. Very little Ack-Ack.

(9)

16 Took off 8:15. Bombed Wong Tus on N Tip of Bougainville. Bombed PDI Individual runs. Came back in 3 ship formation. Buzzed field at 500 ft. Peeled up to 1,000 ft. Very pretty. C-2.

(10)

18 Took off 0740 to bomb Raubal but louzy weather made us bomb Chabaivill on Bougainville. Very little AA and no Zeros. Mulherron and Vetrecin both grounded. C-2.

(11)

22 Took off in flight of 3 planes at 11:00. Bombed Chinatown on South end of Buka with 30 Frags. Made individual runs and think hit target but a cloud obscured target as we passed over. Bombardier Scheslinger. Encountered 4 burst of Ack-Ack. Pretty accurate.

(12)

24 Took off okay. Flying C-3 over Rabaul at 1 PM. Dropped bombs on runway. Ack-Ack was terrific. Miracle no one hit. 20 or 30 Zeros around. Kept off mostly by fighters. Sgroi thinks he hit one. Watermans crew got a sure.

(13)

28 Took off at 4 AM in terrible weather. Chased up and down looking for rest of Squadron. Finally found some but weather too bad so bombed on Bougainville. SNAFU.

(14)

31 Took off at 0800 to bomb Lunaki Airdrome at Rabaul but again weather turned us back and we bombed Kahili. Flew B-3. Surprising amount of Ack-Ack. Big hole in one ship.

(15)

1944

January

1 Took off at 0800. Bombed Lakunai at 25,000. Zeros (80) all over place. Vetrecin got one sure. We knocked down 20 and 8 probables. One 24 went down. 2 crash landed at Torokina. Willock of our Squadron was one of them. No one hurt. The other ship was all shot up and everybody wounded (371st) Ack-Ack was terrific. Big drunk at Club at nite.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(16)

1944

January 4 Took off 6 AM. Flying C-3 with 371st. Fighter cover did not Randevoux so we could not go to Rabaul. Bombed Solana. Could not see hits.

(17)

7 Bombed Vunuknow thru a cloud cover. Lead squad did not drop. Little Ack Ack. No Zeros attacked altho several were seen. Dropped 30 Frags Clusters. Party at Club.

(18)

10 Take off for 8:00 but only a few got off. We waited til 10 to get off with 5 other planes. Could not Randevoux with other planes so bombed Kahili. No Ack or Zeros. Not sure we will get a mission.

(19)

12 Took off 7 AM. Beautiful weather but clouds over target. We bombed Tobera Airdrome with good results. AA was moderate. One Zero came up to formation and tossed a phosphorus bomb right at us. Two more came right up into the formation but we did'nt hit them. Waterman was shot up a bit but landed okay. Had party.

(20)

February 14 Only 10 out of 12 ships in our Sqd. got off and only 7 over target including we three. Formation was terrible. Never worked so hard. Bombs were poor. Rappopo was hit. Supposed to have 5 Squadrons but 5th Group did'nt show. No Zeros except one Tojo and very little AA.

(21)

19 Led a flight with Stafford along. Bombing Kara individually. Made two runs. Ack Ack was surprisingly plentiful and accurate. Bomb hits were on runway but most did not explode.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(22)

1944

February 25 Took off 8 AM flying C-3. Two Ack Ack positions was target but closed in so bombed Rapopo. Whole squadron fell short in revetment area. Don't see how they can bomb so louzy.

(23)

27 Took off 8:30. Got in some pretty bad weather but had a beautiful mission at 15,000 ft. Bombs fell all over the target. Should pacify the Group C.O. (C-2)

(No Mission Credited)

29 Took off to fly D-1. Developed trouble #2, had to feather and return on 3 engines. No trouble at all. Told Goldsborough to radio ETA. He sent it urgent without asking me. Caused an alert as Bomber Command did'nt get the message, only the Alert. I caught Hell from Com Air Sols on down. Had to make a report as did Goldsborough. Such is the life of a Pilot. The rest of the Squadron had to turn back because of weather.

