



# THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Vol. 5 No. 3 Newsletter May 1, 1985

## SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT, Bernice Barr  
TREASURER, Walter Butler  
CHAPLAIN, Harvey Jennings

VICE-PRESIDENT, Lew Boatwright  
HISTORIAN, George F. Coen  
Newsletter Editor, George F. Coen

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

First a couple of administrative details. John Henry was appointed chairman of an audit committee to check our financial records for 1984. He reported that, in his opinion, the financial statements fairly present the financial position of the 99th BGHS in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Thanks John for the audit and report. Thanks also to Walter Butler for his dedicated labors in keeping our records.

I've also asked John Henry to be chairman of our nominating committee for this year. If you desire to nominate yourself or someone else that is willing to serve a four year term on the Board of Directors please send the information to John at 12025 Apache NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87112. The person nominated must be a member, agree to serve, and be present at the annual meeting in July. There are four members completing their four year term this year. You may re-elect some or all of them or four new members. Members completing their term are George Coen, Rex Greathouse, Joe Kenney, and Mike Yarina. My personal thanks to each of these for their great efforts and hard work in getting our organization going in the lean years of organizing and development.

### A REMINDER:!!!!

REUNION-July 25-28 Seattle, WA. We will be staying at the HYATT-SEA TLE- call toll free (800)228-9000 for reservations.

AIRLINES\*\*- Call Convention Desks-UNITED-official carrier- (800) 521-4041-Code 546M; DELTA-(800) 241-6700-Code E0095; EASTERN-(800) 327-1295 (Florida-800-432-1217) Code EZ7P23. If you go through the convention desk you will get the lowest fares available and the airline will give us a print out of the passenger list. You may also ask your travel agent to go through the convention desk for reservations.

"LET US MEET IN SEATTLE, WA JULY 1985"

### SHOULD WE ESTABLISH A MONUMENT AS A MEMORIAL TO THE 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP????

JIM SOPP, who is going to be our Host in Dayton, Ohio in 1986, has recommended that the 99th BGHS establish a memorial to our 99th Bombardment Group at the Air Force Museum in Dayton. He said that the Museum is receiving memorials from AF organizations at a surprising rate. Our Board of Directors has approved the idea and asked me to present it to you for your approval and financial support or for your disapproval. A form will be included on the next to the last page of this newsletter for your reply. We request a quick response since we are in a time frame bind-we need to finalize a design, write specifications, secure bids, select a contractor, and get

the work started by the first of 1986 so that the memorial would be installed and ready in place to be dedicated during our reunion in Dayton in June 1986. You guessed it----before we can complete these things we need to know if you approve and if you do, how many \$\$\$\$'s will be available for the memorial. So you see why I'm asking for an early reply-with your contribution (tax deductible) or your pledge to be payable monthly or as you desire. If you don't agree please send in your reply. For those of you who are fortunate to be business executives, own businesses, Lawyers, Doctors, etc. we especially ask for your CORPORATE GIFT. From members of the Board, Gen. Uppie, Ray Schwanbeck, we have received cash and pledges of nearly \$1000. The total cost of an appropriate Memorial with engraving of dedication words, targets if possible, Sq. emblems, Diamond Y-names of 12th and 15th Air Force-5th Wing-no doubt will be expensive-but appropriate to dedicate the 99th Bomb Group to history and posterity for generations to follow us to see the record that our great group achieved. WHAT DO YOU SAY?? LET US DO IT!! An initial idea of a design will follow. If you have comments concerning this please let me know.

Harvey Jennings, our Chaplain, is investigating the idea of having a short religious interdenominational service in our hotel on Sunday morning July 28th. If you can and are willing to sing, play the piano, etc please contact Harvey at 2621 Las Casas Wav. Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. He needs all the help he can get. I's a good idea!

I am pleased to report that the state of New Mexico has finally granted our 99thBGHS exemption from the .0462% state sales tax. This will reduce our expenses a little but at the same time our printer has raised his prices by a substantial amount. George will have to reduce the number of pages in our newsletter to stay within our budget. Raise the dues? We will wait and see.

Joe Chance assures me that all is settled for our reunion in Seattle and all we need to do is arrive, pay the fees, and enjoy ourselves. LET US MEET IN SEATTLE! Spring has arrived in Albuquerque and we are enjoying it very much-hope you the same!

Your Friend,

*Bernie*

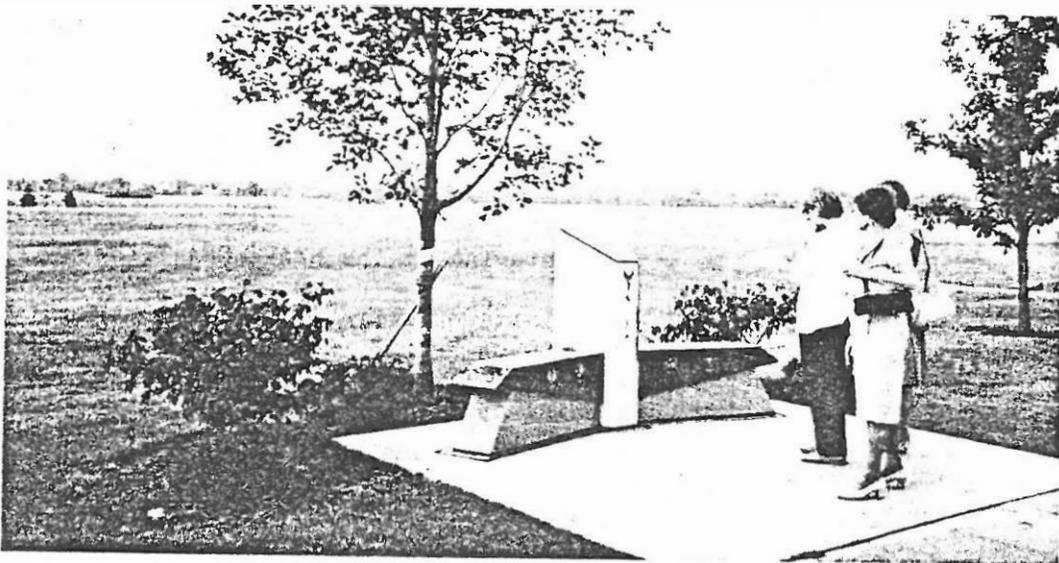
Bernie Barr

7413 Vista Del Arroyo

Albuquerque, NM 87109

PS:

Here is a picture of the memorial that our <sup>sister</sup> 5th Wing B-17 483rd. Group dedicated to their organization. It is a very imposing monument and does credit to their unit. If you agree to establish one it will be just as great.



??? WAS THERE MORE THAN ONE SHADY LADY???

Charley Miller called to say that he knew that there was one, with paint job, a modified F model that was assigned to the 346th Sq. He says that he flew many missions in it as a waist gunner. He vividly described the sensuous, beautiful, bare breasted, reclining lady that adorned the nose of the airplane. It was a great sight to behold-a great flying airplane. He can not relate the one that he flew in to the one described in our newsletter.

BSB

PROPOSED 99th. BOMBARDMENT GROUP MEMORIAL

A DIAMOND SHAPED PYLON SET ON A DIAMOND SHAPED RAISED BENCH TO PROVIDE A VIEW FROM ALL FOUR SIDES. ENGRAVE THE SQUADRON EMBLEMS ON THE TOP CONE. IF POSSIBLE ENGRAVE THE NAMES OF THE TARGETS THAT THE 99th. BOMBED INTO THE SIDES OF PYLON AND BENCH WITH A SHAPE OF A B-17 ON ONE SIDE OF THE BENCH. ENGRAVE OR PLACE A PLAQUE WITH A DEDICATION TO ALL WHO SERVED\*\*\*ETC ON ONE SIDE OF THE PYLON THAT WILL BE NEXT TO THE SIDE THAT WILL HAVE THE 99th GROUP NAME-OUR DIAMOND Y-12th-15th,- 5th WING -etc.

The Proposed Dedication Words to be engraved on monument or put on a plaque.

DEDICATED TO ALL WHO SERVED IN OR WITH 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY) WORLD WAR II 1943-1945 AFRICA-ITALY 395 COMBAT MISSIONS

