



# THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society



Newsletter

Vol. 11 No.2

Mar. 1, 1991

SOCIETY OFFICERS, 1990-1991  
Same as for 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

Dear George:

No doubt all of us are following closely the course of the war with Iraq, and especially so since the Allies are resorting heavily to air power. As high technology equipment is obviously playing a major role in this conflict we are fortunate that the efforts of American industry to develop much of it were not frustrated by anti-military critics. Let us hope that peace can be achieved soon.

It has been interesting to note the recent revival of a number of old war films, including Twelve O'Clock High and Memphis Belle. After seeing the latter our grandson, Taylor, wanted to know how anyone could have survived that "black flak".

You may have noted recently the obituary of John C. Morgan, a B-17 co-pilot awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in a raid over Germany in the summer of 1943. "Red" Morgan ended up later on in my prison camp, Stalag Luft I, after having been shot down over Berlin. He lived in our camp's North Compound, the same one as Ninety Niner Charlie Bilharz, who saw him frequently. I met Red when he visited his pilot in South Compound, Major Fred Rabo, a neighbor of mine in Barracks 14.

Activities for the Albuquerque Reunion commencing in May have been included in the latest copy of Newsletter. We salute Bernie Barr and his associates for putting together such a broad and innovative program. Now is the time to fill out the Application and to mail it with your check to Walter Butler. Don't forget to attend to your room reservation personally.

See you in May

Bill S.

Dear George;

Just received information that may lead to finding an old 99'er who twice had to bail out and twice walked through enemy lines back. I hope someone remembers who our man was.

Early in 1944, I believe sometime in March, a Navigator spoke for us in the 346th Squadron. He had been shot down a number of months prior and it had taken quite a long time for him to make his way back. He had really been through a hefty questioning from our Intelligence which he referred to a number of times while he spoke to us. The objective was to help us get back if we happened to find the need to bail out.

His second bail out and walk back came as a Navigator in a C-47 in the 322nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 14th Air Force located at Kunming, China. He arrived there in January of 1945 and returned to the States April 15, 1945 only three months after joining that Squadron. This man's name is Satiris G. Fassoulis, O-744841, SSN 1034 (navigator).

The history in China records relates that he'd bailed out over northern Italy from a Bomber Group, that he could speak fluent Italian and that over a number of months had made his way back through enemy lines.

My thoughts are that if this happened to be the same guy (the timing is right), what a heck of a story this would make, and if he could be found, this has the possibilities of being a "hard to top this" type of story.

The 322nd TCS has not found him either.

Sincerely;

Joe C. Kenney  
950 McDougall  
Lander, Wy. 82520

PS: Enclosed is a copy of a letter sent to our Supreme Court Justices from Harold Ira Turner which might be of interest to the Group.

29 January 1991

To: Board of Directors, 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Subject: Audit of 99thBGHS Treasurer's Records

At the request of the Society President, I have conducted an audit of the 99thBGHS financial records for the period 1 Jan - 31 Dec 1990.

The ledgers, check register, bank statements and voucher file were examined using procedures consistent with previous audits. In my opinion the records present fairly the results of financial transactions during the above stated period.

Lew Boatwright

## Letters

HELLO GEORGE!!! The summer of 1944 was very eventful for me and the 99th Bomb Group. I had just arrived in late May and was assigned to become the Squadron Commander of 416th Bomb Squadron when John Morris completed his tour. My first combat mission was as co-pilot to Morris on the shuttle run to Russia. I became the CO on the return 11 June 1944. My first Group lead was to Sete Oil Refinery a couple of days later. By the first of July I had completed 12 combat missions. Col Lauer called me up to his office and during our conversation he asked me how many missions I had flown in June. I told him I had flown 12--"Bernie don't fly so often because you will not go home before I do!" It was about this time that he returned to the USA for rest, etc. and Col Myers was assigned as commander. After a few days as CO he decided to fly a mission and as a gung ho qualified group leader I volunteered to fly as his co-pilot and check him out to be a group leader. Our mission was to be PLOESTI. About an hour out, en route to our target he said that we had to return. I said "Col there is nothing wrong with the airplane and we should not return." He, being the commander, returned to the base. I was very upset and called Col John Ryan the 5th wing operations officer and reported what had happened. A day later, Col Myers was gone and in a couple of days a Col Glassford came down to be our CO. He flew his first mission with Al Schroeder's squadron and some how or another he went down into the navigators and bombardiers nose hatch and got them so upset that the mission became a fiasco!!! He too was gone in a couple of days after I called Col Ryan again. Lt Col James Barnett took over as Group CO. I was moved up to become the Deputy CO and remained until Col Lauer returned in Sept. and resumed command and I became the Group Operations Officer and remained until I completed my 50th mission with the 99th on Dec. 28, 1944. I had flown a tour in the South West Pacific before, so that was my 100th combat mission in B--17s. It is very unusual that command changes this often, but that was the way it was as I saw it!!!! And I was there!!! Col Lauer completed his 50th on the 26th Dec. so he was right. I did not get home before he did. Col Ray Schwanbeck came in about the first of Jan and assumed command and remained the last commander of the 99th Bomb Group. He is still active as one of our members.

Bernie Barr

29 October 1990

Dear George --

Am enclosing the latest list of 99th planes. You have probably already suspected that I have a new printer. Finally broke down and bought a Laser Printer. They will do wonderful things and I like it a lot. Only use my dot matrix printers for rough drafts, etc. now.

I have been exchanging letters with Steve Birdsall for some time now. He gave me a few names of the Gs which we had to send to the 2nd before we swiped all those Gs from the 483rd. You will note that I have included the MACR number of those planes MIA on which a MACR was issued. They informed me at the Archives that MACR reporting didn't start until about May 43. The units who lost planes prior to that time were supposed to submit MACRs in order to catch up. Not all of them did. Between us, we have also been able to figure out a few more names of 99th planes. He uses my research coupled with his technical knowledge to identify new ones.

I have had quite a few letters from some of the fellows concerning the planes that they flew. Some have requested a complete list of planes. I have sent them one 'gratis' although they offered to pay. What's a buck or two to me at this stage of my life.

It looks like this list is about as good as I can do with the information I have at present. When you publish it, I think it would be a good idea if somewhere in there you put some type of statement to contact me for further or additional information. That is if you don't want to get swamped. I am sure it will create many questions. I have used archives and 99th Hist. Soc. sources for spellings, etc. On the lists I give away, I have my printer do both sides of the page. I think you could more easily handle the pages if they were only printed on one side.

How is the history of the 99th coming with Squadron Signal? If at all possible, I would like to borrow some of the pix of 99th planes or the negatives [to get some copies made] if you have them before you return them to their owners. I would like some to go with this list which my two sons will eventually get. Would that be possible?

The 2nd BG now has a memorial at the AF Museum. I believe they are going to dedicate it next year sometime. It is bigger than ours and has all kinds of 'bragging' on it. All this topped off with a bronze eagle which sort of looks like a seagull.

Had a letter from Jake Grimm and he sent me a pix (xerox) copy of 25818 which we had been calling Crappy. Turns out the name is Scrappy. The name is very clear on the copy I have.

Just got back from my six month checkup and Dr. Feelgood gave me another six months. At least he said he expected me back then.

regards,  
Dick D



Dear George;

I am working on a project for our annual Crew Reunion, and as the Historian of the Group Historical Society, you may be the man to help me.

I would like an aerial photograph or even just a layout of the Group area at Tortorella. If such a thing exists and you can send me a copy, I would be in your debt for life.

I am still trying to get to one of the Group Reunions so I can meet all of you characters.

Thank you for any help.  
Charlie Kinkead, 9356 Chase St., Spring Hill FL 34606

Dear Charlie;

I have not been able to locate such a map, but I will keep looking. Ole Snort, our family hog, got into the 99th files, maybe that is the problem.  
best george

*P.S. We ain't about - r.*

Dear Howard;

I will try to arrange with Dick to publish his lists. It must be a serial effort, but it is high time that we got it into print.

The problem has been that Dick has compiled so much information that it simply would not go into one issue, and by the time I have gotten set to print Dick has extended and revised the list.

It may be November before anything shows up in the newsletter. Meanwhile Dick may be reached at:

Richard E. Drain  
Box 664  
Westcliffe CO 81252

With best wishes,

george

12th December 1990

Dear Mr. Coen,

Thank you very much for your sending newsletters of 99th Bomb Group to me.

