



99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Newsletter

Vol. 9, No. 5

Sep. 1, 1989

SOCIETY OFFICERS, 1989-1990

PRESIDENT - BILL SMALLWOOD
 TREASURER - WALTER BUTLER
 SECRETARY - H.E. CHRISTIANSEN

VICE-PRESIDENT - FRED HUEGLIN
 HISTORIAN - GEORGE F. COEN
 EDITOR - GEORGE F. COEN

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During July we had two special visitors: Fred Hueglen and Chris Christiansen. Fred is our current Vice President and Chris is Secretary. Driving north to see some relatives Fred arrived in Vermont in mid-July. We sat on the screened porch with a view of the Green Mountains. After covering some 99th administrative details the talk turned to our respective stays in Foggia. And true to his word Fred has mailed some photos of his crew, the Twomley crew, including his tent, complete with a wooden door. (Others have been responding to my inquiries into the set-up of the 99th while overseas. Al Schroeder, Rex Greathouse, Howard Brown, George Ureke and Bruce Borman have mailed photographs that help to round out the overall picture of our base at Tortorella.)

Chris arrived the last day of July, with his TV camera. Before lunch we toured the house and grounds and nearby Mt. Ascutney, where he took pictures looking back toward town, with its white church steeple. Our afternoon discussion centered on the upcoming Huntsville reunion, and especially responses to his questionnaire included in the July Newsletter. Everyone is requested to return this form promptly to Chris with their preferences stated.

When a good portion of one's working life has involved interpretation of data it becomes a habit difficult to drop. Since the January Issue of Newsletter published names and addresses of our members this made grist for the old mill. Nancy and I completed a count, by states, and came up with some information. California has the most members with 85, Florida has 77 and Texas 61. Add on Ohio and Pennsylvania, each with 50, and the total for the five states of 323 amounts to 38% of the grand total of 850. The total of the 17 states with most members accounts for two-thirds of the grand total. It would be interesting to determine if attendance by states at reunions coincides with the above. Perhaps others have done an analysis of their own.

Hope everyone is having a good summer

Bill

DEAR MEMBERS:::WE WILL MEET IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL 2101 LOUISIANA BOULEVARD 4/30/91 to 5/5/91 FOR A GREAT REUNION YOU ALL COME!!! DETAILS WILL FOLLOW!!!

REX AND FLORENCE CARNES WRITES:::Just finished reading the July 1989 Newsletter, by far the most interesting Newsletter that we have published to date, in my humble opinion. Don't know for sure how ^{much} information you need or want on 3-24-1945, Berlin but kept a log at that time. Plane we flew in 870, Pilot John B. Clark III (Now Deceased) Co-Pilot William Britton, Radio Hovey S. Dabney 99th BG Member Waist John Casley, Ball Paul Capen 99th Member and myself Tail. Take off @ 0745 return 1705 hours for 9 hours and 20 minutes. The scuttlebut on the lost planes, as I remember it was the 483rd that lost all the planes on its return from Berlin by crossing directly over Prague, Chex., lost to flak almost one whole squadron in the group. Can't say this is the gospel but believe it was the rumor at the time. As Ever REX & Flo PS REALLY ENJOYED YOUR GRANDSON'S STORY (Michael Ross) REX See Last Issue.

BERNIE BARR

WTF (With Two Fingers)

LETTERS

9 August 1989

George Coen, Historian
99th Bombardment Group Historical Society
2908 Aliso Drive N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Dear George:

I am a new member of the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society. I have sent for and have received all of the back copies of the Newsletter and needless to say I enjoy them very much.

I am an air historian and am presently writing a book about Air Aces, Air Crew Members as well as ground personnel, and the Newsletter contains a wealth of information, and all of it is authentic.

As a historian, I am constantly looking for stories, anecdotes, articles, items and many other things.

The members of the 99th Bombardment Historical Society can provide many of the stories and anecdotes I am seeking.

I am request two things: 1. Permission to use stories and anecdotes as published in the Newsletter, and 2. I am requesting that your members write to me with their stories and anecdotes of their experiences and when they write to me they give me permission to use the material. I should be able to use most of their stories in my book and future books I intend to write.

I am looking for anecdotes and vignettes of their feelings and experiences, both in th air and on the ground during both their training phase as well as the combat phase.

Any one interested in helping me in my endeavors to provide an interesting sidelight of a great period of American history, should send their letters and anecdotes to me at the below address.

Thank You.

William F. Kirwan
WILLIAM F (BILL) KIRWAN
15500 Bubbling Wells Rd #80
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
619-329-5165

Dear Bill;

Welcome to the Group. Feel free to copy anything you wish, but remember to change the names to protect the guilty. There is a copyright fee of one short beer per reunion. Welcome to our anecdotes and barefootisms. I don't know about vignettes; we don't much go for Italian food.

We look forward to meeting you.

best wishes old Man Coen



Aug 9, 1989 - 9 a.m.
Sunny - 68 degress

Dear Geo.;

Just a few lines to let you know I landed in the hospital on Saturday, July 29th (exactly nine months from date of my heart attack) but this time there was no heart attack (thank God) but the pains across the chest cause angina. I was released on Monday, August 8th and came back home taking things the easy way.

Hope all is well in Albuquerque and please give all my dear friends at the Wednesday luncheon my best warmest regards.

Will write soon again, and still am hoping to make Huntsville and especially Albuquerque in 1991.

Thanks for all your past kindness and keep up the good work.
sincerely Dick Dempsey

December 20, 1988

Dear George,

I noticed in the September 1, 1988, newsletter pages 14 and 15, that I have come under attack regarding my letter printed in the March 1, 1988 issue, pages 39 and 40.

George, not that it means that much to me, nor am I trying to lay blame on any particular person, but I must demand equal space to defend and answer some of the observations and questions pertaining to the 1-16-44 raid on Villaorba, in which a B-24 was shot down in the Adriatic Sea.

Number one, my letter was not written from hearsay or memory in trying to reconstruct an incident that occurred 45 years ago. The information related in my letter dated 5-15-87 was from my personal observation in the tail position of #482 "Robert E. Lee", piloted by Major Daniel V. MacDonald, Commanding Officer of the 416th Squadron.

We were the lead ship of the 99th Bomb Group that day. If we were at full muster, I could see thirty-six B-17's also six B-24's emerging from the cloud bank at approximately 5 o'clock, slightly low, also they were under attack by five ME-109's. I witnessed the destruction of three ME-109's as follows: one blew up in mid-air; second went into a dive and did not pull out, striking the ground; the third went down over the sea and the pilot bailed out.

As for the B-24 that went down in flames, I counted nine chutes coming out before it hit the water. I still say, the B-24's were firing at the ME-109's and accidentally fired toward our formation, because I could see the tracers coming our way. Question one: why is there no mention of the German fighters by Mr. John O'Connell's two witnesses to this disaster? Question two: Why hasn't some crew member of the B-24's come forth with an explanation or questions concerning their experience in this matter.

As for the military Archives in Washington D.C., I have never consulted them and I would have very little faith in what a person might find there. As for information found in the News Media, Squadron Diaries, etc., I think a more accurate history would be obtained from an eye witness

account recorded in a personal diary. Copies of my diary for that particular day follows:

27th MISSION
DATE - JAN 16th 1944
TARGET - AIR FIELD
LOCATED - VILLARBA, ITALY
SHIP - ROBT. E. LEE, LEAD GROUP

NO. - 482
PILOT - MAJ. MAC
HRS. - 4:40
POSITION - TAIL GUNS

Some flaps met six Libs as we come off target. They were being attacked by five ME-109's. Two three 109's go down. One blew up in mid-air. One went into a dive and didn't pull out. The other one went down over the sea. The pilot bailed out. The Libs came over to us for protection and one was shot down by our own men. Nine chutes come out of the ship before it went into the sea in flames.

We thought at first they were some of our own planes flown by Germans, as this had happened before. They had a few of our planes captured in flying condition. Sometimes they will try to join our formation then open up without warning. This particular plane that was shot down did not signal by radio or show the colors for the day. So I guess the boys in the rear were tugging happy.

The above diary was hand written approximately five hours after we returned to our base at Foggia, Italy, the night of 1-16-44. Please note the penmanship, if legible, is written by fountain pen not ball point pen.

Well George, you asked for it at Dallas, remember? Now we'll see if you print this letter. At first I intended to ignore the insinuation that the information stated in my letter was a fictitious recollection of what might have happened that day. I assure you this was based on my personal observation plus my diary, recorded the evening of the same day.

Dear Al;

If we waited for concensus in the reporting of those little group discussions of 46 years ago we would get very little ever printed. In fact, one of our neighbors, S.L.A. Marshall of El Paso has made a career of studying honest reports by honest witnesses who disagree entirely on reports of the same combat incident. General Marshall would come up with the most likely series of events in cases where all of the witnesses disagreed in all honesty. The confusion just goes with the territory. Our part is to publish the various accounts and to leave it to a devotee of SLAM to bring the accounts into some sort of agreement. You may have noticed that we have done this in writing of the Secret Sicilian Invasion and in other cases. We think that it is wonderful that there is such good correlation.

I flew 48 missions or so with Pete Bulkeley, The Bearded Bombardier, yet when we compare notes it does not even sound like the same war. And then when we check with Imrie and Henderson, it is even worse to try to fit our accounts together.

After all, we did have a few things on our mind during some moments of those Discussion Groups.

So thanks for your letter, Al, which we print for the authors who may some day interest themselves in our antics of those bygone days.

with respect,

your comrade george



Polish village honors American WWII flier

Brother of U.S. war hero - a PRCUA member

Instead of our usual PRCUA Member's profile, we are publishing this time a story about a brother of one of our members. Bernard Szymczak, of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, is a member of PRCUA St. James the Apostle Soc. 445. His brother, Walter P. Shimshock (English version of his Polish last name Szymczak), was a World War II flier, who was killed in action while delivering supplies to Warsaw. This is Bernard's recollection of his brother.



Bernard Szymczak can't verify it, but he is certain Sgt. Walter P. Shimshock's Polish heritage influenced the airman to volunteer for an ill-fated flight, ("Flying Fortress") in 1944, supplying freedom fighters in Poland.

The time was during World War II. Sgt. Walter, a native of Northeast Minneapolis, was a 19-year-old tail gunner in a B-17 bomber named "Till We Meet Again" that was shot down September 18, 1944, near the Polish village of Lomianki, close to Warsaw. In the result of this action, Sgt. Walter was captured, mentally and physically tortured and then executed.

His bomber, like many others, carried food, ammunition, weapons and medicine for the Polish underground (Armia Krajowa), which had risen up against the Germans and battled them in the street of Warsaw and the surrounding countryside since August 1st, 1944.

Last September, 42 years later, almost to the date, the villagers have erected a monument at the cemetery in Lomianki, about a mile from the site of the crash of the "Flying Fortress". The memorial, unveiled on September 21, 1986, is inscribed with the names of Shimshock and the other nine crew members who died heroically, in its brass plaque.

Walter P. Shimshock's plane was part of 107 American aircraft that flew with supplies to the Polish partisans. The 9 foot tall stone memorial, believed to be the first in Poland for American Servicemen, was erected after a five-year campaign by the villagers to get government permission.

Bernard Szymczak who maintains the original spelling of the family name, says he was deeply impressed by the dedication of the villagers in Poland to erect the memorial. "That is impressive and I am sure Wally would have thought so too," he said. "It makes me want to travel over there to see it...I have always wanted to visit Poland."

Walter, the middle of the three brothers, joined the Army Air Force shortly after graduating from De LaSalle High School in 1943. About a year later, he was assigned to the 39th Bomb Group. He wrote often but brief, due to wartime censorship. Because of this, not much was learned about

his many air missions, Bernard stated. He found out later that the fatal flight to Poland was his brother's 14th mission in a little more than a month of combat duty. Because the sergeant received the Purple Heart, he had to have been wounded in combat, but the family was never told the extent of his injuries.

Another brother, George, a partner in a northeast Minneapolis meat market, a few years younger than Walter, admitted that he looked up to him. "Boy, what a guy," he recalled. "Good student, well liked by everyone, always happy. And he was not afraid of anything."

Bernard Szymczak, retired now after 24 years of teaching at Anoka High School, described his brother as "one that was always smiling." "A crewman on another plane in that flight visited with us and that was the main thing he remembered about Wally," stated Bernard.

What actually happened to the crew of Walter Shimshock's plane on that fatal day of September 18th, 1944?

A writer by the name of George Shiller, contacted Bernie several years ago. Using U.S. Army Air Corps Archives, records from the Polish underground combined with interviews with one of the two crewmen who survived, Shiller pieced together what happened.

The crew's plane was so new that they didn't have time to paint on the nose of the aircraft its name "Till We Meet Again," a title of a popular song. As the bombers neared Warsaw, German fighters attacked. One of the engines on Shimshock's plane caught fire, causing it to fall out of formation. The crew was preparing to jump when a blast rocked the bomber.

Of the 10 men on board, eight got out. German bullets hit one of the survivors, Sgt. Marcus Shook, in the leg and ankle as he parachuted to the ground. He spent the rest of the war in a prison hospital and then came home. Sgt. James Christy, the other survivor, who just along for the ride, came home after spending time in POW camp.

Shiller believes German bullets killed some crew members as they parachuted to the ground. He recalls, one to the crew members waved a white handkerchief as he came down but, he was shot moments later.

Shiller believes that unfortunately Shimshock wasn't so lucky. He broke his leg when he landed and after the Germans captured him, he was severely and often interrogated. An underground report, which did not identify the Americans, said that the tall, young man with a young girl's picture in his wallet "suffered a great deal since he was not cared for...he conducted himself like a soldier, full of scorn for the Germans."

"After the interrogation, the Germans shot him", the underground report concluded. Bernie said his mother and father didn't live to know that for which he is thankful.

The way Walter P. Shimshock and the others died apparently has a lot to do with the monument. That, and the fact that the men died trying to help the Polish people.

Six years ago, when the grass roots reform movement known as Solidarity erupted in Poland, witnesses to the events in 1944 asked for and got permission to erect a monument honoring the 10 courageous flyers.

In September 1986, there was an unveiling ceremony attended by veterans groups and residents of Lomianka village.

Walter P. Shimshock is a perfect example of many Polish Americans who gave their life in the fight for freedom in the land of their forefathers. He is definitely one that we can proudly look up to. A hero we can all admire.

(Based on Bernie's account and materials published by St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch, Minneapolis Star and Tribune.)



Unflyable Fortress makes it home

Writer Allen Ostrom was a tail gunner in World War II with the 398th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. He is now retired from his own janitorial supply business and lives in Seattle's North End.

Ostrom is in charge of the 398th's reunion, scheduled for Seattle in July during the 50th anniversary celebration for the B-17.

"We didn't talk much about what we did right after the war," Ostrom said. Now, he added, B-17 crewmen are talking about the camaraderie they shared during the grim days of the war.

Ostrom wrote the story that follows and mailed it to the hometowns of the crewmen involved. Even after 40 years,

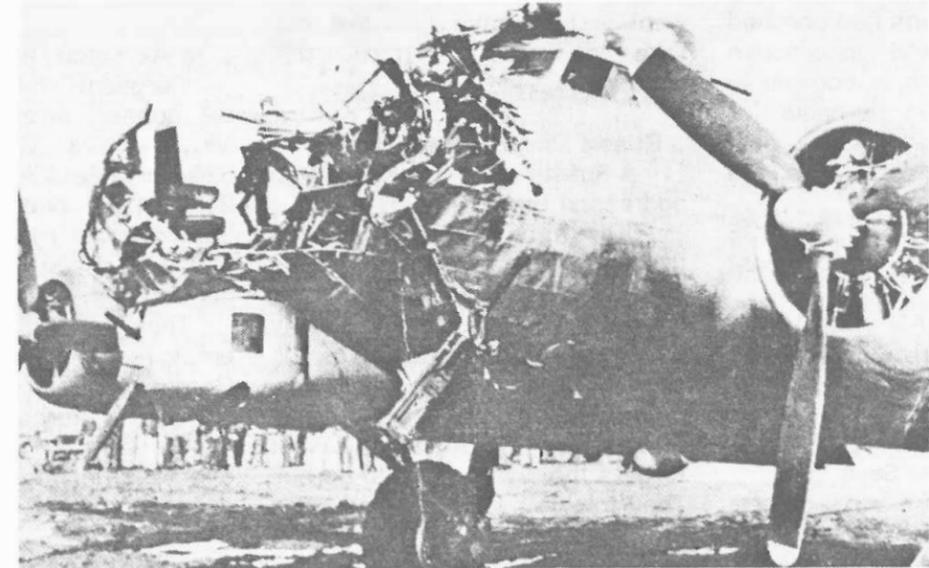
they deserve a little credit, he said.

He's the first to admit that there are thousands of stories concerning the crews of B-17's.

This is only one of them.

by Allen Ostrom

Among the many visitors coming to Seattle in July to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Boeing B-17 bomber are at least five 8th Air Force airmen who brought an "unflyable" Flying Fortress home to England following a mission over Germany.



This B-17 may look unflyable, but it carried its crew from the skies over Cologne, Germany, to its home base in England. An anti-aircraft shell exploded in the Fort's nose at an altitude of 30,000 feet, knocking out navigational equipment, the plane's oxygen system and hydraulics.

The Fort took a direct hit in the nose by a German 88 anti-aircraft shell on Oct. 15, 1944, over the city of Cologne.

The blast left the Fort looking like it had been worked over by a giant can opener. Its nose had been completely blown open, killing the bombardier, George Abbott of Mount Lebanon, PA, but miraculously no one else on the nine-man crew died in the explosion.

The Fort's navigator, Raymond LeDoux of Woodburn, OR, was knocked unconscious by the explosion. When LeDoux recovered, he saw his navigation instruments had been blown away; a 40-below-zero, 100-mph wind churned in through the aircraft's open nose; and jagged metal obscured most of the windshield.

Pilot Lawrence DeLancey of Corvallis, OR, and copilot Phil Stahlman of North Fort Meyers, FL, managed to keep the plane under control while it lost air speed, dropped out of the formation and drifted toward the ground.

Two American P-51 pilots saw the crippled Fortress and gave it support and direction. They "pointed" the helpless and lost B-17 in the general direction of England and then broke off to rejoin their own squadron.

LeDoux, by this time, had stationed himself in the cockpit between the pilot and the copilot and was attempting to navigate with the aid of a small, silk map of Europe

carried by all bomber crewmen. With no instruments, LeDoux merely pointed in the general direction he felt the pilots should fly.

The Fortress had lost its oxygen system along with its hydraulics, so the plane struggled toward its home in England at low altitude.

At one point, the plane received anti-aircraft fire from a gun battery off the coast of Holland. LeDoux used the gunfire as a navigational aid.

"Now I know where we are," LeDoux said, and proceeded to navigate by the North Sea wave pattern and his flimsy silk map. His calculations brought the Fort directly to the 8th Air Force runway at Nuthampstead, England, about 20 miles north of London.

Later in the war, LeDoux was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his navigational triumph.

Others on the crew were Ben Ruckel of Canoga Park, CA, engineer; Wendell Reed, Shelby, MI, radio operator; Russell Lachman, Ipswich, MA, waist gunner; Albert Albro, Sacramento, CA, ball-turret gunner; and Herbert Guild, Bronx, NY, tail gunner.

Stahlman, LeDoux, Ruckel, Lachman and Albro expect to be at the B-17 anniversary celebration and the 398th Bomb Group reunion in July. The whereabouts of DeLancey, Reed and Guild are unknown.

Two Baltimoreans In Crews That Flew Shuttle To Russia

A United States Air Base in the Soviet Union, June 4 (AP)--Russians gave an opened-armed [sic] welcome to men of the United States 15th Air Force--the first Allied flyers to land in the USSR while on actual military operations--when they set their heavy bombers down at this American airfield deep in Russia Friday.

En route to the air base from Italy, the Americans had bombed freight yards and locomotive shops at Debrecen, a communications junction in Rumania for the Axis front facing Russia.

Among the flyers were the following Baltimoreans:

STAFF SERGEANT GEORGE H. WEBB, 520 North East Avenue.

STAFF SERGEANT BENJAMIN F. SHEKELS, JR., 3 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn.

"Just Like Us," Red Flyer Says

Russian officers and soldiers, who with the Americans at this base helped make this mission possible, rushed forward to greet the flyers as they alighted.

"Why, they are just like us," said one Red army sergeant. "Look how they laugh and act."

After reporting to intelligence officers, these men--whose bombs blasted yards where stood more than 900 cars loaded with Axis military equipment--marched across the field to living quarters.

A small boy, not over 10, timidly walked toward the first group and handed Sergt. William L. Steadman, 29, Newberg, N.C., a former Atlanta (Ga.) radio commentator, a bunch of flowers.

"For the American," the youngster said with a broad grin.

Escorted To Nearest Village

Lieut. Col. William Jackson, from South Pittsburg, Tenn., who is in charge of the base hospital, escorted the flyers to the nearest village.

A whole crowd had gathered and all kinds of comments were arising from the peasants:

"Americans, where did they come from? What a world. They have flown from America. How like Russians they are. There is one who looks like my Sasha. Here, take this basket; I want you to have it. We will take no money from the Americans."

Russia Picked Their Targets

A Russian who spoke English addressed the crowd:

"These boys are American flyers. They have just landed here after dropping bombs on some of Hitler's trains. They just want to buy a few things for souvenirs."

An American officer told us: "We asked the Russians what targets they wanted us to bomb. They told us. We did it and they liked it."

One Flyer Operated On

Lieut. John Johnson, of Kentucky, had his choice between an appendectomy and a trip to Russia--he took Russia.

He felt a dull ache in his side just before he was briefed last week, but he knew something important was in the air so he didn't say a word and got to make the historic shuttle-bombing trip.

He ended up in the Soviet Union with an operation in one of the finest field hospitals the Americans have established. He is doing so well he will take his place in the next regular schedule.

The hospital, headed by Lieut. Col. William M. Jackson,

of South Pittsburg, Tenn., has everything a tired, wounded or sick flyer can need--including even the smiles of American nurses.

It includes a rest home in the country where American and Russian flyers, if they wish, may hunt, fish and swim.

Staff Sergeants Webb and Shekels Reach Russia

In Air Force Only 16 Months

Sergeant Webb, 20-year-old tail gunner, wrote his parents, Mr., and Mrs. George Webb, of 520 North East Avenue, on May 21 that he had completed his 38th combat mission. His first raid was made January 18--on his birthday.

The young Baltimorean was employed by Bethlehem Steel Company before joining the Army air forces in January, 1943. He has been serving overseas in the Italian theater since November.

Shekels Credited With One Kill

Son of Mr. and Mrs. B.J. Shekels, of Brooklyn Park, Sergeant Shekels was credited with knocking down his first enemy plane on March 11 in the Padua raid. His last letter home told of the completion of his 33rd mission.

The 22-year-old sergeant, who was an inspector for British Overseas Airways, has been in the army air forces since 1942. He has been serving in the Mediterranean area for nearly six months.

His father is employed at the Glenn L. Martin Company and one brother, Davis Shekels, is an aviation cadet now in training at Kessler Field, Mississippi.

Gunner Admits Goosepimples When Russians Shot At Plane

The most memorable moment in the flying career of Staff Sergeant George H. Webb, of 520 North East Avenue, came four days before D day on the first shuttle bombing raid between Italy and Russia.

As his B-17 crossed the Russian LINE MISSING American air force in the Mediterranean theater, Red ground crews became confused, mistook the ship for a German bomber and began firing anti-aircraft guns.

The B-17 quickly flashed a recognition signal, and the Russians recognized their error and stopped firing. The plane and Sergeant Webb, who had experienced a bad case of goosepimples, landed unhurt. Immediately, news cameras began grinding, were made, reporters asked questions, flashlight bulbs went off.

Shuttle Raid Delights Reds

CANT READ FIRST PART OF THIS.----knocked out a huge train repair shop in Hungary.

The 20-year-old Baltimorean who is home on furlough, was embraced by a beautiful Russian pilot named Olga. He began to realize how important the raid had been to Russians.

Romance With Girl Pilot

The girls of the base where they had landed gave concerts in their honor. Sergeant Webb had a short-lived romance with Olga, who piloted a Stormovik and had shot down three German planes. The 23-year-old dark-haired Russian gave him a gold bracelet as a parting gift.

The Baltimorean's conversation with Olga necessarily was simple. He had been taught only a few, indispensable Russian phrases, like "Gyde mnye spryatotssya." (Where can I hide) and "Ya Americayetess, (I am an American), none of which he could pronounce without biting his tongue.

Triple-Play Language

Sergeant Webb made better time with Olga after he discovered that she spoke German. Unable to speak German himself, he used a German-speaking member of his B-17 crew as interpreter.

When the gunner was briefed the night of June 1 for the history-making raid, he was taught helpful phrases in Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, and Croatian. During the over enemy territory, Sergeant Webb sweated out each phrase, hoping that he'd remember the right phrase for the right country. The ship met with little flak and no fighters.

On D-day, the Americans returned from a heavy raid on a Rumanian airdrome to attend a concert given by wounded Russian soldiers who wanted to show the Americans their appreciation of the Yank's invasion of France. Shortly afterward, the Americans resumed their bombing missions in Europe.

50 Missions To Credit

Sergeant Webb returned to Baltimore with 50 bombing missions to his credit and one German Focke Wulfe 190. He bombed more than a score of targets, including the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania, Rome, Cassino, Bucharest and Vienna.

He has flown on missions totaling 229 hours, including one to Steyr, in Austria, where he

dueled with German Messerschmitts which surrounded his ship for nearly four hours.

The former student of Public School No. 93 and employee of the Bethlehem-Sparrows Point Shipyard came home with a seven-foot-long short-snorter strip, composed of paper money from every country over which he had flown.

From Florida To Algiers

On his first overseas flying trip, Sergeant Webb, who had seldom left Baltimore in peacetime, and then to go only as far as Pennsylvania, flew from Florida to Algiers by way of Puerto Rico, Trinidad, British Guiana, Brazil, Dakar, a Free French post in the Sahara Desert, Casablanca, Tunis and Oran.

