Bombs Away

44-10
This is the Story of 44-10...

This is graduation. Our last missions are flown over the turbulent cadet airways. We are bombardiers. We're happy now.

The wings and bars for which we have strived are neatly pinned on our blouses and shoulders. We shall never forget how we got them... never forget our cadet days recorded in these pages... days of worry, study, sweating out exams... C.E.'s and combat hits. Yes, there was always the bitter mingled with the sweet to formulate pleasant memories for tomorrow's reminiscence.

There was open post and our bombas-dears. There were our buddies who gave us words of encouragement when the road got rough... we had our instructors to supply the extra throttling we needed when the flying got tough; and more than all that... there was our objective... distant, yet glittering, towards which we steered our course.

Now, "Bombs Away, Sir!" Shack! We make this our final entry with an inward glowing of satisfaction as we prepare to take another heading. Rough days ahead, we know... but come what may, we are fit for the purpose that is ours... to serve now.

Perhaps all that glittered... is gold... after all!

VICTORVILLE
ARMY AIR FIELD
TO CLASS 44-10:

Mingled with the thrill of receiving your wings is the honor of becoming an officer. You have worked hard for both, and you deserve them.

Ahead lies a great task. You have trained for one of the most important jobs in modern warfare. United Nations air victories are being contributed to more and more by the American bombardier. He is the pivotal figure in this war and in him is concentrated the responsibility of every mission. As you leave here for further training, constantly strive to improve your knowledge and technique so that you will be ready when you reach the combat theater. Also in combat, your responsibility as an officer will be equally as great.

Congratulations and remember always—be as good an officer as you are a bombardier!

EARL C. ROBBINS,
Colonel Air Corps,
Commanding.
MAJOR S. A. MILLIGAN
Post Executive Officer

CAPTAIN JOHN D. BARNARD
Executive Officer
Training and Operations

CAPTAIN ROBERT C. DAVIDSON
Post Adjutant

MAJOR ROBERT H. MURRAY
Deputy for Training

LT. STANLEY A. REEL
School Secretary

CAPTAIN CARL E. SCHULTZ
Director of Training
LET'S GET TACTICAL...

A room full of babbling, green, awkward cadets was the scene that greeted Lt. Santos Giampapa as he strode upon the rostrum to bid us welcome to VAAF. The badgering ceased abruptly as all eyes focused attention on this little man with the West Point appearance. Yes, he's going to be a stickler.

Fortunately first impressions aren't always accurate. Ours weren't. Lt. Giampapa claimed no past association with the noted military academy. He was assigned a tactical officer by way of Boston and Officers Training School...the hard way. And we breathed a sigh of relief.

However, when we placed last in one parade, his fighting spirit bristled with indignation. And we felt the full sting of the bristles. Inspections at every formation! The skeptics attempted to forecast our inevitable fates. "He's G.I. Strictly G.I."

Our fears were misnomers because we won the parade on a glorious 10th of June. It wasn't long before the entire field was aware of the honor bestowed upon us. And why? Lt. Giampapa's publicity department took care of the ballyhoo. He smilingly broadcast the virtues of his "men"; we were proud to be the object of his attentions.

If square deals for his men were Lt. Giampapa's goal, he fulfilled it two-fold for the guys of 44-10. If we have emerged from the Victorville mill bearing some semblance of officer-bombardiers, it was all due to Lt. Giampapa who had faith in a motley gang of giddy kids, bent on making good in the Air Corps. Our goal is to strive to emulate a really fine man.
CADET DETACHMENT

LT. FRED E. BLANEY
Adjuvant

CAPTAIN A. H. MILLER
Assistant Commandant of Students

MAJOR HAROLD M. SKAGGS, JR.
Commandant of Students

GIGS TOURS PASS
ON SATURDAY

We were willing to wager our last bottom G.I. dollar that the Army chose its inspecting officers by their ability to spot dust where there shouldn't be dust, with the aid of white gloves and California sunshine.