I have an idea to write the article about members of USAAF who took part in WW Two and were descendants of Czech and Slovak parents and grandparents. Mr. Coen, can you send me some addressees where I will find the help about this matter. Did some "Czech" and "Slovaks" serve with 99th Bomb Group?

I hope you can help me in this matter. Awaiting your reply.

Yours sincerely

Tomas POLAK  
Sidliste Beskydske 1198  
744 01 FRENSTAT P.R.  
Czechoslovakia

HEADQUARTERS  
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
Office of the Group Commander

APO 520  
7 July 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Personnel  
TO: Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520

1. Roster of personnel, members of this command on 23 April 1943:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ASN</u>
Lauer, Ford J.	Col	0-17048
Barnett, James A.	Lt Col	0-373797
Hampton, William M.	Lt Col	0-262745
Semans, Lawrence S.	Lt Col	0-286984
Christensen, John A.	Major	0-1699316
Fairbanks, Vernon E.	Major	0-486892
Gray, Ellis H.	Major	0-911194
Koehne, Frederick D.	Major	0-420946
Barnes, Phillip J.	Capt	0-912632
Bryant, Ernest D.	Capt	0-665988
Cronk, Roderick N.	Capt	0-430897
Davis, Dent C., Jr.	Capt	0-854964
Dickman, Robert W.	Capt	0-436413
Hess, Samuel B.	Capt	0-2055375
Jacobs, Russell T.	Capt	0-729866
Jones, Benjamin W.	Capt	0-790248
murphy, James E.	Capt	0-419299
Philips, Philip M.	Capt	0-917863
Sarosy, John A.	Capt	0-561978
Sweeny, Philip J., Jr.	Capt	0-562170
Thomas, David A.	Capt	0-922570
Trent, George D.	Capt	0-566938
Warren, Wayne W.	Capt	0-492834
Whitlock, Harold T.	Capt	0-910478
Criss, George J.	1st Lt	0-649317
Mullis, Kenneth M.	1st Lt	0-566275
Weidner, Kenneth V.	1st Lt	0-1549631
Nero, Daniel V.	2nd Lt	0-924187
Fogle, Robert A.	WO (j.g.)	W-2119073
Webb, Richard H.	WO (j.g.)	W-2119066
Freiwald, Lawrence M.	M/Sgt	14024007
Gordon, Ria (NMI)	M/Sgt	12006025
Hansen, Palmer H.	M/Sgt	7030136
Mahar, Richard J.	M/Sgt	16052214
Simon, Alfred G.	M/Sgt	16028869
Brink, William J., Jr.	T/Sgt	35350365
Chancellor, John N., Jr.	T/Sgt	38020876
Deslover, Donald M.	T/Sgt	16043632
Freeman, Elmer C.	T/Sgt	32225335
Freer, Frank C.	T/Sgt	39083221
Hendrickson, Edward M.	T/Sgt	7022500
Love, George T.	T/Sgt	33171336

Parris, Roy C.	T/Sgt	14100559
Schuh, Charles W.	T/Sgt	32384874
Smith, Robert J.	T/Sgt	37157646
Cormia Keith C.	S/Sgt	33133884
Crater, Winfield J.	S/Sgt	36168882
Czaja, Felix E.	S/Sgt	20135528
Gilbert, Frederick D.H.	S/Sgt	32310937
Michelsen, Rollin W.	S/Sgt	37294715
Palmese, Phillip (NMI)	S/Sgt	19098113
Rabaut, John C.	S/Sgt	16148310
Shapiro, Max (NMI)	S/Sgt	34266694
Sheffield, James A.	S/Sgt	18115067
Spry, Jesse A.	S/Sgt	39242699
Thrower, Hilery L.	S/Sgt	34332689
Whitmore, James H.	S/Sgt	32379062
Demory, John (NMI)	Sgt	39539217
Fletcher, Walter S.	Sgt	34248954
Koch, Richard S.	Sgt	33300870
Medici, Frank J.	Sgt	32324845
Rouse, jack V.	Sgt	14047160
Stout, Milton C.	Sgt	33260243
Taylor, Virgil M.	Sgt	35475344
Whitmore, Harold J.	Sgt	31101248
Apt, Seymour (NMI)	Cpl	33322055
Bartlett, James L.	Cpl	18188299
Beatty, Lee F.	Cpl	14062188
Dale, Joyce L.	Cpl	13076363
Febesh, Abe (NMI)	Cpl	32884423
Gebhart, Eldridge C.	Cpl	37295200
Haley, William H.	Cpl	38209904
Harris, Hoy (NMI)	Cpl	38200075
Hayes, Edward C.	Cpl	34161614
Hays, Fred R.	Cpl	38274741
Maywald, William (NMI)	Cpl	38164161
Miller, Theodore B.	Cpl	36803722
Mollo, Andrew J.	Cpl	31143118
Philips, Clarence A.	Cpl	38222560
Platt, Jack (NMI)	Cpl	38149663
Vela, Gerardo J.	Cpl	18089894
Wiseman, Floyd B.	Cpl	39826096
Freeman, Shirley C.	Pfc	34249238
Lamson, Herbert (NMI)	Pfc	34248908
Larson, Swen (NMI)	Pfc	37280500
Wingfield, William R.	Pfc	33533507
Schiel, Francis L.	Pvt	37192725

For the Group Commander:

JOHN a. SAROSY,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.



THREE HUNDRED FORTY SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
Office of the Operations Officer

SUBJECT: Combat Crews on Today's Mission.  
TO: Commanding Officer, 99th Bombardment Group

APO 520  
5 July 1943

B-17F #30384 Crew #1

P Burrell, H.R. Captain  
CP Thurman, W.E. Major  
N Abrams, J.B. 1st Lt.  
B Hansen, D.T. 2nd Lt.  
tt Murray, J.D. S/Sgt.  
WG Long, K.A. Pvt.  
R Sessions, A.G. Sgt.  
BT May, E.P. S/Sgt.  
WG Macchiaverna, J.J. Sgt.  
TG Clem, A. (NMI) Sgt.

B-17F #29480 Crew #2

P Hager, J.S. 2nd Lt.  
CP Pixler, W.F. F/O  
N Beaird, J.A. 2nd Lt.  
B Archambault, J.A. 2nd Lt.  
TT Canaday, C.W. T/Sgt.  
WG Dorman, S.M. S/Sgt.  
R Dunow, F.A. T/Sgt.  
BT Sibbett, G.A. S/Sgt.  
WG Borgess, K.R. S/Sgt.  
TG Lemino, F.P. S/Sgt.

B-17F #29473 Crew #3

P Shields, D.I. 1st Lt.  
CP Humes, W.E. 2nd Lt.  
N Coleman, D.H. 2nd Lt.  
B Cozine, A.B. 2nd Lt.  
TT Carlton, R.W. T/Sgt.  
WG Crisler, S.I. S/Sgt.  
R Shivley, A.W. T/Sgt.  
BT Burkhardt, J.A. S/Sgt.  
WG Herrmann, I.L. S/Sgt.  
TG Richardson, J.E. S/Sgt.

B-17F #5769 Crew #4

P Covert, C.B. Captain  
CP Craig, T.F. 1st Lt.  
N Cook, J.E. 1st Lt.  
B Barney, W.W. 2nd Lt.  
TT Purnell, J.E. S/Sgt.  
WG Nash, R.G. Pvt.  
R Garside, T. (NMI) Cpl.  
BT Kowzan, J. (NMI) T/Sgt.  
WG Schultz, W.J. Pvt.  
TG McCluskey, G.L. S/Sgt.  
F Greenwaldt, W.E. Sgt.

HEADQUARTERS 99TH BOMBARDMENT GP. (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
APO 520

30 June 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:  
Historian (through channels)

1. Unit History of the 347th Bombardment Squadron for the period 1 June 1944 to 30 June 1944.

a. The present designation of the unit is 347th Bombardment Squadron, 99th Bombardment Group (H).

b. Changes in organization

- (1) There has been no change in unit designation.
- (2) There has been no transfer of the unit.
- (3) There has been no change of Commanding Officer.
- (4) There has been no change of Staff Officers.

c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted

(1) Month of June 1944.

- (a) 89 Officers and 421 Enlisted Men at the beginning of the month.
- (b) Net decrease of 4 Officers and a net increase of 30 enlisted men.
- (c) 85 Officers and 451 Enlisted Men present at end of month.

d. No new station

e. No movement

f. Campaigns

(1) Previously listed. No changes.

g. Operations:

2 June -- Eight of our B-17Gs took off to their target, the Oil Refineries at Debreen, Hungary. All of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target and landed safely at a base in Russia.