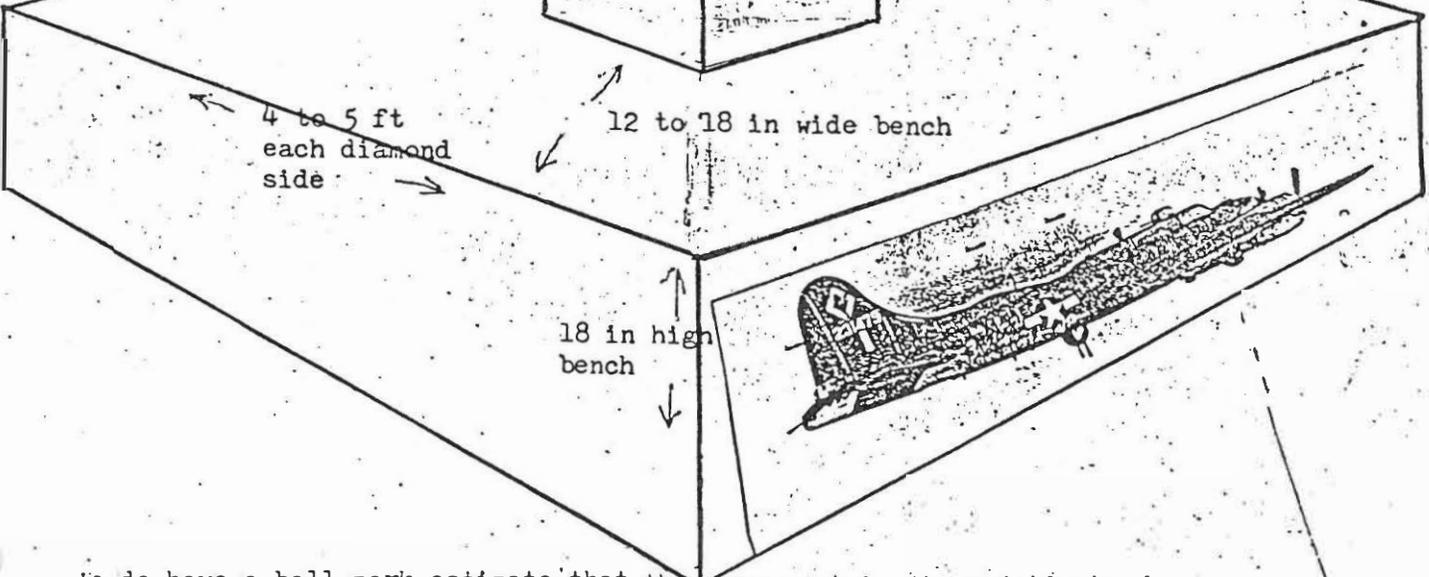
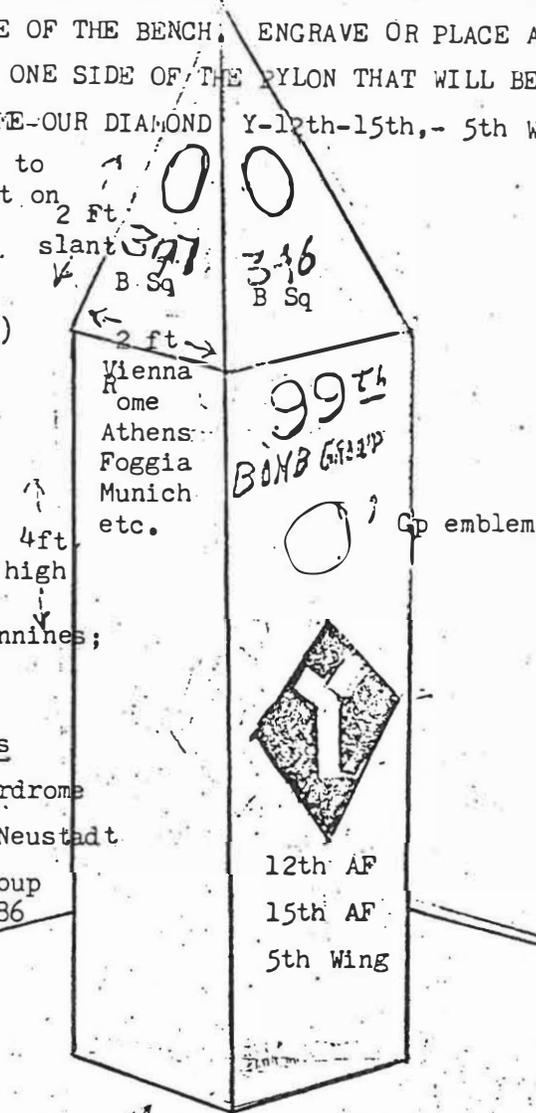
12 CAMPAIGNS-

Air Combat, EAME Theatre; Air Offensive, Europe; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; Northern Apennines; Rhineland; Central Europe; Po Valley.

2 Distinguished Unit Citations

5 July 1943 Sicily-Gerbini Airdrome 23 April 1944 Austria-Wiener Neustadt

Presented by the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society 28 June 1986



We do have a ball park estimate that this may cost in the neighborhood of \$10,000. Expensive? Very! Of course we can scale the memorial to \$\$\$\$'s contributed. Your response form is on the next to the last page -please cut it out and give us your answer today. THANKS'.....



Feb. 12, 1985

Dear George;

I want to thank you for all of the News Letters that you have sent me. I enjoyed all of them. I have sent in my dues. . .

I am sorry I missed the last reunion. Maybe I can make the one in Seattle, Washington. I missed the last reunion because the notice I received was two weeks before the reunion and I could not make plans to attend. I had other things to do on that date. I would have liked to see Colonel Upthegrove and all of the boys. I am bad on remembering names, but if I see them in person I would remember them; but there is one face I know and that is Colonel Upthegrove.

In the July '84 news letter you wrote July 29, '43 that 42-30470 came to the 416th. That was the ship that we brought over from the USA. We flew our first mission Aug. 6, 1943 and our last mission Jan. 28, 1944. We had two incidents that I recall. It was on our 49th and 50th. The mission was to Solon, France. On our way back our ship was hit in the hydraulic system. We had to land north of Naples. It was a belly landing because we lost our hydraulic system and could not lower our wheels. A truck picked us up. The engineers had to stay with the ship. The next day we flew our 50th mission without the engineers of our regular crew. This was to Aviano, Italy. We were again on our way home when out of the clouds came two German fighters. A 20 millimeter burst outside of the ship and the fragments from the shell killed our waist gunner, John Genisio. We were flying at 20,000 feet on a gradual descent and home free.

I seem to remember one incident that has bothered me for years. We had a bombardier who flew 6 missions. On 4 of the 6 missions he was wounded. Col. Upthegrove told him he was a jinx and he was going home to the USA. I don't remember who the Lt. was, but if you remember the incident I think it could be part of the 99th history.

Enclosed is a picture of our crew, The Wolf Pack. The picture is for the Society to keep. I have a copy of my own. I have a copy of my own. The names of the crew are on the back. I don't know if any one of them are still living. Maybe you can find out. I have not seen any of them in any of your news letters of 1984.

I was thinking if the Society could make a collection of these pictures that most of the crews took; say one picture of each crew. . .

I am hoping to see you in Seattle.

LT. Philip J. Capobianco  
262 Hallock Ave.  
Mingo Jct. OH 43938

Dear Phil;

Thank you for the lovely picture. I wish that all of our crew pictures were as good. We do have plans for a set of pictures of planes and crews when the War Diary has been all published. Indeed, we have more good stuff than we can publish - but your letter was too good to pass up. geo.

To Sous-Leutnant Georges Ceen  
Etats Unis

I write to you for to get send mil francs. Otherwise I tell name of bombardier who hide jeep in straw stack. Also tell name of navigator who dug ditch which trap Colonel Uppie's jeep. Send money to  
Openh Bom Bey, 13 Rue Jules Ferry,  
Mechtat Oulad Hamdu, /Algerie

\* \* \* \* \*

Ya Sidi Bey;

Salem aleicum and all that there.

I remain bravely unfrightened by threats to expose Lt. Kidwiler.  
s to your second item, well - - ah - perhaps that can be adjusted. Would  
ou prefer large hills or small? george

## WRITE YOUR STORY NOW

We would like to impress upon you all the importance of sending us your story NOW! You fellows must face the fact that none of us is immortal - that some it will be too late to write. Yes, there will remain only General Uppie and me!

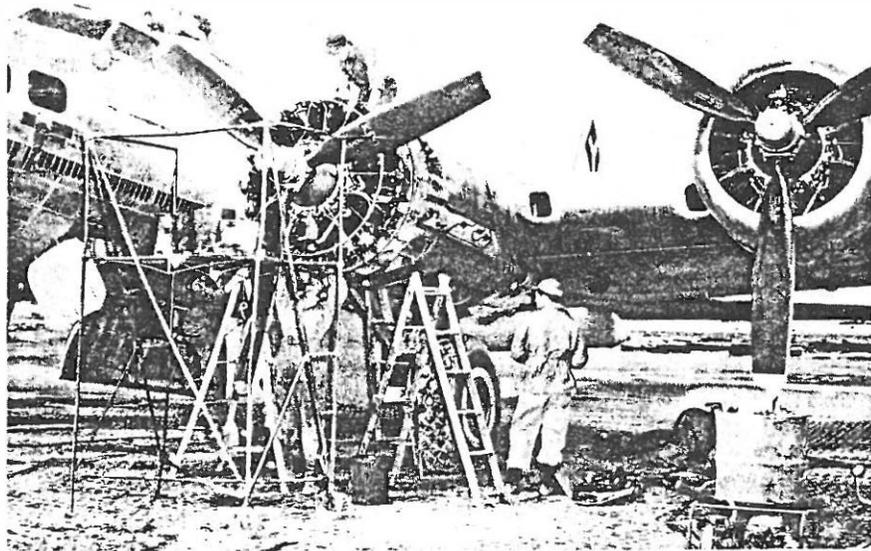
A Quote

PLOESTI

Dugan &amp; Stewart

As Posey's ships left Blue Target, some airmen were screwed up to hallucinations. The radioman of Princess, Norman Kiefer, heard urgent shouts on the interphone. "Go back, Mac! Mister Five-by-Five just crash-landed back there! Go back and pick them up!" yelled the top turret man. The tail gunner joined in: "We can land and pick them up! The field is level. Go back, Mac!" McAtee hesitated and replied, "Shut up. We're not going back." (When Princess landed at Benghazi, her men found the entire crew of Mister Five-by-Five in the briefing room. McAtee shook hands with the pilots. . . and confronted his two gunners with them. The sergeants vehemently denied calling on him to turn back. McAtee said, "How do you like that! You know, I almost turned around and went back.")

p.162



Courtesy of  
Gene  
Agnew

from MONEY MARBLES AND CHALK - March 1985

Bill Baird of the 17th BG examines patients for the VA . . .