The Baltimorean, who holds the Air Medal and seven oak leaf clusters for his missions, wants to join the crew of a B-29 Superfortress and bomb Tokyo when he returns from a short rest at a Miami Beach rest camp.

Poles erect monument for American soldiers



Ryszard Szczesniak saw the U.S. crew crash when he was 12 years old.

LOMIANKI, Poland (AP) — Villagers who witnessed the crash of an American warplane shot down by German artillery during World War II have fulfilled what they thought was an obligation and erected a monument to honor the crew.

The 9-foot-tall stone memorial, believed to be the first in Poland for American soldiers, was erected after a five-year campaign.

Mrs. Niegodzisz, 76, said she saw thousands of parachutes carrying metal cylindrical supply containers floating to the ground. She said she noticed one of the planes losing altitude.

"I was standing there with my father," she said. "It was coming from the northeast, burning, losing parts that were falling to the ground."

She said she saw one airman floating to the ground with his parachute, waving a white handkerchief at approaching German soldiers.

"A German went up to him and shot him with a pistol," Mrs. Niegodzisz said, pausing to brush back tears from the corners of her eyes. "I will never forget, to the day I die, the face of that young man, alive, so close to the ground, waving his handkerchief."

Two survivors — Sgt. Marcus L. Shook of Missouri and Sgt. James D. Christy — were taken captive by the Germans and returned to the United States after the war.

"They were young Americans trying to save our Poland," said Stanislaw Niegodzisz who lives in a farmhouse about 200 yards from the crash site in Lomianki, six miles north of Warsaw.

"We want all of America to know what they did," he said.

The B-17, nicknamed "Til We Meet Again," was shot down Sept. 18, 1944, with 10 U.S. soldiers aboard. Two of them survived.

The plane was one of 107 American aircraft dropping supplies that day for Polish partisans fighting the Nazis in the Warsaw uprising. About 220,000 Poles were killed during the 63-day battle.

Standing outside the farmhouse recently, Niegodzisz's wife, Janina, reminisced about the day the plane was shot down.

"We thought it was the day of the liberation," she said. "There was a whole cloud of planes. It blocked out the sun."

The planes dropped arms, food and clothing for partisans in the nearby Kampinos forest. The Americans were unaware at the time that most of the partisans had already left the area. Most of the supplies fell into German hands.

from Fab Fabiniak's files

Mrs. Niegodzisz and other village residents buried the eight others in a common grave 50 yards from her house. In 1946, the bodies were transferred to the military cemetery in Warsaw and a year later returned to the United States.

Five years ago, residents first sought permission from government officials to erect the monument. The proposal came during the height of liberalizations spawned by the outlawed Solidarity free trade union movement.

The imposition of martial law later that year and the subsequent deterioration of U.S.-Polish relations temporarily put the plan on ice.

The government finally granted permission in the fall.

On Sept. 21, the monument was unveiled in a

ceremony attended by villagers and veterans group. The monument is located in a small military-civilian cemetery about a mile from the crash site. Polish soldiers killed during the 1939 Nazi invasion also are buried there.

The names of all 10 crew members were inscribed on a brass plaque.

Killed in the crash were Lt. Francis Akins of Derry, Pa. (the pilot); 1st Lt. Forrest D. Shaw of Exeter, N.H. (the co-pilot); 1st Lt. Ely Berenson of New Jersey (the navigator); and 1st Lt. Myron S. Merrill of New Jersey (the bombardier).

Also, gunmen Sgt. Frank de Cillis of New Jersey; Sgt. George A. MacPhee of Massachusetts; Sgt. Walter P. Shimshock of Minneapolis, Minn.; and Sgt. Paul F. Haney of West Virginia.

At the top of the monument, the villagers wrote: "To the memory of the heroic crew that brought help to the Warsaw uprising in the plane of U.S.A. Air Force B-17, 'til we meet again.' Shot down Sept. 18, 1944, by German artillery." It is signed, "The People of Lomianki."

On Nov. 1, All Saints' Day, candles and flowers were placed around the monument, and village residents stopped by to pay their respects.

One of the visitors was Ryszard Szczesniak who was 12 years old when he saw the plane crash. He led the campaign to build the memorial.

"Commemorating this event has been lying on my heart. You have representatives of Poland in America who did something good for you . . . I wanted to ensure the memory of the crew will be preserved here," he said.

B-17E 41-2446

BY

GLEN E. SPIETH

Dedicated to the crew of The Swamp Ghost

Pilot	Lt. Fred C. Eaton
Copilot	Lt. Harry M. Harlow
Navigator	Lt. George B. Monroe Jr.
Flight Engineer	Sgt. Clarence A. LeMieux
Bombardier	Cpl. Richard E. Oliver
Radio Operator	Sgt. John V. Hall
Right Waist Gun	Sgt. Russell Crawford
Tail Gun	Pvt. Howard A. Sorenson
Remote Turret	Pvt. William E. Schwartz

The story of the plane 41-2446, the crew's struggle to survive and the recovery plans to date.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON 41-2446—"THE SWAMP GHOST"—The plane, an early version B-17E, was the 53rd built out of a total of 512. Equipped with a remote operated lower turret, it is the only surviving example of its type. 41-2446 was delivered to the US Army Air Corp on December 6, 1941, at Boeing Field, the day before the Pearl Harbor attack. The plane was flown to Fort Douglas, Utah, and Sacramento, California for the armaments installation and fuel consumption tests. The 41-2446 was then flown to Hawaii and was assigned to fly reconnaissance missions. On the 8th of February 1942, with bombs and ammunition loaded, 12 planes then assigned to the 22nd and 88th Bombardment Squadrons of the 7th Bomb Group including 41-2446 of the 22nd BS, left Hickam Field, Hawaii for Townsville, Australia by way of Christmas Island, Canton Island, Fiji Islands, and New Caledonia. Preparations began immediately after arrival at Townsville on the 19th of February for a big mission against the Japanese.

THE MISSION, CRASH LANDING AND ESCAPE—On February 22, 1942, at Townsville, only nine of the Twelve B-17s could be prepared for the first heavy bombardment mission of the war from Australia against the Japanese. The Japanese had invaded and captured Rabaul, New Britain in early January of 1942. Rabaul, located northeast of Port Moresby, New Guinea, was to be the target. The mission was to proceed from Townsville, bomb Rabaul Harbor shipping, then stop at Port Moresby to refuel before returning to Townsville. Crews worked until dark loading bombs and gas. Last minute instructions were given at 10:15 p.m. Major Charmichael led the first flight with Lt. Brandon and Lt. Swenson as wingmen. Capt Lewis led the second flight with Lt. Eaton and Lt. Spieth as wingmen. Lt. Rawls' plane collided with Lt. Bostrom's plane while taxiing in the dark and Lt. DeBose's plane had water in the gas and could not start engines. Six B-17Es took off and assembled above Magnetic Island at 12:45 a.m. on February 23, 1942, with the plan to strike Rabaul Harbor from an altitude of 20,000 feet, between 6:40 and 6:50 a.m. Ninety miles out, the flights were broken up by severe weather conditions en route to the target. Capt Lewis and Lt. Eaton were first to arrive over Rabaul at 6:47 a.m.

This aircraft, 41-2446, with Lt. Eaton as pilot, waited over the target, Rabaul Harbor, a half an hour before an opening in the clouds developed. A bomb run on ships in the harbor was made, but the bombs hung up in the rack. A second run was made on a Japanese transport and the bombs released; however, the delay allowed the Japanese Zeros enough time to intercept and as many as 12 were after this plane. Lt. Eaton maneuvered the B-17 more like a fighter than a bomber, turning into each attack, which startled and flustered the Japanese pilots. Three Zeros were shot down, one at 7:45 a.m., 10 miles south of Rabaul, by Sgt J.V. Hall from the tail gun position; a second by Sgt R. Crawford, from the right waist position; and a third was seen going down but could not be confirmed. The air battle continued for forty minutes or more until the Zeros lost contact in the clouds. The battle had taken its toll; punctures in some of the fuel tanks allowed fuel to drain and it was apparent that they could not make it over the Owen Stanley Mountains to Port Moresby.

At approximately 10:00 a.m., a few miles inland from the coast of New Guinea, a grassy field was spotted and decision to make a belly landing was made. The landing was a surprise to the crew because the grass was 10 to 15 feet tall and had 4 to 6 feet of water at its base. They made quite a splash; the plane slowed very quickly, less than 300 feet, making a slow turn to the right as it slid in. Very little damage was done to the plane. The crew was unhurt, with the exception of Lt. Monroe, who was thrown into the bomb bay, receiving a head cut. The radio operator immediately radioed their position to Port Moresby. Just after the message was acknowledged, water seeped into the batteries shorting them out. No further communications were possible. It was decided to get away from the plane as soon as possible because the Japanese might be close and decide to strafe the plane. The Norden Bombsight was destroyed; what equipment they could save was loaded into a life raft and a six-week struggle to return to their unit was to begin.

It took four days to cut their way through eight miles of swamp. The mosquitoes attacked in swarms. The grass, which looked so soft from above, actually was very tough and had edges that were razor sharp. Hands and legs soon became bloody messes that quickly turned into tropical ulcers. Shoes and clothing started to rot in the wet swamp environment. Several of the crew began to have hallucinations; seeing something off to the side of the trail they were cutting, they would leave the group and start off on their own to go to the messhall or ice cream parlor. They came upon a small island in the swamp and spent hours cutting trees and building a raft, but when they put it in the water it sank. The wood was heavier than water. Next, they tried dry logs and floated, one or two to a log, down the river. With little sleep and no food for days, the tattered, mosquito-eaten group met two former headhunting natives who guided them in their canoes down the river to their village. After eating and spending the night, the natives took them further down stream to Allen Champion, an Australian magistrate. While Champion tried to arrange transportation, a Japanese invasion force appeared just off the coast. The crew was moved by foot to an Anglican mission, thirty miles inland. By this time, many of the crew were without shoes; some lost in the river crossings and other rotted to pieces. Raw feet, malaria, and tropical ulcers made travel difficult. On returning to the coast, they found their launch had been destroyed by a Japanese flying boat. After several more harrowing days trying to avoid the Japanese, a relief schooner passed by the area. They boarded for the trip to civilization. The entire crew got a flight back to Townsville and reunited with their unit. Many of those left behind who assisted in the escape, including Allen Champion, were captured and killed by the invading Japanese forces.

CURRENT LOCATION AND FUTURE PLANS--The aircraft is located in a New Guinea swamp about 8 miles from the coast approximately 30 miles from Popondetta. When negotiations are complete with the Government of New Guinea, regarding the release of "THE SWAMP GHOST," and the permit to export the plane back to the United States has been granted, the recovery plan can be implemented. That plan, currently, entails an expedition to the crash site to disassemble the plane into three main pieces--the fuselage and the two wings. An agreement, with the Australian Air Force for the use of a Boeing CH-47D helicopter and crew, to assist in the recovery, can then be implemented. The three major pieces can be air lifted out to a nearby airport where a returning empty US Air Force C-5A could make a landing and load the fuselage and continue on its original flight path to Travis AFB in California. The C-5As returning from the middle east pass near the crash site on a regular basis and only a minor diversion is required. The second C-5A could pick up the wings, which will need partial disassembly prior to loading.

Based on the completion of an agreement with the Government of New Guinea, "THE SWAMP GHOST" could be back in the United States for restoration by the end of this year. Assistance is needed from our Government to expedite the process. For those who would like further information, assist or make a donation to the project, please contact GLEN E. SPIETH, 5928 Steilacoom Blvd., Tacoma, WA 98499, Phone: 206-584-3930.

1942 AERIAL PHOTO - Taken on June 8, 1942 from 1500 feet showing the sliding turn to the right upon landing and the trail cut by the crew at the lower right. (PHOTO COURTESY OF FRED EATON)

COCKPIT - Sits high and dry with most equipment still in good shape. Much of the cockpit instruments, panels, control wheels, etc., are currently in storage and can be acquired for the restoration process. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

RADIO ROOM - Although water was in the room at the time these photos were taken, the condition as shown is remarkable. The water is clear, allowing full visibility down to the ribs and skin at the bottom, which only has a thin layer of silt obstructing surface. The support for the remote operated turret is clearly visible through the door opening. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

COCKPIT - The upper surfaces are clean to the bright aluminum. The original olive drab paint has baked and weathered off, but those areas that were protected by the shade of the grass still have the original paint intact. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

UPPER TURRET - The castings and forgings in the top turret are remarkable in their condition. No signs of corrosion with the exception of a few patches of rust [which] is clearly visible in this photo. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

NOSE VIEW - The exterior condition is outstanding. The nose Plexiglas was not damaged during the crash and was still intact when these photos were taken. The original olive drab paint is clearly visible where it was protected from the sun by the tall grass. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

NOSE VIEW - The nose Plexiglas intact and still undamaged at the time of these photos. Most of the small Plexiglas windows have been crystallized by the sun and have fallen in. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

PILOT'S WINDOW - Glass still intact, though it now has dirt and moisture in the insulating core between the layers of safety glass. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

LIFE RAFT COMPARTMENT - One of the life rafts was inflated and loaded with supplies and guns; however, it was too difficult to move through the swamp grass and was soon left behind. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

TAIL GUN POSITION - S/Sgt. J.V. Hall shot down two Japanese Zeros, one confirmed and one unconfirmed, from the tail gun position. The glass window is still intact, but the Plexiglas portions have been crystallized by long exposure to sunlight. The guns were removed by the Australian Air Force in 1972. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

TAIL - The fabric has long since rotted away, but the spars and framework are still like new. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

	PILOT	Fred C. Eaton	(center in photo)
	CO-PILOT	Lt. Harry M. Harlow	
	NAVIGATOR	Lt. George B. Monroe Jr.	
THE CREW	FLIGHT ENGINEER	Sgt. Clarence A. LeMieux	
	RIGHT WASTE GUN	Sgt Russel Crawford	(right in photo)
	RADIO OPERATOR	Sgt. John V. Hall	
	BOMBARDIER	Cpl. Richard E. Oliver	(left in photo)
	TAIL GUN	Pvt. Howard A. Sorenson	
	REMOTE TURRET	Pvt. William E. Schwartz	

Photo was taken at a reunion of three of the crew at Travis AFB, California, August 11, 1984. Many of the crew will be at Boeing Field for the 50th Anniversary of the first flight of the B-17, which was on July 28, 1935.

LONELY VIGIL - Delivered to the U.S. Army Air Corps on December 6, 1941, the day before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, "THE SWAMP GHOST" 41-2446 deserves to be returned home. It is the second oldest B-17 that currently still exists and the only existing early B-17E with a remote operated turret. If you would like to assist those of us trying to save this aircraft before it becomes further stripped, scrapped, or destroyed, please contact Glen E. Spieth, at 5928 Steilacoom Blvd., Tacoma, WA 98499 PHONE 206-584-3930 (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES DARBY)

May 9, 89

Dear Bernie--

It was good to hear your voice a few nights ago. You may remember Harry Spieth, who was with us at Hamilton and Salt Lake. His son, Glen, works for Boeing and is most interested in our experiences in Australia and New Guinea. I think he knows more of what we did over n the Pacific than we do!

Glen has worked very close with Travis Air BAsE and their C-5A people. Several groups of people have traveled to New Guinea and chartered helicopters, landing on the wing of my old plane, which is in a swamp sixty or more miles from any road. It was only recently that the New Guinea government agreed to allow my B-17 to be taken from New Guinea to Travis Air BAsE. I will believe it when I see it!

I enclose an article written by Glen Spieth which tells the story better than I could. If anything is written (from his paper) he should be given credit.

Just for the record, I enclose a copy of a letter on my experiences.

I get your Group Bulletin regularly and think it is one of the best.

Maybe someone can boil all this information down to a couple of paragraphs! All the best to you and your bride--Sincerely, Fred

August 7, 1989

31 Parkland Road
Mona Vale 2103
Australia

Dear George:

I thought that you might be interested in a project which has involved me virtually every minute over the past couple of years.

As you can see from the enclosures, an old B-17F turned up right on my doorstep as it were. An old Black Jack is a very special B-17...she was involved with the development of "skip-bombing", low altitude attacks on enemy shipping. She singlehandedly sank the Japanese destroyer Hayashio - one of the very few confirmed sinkings of enemy warships by AAF heavies.

Anyway, we decided that the way to tell the story was a film and the result, Black Jack's Last Mission, has been shown nationally on network TV here in Australia.

We're now distributing the film as a boxed videocassette, and the details of this are also enclosed.

If you think that some of the 99th members might be interested in seeing the enclosed photo, or may be interested in the story, please use the material as you see fit. Naturally we will be grateful for any publicity for the project. The cost of getting a film crew and equipment into one of the most remote parts of New Guinea was just too great - we'll probably never even reach break-even point on the film. But I'd do it again.

Naturally I've been keeping up with the 99th through the Newsletter, and I'm delighted to see that Dick Drain and Jake Grimm have gotten together over the big "plane swap" in 1944.

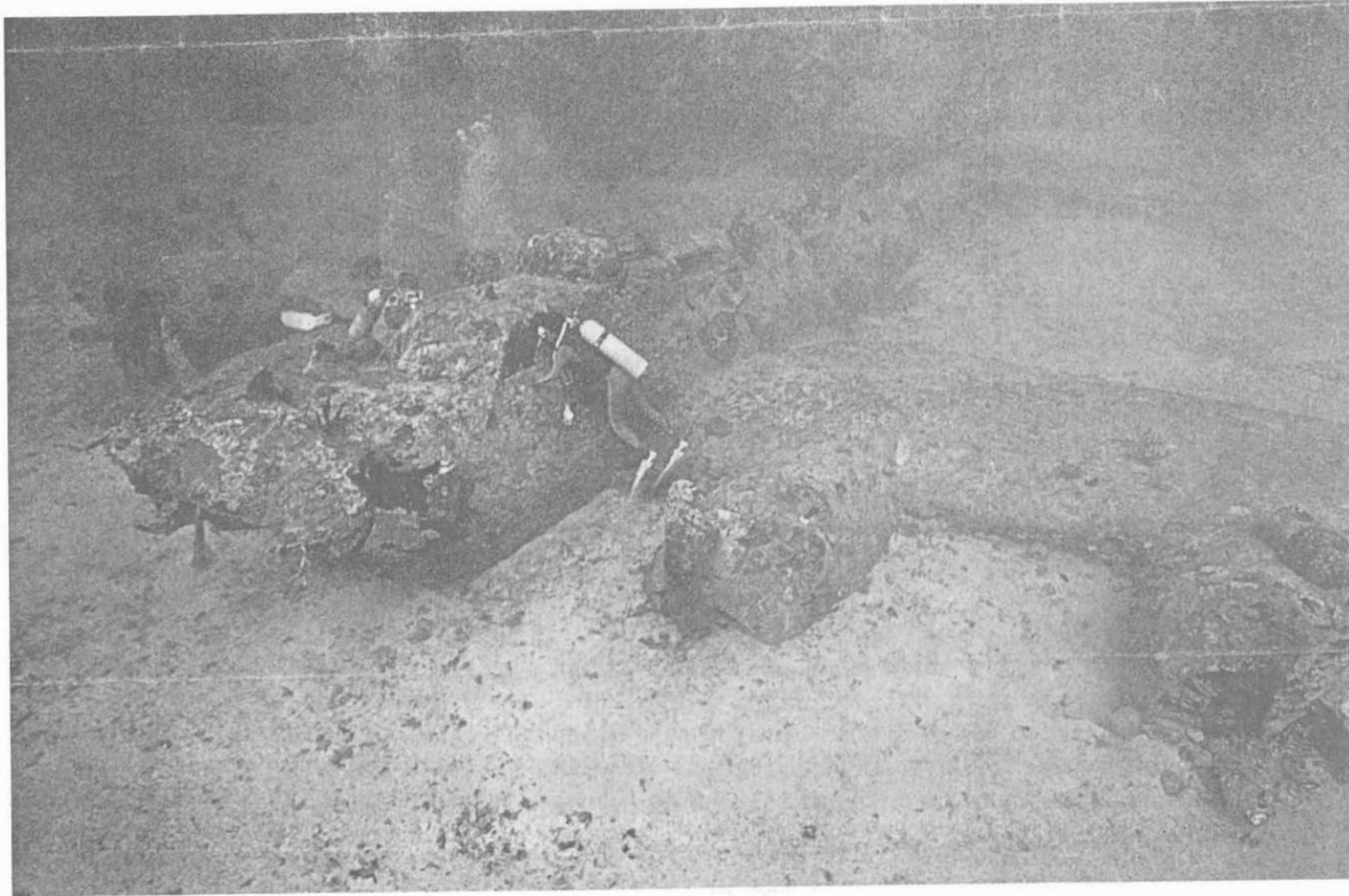
Hope all is well with you, and I'll look forward to hearing.

All the best,



Steve Birdsall

THE LAST GREAT B-17 STORY NOW TOLD ON VIDEO



BLACK JACK'S LAST MISSION

Black Jack is a Boeing Flying Fortress, missing in action on a combat mission in July 1943. After more than forty years she's been discovered, totally intact, in the deep warm waters off New Guinea. Relive the discovery of the old plane with the three adventurers who found her, come back in time with Ralph De Loach, the pilot on that fateful last mission. Venture right into the cockpit of the fully-armed bomber lying on the ocean floor. It's all there in *Black Jack's Last Mission*, a handsomely packaged one-hour video program.

Written and produced by B-17 historian Steve Birdsall, *Black Jack's Last Mission* is a true collector's item. It combines stunning color underwater footage with dramatic actual wartime combat film and comprehensive background on the B-17.

No matter where you served, if you loved the B-17 you'll find Black Jack's story unforgettable.

The perfect gift, *Black Jack's Last Mission* is now available on NTSC (American-standard) VHS cassette for \$42.95. The price includes AIR MAIL postage anywhere in the world.

Please complete details below and mail coupon and Postal Money Order to

Steve Birdsall
31 Parkland Road, Mona Vale 2103, Australia

Please send me copies of BLACK JACK'S LAST MISSION @ \$42.95 (US dollars) per VHS video cassette.

Name _____ Address _____

Zip _____

I enclose Postal Money Order for \$ _____
Please Allow 28 Days For Delivery

99100



21 April 1989

Mr. George F. Coen
99th Bomb Group Historical Society
2908 Aliso Drive, NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Dear George:

Here's the thing I was asking about at McAllen -- page 15 of the September 1983 NEWSLETTER...

Also, I've Xeroxed the shots taken at Poltava by my one-time AE, Bob Hayes, who I understand is deceased. He told me the film was exposed around the sides as he had had to smuggle it out in his barracks bag as he wasn't supposed to have taken a camera with him and wasn't supposed to have used it if he did. So much for the rules!

I'll be happy to get prints made and paste up a couple of pages, along with his comments (on the backs of the pictures), for use in the NEWSLETTER if you want them, but I don't think that I want to just send them somewhere to get rid of 'em...

And, in the minutiae department, something that mentions the 17 I flew overseas in December of '43 -- 42-40055. I don't think I've seen it in any of the listings of airplanes assigned to the 99th -- not this 055 at any rate -- but then I'm not the most careful reader in the world...

0055 -- it had no name as all the good ones had already been taken -- was used as the 347th Squadron lead at first, then was replaced in that position when a newer one came in. Kirkpatrick was the P the day it went down, I believe...

Yours,



EDWARD M. MOORE / P.O. BOX AD / 40638 LONG ISLAND DR. / UMATILLA, FL 32784 / 904-669-5845



April 28, 1988

Dear Sanford

I am probably too late with any information I have, but I will try to get a few facts off to you anyhow.

I joined the 7th Bomb Group, 22nd Bomb Squadron in July 1940, at Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco. Several of us who had just graduated from Kelly Class 40c were assigned to Hamilton.

Our entire 7th Bomb Group was sent to Salt Lake City with our living quarters at Fort Douglas. We first spent many classroom hours plus flying hours qualifying as Celestial Navigators and Bombardiers.

Late in 1941, I went to the Boeing factory with a skeleton crew and took delivery of my own B-17 and flew it back to Salt Lake.

Our combat crew after going to Hamilton Field en route to the Philippines obviously had our orders changed when we saw what happened on December 7th.

A few days later, we flew to Hawaii where we stayed for a few weeks patrolling and looking for Jap subs.

Finally, with several other crews, we went to Townsville, Australia. We became the 435th Sqdn.

I was on the first bombing mission from Townsville to attack the Japs at Raboul Harbor, on Feb 22, 1942. After bombing the target, we were shot full of holes by at least 8 Jap zeros, causing us to lose much of our fuel. We were unable to return to an airfield in the New Guinea, so I crash landed on the coast with wheels up. It took us six weeks to get back to civilization.

I flew the rest of the year, over 60 combat missions, and in December we all were sent back to the U.S.

In 1943, I went to Command and General Staff School, and then took a provisional B-17 Group of 45 planes to England. There, I had the opportunity to fly a couple of missions with the 8th Air Force. After returning to the U.S., I was reassigned to Italy.

As Deputy Group Commander, 301st, I flew 40 more combat missions to Ploesti and other targets in Germany.

Later in 1944, I was assigned to the position of A-3 Operations Officer of the 5th Bomb Wing, comprised of 6 bomb groups and all the B-17s in Italy.

In late 1945, I was returned to the U.S. and served on the War Department General Staff until I resigned for the Air Force in Sept, 1945.

After a short tour flying with American Airlines in 1946, I joined Sears Roebuck and Co., where I stayed until retirement in 1977. (30 years.)

Sorry to be so long-winded!

Sincerely,
Fred Eaton

Mr. George Coen (Historian & Editor) 99th B.G.
2908 Aliso Dr. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

George:

In going through some of my belongings, I ran across a clipping from the "Austin American," our local paper, dated October 11, 1944. It had yellowed with time and the copy is not too clear.

If you can use it fine, and if not, disregard.