6 June -- Eight of our B-17Gs took off from their Russian base to their target, the A/D at Galatin, Roumania. Target successfully bombed and all ships returned safely to their base.

11 June -- Eight of our A/C took off from their Russian base at 0555 hours but one A/C had to return to Russia because of mechanical trouble. The seven of our ships bombed their target, the A/D at Foscan, Roumania. All of our A/C landed safely at their home field at 1305 hours. Major Robert R. Shaefer was our squadron leader.

13 June -- Seven of our B-17Gs took off at 0617 hours to their target, the A/D installations at Oberpfaffen Hofen, Austria. There were no early returns. Flak was reported as being heavy, intense, and accurate. From 1 to 15 E/A were observed and 5 were encountered without claims or losses to ourselves. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1315 hours. Lt Leishman was our squadron leader.

14 June -- Six of our B-17Gs took off at 0742 hours to their target, the Shell Koolaj Oil Refinery, Budapest, Hungary. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate. There were no E/A observed. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1407 hours. Lt Hines was our squadron leader.

16 June -- Six of our B-17Gs took off at 0644 hours to their target, the Kagaran Oil Refinery, at Vienna, Austria. There was one early return due to mechanical trouble. Flak was reported as being heavy, intense, and accurate. 10 to 15 E/A were observed but there were no encounters. S/Sgt Robert I. Thomas, 12140736, was wounded slightly. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1328 hours. Lt Leishman was our squadron leader.

22 June -- Seven of our B-17Gs took off at 0850 hours to their target, the M/Y at Modena, Italy. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, slight, and inaccurate. There were no E/A seen, no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1413 hours. Lt Hines was our squadron leader.

23 June -- Eight of our B-17Gs took off at 0615 hours to their target at Ploesti, Roumania. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. 10 to 15 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed in the target area with all of them encountering our formation. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate. Three of our men were wounded. All of our A/C returned safely at 1340 hours except for one A/C which landed at Foggia Main to let off a wounded man. Lt Gardner was our squadron leader.

25 June -- Seven of our B-17Gs took off at 0600 hours to their target, the M/Y and Storage Tanks at Sete, France. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. There was no flak and no E/A were observed. No casualties and all of our A/C returned safely at 1337 hours. Lt Maslow was our squadron leader.

26 June -- Seven of our B-17Gs took off at 0557 hours to their target, the Winterhafen Oil Depot, Vienna, Austria. There was one early return due to mechanical trouble. Flak was reported as being heavy, intense, and accurate. 3 to 4 E/A were observed and there was one encountered. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1245 hours. Captain H.B. Shull was our squadron leader.

27 June -- Ten of our B-17Gs took off at 0648 hours to their target, the M/Y at Brod, Yugoslavia. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being light, slight, and inaccurate. 1 to 6 E/A were observed but there were no encounters. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1340 hours.

30 June -- Seven of our B-17Gs took off to their target at Budapest, Hungary. There were two early returns due to mechanical trouble. Flak was reported as being heavy, slight, and inaccurate. There were no E/A observed and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1300 hours. Major Robert R. Shaefer lead our squadron and our squadron lead the group.

The following is the one claim for an E/A destroyed during the month of June 1944:

Mission #209 -- Vienna, Austria -- 26 June 1944

Sgt Carl (NMI) Sherman -- 1 ME-109 destroyed.

Losses in action:

The following-named men were Wounded in Action during the month of June 1944:

Mission #205 -- Vienna, Austria - 16 June 1944

S/Sgt Robert I. Thomas, 12140736,, slightly wounded.

Mission #207 -- Ploesti, Roumania - 23 June 1944

2nd Lt Irving H. Fox, 0-674749, slightly wounded

2nd Lt Harry (NMI) Green, 0-809272, slightly wounded.

There were no MIA or KIA during the month of June 1944.

j. Awards and Decorations:

99th Bombardment Group (H) awarded the Presidential Citation under G.O. #896 dated 7 June 1944.

First Lieutenant Charles J. Jankousky, 0-679531, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under G.O. #963 dated 11 June 1944.

First Lieutenant Robert (NMI) Maslow, 0-804704, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under G.O. #724 dated 30 May 1944

First Lieutenant John F. O'Connell, 0-735204, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under G.O. #963 dated 11 June 1944.

Sgt Merrill C. Dissbell, 39538913, United States Army. Awarded the Soldiers Medal under G.O. #1023 dated 13 June 1944.

S/Sgt Norman R. Bolotin, 16169901, United States Army. Awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart under G.O. #333 dated 18 June 1944.

Second Lieutenants Charles W. Gardner, 0-750134, and James P. King, 0-698730, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Purple Heart under G.O. #27 dated 1 June 1944.

Sgt Gus T. Brown, 18154612, Air Corps, United States Army, awarded the Purple Heart under G.O. #29 dated 9 June 1944.

The following personnel awarded the Purple Heart under G.O. #35 dated 23 June 1944:

2nd Lt John P. Devlin, 0-749383

2nd Lt Allan ;H. Hoover, 0-748652

2nd Lt Michael E. McDonnell, 0-737991

2nd Lt John W. Pace, 0-673933

S/Sgt Richard B. Hobby, 31145705

Pfc. Bernard J. Larvin, 18154552.

The 99th Bombardment Group (H) entitled to wear battle stars for Tunisian and Sicilian Campaigns under NATOUSA letter dated 23 December 1943. Entitled to wear the battle star for the Italian Campaign under NATOUSA letter dated 10 January 1944.

2. Enclosed is the war diary of this unit for the period 1 June 1944 to 30 June 1944.

For the Commanding Officer:

THREE HUNDRED FORTY SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
Office of the Intelligence Officer

5 March 1945

SUBJECT: Historical Records

TO: Major Philip M. Philips, 99th Bomb Gp (H) Hq, S-2

1. There was no change in Commanding Officer.

2. The following is the list of awards approved for personnel of this organization during the month of February 1945:

Captain Robert L. DeWitt, 0-819977, awarded the Silver Star

Corporal Raffaele J. Imperato, 32503378, awarded the Bronze Star

Major John W. Hutton, 0-725733, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Claude Acree, 0-2057836, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Orland J. Bucci, 0-754877, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Warren J. Donovan, 0-819771, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Benjamin A. Hancock, 0-712285, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

Captain Daniel M. Jones, 0-746890, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Dean C. Kuhn, 0-771939, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Elmer C. Madsen, 0-768611, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt George L. Semonis Jr., 0-768705, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Vance N. Van Hovel, 0-705861, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

1st Lt Joseph J. Wilisowski, 0-722940, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross

3. The weather in February started off very pretty and continued so throughout the month enabling us to participate on twenty bombing missions. The old traditional game of softball sprang into existence all at once and even a few touch football games have been played. Some of the men have started blaming their laziness on spring fever.

Two of our original combat officers in this squadron returned to visit with us this month after being interned in Switzerland for sixteen month. They were First Lieutenants Walter H. Breslin and Morton L. Marks. They were only with us for a few hours and afforded all of their time visiting with old friends left with the squadron.

On the 12th of February, the latest Censorship regulations were read to all officers and enlisted men of the Squadron by Capt Monroe B. Gross, Capt John A. Plummer, and 1st Lt William B. Murphy.

Escape, Evasion, and Security lectures were given to all combat personnel on the 16th and 17th of February by Captain Monroe B. Gross and 1st Lt William B. Murphy.

The night of February 17th was the night the squadron officers gave their party at the Sky Room in Foggia. The night seemed to be a big success and everyone enjoyed themselves. It is rumored that quite a few gallons of beverage was consumed and at any rate some of the fellows didn't look too good for a few days following.

On return from a mission, one of our enlisted gunners decided to fulfill his old longing and thinking he was over his own field and doing something spectacular, bailed out of the plane. We haven't seen him since because he has been in the hospital with a fractured ankle.

The month ended up with pay day and the usual games that follow immediately after the first five or six men are paid. Captain Stusser, our adjutant, sponsored a war bond drive and met with great success in selling over seven thousand five hundred dollars in bonds the first day. This is the second month that Capt Stusser has really put a war bond drive across.