(24)

March 4 Flew B-2 on louzy mission to Rabaul. Weather louzy and bombed on ETA. Missions piling up now.

(25)

6 Flew C-1 on mission to Kavieng Airdrome. Bad weather over target and bombing louzy as usual. 8½ hours-too long.

(26)

8 C-1 on Rabaul City. Very good mission at 16,000 ft. Lots of fires started. Flew 331, our old ship. Ack Ack intense but we were not hit.

(27)

10 331 was out so took spare ship 679. Right after take off had a hydraulic leak. Stayed in formation and hand-cranked doors open but bombs would'nt release. Mike (Vetrecin) worked on them and we made another run on Rabaul City but bombs still hung. Made run on Rapopo- still would'nt go. So Mul (Mulherron) had to dropp them from bomb bay (with a screwdriver). Were hit by Ack Ack on every run. One of them almost got Goldsborough and Beltz. Bomber Command got the facts and publicity. Then had to land without brakes but by landing on Tail Skid it came to stop okay.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(28)

⁴⁴
arch 12 Flying B-2 went over Rabaul City in 331. Had an excellent run and plastered target with 1,000 pounders. Ack Ack not bad as we were at 18,500 ft.

(29)

14 Flew lead for Squadron in A-1 with Op. Officer Stafford as Co Pilot and Magill as Bombardier. Bombing was beautiful. Made AFCE run. Of course, Stafford was the real pilot. Results from the mission make it the best we have pulled. Bomber Command congratulates us on last 3 or 4 missions all of which have been excellent.

(30)

16 Flew C-2. Made dry run on Vunaknow then wheeled around and bombed Tobera. Had nice pattern with 12-500 pounders. No Zeros altho 5th Group was attacked yesterday. Flak hit a few ships but not ole 331.

(31)

18 Carried 40 gasoline and rubber bombs to Rabaul City. Weather not too good but had a fair run. One Zero was fired on by Hitchcock and Sgroi but no results. Was B-3.

(32)

20 Flew C-2 with 500 lbs. to Vunakanou. Weather again bad but hits ok and mission called excellent. Had a lot of trouble with electronic superchargers and almost had to drop out. Ack Ack hit several ships but not us.

(33)

22 Took off in 331 in C-1 position. #4 engine supercharger ran away on take off pulling 65". Engine would not feather. Salvoed bombs "safe" at 400ft. Was losing altitude at 130 Mph so started up no. 4 engine even tho it was on fire. Got up to 800 ft. and came in okay for landing. Looks like our luck is gone. Took off immediately in spare ship and made mission to Tobera okay. My burning engine caused quite a commotion this morning.

23 Did'nt do much. Was pretty tired all day. No mission tomorrow. Something is cooking.

24 Still pretty tired. Disturbing rumor that we are not going to Auckland this time. Two bomb bay tanks in plane. Truk ? Briefing at 9:30 tomorra.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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1944