Best regards

Art White
347th S-2

FROM THE AUSTIN AMERICAN, Wednesday, October 11, 1944

Austin Fort Navigator Returns to Base After Watching Armistice in Bulgaria

First Lt. James W. Knox, 21, of Austin, navigator on a 15th air force Flying Fortress, has returned to his base in Italy from a Bulgarian prison camp.

Lt Knox, son of Capt and Mrs. Warren P. Knox of 506 East 16th, was on a mission to Sofia Jan 10 when his aircraft was hit by flak over the target and two engines were knocked out.

The story of this mission and his experiences that followed comes from his Italian base.

Ship Attacked

Immediately after leaving the target, his ship was attacked by 12 enemy fighters. Another engine was set on fire by 20 mm. cannon shells from the fighters. Unable to cove [sic] over the mountains on one engine, he and the rest of the crew parachuted to the ground and were immediately picked up by the Bulgarian troops.

"The food and medical aid was very poor and several men had to undergo amputations without the aid of anesthetic as there was none to be had," Lt. Knox related. "The living conditions weren't any better either. We were introduced to countless species of bugs, insects and lice. During the course of our interrogation, the Bulgarian officers were very harsh and tried to force us to submit to their questioning."

Armistice Signed

Recalling the day armistice was signed, he told of how the Bulgarians thought they were Russians and for that reason everything was decked out in red. The Bulgarian women wore red dresses. Peasants in the fields wore red sashes around the waist. When the Americans were being evacuated from Bulgaria by train, people would cut a watermelon in half and hold up the red pieces to show them they were friendly. All nazi insignia was removed from trains, buses and buildings and red flags replaced them.

Reported missing in action Jan. 10, Lt. Knox was listed with this casualty status until July 14, when his wife, Mrs. Margaret R. Knox, 2818 Guadalupe, learned that he was a prisoner of war. The navigator went overseas in September, 1943.

Lt. Knox is a graduate of Austin high school and attended the University of Texas until his enlistment in March, 1942.

20 Mar 89
Spring

Dear Geo,

This snowy day in Albuq decided to do something--add a little to your Historical Search. I am forwarding some photo's of the different aircraft in the inventory of the 10th Air Rescue Sqdn of Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska in 1949.

Now after you guys had literally worn these aircraft out (pun) we went to Tinker AFB, OKla to ferry our **new** aircraft to Alaska. 787 was one of them, 595 was another. Anyhow, I had (as crew chief) the only C-47 on wheels, **floats** and skis in the Air Force or any other service!

As you can see on the cover of the Xmas program, the "Dumbo" is mounted under the bomb bay and was dropped exactly as we did the bombs we used to bomb ice blockages here and there from the glaciers. More practice four our "Navigators, Bombardiers" of recent vintage--at this time.

Most of the pictures speak for themselves. Hope this helps a teeny bit more--always open for more correspondence.

Truly
Rev Dr. Donald Stromell
4302 Pan Am Hwy NE, #104
Alb, NM 87107
505-889-9056

I appreciate the
newsletter also
"immensely"



1419 Quamasia
McAllen, TX 78504

16 March 1989

Dear George,

I went to CAF Headquarters Friday, and there were three big packages of copies of your Newsletter. Thanks so much for sending them. I'm looking through them now--when I've finished, I'll put them in the CAF library.

I don't know when I've enjoyed a group of people more than I did you people from the 99th when you were here in February. I consider it a pleasure and an honor to have met and interviewed as many of you as I did. I'm sorry I ran out of time and energy before I ran out of people who wanted to be interviewed. I hope some of you caught the interview bug (one man did) and will conduct interviews and mail them to us at the CAF. We've developed a "How to conduct Interviews" booklet, and will send it to anyone who wants it.

Thanks again for the copies,

Margaret Cawood

4 May '89

Dear George,

I received the copy of your diary--thanks so much. I'll put it with the tape, and, in time, both will be found in your file in the CAF Museum in Harlingen.

I believe that all of the men from your Group who said they would send me materials have done so. It is all much appreciated and will enhance the value and interest of the files.

I'm sorry I didn't get around to all of the men who wanted to tape their stories. I have developed a packet for taking oral histories. If you hear of anyone who would like to do it, have them contact me and I'll send the info.

Again, it was a real pleasure dealing with the 99th. I enjoyed every minute I was with you folks.

Sincerely,
Margaret Cawood



January 25, 1989

Dear George,

Regarding your mention in the January newsletter of seeing a picture of 2nd Patches (238201) in one of the S/S aircraft books, I have a bit of news to relate.

I keep in touch with a waist gunner (Dionysios Papadatos), a member of our crew, who lives in Buffalo, N.Y. He is involved with radio control model flying and sometimes ago he ran across the enclosed article on 2nd Patches in an old issue of the "Flying Models" magazine.

As you probably know, 2nd Patches wound up in the 347th Squadron. I believe it was sometime in September 1944 that it was scheduled to fly on a "maximum effort mission." The officers on our crew were off that day; however, they did schedule most of the rest of our crew (Jack Gardner's crew) to fly the mission in 2nd Patches.

The plane crashed on takeoff. I'm enclosing a copy of a photo taken after the accident. Our engineer, who was flying his fiftieth mission, and a "toggaler" were killed in the crash.

On page 52 of the newsletter is a reprint of a news article sent in by Bob Karstensen regarding the rebuilding of a B-17. It was damaged in a crash during an air show at Beaver County Airport in Beaver Falls, PA, in 1987. I live a short distance from the airport and have been following the progress of the project. They hope to have the plane flying sometime this year. Enclosed are a couple of pictures of the wounded bird. I hope to get some shots when it's test flown. I'll send them along when I do.

I enjoy the newsletter very much, George. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely
Joe Sholtis

48 Lake Shore Dr.
Youngstown, OH 44551
(347th Squadron)

Dear Joe;

We have begun the story of PATCHES, both 1 and 2. Should this account be of sufficient interest, we plan to follow through with stories of other aircraft, such as **maybe** YANKEE DOODLE, EL DIABLO, and others. Perhaps some of you might even have an idea or two. The end product is expected to be a book of 99th aircraft in color. geo

Sep 17, 1988--Oct 1, 1988

Jules & Anita Horowitz
3507 Oaks, Way #911
Pompano Beach, FL

Cruise--Black Sea on board Cunard Lines Vistafjord
Venice--Naples, Italy
Alitalia--Naples, Rome, JFK, Miami

9/20 SANTORINI--Greek island. Not on the tour. Rode the cable car to the heights above the harbor. Not much to see, other than the view. Hot, walked down about 300 steps, have to keep looking down to avoid donkey dew, many people ride donkeys up and down the cliffs.

9/21 CANAKELE, TURKEY--Hired a cab and went to the site of ancient Troy, took a photo of the wooden horse replica, walked about the ruins a bit then returned to town. Spent a half hour driving around the city and then returned to the ship. Ship passed thru the Bosphorus Straits at Istanbul at 9:15 pm; beautiful sight. Most impressive, we traveled several miles; all the mosques and many buildings were ablaze with color, it was a Disneyland-like sight. On to Varna in the morning.

9/22 VARNA, BULGARIA--We were part of the tour which was quite enjoyable. Our first stop was at a museum, the original house was the home of a wealthy merchant or doctor who lived there in the late 17th Century. It is now a museum which has many artifacts depicting the way of life at the time. Our next stop was at a rock monastery that was started several hundred years ago, a chapel and monks cells built into the side of a cliff. We next went to the Golden Sands beach resort followed by another beach resort called Drush--something or other where we stopped at a "5 star restaurant" called "_____ Wedding." The food and drink was adequate and tasty, after which we were entertained by native dancers and singers in very colorful costumes with several changes of "folklorico" dress. The show was quite enjoyable although a bit long. On our way back to the ship, we made a short stop at a shopping area, then back to the ship. Tomorrow Yalta.

9/23 YALTA, RUSSIA--Arrived in the A.M. After clearing passport control we boarded busses and proceeded to the Alupka Palace which depicted 19th Century Russian architecture. It was built by Count Vorontsov, who at the time was the richest man in Russia. He was a General of the Army and was a hero of the Napoleonic Wars. We then went to Livadia which was the Czar's summer palace. It was the site of the Yalta Conference in 1945. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin discussed the ending of the war. At present, it is used as a sanitarium. We then went to the Yalta Hotel which is rated 5 star by the Soviets.

Lunch was served very nicely, _____MISSING TEXT-----
with vodka, red and white wine, soda pop, soda and water. Very nice. Then we saw a "folklorica" singing and dancing troupe who were simply fantastic. I can say that it was the best show of its type that I have ever seen. Our guide said that they were amateurs, but in my estimation they were very professional. Anita said that they were as good as the Moissiev touring troupe who she has seen in the past. We then returned to the ship about 4 p.m.

9/24 ODESSA, RUSSIA--After breakfast, we drove into the city in busses. It is a major city of about 1 million people. The Revolution of 1905 started here on the battleship Potemkin. Today there are many health facilities in the vicinity, and it is a large commercial port. The city endured a 70-day siege by the Germans in 1941. Odessa was liberated in 1945. We went to the Sailors' Monument and witnessed a Requiem by teenage children, which is considered a

great honor by the participants. It was very much like the ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington. We then toured the city by bus and returned to the ship for lunch. We had the services of an excellent guide. After dinner, Anita went to the Opera House and saw a ballet presentation, and enjoyed the evening.

9/26 ISTANBUL, TURKEY--After breakfast we took a cab in to the Hilton and then walked some blocks to the Sheraton; both hotels look to be top class. We couldn't believe the traffic that we encountered, I never saw so many cabs on the road in any city that we have visited in the past. We had to play Russian Roulette trying to cross the road. After lunch, we went to the Seraglio Palace to see the Topkapi emeralds and the rest of the fabulous jewel and artifact collection. We didn't get to the Blue Mosque which is also a major attraction. We then went to the covered market, which was a very large flea market. It was not as large as the shopping in Hong King. It covered 16 miles of enclosed passageways with hustlers huckstering along the way. We then returned to the ship and went to bed early, as we were pooped out.

9/27 MYKONOS, GREEK ISLAND--Went to town by tender after lunch. Shopping is poor, same junk in all the shops. However, there are some expensive shops catering to jet setters, fashion designers and gold items. There are some nude and topless beaches. We were told that many gays are present on the island. The village of Mykonos is very quaint, all the buildings are painted white, the streets are very narrow and winding. Nothing much else to do so we came back to the ship after about 2 hours. Next on to Athens, 100 miles distant.

9/28 PIRAEUS/ATHENS, GREECE--We debarked after breakfast. Due to a taxi strike, we got a ride on a ship shuttle bus to the railway station. After about 7 stations, we got off as close to the Acropolis as possible. We then walked uphill quite a distance until finally we reached the top. It is easy to see why the Parthenon is considered such a wonder. It is a magnificent structure. Many parts of the structure are constructed due to the ravages of time. The view from the top is breathtaking since the Acropolis is about in the center of Athens--views of the city from all angles. The walk down was much easier after we stopped for a drink. We then hit flea markets all over the place. After a stop for lunch and some more browsing, we decided to go back to the ship as we were pretty tired. After visiting all these ports, we came to the conclusion that we would have done much better to have taken some of the tours that were offered, particularly in Athens and Istanbul. (We did make some tours.)

9/30 VALLETTA, MALTA--Debarked after breakfast and walked into Valletta, uphill of course. The island of Malta is in the path of all shipping going back to antiquity. The island, therefore, was besieged and conquered by many nations. The view from afar is stone fortifications going back centuries. World War Two was a difficult time for the inhabitants; they had over 3300 air raid alerts and extensive damage was done. We visited the War Museum and were apprised of the 1941-1944 period here. We visited St. Johns Cathedral which reminded me of some churches in Rome with all the detailed paintings and statues. It was awesome. We then returned to the ship. We are due to sail at 12:30.

10/1 NAPLES, ITALY--Due to dock at 6:30 a.m. and board busses at 700 for our flight to Rome. Have a TWA flight at 11 a.m. for Kennedy, and then TWA for Miami and home.

Comment Vistafjord is owned by Cunard Lines. They make the travel arrangements which were terrible. We and 40 others missed our connection in Rome, causing us to remain overnight. Since we all had arrangements for pickup at final destination, we all had problems. I suggest any one in future traveling with Cunard out of the USA make their own travel arrangements. Overall, it was a very enjoyable trip except the return to USA.

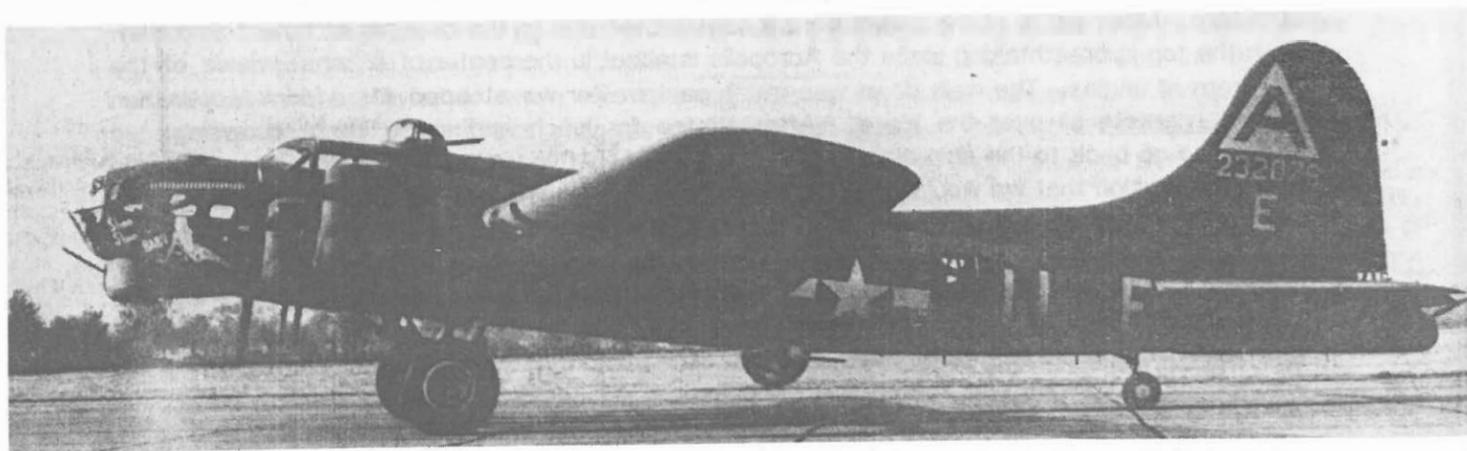
3/29/89

Dear George
This article appeared in our newspaper Sunday and I'm sending it on to you. I don't know if it is of interest to you or for the newsletter. All is well here and I hope it finds you well and still a happy hiker.

Take care of yourself,
best regards
Jim Sopp

Dear Jim;
Our thanks for the article. We are glad to get such B-17 articles in the belief that some of our members may be able to visit the Big Iron Bird, and of course we are all surprised at the interest of the younger generation in our antique flying machines. I was able to take two four-day backpacks enroute home from McAllen, one in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park and the other in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The turkeys were gobbling and it was plumb restful.

salud
george



☐ 'Shoo Shoo Baby,' left, on runway

'BABY' LOVE

Flying Fortress's long journey to Dayton told with affection

SHOO SHOO BABY A Lucky Lady of the Sky

By Dan Patterson and George Merva
Patterson Productions.
25 pages. \$9.95.

By Sam Rubin

She was a gallant, feisty fighting lady in World War II. After the war, like so many others, she was downgraded to lesser objectives, then left ignominiously to rot in an open field in France. It took two Dayton men who call themselves airplane "nuts" to restore the B-17G "Shoo Shoo Baby" to dignity and finally give her a richly deserved place of honor at the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton.

The book's collaborators, photographer Dan Patterson and writer George Merva, consider their work a labor of love. As one fascinated by airplanes and as a veteran of World War II when I saw this type of craft perform, I highly recommend this beautifully produced pictorial and written account of a famous airplane and the courageous men who flew her. "Shoo Shoo Baby," fully restored in mint condition and ready to fly, is the only remaining craft of its type.

Resurrection of the B-17G Flying Fortress began in 1978. A group of 10 men worked more than 50,000 man-hours to completely rebuild "Shoo Shoo Baby" at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

Free-lance writer George Merva has meticulously researched the history of the big bomber from her birth in 1944 at the Boeing plant in Seattle where she was given the U.S. Army Air Force serial number 42-32076, and delivered to Basingstourn, home of the 91st Bombardment Group (H) in southeastern England.

Lt. Paul McDuffee and his crew flew the plane's first World War II mission

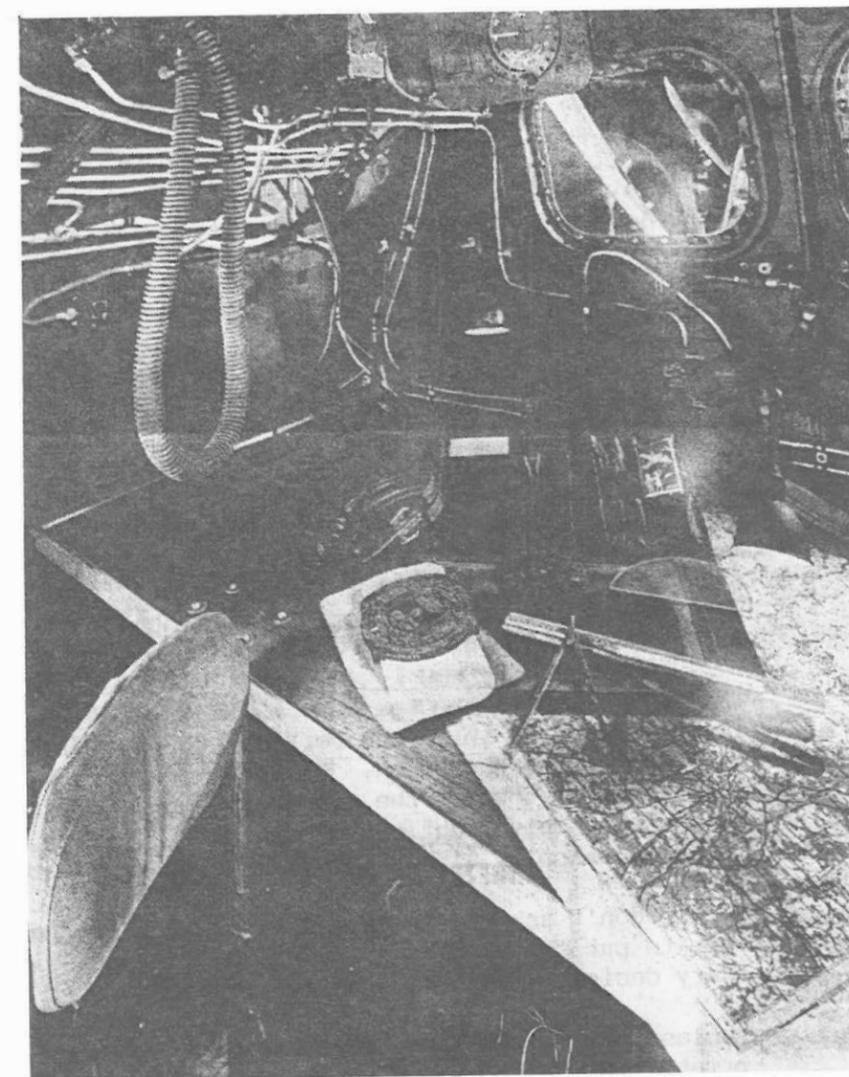
against Frankfurt, in Germany's heartland. She went on to fly 23 missions.

"Shoo Shoo Baby" came to be known as a lucky plane because only two men were ever wounded while aboard her. On her last mission she lost three engines and was forced to land in neutral Sweden, where she was impounded. Later, she was sold to Denmark and converted into an airliner.

She was then to become a photo reconnaissance craft mapping Greenland's icecap. The plane was destined for the scrap heap in 1955 when the French National Geographic Institute again put her to useful work. Six years of jungle heat finally took their toll. She lay abandoned in a field in France in 1961 and was stripped for parts.

It was from there that "Shoo Shoo Baby" began her long journey to respectability at her new Dayton home, where she arrived this past October. How she came into American hands, her painstaking rehabilitation by dedicated men and the financing that made it possible, as well as her final flight to the Air Force Museum are told by Merva with a sense of awe, attention to history and devotion to a cause.

☐ Items on navigator's table came in a leather case, below, and included map for mission to Berlin



PHOTOS BY DAN PATTERSON FOR BOOK

The photos, design and layout by Patterson bring the reader right into the cockpit of the warplane, and one gets the feel of what it must have been like to fly and fight in a B-17.

Incidentally, the name of the plane is from the words of a World War II song made popular by the area's own

McGuire sisters.

The book (25 pages including the outstanding cover), is on sale at the museum and several area book stores.

Sam Rubin, who served as a Marine in World War II, is a retired telegraph editor for the *Dayton Daily News*.



23 March 1989

Mr. Jacob L. Grimm
209 South Market Street
Ligonier, Pennsylvania 15658

Dear Jake:

A copy of a letter you wrote on 6 March 1985 (see enclosed) was handed me at the recent 99BGHS meeting at McAllen, Texas. In it you refer to a cartoon drawn by me after the war ended, when I was trying to get used to drawing cartoons for a living again after four years in the military.

The crew shown is the one I left the Zone of The Interior with on/about 10 December 1943 in a Vega Fort #42-40055, which went down a few weeks after we got to the 347th. By the time I latched onto 42-32033 I was getting along towards the end of my tour and, of the ten individuals caricatured only eight of us remained on flying status. So two of the men shown happily airborne in 033 never set foot in the airplane.

Please don't ask why I elected to use 033 instead of 055 when the time came to put a number on the airplane I was drawing; it was just an arbitrary decision and I have no idea what prompted it.

Enclosed also is a Xerox of a letter written by one Jonathan K. Shafer, printed in the 1 January 1988 99BG Newsletter, in case you did not see it. It closes out the story...

Yours,

EDWARD M. MOORE / P.O. BOX AD / 40638 LONG ISLAND DR. / UMATILLA, FL 32784 / 904-669-5845

Ben Frouther of 15th AF Assoc suggested I contact you!
Have you published a history of the 98th? If so, please send details. Saw the 98th Memorial at Wright-Patterson (AF Museum).
Dean C. Kuhn of Dublin, Ohio taped the ceremony. He was lead bombardier for my uncle's 347th Squadron. (see show any good video military history tapes of the 98th?)

June 29, 1989

DEAR George,

Would you have known or flown with my uncle, Andrew J. Herbenick of Lyndora, PA, during WWII or Korea?

He graduated from Big Spring, Texas (Class 44-6) and served with the Fifteenth Air Force, 5th Wing, 99th Bomb Group (H), 347th Squadron out of Foggia, Italy from 12 August 1944 to 14 April 1945. He was a bombardier and completed 35 missions on B-17s primarily.

Recalled to active duty, he served with the Fifth Air Force, 3rd Bomb Group (L), 8th Squadron in Korea from 21 January 1951 to 30 June 1951 as bombardier-navigator. He was MIA on his 23rd mission and later declared killed in action. He flew night missions on B-26s primarily.

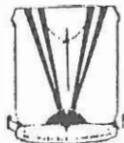
Through BOMBARDIERS, INC. (Star Rt. 1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor, MI 49951 906-289-4440) and other materials, I have reason to believe that you may have trained with or flown with him during those time periods of military service. If you did know him and can relate any information you may have about him, I would appreciate hearing from you. Currently, I am preparing materials for a book about his missions for future generations to remember and hopefully more fully appreciate. Thank you!

Cordially,

Raymond M. Herbenick
(nephew)
4926 Marshall Rd.
Kettering, Ohio 45429

513-433-8508

PS If you are ever in Dayton, Ohio please stop by at the University of Dayton where I teach. I would enjoy meeting you.

**483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION**

6 March 1985

PresidentM. L. (Bob) Hotman
114, 1414 Sierra Lane
Fort Dodge, IA 50501**President Elect**Harry K. Keller
25 Monument Circle
Room 907, Box 1595-B
Indianapolis, IN 46206**Membership Secretary**Donald R. Speegle
2808 Carondelet Drive
Arlington, TX 76015**Treasurer**Louis I. Pellegrini
c/o Louis I. Pellegrini & Co
126 Franklin St
Frankingham, MA 01701**Archivist**Janet L. Grimm
209 S. Market St
Ligonier, PA 15658**Reunion Chairman**Maurice K. Mull
6401 Mitchell Rd SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108**Immediate Past President**Joseph W. Gawthrop
707 Hollingwood Dr
Greensboro, NC 27410**Chaplain**Verner Sterback
456 W. County Rd J
New Brighton, MN 55112**Past Presidents**Philip Lutzke 1980
William A. Haskings 1981
James V. Hardin 1982-83
Lynn M. Burdett (Derauseil) 1984
Joseph W. Gawthrop 1984George F. Coen
99th Bomb Group Historical Society
2908 Aliso Drive NE
Albuquerque NM 87110

Dear George:

Your newsletter (March 1 1985) arrived recently and I have, as usual, enjoyed reading it. I hope you are receiving our newsletter.

The cartoon of B-17 42-32033 (and crew) is of one of the planes our Group flew overseas in March 1944. As you know about half the planes we flew overseas were distributed throughout the 5th Wing with the 99th receiving many of them. Johnny Hommel (P) and Garden Ball (CP) flew it to Italy. They both went down over Memmingen on 18 July 1944 when we lost 14 of 26 planes. Hommel, a promising West Point graduate was KIA and Ball was a POW. I sent a xerox of the cartoon to Garden Ball. He should enjoy it.

Enclosed is a photo of B-17 42-29485 taken after this "war weary" was transferred to the 483rd. This has to be the same artist as your photo records in the newsletter of January 1 1985. Probably it is the same plane.

I hope we find time to compare photos and documents when our Group meets in Albuquerque. I may see you before that. Beverly and I plan to attend the celebration in Seattle.

Sincerely,

Jake

Jacob L. Grimm

Walter Butler has supervised extensive changes in the addressing and labelling of our newsletters, so that now we have on each label:

- 1) the last year for which your dues are paid
- 2) Your Squadron Number

If your label does not read 1989 you had better forward some wallet ivy to Walter. geo.