MONROE B. GROSS  
Captain, Air Corps  
347th Sq, S-2

Sheet No. 2 416th Bombardment Squadron

September, 1943

- 13 Today was nonoperational for the benefit of the combat crews, although they are, as usual, howling for action. The Ordnance section transferred out today and formed a new Airdrome Ordnance Company. Lt Eidner went as the C.O. of the new company. The day was uneventful. It is now Lt. Col. Orance and we were all glad to hear about the promotion.
- 14 Another nonoperational day and everyone had a chance to catch up on some back washing. The wars news sounds good and everyone is optimistic about the early end of the war. Usual camp duties for everyone in the ground echelon but they have it easy as all planes are ready and there has been 2 nonop days in a row.
- 15 Squadron went to Torea Annunziata on a raid today with Captain Macdonald lead. Had a very successful raid and no damage was suffered by any of the planes. Had the worst dust storm of the stay here and everyone was cross and irritable, but it cleared up in the evening.
- 16 Today the Squadron participated in its 78th mission, and the target was Benevento Bridges, Italy. Was a very successful raid and 9 planes returned safely. Day was very quiet in camp and it was PX day.
- 17 Day nonoperational and a very quiet day in camp with just usual camp duties on schedule. 18 men left the Squadron after completing their 50th mission, and we hope that they are on their way home.

- 18 79th mission for the Squadron today, and the target was Viterbo A/D, Italy. 10 planes departed on the raid and all returned safely after a very successful raid. Day has been fairly nice but the wind still blows and the flies are as thick as ever. Captain Macdonald has been made our new C.O. and Captain Henderson is the new Operations Officer. Lt. Shaw joined us today and was appointed Assistant Operations Officer. The 506th Bomb Squadron, a B-24 outfit has been attached to us for the present and now we have 6 "boxcars" in our line area. no mail today and everyone moaning about it.
- 19 Today was a hot windy day and as the day was nonoperational, there were a lot of the boys going into Tunis on pass. Lot of mail today and morale is much better. S2 moved into a larger tent and now has room to operate.
- 20 Another nonop. day and things are very quiet in camp. Had the best meal of our overseas duty, today. Roast beef and all the trimmings. A good meal makes us all happier. But now back to "C" rations for supper. Is now Major Macdonald and we are glad to see the promotion. Movie tonite and all the camp is attending.
- 21 Today is nonoperational and the camp is deserted. The 24 outfit had their first mission from this field.
- 22 Today was a day to test the souls of men. The worst Sirroco of the year hit camp today and the dust was so thick that one couldn't see ten feet. It started about noon and lasted until late evening. As usual, the S2 tent was blown down, and the Armament shop blew down. Mission that was scheduled for the day was called off due to bad weather over the target.
- 23 Today's mission was canceled after briefing due to bad weather. The boys who were scheduled for their 50th mission are moaning. Today was the hottest day of the year and everyone is taking it easy because of the heat. Usual camp duties and no excitement.
- 24 No mission today as it was the P-24s turn to go on a raid. Day has been very hot and windy. Today is PX day again and there were plenty of cigarettes and a candy bar for all. Camp is full of rumors as to when and where we will move, but as usual, rumors are without foundation. Movie tonite was "Who Dun It," with Abbott and Costello, and it was enjoyed by about everyone in the Squadron. The movie twice weekly is one of the few bright spots to look forward to around here.

Sheet No. 3 416th Bombardment Squadn.

September, 1943

- 25 Today was the squadron's 80th combat mission, and 9 planes took off for Bologna Marshalling Yards, Italy. All planes returned safely after a successful raid. A French show was presented in camp tonite and was enjoyed by everyone. Weather is nice and had become cooler.
- 26 Today's raid was canceled because of unfavorable weather. Was a quiet day in camp and usual camp duties were carried out.

- 27 Raid today was canceled because of unfavorable weather. Major Macdonald left on a trip to Cairo to buy souvenirs, etc. for the squadron. Had a wonderful surprise when Sgt Carl Miciak came back to camp today. Sgt Miciak was the radio operator on Sgt Norris' crew that was shot down over Foggia, Italy, August 25. Sgt Miciak bailed out of the plane and was taken prisoner. He escaped from a hospital and made his way back to Allied lines. He brought back the news that Sgt Barthell also had escaped from a hospital, and that Lts. Seila, Kidwiller, and Dahl were safe, although prisoners.
- 28 81st Squadron combat mission today. The mission was not completed due to unfavorable weather conditions over the target. Had a rainstorm today and it was a welcome relief after the heat and dust.
- 29 Nonoperational day, and a quiet day in camp. The weather is nice and cool and everyone is in good spirits. Lt Boggio left on a flight to Algiers to take a Colonel there.
- 30 Today was nonoperational and the camp is deserted, as most of the fellows have taken advantage of two nonop. days and have gone to Tunis on pass. Camp is very quiet and weather remains cool and there is no dust. Major Macdonald returned from Cairo with souvenirs for all.

Sheet No. 1 War Diary, 416th Bombardment Sqdn. Notary, APO 520

Month of October, 1943.

Prepared by Ernest F. Baldwin Jr., 1st Lt. AC.

DAY	EVENTS
1	82nd Squadron Mission, and target was Augsburg, Germany. Bad weather prevented completion of the mission. Was a very rough raid and over 50 enemy fighters were encountered. Lt. Lewis Franck, our Squadron Bombardier destroyed 4 enemy aircraft. Lt. Burton English and his crew were lost of the raid and had to bail out of their plane when it was set afire by the enemy fighters. Today was PX day and we received cigarettes and candy.
2	Day was nonoperational and the usual camp duties were carried on. Our Executive Officer is now Major Weeden, having received his promotion today.
3	Today was nonoperational and things were very quiet around camp. The weather has been very cool and is a grand relief after the heat.
4	The Squadron participated in 2 missions today. 5 planes went on a mission to Pisa, Italy, and 4 planes participated in a raid on Bolzano, Italy. Both raids were very successful and all planes returned safely. Had a show this evening in our "outdoor theater," and the attendance constituted the biggest part of the squadron.
5	Today was the 85th combat mission for the Squadron and the target was Bologna, Italy, Marshalling Yards. Was a very successful raid and all planes returned safely. Had a French stage show tonite and all enjoyed the show very much. This afternoon we had a formation, and the enlisted men received their Good Conduct Ribbons. Weather has been fine and cool.

- 6 86th Squadron Combat Mission today and target was Mestre, Italy. Lt. Jenkins and Sgt Sigmon destroyed enemy aircraft that attacked for the formation over the target. Had a nice rainstorm today and the dust problem is taken care of for the time being.
- 7 Today was nonoperational and the combat crews enjoyed a rest. Had a real Sirroco this afternoon and the afternoon was miserable, fighting the dust and the wind. Have a new mess hall for the enlisted men. A portable tin structure, and it makes a very nice mess hall. Lt. Barker made a flight to Chateaudun to buy fresh eggs for the mess hall.
- 8 Day was nonoperational and things were very quiet around camp.
- 9 Squadron participated in their 87th and 88th Combat Mission today. Targets were Larrisa, Greece, and Salonika, Greece. All planes returned safely after a very successful raid on each target. Day was quiet in camp and we had a nice rainstorm. Looks like the rainy season is definitely on its way and everyone has been busy digging drainage trenches around their tents.
- 10 89th Squadron Mission today, target was Athens, Greece. All planes returned safely. usual camp duties were carried out.
- 11 Day was nonoperational. Quiet day in camp! Was a show in the evening but most of the fellows were enjoying a short-wave broadcast of the world series. Baseball talk seems to be the main topic of discussion for the present.

Sheet No. 2 416th Bomb. Sqdn.

October, 1943

- 12 Today was a quiet nonoperational day with the usual camp duties being performed. The day has been dark and cloudy, with intermittent rain showers and has turned very cool. 19 men, who have finished their 50 missions, departed for the United States this morning.
- 13 The day was nonoperational and has been very quiet. Most of the fellows attended the show in the evening. Usual camp duties for the Ground Echelon.
- 14 90th Squadron Mission to Terni, Italy, Marshalling Yards. The raid was successful and all aircraft returned safely. 36 enemy fighters were encountered on the raid. Captain Buck, Captain Was, Lt. Collins, and Lt. Franck completed their 50 sorties today. Officers and enlisted men had a softball game in the morning, with the enlisted men winning by a score of 7-2.
- 15 Today's operations were canceled because of weather conditions. The day was very pleasant and cool. We don't know how it happened, but we all were allowed 2 candy bars and a whole carton of cigarettes (and not Chelsea's) for this week's PX ration.