- March 25 It is Truk. Runway and area on Eten Isle. Take off from Torokina Strip (West Side of Bougainville) About a 12 hour flight. No escort. C-1 position. This will be murder. Just two Squadrons going. Leaving for Torokina at 1 PM today.
(34)
- 26 Slept through continuous gunfire by our side lobbing shells over the Jap lines. Luckily for us they didn't return the fire. Took off at 6:30 AM and we proceeded on course. Attack time was 12:30 but no Truk. Both Squadrons flew around till 13:30 dropping bombs on some innocent little Island. Gas was awfully low and we landed with 105 gals. at Green Island about 45 minutes flying time left. Everybody was awfully low and some gave out of gas on approach. Mission was no good at all. Lots of planes threw out a lot of valuable equipment.
- 27 Flew back to Munda and got some sleep and a shower. Rumor going back to Truk tomorrow night.
- 28 Got up late. Went to a briefing which will be same deal as before. 5th Group didn't get thru yesterday. Take off for Torokina at 12:30 today. Ate very well at Torokina. Take off tomorrow at 0630.
(35)
- 29 We hit Eten Island in Truk Group at about 13:00. Bombing was wonderful. Right after bombs away we were attacked by 80 to 100 Zekes, Tonys and Tojos. They stayed with us for 50 minutes making passes from all directions. We got 3 Sure 3 Damaged. Group destroyed over 100 planes on ground and in air. Two planes B-24 out (Lost) of a total of twenty. Rockas in our Squadron dead. Landed at Torokina about 1900. News correspondents and all big shots around. We should have a fighter escort on a mission like this. All of Rockas crew killed except Tackas on landing at Green Island.
- April 1 Landed at Piva (Bougainville) about 2 PM. Were not shot at by Japs while landing. They have been pretty well knocked out by our artillery which fires all the time. Food very good (Navy) Slept fairly well in spite of the firing. Back to Truk tomorrow.

Bess Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(36)

April 2 Took off in A-2 in first Squadron of Group. If Col dropped out I would have had to lead Group. Reached target (Dublon in Truk) okay. We had four Squadrons, two from 5th Group. About 50 Zeros intercepted before we hit the target. Ack Ack pretty thick. They dropped many phosphorous bombs. Dropped our incendiaries on target and fought off Japs for 45 minutes. They got 3 B-24s from the 5th and one of ours who made a water landing and were picked up. Our plane was not damaged. What luck we have. We got two more Zeros. Hitchcock one and Beltz and Goldsborough one. This is supposed to be our last mission before Auckland.

(37)

16 Flying A-2 took off at 740AM (From Green Island) Weather was miserable but found target with aid of Snooper. Dropped pretty well considering the weather. No Ack. No Zeros. Target was Satawan Runway. East of Truk 100 miles. Landed at Torokina

(38)

18 Was delayed in take off about 25 minutes as a magneto was bad. Did't think we could catch Squadron but went up individually. Found target and bombed it with pretty good results. No Ack Ack No Zeros. Just as we turned off target saw the Group coming in. How we beat them up there I don't know. They bombed six minutes after we did. Returned to Torokina.

(39)

24 Flying A-3 took off in 331. Half way to Green Prop ran away on No. 1 Engine. Salvoed and returned. Took off again in 372nd ship and sped up to Green arriving just before dark. Messed around a couple of hours then took off at 11:00 PM. Pitch dark no moon and lots of weather. Flew up. The ETA ran out then we looked for the target for about an hour without finding it. Returned to Munda thru lots of weather. Had another Navigator as ~~as~~ Sullivan has already left for Auckland and also had a reporter with us. Were in the air for 14 hours and 20 minutes which is just about a record. Landd at 12:55.

Bird Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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1944