Jan. 23, 1989

Dear George:

In the Jan. 1st 1989 Newsletter, on page 59--5th paragraph--stating a flight of Fortresses went to Bucharest with a liaison part.

I think you will find that there were only 2 B-17s that made that flight.

I have the history of that flight and I'm enclosing it. You may add this to the history of the 99th.

I'm sure our members would love to read about this mission.

Sincerely,

Leo H. Drouin

P.S.

(It was a volunteer assignment or mission)

**Mission Flown by Aircraft of the Fifteenth Air Force
To Bucharest Area, Rumania
29 August 1944**

Note:

The following account was taken from a collection of articles filed, in late August and early September 1944, with the Public Relations Section of headquarters, Fifteenth Air Force, for possible release. The stories were written by war correspondents flying on Operation REUNION missions. (A manuscript copy of a small number of the articles is represented in the Archives of the USAF Historical Division, research Studies Institute, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.)

Arriving over Bucharest, the formation dropped to 2,000 feet and circled for a landing. The escort covered the field, some planes flying as low as 50 feet to make sure that nothing untoward happened.

"We sweated out that trip over the city," said 2nd Lt. John J. Headrick, 318 Terrace Ave., Albuquerque, N. Mex., bombardier on Captain Karnes' plane. "We were just praying that everything worked out okay. That place used to have plenty of flak. When we let down, we thought of putting on our flak suits, but we decided that if anyone wanted to shoot at us from 2,000 feet, the shells would go clean through us."

The fighters buzzed the field first to receive flare signals and assure themselves that the way was clear. After the bombers landed, the Mustangs remained in the area, indulging in acrobatics and watching for signs of trouble. There were no incidents.

On the ground, the liaison party was met by Capt. Cantacuzino, the Rumanian ace who flew out Col. Gunn in an ME-109, and a host of Rumanian Air Force personnel and civilians. With the Capt. was Major William H. Yaeger, Hebbronsville, Texas, only American in the welcoming party. When Col. Gunn took off he had been left in charge of the evacuees, who were some distance from the airport, and he stayed behind Tuesday to help arrange the details, rather than fly back to Italy with the Fortresses.

When we got there," said Capt Karnes, "people were driving up from everywhere. There [sic] were driving up in trucks, American-made passenger cars and German jeeps. A lot of them were right on the field. Outside the fence were a lot more, mostly peasants who had come up in carts."

"The field had a lot of German planes on it," said 1st Lt. William H. Lorenz, 213-05 39th Ave., Bayside, L.I., Major Schroeder's co-pilot. "Most of them were ME-109s, belonging to the Rumanian Air Force. The field wasn't bad, except that it fell away at one end."

Major Schroeder described the reception given the 15th AAF crews. "They wanted us to stick around a while, but we could only stay 15 minutes. We weren't about to do without the escort. They offered us an escort of MEs for 150 miles. That would have been a new experience, all right, but it wouldn't have lasted long enough. Some of them tried to refuel us with 87-octane gas but we wouldn't let them. Our engines are built for 100-octane. All in all, they were very friendly."

They appeared to be nice people," said T/Sgt Fred Matia, 111 Gansevort Ave., Rome, N.Y., engineer on Capt Karnes' Fortress. "They were well dressed, and most of the ones we saw seemed to speak good English. Bucharest looked good. Remembering some of the missions our boys flew there, I'd say I like the place--from the ground."

After remaining on the ground for 20 minutes, the Flying Fortresses took off and returned to Italy without a cargo. In the meantime, communications with 15th AAF Headquarters were established and the plans for the mass evacuation perfected.

FIRST LANDINGS TO ARRANGE EVACUATION

Censored by Paylor

Sent to MAAF PRO - 1830 hours

August 31, 1944

15TH AAF PRO --

Making the first scheduled landing of AAF heavy bombers in Rumanian territory, two 15th AAF Flying Fortresses, strongly escorted by Mustangs, flew into an airdrome near Bucharest, Tuesday, August 29. At the time the capital was held only by the Rumanian government forces.

Instead of bombs, the bomb bays were filled with signal equipment and medical supplies. A special party, headed by a famous pre-war pilot, got out of the planes to stay to handle the details of the evacuation.

No personnel was removed on the first trip. The men were being held some distance from the field for safety's sake and the Mustangs were able to cover the operation for only a limited time.

The trip was uneventful, with the bombers flying across the Balkans at medium altitude, encountering no flak and no fighters. The first B-17 to touch down was piloted by Major Allen W. Schroeder, 611 North Lincoln St., Aberdeen, S. Dak. It was followed by a Fortress flown by Captain E.C. Karnes, 8403 Naylor Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.

The Mustangs did not land. The bombers were on the ground for 20 minutes, with their motors going all the time.

In the course of an all-fighter shuttle to Russian August 4, F/O Richard T. Andrews, 916 Southeast 35th St., Portland, Ore., landed in a Rumanian pasture to pick up fellow Lightning pilot who had been forced to crash land. Both pilots flew on to Russia in one cockpit.

The planes were prepared for the first step in Operation Reunion by removing the bombsights and bomb shackles. All guns were manned and each B-17 carried a full crew. The radio equipment and signal flares were carried in one craft; medical supplies, with Capt Edgar O. Hughes, 505 Hamilton St., Washington, Ill., a flight surgeon, went in the other. Capt Hughes returned with the plane.

Members of a special force, commanded by an AAF Colonel, with years of experience pioneering civilian and army air lines, went along to set up communications and establish liaison in Rumania. With them went a supply of Red Cross packages.

Shortly after crossing the Yugoslav coast, the two bombers picked up the Mustang escort, and flew at 12,000 feet to Bucharest. The course was plotted to avoid any known flak positions and no anti-aircraft fire was observed. No enemy fighters were seen.

Other crewmen on the first AAF scheduled landing in Rumania are as follows:

Major Schroeder's crew:

Capt Marshall Hanson, 805 E. Melendy, Ludington, Mich., bombardier.
1st Lt. Stanley C. Millner, 934 Greenwood Ave., Trenton, N.Y., navigator.
T/Sgt Benjamin A. Audia, 6508 South May St., Chicago, Ill., engineer.
Sgt Harry N. Maronpot, 170 Saddle River Rd., Fair Lawn, N.J., assistant engineer.
T/Sgt Thomas J. Wright, 553 North Parkside Ave., Chicago, Ill., radio.
S/Sgt Roy C. Fowler, Route 1, Box 59, Montrose, Colo., waist gunner.
S/Sgt Charles C. Mattner, 6206 Grandville Ave., Detroit, Mich., ball turret gunner.

Captain Karnes' crew:

1st Lt. Donald D. Sibley, 65 Catherine St., Hornell, N.Y., co-pilot.
1st Lt Charles H. Jeffers, Jr., 156 W. Main St., Elkton, Md., navigator.
S/Sgt Aloe J. Cortez, Jr., 15 st., Port Arthur, Texas, assistant engineer.
T/Sgt William H. Aspengren, 1838 Capitol Ave., Des Moines, Iowa, radio.
S/Sgt Howard C. Brown, 1022 Hoover Ave., Hamilton, Ohio, waist gunner.
S/Sgt Leo H. Drouin, Ladd Hill, Laconia, N.H., tail gunner
S/Sgt Rudolph J. Cuginin, 49 Railroad Ave., Westerly, Rhode Island assistant engineer.

HERE TIS

Vol 3 No. 4

8 July 45

Published Weekly by the Special Service and I&E Sections, Hq. 99th Bomb Group (H)

KEEPING UP WITH THE WORLD

Since VE day, there has been a growing tendency on the part of the men to lose contact with current events. News on the radio is listened to with half an ear, 'Lil Abner and Dagwood receive more attention than the taking of Borneo, the long, yellow teletypes reporting the latest exploits of the 99th (and the rest of the army in Europe) have been cancelled. But gentlemen, there is still a war on and every day sees something happening of direct importance to us.

Under the auspices of the I&E office, Captain Edward Schmuck, the Gp S-2 officer will conduct a 15-minute news summary every Thursday evening before the GI Movies. Using maps and slides, Capt. Schmuck will give a resume of the week's highlights covering the latest war news and emphasizing events of special interest to us--occupational news, legislation affecting the G.I., troop movements. This summary, combined with the G.I. movies will be doing a great deal towards keeping you well informed to world happenings. See you there Thursday--2015 hours--Gp Theatre.

A E P NEWS

Sorry you eager students. That questionnaire you filled out last week (or will fill out this week) doesn't mean that classes will be underway within a week. We have to find out who wants what and who can teach it. Our aim is to have classes in everything that you want, but before we can get the ball rolling, we have to find classrooms and teachers. We'll keep you posted. Won't be long now.

No news from the Florence crowd yet. If you have a buddy up there who finds time to write you, how about dropping in and sharing any dope you get on the school!

Musicians

Men interested in playing in a 99th Group Orchestra get in touch with Lt. Kinard at Group S-3.

SWIMMERS

Men interested in competing in the 15 Air Force swimming meet at Bari contact the Special Service Office-Notary 13.

Transportation is bad around here! How about giving a guy a lift whenever possible?

99TH CARRIES ON

The crews still hurry through the dawn to briefing and the formations still glide over the field, but now it's all for sweet training's sake. The warning orders from higher headquarters still come through, and the navigators still pour over their maps but now the [orders are for] rest camps, GI School in Florence, ferry trips for the lucky lads on their way [home] and the maps are sectionals showing such spots as Rome, Naples, Bari, Venice, and Florence.

During the past weeks, since the cessation of hostilities, planes of the 99th have helped dozens of GIs on to center from where they'll start the trek [homeward]. Hundreds have been ferried to rest camps all over the MTO and more recently to schools such as the one in Florence.

All the while, the never-ending training program unfolds. Ground training-^{gunnery school} THE REST IS ILLEGIBLE ^{vs. Aerial Training-Navigation Flights, and Local Transportation.} Link and Bomb Train ^{Yes, sir, the 99th still carries on}

SOFTBALL CAMPS

The 347th Whiffle Birds with _____ of 8 wins to 1 loss have captured the pennant in the Enlisted Men's League, while 416th Hubbas with 9 wins to 1 loss [take] the Officer's League Crown. A playoff [to decide] the sole king of the 99th will take place in the near future.

Meanwhile, plans are being laid for a third softball tournament and also a _____ tournament. Lots of ball playing 'round these 'yar parts--are you taking part?

GROUP BASEBALL TEAM

A Group baseball team is being organized to compete against the 97th and 2nd Bomb Groups. The winner of the six series will represent 5th Wing in the sectional playoff. Its _____ THE REST IS ILLEGIBLE _____

FRAGS

346

The past few day's rain has changed to sunshine for the boys in the 346th. A little old list comes out and the morale is once more up at the top. . . . Rain isn't the only thing that has been dampening the squadron area lately either; we had a real tough beer party the other night, and bub, the fluid sure did go down good. They say that Pete Gerald finally met his _____ and he stuck with it all night, that is, while he could stand up. Charlie Frissell had a great time too. "Two Beer" Frissell they call him. . . . Tent city is pretty well along now and the boys really worked to get their stuff into the new layout before the rain started. Sure is cozy. . . . There is a nice ball field in the 346th and ball players are needed. If you are a ball player and wish to take part in the new leagues being started, get in touch with Lt Wetzel. There will also be a hardball team in the squadron and men are needed there too. Get out and exercise. As for O'Toole, well, his training days are over and he is on his way to the front. Yep, fighting his way to the many bars in good old Boston. So long guys--I hope. Oh yes, one thing more. On Sunday, July 2, I tried to leave this base, bound for a day in Foggia. To say that it is difficult to get a ride to town would be putting it mildly. I don't mind having to wait for a vehicle to come along, but what gripes me is the fact that when some of the vehicles do come, the operators feel that they might wear out shoe leather or something, stopping. Empty vehicles _____. How about it men, and officers, give your fellow man a break and pick him up on The Road. So long boys. (So long O'Toole. Yep, he really shipped out.)

347

I went to see about that "deal" and no soap, so yours truly will be on the writing end for a while. It won't set well with my lovely Irishwoman 'cause I can't spend the time writing that I should. The building program is progressing (as quickly as the Italians work)--three houses up and the fourth coming right along. If the "First Joe" doesn't stir his stumps soon he'll find a wall running through the iffle of his tent. Frenchie has always been good-natured but you should have seen him when he was put on "the list". Our squadron newspaper made its debut this week-end--a nice edition too. . . . Another inspection! Can't anyone tell us what its all about? . . . [Some] of our old timers have been coming back for visits--King, ugy, Evans, Forbes, etc. Good to see 'em. The new men have taken over quite rapidly and are doing a fine job in keeping the good old 99th rolling.

426

Now look fellers, we were minding our own business, sitting in the office reading a copy of Time magazine, when our no. 1 soldier, Sgt Egan waltzed in and "asked" us if we would write a weekly item for "Here 'Tis." So if we don't get your name in, make your complaints to Sgt Egan and suggest that _____ ILLEGIBLE _____ just drop in the S-2 office any time and slip us an item. And don't forget the name. . . . "The old order changeth, yielding to new." That seems to be the general scheme of things around here now. And a guy who has been with this outfit for more than two weeks is considered an old-timer. But with the departure of many of the old faces, a new gang has been shipped in and they seem to have slid right into the vacated spots with a minimum of lost motion. . . . A new slate of officers was installed at the EM Club election held a few nights ago. Don Flynn is the new president. Roy (the operator from operations) is the vice-president, and "Desperate" Des Hogg is the new secy-treas. The new boys wasted no time in getting results and two nights after they took office a snack bar at the club was opened. That was followed by a "free beer all you can eat part" on the night of the 4th. No details on that are necessary. The big heads on the next AM told the story. But the boys haven't stopped there. With the big assist from Him Hughes, our in-coming Sgt, they now have two new bars which will be installed in the extension to the Club now under construction. And plans are being made daily for further improvements! . . . Say goodbye to "Andy" Anderson, S-2 chief, Line Chief Braswell, Armorer Chief Grabarek, Prop Specialist Kennedy and a slew of others.

Hq

BINGO Friday night wasn't as well attended as usual. Perhaps the new men in Hq don't know about it. Well, feller (as Cpl Thompson would say), every Friday night at the EM Club we play Bingo. The games start at 2030 and the prizes depend on the amount of men who participate. This last time there were eight four dollar prizes and two big ones which Sgt Zilli and Pvt Reedor walked away with--lucky boys. Come on out and play--usually have cold beer and cokes that night--who could ask for anything more? . . . A new softball schedule will be starting soon and well have to get up a team at Headquarters. Back when we had about ninety men at Hq., we had a team that couldn't be beaten. Now, with men all over the place, we can't even get the men to come out for the team. Let's get on the ball fellas--keep up the Hq. reputation and have a lot of fun playing. Look at the bulletin boards in S-1 and the mess hall for details as to game time and practice. . . . If any of you new men feel sort of strange about coming into a new outfit, just remember that every one else here is in the same boat. The only two original 99th men that I know of left here are _____ and _____.

Chapel Chimes

WAR AND PEACE

Dig out that July 6th copy of "Yank" and take a look at it. It is our guess that more men spent more time looking at the **back cover** than at the material on page twenty-two. We question the ultimate importance of so much time spent on viewing the scintillating starlet and so little attention given to an intelligent attitude toward the war and the peace.

It would be well to think through the implications of these viewpoints which are suggested: "the people of the world are one," a sergeant states. Certainly not one race, religion, nation or class, but a common brotherhood under the fatherhood of God--that is the reason the people of the earth are one. Another sergeant points out the relevance of religion to the direction of the moral conduct of peoples. Another points to the responsibility of the individual citizen for peace. We do not believe that those soldiers are baying at the moon.

These are pertinent statements which deserve a good part of our attention.

Chaplain James Sadler

CHURCH SCHEDULE

PROTESTANT: Sunday
347-0800 Ord-0845
348-0930 416-1015
346-1100 Briefing Rm-1900

CATHOLIC: Sunday-0800-1030
Weekday Mass: 0645

JEWISH: Wed.-1900--Chapel Tent

FLAGELLA MOVIE SCHEDULE

MON 9 JULY 1400 & 1900
"BUFFALO BILL"--Joel McCrea
TUES & WED, 10, 11 JULY 1400 & 1900
"IN OLD CHICAGO"--Tyronne Power
THURS & FRI, 12, 13 JULY 1400 & 1900
"UNION PACIFIC"--Joel McCrea
SAT & SUN, 14, 15 JULY 1400 & 1900
"TAMPICO"--Edward G. Robinson

99TH BOMB GROUP MOVIE SCHEDULE

MONDAY 9 JULY
"GENTLE ANNIE"--James Craig, Donna Reed
1900 - 346th, 416th, & Ord.
2045 - 347th, 348th, & Hq.

WEDNESDAY 11 JULY

"BREWSTER'S MILLIONS"--Dennis O'Keefe

1900 - 347th, 348th, & Hq.
2045 - 346th, 416th, & Ord.

THURSDAY 12 JULY

"G.I. MOVIES"

2030 - One showing only

SATURDAY 14 JULY

"THE CORN IS GREEN"--Bette Davis

ANY SUGGESTIONS BUB?

Working on planes, in offices and hospitals teaches you many little tricks that can't be found in textbooks or schools. How about sharing your discoveries and ideas with the rest of the men. Jot down any time or labor saving device that you've discovered and send it in to Sp Service--we'll print it in HERE 'TIS. And if your idea is really good, we might even go so far as to throw in a beer.

SPORTS FOR SPORTS

SWIMMING: Just for the hell of it we'll not start off with softball this week. All you swimmers pay attention! The Fifteenth Air Force is holding a meet in Bari Aug. 2 to Aug 5. There are fourteen events to choose from--call up Sp Serv. and we'll give you full particulars. Entries must be in by the 25th of July so let's get on the ball and contact us.

SOFTBALL: The newly formed Group Softball team got off to a fine start by beating the 97th Bomb Group ___ to ___ in a very hot game. Five more games are scheduled with the 97 and 2nd--the winner to represent 5th Wing in Theatre playoffs. _____ ILLEGIBLE

Congratulations to the two winners of the second softball tournament--the Whiffle Birds and the Hubbas. The Hubbas have all put off rest camps until they could finish the league. Now they're all resting up for the playoff and the next one.

FINAL STANDINGS

				OFFICER'S LEAGUE				
	W	L		W	L		W	L
Whiffle Birds	8	1	Pelicans	4	5	Hubbas	9	1
Rattlers	7	2	Short Circ	3	6	War Weary	7	2
Flak Catchers	6	3	Office Boys	2	7	Hamburg H	6	3
Electrons	5	4	Fubar	2	7	Wheels	4	6
Barracks	5	4	Ordnance	2	7	Eagles	3	7
						Scmbs	0	10

HORSES: One of the oddest individuals ever seen at the Kentucky Derby was an old crap-shooter looking for a "Don't" window. "I've lost five straight races betting a horse 'does,'" he moaned. "Now I want to be that he 'don't.'" But he has nothing on that horse follower who entered the race track saying, "I hope I break even today. I sure do need the money."

NEWS OF HOME

EMPORIA, KAN: Mrs. Carrie Stepter celebrated her 104th birthday by buying a pair of play shoes and a party dress. "I've worked hard during the past 100 years," said she. "Now I'm going to have some fun."
(Just like me when I get out of Italy)

EVENSTON, ILL: Les Belgrade bought a hard-earned steak, entrusted it to his trained cocker spaniel to carry home. Missing to date: One steak, one dog.
(Ah, it wasn't too good anyway)

NEW YORK: Asked whether she thought male wolves were fun, and whether life would be as exciting without them, Miss M.V. Doinse said, "Wolves are much more fun than goody-goody boys. What good is a man if he isn't a wolf? I've never met a woman who wasn't a wolf."

NEWARK, N.J.: Things are tough in Newark. Police raided an opium den here and discovered that all the patrons had to bring their own dope.
(Oh, this dreadful war)

DARIEN, CONN: A woman phoned her minister, told him she was going to commit suicide, then drank what the medical examiner called "enough whiskey for 6 people." It killed her all right, but what a way to die.
(I can only think of one better way)

KOKOMO, IND: The big issue in this divorce case is not custody of the children but custody of an elephant. Terrell Jacobs says he doesn't mind losing his wife, Mari, but he wants that elephant. So does Mari. Both are circus performers.
(Wait 'till he tries getting that elephant on his lap.)

UNIT HISTORY OF THE 348TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, 99TH BOMB GP. (H)
SEPTEMBER 1943 TO JANUARY 1944 (INC.)

A. ADMINISTRATION

The advanced echelon left Oudna No. 1, Tunisia, for new station, Foggis A/D, No. 2, Italy on 3 December, 1943. The air echelon departed from Oudna No. 1, Tunisia and arrived at Foggia A/D, No. 2, Italy on 11 December 1943. The advanced echelon arrived at new station, Foggia A/D, No. 2, Italy on 12 December, 1943. The main echelon which departed from Oudna No. 1 on 11 December, 1943, arrived at Foggia A/D, No. 2, Italy on 22 December, 1943.

Strength: 1 September, 1943, 82 officers and 365 enlisted men
30 September, 1943, 62 officers and 309 enlisted men
Decrease for September 20 officers and 56 enlisted men
1 October, 1943, 62 officers and 307 enlisted men
31 October, 1943, 77 officers and 351 enlisted men
Increase for October 15 officers and 44 enlisted men
1 November, 1943, 83 officers and 363 enlisted men
30 November, 1943, 80 officers and 362 enlisted men
Decrease for November 30 officers and 1 enlisted man
1 December, 1943, 80 officers and 362 enlisted men
31 December, 1943, 76 officers and 353 enlisted men
Decrease for December 4 officers and 9 enlisted men
1 January 1944, 76 officers and 353 enlisted men
31 January, 1944, 84 officers and 370 enlisted men
Increase for January 8 officers and 17 enlisted men.

Warren B. Whitmore, Lt Col, relieved of command on 18 September, 1943. ; major Robert F. Elliott assumed command. Major Robert F. Elliott relieved of command and succeeded by Capt Max E. Davis 15 October, 1943. Capt G.E. Hutchison, S-2 Officer, transferred to Det. of Patients, 35th Station Hospital, A.P.O. 365, 24 September, 1943. Lt Kermit J. Mack assigned to duty as assistant S-2 officer 31 October, 1943. Capt G.E. Hutchison, S-2 Officer, returned to duty as S-2 Officer 4 November, 1943. Lt Raymond D. Isal, Engineering Officer, relieved from assignment and transferred to 97th Bomb Group 16 November, 1943. Lt Langdon F. Ayres appointed Engineering Officer. Capt William M. McLeod relieved from assignment as S-2 Officer and transferred to Det. of Patients, 64th General Hospital, A.P.O. 763, 14 November, 1943. Major Max E. Davis relieved of command and succeeded by Capt George E. Bransom as Commanding Officer. Lt Alphonse F. Sentous assigned to duty as S-2 officer 26 January 1944, succeeding Capt G.E. Hutchison.

B. BATTLES

2 September 1943--Oudna #1. Six A/C took off on a mission over the Bologna M/Y, Italy. A/C #43-0396 missing in action.
7 September 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over Foggia Sattelate #1, Italy. Lt William H. Williams, Bombardier on A/C 467 killed in action. A/C 494 went out of control and the following crew members bailed out over home field: S/Sgt R.M. Deering, S/Sgt R.L. Bruce, Sgt J.W. Lynn, I/Sgt J.D. Hofstetter, I/Sgt D.E. Manuell, S/Sgt A.T. Cisk, S/Sgt H. Potts, 1st Lt J.H. Drake, 1st Lt T.W. Berube, 1st Lt C.P. Gough, Major W.B. Whitmore. Lt T.W. Berube, Navigator on A/C 494, received flak wounds in the chest. Lt H.V. Brooks, Navigator on A/C 842, received flak wounds in the chest. Lt R.A. Copsey, Pilot on A/C 790, received flak wound in left forearm.
8 September 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off on a mission over Frascati, Italy. All returned safely to base.
9 September 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off on a mission over Capua, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
10 September 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Isornia Highway, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
11 September 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over the Benevento M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
12 September 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over Fresinone A/D, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
14 September 1943--Oudna #1. Mission #1--Nine A/C took off on a mission over Torro Annunziata, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base. Mission #2--Seven A/C took off on a mission over Eboli Crossroads, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
16 September 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over Benevento M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
18 September 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over Viterbo A/D, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
25 September 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over the Bologna M/Y, Italy. Flak was heavy and about 15 E/AC encountered.
28 September 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over Bologna, Italy. No bombs dropped because of weather over target area.
1 October 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off a mission over the Augsburg M.E. Factory, Germany.. No bombs dropped on account of heavy overcast of target area. Sgt U.J. Samson killed in action. All A/C returned safely to base with their load of bombs. About 15 to 20 E/AC were encountered.
4 October 1943--Oudna #1. Five A/C took off on a mission over the Bolzano M/Y, Italy and four A/C on a mission over the Pisa M/Y, Italy. Both missions were successful.
5 October 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Bologna M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
6 October 1943--Oudna #1. Four A/C took off on a mission over the Mestro M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
9 October 1943--Oudna #1. Four A/C took off on a mission over Larissa A/D, Greece and five A/C took off on a mission over Salonika Sode A/D, Greece. All A/C returned safely to base.
10 October 1943--Oudna #1. Five A/C took off on a mission over Athens Tatoi A/D, Greece. A/C #446 missing in action.
14 October 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off on a mission over the Terni M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
21 October 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Terni RR Viaduct, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
24 October 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over the Wiener Neustadt Airframe Works, Austria. no bombs dropped due to weather.
29 October 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over the Genoa M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.
30 October 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over the Turin M/Y, Italy. No

bombs dropped due to heavy overcast at target area.

31 October 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off on a mission over the Antheor Railroad Viaduct, France. A/C #361 returned early due to engine trouble. No flak or E/AC encountered on mission.