- 16 Today was nonoperational. Evidently the officer's have learned some of the finer points of the game of softball, because they came through with a win over the enlisted men in today's game; score 13-11. Adolph Menjou was at the base in the afternoon and presented a show, high spot of the show was the appearance of red-headed, film actress Anna Lee. The camp was practically deserted as nearly everyone went to the show. Lt. Fitzpatrick returned from Cairo and had beaucoup souvenirs for the men.
- 17 Today was one of those days when absolutely nothing happens, except the usual camp duties.
- 18 The day was operational for the Photo Department only, as we enjoyed a good movie in the evening. 6 replacement crews arrived today to take the place of those who have completed their 50 missions. Among the new pilots was Lt. Monte Eydenburg, brother of Sgt. Arnold Eydenburg of our Orderly Room. The Officer's Mess hired a new KP today, an Italian boy who lives nearby. he can't speak any English and we don;t even know his name, so he is called "Saboteur."
- 19 Another nonoperational day, but practice mission was held and the new crews participated, as a part of their training. The new gunners and radio operators are attending school on the base and are kept quite busy.
- 20 Today was likewise nonoperational and this is becoming monotonous, but Group promises us a mission for tomorrow. Movie in the evening.
- 21 91st Squadron Mission today, the target being Terni, Italy. 9 of our planes participated and all returned safely after a successful raid. Our squadron destroyed 3 enemy aircraft in aerial combat over the target. S/Sgt Floyd L. Laxson, tail gunner on Lt. Andrew's crew, was injured by a 20mm shell, which exploded inside the plane and blew Sgt Laxson clear out of the tail gun position. Sgt Laxson, despite severe wounds and the destruction of his oxygen mask, went back to his gun position and destroyed one of the attacking fighters and then continued on over the target with his crew, never letting them know of his injury until the bombing mission had been successfully completed.

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Sheet 3 416th Bomb Sqdn.

October, 1943

- 22 Quiet day in camp and nonoperational. New crews participated in another practice mission. had a GI stage show in the evening which proved very enjoyable, especially the "Hill Billy" band.
- 23 9 of the Squadron's planes left today on a secret mission. Today was very windy and dusty, making life quite miserable. In the evening we had a Squadron party with plenty of beer, sandwiches, and cake for all. For entertainment, we had Sgt Grant on the piano and Sgt Rose doing a bit of vocalizing. The party was immensely enjoyed by all.

- 24 92nd Squadron Mission. Our 9 planes, which left yesterday, were split into two groups; part of them spending the night in Sicily and the others in Italy. They departed from these bases today to take part in a mass bombing attack on enemy installations at Weiner-Neustadt, Austria. due to unfavorable weather conditions, the mission was unsuccessful and no bombs were dropped on the target. All of our planes returned safely.
- 25 Our planes returned from Sicily and Italy after the mission of the 24th. The area is a "sea of mud" as a result of the long, hard rainstorm in the evening. The movie was rained out.
- 26 "Matey," one of our cocker spaniel mascots, became a mother today. Matey gave birth to 5 pups in the early hours of the morning, one of the pups was born dead. "Bombsight," our other cocker mascot, is quite the proud father, but "Matey" won't let him near the pups. 'Matey" came over seas as a member of Lt. English's crew. The day was nonoperational, and the camp is all ready for the Group inspection. The ground is still very muddy, but the sun is shining again and the day was quite nice.
- 27 Nonoperational day, with the usual camp activities. All pups doing well.
- 28 The only operations for today was a practice mission for the new crews. Otherwise, all was quiet around the camp.
- 29 93rd Squadron Mission: The Group departed with Turin as the primary target and with about 5 secondary targets. Bad weather prevented the bombing of Turin, so the Marshalling Yards at Genoa, Italy suffered a plastering. 10 planes departed on the raid and all returned safely. Lt. Osborne and crew spent the night in Sardinia being forced down with engine troubles.
- 30 94th Squadron Mission. Another attempt was made to hit the Ball Bearing Factory at Turin, Italy, but bad weather prevented the completion of the mission. The old "dust bowl" is now just a big mud puddle due to the rain in the afternoon.
- 31 95th Squadron Mission. 3 planes from Squadron participated on today's raid on a RR viaduct at Anthoer, France. The mission was highly successful and all shops returned safely. A heavy rainstorm interrupted the pay line in the afternoon, but even a rain storm can't hold up pay day for long.

Sheet No. 1 War Diary, 416th Bombardment Sqdn. \_\_\_\_\_

Month of Jan, 1943. Prepared by E.H. Baldwin, 1st Lt., A.C. \_\_\_\_\_

(Station)



416 th

## THE AIR ECHELON

DAY	EVENTS
3	Ground Echelon departed for Mitchell, South Dakota and the Air Echelon departed for Salina, Kansas.
4 & 5	The group received 35 Fortresses and also news about a 6-day leave.
6 & 7	Members of the crews and ground echelon with the air echelon were processed in these two days. Furloughs were given out on the 7th of January to all members of the Air Echelon.
7 to 13	Air Echelon on 6-day leave
14 to 16	Several men AWOL while waiting for the late comers the rest of the members spent time checking equipment.
17 to 20	Everyone checking equipment and getting ready to move. The air echelon is also wondering when and where they will meet the ground echelon.
21	Air echelon departed Salina, Kansas at 0830 for DeRidder, La., by plane and arrived at DeRidder at 1300.
22 to 29	Much time spent in checking equipment and getting everything in shape for combat.
30	Departed DeRidder, La. at 1700 and arrived at Morrison Fld, Florida at 2200 by plane.
31	At Morrison Fld and still checking over equipment and making several test flights.

Sheet No. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 416th Bombardment Sqdn.

February, 1943

1 & 2	At Morrison Fld and still checking over equipment and making several test flights.
3	Departed Morrison Fld at 1300 for combat zone. First stop is Borinquen Fld, Puerto Rico. Landed at Puerto Rico at 1900. Quite a nice Fld.
4	At Puerto Rico and routine inspections of aircraft and equipment.
5	Departed Borinquen Fld, Puerto Rico at 1230 for Atkinson Fld, British Guiana, landed at 1830.
6	Departed Atkinson Fld, British Guiana at 1145 and arrived at Elem Brazil at 1645.

7	Departed Belen Brazil at 1100. Arrived at Natal, Brazil at 1730.
8	Usual camp duties, Natal, Brazil.
9	Departed Natal, Brazil at 0200 and arrived at Yundrum Fld, Bathurst, Gambia at 1230.
10	Departed Yundrum Fld, Bathurst Gambia at 0830. Arrived at Marrakech, Morocco Africa at 1600.
11 to 22	Bad weather at Marrakech and Fortresses could not continue on. Time spent visiting native towns. Rumors are going around that we were scheduled to go to England. Due to bad weather we may remain at some field in North Africa.
23	Departed Marrakech at 0915, and arrived at La Senia Airport, Oran, Algeria, North Africa at 1300. A good thing the bad weather set in because if we would have gone to England we would probably never again have seen our ground echelon.
24 to 28	At La Senia Airport and getting all the supplies we think we might need. Also received our motor transportation, consisting of a couple of jeeps and weapons carrier and 2 1/2-ton truck.

Sheet No. 13 \_\_\_\_\_ 416th Bombardment Sqdn.

February, 1943 \_\_\_\_\_ EVENTS

1	271 EM present, 48 on DS, 1 EM is in hosp, 18 Officers present and 37 on DS. Lt O'Rourke still in hospital.
2	Today we had our first March. 8 Officers and 200 EM plus 21 EM fr Hq detach marched to and from the city of Mitchell, South Dakota. (We sure looked plenty SHARP and really put on a show for the citizens of Mitchell.) Total distance marched was 9 1/2 miles; weather was fair and warm.
3	We are sending trucks into town for the purpose of swimming, bowling and attending church services; also trucks sent into town every Sunday noon for the purpose of soldiers who wish to have a good Sunday dinner with some of the local families. The town of Mitchell sure is going over big and is liked by all.
4 to 11	A lot of rumors going around and also a lot of inspections, drills and lectures.
12	Well, another march for today; 8 officers, 600 EM plus 22 EM fr Hqs marched to the city of Mitchell and attended a movie at the price of \$.11 per man. We were transported back to the fld in gov vehicles. Total distance marched was 4 1/2 miles. Weather was fair and quite windy.
13 to 20	Usual camp duties, AAB, Mitchell, South Dakota.

# Boise City Having No Luck Finding Crew That Bombed It

By John Klein  
World Staff Writer

BOISE CITY — Crew members of the B-17 would rather forget that night in 1943.