Anyways, this old guy has stepped on a land mine and he ain't got but one leg. Count your blessings - I was over there almost the whole time and never even saw a land mine. As I was saying, this old guy turned out to be as healthy as a horse - with one missing leg. I always try to be friendly to these here heroes, so I says to him, "You're healthy as a horse with one missing leg, feller, - you must have good genes." Then I says, "How old was your pappy when he died?" "I don't recall saying that my pappy is dead". says he, kinda taciturn-like." "Oh", says I, "he ain't?" "Nope", says he. He's nigh onto ninety-two and goin' strong." "Do tell". says I, "well, like I say, you got good genes." (A doctor is always got to appear right, see?) "How old was your grandpappy when he passed?" "Well," says he, "I don't telling of him passing either." "You mean he ain't dead either?" says I, incredulous. "Nope", says he, "He's agoin' on a hunnert and eight and fixin' to get married". "Well, now", says I, "Ain't that something?" "He's a hunnert and eight and wants to get married!" "I don't recall saying anythin' about him wanting to get married", says he.

The difference listening and understanding is what makes wars.

Bill Baird

John F.O'Connell  
321 Lindsey Drive  
Berwyn, Pa. 19312

21 March 1985

Mr. George F. Coen  
2908 Aliso Drive NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Dear George:

Just a note to thank you for sending me all the back issues of the 99th B.G. news letters. I have enjoyed reading them so much that I have done little else for the past few days. I have written to several people on the membership list whom I knew and remembered, as well as to some I didn't remember but did know. No replies yet, but I am hoping to re-establish contact with them. I did find on the list a former member of the 347th -and a fellow navigator at that- Norris Domangue who lives only three miles from me. And I owe it all to you!

I have little to add to the archives but the list of my missions, and orders assigning me and the 20 other crews mentioned on page 18 of the 7/1/84 newsletter as of 10/18/43 to the 12th A.F. and the 99th B.G. I think the list is in order of squadron number, and I have so indicated where I could.

Also enclosed is a copy of my letter to Steve Birdsall which I think is self-explanatory. Two things still intrigue me about that 3/18/44 mission to the Villaorba A.D.: one, that Stars and Stripes shrugged off the damaged tail and said the plane returned to its base- which, of course, was not true; and two, that I have believed all these years, and will continue to do so until some one can prove differently, that it was our own frag bombs and not a rocket which blew that tail off.

\* \* \* \* \*

On a different matter:

In the 9/1/84 Newsletter on page 13, the Group War Diary refers to the crash on 11/18/43 of plane # 179 of the 347th Squadron into a mountain. The mountain was in Sicily and they were going in to refuel after the mission to Athens. All aboard were killed, and although I am listed among those killed -it is obviously not so. I wasn't flying with the crew that day(it was my original crew with whom I had gone through training and joined the 99th). I think the navigator who took my place was Emil(?) Rye. I am not positive, but that name comes to mind. Like Mark Twain, I am happy to say that the report of my death was greatly exaggerated!

Keep up the good work! The 99th BG Historical Society Newsletter has already made 1985 a memorable year for me.

Sincerely Yours



Dear Steve:

20 March 1985

I have only recently heard about and become a member of the 99th. Bomb Group Historical Society, and thanks to George Coen's sending me back copies of the news letters, I have been having a great time re-living old memories and learning a lot of things about the 99th. and its personnel that I never knew.

This letter is prompted by your request in three different news letters for information concerning a picture of a damaged plane from the 347th squadron on the mission of 3/18/44 to Villaorba A/D in Northern Italy. I am enclosing a photocopy of a clipping I cut out of Stars and Stripes ( I think ) in April or early May 1944 showing the plane in question with its tail blown off, and claiming that the plane returned safely to base-which, of course, it did not! Incidentally, had that original clipping for forty years and then had it framed and gave it to the bombardier on that plane, Ken Simon, in time for the fortieth anniversary of the mission.

I do not recall at this late date why Ken was flying in the injured plane rather than with us, since we had been crewmates since my original crew was killed on 11/18/43. I think I was in the lead ship and Ken was flying wing in one of the elements.

It was immediately after the "bombs away" call came that one of the crew in the back of the plane reported that the plane in question had been hit and was leaving the formation with the tail heavily damaged and the tail-gunner missing. The plane left the formation under some control, and because of that I kept hoping for some time after we landed that the plane could make it home-but, of course, it did not, and the survivors spent the rest of the war as POW'S.

You mentioned in one of your letters that the ship's tail had been destroyed by rocket fire. You may be interested to know that at least one of our gunners in the back reported at the time, and I have so believed all these years, that it was our formation's frag bombs - and perhaps even our own ship's bombs - which blew the tail off! You will note that the picture of the damaged plane was taken from overhead, and I can remember some conversation at the time that the hit plane had been flying very close to us and slightly below, and had drifted into a position where it could have been hit by one of our bombs - and some of the crew thought it had. We may never know for sure, but that's been my belief all these years.

The pilot of the downed plane was Gerry Lombard, and the bombardier was Kenneth Simon (who has been my good friend for more than forty years now) and whose address is:

1005 The Parkway  
Mamaroneck, New York 10543

I don't know where Gerry Lombard lives, nor who the other members of the crew were. Ken Simon may know, and I am sending him a copy of this letter so he will be alerted in case you contact him. I am also sending a copy of this letter and the news clipping to George Coen. He might be interested in seeing another result of his sending all those newsletters.

Mr. Steve Birdsall  
31 Parkland Road  
Mona Vale 2103  
Sydney, Australia

Sincerely Yours

John F. O'Connell

John F. O'Connell  
321 Lindsey Drive  
Berwyn, Pa. 1931

From:

Dec. 20, 1943

9

FROM A 15<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BOMBER BASE--Heavy flak thrown at AAF Flying Fortresses over Eleusis Airdrome in Greece today exploded under the open bomb bay of one ship, riddling it with holes and knocking out one engine and damaging a second, but the pilot brought it home. None of the crew was hurt.

Safe on the ground, Capt. R.R. Shaefer, 25 year old former army transport pilot of Albuquerque, N.M., counted more than 60 holes in his ship from its tip to its tail. He was flying his third mission, but his first in the pilot's seat.

Flak hit the ship just as the bombs were going away. Shaefer found that it had: Cut the gasoline line of No. 2 (left inboard) engine, rendering it useless; tore away the engine controls of No. 3 (right inboard) engine; put 40 holes in the left wing; tore a hole through the catwalk of the bomb bay; knocked a regulator guage off an oxygen bottle; grazed by a hairbreadth the main oil lines to Nos. 1 and 4 engines.

In addition, flak fragments tore the pants leg of the radio operator, Technical Sergeant C.G. Langton, 1533 8th Ave. S., St. Cloud, Minn., but failed to break skin. Other fragments passed between the legs of the tail gunner, Staff Sergeant M.F. Harvey, 953 N. Rural St., Indianapolis, Ind., who was flying his 48th mission.

"I don't see how we got out of that one," said Shaefer. "It hit us just over the target--I think three bombs had left the bay. With the explosion the tail shot up about 15 feet and the left wing went way up."

"It felt like somebody had grabbed the tail," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Thomas F. Craig, of 110 Burlington Ave., Paterson, NJ, a 26 year old pilot veteran of 43 missions who was flying as co-pilot on this raid.

"I had to feather the No. 2 engine," Shaefer continued. "Gasoline was streaming out and it's a miracle it didn't catch fire. No. 3 was still running, but practically useless."

With its airspeed reduced, the crippled Fortress straggled out of formation, but was protected from hovering enemy fighters by a screen of escorting P-38's. Hours later it limped home.

"We were lucky," said Shaefer. But his crew called it skill--and courage.

Other crew members:

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. E.R. Jenkins, bombardier, 317 E. Bay St., Charleston, S. Car.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William Amundson, navigator, 428 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave.W., Duluth, Minn.

S/Sgt. H.B. Ward, gunner, Pinehurst, Wash.

Sgt. T.F. Hampton, gunner, Crestwood, Ky.

Sgt. Tom Woodbury, gunner, 1715 Lagoon Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Sgt. Ira G. Griswold, gunner, Clifton, Ariz.

Dec. 20, 1943

Attention: Baltimore, Md., News-Post  
Baltimore, Md., Evening Post

From a 15th Air Force Bomber Base -- Staff Sergeant William E. Greenwaldt, 23, of 1427 Francis Ave., Halethorpe Md., an AAF Flying Fortress photographer, is on his way home to the States for a rest after completing 50 combat missions with the 15th U.S. Air Force.

Greenwaldt, who began flying as a combat photographer May 30, 1943, recorded on film the heavy damage inflicted by Fortresses on targets in Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, France, Greece and Germany. He was behind his aerial camera on both historic raids on Rome by the Fortresses.

Typical of flying photographers who long to take a crack at the enemy with something more deadly than a camera, the sergeant recalls best a mission to Gerbini Airdrome, Sicily, July 5, when he had a chance to use a .50 caliber machine gun.

"After the attacking pursuit had left us on that raid," he said, "a lone fighter jumped <sup>us</sup>. Nobody noticed the plane coming in from our tail. I saw him and tried to warn the crew, but my throat mike was disconnected. I grabbed a gun and let out 15 or 20 bursts, and I'm sure the plane or pilot was hit.