- May 21 Took off in C-47, landed on Los Negros in Admiralty Isles. Our new base. Found out Willock went down over Truk. 3 escaped. Surbaugh was never picked up. Both came overseas the same time I did. Thats 2 out of 4 leaving Waterman and me and makes 4 crews lost from this Squadron in last couple of months.
- 22 Helped fix up tent. Living with Holmes and Durham. Not bad here.
- 23 Messed around with tent.
- 24 A snap mission but I did not go. Have a new system now. Half of Squadron (all four squadrons) fly on each mission making 5 or 6 plane squadrons.
(40)
- 25 Went along as Co-Pilot on 10-hour snap mission. No Ack Ack.
- 26 Loafed around.
(41)
- 28 Led our Squadron on mission to Wolei Isle. Dropped 120 Frags. each. Excellent pattern. Good weather. Got hit three places by Ack Ack. No Zeros.
(42)
- June 1 Took off and randevouxed okay but turned back by bad weather.
- 2 Other flight bombed Truk. Met Zeros. Sawyer of 372nd killed. Came over same time I did.
(43)
- 3 Led Squadron over Truk. Eten Isle. Bombing very poor. Just a few Zeros. They got a 5th Group ship. Men bailed out into water.
(44)
- 7 Led Squadron but were split up by very bad weather. We went up to atoll alone hiding in clouds and popped out about 5 minutes from Target and spotted 5 Zeros at our altitude headed in our direction. We salvoed bombs above one of the islands and dove into a cloud. Our interphone was out and 3 turrets were frosted up. Sullivan is being sent home tomorra. Got credit for June 1st strike.
(45)
- 9 Another SNAFU by weather. Got together with 5 others but they all turned back.
(46)
- 11 Finally got thru to bomb Truk thru an overcast. 10-15 Zeros. No damage.
(47)
- 13 Led Squadron to Dublin Isle. # 3 in Group box. Took off and randevouxed after penetrating front. Bombing not too good. AA not too bad. 10-15 Zeros. We got none. No ships lost.
(48)
- 15 Led again. Weather en-route was good but whole target area was overcast so bombed Tol Isle one of Truk Group. A couple of Zeros were seen but none came near. No Ack Ack.

Bice Cheney

COMBAT MISSIONS
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(49)

1944

June 17 Led Formation to Dublon. Were # 3 Squadron. Weather pretty bad over target but had a good pattern. 20 to 25 Zeros came up and were very eager. Most passes from above diving out of an overcast. Were with us 25-30 minutes. Before and after Bomb run. Were in overcast just after run and were sweating it out but broke into clear and Group got together pretty quick. Our Squadron got two Zeros, our crew sharing in one.

(50)

19 Dublon again. Our Squadron #2 in Group. Had nice pattern Ack Ack was very good hitting us once and several other planes. No Zeros came up. Rumor they have been moved to Guam as Truk is pretty well beat up.

(51)

23 Led Squadron (checking out Davis as leader) to Yap carrying only 3- 1,000 lb. Had beautiful pattern over runway destroying a few planes on ground and making runway unservicable. Attacked by 10-12 Zeros but our formation was tight so they picked on 5th Group as usual. One 5th Group ship shot down and and survivors strafed and others were shot up a good bit but we suffered no losses. Ack Ack was moderate.

Bill Cheney

COMBAT COMPLETED
FLIGHTS TO AUSTRALIA
As Recorded In Diary

1944

- June 25 Am grounded and probably will not fly anymore missions except in an emergency. Sweating out that Captaincy which everyone agrees Towns, Waterman and I should have had long ago, but nobody seems to be able to do much about it.
- 27 Mulherron came back from Sydney. Those boys sure have some wild tales about that place. Hitchcock knocked down a "Sure" Zero and Sgroi got a probable flying with Sylor. Brings our Crew total up to 8 "Sures".
- July 8 I may take C-47 down to Sydney tomorra with passengers. I don't like flying it with passengers knowing as little about it as I do.
- 9 Did'nt go to Sydney but Davis and I are going tomorra. We Went up in a C-47 and shot a few landings in it which is pretty simple. To think that civilian pilots get \$1,000 for taking passengers a couple of hundred miles in perfect weather in those crates.
- 10 We took off with me in Co-Pilots seat and landed at Nadzab, New Guinea. Passed over Lae and Salamaua of recent fame. Stayed overnite at Townsville, Aust. where ate two big steak meals. Pretty raunchy little town.
- 11 Left Townsville landed at Charlieville, a purely Australian field. Arrived in Sydney about 3 PM Checked in at nice Hotel. Got dates and went to "The Roosevelt" a night club where many of Squadron were.
- 13 Had to leave Syd. at 1000 with another load of passengers Took same route back. Overnite at Townsville where ate "steak" for a change !
- 15 Messed around. Vetrecin and Hitchcock, flying with Sylor over Yap were killed today when another ship got caught in prop wash and crashed into him. The plane broke into bits and went down in pieces right over the target. Someone reported that the ball turret came loose and went down which means poor ole Vetrecin never had a chance. Someone else reported seeing chutes open but dont know which planes they might have come from. Hitch was flying his 50th mission to get it on the list going in tomorra. He was top gunner in Squadron in points. Sure makes me sick to see these guys go down after flying with them so much.
- 16 Went down to Guadalcanal in converted B-24. Will bring supplies and a new C-47 back. Staying at 13th AF HDQ. What a set-up. Archery ranges, basketball courts- Chicken - They dont know thers a war going on.
- 18 Took off at 1300 landed at Bougainville because Capt. Rogers of Bomber Command (Co-Pilot) had some business there. Stayed at Marines. They have a club which serves any kind of drink you can think of. From a circular bar including a Dry Martini (With Olive). Hard to realize Japs are only 10 miles away but no artillery fire.