But the citizens of Boise City, perhaps the only American town bombed during World War II, would like to include those men in an anniversary celebration.

"I guess no one really wants to admit to being on that plane," said Boise City attorney Stan Manske. "They shouldn't worry about it. No one around here is mad ... anymore."

Boise City residents are raising funds for a monument on their courthouse square to commemorate the bombing of their town on July 5, 1943.

No, it was not the Germans or Japanese.

It was the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Six 100-pound practice bombs, loaded with four pounds of dynamite and 90 pounds of sand, were dropped on this town — 1940 population 1,144, now 1,761 — by mistake.

An Army Air Corps



training unit was stationed at Dalhart, Texas, about 30 miles south of Boise City. They were dropping bombs on a lighted practice range near Conlen, 20 miles northeast of Dalhart.

A navigator on the plane made a mistake. He believed the courthouse lights in Boise City were the target.

"They did pretty darn good," said Manske.

"Although none of the bombs hit the courthouse, all of them were within 73 feet.

"If they had been using real bombs, I guess there wouldn't be a Boise City anymore. I would imagine people would have relocated."

Instead, old timers in this small Cimarron County town, just 25 miles from the New Mexico border, have kept the memories of that night alive.

One of the six bombs did not explode and has been kept by residents. Recently, the bomb has been cleaned up and painted. It will become part of the monument along with

newspaper clippings about the bombing.

The Boise City Chamber of Commerce is planning a 50th anniversary celebration and would like to invite the crew members of the plane to attend.

"We've done our best to locate these guys," said Manske. "I guess they are a little reluctant.

"I know it probably wasn't funny that night but now it brings a smile to people's faces."

For years, it was believed Boise City was the only documented case of a city in the continental United States being bombed from the air.

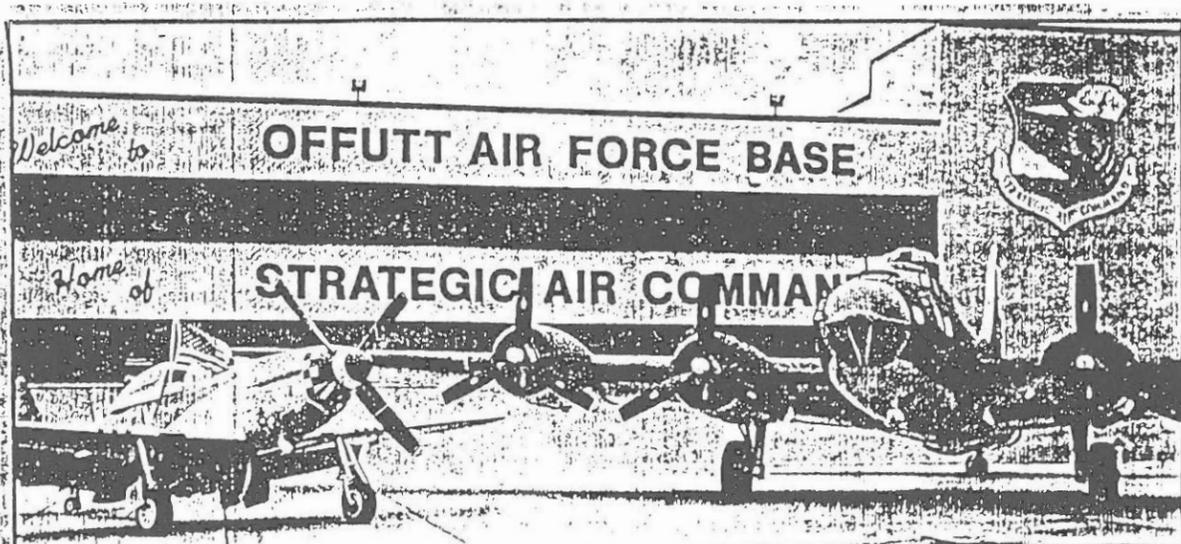
In research, chamber of commerce officials have found several other incidents, although it is uncertain if any of those other bombings involved a town.

The city originally planned to celebrate the anniversary last summer. However, fixing the one bomb and collecting information on the incident have delayed the monument and celebration.

Manske said he believes the monument will be erected sometime next summer. Citizens now plan to celebrate the bombing on July 5, 1993.

"We'll have quite a shindig out here," said Manske. "Sure wish those guys would come on out."

Does anyone who trained at Dalhart want to take credit for this? Sounds like you might get a free dinner out of it!



A piece of history. A B-17 "Flying Fortress," the bomber that flew daylight bombing raids on German production facilities during World War II, sits next to one of the best escort fighters during that era—the P-51 "Mustang." Both aircraft represent a piece of Air Force history. Tuesday, Sept. 18, the Air Force celebrates its 43rd anniversary. From the historic "Flying Fortress" of yesterday to today's B-1B "Lancer" and B-2 "Stealth" bomber, the Air Force has always stood ready. Gen. John T. Chain Jr., SAC Commander in Chief, speaks concerning the anniversary. See page 13.

# NEWS, DUES & VIEWS

## NOTICE TO NAVIGATORS

Save your 1990 calendar. It will be usable in 2001. And don't miss the lecture in the Hospitality Room on "How to convert the A-4 Navigation Kit into snowshoe bindings. george

### CROSSHAIRS - Dec '90 - p.16 SORTA' UP THE CREEK, EH WHAT?



"WIMPY" Wellington RAF Bomber

In the Fall 1990 issue of WINGS, newsletter of the Air Force Flyers Club (AFFC) a writer by the name of Doug McHardy gave a dissertation on the Wellington bomber, its operation and an amusing anecdote or so.

One such story begins with the statement that "wireless operators" [acronym reference of WAG] suffered "for a goodly percentage of navigators' refused to accept the D/F [directional finder] calculations from the WAGs."

Seems that a particular navigator, after being handed a D/F, "insisted that he knew

\*\*\*\*\*  
WE'VE PUT 27,000+ NAMES IN OUR COMPUTERS--ABOUT SAME TO GO--BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR 1991 SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP DONATION! WE NEED IT!

I am sure that our gentle readers have seen the picture of the five-engined B-17 with the fifth engine mounted in the nose for research purposes.

It was recently my privilege to swap yarns with one of the research engineers of a generation younger than ours. He recalled that a pilot reported to the ground "I am at 25,000 and have just been passed by a five-engined plane with four engines feathered!" george

Your 99th Staff has made special arrangements with KESHI of Santa Fe. They will provide an English-speaking clerk, they will accept your Yankee dollars, and there will be no customs inspection upon your return to the USA. Just ask for Robin, who happens to be the daughter of Sid and Buck of the Mayflower Group of the 99th.



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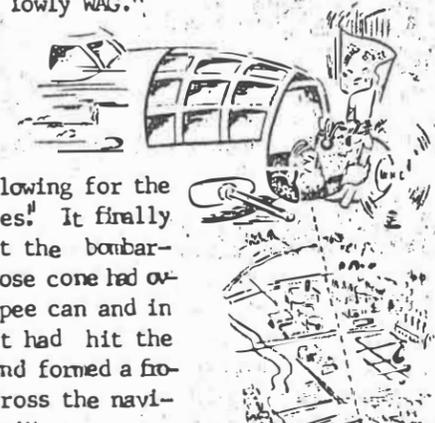
Robin B. Dunlap

where he was and did not need any superfluous data from the lowly WAG."

NAV maintained steadfastly that he "could see the certain river

he'd been following for the past 30 minutes." It finally came out "that the bombardier in the nose cone had overflowed his pee can and in consequence it had hit the slip stream and formed a frozen stream across the navigator's window!"

Some five minutes later a chagrined navigator screamed that they were lost as he "had been following a stream of frozen p..."...so was life aboard a Wellington!

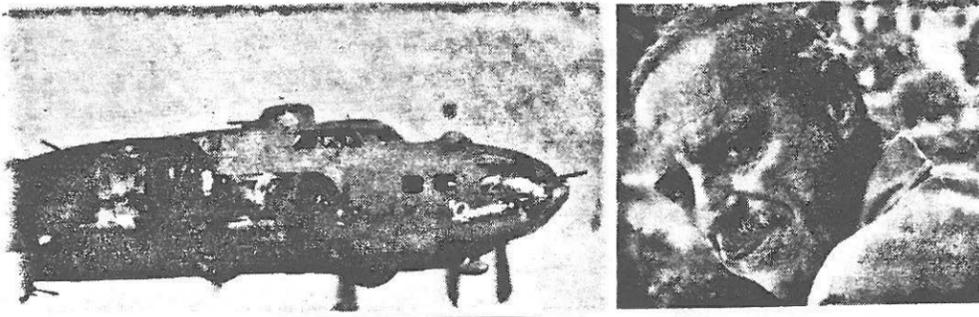


Sally and I are unable to read the 346th Squadron Diaries for what seem to be May 1943 to August 1943, inclusive.