Yes, no matter how we put our muscles to the task of tidying up our prescribed bunk areas for the Saturday rituals, there was always the steely eye of the inspecting officer to contend with. His 20/20 vision did us wrong.

Military inspections, comparable only to Mother's house cleaning in the Spring and Fall, brought out the mutinous elements in our physical make-up, aggravated by a newly acquired domestic disease... house-maid's knee.

The indoor ceremony followed “the garden” investigation. Inspections in rank on sand-packed desert beds under the blazing sun of the Mojave assured burnt noses, perspiring brows and dusty shoes. Through all our weeks at Victorville we had not devised a method of tramping through the sands without getting our foot gear dusty. But “sharp” was the keynote of the judicious inspecting officer and we were gigged for “dusty” shoes.

“Gigged for dusty shoes? What are you griping about? He gigged me for sweat on the brow.”

And we cussed by the numbers. Tours were for rookies. Somehow we felt we had never passed the basic training stage. Yet, after a process of trial and error and sessions in shoe polishing, we triumphed.

We're on the ball now. We can make a bed... the army way... and everyone is satisfied.
THE RUGGED TYPE...

...They had the toughest job of them all — First up and outside for those pre-dawn reveilles while others could snatch 40 extra seconds of precious "sack-time" — First out for school and flight line formations, while others digested those magnificent mess-hall treats... Not to mention the wear and tear on the larynx, what with "E Flight, fall in"... "All right, you guys, cut the talking in ranks"... "Come on, get in step, you guys"... "Straighten it up, here comes an officer"... and all the other little by-words that became so much a part of these Cadet Officers.

Trouble? Plenty of trouble, but it was well worth it. The pride of wearing the bars of a Cadet Officer, the satisfaction of successfully assuming responsibility — the realization that the training and experience in leadership would someday be priceless... all these helped make the tough jobs easier. Much credit is due these lads who, in addition to other duties, found time somehow to be Cadet Officers.
READIN’...

Twang looks wearily... and drearily...
At this rugged ground school lore.
What’s it for?
"Give me a bomb... a pat on the back,
And I’ll come back... with a shack."
'RITIN' ... 'RITHMETIC...

A foundation necessarily precedes the construction of a building and so we became the timber, the steel braces, cement, nails and the other materials needed as the construction artists, our instructors supreme, built monumental edifices from an unpredictable mob of aspiring bombardiers.

Edifices? Yes, built from the sweat and patience of many instructors who molded us into bombardier-officers.

With kaleidoscopic efficiency we were put through varying stages of learning...theory of bombing, analysis of results, causes of errors, meteorology, C-1 auto pilot, instrument calibration...code...aircraft recognition...

Repetition! The instructors used it as a wedge to penetrate our fuggy brain matter. We set up walls of revenge. Yet slowly, deliberately in strict adherence to the military doctrines of Air Corps schooling, our instructors supreme succeeded in forging the last stubborn obstruction into an obedient panel of knowledge. The building was finished! We thought of Abe Lincoln's "house divided against itself cannot stand." We were determined to stand undivided.

Today, as we flaunt our bombing ability before the admiring eyes of the undergraduates we can only say, "They did it in Ground School, fellas!"
WE BOMBED FROM 12 FEET and the dizzying heights sometimes brought spots before the eyes of Wimer and DuFresne sharing close quarters with Lt. Silvaggio on the trainer. Collaborators below are Durant and Hart, who restrain comment on the results of this initial "low altitude mission."

A LETHAL CARGO is contained within that canvas bag...a $5,000 parcel designed to pack a wallop. Our implement of war is gingerly handled by Gratias on the ladder as he hands the bombsight to Harman. The beholder on the loft is Brunemir, who seems to frown on the manual chores accompanying trainer instruction.
HIGH...WIDE and Handsome?

