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HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE  
Office of the Surgeon  
APO 634

M-K-5

11 December 1944.

SUBJECT: The Use of Rest Homes in the Eighth Air Force for the Two Year Period  
November 1942 to November 1944.

TO : Surgeon, Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, APO 634, U. S. Army.

Introduction:

From the beginning of operations by the Eighth Air Force it was apparent that fatigue and staleness in flyers would necessitate special measures. Weariness developed by flyers has been known to flight surgeons for a long time. Under ordinary conditions of flying in peace time it responded to short periods of rest, but under combat conditions there is a great amount of stress added to the tension ordinarily connected with flying. Consequently, combat crew members experience fatigue in a relatively few months of operational flying. Ideally, periods of leave spent at their own homes would be best. As it would be highly impracticable to disrupt operational tours by sending airmen home the next best substitute evolved. Rest homes came into being.

Rest homes should provide an atmosphere of ease and freedom. This has been the policy in those being operated in the Eighth Air Force. Moreover, it has been attempted to actually maintain a homelike environment throughout all the rest homes. The facilities of the homes provide an exceptionally good cuisine, comfortable beds with good springs and mattresses (Fig. 1), a minimum of military routine, bathing accommodations, excellent recreational and athletic equipment, and medical care when required. Special emphasis has been placed on the opportunities offered for recreation. Athletic equipment and grounds (Fig. 2 and 3) have been provided for golf, baseball, football, tennis (Fig. 4), badminton, archery (Fig. 5 and 6), skeet shooting, bicycling (Fig. 7), boating (Fig. 8), horseback riding, and other sports. Dances and motion pictures are offered several times weekly. Besides these there are opportunities and facilities for furthering hobbies such as photography. Each home has a small, well equipped dispensary (Fig. 9) where medical care is administered. The policy of removing guests from military environment is carried to the extent of providing sport clothes for them to wear during their stays at the homes.

The staffs at the respective institutions comprise an administrative commanding officer and adjutant plus several enlisted helpers, and two (2) female Red Cross representatives, who act as hostesses and supervise the recreation and feeding of the guests. A medical officer rotated each week from the groups and squadrons of the Eighth Air Force is in attendance for emergency medical care and in an advisory capacity at each home. Civilian chamber maids, cleaners and ground keepers are provided by the American Red Cross.

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History:

In July 1942, before the first Eighth Air Force plane flew in combat, arrangements were started to activate rest homes. Unofficially it was possible to start sending combat crewmen to a rest center late in November 1942. By January of 1943 the first official rest home was activated at Stanbridge Earls, Hampshire (Fig. 10 and 11), which has been described as "an estate of great historic interest which has recently been thoroughly modernized and refurnished, has central heating, is surrounded by beautiful grounds and gardens, and is being equipped for recreation and athletics, including excellent fishing in season". Originally this home provided accommodations for twenty-five (25) officers only.

In February 1943 the hostel called the Palace Hotel at Southport was activated as a rest home by the American Red Cross. This hotel had a bed capacity of four hundred (400) and accommodated officers and enlisted men. Because of its location and since the proper facilities for rest and relaxation could not be provided as thought best by those in control of the rest home program the facilities at the Southport rest home have only been used when other homes have been filled. Up to the present writing, this home has been used as an auxiliary to the regular rest home program.

Other rest homes have been added. The following chart shows the number of rest homes now operating:

Rest Home	Opening Date	Capacity as of 1 Nov 1944
1. Stanbridge Earls	3 Jan 1943	30 Officers
2. Southport Rest Home	19 Feb 1943	50 Officers 100 Enlisted Men
3. Moultsford Manor (Figs. 12, 13, and 14)	13 May 1943	25 (Originally for EM only. At present under control of the Central Medical Board and accommodates officers)
a. Includes Bucklands (Fig. 15)		20 Enlisted Men
4. Coombe House (Fig. 16)	20 Sept 1943	50 Officers
5. Walhampton House (Fig. 17, 18 and 19)	17 Feb 1944	50 Enlisted Men
6. Aylesfield House (Fig. 20)	15 March 1944	25 Officers
7. Roke Manor (Fig. 21)	10 April 1944	25 Officers

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Rest Home	Opening Date	Capacity as of 1 Nov 1944
8. Pangbourne House (Figs. 22 and 23)	1 May 1944	30 Officers
9. Spetchley Park (Figs. 24 and 25)	1 June 1944	45 Enlisted Men
10. Purzedown House (Fig. 26)	26 June 1944	25 Officers
11. Rynsham Hall (Fig. 27, 28 and 29)	22 July 1944	65 Officers
12. Keythorpe Hall (Fig. 30 and 31)	26 July 1944	30 Enlisted Men
13. Ebrington Manor (Figs. 32 and 33)	5 August 1944	20 Enlisted Men
14. Knightshays Court	6 October 1944	40 Officers

(CHART I)

Originally most of the rest homes started with a smaller bed capacity than that which is now being used. The combined facilities of all the homes has never adequately met the demand and extra beds have had to be set up.