Sorry, fellows, but the characters are too faint for more than meagre clues.

geo

## PRESS RELEASES



This B-17 "Flying Fortress," far left, was called *Queenie* by pilot Jules Horowitz and his crew. Former crew members such as Horowitz, left, of Palm Aire, will mark the 50th anniversary of the B-17's maiden flight with a reunion in Seattle, Wash.



In World War II, a young Jules Horowitz poses before aircraft.

# 'Flying Fortress' crews plan plane's 50th anniversary

"The day after Pearl Harbor I was standing in line in the rain, waiting to get in."

— Jules Horowitz,  
World War II pilot

By David Uhler  
Staff Writer

**POMPANO BEACH** — The lucky ones came home with war stories.

They flew their 50 required bombing missions, or the war ended, or they were released from POW camps and they came home.

Despite the memory-culling passage of 40 years, the war stories are still vivid for the crews and support personnel who flew the B-17 "Flying Fortress" bombers and kept them in the air.

Only a handful of the old B-17s are still around, but many of the men and women who knew them, loved them and maybe hated them, still hold reunions to talk about the planes and their comrades-in-arms.

But this year's reunion is a little different from previous get-togethers.

It's the 50th anniversary of the first B-17 flight, and reunions of more than 20 bombing groups are planned during a three-day celebration in Seattle, Wash. Boeing Aircraft Co., the Seattle-based designer of the B-17, is hosting the event, which starts Thursday. More than 10,000 people are expected to attend.

And among that throng, Jules Horowitz will undoubtedly find friends he hasn't seen in years.

Horowitz, a former B-17 pilot now living in Palm-Aire, keeps in touch with other members of the 99th Bomb Group through the organization's historical society. That's how the former ball turret gunner from Horowitz's crew recently located him.

"I told him, 'If you make it to Seattle I'll buy you a drink,'" Horowitz said.

Horowitz, 63, is a retired real estate investor who counts himself among the lucky ones. Like many other Americans, he got into the war early, caught up in the wave of national patriotic fervor following the Japanese sneak attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor.

"The day after Pearl Harbor I was standing in line in the rain, waiting to get in," Horowitz recalled.

Please see **FLIERS**, 18

## Fliers

Continued from page 3

Horowitz flew his first mission on July 21, 1943 and his 50th and final one on Feb. 10, 1944. He left the war as a captain and was promoted to major during a peacetime stint in the reserves.

His luck was good, even without participation in the superstitious practices followed by other airmen. Some crews believed it was bad luck to fly with someone on his last mission. Others always wore the same set of "lucky" clothes.

"By the time they finished their 50 missions their pants could stand up by themselves," Horowitz said.

Death never touched Horowitz or his crew, although sometimes it came close. Horowitz remembers the time they "loaned" their plane to another crew while they went for some rest and relaxation in Capri, Italy. The plane was shot down the next day and three men were killed.

One of Horowitz's hairiest episodes occurred after a bombing run over Italy. A piece of shrapnel from German flak cut a hydraulic pressure line on one of his four engines.

"The propeller started windmilling, but I couldn't feather it because the line was cut," Horowitz said.

Horowitz became separated from his squadron. A three-engine heavy bomber was usually a sitting duck in the air, a "cripple" enemy fighters loved to pounce on and cut to shreds. To escape detection and even the odds, Horowitz pulled the vibrating bomber down from 20,000 feet to treetop level and got back into U.S.-controlled airspace.

Horowitz made a successful emergency landing at a friendly airfield. As the plane rolled down the runway, the propeller from the stricken engine fell off.

"My flight engineer got out and kissed the ground," Horowitz said.

That wasn't the only time Horowitz

el, Wednesday, July 24, 1985

witz flew with three engines. A lack of spare parts forced him to use an oil-burning engine only occasionally during several missions. He fired up the "problem child" only on takeoffs and over the target during bombing runs.

But history books and pilot's log books — Horowitz's included — are filled with legendary stories about the reliability of the "Flying Fortress." Some planes returned safely to base missing large portions of wings and rear-tail stabilizers. One B-17, cut almost in half by enemy gunfire, made it back to its airfield in England, only to break in two when it landed on the runway.

The B-17s were powered by four 1,200-horsepower Wright engines and had a top speed of 302 mph and a cruising speed of 160 mph. The plane, which was capable of carrying 17,600 pounds of bombs, earned its "Flying Fortress" nickname from the 12 .50-caliber machine guns it carried for self-defense.

A total of 12,731 "Forts" were produced by Boeing, Douglas and Vega (now Lockheed). In the later months of the war, Boeing's production rate alone was 16 planes per day.

Some of those planes are still flying. One of them is "Sentimental Journey," a B-17 refurbished by an aircraft club based in Texas that calls itself the "Confederate Air Force."

The plane, which will be on display at Boeing Field during the celebration, is one of the reasons Horowitz is looking forward to his visit. Another is the chance he will have to show his wife, Anita, around the old warbird.

"My biggest thrill will be to get her in the cockpit of that airplane," said Horowitz. "She's heard me talk about it for 40 years."

"He never stops," she said with a grin.

## QUOTES

From the blueprints [Hermann] Lang had stolen, [Major] Groskopf explained, Professor Fuchs had developed a bombsight called Adler-Geraet, supposedly an improved version of the Norden. p. 61

This occurred in Berlin in 1937. This means that the Germans were the first to assemble a Norden bombsight. george

OR DID THEY ?

DECEMBER 1990

385th BGMA NEWSLETTER

### HOW THE GERMANS STOLE PLANS FOR THE NORDEN BOMBSIGHT

Ed Note: This compression of a 12-page article detailing how the Germans, prior to WWII, managed to acquire blueprints and drawings of key parts of the Norden bombsight was derived from documents furnished BOMBARDIERS by Loyd Searles, the author of the article THE BOMBSIGHT WAR: NORDEN VS SPERRY, published in IEEE's magazine SPECTRUM, September 1989, and reprinted on pages 13-17 of our December 1989 CROSSHAIRS. We are grateful to Loyd for this bit of Norden history.

BY Ned Humphreys

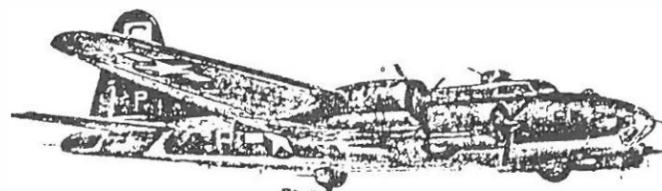
The odyssey of the Norden device that began in 1937 in Brooklyn ended in the spring of 1945 in an obscure village in Austria. A unit of General George S. Patton, Jr's rampaging Third Army stumbled upon a factory the Germans tried to hide in the Tyrolean Alps, and captured its super-secret product, called LUFTWAFFENZIELGERAET EX 42.

It was thought to be one of those ingenious electronic gadgets in whose invention the Germans supposedly excelled and its captors rushed it in triumph to the technical intelligence team that followed the Third Army.

So ends Chapter 4 entitled THE BOMBSIGHT FIXATION, of Ladislav Farrago's "The Game of the Foxes".

Aficionados of America's most famous 'military secret', the Norden bombsight, will find this chapter most interesting as it swells up details of how master spys work and the means they employed to acquire drawings or sketches of enough of the Norden major components to permit German engineers to fill-in the gaps as they 'rebuilt' a Norden from the stolen documents.