Handsome? Did anyone here say handsome? Handsome possibly to another trainer, but definitely out of the groove in the jargon of the hep cats of 44-10 who stood mute, as if struck by lightning first day in the hangar.

As we filed through a very small door into a very large hangar, we felt like Ali Baba invading the domain of the plundering vagabonds. Huge, massive framework...a sky-hi ceiling, windows and more windows and the feeble pipe-like assemblage before us gave forth solemn and ominous uncongeniality to the motley gang of ten men.

"I've got to hit that Bug," was the lusty battle cry those first irksome days of our learning curriculum. Battle cries turned to visible tears in the grooming process tho' none of us reached the "racked with sobs" stage. We begged and cajoled, pleaded and sometimes prayed and gradually through a process of nerve-shattering endeavor and the "HP to succeed, nay to conquer, we chalked up an entry on the credit side of the bombing ledger...One Trainer Course...completed. The figures balanced while we sometimes found ourselves off-balance.

This is where we Learn to Bomb, Hit the bug, quote a psalm...Our instructor's going wild. He started out by being mild. Twang and Tillie ruined his day, He'll take combat...any day!
THE ROAD TO FLIGHT

There are many roads which lead to a goal. Some pock-marked with obstacles and disappointments. Others lined with herbaceous borders, weeds and sweet smelling flowers. We conclude now that our "road to flight" can be compared only to a road with detours. But what's a road without detours?

Just as the traveler strays from the marked highways and by-ways, so did the men of 44-10 cavort a diverted path down the flight road. Detours in our case were profitable. We acquired bombing equipment and target hitting knowledge in the process. A total of three stops netted us a parachute valued by the Air Forces at $230.00—one clip board... oxygen mask... flashlight... stop watch and a $600.00 camera. And we took time out for a swig of Coke along the way. A good take for one night's work, we thought.

Then we proceeded to the crossroads and checked the road signs of our ready room. Terse directions, neatly written on blackboards gave all the needed data... "Mission, pilot, ship, T. O., Target, Alt., C.I.A.S., Instructor, Student."

We picked up a rider (our instructor) and proceeded on our way down the "road of flight."

"Where you going, Mister?"
"Target Series N."
"Good deal, I'm going there, too."
"Hop in."

Destination ahead. There were no more detours this far.
CAMERA CHECK OUT becomes a pleasant chore when there's a WAC around to break the tedium of the day's occupation. There's a catch in it though. The WAC doesn't like cadets and she only works there. The Smith Boys with Casanova Wrubelle look on admiringly, but to no avail.

A HEALTHY ARTICLE IS THE PARACHUTE...that all important emergency parasol if Dame Fortune goes askew, which sometimes she does. It's serious business for Smith, Bracken, Nigg, another Smith, Schwartz and Storch who swear by the product of the ambitious little larvae.
WE ROARED AWAY...

April tenth was the date of our initial roar... April 10, 1944! A day to remember. Pounding hearts and dry, parched palate heralded our first trip skyward in a noisy AT-one-one special. A series of jumbled questions ran through our minds that day... minds wearing a fuzzy coat of doubt as we made preparation for our maiden mission.

“Do I remove the pins before or after take-off?”

“How many do they wash-out on the first mission?”

“When do I open the bomb bay doors?”

In the air: “Sir, I forgot my bombing tables.” And what’s a bombardier without his tables? Reminds us of eggs without the shells. “Sir, are you certain that my last one hit at 350?” The crosshairs were right on the shack. Oh, my bubbles, I forgot about them!” Wailing, wailing. Gradually the questions simmered down to a few per mission. Grey hairs disappeared from instructor’s heads, but not before we had realized that wearing a pair of bombardier wings represented a lot of worry, sweat... a lot of pounding headaches... and not half so much romance as depicted on the poster in front of the home town post office.

We roar away now with courage, as we trade AT-11’s for bigger stuff... trade wooden shacks for enemy arsenals.
Twang has toiled, alas, alack,
But he can't hit the wooden shackle;
And for graduation's sake,
He's going to use his little rake.