Greenwaldt is a 1938 graduate of Baltimore's Polytechnic Institute and was a mechanic for Westinghouse Electric until entering the army in June, 1942. He is unmarried.

--bb--

Press Release: Cutlines  
 From: 99th Bomb Gp.  
 Thru: 5th Wing (US)  
 Dec. 20, 1943

Crouched in the camera-well of an AAF Flying Fortress with "Anna," his giant K-17 aerial camera, Staff Sergeant William E. Greenwaldt salutes his last mission. By completing 50 sorties he is eligible for a rest in the States and a visit to his home town at 1427 Francis Ave., Halethorpe, Md.

Dec. 21, 1943

Somewhat awed by the damage to his plane is 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Thomas J. Davis of Piedmont, Mo., an AAF Flying Fortress pilot who ran into trouble on his 50<sup>th</sup> mission when the U.S. 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force raided Innsbruck, Austria, December 19. A 20 mm. shell from a German fighter crashed through this engine, tearing a 12 inch hole in the nacelle and lodging in the wing. The propellor flew off its shaft just as the pilot was about to touch earth after making it home safely.

--bb--

(Photo)

Dec. 22, 1943

Attention: Logan, Utah, Herald-Journal  
 Ogden, Utah, Standard

From a 15th Air Force Bomber Base -- Decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart and Air Medal, Capt. Heber B. Bankhead, 25-year-old AAF Flying Fortress pilot and squadron commander, has completed 50 bombing missions and will return to the States for a rest.

Bankhead earned the DFC and Purple Heart May 25, 1943, on a mission to Messina, Sicily. Enemy fighters shot his ship virtually to pieces, yet he flew it with one hand after the other was injured and crashed landed it safely in friendly territory.

The pilot began combat flying March 31, and soon was entrusted with directing his squadron in battle as lead-ship pilot. In the later stages of his career he became, successively, operations officer and commanding officer of his squadron.

A native of Wellsville, Bankhead was graduated from South Cache High School at Hyrum, Utah, in 1938 and in 1940 received a B.S. degree from Utah State Agricultural College. He was an employee of the Weber Central Dairy Assoc. of Ogden until entering the Air Forces as a cadet in May, 1941.

--bb--

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
 MISSION: 24 April 1944 - PLOESTI

#### I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: While still two minutes from the target and continuing for an additional twenty minutes, 25-30 enemy aircraft consisting of ME109s and FW190s jumped the 99th Bomb Group from altitudes ranging from 20-22,000' for a total of some twenty encounters.

These attacks were from all around the clock both high and level, but were not too well coordinated. It is believed that these E/A were airborne from the target area as they had not been seen before.

The ME109s were black with yellow tips and had a band of same color behind the cockpit. The FW190s were mottled gray with 6 yellow stripes on top of their wings.

There was one report of FW190s shooting rockets at 9 o'clock from a range of 1500 yards.

B. Flak: Over the target this group experienced intense, accurate and heavy flak while flying at a mean altitude of 22,400'. This flak was both barrage and tracking type.

Flak was also encountered enroute and from the target and this is spotted under significant observations. Thirteen of our A/C returned with flak holes from today's mission.

B. Water: one M/V, believed to be a destroyer opened fire on formation from 40°48' N, 23°08' E on Danube River; 25 barges; 4 seaplanes on Danube; 20 barges; 4 large M/Ws; 12 barges anchored in river; 15 boats which looked like mine sweepers were in the river; 3 large M/Ws anchored in Tiejia harbor.

C. Air: from 22,000' - 1 B24 down, 1 chute seen; 22,300' - 1 B17 down, 4 chutes seen; 22,300' - 1 B17 down under control, 5 chutes; 22,000' 1 B17 down, 6-8 chutes.

D. Flak Positions: From a mean altitude of 22,400' the following gun positions were pinpointed on target chart #1-101B-NA: N-11, L-12, N-12 and 13, M-11. there were also a string of batteries along the road from A-12 to E-17. Additional flak positions were observed as moderate, heavy and inaccurate and some slight, light and inaccurate.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. Total Losses:

From Flak: 0  
From Fighters: 1 (416<sup>th</sup> Sq.)  
Other Reasons: 0

#### B. Damages

From Flak: 13 minor  
From Fighters: 0  
Other Reasons: 0

#### C. Victories (claim sheets being submitted)

Destroyed: 3 ME109s, 2 FW190s  
Probably Destroyed: 0  
Damaged: 0

#### D. Corrections on Telephone Mission Report:

Three men were slightly wounded by flak. These were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Lorace E. Catterson, 0-697992, leg abrasions. T/Sgt. Walter H. Butler, 38350514 and Corp Charles V. Swannigan, 13032773 who both had minor hip wounds.

Vernon E. Fairbanks  
Major, Air Corps,  
S-2, 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Grp.

### SPECIAL ACCOUNT

(On Aug. 25, 1943, Technical Sergeant Carl M. Miciak, 23, a radio operator of 1250 Taylor St., New Kensington, Pa., leaped from a flaming Flying Fortress which was attacked and shot up by 30 enemy fighters over Foggia, Italy. On Sept. 27 he straggled into camp with the following tale of his adventures:)

-0-

"We were on the bomb run and there were approximately 30 fighters attacking us. They came in so close that they almost scraped the plane with their wing tips. There were so many tracers that the inside of the plane and all around it was glowing just like a gold picture.

"I didn't hear many guns firing so I opened the door to the top turret and Sergeant Walker (Technical Sergeant Clarence A. Walker, Bakersfield, Cal.) was lying on the floor on his stomach and he just gave a feeble laugh. I closed the door and commenced firing again at the attacking planes. While going through the bomb bay I noticed we had dropped all but six frag bombs.

"The first time I realized we were in trouble, or out of formation, was when the alarm bell rang. I knew that the bell didn't work in the waist section, so I went down there to tell the rest of the fellows to bail out. When I got there all the fellows were in the waist section. Malaga (Staff Sergeant Steve Malaga, Pricedale, Pa.) had come up out of the ball turret and Bernat (Staff Sergeant Paul V. Bernat, Latrobe, Pa.) had come up from the tail guns. Barthel (Technical Sergeant Jason D. Barthel, Darien, Conn.) and Martignetti (Staff Sergeant Edward F. Martignetti, Jersey City, NJ) and the waist gunners were sitting there also. Bernat and Martignetti were wounded. Malaga looked stunned.

"Barthel then bailed out, but his foot caught in the waist door and I kicked him out. Then I bailed out, and just as I jumped, a blinding sheet of flame from the No. three engine came by and I passed out.

I don't remember pulling the ripcord, but came to in the air and my chute had opened. I put my hand up to my neck and it came away bloody. I could feel a big cut there but I don't know how I got it. I passed out again and when I came to I was on the ground. The plane had crashed about 100 feet away. It was burning and the machine gun bullets were shooting all around and the frag bombs were exploding.

"About 20 feet away I saw Malaga all crumpled, and he had apparently jumped without his chute. Just a little ways off I saw Bernat and Martignetti and it appeared that their chutes hadn't opened, or that they hadn't jumped and had been thrown clear when the plane crashed. I doubt if Walker ever got out of the top turret.

"I heard someone crying out in pain but I was too sick and too much in pain to investigate. Later I found out it was Barthel. I was burned all over the head and arms and was losing a lot of blood from my neck. I had wrenched my knee so I couldn't walk.

"I dragged myself to a woodcutter's shack about a half mile away and laid down on some rags on the floor. Some Italian soldiers came with police officers and after a long conference they half carried me six miles down to a main road and there met an Italian convoy. They gave me first aid and took me to a little town about 15 miles away and I was put in a small hospital there.

"About midnight a doctor gave me treatment for my wounds. I had lost a lot of blood in all that time. He put 14 stitches in my neck.

"An Italian civilian came to see me while I was in this first hospital, and asked me some questions as to what sort of plane I was flying in. He showed me a piece of paper with Lt. Dahl's (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Eldon H. Dahl, co-pilot, Bozeman, Mont.) name and serial number on it, and said that Lt. Dahl had come down all right but had tried to escape and the soldiers had beaten him up, but he was otherwise all right.

On September 1<sup>st</sup> a German officer took me to Potenza and put me in a hospital there. It was a big place. I was given treatment and put in a ward with five other Americans. Bartnel was there and four B-24 men. Barthel had a broken leg. I guess I broke it when I kicked him out of the plane, but it saved his life.

"Barthel said he had seen Kidwiler (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William W. Kidwiler, bombardier, Seattle, Wash.) and that Kidwiler was all right and had been captured. Kidwiler had told Barthel that he and Lt. Seila (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Claude F. Seila, navigator, Westfield, NJ) both bailed out together and he presumed Seila landed all right.

"On September 9<sup>th</sup> there was an air raid and our medium bombers were coming right for the hospital. Rothrock (Sergeant Clarence Rothrock, Spokane, Wash.) one of the B-24 boys, went out of the window on some sheets he tied together. I went down into the second cellar, as far down as I could get.

"The bombs hit the hospital. One came right through into the cellar and landed about 10 feet away from me but it didn't explode. I ran out of the building.

"I met up with Rothrock back in the hills and we tried to escape, but there were too many Italians around and they brought us back to the hospital. The center section of the hospital had been hit and about half the occupants killed. Our ward where Barthel had to stay because of his leg wasn't touched.