It all boils down to the fact that the Germans had copied the Norden sight by 1937, three years before 1940 when the British finally coaxed President Franklin D. Roosevelt into letting them share the bombsight.



from GOODBYE DARKNESS by William Manchester

Americans seem to have a special place in native [Philippine] hearts. When the Japs had conquered Manila, General Homma ordered a victory parade, the music to be provided by a local band. An audience of natives was rounded up. The tunes were greeted with scattered applause until the last one, which triggered a standing ovation. Homma, startled, smiled in all directions. He didn't know the Filipino musicians were playing "Stars and Stripes Forever." p. 86

HOMAGE TO CATALONIA George Orwell,

Sometimes it is a comfort to me to think that the aeroplane is altering the conditions of war. Perhaps when the next great war comes we may see that sight unprecedented in all history, a jingo with a bullet-hole in him. (Written in 1938 in Spain.) p. 66

The extraordinary devotion to duty of the men who flew the bombers is indicated by the fact that more awards and decorations were won by them than by the men of any other arm - and more cruelly by the fact that of the men who died, over 25,000 have no known grave. p. 7

Undoubtedly there was a considerable misunderstanding. Neither the British nor the Germans realized the very limited accuracy of night bombing. They did not yet appreciate that not only were the wrong areas in towns bombed but often enough the wrong towns were hit. The assumption with regard to each others actions was that what was hit had been aimed at and so mutual recrimination and eventually mutual retaliation arose from the idea that in both cases the enemy was indulging in 'terror' bombing. p. 28

... the Americans had been impressed by the inconsequential effects (in 1942) of British night bombing in Germany during 1940 and 1941 when, as a neutral country, they still had diplomatic and business contacts there. p. 50

This encouraging reduction in the casualty rate which enabled Bomber Command to maintain its offensive and to increase its rate of expansion was undoubtedly due in considerable measure to the introduction of window and it underlined the folly which had been committed by delaying the introduction of this countermeasure for more than a year after it became available on the ground that its use by the Germans would disrupt the British air defences. Mr. Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary of the period, who was a particularly obstinate advocate of this precaution, seemed unconvinced by the fact that the Germans hardly had a bombing force to be fended off and that the disruption of air defence was therefore likely to favor the British much more than the Germans. But of course Mr. Morrison was responsible for the home front and could not perhaps be expected to take a more than parochial view. Nor, unfortunately, was he the only offender in this respect. p. 71

So, instead of finishing the war in the Battle of Berlin, Bomber Command, despite its huge effort, painful endeavor and brave sacrifice, clinched a different matter. Ultimately, the cover of darkness did not avail. Bomber Command originally took to it to escape the German fighters but discovered that in it they could not find their targets. The means which they then developed to find targets in the dark also, broadly, availed the German fighters to find them and so now they could not escape the night fighters. Thus, to concentrate their attacks for long enough upon targets of sufficient importance to give them a chance of achieving decisive results, Bomber Command was exposed to casualty rates beyond what could be afforded and endured. In the Battle of Berlin, Bomber Command reached the unacceptable level of casualties but the effects of the bombing, painful and damaging as they were to Germany, did not even approach decisive proportions. p. 88

Before the advent of the Mustangs they (the Germans) had usually been able to hold off until the American bombers reached the limit of their fighter cover range. Now that they could not do this they suddenly struck early in the American outward flight. Though they scored an impressive success this also revealed an unfavorable tendency for the Germans. They had lost their safe zones for intercepting the Fortresses. They now had to strike whenever and wherever they could. The Mustangs forced them to do that. So all the other American and British fighters, the Lightnings, Thunderbolts and even the Spitfires began to get chances of engaging the Germans. p. 99

This is an extract from Bill Smallwood's first book, currently entitled TOMLIN'S CREW. Bill tells us that the title may well be changed before publication. george

TOMLIN'S CREW

with worn records of popular band music. Lying on our bunk beds, on excelsior-filled mattresses, after lights out we twelve Americans would listen to strains of Tommy Dorsey's trombone playing *Night and Day*, our thoughts a million miles away. The most vivid event in our camp was liberation, when an advance unit of the Russian Army arrived and opened the gates which had denied us freedom for so long. To this day, when I meet a fellow Kriegie from Stalag Luft I, it is likely that we will go over a number of things, but always the liberation, with those Russian troops, Mongolians, many of them, offering us vodka, attempting conversation. The most successful reaction I was to receive <sup>CAME</sup> in an attempt to converse with our liberators ~~one~~ while sharing guard duty with a short Russian assault trooper. We couldn't use words, but when I fished out a package of Camel cigarettes from <sup>my</sup> ~~his~~ blouse he saw the silhouette of the camel on the side, and immediately began jabbing his finger excitedly at this animal, something, no doubt, reminding him of his ~~his~~ homeland.

Returning toward Barracks 14 I made a stop at the washroom and almost collided with Paul Lambert. He quickly motioned me aside and in a low voice indicated that some senior 8th Air Force people he knew were attempting to arrange to evacuate the lot of us from Stalag Luft I by air. But then he tempered this exciting news by adding that the local runway at Barth could have been mined by departing Germans; apparently no one really knew. It was almost a miraculous thing when, a few hours later, on a dare a partially inebriated Russian officer was said to have motored down the suspect air strip. Steering straight ahead his half track vehicle failed to set off any mines which might have been placed beneath the runway, proving it was safe. The balance of our stay was merely preparation for departure. No one in Allied authority really knew what the Russian attitude would be should American bombers suddenly appear, intent on removing Allied airmen. In the event our liberators chose to stand aside. Soon the "Forts" flew in and I was pressed into service as a loader, checking to see that only thirty five men climbed aboard each B-17, fitted now with bucket seats in the waist section. Departing in one of the flights, as our plane headed for France I took a last look out of a waist window back toward Stalag Luft I, with its barbed wire. Fifteen months ago our crew had penetrated German skies in a Flying Fortress, and now here I was leaving in one.

J.W. Smallwood, Jr.  
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We continue the subscriptions of deceased members for an extra year, but please remember to send us any change of address.

\* \* \* \* \*

## REUNIONS-

### 30 Apr 1991 99th Bomb Group, Albuquerque NM

Bernice Barr, 7408 Vista del Arroyo, Albuquerque NM 87109

13 jun 91 19th Bomb Group Assn. San Antonio TX

James A. Kiracofe 274 Quinn Rd., West Alexandria OH 45381

phone (513) 839-4441

Mid September 1991 A reunion of all airmen who were shot down and rescued by citizens, partisans or Chetnicks in Yugoslavia is being planned for Mid-September 1991

Contact: John Rucigay (518) 877-8131, 14 Ashley Dr. Ballston Lake NY 12019

16 Sep 1991 15th Air Force Association, Las Vegas NV

15 Air Force Ass'n.P.O.Box 6325 March Air Force Base CA 92518

18sep1991 8th Air Force New Orleans

Eighth Air Force Historical Society, 1607 E. Willow Ave., Wheaton IL 60187

### Spring 1992 99th Bomb Group, Washington DC

Bernice Barr, 7408 Vista del Arroyo, Albuquerque NM 87109

## TAPS

JOHN POLLITZER I am taking the liberty to advise you of the death of one of your members. . . .

Mr. Pollitzer passed away December 22, 1990. respectfully, Charles T. Brown

JOHN S. FINNEGAN My husband of more than 42 years, John S. Finnegan passed away January 1, 1991 from complications due to pneumonia.

He had always felt he was living on borrowed time since his plane went down July 5, 1943 and he was taken prisoner in Sicily. He was wounded and had a broken leg so he was fortunate to be kept in a hospital and attended by the Italians until the English Commandos invaded the island and rescued him.

The DAV conducted a fitting memorial service. . .sincerely Joyce Finnegan

### John 'Jack' Pollitzer, 79, founded Beaufort Realty

BEAUFORT  
John D. "Jack" Pollitzer, 79, of 10-A Sunrise Bluff died Friday.

Born in Beaufort, he was a son of the late Henry Richard and Mabel Higgins Pollitzer. An Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, he flew 50 missions with the 8th Air Force and as a tail gunner was credited with shooting down seven enemy planes shot down. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a graduate of Presbyterian College, where he was a member of the football and track teams, and attended the Medical University of South Carolina. He was owner, broker-in-charge and founder of Beaufort Realty and was a member of Beaufort County Realtors Association, the Beaufort Yacht Club and First Presbyterian Church.

Surviving are sons, John Pollitzer of Beaufort and John Dockstader of Graham, Texas; and a sister, Mrs. E.B. Mitchell of Beaufort.

Services will be held at 2 p.m. today in Evergreen Cemetery. Copeland Funeral Home is in charge.

99th Bomb Gp Historical Society  
 Walter H. Butler - Treasurer  
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Charles W. Clift	9606 Strawberry Plains Pl.,	Strawberry Plains,	TN 37871
Richard C. Vaughn	P.O.Box 97	Nimitz	WV 25978
Anthony Robinson	5251 Tennis Lane	Delray Beach	FL 33484
Leroy W. Newby	346 Pineview Dr.	Venice	FL 34293

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962 James M. Wescott	HCR # 66, Box 195	Van Buren	AR 72956
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