LET'S DODD IT MY WAY... says Romano while plotting a navigation hop with Ball. We have it on reliable authority these two boys arrived 12 minutes late, some odd 16 miles off course. Navigation comes hard to our Green Spot lotharios who find it hard navigatin' back from their week end jaunts.

BIG BUSINESS ON THE LINE... at any rate, this group of 44-10 men are making full use of Air Corps Standard Bombardier Equipment. The Joe with the pencil is Bernie Ravin who appears to be having trouble penetrating the navigatin' noggins of Poe, Richie, Durston, and Bouldin.
Tillie lends a helping hand,
Her services are in demand.
She believes in serving double,
When Twang has trouble
With the bubble.

"Patience, dear," is what she'll say.
"You'll be a bombardier...some day."

EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN STOVE is present in this pre-flight photo of 44-10 beavers on the line. It’s bound to be a good mission if the calculations of Loffredo, Mahan, and DuFresne are right. They’re the lads bending laboriously over their forms on the tail of an AT-11. Toof, Hoffman, and Richie gambol in the near background at the muscular task of loading the blue boys.

THIS AMBITIOUS QUARTETTE, minus their musical instruments, form an abstinent body as the picture implies. Bombing is serious business for Goldstein, Rollins, McKnight, and Winters as they prepare to “roar away.” Determination carves deep into the brows of these lads, specifically for the benefit of their instructor who is lurking about the line, out of camera range.
They Taught Us How To Bomb...

We can’t help feeling that our instructors are the real heroes of this war — the men who, by virtue of their assignment, are denied the greater glory of actual combat. These are the men who soothed and consoled, and fretted over us — who slowly but definitely made us expert in the secret craft of precision bombing.

During those first trying hours as we went praying down the bombing run on the way to the target — it was our instructors who shared the ecstasy of the “shack” with us — or who saw us through those black moments that periodically cast a shadow over every fledgling bombardier.

It is our collective hope that their reward will be the reflected glory of our achievements.

They Taught Us How to Use Our Hands.

MOONLIGHT & TARGETS...

Moonlight and targets,
Brought misery and pain,
Moonlight and targets,
We'll never hit it again.

Moonlight discloses,
My bomb hit 500 feet wide,
Moonlight and targets,
I'll get a check-ride.

Night flying was the bugaboo and waterloo of many bombadier cadets. Perhaps it was the fact that moonbeams were made for better things. Moreover, the supervisor of the satellites, that shining old man with a market cornered on green cheese, who dominated the constellation decided that the sanctity of his sky domain was not to be invaded by meandering cadets...searching for wings...and bars.

Night lights were for lovers. We were lovers in a remote sense; lovers of bombsights, and glittering targets. Mister Moon frowned on the enlarged explanation of the word.

It was for us to win him over. This had to be done in degrees. 15,000 feet measures afforded us a fair chance to get near the old cantankerous, mischievous buzzard with the shining face.

Swing the sight...where's the target? Moon...be good to me!
We supplicated...sometimes cried...mostly yelled at Mister Moon. Then suddenly a moonbeam darted out from the mellow mass to light up the wooden shack.

Synchronize...course okay...bubbles level, Sir...Up trigger...kill rate...check bubbles...gotta' hurry...synchronization okay, "Bombs Away, Sir." Switches off...a shack for sure!

C.E.'s revealed the success or failure of our night excursions. Whatever the score, we had won a friend in Mr. Moon. A lasting friend.
He was a prankish fellow at the outset. We forgave him though because we too are a bit more playful at night.
THE OMNIPRESENT E6B forms the center of interest as these class ten men compile necessary data for the third mission of the evening. The handy gadget is purported to be able to do anything a wife can do. Mystic Montgomery, Meandering Magee, and Shy-Boy Schwartz claim they’re not authorities on the subject. We Wonder!

