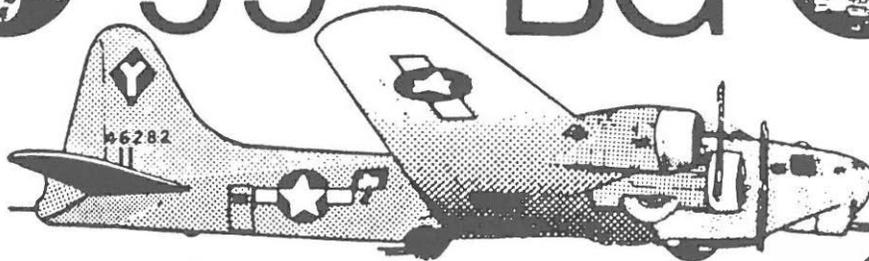




99th BG



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS
HaSq, 346th, 347th, 348th, 416th
395 COMBAT MISSIONS
1943 AFRICA - EUROPE 1945



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society NEWSLETTER



Vol. 12 No.1

SOCIETY OFFICERS, 1991-1992

Jan 1 1992

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Greetings 99'ers: THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I look at the calendar I wonder where the summer has gone. When you read this it will be cold and snowing in some parts of the country and it will be close to Thanksgiving and then Christmas will be just around the corner...then New Years. So the best of everything to all in the coming year.

Arrangements for the reunion in Rapid City in September 1992 are coming along great. However, many of us feel 17 months is a long time without a get-together and have been on Jim Smith of Kansas City to have a get together this Spring. So he has come up with a Mini-reunion. This will not affect the reunion in Rapid City. He has a block of rooms set aside at the Rodeway Inn in Overland Park, Kansas, for April 1 - 5, 1992. The rooms are \$45 and \$50. The \$50 rooms include a refrigerator and hair dryer. Fee for the Hospitality Room is \$15.00 per person. There will be a banquet Friday evening, the price will be \$26.00 per person and this will include two drinks per person. Jim reports the food at Rodeway Inn is way above average. Send check to Jim Smith, 9801 Richmond Drive, Kansas City, MO 64134, for the Hospitality Room and banquet. For your hotel reservations - there is a toll-free phone number to the Rodeway Inn - 1-800-444-4191. For those driving in the address is 7000 West 108th Street (1-435 & Metcalf), Overland Park, Kansas. For those who will be flying in, let Jim know your Flight No. and arrival time - some one will be there to drive you to the Rodeway Inn. So make your reservations and we'll see you in Kansas.

Sincerely,

Harvey Jennings
Harvey Jennings

There is a current rumor that I printed the same President's Letter in two successive newsletters. The fact that I have two unpublished Messages from Harvey indicates that this rumor might be true.

Harvey, perhaps you should date these letters. Sorry. george

Greetings 99ers!



Now that the holidays have come and gone, I'd like to wish all of you a HAPPY New Year and the best of everything for 1992.

Our Mini-Reunion is still on go for April 1 through 5, 1992. Registration sheet is in the back of this Newsletter. Mike and Marion tell me the regular reunion in Rapid City in September 1992 is coming along fine. Mike and Lettie have closed the ranch and headed south for the winter.

The Air Force Muscum at March Air Force Base, Riverside, California, will be completed and open in 1993. We are hoping to hold our '93 Reunion in Ontario, California, at that time. Bernie Barr and his wife Doris will host it. The 15th Air Force will hold its 50th Anniversary in 1993 at Riverside. Will keep you informed as to dates, etc., as more information comes in.

Hope to see all of you in Overland, Kansas, in April 1992!

God Bless



Harvey

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

GREETINGS:

Reading the November, 1991 99th B.G. Newsletter cover to cover is sure to bring up memories you hadn't thought of for a mighty long time. Even though I was in the 346th, I still read all of the Squadron Diary's and find them all to be equally interesting.

For example: On February 14, 1944 (Valentine's Day), Julius Horowitz, well known to all of us, completed his 50 missions, he along with others.