"Pretty soon some more of our bombers came and Rothrock and I ran again, but we were only 200 yards away when we were captured. There was another raid and this time we got back in the hills and hid in a dry creek bed. They didn't find us. We walked for a day and a half until we were so weary that neither Rothrock nor I could walk anymore. We were still in our pajamas.

"We stumbled onto an Italian farmhouse and the farmer gave us food to eat and let up sleep in the barn. Next morning he took us to a little town where we lived in a schoolhouse. The Italians were good to us and gave us food.

"After five days a British commando outfit of five men came to town. They looked like angels. They put us on a train to Taranto. We traveled right through the German lines and could see German camps and convoys through the window. It was the craziest war I ever saw.

"In Taranto the British gave me clothes to replace my pajamas and I got on a C-47 Transport to Catania. I couldn't seem to get any transportation at Catania so I went out to a C-47 that was warming up and climbed in while the pilot wasn't looking. The plane went to Tunis and from there I hithiked home.

"I wish I knew what happened to Lt. Norris (1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John R. Norris, Jr., pilot, Los Angeles, Cal.)

The 99th Bomb War Diary continued

U.S. SECRET equals British MOST SECRET

HEADQUARTERS  
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
APO 520  
8 January 1944

SUBJECT: Tactics

TO: Commanding General, 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, APO 520, U.S. Army

1. In compliance with Paragraph 3, Operations Memorandum Number 4-1, your headquarters, dated 30 December 1943, the following information is submitted.

Target: Reggio Emilia M/E Factory and M/Y, Italy

a. Weather in vicinity of Foggia light haze and cloud coverage to three tenths (3/10) at four thousand (4000) feet. West to the coast of Italy slight overcast at eight thousand (8000) feet. North from approximately 42 degrees North and 11 degrees East broken cloud coverage. Over target light broken overcast at about twenty seven thousand (27000) feet.

b. Negative

c. At the target a light broken overcast was encountered but did not have any effect on the bomb run.

7 January 1944

Target: Messerschmitt factory, Wiener Newstadt, Austria

a. No weather encountered until seventeen thousand feet (17000) where there was a five hundred (500) foot layer of broken clouds. Thirty (30) minutes from the target there was a solid overcast of high clouds, twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand feet, group turned back at this point.

b. Group leveled off below seventeen thousand (17000) foot layer of clouds and climbed through at first opportunity. The group made two (2) three hundred sixty (36) degree climbing turns to try and get over the high overcast but could not, so the group turned back.

c. Target was not reached so weather at the target could not be observed.

Target: Torpedo works at Fiume, Italy

9 January 1944

a. there was a front across the Adriatic running East-West, about one hundred (100) miles. The South-West part of the front was about at Rimini on the Italian West coast and the North-West part of the front was about thirty (30) miles North of Fiume. It consisted of alto-stratus, with bottom at sixteen thousand five hundred (16500) feet to eighteen thousand (18000) feet, not more than fifteen hundred (1500) to three thousand (3000) feet thick. It was clear underneath, except along the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia, which had a low strato-cumulus from the mountains inland.

b. Formation was forced to stay below the alto-stratus, bombing from sixteen thousand (16000) feet.

c. Low solid overcast over Fiume but on the run up to the I.P. for Fiume, Pola was seen to be clear thru a large hold in the clouds. A left turn of about one hundred and twenty (120) degrees was made and the bomb run made on Pola, axis about two hundred and seventy (270) degrees.

15<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE SHIFTED FROM NORTH AFRICA

ATTACK ON BULGARIAN CAPITAL IS FIFTH IN LESS THAN TWO MONTHS

HEADQUARTERS U.S. 15<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE, Italy, Jan. 10 (U.P.)--American Flying Fortresses bombed Sofia today simultaneously with the release of word that the second largest United States air force--the 15<sup>th</sup>--had shifted from Africa to bases in Italy at least 600 miles closer to the enemy.

Lt. Gen. Nathan F. Twining sent a powerful fleet of his 15<sup>th</sup> air force to strike a heavy blow at the Bulgarian capital and also at the morale of Germany's war jittery satellites in the Balkans.

The bombardment of Sofia was the fifth in less than two months. At the Bulgarian capital railroads converge from Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece. The city is the hub of German communications throughout the Balkans.

BLAST RAIL YARDS

The first heavy bomber raid on Sofia was on Nov. 24, when Liberator bombers hit it hard. The last was on Dec. 20, when the attacking fleet of Liberators and Lightnings shot down nine German fighters and left the city's railroad yards a mass of flames and explosions.

Flying Fortresses were operating from Italian bases seven days after the first echelon crossed the Mediterranean. However, other units continued to operate from African bases.

The move of the 15<sup>th</sup> air force as a body was accomplished without missing a single day of operations against the Germans in Italy, it now can be revealed.

ENGINEERS MOVE IN

It was one of the most highly coordinated military transitions carried out in this theater. The first step was construction of new heavy bomber bases in Italy where none existed before.

American and British engineers moved in behind the advancing ground forces during the early days of the Italian campaign and began building air fields under the threat of German artillery. For many days they worked night and day within sound of the front line guns.

Freeland  
99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group wound up at Foggia

Target: City of Sofia, Bulgaria

10 January 1944

a. Clear from Italy to coast of Yugoslavia. Solid overcast from coast of Yugoslavia almost half way to Bulgaria. Overcast at approximately ten thousand (10000) feet. There was fog in the valleys over Yugoslavia and in the Western part of Bulgaria.

c. The I.P. Slivnitsa, Bulgaria was clear from twenty one thousand (21000) feet down but was partly overcast. Cirro-cumulus clouds were encountered between the I.P. and the target. The bomb run was made on instruments as the ground could only be seen by looking almost straight down. Haze obscured vision of the target to the extent, it is believed, that a smoke screen was being put up over the target.

Target: Halon Busin Pireaus, Greece

12 January 1944

a. Overcast east of base at seven thousand (7000) feet as Group formed. Overcast was broken near Brindisi, became thin overcast at about eleven thousand (1000) feet base near hell of Italy. Became broken short distance off coast increasing to undercast off coast of Greece, encountered overcast again at nineteen thousand (19000) feet about seventy five (75) miles from I.P.

b. Slight alteration of course at various points to miss localized weather, leveled out on occasions during climb to avoid clouds.

c. I.P. covered necessitating shorter bomb run. Two (2) distant cloud layers, one nineteen thousand (19000) feet to twenty two thousand (22000) feet, one from sixteen thousand (16000) feet to seventeen thousand five hundred (17500) feet made proper cover by escort very difficult--visibility between cloud layers poor. This cloud condition existed from target out to coast of Greece.

Target: Rome Guidania A/D

- 15 -

13 January 1944

a. Low clouds enroute to Naples, cloud cover off shore fifty (50) miles, tops at eight thousand (8000) to nine thousand (9000) feet, with broken overcast, base at twenty two thousand (22000) feet South-West from Rome. Overcast dissipated seventy (70) miles off coast of Rome, encountered overcast near target, base of overcast about twenty five thousand (25000) feet. Moderate haze over entire target area.

b. Evasive action consisted of slight turns and rapid descent in altitude off target.

c. Target area covered with haze but had no effects on the bomb run.

Target: Mostar A/d Yugoslavia

14 January 1944

a. Weather enroute CAVU except for patches of low overcast along Yugoslavian coast at about five thousand (5000) feet. Also few scattered low scud.

b. CAVU, no evasive tactics.

c. CAVU, weather had no effects on the bomb run.

#### SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 2 April, 1944 - Steyr, Austria

#### I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Thirty-seven A/C of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (B-17) encountered stiff fighter opposition 2 April 1944 enroute to bomb the ball bearing plant at Steyr, Austria. At least 100 E/A were observed and approximately 50 were encountered at various times to and from the target. The E/A were first observed at 1140 hours at 45 deg. 30 min. N 15 deg. 00 min. E and this first group attacked from the rear and low. E/A included Ju88s, ME110s, ME210s, FW190s, ME109s, at least one FW189 and one crew reported eight 4 engine E/A. Because of the fact that only one crew reported the four engine E/A there may be some doubt as to accuracy of the observation, although the crew is experienced and usually reliable. Crews were questioned at length on the reported four engine A/C, but information generally was unsatisfactory. They reported that the E/A fired cannon from "under the fuselage," but the flashes were small and about like a 20 mm. They observed no bursts, although they insisted the four engine A/C came within 500 yards from the rear. They were in a company front, but the reporting crew was unable to say what became of them after the one attack because they were attacked by several S/E fighters and lost track of the four engine A/C. On the return flight one ME202 attacked near Fiume.