IRIDIUM SMILES AND SCINTILLATING GAIT proclaims this the last mission of the week and Peters, Russo, Wolski, and Sams stride hurriedly towards the barracks in preparation for the week end mission...not over L. A., but more pleasantly to the Angel city. The happy, passionate, nay wolfish countenances displayed here changed when the fluctuating schedules fluctuated to include bombing on Saturday night.

ACTION AT NIGHT...and the 44-10 night-hawks go into their well-rehearsed routine. Wakefield and Wolski hoist the heavies into the buggy while Schwartz and Wilson tending a mean computer. Handling the less arduous task is Martinson, who demonstrates perfect shackling technique, aided and abetted by Mister Moon.
MUSCLES ... BY THE NUMBERS

It's exactly 10 minutes before P. T. time. Our eager adjutant (but aren't they all) screams the fall out command.

We run out to the stand. Then comes the slaughter. The calijumps begin with a terrific cadence. On and on they go, without a moment's respite. As we are about to drop by the wayside, the instructor stops, beats his chest like Tarzan and starts another series of exercises. Hours elapse... or time that seems like hours. The instructor gives us "halt" and we bite the dust by the numbers. Grinning from ear to ear he announces casually... "Two laps."

So we file away on the endless trek, first half is down hill, so we can coast on automatic pistons. Coming back is different. Our tongues hang out, we puff locomotively and push uphill.

We chug wearily around the course again with the pace a turtle could beat and we finally make it... but only because omega must follow alpha.

Then off to our assigned areas for the finishing touches. We proceed to kill one another in football, basketball, baseball and the other muscle building chores. Superman would have long passed out... but not 44-10. We might wash-out. Superman couldn't!

"Courage, men" was the comforting cry of Lieutenants Fred A. Anderson and Floyd L. Marchant who upheld the integrity of the PT department and made men of us. We're thankful now. We're healthy and strong, thanks to the insistent demands of our instructors who knew what they were doing all along.
THE GENTLE ART OF MEAT CUTTING fascinates a trio of 44-10 men who lend a helping hand to the cadet culinary staff. The word “art” is purely figurative, but “gentle” is not, for the all-important commodity of the rationed variety rates a soft touch and special handling at the carving hands of Armstrong, Avera, and Ball.

A TRIBUTE TO GOOD FOOD is demonstrated here by Feldman, DuFresne, and Grady who smile graciously in salute to their vitamin-filled victuals. Cadet grub at VAAF comparable only to Mother’s brought forth graphic approval as the men of ten get ready to add inches to the midriff. Burp!

A MARVELOUS MESS... and time to relax amid home-like surroundings and soft music. Good meals, compensated two fold for the hectic, split-second training of bombardier cadets. Our mulish tendencies took wing soon after we fortified ourselves with the magnificent bill of fare at Capt. Bert Galindo’s happy hall of nutriment.
MEET the MEN of 44-10
The Song Of The Bombardier...

Roar away with the Bombardier,
Rack up the eggs, line up the Golden Goose.
Roar away with the Bombardier,
We're headed for a spot to turn 'em loose.

High, low, rain or snow,

'Neath the tropical sun.
Off we Go! Look out Below!

We've got a Job to be done.
Bomb, Bomb, Bomb, Drop that Souvenir

From the U.S. Bombardier!
The Staff...

THE CHIEFS
Editor (Dynamic, driving, delirious)!...Willie Snow Durant
Co-Editor (Modest genius) ........Bernard Ravin

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Leon (I offer you my all) Christian
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class book is the third "Bomb's Away" publication produced
by Choppie and Gene. Their combined talents resulted in one
of the finest class books in the Western Flying Training
Command. Our good wishes go along with those of higher
headquarters as we say: "Good luck, Choppie and Gene,
and thanks for giving us a really fine book."

Twang gets his dough,
He's jubilant,
The Army isn't bad...

Until the Ax swings hi then low...
"I'm feeling kinda sad."
They're things to pay and
Pay and Pay...