2 November 1943--Oudna #1. Six A/C took off on a mission over the Wiener Neustadter Airframe Works, Austria. All A/C returned safely to base.

6 November 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Turin Ball Bearing Works, Italy. No flak or E/AC encountered. All A/C returned safely to base.

10 November 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over Bolzano M/Y, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.

16 November 1943--Oudna #1. Seven A/C took off on a mission over Instre Le Tube A/D, France. A/C #657 returned early due to oxygen trouble. Heavy flak and 15 E/AC encountered. Target area well covered.

18 November 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over Athens Eleusis A/D, Greece. A/C #135 returned early due to oxygen trouble. All A/C returned safely. Flak heavy.

22 November 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over Toulon, France. All A/C returned early with bombs due to weather conditions.

24 November 1943--Oudna #1. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Toulon Submarine Base, France. One A/C returned early. Flak heavy. Mission very successful.

27 November 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over the Grizzano M/Y, Italy. No flak or E/AC encountered.

29 November 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over the Fiano Romano A/D, Italy. All A/C returned with bombs due to heavy overcast.

1 December 1943--Oudna #1. Ten A/C took off on a mission over Turin, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.

6 December 1943--Oudna #1. Nine A/C took off on a mission over Grizzano M/Y, Italy. Bombs were not dropped due to overcast.

14 December 1943--Foggia #2. Six A/C took off on a mission over Athens Kalamaki A/D, Greece. Flak moderately accurate and heavy. Ten to fifteen MS 109s and F 190s encountered.

15 December 1943--Foggia #2. Seven A/C took off on a mission over the Bolzano M/Y, Italy. Take off at 0957 o'clock. Flak: heavy, intense and accurate. No E/AC encountered. Target area well covered.

16 December 1943--Foggia #2. Seven A/C took off on a mission over the Padua M/Y, Italy at 1026 o'clock. Flak slight and inaccurate. Target area well covered. All A/C landed safely at 1450 o'clock.

19 December 1943--Foggia #2. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Innsbruck M/Y, Germany. Flak heavy and accurate. Forty to fifty E/AC were encountered. A/C 832 shot down over target. Lt G.D. Sweem officially credited with shooting down two E/AC. S/Sgt A.A. Giarrana destroyed one ME 109.

20 December 1943--Foggia #2. Six A/C took off on a mission over Athens Eleusis A/D, Greece. A/C #135 returned early due to minor engine trouble.

25 December 1943--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a mission over the Udine M/Y, Italy. Bombs were not dropped [due] to heavy overcast. All A/C returned safely with their bombs.

28 December 1943--Foggia #2. Seven A/C took off on a mission over the Rimini M/Y, Italy at 0930 o'clock. No flak or E/AC encountered. Target area well covered. All A/C returned safely at 1355 o'clock.

30 December 1943--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a successful mission over Rimini M/Y, Italy at 1020 o'clock. No flak or E/AC encountered. All A/C returned safely at 1440 o'clock.

3 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C off on a successful mission over the Villar Perosa Ball Bearing Factory, Italy. Two A/C returned early due to minor engine trouble. All A/C returned safely to base.

4 January 1944--Foggia #2. Eight A/C off on a mission over Sofia, Bulgaria. A/C #346 returned early due to engine trouble. All A/C returned safely to base with bombs. They could not locate target due to weather.

7 January 1944--Foggia #2. Eight A/C on a mission over Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Due to heavy overcast, target could not be found. The secondary target was hit. The target was the Maribor A/C Factory, Yugoslavia. Target was well covered. Our squadron only one to drop bombs.

8 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a successful mission over the Reggio Emilia M/Y and A/C Factory, Italy. A/C #135 returned early due to engine trouble. All A/C returned safely to base. No flak or E/AC.

9 January 1944--Foggia #2. Seven A/C took off on a successful mission over the Pole Harbor, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.

10 January 1944--Foggia #2. Eight A/C took off on a successful mission over Sofia, Bulgaria. S/Sgt Jack Gotthold and S/Sgt Chester Kissinger received credit for destroying one E/AC each.

11 January 1944--Foggia #2. Six A/C took off on a successful mission over Piraeus Harbor, Greece. Our A/C encountered approximately 30 E/AC. All A/C returned safely to base. S/Sgt F.L. Messel and T/Sgt R.T. Ryle received credit for destroying one E/AC each.

13 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a mission over the Guidania A/D, Italy. Mission successful and all our A/C returned safely.

14 January 1944--Foggia #2. Eight A/C took off on a successful mission over Mostar A/D, Yugoslavia. Slight flak and no E/AC encountered.

15 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C on a successful mission over Arezzo M/Y, Italy. A/C #981 returned early due to engine trouble. All our A/C returned safely to base. Slight flak and no E/AC encountered.

16 January 1944--Foggia #2. Seven A/C off on a mission over Villaorba L/G, Italy. All A/C returned safely to base.

17 January 1944--Foggia #2. Eight A/C took off on a mission over the Preto M/Y, Italy. No flak or E/AC encountered. All A/C returned safely.

18 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C off on mission over Porgibonsi M/Y, Italy. Target well covered. No flak or E/AC encountered.

19 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on a successful mission over Centocelle A/D, Italy. No flak or E/AC encountered.

20 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C off on a mission over Gianpino A/D, Rome, Italy. One early return due to engine trouble. Target well covered. No flak or fighters.

21 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on mission #138. Primary target was not bombed due to heavy overcast. The secondary target, Rimini M/Y, Italy was hit. Mission very successful. Our A/C encountered six E/AC firing rocket shells. All A/C returned safely to base.

22 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a mission over Pontedara A/D, Italy. A/C #527 returned early due to oxygen trouble. Target well covered. No flak or fighters.

23 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on mission over Poggibonsi M/Y, Italy. Two early returns due to engine trouble. All A/C returned safely to base with their bombs due to heavy overcast over the target.

24 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on a mission over Sofia M/Y, Bulgaria. Bombs were not dropped due to heavy overcast of target area. Most of the A/C jettisoned their bombs in the Adriatic Sea.

27 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C off on a mission over Salon De Provence A/D, France. One early return. Our A/C were jumped by about 15 E/AC. Flak was heavy and intense. All A/C returned safely to base.

28 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a successful [mission] over Aviano A/D, Italy. One early return. From 10 to 15 E/AC were encountered over target. Flak was heavy and intense. All A/C returned safely.

29 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on mission #144. Due to heavy overcast at primary target, bombs were dropped on the Fabriano M/Y, Italy. Flak slight and no E/AC encountered.

30 January 1944--Foggia #2. Ten A/C took off on a successful mission over Maniago A/D, Italy. Target areas well covered. About 5 E/C were encountered over target. No flak. All A/C returned safely to base.

31 January 1944--Foggia #2. Nine A/C took off on a successful mission over Udine A/D, Italy. Target area well covered. Heavy flak and about 10 to 15 E/AC encountered over target.

C. CASUALTIES

Lt J.G. Careboris, Lt C.O. Dean Jr., Lt E.Y. Hooper, Lt S.G. Fasoulis, T/Sgt E.H. Cox, T/Sgt V. Laybe, S/Sgt E.C. Sykes, Sgt W.A. Bess, Sgt F.M. Bunn, and A.H. Evans missing in action 2 September, 1943. Lt W.H. Williams killed in action 7 September 1943. Major W.B. Whitmere, S/Sgt R.M. Deering, S/Sgt R.L. Bruce, and S/Sgt J.W. Lynn, Lt T.W. Berube, Lt H.V. Brooks, and Lt R.A. Copsey wounded in Action 7 September 1943. T/Sgt M.G. Magee wounded in action 12 September 1943. Sgt U.J. Samson killed in action 1 October 1943. T/Sgt H.A. Higginbotham killed in action 1 October 1943. Lt S.R. Gilmer, F/O G.W. Rohrer, Lt M.N. Wantman, Lt J.C. Staffo, T/Sgt R.A. Cleaver, T/Sgt W. S. Hill, S/Sgt R.L. Meyers, S/Sgt J.G. Stankus, S/Sgt H.E. Webby, and Sgt O.W. Hinkle missing in action 10 October 1943. S/Sgt S.J. Karkut, S/Sgt F.A. Novacs, S/Sgt L.L. Burge wounded in action 11 October 1943. Lt C.C. Stidd, Lt L.M. Solanders, Lt J.W. Kozumalik, Lt L. Green, T/Sgt T.R. Campbell, Sgt H.F. Brown, Sgt F.P. Carollo, S/Sgt L. Garcia, S/Sgt J.A. Rabante, and Sgt J.R. Donley missing in action 19 December 1943. Sgt E. Donovan wounded in action 19 December 1943. Lt R.C. Baty Jr. wounded in action 16 January 1944.

D. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Captain E.P. McLaughlin, Distinguished Flying Cross. T/Sgt Gregory A. Brothers, Sgt Robert N. Calkins, and Sgt Charles Barnes, Soldiers Medals.

George Frame, one of our favorite contributors, sent us this one page just a little too late for inclusion in his November, 1988 article. We present it with pleasure. *geo*

As a radio mechanic it was my specialty to make sure all radio equipment was in operation.

Each night after a mission I would talk to the combat crew, or I would look on the Form I, to see if the pilot had written any squaks about the equipment. Often times the pilot would write that his command set wasn't working, or maybe one of the gunners would indicate his gun mike wasn't working.

When this happened I would either replace the equipment, or sometime it would be repairable.

As I would pre-flight the radio's I'd call.... " Sandfly Tower" and talked to Dick Dempsey, who worked in the control tower. Sometimes I would talk to another guy named Oppenheimer, I can't think of his first name, and if the communication sets were O.K., Dempsey or Oppenheimer would come back with a " five by five", meaning that the radio's sounded loud and clear.

In our communication's department, we had Sherman Miller as the chief, Larry G. Hastings, we called him G Strings, Pappy Loudermilk, whose name was Lloyd instead of Pappy. Pappy was the old man of about 31 years old at the time, while the rest of us were in our 20's. Other guys in communications were Marc Antonio, a little Italian guy from West Chester, Pa. Marc was built like a little grizzly bear, and then we had Jake Axelrod from Brooklyn, including the accent. Others were Lajoy and Latheam, and Gordon H. Hunsberger, we called him the Krout...

After the 99th moved to Foggia, our airplanes received some high tech equipment such as ILS (Instrument Landing System) special kinds of radar, etc.

It wasn't long after we moved to Foggia when we traded in our F-model B-17s for a more advanced 17. This was the G with a chin turret for the bombardier to operate.

It was about that time when we started using some materials to disrupt the German radar flak guns. We called the material " Chaff". The chaff wasn't nothing more than aluminum strips, much like the christmas tinsel we see today. The chaff was packaged in small bundles of about 100 strips to the package, and each package was about six inches in width and perhaps twelve inches long.

In the radio room we cut out a slit in the 17's skin so that we could have the radio operator push out the chaff when they were just about over the target. As the bundles of chaff hit the slipstream it would separate and strips of aluminum would float down, causing the German radar to show trash rather than a blip as they would try to track the 17s.

It was my job to make sure the radio operator on a 17 had a good supply of chaff, usually it came in large boxes about 36" x 36"....

The chaff was effective from all reports. It was reported that German flak would be very accurate until the chaff was dumped out, and then the flak was erratic...



We find that chaff was invented, manufactured, and stockpiled for some time before the combat crews were allowed to play with it. That was because the brass was afraid that the Germans would get the secret. Meanwhile, back at the Geschwader, the Germans had invented, manufactured and stockpiled it but did not allow its use in combat lest the Allies learn about it and use it.

It might have been worse. Parachutes were originally not issued lest the pilots bail out. Naval tradition required that the captain go down with his vessel. At least we missed that bit of chivalry. *george (I'd Dive Down Their Funnels) Coen*



We present Ken Simon's diary of those little group discussions with the Luftwaffe. Thank you Ken.

Mission #17

DATE: December 28, 1943
TARGET: Marshalling Yards
LOCATED: Rimini, Italy
HOURS: 4:30

SHIP: Fort Alamo II (Lead Ship)
NUMBER: 696
PILOT: Capt. Shaw
POSITION: Tail Guns

Dropped our bombs in heart of city. No fighters, no flak. Went over target twice with bad oil leak. Come home on three engines.

Rimini is located on the east coast of Italy about half way up on the Adriatic Sea.

Mission #18

DATE: January 4, 1943
TARGET: German Headquarters (City Proper)
LOCATED: Sofia, Bulgaria
HOURS: 6:15

SHIP: Spoofer
NUMBER: 522
PILOT: Maj. MacDonald
POSITION: Tail Guns

Target covered, could not drop bombs. A few bursts of accurate flak and three FW-190's made one pass at our squadron. They hit one ship but did no damage. Our ship lead all four groups. The first mission over Bulgaria by any ship from this theatre.

Our mission today took us over Albania and Yugoslavia.

Mission #19

DATE: January 7, 1943
 TARGET: Aircraft Factory
 LOCATED: Weiner-Neustadt, Austria
 HOURS: 4:30

SHIP: Sweater Girl
 NUMBER: 472
 PILOT: Capt. Shaw
 POSITION: Tail Guns

Turned back eighty miles from target due to bad weather. Flew around over Hungary, Austria and Yugoslavia, trying to find a target open.

Returned with bombs.

Mission #31

DATE: January 22, 1944
 TARGET: Air Field
 LOCATED: Pontedera, Italy
 HOURS: 5:00

SHIP: Robert E. Lee (Lead Ship)
 NUMBER: 482
 PILOT: Col. Lawrence
 POSITION: Right Waist

Flew around near Rome for an hour and a half trying to find a target open. Made a run on one city, but bomb bay doors would not open, so we hit the marshalling yards and air field in the town next to it. No fighters, no flak.

Returning home we found ourselves directly over the new invasion south of Rome. It didn't take us long to get out of there. We were directly over the first day invasion of Anzio. Several Spitfires came up to get us out of there. Looking through the holes in the clouds all you could see was ships.

Col. Lawrence had orders to go up the Adriatic side and return the same way, instead, I guess he wanted to see what the secret was on the Mediterranean side. They called him up to wing command as soon as we landed.

Mission #32

DATE: January 27, 1944
 TARGET: Flight to England
 LOCATED: Bobington Airfield (Near London)
 HOURS: 10:20

SHIP: Spoofer
 NUMBER: 522
 PILOT: Major McDonald
 POSITION: Tail Guns

Left Italy, arrived five hours later in Algeria. Spent the night and took off the next morning for Marakash, French Morocco. Arrived five hours later. We stayed there two days and then took off for England. We arrived ten hours and twenty minutes later. Had a hard time getting down through the clouds. We took a General, Col. and a civilian to England on military business.

Maj. Emerson flew as co-pilot. We flew over the Headquarters of the French Foreign Legion (Sidi-Bel-Abbes). We took a shower in the King of Morocco's Palace at Marakash. It's now a U.S.O. club.

General Patton landed just behind us at Marakash. We went over and looked at his plane, a C-54. We had to wait two days for weather clearance for England, but he took off two hours later for the same destination.

A civilian brought us two crates of oranges out to our plane, one marked for General Eisenhower and the other for the crew. He said he knew the General wouldn't get his if he didn't give us one also. We picked up two sacks of sandwiches for the flight--one spam and the other turkey. I can still hear General Atkinson griping about those lousy spam sandwiches. You know who ate the turkey.

Mission #33

DATE: February 9, 1944
 TARGET: Flight back to Italy
 LOCATED: Casablanca French Morocco
 HOURS: 8:20

SHIP: Spoofer
 NUMBER: 522
 PILOT: McDonald
 POSITION: Tail Guns

Flew from Bobington to St. Morgans in two hours. We cleared of England and took off for Casablanca at 1:00AM. Arrived 8:20 minutes later. Had dinner then left for Algeria arrived 3 hours later. Spent the night and left the next morning for Bari, Italy. Arrived six hours later. Let the Col. off and then blew out the tail wheel tire. We took off anyway and made it back to our home base in one hour. Gave the mess hall a good buzz job and then landed in a sixty mile wind with no tail wheel tire and the bombardier as co-pilot.

We had almost two weeks in London on our own. Our home was 44 Cordoggan Place, Knights Bridge. First night in London got caught in an air raid. The subways quit running at 10:00PM, couldn't get a taxi, had to walk about two miles in the blackout. After asking directions we finally reached Knights Bridge at 2:00AM. I climbed to the 3rd floor of three buildings before I found my own room. They all look alike in a blackout. The Germans bombed every night we were there. I'll never forget setting in the theatre with the throbbing of German bombers overhead. We could feel the concussion of bombs hitting, still we stayed and watched the show. Had a nice time, hope to return some day when the bombs are not dropping.

Mission #34

DATE: February 15, 1944
 TARGET: Guns and Troops in Monast ry
 LOCATED: Cassino, Italy
 HOURS: 3:05

SHIP: Fort Alamo II
 NUMBER: 696
 PILOT: Capt. Shaw
 POSITION: Tail Guns

Target hit, no fighters some accurate flak. Could see the guns firing on front lines.

Major Mac finished his 50th England Mission and will go home soon. Capt. Shaw will take over as commanding officer of our squadron. I am flying tail for him. I hate to see Mac leave but Capt. Shaw is a fine officer and a very good pilot.

Cassino is about half way between Naples and Rome. Coming back we flew about 100 feet high all the way up the Volaturno River, sure a lot of fighting took place here. Burned out equipment all along the way.

Mission #35

DATE: February 17, 1944
 TARGET: Troops and Supplies
 LOCATED: Anzio Beachhead
 HOURS: 3:50

SHIP: Lady Luck
 NUMBER: 507
 PILOT: Lt. Sickinger
 POSITION: Right Waist

Flak intense, heavy and accurate. One ship in our group knocked down. All the ships in our squadron were shot up pretty bad.

We went in at 13,000 feet and they turned their field pieces up at us. One 17 exploded, the tail assembly floated down to the beach and lit in a group of olive trees. (We found out later the tail gunner was pinned in, and was knocked out and his only injuries were two broken ribs. Plenty lucky.)

This mission was to help the men on the beachhead. The Germans were about to shove them back to the sea. We carried fragmentation bombs. I would have hate to see that brush pile falling from the sky on me.

Mission #36 & 37

DATE: February 22, 1944

TARGET: Air Craft Factories

LOCATED: Regensburg, Germany

HOURS: 6:55

SHIP: A New Modified "G" (Lead)

NUMBER: 889

PILOT: Capt. Shaw - Capt. Morriss

POSITION: Tail Guns

My roughest raid so far. Started out with eight ships in our squadron, one turned back with engine trouble, four more turned back due to bad weather.

Ended up over target with a right and left wing man. We were flying tail end of the wing and were attacked by 35 ME-109's and ME-210's. They hit our right wing man's left wing tank and he slid over us in flames and went down over the target. The left wing man was hit later and went down. We were the only one to return in our squadron. Our ship was shot up so bad it went to the bone yard. The top turret and radio gunner each shot down a ME-109. The ball turret and I knocked down a ME-210 a piece.

I hit several others and fired 1,100 rounds of ammunition. Had a lot of trouble with the new tail turret. They sure threw the rockets at us today.

We lost 52 out of 177 bombers on this raid. Combined raid with the 8th Air force; we received credit for two missions on this one.

The Armament Major and a group of Boeing factory men met me as I crawled out of the plane and were all excited about their new tail turret. I told them if they would saw off that tail and give me a shotgun I would feel safer. That was the one and only tail of that type.

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

8 Jan 44

- Weather in vicinity of Foggia light haze and cloud coverage to three tenths (3/10) at four thousand (4,000) feet. West to the coast of Italy slight overcast at eight thousand (8,000) feet. North from approximately 42 degrees North and 11 degrees East broken cloud coverage. Over target light broken overcast at about twenty seven thousand (27,000) feet.
- At the target alight broken overcast was encountered but did not have any effect on the bomb run.

Target: Messerschmitt Factory Wiener Neustadt, Austria

7 Jan 44

- No weather encountered until seventeen thousand feet (17,000) where there was a five hundred (500) foot layer of broken clouds. Thirty (30) minutes from target there was a solid overcast of high clouds, twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand feet, group turned back at this point.
- Group leveled off below seventeen thousand (17,000) foot layer of clouds and climbed through at first opportunity. The group made two (2) three hundred sixty (360) degree climbing turns to try and get over the high overcast but could not so the group turned back.
- Target was not reached so weather at the target could not be observed.

Target: Torpedo Works at Fiume, Italy

date ?

- 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 (3) miles North of Fiume. It consisted of alto-stratus, with bottom at sixteen thousand five hundred (16,500) feet to eighteen thousand (18,000) feet thick. It was clear underneath, except along the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia, which had a low strato-cumulus from the mountains inland.
- Formation was forced to stay below the alto-stratus, bombing from sixteen thousand (16,000) feet.
- 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 hole 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.

Target: City of Sofia, Bulgaria

4 or 10 Jan 44

- Clear from Italy to coast of Yugoslavia. Solid overcast from coast of Yugoslavia almost to half way to Bulgaria. Overcast at approximately ten thousand (10,000) feet. There was fog in the valleys over Yugoslavia and in the Western part of Bulgaria.
- The I.P. Slivnitsa, Bulgaria was clear from twenty one thousand (21,000) 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: Halah Basin Pireaus, Greece

11 Jan 44

- Overcast east of base at seven thousand (7,000) feet as Group formed. Overcast was broken near Brindisi, became thin overcast at about eleven thousand (11,000) feet base near heel of Italy. Became broken short distance off coast increasing to undercast off coast of Greece, encountered overcast again at nineteen thousand (19,000) feet about seventy five (75) miles from I.P).
- Slight alteration of course at various points to miss localized weather, leveled out on occasions during climb to avoid clouds.
- I.P. covered necessitating shorter bomb run. Two (2) distant cloud layers, one nineteen thousand (19,000) feet to twenty two thousand (22,000) feet, one from sixteen thousand (16,000) feet to seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) 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 Guidonia A/D

13 Jan 44

- Low clouds en route to Naples, cloud cover off shore fifty (5) miles, tops at eight thousand (8,000) to nine thousand (9,000) feet, with broken overcast, base at twenty two thousand (22,000) 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 (25,000) feet. Moderate base over entire target area.
- Evasive action consisted of slight turns and rapid descent in altitude off target.
- Target area covered with haze but had no effects on the bomb run.

Target: Mostar A/D Yugoslavia

- Weather en route CAVU except for patches of low overcast along Yugoslavian coast at about five thousand (5,0900) feet. Also few scattered low scud.
- CAVU, no evasive tactics.
- CAVU, weather had no effects on the bomb run.

did a good job of celestial navigation that night, and we arrived over the Azores the next morning right on the (radio) beam.

The runway there extended to the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea 100 feet or so below. We contacted the tower and were given clearance to land - coming in over the cliff. We discovered there was a light rain falling, and in addition to that, there was a strong updraft at the seaward end of the landing strip. Because of the rain and wind conditions I didn't set it down on the first attempt, and we went around for a second try. The second time around it was raining even harder, and I had to open the pilot's side window to see out. That, and having to compensate for the updraft, made for a pretty nervous landing. When we did touch down there was a terrible crash and clatter, and I thought surely I had landed with my wheels up! As it turned out we had landed (for the first time) on one of the metal runways they were using on temporary fields at that time. The noise we heard was the metal panels clashing, and loud because my window was open. We had made a good landing. It has been said that flying multi-engine airplanes consists of hours of boredom interrupted by moments of stark terror. That was one of those moments. There were to be others.

We were allowed to hike around the countryside late that afternoon, and see some of the scenery of the Azores, but we were not allowed into town. Much of the island we were on was covered with small farming plots that had been cleared from very rocky ground; consequently each plot of land, usually a half acre or less, was surrounded by a four or five foot high stone wall. It was a very scenic area and represented so much hard labor it is hard to comprehend.

In Marrakech we were allowed into town, and visited some of the markets and bazaars. We were warned about the food and problems of sanitation in town, so our visit was very brief, and we had no reason to buy anything. The next day in Tunis we didn't leave the base at all.

When we arrive over Foggia we discovered that there were many air fields in the immediate vicinity, probably 10 or more. Some were American, and some were British. Consequently, when I contacted ground control for landing instructions it was easy to get confused or misdirected, and land on a field that was not expecting me. Upon landing, I taxied up to the tower and called by radio for parking instructions and ground transportation. The reply was "Where are you?" I said "I'm right in front of your tower" They said "Not on this field." Well, being somewhat embarrassed, not knowing what frequency to use to contact that tower, and knowing that we were on the wrong field, we taxied back to the end of the runway and took off. Undoubtedly, we left behind us some very puzzled control people. We then obtained new landing instructions from ground control, and found and landed at the base we had been directed to, where the tower controllers were wondering just where the hell we had been, and what kind of pilots they were turning loose these days. Being new to the ETO, I didn't realize that it was a somewhat normal SNAFU (Situation normal - all fussed up).

After that, we encountered a mix-up not of our own making. We were directed to fly to another base near Foggia, where we were assigned some equipment and a pyramid tent with instructions to erect the tent and make it our quarters. We were also relieved of our brand new B-17G as well as its cargo of mail. We had assumed the plane would be ours for the duration, but things didn't work that way in Italy.

About an hour after we had the tent erected and were getting organized, we were instructed to leave the tent and proceed by truck to another air base which turned out to be the home of the 346th bomber squadron of the 99th wing of the 15th Air Force.

It had not occurred to us to wonder why both our enlisted men and officers were being quartered in the tent we had erected. We had been conned into putting up somebody else's tent for them

Everything at the base of the 346th was temporary except the runway. We inherited two tents from a crew which had failed to return from a previous mission. The four officers in one and the six enlisted men in the other. Conditions here were just not coming up to the expectations we had from watching some of the war-time movies which tended to glamorize the Air Corps operations. It was somewhat disconcerting then to be sleeping in beds (army cots) that were practically warm yet from a crew that was now "missing."

For our first few combat missions, our crew was broken up, and individual members were assigned to older and more experienced crews for training, evaluation, and orientation into combat conditions. We also had a number of practice missions in formation flying, which was needed to tighten up the formations. They were getting sloppy and consequently more vulnerable to enemy aircraft attacks.