Crews believe the fighters came from the Udine and Klagenfurt areas. The attacks ended at 1250 hours. For the first time this group was attacked by rocket-firing JU88s from headon. The 88s fired a rocket barrage at the noses range of our guns, they broke off to the left and right in a diving turn. After this frontal rocket barrage, S/E E/A attacked from the rear. Many S/E E/As made diving attacks out of the sun. Some rocket attacks were made from 3 and 9 o'clock and some from 5 to 7 o'clock. One outstanding feature of the battle was the very noticeable increase in E/As carrying rockets. It is evident that the enemy is installing more rocket firing devices and the twin engine A/C are carrying four rockets, two under each wing. The FW190s and the ME109s also carried four rockets each and after firing came in for the attack. Many of the pilots appeared experienced and several of the attacks by S/E fighters were aggressive. Most attacks occurred at 23,000 feet altitude. The fighter escort of P-38s was picked up at 1014 hours at 44 deg. 43 min. N 15 deg. 24 min. E. and left about five minutes after bombs were away or 1220 hours. The F-47 escort could not be seen, but some crews reported seeing top cover vapor trails and hearing the P-47s on the radio over target. A minute before bombs away five ME110s fired rockets from nine o'clock level. The bursts were about 800 feet short, but accurate as to altitude. Many single fighters attacked from 10 to 12 o'clock high in trail while others attacked in pairs. One crew reported some ME109s were silver with black crosses and one ME210 was painted grey with a green stripe around the fuselage. During the battle, gunners of this group claim they destroyed four ME109s, six ME110s, one ME210 and

one FW190. Two JU88s were claimed as probably destroyed and one ME110 as damaged. These claims have not been computed and these figures may be too high after a careful analysis. This group lost two B-27s over the target and one after leaving the target. Crews were not able to determine whether flak, rockets or fighters were responsible, although fighters were observed attacking two of them after they appeared to have been crippled. Ten chutes were observed out of one A/C, none of the second and the third A/C was last observed over enemy territory with two engines feathered and losing altitude rapidly. Fighter escort was excellent and accounted for any fighters.

B. Flak: Moderate, heavy, accurate flak was experienced over the target. This was barrage and tracking type. Twenty-eight A/C were damaged slightly by flak, and one was hit by rockets with serious damage resulting. One crew reported seeing small "discs" about four inches in diameter exploding at altitude with white smoke. They could give no further information.

Over Steyr this group experienced moderate to intense, accurate, heavy flak of the tracking type which holed 28 A/C. Batteries appeared to completely cover the city on all sides.

These discs appeared to be of a pinkish color and they covered an area of some 300 yards. Six patches of these were observed.

Enroute, this group experienced some flak from the areas; this was slight, light and inaccurate and the batteries appeared located south and southeast of the harbor area.

## II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATION

A. Communications: 1100 hrs. Caljo (45° 15' N - 15° 00' E) 23,000', 200 RR cars in yard.  
1145 hrs. at 47° 12' S - 14° 44' E, 10 AC in one A/D with engines running.  
1215 hrs. 46° 08' N - 15° 20' E, 12 A/C.  
1045 hrs. 47° 08' N - 15° 10' S (radio) 3 AC on east end, on south side large hangar and wings.

## III. CONCLUSIONS

- A. Total Losses:
- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| From fighters | 3 |
| From flak     | 0 |
| Other reasons | 0 |
- B. Damage:
- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| From fighters | 2                 |
| From flak     | 28 (minor damage) |
| Other reasons | 0                 |
- C. Victories: (Claim shoots being submitted)  
Destroyed: 6 ME109, 8 ME110, 1 ME210, 1 FW100  
Probably destroyed: 1 ME109, 2 JU88  
Damaged: 0
- D. Correction son previous Mission Reports: None.

Vernon E. Fairbanks  
Major, Air Corps,  
S-2, 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp.

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Anderson, Richard P., 2d Lt., 0-820696, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 28 August 1916 Enlisted: 11 October 1941  
Home Address: Badger, S. Dak.  
Occupation: Farmer  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Missions: Twenty-eight Duty on A/C: Copilot
  
- Domangue, Norris J. Jr., 2d Lt., 0-719900, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 19 July 1923 Enlisted: 11 November 1942  
Home Address: 1534 N. Parkway, Memphis, Tenn.  
Occupation: Student  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Mission: Twenty-three Duty on A/C: Navigator
  
1. Parrish, James M., 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., 0-752897, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 3 July 1921 Enlisted: 14 August 1942  
Home Address: Honey Grove, Texas  
Occupation: Civil Engineer  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Mission: Forty-eight Duty on A/C: Bombardier
  
1. Rice, John H., T/Sgt., 39461675, 347<sup>th</sup> bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Group.  
Born: 13 April 1920 Enlisted: 5 February 1943  
Home Address: 21 S. Franklin Street, Wenatchee, Washington  
Occupation: College student  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Missions: Forty-six Duty on A/C: Radio operator
  
1. Hornik, William J., T/Sgt., 35528556, 347<sup>th</sup> bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 15 February 1919 Enlisted 5 January 1943  
Home Address: 2256 W. 19th Street, Cleveland, Ohio  
Occupation: Machinist  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Missions: Forty-eight Duty on A/C: Top turret gunner
  
1. Canty, Anthony T., S/Sgt., 17072132, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 3 February 1920 Enlisted: 1 July 1942  
Home Address: 6325 A Easton Ave., St. Louis, MO  
Occupation: Construction worker  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Missions: Forty-two Duty on A/C: Waist gunner
  
1. Williamson, William N., S/Sgt., 18075991, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 20 August 1920 Enlisted: 15 May 1942  
Home Address: 4015 Hanover Street, Dallas, Texas  
Occupation: Aircraft worker  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Missions: Forty-two Duty on A/C: Tail gunner
  
1. English, Francis H., 39534821, Sgt., 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.  
Born: 5 November 1917 Enlisted: 11 September 1942  
Home Address: 340 Island Hiway, RFD #1, Victoria B.C., Canada  
Occupation: Printer  
MIA: 23 August 1944 RTD: 29 August 1944  
Mission: Twenty-nine Duty on A/C: Photographer
  
2. Never in enemy hands.

3. On a mission to Vienna on 23 August 1944, B-17G was hit by flak over target. Numbers one and three engines and oxygen system were knocked out but the plane was held under control for one hour. At 1356<sup>the</sup> crew bailed out from 12,000 feet between Dubica and Kozara. (60 miles South of Zagreb).

Within 4 hours Partisans had collected all crew members and they were taken to Partisan Headquarters in the hills. They stayed there 2 days. On 25 August 1944 they left for another Partisan camp traveling N.E. for one night. On 26 August they left for Sanski ost traveling 17 hours in a S.W. direction arriving 27 August 1944. They remained there until they were evacuated on the night of 28 August 1944 to Bari A/D.

G.D. McWilliams  
2d Lt., Air Corps  
Interrogator

SECRET  
APPENDIX B

<u>Helpers</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Aid</u>
Sauro Strugar (Partisan)	23 August 1944	Guide
Bieliabian (Partisan)	23-25 August 1944	
Sumonjo (Partisan)	23-25 August 1944	Medical
Major Flint (?) (British Mission)		

SECRET  
APPENDIX C

1. Germans at Bihac (Control point)
2. Ustaci has four (4) other crew members.

SECRET  
APPENDIX E

1. Used maps, compasses, malted milk tablets. Candy no good, no matches in some kits.

ESCAPE STATEMENT

Sgt. Gus T. Brown Jr., 18154612, 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 347 Bomb Squadron.

1. Personal History:

Duty: Waist Gunner

Age: 20

Missions: 9

Returned to duty: 29 May, 1944

2. Mission of 24 January, 1944 to Sofia. Target area obscured by cloud. Ship turned and headed for alternate target Nis. Ran into severe storm, gasoline supply exhausted, visibility was nil, so crew bailed out. All crew bailed out. Landed area south of Unice.

3. Never in enemy hands.

4. Brown only had kit with Maalox tablets, compass, etc. in it. Other crew members with him had old type kits with \$15 and gold piece. Escape maps useful. With assistance of American mission amber money was exchanged for local currency and was useful in purchase of cigarettes, small toilet articles, etc. Briefing of officers in crew had emphasized Partisan influence in Yugoslavia to extent that pilot in Brown's crew drew a star in the snow when he met the first native. Since the crew was in Chetnik territory this was a dangerous thing to have done. Enlisted men of the crew had not been briefed on conduct in Yugoslavia.

Interrogator  
R. BLYTHIN  
2nd Lt. Cav.

APPENDIX A

Landed in Zlatabor area south of Unice. Made contact with Chetniks on night of bail out. Entire crew made contact with each other on second day after bail out. Contacted Captain Milomir Kolamevic, of Kraljevo, a Chetnik officer who guided group most of the distance to American officer (Mareo) about 100 kilometers south of point of landing. Traveled NE direction avoiding Cacak, crossed Dicina river at night and railroad and highway paralleling river--narrowly avoided German patrol on highway. In small village met man who claimed to be an American doctor formerly resident of Belgrade--Peter Uvanovich (sic), this man and his wife were evacuated with the flyer. Met Captain Maja V. Batuicevic formerly of Belgrade, now chief of staff of Chetnik corps in area--was very friendly to American flyers. Chetniks were helpful and friendly to crew. Guarded airstrip during evacuation.

From a standpoint of security there is no objection that this man be returned to operations in this theatre.

APPENDIX B

Saw few evidence of Chetniks fighting Germans. Did see Chetnik troops moving in direction of Dicina River to fight (according to Chetniks) the Partisans. Brown had a thirty or forty minute talk with Mihalovich. Expressed his thanks for kind treatment at the hands of the Chetniks. Mihalovich stated he liked the Americans and would like to meet all the American flyers in the area and that he would like to visit American after the war. No political or military conversation.

99th Bombardment Group (H) AAF

November, 1943

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

Escape of T/Sgt. Titus, K.E.

On Nov. 13, 1943, a ghost walked into the 346<sup>th</sup> squadron area. The "ghost" was T/Sgt. Kenneth E. Titus, a 23 year old gunner from Huntington Park, Cal., who had been missing since July 22.