The original rest center program was administered by the Eighth Air Force Service Command. In March 1944 the US Strategic Air Forces in Europe took over control of the rest homes. The rest home beds had to be divided between flying personnel of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces in June 1944 which added to the strain on the capacities of the homes. However in October 1944 all Ninth Air Force beds, except one hundred (100) beds at the Southport Rest Home, ten (10) beds at Moulshford Manor and five (5) beds at Bucklands, were reallocated to the Eighth Air Force. The US Strategic Air Forces in Europe provided other homes for the combat crew members of the Ninth Air Force on the continent of Europe.

The Eighth Air Force now has an allotment of fifteen (15) rest homes with a capacity of six hundred thirty (630) beds. Officers have been allotted three hundred thirty-five (335) beds and enlisted men two hundred ninety-five (295) beds. About eighty (80) to eighty-five (85) per cent of all the beds are used by bomber combat crew members. Officer fighter pilots comprise approximately 15% to 20% of the guests each month at the rest homes. Of the bomber crews, officers and enlisted men are assigned rest leaves approximately on an equal basis, 50% of all bomber crew guests being officers and 50% enlisted men.

All the beds used by combat crew members of the Eighth Air Force are supervised by the Chief of the Care of Flyers Section in the Surgeon's office. The total number of beds is divided proportionately between the three (3) heavy bombardment divisions and subordinate commands. (CHART II)

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#### Number of Guests and Guest Days:

A study of the number of guests who have spent leaves at rest homes for the two year period from November 1942 to November 1944 reveals the great extent the homes have been used. From the inception of the program in November 1942 when one officer spent three (3) days at a home the number of guests has increased month by month in a steady progression up to November 1944 by which time a total of 6,738 officer guests and 6,177 enlisted men guests had accumulated 47,636 days of leave and 42,912 days of leave respectively (Fig. 34, CHART III). Accommodations originally were for officers only and it was not until May of 1943 that enlisted men were regularly assigned to official rest centers. (The figures stated herein do not include guests who were assigned to the Southport rest home since this institution has been directed and administered by the American Red Cross and for a long period of time had no Air Force representatives to supervise activities. All reference to rest homes, that follow will exclude the Southport rest home.)

The number of guests and guest days has been able to increase steadily because of the addition of more homes and facilities as the demand increased. Often though until new homes could be activated extra beds had to be added at most homes and periods of leave shortened by one or two days to allow bed space for other combat crew members requiring leaves.

#### Rate of Attendance:

The rate per thousand mean strength of all flying personnel in the Eighth Air Force attending rest homes monthly varied considerably. From November 1942 through February 1943 there was no consistency. This was because the rest homes were in a formative stage, facilities were few, and there was only spotty understanding of the advantages that accrued from leaves at these institutions. Most of the flying personnel at that time were also more inclined to spend leaves in London, or in touring England, as they were newly arrived, and the novelty of seeing strange places and meeting a foreign populace still had much attraction. Very soon though it became apparent that leaves taken haphazardly worked to the detriment of flyers. They formerly believed that it was beneficial for them to let the bars all the way down and go on drinking sprees at night spots in order to relieve the tension of combat flying. However they got little rest and no relaxation and more often than not had to spend two (2) to three (3) days recuperating after returning to their bases. Such leaves did not benefit them physically and certainly did nothing to relieve the tension and anxiety built up by combat.

During the succeeding nineteen (19) months there was more uniformity in attendance at homes. Combat flyers who had had leaves at rest homes passed along the word that such leaves had helped them considerably. The rate of attendance for officers was not steady but was maintained between 19.1 and 40.9 per thousand flying personnel (Fig. 35, CHART IV). Following periods when missions were more hazardous the rate would tend to be higher. This occurred after the winter months, when adverse weather added to the other factors of stress, or when the necessities of the situation required that missions had to be flown on several successive days with little rest between them.