During this time we managed to get a couple of days off. One day we went into Foggia to look around. The town had been badly damaged during the advance of the US army through there. Most of the buildings were bombed out and there were not many businesses still operating. The people of Foggia were in desperate conditions as far as food and clothing were concerned, and yet, because of the spend-thrift affluence of the American airmen, the price of food or anything else around town had inflated clear out of sight.

On another day we managed to get a jeep to drive to the seaside town of San Savero which had been, as is now, a favorite vacation spot for tourists. It is on the coast of the Adriatic Sea just above the "spur" of the boot of Italy. There was a nice beach there and we spent the day swimming, although it was a little risky because of two derelict enemy ships just off shore that were reported to have spilled explosives in the water, and were probably booby-trapped.

One day we were assigned to a training mission, and in taxiing out to the runway, I heard a banging or popping sound, seeming to come from the right-hand landing gear strut. Thinking that probably the strut had lost hydraulic fluid and was bottoming out (which would be a very dangerous thing to land on), I aborted the mission and went back to the flight line and turned the airplane back to maintenance for a check. We didn't fly that day. What a mistake!

That evening I was called to the squadron commander's tent, and he was madder than hell. He told me that the maintenance officer (who was very proud of his efficiency record, and had certified the airplane I had turned in to be airworthy) could find nothing wrong with it. The noise I had heard was from a dent in the skin of the wing, that was operating like the bottom of an oil can, popping in and out as the wing flexed in taxiing on rough ground. And he thought I should know that! He accused me of being war-weary or afraid of flying, which was hardly true since I had so few missions, ten to be exact, and some of those had been short range missions or "milk runs." There had been some missions into lower Germany however, where we had plenty of action from enemy aircraft and flak. Anyway I lost my temper and told the squadron commander that if he would allow me to fly with the men I had trained with, to have my own crew, that I would fly any damned airplane he had on the base. I guess that was what he wanted to hear because the next morning, July 28, 1944, we were assigned for the first time as a complete crew, on a mission to Ploesti.

We were given an airplane that had come back the day before on two engines. The maintenance people had replaced the engines that had been shot out the day before, but they did not replace the two engines that had brought the airplane home. These two old engines had been overworked on the previous day's mission, and altho I noted that in the aircraft log, I wasn't about to have another encounter with the base maintenance officer, much less the squadron commander.

Ploesti was a famous target, because of an earlier mission flown from North Africa, on which a large number of B-24s had been lost. It had been a real disaster, largely due to poor planning which had caused a second wave of low altitude planes to run into debris from the bombs of the first high altitude squadrons.

From Foggia, Ploesti was a maximum range or nine-hour mission; nine hours of formation flying. Flying the B-17 in formation was hard work, the engine controls were stiff in order to stay in place, and the control surfaces had not as yet been fitted with booster equipment. Consequently, the co-pilot and I would alternate flying the airplane for 30 minutes at a time.

When we took off from our airbase that morning and began forming up with the other squadrons for the mission to Ploesti, the sky was clear. It was a beautiful day, and that was a good indication that we could expect from fighters and flak. The first hour or so of the mission was uneventful, as usual, then we noticed a B-17 off to our starboard side that was trying to join our formation. He was several hundred yards away, and we had no way of contacting him by radio to know exactly who he was. Radio silence was required on all combat missions. He could have been someone from a squadron in the wing ahead of us who had experienced temporary engine trouble, and was now trying to join our formation for protection from enemy aircraft, or he could have been a B-17 that had been captured by the Germans and sent up as a decoy. Such aircraft had been known to join formations and suddenly shoot down a number of other planes in the formation. We didn't dare take the chance of letting him in, so we fired some warning shots to keep him at a distance. It was like shutting your best friend out in the cold without an overcoat. It was a tough decision to have to make. I hope he made it home somehow, but his chances were not good - if he was one of us. He soon dropped further back and we lost track of him.

About 45 minutes before we reached the target one of our old engines, number one engine, lost oil pressure, and was throwing out a lot of smoke. Since we were not flying at maximum power settings, we shut the engine down, feathered the prop, and were able to stay in our formation on into the target area. From the initial point of the bomb run we had to fly straight and level while the bombardier actually operated the airplane with controls in his bombsight. As usual we started getting a lot of flak during the bomb run. There were no enemy aircraft in the air, but the flak became exceptionally heavy and accurate. Right over the target our number four engine, one of the new ones, was hit and lost a cylinder head. It became so rough that it was threatening to tear itself off the wing, so we shut that engine down, and feathered the prop.

We were then flying on just two engines; one old and one new, which was such a loss of power that we had to put both of them on emergency power settings. Within 15 or 20 minutes after leaving the target we lost the second old engine, number two. It must have broken a piston or something, because it was smoking badly and sounded like it was chewing itself to pieces. We had to hurry to shut it down and get the prop feathered. Carrying a dead engine with the prop feathered was a lot better than having it fall off (which would have greatly increased the wind resistance, or worse yet, damage the wing). We tried to start up number one engine again, but it was impossible, and it probably would not have been able to pull its own weight anyway. So we continued with only one engine, number three, which was new.

The B-17 will fly on one engine, but it will fly at a reduced air speed and altitude, so in order to stay abreast of the squadron and obtain from them some protection from enemy aircraft, we had to gradually lower our altitude. In other words, we were going down hill while the rest of the formation was flying a level course. While we were doing this we also did everything we could to lighten the airplane. We threw overboard all the pieces of armor plating some of the gunners used in addition to their flak vests. Eventually we threw out all the guns, ammunition, and any radio or other equipment we could get loose. We also tried to jettison the ball turret. It weighed about a ton and would have made some difference in the altitude we were able to maintain on one engine. We discovered, however, that someone had left out of the airplane the tool kit that was needed to disengage the bolts that held the ball turret in place. So we were stuck with it.

As the distance between us and the tail end of our formation increased we became more and more concerned about our vulnerability to enemy fighters. We had seen our own fighter escort go home as they ran low on fuel on the way in to the target, and so far none of them had come back.

The days when a disabled bomber could lower its wheels as a sign of surrender, and be escorted to a landing at the nearest air base by enemy fighters was over. One of our crews operating out of England had done so, and then suddenly opened fire and shot down their enemy escort. The Germans had not been known to extend those courtesies again; in fact there were reports of them shooting parachuting aircrew members in mid-air. Eventually we lost sight of our squadron and the whole wing. We were alone, on our own, scared and lonely. All our hopes pinned on one good engine.

We were proceeding on a westerly course that would take us back to Italy, and then Foggia. As we neared the coast of the Adriatic Sea, we encountered a range of mountains that were about on a level with the altitude we were able to maintain; the peaks being a little higher. The passes between the peaks in these mountains were obscured by clouds that we couldn't get over, so it would have been out of the question to try to fly between the peaks. We were led to the decision to bail out even though we still had one very fine engine running like it would never quit.

In the area in which we were located, there were numerous meadows. We were over a very pretty foothills meadow surrounded by some timber and barren hills, and I gave the order to bail out. We were all to bail out through the bomb bay doors which had been opened, and I got busy setting the airplane to fly on automatic pilot while the rest of the crew was bailing out.

I thought I had allowed sufficient time to be the last to leave (which is expected of aircraft commanders as well as ship captains), but not so long as to be too far from the rest of the crew. That was some experience; I had never parachuted before. The first shock was being tumbled violently through the air (for what seemed like along time) because of hitting the airstream. The second shock was the severe jolt when the chute popped open. It threw my sheepskin-lined overshoes off! The third sensation was the sudden serene silence. While hanging apparently motionless in the air, the only sound I could hear was a very faint whisper of the air escaping around the edges of my parachute.

As I hung there trying to associate myself with the reality of the situation, I was more stunned than frightened by the marvelous unobstructed view. There was no sensation of height, even looking straight down. After a while I spotted a couple of the crew members, and they were close enough that I could hear them shouting to each other. Apparently our airplane had made a complete circle, and was headed pretty much in our direction. I was reminded of accounts I had heard of people being run down in mid air by their own airplanes! That's why I had set it to fly on auto-pilot straight and level or as near as possible, but it's pretty hard to trim up a B-17 to fly with much stability on one engine. It came fairly close, but missed all of us.

As our airplane passed us I saw two more parachutes emerge! I was so shaken up and disoriented by then that the thought passed my mind that there had been stowaways aboard, or that another airplane was going down with us! Neither thought persisted however as I recognized it as ours, and watched it crash and burn.

Later on I learned that the navigator, Chester Strunk, had taken so much time to carefully remove his girlfriend's picture from his navigation folder that neither he or E.R. Allen, bombardier, got out until some time after I did. It was a good thing that the airplane circled back before they bailed out or they would have been so far from the rest of us that we might not have found them. Of course it could have been a good thing for them to get further away. Who knows?

We must have bailed out at quite a high altitude, because it seemed to take us a long time to reach the ground, and when we were within two or three thousand feet of the ground, we saw people coming out of the woods at the edge of the meadow where we were going to land. Some of them were on horseback, and some of them were shooting at us! They were not very good shots or perhaps not too serious about it. They didn't hit any of us.

There was no point in trying to conceal ourselves once we were on the ground in an open meadow even though it did take several minutes for anyone to reach us. We simply gathered up our parachutes and waited. The people who captured us were really a rag tag bunch. We were surprised to see some of them wearing tattered Italian Army uniforms.

We learned later that those people wearing the Italian uniforms were remnants of Mussolini's army, which had invaded Albania along about 1936. Much to Mussolini's embarrassment, the Albanians kicked those forces out, and a number of the Italian soldiers were left there as prisoners. Some of them later joined either the Chetnicks or the Partisans who were fighting a guerilla war throughout the Balkan countries.

We knew the United States was guaranteeing a price or a reward to anyone returning American airmen to allied lines. I think they were offering something like \$500 each, so we expected to be held for ransom.

Each of us were equipped with a small plastic box, approximately 4 x 2 x 6 inches which was an escape kit, containing \$50 in US currency, a compass, some concentrated food, some pills that were to be used only in the need for extra energy (probably amphetamines), a rubber bag to be used as a canteen, and some maps which were printed on silk cloth. The food didn't last long and wasn't very tasty. The maps, had we found the opportunity to use them, were not very accurate. I offered to pay the co-pilot, Doyle Pope, the \$10 I owed him, and he didn't take it! I did find a unique use for the rubber bag, but that was later on.

Once we were on the ground and completely surrounded our "friends" stopped shooting at us, and in fact when they had gathered us together, someone found a bottle of wine and passed it to us, so we felt we might soon be on our way back to allied territory. We assumed these people were a band of guerillas attached to either the Partisans or the Chetnicks who were operating in that area. Since none of us could speak whatever language they were speaking, we never did know for sure who they were. They seemed friendly enough, but did insist on relieving us of such small things as our wrist watches (GI hack watches), some of our rings, and our parachutes. Some of them were in uniform, some of them were in civilian clothes, but all of them had rifles, and carried two bandoliers of cartridges around their shoulders.

continued on p. 66



We have here a first-rate account of his combat tour by our Ex-President, Joe Kenney. We have held up the printing of his diary during Joe's terms in the Presidency.

When we conducted our first get-together at Amarillo in 1980, Joe was the first to howdy and shake.

December 4, 1981

Following are excerpts from the diary I kept during WWII. These include only that period of time in which I flew my 50 combat missions as a radio operator-gunner and are confined to the combat missions themselves. For a small amount of background, I joined the 99th Bomb Group in September, 1943, when we were still a part of the 12th Air Force. The 15th Air Force was formed on the First of November, 1943 and consisted of all the B-17s and B-24s that were there at that time. There were four groups of B-17s that made up the Fifth Wing. We had our base out of Tunis at that time and I had the dubious honor of being one that made up the Advanced Echelon which finally left Bizerta and arrived in Italy after everyone else had moved. Our base in Italy was at Tortorella about 12 miles northeast of Foggia. These are observations of a 20 year old and are as accurate as my memory serves.

Mission number 1, January 20, 1944. Target-Ciampiano Air Field south of Rome. The bomb load was of frags, (I always considered these frags to be a somewhat "hot" load). We had a P-38 escort, saw no enemy fighters, encountered no flak and bomb coverage was good. This mission was a part of a concerted effort to diminish the number of enemy planes in the area just prior to the Anzio Invasion. This mission was a "milk run" for my first one.

Mission number 2, March 18, 1944. Target-Villaorba Air Field, northern Italy. This effort was designed to draw as many enemy fighters into the air as was possible from all bases in northern Italy plus those from Graz and Klagenfurt in Austria by a fairly large number of P-38s that flew ahead early to engage these enemy fighters. The timing was such that all these fighters would have exhausted any reserve fuel they had and would be forced to land at Udine and Villaorba for refueling because of their action against the P-38s. I am not at all sure how all these elaborate plans worked since, as we approached our target area, we were attacked by 67 ME 210s which launched a heavy rocket attack against us from just outside our 50 calibre machine gun range. They hit us hard with the B-17 group to our right taking the most hits and they did lose 3 airplanes. We lost one from our group, the whole dorsal fin was blown off along with the tail gunners position. The other 9 bailed out before the plane went on down. The Air Force claimed that it was a hit from a rocket but we believed it was a frag bomb that went awry from one of our bombers. Other planes in the group were shot up some. Those rockets were mighty disconcerting because the trail of white smoke from them indicated an inherent instability that made them inaccurate enough to be dangerous as could be. Flak over the target was moderate and accurate enough that we heard a few bursts. Mission somewhat rough.

Mission number 3, March 30, 1944. Target-Sofia Bulgaria (city). This effort was designed to force Bulgaria out of the war. Our mission was preceded the three previous nights with the R.A.F dropping leaflets warning the Bulgarians to pull out of the war or have their city destroyed on March 30, 1944 which is where we were at that time. We were preceded in the bomber stream by four B-24 groups with four more B-24 groups behind us. When we went over Sofia, more than half of the city was destroyed, an example of pattern bombing and the awesome effects of such an effort using 500 pound bombs. The city was heavily defended, probably because our arrival heralded by the leaflets of the three previous nights. There was a total of 367 heavy bombers on this mission, 253 B-24s and 114 B-17s. Flak was heavy and accurate. The fighter opposition was hot and aggressive. We had a P-47 escort which was drawn down by some ME 109s that decoyed them out of high altitude. (Get a P-47 in a dive and he was good for 15,000 feet down) The Luftwaffe came in with a determination that

made you take note and they shot several planes down. I saw a B-17 from a group ahead and below us take a hit from an ME 109 in his left wing. The 109 was driven off by heavy fire from surrounding B-17s but, as we proceeded, I saw a vapor coming from that left wing. A flash appeared just behind that wing and then in the next instant that B-17 exploded in a blinding flash. A blast such as this always stops forward motion of the aircraft involved in the blast. Since our true air speed at that altitude was around 220 miles per hour, what was left passed behind us almost instantly. The 5th Wing lost 6 B-17s on this one as I remember. I have no idea how many B-24s went down, I do know there were several. This was the only mission I was to fly as a waist gunner, all the rest were as radio. This was somewhat rough as missions went.

NOTE: During the period of time covered to this point on missions flown where I did not fly, many of the fellows I knew very well had been shot down. Frankie Corollo, prisoner, Dave Gratt, prisoner, (I'll always wonder whether Dave made it through since he was a Jew). Sam Luera, prisoner. Homer Ackelson, killed in action. Edward O. Ergle, killed in action. Marshall Kohler, killed in action. Major Hamilton, killed in action. Beasley, killed in action. Cresser, prisoner of war. Lt. John Mahon, shot down over Regensburg and we heard that he and his crew were all prisoners. These, just to name a few that have come to mind.

Mission No. 4, May 13, 1944. Target - Trento Italy, marshalling yards. At briefing we were told that we could expect at least 50 enemy fighters in the area. Flak was to be heavy and accurate. We were to have a P-47 escort but they didn't show. I really sweat this one because we were a small force without the escort. As it turned out we encountered no fighters and the flak was light. We did hear a few bursts and get a few holes but we didn't lose any airplanes. Pretty much of a milk run. Calhoun was our pilot.

Mission No. 5, May 14, 1944. Target - Piacenza Air Base, northern Italy. Barlow was the pilot. P-47's were to escort (they didn't show up). We took our usual course up the Adriatic but as we turned into our westerly course we flew over a small island off the Italian coast and they threw up a heavy barrage of flak that was pretty accurate. We took some hits and began to have problems with the number four engine almost immediately. That engine began to smoke and just got progressively worse as we continued to gain altitude. The higher we got, the rougher that engine ran. On the bomb run our ball turret operator reported that our number two engine was also smoking. About the time we dropped our bombs the number one engine had to be feathered. Our pilot asked me to change the amplifier on number one and when this was completed he re-started number one only to have it go again. As I remember it I believe the engine blew a cylinder head. Number two engine cleared up and number four continued to run rough and smoke heavily. By this time we had become a "straggler" and were especially vulnerable because of that trail of smoke that ran as far back as you could see.

A very good marker for any enemy aircraft that might see it. Dischmann, our tail gunner, no there were a number of fighters way back but coming our way. Our pilot put us in a shallow dive, picked up some real substantial speed as we went out over the sea near Corsica and out of high altitude. We caught our group, fell back into formation and all was well since at the lower altitude the number four engine cleared up and ran fine. This mission was a milk run but I think we did our share of sweating. (The fighters were P-51's)

Mission Number 6, May 18, 1944. Target-Ploesti Romania. Ploesti was always very rough. You were generally in intense and accurate flak for more than 30 minutes. There were approximately six hundred heavy bombers that started out on this mission. We ran into very bad weather and only 206 of the B-17s were able to go in and drop their bombs. Cloud cover prevented us from dropping and we went back toward Italy taking Belgrade as a secondary target but were unable to drop there either. We brought our bombs back with us. We lost two B-17's when they collided in the heavy weather and a third was lost to the Luftwaffe. The Fifteenth Air Force lost 17 heavy bombers that day, 14 right over Ploesti. A bad day with those losses to say the least, especially so when we were so ineffective.

Mission number 7, May 19, 1944. Target-Puerto Margheia, near Venice Italy. This was an oil and gasoline dump. Our bombing was very good and the results were excellent, smoke rose to more than 20,000 feet. Our P-38 escort kept any fighters away from us and the flak over the target was light. We did wind up with problems, however. The B-17 we flew that day was number 232570 and was named "Achtung!" We had mechanical problems with number one engine and it was feathered. We also developed a very strong, raw gasoline smell in the plane and the bombardier cracked open the bomb bay doors to create enough additional circulation to lower the raw gas concentration. NOTE: "Achtung!", 232570, was plagued with this raw gas problem off and on throughout its combat life until August 20, 1944 when she exploded after being hit over Vienna Austria.

Mission number 8, May 22, 1944. Target-Avenzano Italy. This was my first flight on the lead airplane, and this day we flew group lead with Major Schroeder as our pilot. Major Schroeder was our Squadron Commander at that time and was a truly fine leader, an excellent pilot and a very good and fair man. We flew radar ship number 232650. We had no flak, no fighters and because of a heavy layer of cloud below we bombed Avenzano through the cloud by use of radar.

Credit for time only. May 22, 1944. Radar ship 232650. This was a same day flight and we went back into the Avenzano region hoping to bring up the Luftwaffe with our second "fighter sweep" of the day. Poor visibility below and no action above (if the Luftwaffe had taken the bait our hopes were on the P-51's in the area) we came back with our bombs. No flak, no fighters, no mission completed and we received credit for combat time only.

Missions numbered 9 and 10, May 24, 1944. Target - Atzgersdorf Austria, aircraft factory. 232855, Wearie Willie first flight into combat. Squadron lead with Adams pilot. Through the bomb run we ran into quite a lot of flak but had no real big problems. Our fighter escort had a real field day high above us as they mixed it up with the Luftwaffe as we counted several enemy fighters going down. Target coverage good, no enemy fighters got to us, flak heavy but we didn't lose any airplanes, from our group.

NOTE: I am not certain about just what mission the following occurred but I include it at this point because it did occur on one of these missions about this time. On the bomb run the group ahead lost two airplanes, one of which was on fire pulling to our left. Eight parachutes were counted. That B-17 made a 180° turn back over these eight 'chutes where it exploded setting four of the 'chutes on fire. Those four fellows didn't have a second chance.

Credit for combat time only. May 25, 1944. Radar ship 232733. Adams pilot. Our target was to have been Lyons France. Our course was to have taken us just south of Anzio Beachhead but an error in navigation put us over the German front lines at 10,000 feet. Some of the ground levels reported to be 4,500 feet so we were pretty close. The Germans shot us absolutely to pieces. We sustained a direct hit from a 40mm shell in our No. 3 engine nacelle making it mandatory for an immediate shut down. We took some heavy damage in our left wing losing about 200 gallons of fuel from that outside Tokyo tank. I remember my concern as I saw that fuel spray from that outer trailing edge of the wing, wondering to myself just how close that gasoline was getting to those white hot superchargers on engines No 1 and 2. Some damage was in evidence to the left aileron along with a considerable number of flak holes over the whole airplane. Since all this was going on and we had no fighters I sat on my piece of armour plate on the radio room floor. At this point the radar man indicated that his radar was out of service so I moved over and indicated that he should share my armour plate. He moved over and sat beside me and at that instant a large chunk of flak came through the right side of the radio room, went right between our heads and disintegrated against my oxygen regulator on the left side of the radio room. Had his radar not gone out he might have taken that chunk of flak in his side. If he had been sitting back, that chunk would have taken me in the back of my head. We were in big trouble since we were 200 gallons light on the left wing and had the dead engine on the right side and this created some substantial control problems for the pilots. Our bombs were slaved to get rid of that weight and we headed for the emergency field at Anzio only to have two B-17s collide in the center ahead of us so we went out over the bay and began to throw ammunition boxes over board. We got all of that out and still had some problems, but at least we were able to maintain altitude and as fuel burned off both the stability of the plane improved and we were able to gain some altitude. We were the last plane to return to the base. When the landing gear was

lowered it was discovered that the right tire had a long gash across the face of the tire tread with the good possibility that the tire might have been flat. We were given the choice of bailing out over the field or removing the hatch in the radio room and prepare for a possible crash. We chose the latter. Adams made four approaches to the field before he was satisfied, placing this B-17 on the left landing gear and holding down the runway an incredible distance before all speed of any significance was dissipated and the tail and right gear finally contacted the ground. The tire was not flat but we had to take to the dirt and weeds anyway because we had no brake. No further damage and no one was wounded or injured in any way. I firmly believe that Adams, who had been a United Airlines Captain, had the very necessary expertise and ability necessary to save that plane, he was a very capable pilot. This trip was very rough, the 99th bomb group lost 3 airplanes and I believe all the rest of us sustained battle damage of one sort or another.

Mission number 11, May 26, 1944. Target-Behac City Yugoslavia. I believe we were after a docking area. We were squadron lead and our pilot was Adams. Airplane was 232064. (Rex Greathouse was the Crew Chief on this plane and is a good friend today). This was a very short mission. We made two bomb runs on this target dropping our bombs on the second run into the target. No flak, no fighters, a boni fide milk run.

Mission number 12, May 27, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Major Schroeder pilot. 15th Air Force lead on this one. Target-Avignon France, marshalling yards. This was the first mission I had any radio transmitting to do, this being the bombs away message regarding drop time and bomb coverage. One B-17 in our Group had the bomb load hang up over the target. By the time they were able to salvoe we were beginning our turn to the south. This bomb load struck the ancient Roman aqueduct, that crosses the Rohn River, dead center quite by accident. Target coverage good. No flak, no fighters over the target. As we turned easterly we could look to the south and clearly see dust and dirt blowing along the ground at Marseille France some 25,000 feet below. This mission was a milk run but it was a very long haul.

Missions 13 & 14, May 29, 1944. Radar Ship 232733, Major Schroeder Pilot, Group lead on this mission. Target-Wallersdorf Austria, an Aircraft Factory. We were briefed for heavy to intense flak and this to be accurate. Possibility of aggressive enemy fighter opposition was included in the briefing. Flak turned out to be moderate with accuracy not as good as was expected. However, we did receive battle damage and this was quite a close one for me. A radio operator on a B-17 has many extra little duties such as the transfer of fuel, photos when a camera was installed in the camera well in the radio room, he is the medic, he distributes and collects the escape kits, he goes to the briefings and he also has to dispense the chaff (tinfoil to foul up enemy radar) on the bomb run. I had just completed my duties as chaff dispenser, seat in the radio chair, when I strongly felt that things were just not at all right. I was moved t

the point that I stood up, stepping to the center of the radio room facing the rear and taking my 50 calibre machine gun in hand, (there were no enemy fighters reported), still with that strong feeling of something wrong. A chunk of flak opened up a hole about 6 inches long just inside the forward bulkhead and over the left corner of my radio receiver. The trajectory of this piece of flak, about two inches long, crossed my desk striking the back of my chair, hit the face of the transmitter glancing to the door of the rear bulkhead and then striking the bottom of my machine gun with enough force to be noticeable. I still have that piece of flak which is unusual in that it has the German swastika and eagle imprinted upon it along with some numbers. (These numbers were not those in my serial number) There is no question in my mind that the Good Lord had his arms around me on this one. The 15th Air Force lost some planes on this one although I saw no one go down and I have no idea how many were lost. This mission was for me a deeply moving experience.

Missions numbered 15 and 16, June 2, 1944. Col. Ford Lauer, pilot. Brig. Gen. Laurence flew co-pilot and we led the 5th Wing on this trip, the first of an operation called F.R.A.N.T.I.C Target-Debreczen Hungary. Destination, Poltava Russia, our first shuttle run into Russia. This flight was composed of 140 B-17s, the complete 5th Wing of the 15th Air Force. We hit the Debreczen marshalling yards with excellent results. The force was so great the entire red tile roof of the station was seen to rise a significant height before it disintegrated. We did have some flak over the target heard a number of bursts with the characteristic rattle of the shrapnel as it either glanced off or went through wings and fuselage. A B-17 from the 97th Bomb Group exploded just off target for unknown reasons. We flew on to Poltava which is located in the Ukraine approximately 65 miles southeast of Kiev Russia. A most interesting operation to say the least.