Not much the worse for wear, Titus had a remarkable story to tell. It all happened on the mission to the Foggia marshalling yards when a lone ME 109 attacked his ship and set the right wing afire. Buckling on his parachute, the gunner was blown out of the airplane, either by a terrific explosion or the breaking up of the ship. He descended safely, although he hadn't had time to buckle the leg straps of his chute, and the chest straps wore all the skin all the skin and hair off under his arms. He landed about six miles south of Foggia, and then his adventures began.

Titus hid in a gulley while Italian soldiers, enraged because they couldn't find him, fired machine guns through the bushes and set fires among them. After about six hours the gunner started to walk to Foggia. Civilians approached him with old guns and rusty knives, and some spit on him. He was put in a basement in Foggia and denied food until he lied that he was an American officer. Titus then was held in one prison camp after another under trying circumstances until on September 16 he and about 1300 prisoners were loaded on a train to start for Germany.

Titus was riding in a steel freight car, and with a three inch hack saw blade given him by an Italian soldier he set to work on an air vent in the floor. A lieutenant helped him with a can opener. After 18 hours work they had the hole large enough to escape through. When the train stopped at Verona in the dead of the night the two slipped through the hole and lay on the tracks until the train rumbled off over them. They slept in a haystack and the next morning separated to make their own way to freedom.

Titus slept in haystacks, acquiring painful bites all over his body, and begged food from Italian farmers. He picked up some civilian clothing and a bicycle and he often rode down the coast by hanging on the back of German trucks. At Pescara a German soldier with a flat tire on his bicycle made Titus exchange with him, but the gunner had the bike repaired and continued his journey. At a town near the front lines, he was rounded with 1000 Italian civilians and soldiers and forced to work two days and two nights without rest digging trenches and gun placements. On the third day, allied planes bombed and strafed the enemy position and he escaped while the Germans dashed for shelter.

At Estonia, 15 miles north of the lines, Titus found some bamboo poles on the beach and fashioned a raft. At night he set out into the Adriatic. Next morning he was five miles out and headed south. Then the raft sank. Titus stayed afloat in bitter cold water all that day and the next night; that night he was in the middle while British destroyers shelled the mainland and German guns replied. But a providential tide finally swept him ashore south of the lines. The gunner sang for pure joy. He was picked up by an engineer outfit, given first aid and sent back home.

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

99th Bombardment Group (H) AAF

November, 1943

SPECIAL ACCOUNT  
Escape of Lt. Eldon H. Dahl

On Nov. 21, 1943, another one of our lost men returned. He was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Eldon H. Dahl fo the 416<sup>th</sup> squadron, a 25 year old pilot from Bozeman, Mont., who had been missing since the August 25<sup>th</sup> raid on Foggia. With his wrist in a plaster case and his face somewhat battered, Dahl told how he bailed out of a flaming Fortress, was beaten and lashed by

Italian captors when he tried to escape, but later walked more than 100 miles through German infested country to the freedom of the American battle lines.

Dahl floated to earth about 45 miles south of Foggia and was seized immediately by Italian military police and clapped in the jail of the village of St. Andres di Consa. That evening he swiped a pistol which a guard carelessly left lying about and laid plans to escape. When he saw his chance he stuck the pistol in the back of a lone guard, who promptly screamed and brought the other guards running. The chief of police and two guards beat him with their fists. Later the same evening the two guards returned and beat him again. And the next morning the same two guards again gave him a beating, this time with a heavy rope. But Dahl survived the beatings and went through several more jails before winding up in a quarantine camp north of Rome. On September 11, after the Italian armistice, Dahl and other prisoners were allowed to walk out of the camp by the now friendly Italian soldiers. The pilot lived in the hills for a month, sleeping in caves and begging food from farmers. On October 12 he started south alone, without a compass but with a small reserve of food. The battle lines were 100 miles away, as the crow flies, and Dahl had hills and mountains in front of him. But he trudged on, sleeping in barns and haystacks and begging food. Once he went into town and slept in an Italian home where two Germans were sleeping upstairs. A little over a month later he was near the lines, only to run into seeming disaster.

Dahl was scrambling down a cliff when two German soldiers spied him and fired. He had to surrender. Only one German had a gun, and he asked Dahl for a match. The pilot saw his chance. As he handed over the matches, he knocked the gun out of the German's hands and dived headfirst into a deep ravine. He broke his wrist and lacerated his face, but he scrambled up and ran to cover. The Germans failed to find him, although they passed within a yard of his hiding place. His wrist swollen and painful, Dahl struggled the last few miles across the lines. He was picked up by a U.S. engineer outfit and fed, clothed, bathed, and given medical treatment. Then he came back home.

Jack B. Abrams, Ph.D  
 Lt.Col. USAFR Ret.  
 4660 Tippecanoe Trail  
 Sarasota, Florida 33583  
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THE MISSION WITHOUT BOMBS  
 or  
 How the 99th Bomb Group invaded Sicily  
 by Jack B. Abrams

[Now, forty-one years later, members of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society have discovered that the story of the planes of our group which took part in the Sicilian invasion is known to only a few. George Coen, the editor and founder of the Society, stated that Group Headquarters did not have any information, and only the crews involved are aware of it. Therefore, George requested that those who took part in the mission write their stories. This is my recollection of that long, long night.]

The morning of July 9, 1943 Captain Harry Burrell, our First Pilot, Lt. Orlo Duker, co-pilot, Lt. Duane Hansen, bombardier, and I, the navigator, assembled with two other crews in the briefing tent. Our Group Commander, Col. Fay Upthegrove, informed us that we were volunteers for a top secret mission, which meant that we could refuse to go since we were not being ordered to do so. Not one man declined. This was not due to heroism on my part as much as curiosity, since the mission involved leading in troop carrier planes to the invasion drop point in Sicily and I felt drawn to join my former associates in the 60th and 64th Troop Carrier Groups.

We took off in the afternoon and flew to a newly bulldozed landing strip near the Mediterranean coast between Enfidaville and Susa, south of Tunis, where we transferred to three waiting B-17's. The only difference I could see was that there were some strange black boxes in the radio room. These were designed to jam enemy radar installations so that they could not determine how many planes were approaching, nor what their destination might be.

I am not sure about the times of takeoff and landing because the page for this mission of July 9 and 10 is missing from my navigator's log book, but my Form 5 lists five "missions" on that night as follows:

<u>Date</u>		<u>Number of Landings</u>	<u>Time</u>
July 9	C	1	1:50
	9	NC	2:45
	9	C	2:00
	10	NC	2:15
	10	C	2:00

The first landing, after 1:50 flying time was at the new landing strip. I don't know why the next seven hours are divided into three parts, since it was all one flight, with a landing at another strip near the African coast. The last two-hour flight was back to the 99th Group base.

As we climbed to 700 feet it was still light and although we were headed due east to Malta I could see the sunset in back of us. It was warm, the air smooth, and the drone of the four powerful engines created a relaxed, pleasant ambience. I looked down to mark the time of crossing the African coast and noticed another landing strip with many C-47's lined up. For some reason I marked an X on my chart at that point - for which I was very grateful later.

I took a reading on the whitecaps through the driftmeter and calculated that the wind was quite different than what we had been told at the briefing. It had swung around to the north and increased in velocity. Several more readings confirmed that the velocity was still increasing. It eventually reached forty knots. I wondered if the troop carrier crews were aware of the change.

Soon we could see the Island of Lampedusa close on our right, too close, in fact. After replotting our position, I gave Harry Burrell a corrected course to Malta. When my ETA indicated we should be at the southern tip of Malta, it was far off our left wingtip. The wind was still increasing.

We turned north-northeast at 2100 (shown in pencil on the attached copy of the map). The sky was overcast and dark but we could see stretched out on the ocean to our left the largest invasion fleet in history - over 3,000 ships. Some had barrage balloons attached by cables to their decks. Very shortly we were to get a closer look at some of them. We flew a serpentine course so as to arrive at the Initial Point at 2135, then flew to a course parallel to the Cape and two or three miles from it at 2150. The first wave of troop carriers (red line) passed within a few miles of us at 2153, proceeded up the eastern coast to Cape Murro di Porco and turned back at 2210 and returned to Malta by 2247. At least that's what is drawn on the map.

What is difficult to understand at this late date is why the second wave of carriers is shown arriving at a point exactly three miles from the first wave, going in the opposite

direction only one minute later at 2248. That is a possible explanation of the loss of some of the twenty-two C-47's that we heard about later. There were also rumors that, because of the radical wind shift, many were off-course, flew over the invasion fleet, and were shot down. Or, if they released the gliders on their ETA for the target area, they could have been many miles south of it and the gliders landed in the sea.

The second wave carried paratroops. We assumed they followed us to Cape Passero, then turned northwest and dropped the troops near Gela, crossing the coast at 2330. We continued to fly in circles off the Cape. The last time I marked was 2255, then it became impossible to mark our position exactly because we were dodging several barrage balloons which had snapped their cables due to high seas.

From the first time we approached Cape Passero it was apparent that the secret black boxes were effective. The enemy searchlights were swinging wildly from vertical to horizontal and back, wagging their fingers of light in seeming frustration. We continued to fly in circles off the Cape and at some point lost an engine. This did not interfere with the completion of our mission since we had no bomb load. The problem was that Harry couldn't feather the propeller, resulting in windmilling and creating so much drag that we couldn't climb high enough to get over the Atlas Mountains to home base.