Bice Cheney

COMBAT COMPLETED
FLIGHTS TO AUSTRALIA
As Recorded In Diary

1944

July

- 19 Took off 0900 thru weather to Mokerang (Admiralty Isle) at 1400. Think I'll have to take 47 down to Sydney tomorra.
 - 20 Took off at 700, an hour late waiting for Co-Pilot who did'nt know he was supposed to go. Took off with out him. Found a lot of weather around Nadzab so landed at Dobadura. Thence to Townsville, Aust. where got a good meal. Slept at transient camp.
 - 21 Left Townsville landed at Brisbane. Had trouble with hydraulic system which I dont know anything about but got to Sydney ok. Back to the Carlton Hotel.
 - 22 Crew Chief supposed to fix aircraft today. He is a screwball tho and probably wont. Stayed out quite late and had a merrie time.
 - 23 Supposed to take off but plane's hydraulic system out. Tried to find someone to fix it which is quite a job. ASC said they would take care of it or an Australian civilian would. Not scheduled for tomorra. Went to bed early.
 - 24 Went out to field to check on plane. ASC said they checked plane and filled resevoir and plane was ready to go. Scheduled for tomorra. Sydney is quite a place but costs a lot of dough. Having steak almost every meal and also oysters.
 - 25 Out to take off. Pressures were okay but fluid was pouring out. So got Australian civilian to look at it and found out it would be quite a job. They will fix it today and night.
 - 26 Finally got off. Landing at Charlieville. From there to Charters Towers where went to Town for the night.
 - 27 Delayed take off due to weather but got off to Dobadura. Incidentally, I saw Genl. Kenney taking a Pee by a B-17 while 3 enlisted men stood at attention while passing thru here on the way down. Landed at "Home" about 630. Nothing changed much but expecting to move shortly.
 - 30 Am taking a converted B-24 down to Australia tomorra on Egg run. Taking Mulherron along on sly.
 - 31 Took off on schedule with a rep. of Bomber C. to buy goods. Landed at Cairns, Aust. but got no supplies so took off landing at MacKay on 4,500 ft. runway. Some A/C - cruises at 180. Taken to town by Red Cross and billeted at R.C Hotel. Had steaks oysters etc. and Australian beer at Officers Club.
- August 1 Captaincy should go in today. Ate well all day. No food ration here. At Club again. Bomber C. guy bought \$4,000 worth of Gin and Whiskey which we loaded on plane. Weights 10,000 lb. (Max. B-24 load=8,000 lb)
- 2 Talked Bomb. C. guy into staying another day. Went to Barbecue on outskirts of town. Very good meat.

SEA SEARCHES AND CONVOYS
As Recorded in Diary

943

(1)

October 3 Got up at 4AM. Went on search mission carrying three depth charges. Did'nt see any enemy planes or shipping although were within fighter range of Jap base. Took 10½ hours.

(2)

7 Went on search at 5:30 AM. Saw nothing although pretty close to Jap isle. Field closed when returned but finally landed with a 50 ft. ceil. Going to Guadalcanal tomorrow.

Send
10/3
copy