NOTE: Our stay in Russia was an experience all its own. We were appalled by the incredible amount of damage done to Poltava and the plight of the citizens during the German occupation was terrible. The city itself was pretty much destroyed, yet the citizens of Poltava had carefully cleaned up and repaired the town square which was a beautiful park. There were flowers blooming and the grass was well kept. On other thing that impressed us was the fact that the children were clean. We could not help but notice the single minded track the Russians were on and that they really had nothing to say about where they were going. We saw women using pinch bars to move railroad cars to a location where more women were off-loading steel mat runway sections, terribly hard physical work. I met a Russian pilot who was a woman and she was as rough as any man. Certainly not the way to go, our way is best.

Mission number 17, June 6, 1944. Radar ship 232733. Pilot Col. Lauer. Target-Galeti Romania, airfield. This mission was pulled from Russia and was the second in the operation called FRANTIC. Our bomb load was of frags and, as always, the dread of that "hot" load. We got

excellent coverage of this air field catching a number of German airplanes on the ground. (I think they were bombers) At bombs away one bomb cluster on the outer bomb rack on the lower left side of the bomb bay hung up. I watched helplessly as the clusters above fell on top of this hang up, clusters breaking apart and falling from the bomb bay helter skelter, until the bombardier heard my call that we had the problem. Then he salvoed and cleared the situation up. When we returned to Poltava we learned of the news that the Normandy invasion had begun that morning bringing with it the long awaited second front and the beginning of the end for Hitler and Germany in this war.

Missions numbered 18 and 19, Radar ship 232733. Col. Lauer pilot, Gen. Laurence, co-pilot. Air Force lead again and the final mission in the operation known as FRANTIC. Target-Facsani Romania. We hit this target with good results running into some flak over the target. I believe the plane from the 97th Bomb Group that became a straggler was hit by flak. Then we saw enemy fighters shoot him down. It was some contrast to return to hot, dusty southern Italy from the very different cool green of Russia. This mission was flown on June 11, 1944.

Missions 20 and 21, June 13, 1944. Target-Oberpfaffenhofen Germany at the south edge of Munich. This was an air field. Ship 232028, Capt. Karnes pilot, Squadron lead on this one. This mission was expected to be very rough. Briefing indicated intense and accurate flak with the possibility of more than 200 enemy fighters in the area that would be aggressive. I recall the dread, the awesome foreboding I felt on this one before takeoff. I briefed the gunners and a stray photographer that was to go along. It was rough enough for the photographer to cancel. He put the camera in the camera well and left one in the waist door and told us to get him some pictures over the target. I believe what really bothered us was that a B-24 group had gone in on this target just a few days before and had lost more than half of their airplanes. The flak over the target was intense and it was accurate. Most of us suffered battle damage. Even though we heard that the fighters were around, none ever

attacked our formation. We took a hit by a piece of flak that punctured one of the oxygen tanks and the system began exhausting itself. I was able to save four walk around bottles and others in the crew did the same before we had no pressure to pull from. Our engineer came through and collected those bottles so that the pilots could have it for their use since it made sense that they should be the ones with a clear head. We went off the remaining supply at around 22,000 feet and flew across the Austrian Alps before we could get down to more dense air. I can recall the terrible headache I got from the lack of oxygen. The 15th lost six heavy bombers on this one and this could be classified as a rough one.

Missions 22 and 23, June 23, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Capt. Chamberlain pilot. Squadron lead. Target-Ploesti. We saw plenty of action on this trip to Ploesti. We had strong resistance from enemy fighters with our P-38 escort doing a very good job keeping them away

from us for the most part. However we received a frontal attack on us from one of Hermann Goerings Yellow Noseders, (a part of Hermann Goerings flying circus). He came in from a slightly high attitude. As he neared us with that tremendous closing speed, his speed plus ours, I heard the top turret fire several bursts and then saw tracers streaking close over the top of our plane, too close for comfort, and then the FW 190 streaked over equally close. He was trailing heavy black smoke, entered a spiral to the right and burst into flames. The pilot did not get out, just one less to go up against. T/Sgt. DeLay is the gunner who shot him down. The flak again was just unreal. We were in this flak alley for more than thirty minutes, all of us received battle damage. We were a force of 139 B-17s and we lost six of them. A very rough mission.

Mission number 24, June 27, 1944. Ship 232068 (Heaven Can Wait) Janisch pilot, Rickerson co-pilot. Up until this time I had been an extra radio operator flying where ever and when ever I was needed from the beginning of my combat tour. I was placed on this crew as their radio operator and I must say that this was a very good crew that worked very well together. Our target was Bucharest Romania but it turned out finally to be Brod Yugoslavia marshalling yards. This primary target was reached but the clouds below were such that the target was not clearly defined. We made three bomb runs on Bucharest without bombing and then went on back to Brod. We did hit the target well but, as sometimes happened, some of our bombs strung out into the city. A tail gunner who lived in the same tent as I, began writing his folks just as soon as we got back. After several beginnings he finally said, "Listen to this, Dear Mom and Pop, We bombed hell-out of your home town today." This fellows name was Merko Krajcar and his folks had been citizens of that place. Krajcar was a good friend. This mission was not rough, flak was light, but we still sweat out four complete bomb runs and we all knew how un-nerving these bomb runs-could be. I don't believe we lost any airplanes on this mission.

Mission number 25, June 30, 1944. Target-Budapest Hungary. Ship 232855, (Wearie Willie) Pilot Janisch. Our scheduled mission was for Breslau Germany which was deep into German territory, north of Checkloslovakia and next to the German/Polish border. We were deep into Austria when we ran into a very tall frontal system. The 99th Bomb Group was Air Force lead on this one and we were really getting that altitude with it looking that we might indeed, make it over this frontal system. The rest of the 15th Air Force was circling, gaining altitude somewhat below us. They were also under fighter attack. The rest of the Air Force decided to call off going to Breslau and headed back to Italy, taking targets of opportunity along the way. At this point we were still headed for Breslau, almost due north and the the rest of the whole Air Force was now headed south. You simply don't turn twenty-eight B-17s around on a dime and by the time we did get headed back south the rest of the 15th Air Force was out of sight. We were quite high, 28,000 feet as I remember. We

had a German interpreter on board our plane and he was simply doing his job when he announced that there were approximately 100 fighters being vectored to our group by radar. This sort of information had a way of making us real nervous. 100 enemy fighters against 28, un-escorted B-17s meant that if this battle took place there would probably be a whole lot less of us around in a short while. We picked Budepest Hungary as our alternate, made our bomb run, dropped our bombs and missed the target by nearly five miles. Just lousy. The fighters were never able to get to us although they had hit some of the rest of the 15th Air Force quite hard. I picked up an S O S and followed his progress until he finally gave his "Mayday" call which meant they had to bail out. Another incredible frustrating day with all the ramifications that go with it. The S.O.S. followed by the "Mayday" call was just another frustrating incident. I thought this to be somewhat rough even though we did not get hit.

Mission number 26, July 4, 1944. Ship 232068, pilot Janisch. Target-Brasov Romania. Flak over the target was heavy and accurate. No fighters were encountered. We lost Lt. Elliott and his crew, watched them bail out after they had thrown every thing they could overboard trying to stay up. We regarded this as a very bad day and another terrible loss. So many times I found myself deeply depressed when I counted the awesome losses of our crews, our friends. Those who were then gone. This mission was rough.

Mission number 27, July 6, 1944. Ship 232855. Major Wiper pilot, Group lead. Our target was Bergamo Steel Works in Northern Italy. We had a scare when our pilot figured we didn't have enough fuel to make it back to our base. We were still in a maximum climb on the way into the target and Major Wiper had me start transfer of fuel from the Tokyo tanks at that time. When we attained target altitude it was learned that this plane registered low in a climb and we did have plenty of fuel. Flak over the target was light and though enemy fighters were in the area they did not attack our formation. This was not a rough mission but the fuel scare was enough to take any pleasure that might have been. There were other features on this plane that seemed undesirable in addition to the fuel indicators and I'm not real sure what they were other than that it seemed to take more to get off the ground than you'd ordinarily expect.

Missions 28 and 29, July 7, 1944. Ship 232068, pilot Janisch. Target-Bleckhammer Germany. synthetic oil refinery there was our target, not too far from Breslau. This turned out to a very rough mission, the worst I'd experienced up until that time. We were briefed for heavy to intense flak over the target with some fighters in the area. As we crossed Austria we were attacked by a large force of ME 210's that stood just out of our 50 calibre range launching rockets into our formations. The 463 Bomb Group close by to our right took the heaviest and most accurate part of the attacks. As before, these rockets had that strange

erratic trajectory indicating something of instability but they were very effective. After the initial attack, two B-17s fell from formation out of the 463rd Bomb Group with a third B-17 out of that Group salvaging their bombs. One of the two planes that fell from formation went quickly into a steep spiral and no one got out. The other, on fire, crossed behind us with all hands bailing out. One of the ME 210's went in on these men hanging helplessly in their parachutes and strafed them repeatedly. We were, of course, completely unable to give them any kind of help. This is where I learned to hate the Nazis and all they stood for with all my heart, I cannot forget this even to this day. The enemy continued to press us enough to make us believe our position was pretty hot until our escort showed up and drove them off. Our P-51's did shoot some of them down, one of which was an ME 210. We went on to the target where the flak was heavy and accurate, dropped our bombs with good results with smoke from that synthetic oil refinery rising to over 25,000 feet. After crossing the target another B-17 from the 463rd Bomb Group fell out of formation with her crew bailing out before it went on down. This mission convinced me that the Germans were just as low as the Japs with their ever present atrocities, rotten people, all of them. I don't know what our total losses were that day, I do know that there were others. This was a rough mission.

Missions numbered 33 and 34, July 21, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Captain Karnes pilot, flying Squadron lead. Target - Brux Checkloslavokia. We were briefed for intense and accurate flak with the possibility of 250 enemy fighters in the area and they would be considered aggressive. Our trek into the target was pretty uneventful with our escort keeping any enemy planes from our formation. We eventually turned on the Initial Point and headed in to the target with a rather long bomb run. Our bomb bays were open, our Bombardier was calling for level, when we suddenly had a Group of B-24's in a steep left turn flying through our formation. We were low Squadron and all this was going on above us. The other three squadrons and all the B-24's salvoed their bombs as they scattered all over the sky to avoid any collisions. There were no collisions but we all had to reform the group and did not complete the bomb run. Now the fact that we were low squadron and avoided the mixup doesn't mean that pulse rates and blood pressures were not raised considerably. We did have two B-17's from our squadron turn back for mechanical reasons, so that left us with five planes in our Squadron. Captain Karnes was never one to go back home with a load of bombs hanging in the bomb bay and since we still had our bombs they began to look for a suitable target of opportunity. Captain Karnes made the selection of a fair sized town with a marshalling yards with a train stopped in it. As we pulled from the formation the second element of two planes elected to stay with the Group. We began our bomb run with three airplanes and as we neared the target selection they began to put up some very accurate flak. We dropped our bombs and made an abrupt turn to the left to get out of the flak. As we pulled away our bombardier exclaimed, "my gosh, look at that!" Looking down past the trailing edge of the wing I could see an ammo train blowing up like dominoes. The results were absolutely devastating with an incredible

amount of damage being done. Without that ammunition train, damage from us would not have been great. This mission had more in store for us when we learned that we were unable to transfer fuel from one of the Tokyo tanks. We were very low on usable fuel when we got back to Foggia and pulled from formation to make something of an emergency approach. We were long final when a high ranking British officer cut in ahead of us forcing us to go around. We did a little sweating while we went on around but came in fine. This was one time when it seemed real good to be safely back on the ground.

NOTE: I feel it interesting to note that a former B-24 pilot whose name is Roy Buckmeier was piloting one of those B-24s that flew through our formation on this mission. He lives right here in Lander, Wyoming.

Mission number 35, July 22, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Captain Karnes pilot, Squadron lead. Target - Ploesti. At these Ploesti briefings you always sat there with all the foreboding you could ever feel. The 99th Bomb Group did not lose any planes on this mission. However, if each mission you flew was as rough as this one was with the same loss ratio applied, you could never expect to finish your combat tour. You'd simply fly until you got shot down. The flak was, as it always was, very intense and very accurate, like a thunder cloud. If you never experienced thirty minutes of intense and accurate flak you should know that it seems like an eternity. There were a few enemy fighters in the area but our escort kept them from our formation. We received a number of holes and heard a whole of a lot of flak bursts, we were sweating all the way. Bomb coverage was again good and smoke again rose to more than 26,000 feet. As we turned left off the target and bomb run I looked back at the target area where a group of B-24s was crossing. I saw two B-24s go down, one simply went out and down from the formation, the other, on fire, arc'd across the sky an incredible ball of flame trailing heavy, black smoke. This plane exploded leaving a burning wing with the rest of the B-24 a spinning ball of flame which exploded a second time leaving a dirty smudge with smoking wreckage falling from it. That crew never had a chance. The 15th Air Force put 607 heavy bombers over Ploesti that day and we lost 24 of them, an incredible loss. A very rough mission.

Mission number 36, July 24, 1944. Ship 232855 (Wearie Willie) Pilot Boyd, Squadron lead. Target-Turin Italy, an industrial tank works. Not too much flak but we did hear a few bursts. There were no fighters seen and the flight was pretty much without any problems. This was a milk run.

NOTE: Along in here someplace on one of our returns from a combat mission we lost a B-17 from another Squadron through a kind of a fluke. A B-17 in a trailing position picked up a persistent updraft the both accelerated him forward and upward. The props cut the tail section off the B-17 above and this plane went in with all hands. The other plane made it back to the base OK.

Missions numbered 37 & 38. July 25, 1944. Radar Ship 733. Captain Karnes pilot. Squadron lead. Target was Linz, Austria where we bombed the Hermann Goering Tank Works. This was probably the roughest mission I flew although, on other occasions there were incidents where we were individually closer to getting shot down, wounded or killed. We did not receive any great amount of damage on our plane on this particular mission. However, the fighter attacks began early on with a B-24 Group flying below and behind us taking these initial attacks with devastating results, they were hit heavily. As more and more enemy fighters showed up, more and more of us became involved and we shortly had a full blown aerial battle taking place, the whole war seemed to engulf us. On the bomb run the flak became intense and very accurate. This, too, began to take its toll in battle damage and further loss of airplanes as we progressed into the target. In one instance, a wing was blown off a B-17, no one got out. Several others exploded. Any place you looked in the sky you could see a trail of smoke and a ball of flame, other bombers simply going down, and the parachutes. There were parachutes every where. At bombs away we flew through the blast and wreckage of a B-17 that exploded in front of us, a terrifying experience. We counted 34 heavy bombers going down including the one that exploded in front of us. We did have some battle damage but it was not serious. This was a very rough, rough mission.

NOTE: July 27, 1944 our crew and I flew to Cairo Egypt for a week of R & R. This was a very good interlude in our combat tour. I gained a great deal from it, but, this is another story and not pertinent to this record.

Missions 39 and 40, August 3, 1944. Plane 855, Janisch pilot. Our target was to be Fredrickshaven Germany where we were to bomb a jet engine factory. We didn't have any idea what a jet engine was at that time. The target was so well camouflaged that we could not see it well enough to drop our bombs. The secondary target was the marshalling yards at nearby Imstadt Germany and we hit that with good results. We saw Lake Constantine which lies between Switzerland and Germany. We encountered very little flak and, if there were any fighters, they did not attack our formation. Even though we were deep into enemy territory this would qualify as a milk run.

NOTE: While we were in Cairo another crew took our airplane, 232068, (Heaven Can Wait) and were shot down with no survivors.

Mission number 41, August 6, 1944. Ship 855, Rickerson pilot. Harold Rickerson had been our co-pilot. Target-LesValence France marshalling yards. This mission was a very long haul with no flak, no fighters and we got a good coverage on the target. A milk run.

Missions numbered 42 and 43, August 7, 1944. Ship 055, Janisch pilot. Target-Bleckhammer Germany. I was deeply concerned about this mission from the dire predictions of the briefing but probably more so because of the experience we had on this same target July 7, 1944. The trip in to the target was somewhat uneventful but flak over the target was intense and

accurate as briefing had indicated. When we were over the target and under the intense anti-aircraft fire I again had some very strong motivations that things were not right and something critical might be at hand. We took a sizable piece of flak through bomb bay but the trajectory of this chunk of flak was deflected when it struck the bomb hoist which was hanging on the bomb bay side of the bulkhead just in front of where I was standing. There were quite a number of fighters in the area but our escort was again very affective and none attacked our formation. Although most of us sustained battle damage of one sort or another, no planes were lost from the 99th Bomb Group. There were some planes shot down but I have no idea how many. Our pilot, Janisch, finished his 50 missions on this one. To quote him when we got back to Foggia, he finished "on a good old hell fire and brimstone, hammer and tongs, double." I think this about sums up what kind of mission this was.

Mission number 44, August 9, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Major Wiper pilot. Group lead on this day. Target-Gyor Hungary. Briefing indicated we might have some fighter opposition and that flak would be moderate. The flak over the target was moderate and accurate. The only fighters we saw were our own P-38s and P-51s. Many of us received battle damage from the accurate flak, (it can always be assumed that when you can hear the bursts it is probably somewhat accurate). One of our planes took an 88 shell through the number 1 engine nacelle. The 88 simply didn't explode, if it had, that plane would have surely gone down. That shell did a substantial amount of damage anyway. We took some flak damage and as a result of it, as I remember, our engineer had to crank down the left landing gear by hand. We were not at all sure that it was down and locked because the pilot had no indication that it was locked into position. (It was locked OK) We did sweat out that landing. This one was kind of rough.

Mission number 45, August 10, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Pilot Erdosy, Group lead. Target-Ploesti. At briefing, as always, that awesome foreboding feeling because this has been such a rough target. The flak again, at briefing, very intense, very accurate. They had certainly had enough practice. The trip into Ploesti was uneventful except that we were to fly higher than I'd ever flown on any mission. We went over at 28,500 feet. It seemed to be difficult to believe but the temperature at that altitude on the 10th of August was 60° below Zero. This very low temperature was to present some problems as we went through the complete bomb run. Although the flak was intense as always, it was somewhat less accurate at that altitude. When we were really into the bomb run and the flak was beginning to get to us, our tail gunner discovered that his parachute had ring fasteners and so, also, did his parachute harness. He reasoned that under these circumstances this would probably be the day we'd get shot down and there he would be unable to fasten his parachute to the harness he was wearing. He had no walk around bottle but headed for the waist positions to get a 'chute with snaps. He made it to the tail wheel and lost consciousness. The right

waist gunner grabbed a walk around bottle and rescued the tail gunner only to pass out before he could get back to his position. The left waist gunner rescued him only to also pass out, but this time they had it together and all was in order again. While all this went on we were under heavy flak. Then, after the bombs were dropped the bomb bay doors did not close when the bombardier said they were to close. I reported negative on the doors closing. The engineer then had to try to crank them closed. He was on a walk around bottle trying to get that accomplished as he leaned through the front bulkhead of the bomb bay. He ran out of oxygen and I grabbed two walk around bottles from the radio room, one was empty (they sometimes leaked) taking with me the full one. The catwalk across the bomb bay is about one foot wide and six or seven feet long to the center section of the bomb bay. I walked across that, off oxygen myself, with the whole 28,500 feet through those open bomb bay doors very much in evidence, and fixed the engineer up. As I returned through the radio room door back across that open chasm I got hung up and was losing consciousness when the radar navigator rescued me. The bomb bay doors would not close because of the intense cold. When we got to a lower altitude they did finally close. We saw no enemy fighters on this mission but out of the 414 heavy bombers that went over the target we still lost 16 of them. Again, that awesome loss factor even without fighter opposition. Rough again.

Mission number 46, August 12, 1944. Plane 855, Rickerson pilot. Target-Savona Italy, gun position. No flak, no fighters, nothing unusual at all. A complete milk run.

Mission number 47, August 13, 1944, Plane ? , Rickerson pilot. We flew an old B-17F on this one because our plane did not check out right and this old plane was on standby. This was where I had the hatch out and the waist gunners stood by their guns looking through open gun ports. Target-Genoa Italy, gun position. We were briefed for no flak and no fighters. When we had dropped our bombs and I was preparing my bombs away message we got hit with some light but quite accurate flak. We heard some bursts with the usual rattle of the shrapnel sounding like you had thrown a hand full of ball bearings on a tin roof as it struck the wings and fuselage and I have to say that it startled me. A few holes, no serious battle damage, not too bad as missions go.

Mission number 48, August 14, 1944. Plane 232570 (Achtung). Target-Toulon France, gun position, Rickerson pilot. We had flak over the target but they just couldn't get it to us. No fighters and this was indeed a milk run although we had some of Achtung's raw gas problem, but not bad.

NOTE: Six days later this same plane, 232570 (Achtung) exploded on a mission over Vienna Austria.

Mission number 49, August 15, 1944. Radar ship 232733, Erdosy pilot. Squadron lead. Target Beach Head Number 261, just south of St. Tropez France. Our "H" hour was at midnight. Our

breakfast was of cold powdered eggs, cold flat pancakes and cold watery syrup. Take that with the type of coffee we had and you have an idea how great the chow was. Our take-off time was at 03:00 and the night was pitch black. Shortly after take-off we saw a plane explode when it crashed. Then just seconds later a second plane crashed and exploded. A few minutes later a third plane appeared as a ball of flame bouncing along the ground when it, also, exploded. Two B-17s collided and they both exploded when they hit the ground. A third B-17 was on fire and he salvoed his bombs but did make it safely back to his base even though he traced a spectacular trail of fire across the night sky. We learned later that the first three bombers were B-24s that had crashed on take-off. We couldn't help but

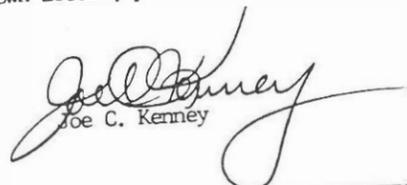
wonder about the possibility of sabotage, frightening to say the least. We flew to an area north of Corsica where we entered a great circle of bombers from both the 12th and 15th Air Forces formed to split off this great circle at the appropriate time for each Bomb Group assigned target. A very spectacular sight. We had a low cloud layer below and could not visually see what was going on below the cloud layer. Our radar man showed me, on the radar scope, very clearly how all the landing craft were heading into shore. Our flight altitude was only 13,000 feet, the lowest mission I was to fly and the only one where we didn't use oxygen. As we went in on our bomb run and were getting closer to shore the cloud layer thinned out and I could see clearly through the camera well all those landing craft getting in closer to the beaches. We dropped our bombs, which were 100 pounders, on Beach Head #261 and the sole purpose was to blow fox holes for the incoming troops as they hit the beach head. This was a most interesting mission, I'm very happy that I could take part in this occurrence.

Mission Number 50, August 17, 1944. Plane 232855 (Wearie Willie). Harold Rickerson pilot. He was a good friend, a good pilot and a good guy. When we went into briefing I saw that our target was to be Weiner Neustadt Austria. While I sat there contemplating the prospects of finishing up on a rough one, a Captain from Headquarters came in, erased Weiner Neustadt, then chalked in Nis Yugoslavia. What a relief! The only problem I could see then was that hot load of fragmentation bombs. I was not overjoyed with this type of bomb load anyway and we had some interesting possibilities when the Bombardier discovered the armourers had failed to safty wire this load, the problem being when the bomb bay doors opened those little arming propellers could turn enough to arm them. As it turned out we had no flak, no fighters and even though I saw some of those little propellers turn, our Bombardier toggled that bomb load out and it went without a hitch. This was a milk run for sure for my last mission. When we landed I had some very mixed feelings as I suppose we all did when this 50 mission tour was finally finished. First, the great relief that no longer would I have to face those odds any more, then great happiness that it was over. Next, and quite stragely, the very

real regret that, because you would not be flying any more combat, you were somehow letting down, first your buddies and crew, and then your country, in getting this rotten war over with.

NOTE: I have attempted to get all this down as nearly and clearly as I could from my diary. My diary was unclear on some of the things that happened and I placed these instances as closely as my memory would permit. But happen they did. After talking with others at these meetings we have been attending I find that I probably had a very easy time in comparison with what some of the rest of our people went through.

These views are as I saw them and from my viewpoint (which was mostly up from the radio room). I note that my words fall far short of my own actual, personal feelings.


Joe C. Kerney

Thanks, Joe.

We have given up all hope of learning who is the author of this fine fragment, but we think that it comes from David Conner of Oregon.

We thank the unknown author. David has given us permission to print his privately printed story, which we will do as soon as we locate the complete story in our files. Anyhow, this was just too good to conceal any longer.

continued from p. 50

They took us up the hill a ways to where our airplane had crashed very close to a small village. As a matter of fact, if the airplane had gone just another 100 yards, it would have wiped out most of the houses. They were small crude huts with thatched roofs, but they were home and castle to some of the men who had captured us. We were grateful indeed that none of the villagers had been killed or hurt in the crash. It would have been more than difficult to explain our innocence to the men around us.

The airplane had broken up some in the crash, and there were bits of wreckage scattered about, but the major components, the wings and fuselage, had remained intact. It had burned almost completely. The fire had been hot enough to burn all the aluminum sheet metal and even some of the aluminum castings.

Our captors poked around the wreckage for a while, mostly out of curiosity I suppose, because there seemed to be nothing left of any value, and the villagers had already scavenged anything that had been thrown clear of the fire.

Six of them marched us out into the mountains. As we went along our way across the hills, which were barren and very poor grazing even for sheep or goats, we would occasionally see other people at a distance. We were surprised to see our guards kneel down and shoot at anyone they saw. I'm sure they had no way of knowing if they were shooting at friends or enemies. It just seemed to be a

THE LAST MISSION

Told by S/Sgt Norris W. King

It was on the evening of September 30, 1943 that we knew a long mission was in store for us since only the planes with Tokio tanks were scheduled to fly. We talked it over that evening and wondered where the target was to be.