I told Harry that I had marked the troop carrier landing strip and if they were returning there it should be marked with flarepots. We could land there - if I could find it. I wasn't sure where we were by the time we stopped circling. I notice that I wrote on the map margin "2345 instead of 2415". I suppose that is when we were told to head back to base. The green line shows 2400.

Harry flew straight and level while I took my sextant and climbed up into the bubble, knowing all too well that I had not consulted the heavenly bodies for over eight months since the flight from England to Gibraltar, and regretting every day of it. There was not a star to be seen. I watched and waited. We all watched and waited. Time dragged. It seemed hopeless, looking at the heavy overcast. We seemed suspended in space, being nowhere, going nowhere.

Suddenly the clouds parted and I had just enough time to take a reading on Polaris which gave us our latitude, and another star at right angles for longitude. Then the clouds

closed. Given enough time I would have taken three fixes and used the average, but I was grateful for even one. I plotted it on the chart, drew a line to the X near the coast of Africa and told Harry the new course.

Then another long wait began. Time flies when you're having fun, and time stops when you're scared. The wait seemed endless. It was actually about two hours. Then we saw a light and it became a line of flares.

On the intercom I heard, "Pilot to Navigator."

"Go ahead, pilot," I answered.

"Is this Africa? Do you think we should land?" asked Harry.

"Do you have a better place?" I asked. "I'm sure it's Africa."

"I'll give them a buzz and see what happens," said the pilot.

We flew low over the strip and a green light flashed, clearing us to land. Good solid ground never was more appreciated. There I met many of the crews that I knew from the 60th and 64th Troop Carrier Groups, and we waited the rest of the night, sweating out the return of crews and planes. Twenty-two were missing.

Next morning the propeller was feathered by hand, and as we were leaving one of my former pilots said to my crew, "Take good care of Jack."

I grinned a bit proudly and very gratefully, when our crew chief answered,

"Hey, he takes care of us!"

[The January, 1985 issue of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society newsletter contains an article by P. G. Bulkely, a bombardier on one of the three planes. He states that Swifty MacDonald was the pilot and the two navigators were John Kotowski and "Smitty", who may have been the Smitty transferred from the 60th Troop Carrier Group with me.

An earlier issue of the newsletter noted that Lt. Colonel Thurman had been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission, after the Group moved to Italy. Perhaps someone remembers who the other members of the crew were.

The black boxes must have been a new development in radar-jamming which the Air Corps wanted to keep from the enemy so that it could be used again, possibly in the invasion of France the following June.]

## QUOTES

Some of our Gentle Readers in California report a duo of American authors who glorify in print and in lectures the aristocratic kraut system of chivalry, while at the same time accusing the American Mustang pilots of deliberately trying to kill the enemy.

Well, Gee whiz, let's have a look at the historical record of this chivalry as exemplified in "Nazi Interrogator", by Raymond F. Toliver.

Get this book at your favorite second-hand store; we do not want to encourage this drivel. geo.

We had our own stool pigeons too, and would occasionally make use of our own permanent-party officers. They would change from their blue-grey Luftwaffe uniform to the USAAF olive drab or to RAF dark blue as the necessity arose. It was sometimes quite difficult to recognize one's own pal when he was all made up as an enemy POW, slightly wounded perhaps, with a bandaged arm or hand, not too well shaven, sullenly chewing gum. p. 277

Last but not least is the most despicable character of all, the double agent, the double crosser who tries to work from both sides.

p. 269

Ah, well, let's hear it from the finest double-agent of all time, Tricycle, also known as Dusko Popov, who died last year.

## SPY/COUNTER-SPY

Popov 1974

" . . . is there one example in history of army marshals or generals revolting when victorious? When they are getting the applause, the glory, and the booty? Most of them love Hitler, and those who don't love him admire him. Don't forget, they did the planning of this war and they are winning it for Hitler."

p. 90

When I saw Johnny next in Lisbon, I broached the coup de etat theme to him again. His response was a horse laugh.

"Why the hell should the Allies want to get rid of Hitler? He's winning the war for them. The German Army high command is absolutely frantic. They're dancing about in frustration. I can tell you, General Halder and many, many others are fit to be tied. Dusko, the German Army's victories at the beginning of the war came about because the campaigns were planned by the professional soldiers in the Generalstab. Then Hitler started putting his grubby hands in strategy and look what happened. First he delayed Operation Barbarossa against Russia for nearly two months by his attack (on Yugoslavia). It was a gratuitous campaign. There was no need to secure Yugoslavia, since there was no danger of a major British operation up through Greece. The English were too weak in April 1941. And they were alone. If it weren't for that delay, Russia might have been crushed before winter set in. But even aside from that, Dusko, Hitler made cardinal mistakes in the first stages of the Russian campaign. He overrode Halder and the general staff and insisted on pushing too far south instead of taking Moscow and Leningrad. And then he made that futile sacrifice at Stalingrad all for the sake of what he conceives to be glory. Von Paulus had an army of about three hundred thousand men there. If it had been sent to reinforce the southern front, it could have neutralized the Russian counterattack. No, Hitler is the Allies' best friend".

"Is he really that bad a military man," I asked, "or are the generals trying to shift the blame?"

"It doesn't require an expert in military strategy to answer that. A psychologist would be more qualified. The man is insane. Look at the Tunisian affair. Rommel was begging for more tanks and reinforcements for months. He hardly got any at all, and then they came too late. But after the Allied invasion of North Africa and the loss of El Alamein, Hitler rushed over a quarter of a million German and Italian troops to Tunisia to hold a bridgehead that was lost in advance. If he had listened to his generals, he would

have done that several months before. Rommel would have taken Cairo and probably controlled all North Africa."

"If there is so much dissatisfaction, wouldn't this be the moment to act?" . . . . .

"Dusko, the reality of the situation is sadder than you know. There is a so-called resistance group, but it is centered around retired or cashiered generals. I say so-called because they only join in after they are kicked out, and then all they do is sit around and talk. They can't agree on a program. Most of them want a Kaiser back, but they can't get together on which of the grandsons of William II should mount the throne or become Regent. They also disagree about the type of constitution they should propose. All that is bad enough, but in addition - and this is what would make them totally unacceptable - they want to hold on to what Hitler has won." p. 200

He went on to play the old Nazi record. Germany was the saviour of Europe and its civilization. Germany was shielding the world against Russian communism. I almost threw up my captured caviar, foie gras, and champagne, restraining myself from asking about this saviour's slave laborers, concentration camps, and mass executions. p.224

And now a word from his sponsor, John Masterman.

#### THE DOUBLE-CROSS SYSTEM

Masterman

5. A more subtle danger, and one which threatened to destroy all our plans, lay in the tendency of Abwehr officials to desert the sinking ship. Shrewd observers among the Germans decided early on which side victory would ultimately lie and made their plans accordingly. Some, such as JUNIOR, who was brought over to us in November 1943 after earlier attempts to join us, had always been anti-Nazi; others tried to come for purely selfish motives. At the beginning of 1944 this was excessively dangerous for us. If such an Abwehr agent changed sides and joined the British, he would quite certainly tell us of all the German agents he knew operating in England, and these would be in fact our own controlled agents. Unfortunately the Germans would know that the traitor could and would give away all this information, and consequently they would expect the arrest of GARBO, TRICYCLE, BRUTUS, TATE and the rest. If the agents continued to work as if nothing had happened the Germans would assume that they were under our control. In short, the German turncoat, trying to assist us, would in fact destroy our entire system. p. 219

We are sure that we deceived the Germans and turned their weapon against themselves; can we be quite sure that they were not equally successful in turning our weapon against us? Now our double-cross agents were the straight agents of the Germans - their whole espionage system in the U.K. What did the Germans gain from this system? The answer cannot be doubtful. They gained no good whatever from their agents, and they did take from them a very great deal of harm. It would be agreeable to be able to accept the simple explanation, to sit back in the armchair of complacency, to say that we were very clever and the Germans very stupid, . . . But that argument just won't hold water at all. . . . . In one respect, however, and in one which is not immediately obvious, we can and should claim a great advantage.

This, curiously enough, (curiously, because we are not dealing with straightforward matters), was the personal integrity of all officers and other persons concerned in the U.K. from the top to the bottom. Almost always when a real blunder was made by the Germans it was traceable to the fact that the Abwehr official implicated was governed by personal considerations; he was making money out of the agent or gaining prestige from him or even only making his post in some neutral haven secure. . . . p. 263

And there you have it. The Germans' main weakness proves to have been the venality of the individual German. gfc

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL - MAY 1985

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In the meantime a quite simple answer to the German radio-controlled bombs had been found. If someone aboard the attacked ship simply operated an electric razor as the bomb came in, it would infallibly avoid the ship and plunge into the water. The Germans stopped using them.

THE COMPACT HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY, Fletcher Pratt!, p. 288

## TAPS

JEFFRIES, THOMAS H.  
HEJDUK, JOSEPH A.  
ORWEIG, CURTIS

. . . Thomas H. Jeffries died in his home in Downey Calif., of cancer in about 1977; Joe Hejduk died in an airplane accident while taking off in his own airplane, in Casa Grande, Ariz.. He lived in Casagrande; and Curtis Orweig died of a heart attack.

James

MAY, EDWARD P.

I regret to inform you that my husband, Edward P. May, passed away April 26, 1983 as a result of a heart attack.

Mary J. May, 619 Taylor, Sterling CO 80751

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