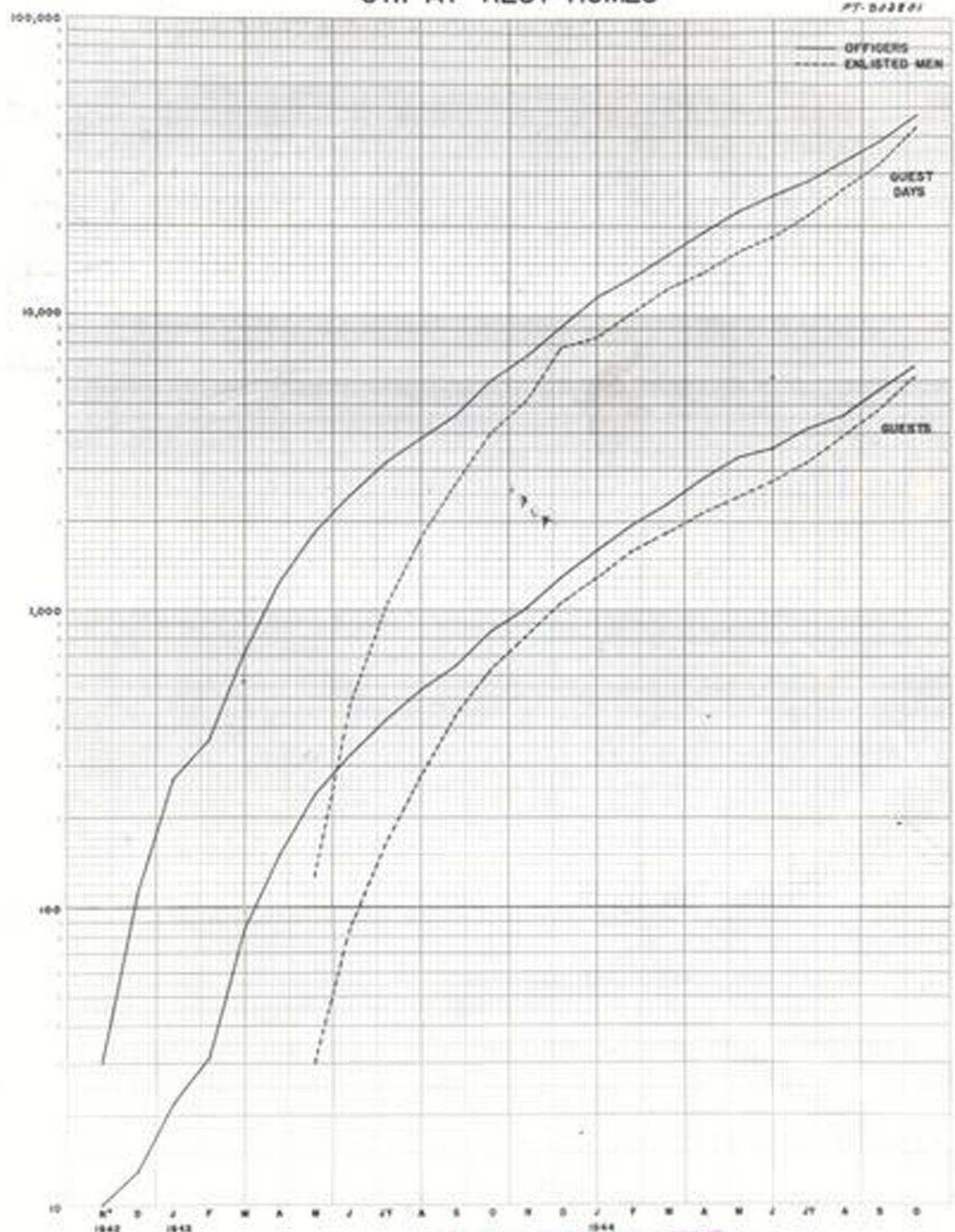
In a fashion the rate for enlisted men each month followed the same pattern as that for officers but at a lower level. It ranged, during the fifteen (15) months from June 1943 to September 1944, between 11.7 and 26.6 per thousand flying personnel (Fig. 35, CHART IV). The rises and falls in the rate for enlisted

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CUMULATIVE NUMBERS OF GUESTS AND GUEST  
DAYS FOR COMBAT CREW MEMBERS AT  
8TH AF REST HOMES



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	STANBRIDGE EARLS <u>Off.</u>	ROKE MANOR <u>Off.</u>	FURZEON HOUSE <u>Off.</u>	EYNESHAM HALL <u>Off.</u>	AYLESFIELD HOUSE <u>Off.</u>	WALHAMPTON HOUSE <u>E.M.</u>	KEYTHORPE HALL <u>E.M.</u>	PANGBOURNE HOUSE <u>E.M.</u>	SPETCHLEY PARK <u>E.M.</u>	MOULSFORD MAJOR <u>Off.</u>	BUCKLANDS <u>E.M.</u>	COOMBE HOUSE <u>Off.</u>	ERRINGTON MAJOR <u>E.M.</u>	KNIGHTSHAYES COURT <u>Off.</u>	SOUTHPORT <u>Off.</u>
1st Bombardment Division	30	25	25	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	20	0	20
2nd Bombardment Division	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	30	0	0	0	50	0	40	15
3rd Bombardment Division	0	0	0	65	25	50	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	15
Medical Care Supplied by	1st Div	325th P.W.R.	1st Div	3rd Div	3rd Div	3rd Div	2nd Div	2nd Div	1st Div	3rd Div	-	2nd Div	1st Div	2nd Div	9th AF
Total for Eighth Air Force	30	25	25	65	25	50	30	30	45	25	20	50	20	40	50
Total for Ninth Air Force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(10	5)	0	0	0	100
										C.M.E.					
Total Bed Capacity	30	25	25	65	25	50	30	30	45	35	25	50	20	40	150