The Greenbacks Disappear.
The Army Needs Your money Bud...
To Make a Bombardier!
A BREAK IN THE SCHEDULE

Our manly instincts nurtured by a ravenous yen for Cuba Libres and the fairer sex sent us scampering to the fun spots on those precious 36 hour sojourns.

Precious did we say? Nay — priceless.

So much to remember now... as we stand... chin-up, proud as the C. O. shakes our sweaty hand and delivers the merchandise to us personally. Yes, silver wings and gold bars culminated weeks of struggle, hard work... pock-marked with week ends. Priceless week ends!

Vague jumbled remembrances come to mind now....

Five in a car on Saturday... gasoline coupons... sleeping at the YMCA... two hankychiefs (one for the nose the other for lipstick) perfumes, luxurious sofas, hard beds, new cocktails at old bars... soft music... jive music... some sincere love-making... some not so sincere... long distance calls from Hollywood to Mom... to the wife... the wife to be. Yep... these were the little mementos that spelled respite to the target tuggers of 44-10.

Girls... lots of girls... some you will always remember, some you’ll want to forget... some you can’t forget... one you’ll marry.

Yes... girls... the L. A. lovelies who upheld the feminine prestige of Southern Cal. made some pretty distinct impres-sions on the gadgets of 44-10. Girls... hepped to the exuberant cadence of bombing cadets... gazed wistfully at our shining brass and in deep seductive voices proclaimed, “You ah’ are the nicest bombardier cadets we’ve ah’ met, you shore are,” in the sweetest, most beautifully tinged southern accent this side of Barstow. Week ends were for liars... nay prevatars. We fought every battle imaginable. We were aide de camps to Nimitz, Arnold... or Eisenhower when the going got too bad... but the girls loved our dribble and we reveled in the joy of flinging it about.

While we tore about the fun circuits, many of the 10 lads stayed at home base. Why? We’ll never know. This self-imposed confinement proved advantageous if you liked advantages. First, the stay at home lads hiked about the local lot... seeing the camp for the first time. Sundays gave forth harm n eggs at the PX... no time limit on getting calories on Sunday... uhh uhh. Bathing suits were the uniform of the day... a plunge in the local chlorine pool... an evening flicker... a USO hop... WACS, ranches, chalking up a few extra hours sack time... cramming for that Monday calibration quiz... writing to the royal loyal one at home... day-dreaming... snoring. Yes, we liked our breaks in the schedule. We wished the breaks could have been more frequent.
Would-be Sinatras are Sams, Russo, Samuels, and Muse.

A tough shot for O'Brien with Harrmann and Penberthy looking on.

Mr. Twang is all a'twitter.
Tillies' giving him the stuff.
Twang's a bashful little critter,
He says loving's mighty rough.
Bombing's rugged, that's quite true,
But resisting Tillie
Is Rugged Too!
One of the pauses that refreshes and Barbour, Allen, and Starry-Eyed Storch cool off with a Coke after a bumpy afternoon mission.

Muse amuses Miller, Nicholls, and McClure with a display of snake charming. Muse will tell you that snakes can be real friendly when you get to know them.

Harmonica Symphony on Desert Maneuvers. Peters has an admiring audience in Purkett, Poe and Wyatt who spend their free moments in music appreciation.

The Mark of the Bombardier is the Familiar black ring around the eye. Washing it off sometimes presents a problem. Harman reveals that Boot Cream does the trick!
BEAUTS AND SADDLES

Here's a pretty Prairie Blossom
And she isn't playing possum
But you'll find her in there "puacha" in a jam.
For her cowboy, tall and lanky,
Is a patriotic Yankee
And he's roundin' up some range for Uncle Sam;
So this little cutie suave
Will be proud to do her duty.
And she'll wear his pants until he wins the war...
Then with tears in near communion
They will stage a western union
And I bet she wears the pants, forevermore!

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