We were awakened at 5:45 the next morning and after breakfast went to the briefing tent where we were told that our target was a Messerschmitt factory in Augsburg, Germany. The briefing officer told us that we would meet heavy fighter opposition as well as heavy flak. He wished us good luck and we headed for the line to get our guns in tip-top shape.

At 8:15, we were taking off the dusty runway and were soon looking down on Africa for the last time. As we were flying over Leghorn, Italy, we were fired on by both ground batteries and fighters, but neither caused any damage.

We were flying over high, snow-covered mountains that made me cold even to look at. We were flying at about 20,000 feet and had been breathing oxygen for about three hours. Since we were pretty deep into enemy territory, I was kept busy scanning the skies. Once in a while, when there was a break in the clouds, I could see the peaks and thought what a lovely end it would be to go down in them.

At about 12:10, fighters started to attack, seemingly out of nowhere. I never had on my parachute, and when I think back now, I wonder why that I started to snap it on. It was a heck of a job because I had to keep one hand on my gun and try to snap it on with the other. After much sweating, I got it into place.

I had never seen a German Me 109 so close before; any enemy plane. They came in too close at times to have time to track them; close enough to make out the Swastika on the tail. There were two ships behind us that kept me busy. I was firing at them over and under the horizontal stabilizer; it was a wonder that I never put holes in my own ship. One of the Messerschmitts went in a dive with smoke streaming behind. I don't know whether I got him or not because there were so many firing at him. I hope that I did.

My interphone was out and had been since the early part of the mission. I can imagine what was being said though--a lot of words that I can't put in this book.

Most of the attacks were from the nose, but I couldn't tell if the nose guns were firing. It wasn't hard to tell that Charlie in the ball turret was being kept busy. I often gave glances to see if everything was OK. Each time I did, his turret was spinning and his guns were firing long blasts.

Pratt had the same chute trouble that I did and didn't get his on until after I did. It must have been a premonition for us to put them on in the middle of a battle when we were busy enough with fighters. It wasn't two minutes after Pratt had finished putting his chute on when the waist became red with tracers. They couldn't have missed Pratt and I [sic] more than a few inches. A second later, the plane gave a tremendous jerk and I was floating on the ceiling with my feet dangling toward the floor. I was then thrown to the floor near, or on top of, the ball turret. Everything in the ship seemed to fall on top of me and I thought it was all over. I must have been knocked out because all at once it became quiet. I thought I was dead.

It seemed hours later when I realized that the plane was floating down, turning as it went. The wind made a terrible sound as it went through the openings. I pulled myself to my feet and staggered a few feet to an opening that I saw above me. I reached for it and started pulling with my arms and

pushing with my feet. Suddenly, the ammunition box that my feet were on gave way and I crashed to the opposite side of the ship. There I saw another opening not more than a foot from where I fell and I knew it was the other waist window.

I paused for a second and think I looked at the ball turret. I know that I thought about Charlie. I knew there was nothing that I could do for him, so I jerked off my oxygen mask, got a firm grip on the red handle, and fell.

I knew that I had to wait before jerking the chute open, and after a few seconds, that seemed like hours, jerked the handle. The chute opened with a crack that seemed to break every bone in my body. I relaxed every muscle because it seemed impossible that I was still alive.

I hung in the chute for no more than a couple of minutes when the branches of a tree flew past my face. I had settled in the top of the highest tree in the forest. Even after that, I continued to hang without any effort of having life.

When I recovered my presence of mind, I took off my throat mike, gloves, and started to unhook the empty chute pack from the harness. I then realized that I had to swing myself to the trunk of the tree because I was at the end of small branches. I grabbed a limb and put one foot on a branch that broke and left me hanging with one hand. It took all of my strength to pull myself to the trunk. When I reached the trunk, I relaxed, took off the chute and started the descent that amounted to falling from one branch to the next. I slid down the long trunk and hit the ground with a terrific wallop. I sat at the bottom, pulled out my escape kit, and started looking at the maps. I realized then that this would do me no good because I hadn't the faintest idea where I was. I tried to get up so I could climb to the other side of the hill and get away from the chute, but all attempts were unsuccessful since I couldn't even stand up without falling down. My head was in a whirl and I thought that if I could dip it into water it would clear up. I lit a cigarette and just sat waiting to be captured. I heard firing and thought it was one of the others being chased by the Germans. I gave up then; I knew I couldn't get away.

Parts of the plane were burning on either side of me; one part about 50 feet from me, the other 25. I thought of going to see if I could find anyone to save, but my head was still in too much of a whirl to try. It must have been the fires that sent a soldier and another man in my direction. They didn't see me until they were almost on top of me. I held up my arms to show them that I wasn't armed, and they came to me. The first thing I asked was if they saw any other chutes, but couldn't make them understand. They were very friendly; I couldn't understand it. Finally, by pointing to my chute and making all kinds of motions, I made them understand about the other members of my crew. Once said, or made me understand, three and the other two.

I gave them a cigarette and we started down the mountain. It was a very steep hill and I fell down a few times, although they were helping me. One gave a yodel and by the time we reached the bottom, there were several awaiting us. Among them were two or three officers and a few soldiers. One of the officers that spoke English told me that I was in Switzerland. I almost fell over with surprise; it seemed too good to be true.

I was taken to a car where there was a major and another high-ranking officer. They took me to the Villa Flora where I was to spend the next twenty days.

They first took me to the operating room where they felt all over for broken bones and asked question after question. Everything was still in such a whirl and my ears ringing so loud that I couldn't understand what was being said unless it was said slow and loud. They took me to a room, put me to bed, and I just lay there resting and wondering.

The only question on my mind was about the rest of the crew. This was answered about an hour later when a Swiss officer told me there were two more in another village. He didn't know their names. He went away and came back [in] about two hours with the names Carroll and Pratt. It was the best news that I have ever heard that even two more came out alive. I asked when I would get to see them and was satisfied in the belief that it wouldn't be until I was sent to the internment camp.

Later, about 6:00 that evening, two attendants came in and started to work setting up two beds. I asked the nurse, Sr. Josy, what they were for. She said that they were moving two Americans in with me. My hopes rose; I thought it might be Carroll and Pratt.

I was never so happy or felt more like crying when my two buddies walked in. They were the most wonderful sights in the world. Pratt had a big patch on his nose and Joe two patches on his face.

It was a happy reunion that I'm not likely to forget in a long time. I doubt that I ever will. We were all too excited to sleep until an over-dose of sleeping pills took effect.

The next day, an officer came to tell us that he had just seen our seven comrades. They were all dead.

The following article appeared in a Swiss newspaper shortly after Christmas, 1943. Sr. Josy sent Sgt Pratt the original from the paper and this is a translation of it.

THE FLYERS' GRAVES

The gardener had received orders to decorate the graves of the fourteen flyers shot down at Ragaz, with green fur branches and twigs.

I found my way to this place of peace on Christmas morning, and noticed at once that all was in order. Something else suddenly caught my eye. In front of the two rows of seven crosses, unknown hands had erected a miniature monument. On a meter-high base covered with green branches, was suspended an artfully constructed model of a four-engined bomber. On the wing, there were fourteen half-burned candles, which had been lighted on Christmas Eve. Under the airplane hung two, hand-made, parachutes, in remembrance of those who had been saved by parachute.

The whole thing was so thoughtfully and cleverly arranged I should have been thoroughly pleased, if it were not for remembering that dreadful day that cost fourteen young lives, that had fallen in our midst--daily hundreds of them go down, and every day large districts have to be cleared of corpses.

Thousands and thousands kill each other or killed by air attacks, shot down as partisans or hostages. A mad murdering for the last five years, and as yet, no end in sight. That is progress of mankind--as far a civilization has brought us. Never-the-less, a single individual is good. Unknown and unmentioned hands have been working for days and days to offer Christmas Greetings to those victims swept by fate of war away from home to a far off country.



BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

(As released by U. S. Army Air Forces)

From the beginning of the Allied assault in North Africa to the final end of the war in Europe, the 15th Air Force experimented with and proved the value of strategic and tactical bombing as used against Germany and Japan. From the lessons learned in the Mediterranean campaigns and landings at Tunisia, Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio, other air force commanders were able to plan the tremendous undertaking of invading Normandy and still others successfully proceeded with island-hopping in the Pacific.

Steps that led to victory started August 20, 1942, when the 12th AAF, one parent of the subsequently developed 15th AAF, was activated at Bolling Field, Washington, D. C. At the same time plans were being discussed in England for the invasion of North Africa. Most of the units of the new 12th were acquired from the barely-tested Eighth Air Force in England, although an air support command for General George Patton's armored divisions was sent directly from the states.

Despite the "book knowledge" that commanders had gained from the successes of combined air and ground operations as accomplished by German forces, the invasion of North Africa in November, 1942, was the first opportunity to study strategic and tactical support in conjunction with an actual allied operation. Mistakes were made, but the overall picture presented the commanders with overwhelming arguments for active air support of all ground operations.

As the war progressed, various generals and other commanders directed the North African Air Force, gaining information which was later employed in the final phases of the war.

Following Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle, who originally commanded the airmen in North Africa, came Gen. Carl Spaatz; present commander of the Army Air Forces, whose subsequent exploits with strategic bombing in Europe are now history. Finally late in 1943, Lt. Gen. John K. Cannon took over the command of the 12th AAF, which was then in the process of being split up into the 12th (tactical) and 15th (strategic) forces.

Under the leadership of General Cannon, the 12th fought its way through Sicily and Italy, paving the path for the invading Allied armies. During these campaigns, the first stronghold to surrender without actual invasion was recorded after the successful air raids on the island of Pantelleria off the coast of Tunisia on the road to Sicily. Each amphibious landing taught the commanders new lessons, which were culminated in the Mediterranean theater by the final rout of German armies during the drive toward Rome.

Operation "Strangle," in which the 12th and 15th AAF combined their tactical and strategic efforts in the Rome phase of the Italian war, provided many proofs of the invaluable aid the air forces were able to supply advancing armies by destroying supplies and communication routes behind enemy lines. As the Italian campaign continued north, allied aircraft from both of the air forces continued to thwart German plans with operational raids in the Po Valley and the Brenner Pass. Eventually, communication between Germany and the German armies in Italy was almost non-existent.

In the 18 months of its operation (Nov. 1, 1943 to May 8, 1945) the 15th Air Force provided tremendous aid toward the complete and overwhelming defeat of the enemy by devastation of German industries, oil production, and communications in Southern Europe.

Led by Gen. Nathan F. Twining, who was appointed its commanding general when the heavy bombers were separated from the 12th AAF, the 15th Air Force destroyed all gasoline production within its range in Southern Europe, comprising approximately 50 per cent of all Axis fuel on the continent. Commencing with the raids on Ploesti, oil is marked in the memory of 15th AAF crewmen by great names: Vienna, Brux, Blechhomer and Ruhland—where the enemy was determined in his resistance, using aircraft, before the decline of the Luftwaffe, smoke screens and always some of the heaviest known concentrations of flak.

In helping to dry up German fuel through attacks on oil refineries, the 15th takes great pride. As a result of its operations, the vaunted 20th Century Wehrmacht was run-

ning, prior to V-E Day, on 18th Century transport. The first attack in the coordinated campaign to eliminate German gasoline supplies began with a mission by the 15th against rail yards at Ploesti on April 5, 1944. The damage done then and subsequent attacks in the great refinery town convinced AAF planners that the 15th's contention that heavy bombardment could profitably be used against oil installations was sound. This commodity then received top priority for the strategic Allied bombers striking at Germany.

As a result of its instrument bombing when visual conditions were impossible on the oil targets throughout the area under its range in December of 1944, Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, now deputy commander of the Army Air Forces, acclaimed the 15th as the "leading exponent in the world today of blind bombing."

But before the attacks against oil could be brought to their final conclusion, the first objective of the strategic air forces was to assure complete air superiority so that the task of demolishing the enemy's war economy might be accomplished without prohibitive loss. When "Operation Pointblank" was conceived in 1944, about 50 per cent of the greatly increased single-engine aircraft production, present or contemplated, for the German Air Forces was within range of the 15th AAF in Italy.

Striking from fields near Foggia and farther south, the 15th AAF carried out attacks on Wiener Neustadt and its satellite plants as far away as Brosov, Rumania; the major plants at Regensburg, where Me-109's were also made, and the twin-engine fighter complex in Budapest. By May large-scale production was at an end and German fighter planes were being produced inefficiently and of inferior quality in small dispersal plants. By the time production figures had risen again, the Luftwaffe was outnumbered and out-classed, and fuel and pilot shortages made it no longer a major factor in the air battle.

Throughout the time that the 15th AAF was helping to destroy, first the GAF and then German oil production, the campaign against communications was also being waged—a campaign often overshadowed but never obscured by other operations. Communications targets were attacked whenever the strategic situation permitted, and often, when the tactical situation demanded (particularly in aiding the Russian drive from the East) received full attention of the 15th AAF.

Our own ground forces in Italy and France, the advancing Russian armies in southeastern Europe, as well as the Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, and Italian Partisans were sub-

stantially aided in the widespread communications attacks of the 15th and 12th. The campaign reached a high point in December, 1944, when 108 attacks against communications targets were carried out. Methods of striking at communications involved both fighters and bombers, seeking to cut lines and to destroy rail traffic. Heavy and medium bombers and dive-bombing Lightnings, Thunderbolts, and Mustangs knocked down bridges and cratered tracks and embankments. Attacks on crowded rail yards and strafing of traffic lines blew up and burned vast numbers of locomotives and other rolling stock as well as supplies and equipment.

Being the lineal descendant of a strategic air force that learned at its inception the technique of cooperating with ground armies, the 15th AAF, from its major campaign in preparation for the Anzio landings, often coordinated its attacks to aid ground forces in the Italian campaigns. In October, 1944, the heavies put forth their greatest effort up to that time in coordination with a drive by the Fifth Army mired in the Apennines. On April 15, 1945, the force sent up 98 per cent of its available aircraft to soften the approaches to Bologna, in an historical maximum effort.

In addition to its attacks on industry, communications and oil, the 15th directed much of its activity toward the rescue and repatriation of aircrews shot down in enemy territory. No other air force has recovered so many of its missing pilots and crews, nor undertaken escape activities in so many countries. By V-E Day, 5,998 personnel had been returned, by air, surface vessels, or on foot through enemy lines. In over 300 successful operations, men were brought back safely from Tunisia, Italy, France, Switzerland, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany.

Since its inception, the 15th destroyed approximately 50 per cent of all the fuel production capacity in Europe and about the same percentage of the German fighter production capacity, meanwhile crippling the enemy's transportation system over half of once-occupied Europe. It dropped 303,842 tons of bombs on enemy targets in 12 countries, including major installations in eight capital cities. Its combat personnel made 148,955 heavy bomber sorties and 87,732 fighter sorties against the enemy.

The magnificent record of the 15th was not accomplished without the cost of the lives of many brave men and the loss of 3,364 aircraft. The 15th made AAF history in record-breaking flights, number of operational aircraft dispatched on a single mission, longest USSTAF B-24 mission, and numerous other instances.

NEWS, DUES & VIEWS

Your Historian is pleased to report that new evidence came to light in the Hospitality Room at McAllen concerning events of the African Campaign. The kite which Zork Was flew in the traffic pattern and which Maxie Davis menaced with his plane on the final approach was not borrowed from the liferaft supplies. It was a kite designed by the Great Zork himself.

We pursue these important clues no matter how many short beers it takes to get at the truth. geo.

READ AND HEED

We sometimes take a year or so to print an account which is first-rate reading except that it is double-spaced or (even worse) long-hand.

Either of these cases calls for re-typing. Given your editor's proclivities for 7-week backpacks, it may well take six months or more to prepare an account for printing. george

The upper right corner of the address label on this newsletter will show the last year for which your dues have been paid. If it reads less than 1989 you had better send Walter some wallet ivy.

Yes, we are aware that the May Newsletter lacked this marking due to a change in the address machine, but we are reinstating that date on all of the labels. geo.

Current mention of the aircraft crash at Sioux City brings back a few memories which are anything but pleasant. The 99th took its first casualties there.

I remember a November night with a few snowflakes at dusk. We had expected not to be sent up into the dusk, but as I recall it, we did fly for four hours. It was good to get down onto the ground, but as we left the plane I heard the next shift taking off into the gathering storm.

The three planes got a quick recall, but not before one plane had augered in.

As I remember it, the copilot of the downed crew, because he had a cold, had not flown. Does anybody know whether he survived the course? Perhaps the facts will emerge from the Squadron War Diaries. geo

Well, compadres, the summer is beginning to cool off. The asphalt is still hot and sticks to our bare feet, but by the time you read this autumn will be a reality.

Just as the swallows of Capistrano tell Californians of Springtime, Guilt Day reminds us paisanos that it will soon be time to harvest the chili. Guilt Day is August 5. At that time we have a pilgrimage to Los Alamos. I have not yet been able to participate, but if I should, my signboard would read "Pattern Bombing Makes Jobs." But just when I have started to plan to attend, Bernie mentions those Nip bullets which once whizzed by his ear into the dashboard, and I remember when I carried a wooden gun, and I limit my participation to reading THE GUILTY HEAD, a book dedicated to the science of guilt. george

I am still working on my history of WWII. As I recall, we first dropped those leaflets headlined WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS, the ones showing with big black arrows the cities which we intended to visit. Since the recipients of the leaflets must have moved out, there cannot have been any loss of life. Logic is logic. Does anybody have one of those leaflets? This account will take a lot oververy skilful editing. geo

QUOTES

Intrepid p.4 Churchill let cities be mauled rather than expose those secrets on which the survival of democratic civilization might depend. There were no bloodless alternatives unless leaders were to retreat into self-righteous horror and refuse to make decisions at all.

"A similar situation exists today," said Stephenson. "The easy way out is to pretend there are no crises. That's the way to win elections. That's the way we stumbled into war in the first place - there were too many men in power who preferred to see no threat to freedom because to admit to such a threat implies a willingness to accept sacrifice to combat it. There's considerable difference between being high-minded and soft-headed." p. 511

Flying Fortresses, p. 2

And then occurred the first bombing of a city of little military importance. During the afternoon of May 10, 1940, three bombers appeared over the German city of Freiburg, attacked, and left behind fifty-seven dead, thirteen of them children.

"This kind of aerial terrorism is the product of sick minds of the plutocratic world-destroyers," Dr. Goebbels would say three years later. "A long chain of human suffering in all German cities blitzed by the Allies has borne witness against them and their cruel and cowardly leaders - from the murder of German children in Freiburg on May 10, 1940, right up to the present day."

Herr Goebbels did not reveal of course that he knew then, and in 1940, that the planes that bombed Freiburg were Heinkel 111s which had been dispatched to bomb a fighter airfield in France, got lost in the clouds, and bombed one of their own cities. Nor did Goebbels refer to the bombing of Rotterdam, which occurred four days after the bombing of Freiburg,

p. 287

It has been said that war is an art; it is not. War is a succession of more or less controlled calamity - and even what control exists (which is never revealed on large-scale maps with their impressive lines and arrows) is frightfully dependent upon whim, chance, luck, and any number of unpredictable variables. p. 288

In a curiously dishonest book . . . the German writer Hans Rumpf marshals a battery of cold, precise statistics which are used to suggest that that the real victim of the Second World War was Germany. The most chilling aspect of the book however is its tacit acceptance of war itself, just so long as it is "civilized" and, no doubt, fought on German terms. p. 289

In total war there really are no innocent civilians, for the means are produced by them. Civilians supply the weapons, the ammunition and even the beautifully efficient German ovens. p. 293

. . . Herr Rumpf employs such phrases as a "lawful act of war," the "ideals of humanitarianism in war" and the "acknowledged laws of humanity in war," as if such exist and as if these were practised by the Germans and not by the Allies. War, then is acceptable if played according to rules. p. 291

The basic error in the thinking of so many who now decry the "work" of the Strategic bombardment forces is that, as stated by the military analyst Liddell Hart, it was "the most uncivilized method of warfare the world has known since the Mongol devastations."

What, indeed, is civilized about any aspect of war? It is not the means, but war itself which is the major tragic illusion. Still there are those who are willing to accept it so long as it can be played according to the rules of the nineteenth century.

This is their theme, just as it is the theme of the tract by Rumpf, one of whose chapters is entitled "At Least There Was No Gas War." There was - at Dachau, at Buchenwald, at Mauthausen and Auschwitz. p. 296

I WAS THERE

Leahy

On November 27 (1944) also, I heard a strange story from Wing Commander Howell of the British Air Force, who had been seriously wounded in Crete and who was in German hospitals in Athens and Salonika for a year. He related how, with divine guidance, he had escaped from a prison camp in Salonika and walked 200 miles to freedom in Turkey. Briefly, his story was that while ill from his wounds he became interested in religion and was inspired with a conviction that if he just walked out of the camp he would be given protection and guidance. He did walk out, past the sentries without being seen, received food and directions from the inhabitants whenever he needed them, and was guided by a bright star to the shores of the Aegean Sea where some escaping Greek officers helped him to reach Turkey by boat.

The President then said that he had two questions of a military nature relating to Europe which he wished to take up with the Marshal. He then handed Stalin two papers in English, together with translations into Russian,

The first was a request that the United States Army Air Force be allowed to use certain airfields in the vicinity of Budapest in order to carry out bombing operations against the Germans. The President said that at that time American bombers based in Italy had to make a long and hazardous flight over the Alps in order to reach Germany.

The second paper asked that a group of United States experts be permitted to make surveys of the effects of bombing in the areas liberated or occupied by the Red Army in eastern and southeastern Europe, similar to the surveys that had been made at Ploesti. The memorandum asked that this group be permitted to proceed at once since it was important to examine the damage while the evidence was still fresh and the people who had been there during the bombing were still on the spot.

Marshal Stalin said that he could grant both these requests and would give the necessary orders immediately.

DEFEAT IN MALAYA

Even as far back as 1919 the American, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, had warned:

'Japan is steeped in German ideas and regards war as an industry because from war she has secured all the extensions of the Empire. She will threaten the safety of the world.'

from DEFEAT IN MALAYA, Ballantine Books, by Swinson p. 13

REUNIONS

13 Sep 1989 Ass'n. of Former Prisoners of War in Romania Hot Springs AR
Roy B. Meyer 1077-B Blackshear Dr. Decatur GA 30033

4 Oct 89 8AFHS, Denver CO
P.O.Box 727 Oldsmar FL 34677

18 Oct 89 97th Bomb Group Clearwater Beach FL
Ralph Burbridge 1014 S. 208th St., Seattle WA 98198

18 Apr 1990 99th Bomb Group, Huntsville AL
H.E.Christiansen, 4520 Panorama Dr., Huntsville AL 35801

Spring 1991 99th Bomb Group, Albuquerque NM
Bernice Barr, 7413 Vista del Arroyo, Albuquerque NM 87109

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 1989 DUES- \$15

1981-1988 NEWSLETTERS, \$5 per yr. 81_82_83_84_85_86_87_88_Total_____

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____ or ASSOC. _____

ADDRESS _____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Mail to Walter Butler - 8608 Bellehaven Place NE, Albuquerque NM 87112

Make check payable to 99BGHS. Your address label shows the date to which you are paid up.

We do not stop the subscriptions of deceased members; we extend the subscription gratis for an extra year. But please remember to send us any change of address.

* * * * *
#2

TAPS

HENRY CLEFFI

Monday, June 19th

Dear Sir-

Henry Cleffi was my husband. He died April 12, 1989. He served with the 99th Bomb Group in Italy.

Too bad your card came late.

I would appreciate the Newsletter. sincerely

Marie Cleffi, 47 Sammis Ave., Dover NJ 07801

AL MAKNAUSKAS

I met Al Maknauskas's wife at the bank this morning and learned that Al died in April of this year as the result of heart complications. Al was a member of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society and served in the 347th Bomb Squadron. I'm sure Mrs. Maknauskas would be pleased to hear from any of Al's army buddies. Sincerely
John R. Repka - 347th BS.

JACK B. BLANKS

Dear George I have just been informed that my navigator, Jack B. Blanks (348th) passed away July 2, 1989. His widow, Jean, lives at 5712 Wallace Neal Road, Charlotte, NC 28208. Hal Terry, Jr. P.S. Jack was a Society Member.

LOWELL STAUFFER

Dear George; Regret to inform you that one of our ground crew passed away on June 30. Lowell Stauffer "found" me several years ago through the 99th HS Newsletter and we had been in fairly close touch since then. He was the last surviving of that ground crew.

It was my intention to visit him and Virginia a while back in the Ohio Valley in early June but some ailing relatives prevented that. I called last week to talk to him about a visit in August and Virginia informed me that Lowell had passed away on the 30th.

He may have been one of the original members of the 99th as he was on George Bransom's ground crew even before moving up to Oudna #1.

I do know that he put up one gritty battle over about the last five years with no complaint. He will be missed by family and friends.

Have attached a copy of his obituary that may be of some help to you. sincerely
Cy Stidd

99th Bomb Gp Historical Society
 Walter H. Butler - Treasurer
 8608 Bellehaven Pl. N.E.
 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 388
 Albuquerque, N.M.

FORWARDING AND RETURN
 POSTAGE GUARANTEED
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

1989 ***** 347
 J.O. Grizzell
 Rt. 4 Box 270 A
 Paris, TN 38242

Sep. 1989

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Donald W. Pius	Rt. 1, Box 1256	East Stroudsburg PA 18301
Emmett M. Oehlert	4 Alden St.	Camden ME 04943-1516
Arthur E. White	600 E. 49th St.	Austin TX 78751
Robert J. Gockenbach	19240 Country Club.Dr.	Tequesta FL 33469
Leonard J. Curtis	11 Meadow Run Dr. SW # 8	Rochester MN 55902
Joseph B. Maloney	5240 Kalmia Dr.	Dayton MD 21038-1223
461st Bomb Group	P.O.Box 36600	Tucson AZ 85740-6600
Clarence Hammes	Rt. 3, Box 352	Morrilton AR 72110-9803
Ira Gordon	43600 SR 19	Altoona FL 32702