For another: On February 19th the diary speaks of fresh meats being served in the mess halls and referred to the improving fresh foods being supplied. Realizing this was in the 348th, but I would assume this happened all through the Group, I can't recall any such improvement, but it is good to know that our chow had improved.

For another: The diary refers to non-operational days when flight crews went into town for a warm bath and maybe a shave and haircut along with those necessary times of recreation, what there was of it. At these times, occasionally, radio operators were scheduled for reorientation classes in code and changing radio procedures. Other times we were scheduled for First Aid classes. These times were aggravating to us, of course, and we envied the latitude other crew members enjoyed. One Radio Operator said: "If I ever get shot down, all it would do is foul up my school record!" Now I thought that statement covered our positions well. However, we did hold fast to the disciplines we were all subject to and we all knew that both the radio and first aid refreshers were necessary improvements.

Some thoughts here; "From 1st Peter Chapter 2, verse 20 we read; "But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God."



Joe
Joe C. Kenney, Chaplain

October 15, 1991

Dear Bill,

I just finished reading the July '91, 99th BG newsletter, including your letter to Mr. and Mrs. Barr (the time delay is a tribute to the life style and pace of Florida living). Thanks for the recapitulation on the Innsbruck mission. First, for record accuracy, you are correct about the date of the mission, It was December 29, 1944, according to my official "operational missions" log. It was also my 46th and 47th mission (a double credit flight) and should have been worth four credits from my point of view. As you know, I was not part of your regular crew, and, in fact, I don't think I knew any of you at all. I was squadron navigator at the time, so I lucked (?) into Colonel Glassford's maiden flight.

Your recollection of that mission coincides very much with mine. I will add just a few notes of trivia to flesh out the record (one of us might write a book!) I remember very well someone--now I know that it was you--peeling back the blood-soaked, shredded trouser leg of the heat suit to find the location and extent of the wound. I remember the application of the sulfa powder, but resisted the morphine. With the flying skills being exhibited, I, like most of us at that time, felt that at least a bail-out was in our future, and I wanted to be as mentally alert as possible. A tourniquet was applied high on my thigh. Because the entire trouser of my heat suit was now inoperable, and the tourniquet was cutting off blood circulation, my second biggest fear was frost bite and ultimate amputation. With the second periodic release of the tourniquet, we could see that the extreme, low temperature had hastened the blood coagulation, so a pressure bandage replaced the tourniquet. Now I could get back to the repetitiously scenic view of the Alps.

The good Colonel, without my help, ultimately found the course home. We were flying "on the deck"--about 200 feet above the Adriatic. I would like to think it was out of consideration for my lack of heat--actually it was sound tactics to minimize fighter attack. With at least one engine totally out, and a full bomb load still on board, his wisdom dictated that we should "unload". The speed of the bombs and the plane, at 200 feet, meant that we would be over the impact zone, and the Colonel would have succeeded where the German flack batteries had failed.

Someone on board, with early assertiveness training, pointed this out to him, so we brought the bombs home.

There was another minor tragedy that was a byproduct of that misbegotten mission--for which Col. Glassford was not responsible. My own crew was fairly young, and we were all still trying to graduate from beer to Italian wine. As a result we would all put our two ounces of "medicinal flight liquor" after each flight, in a glass jug that we had obtained, the object being to celebrate the New Year in macho style. I was still confined to the the dispensary, listening to static- diluted Auld Lang Synes on a head set-- while my hard-earned hooch was being unashamedly guzzled by my crew.

That proved to be my last mission-I was rotated back to the States. Since I had been shot down, and had to bail out over Yugoslavia on my 22nd mission, and the Glassford mission was my 47th mission, they decided to waive the remaining three obligations and packed me off to Ellington, AFB. Good duty.

The recent Reunion seems to have been great. I'm sorry I missed it. Perhaps when one is held in Washington. D.C., we can get together. In the meantime, if you get to Southern Florida please contact me.

Sincerely



Norris J. Domangue
15 River Drive
Tequesta Florida 33469

Dear Walter;

My 1992 dues are enclosed.

Info: Milton E. Ficklin "Pop", Flight Engineer on Pete Torres crew, 347th Squadron, died of cancer in the Spring of 1991. He should be listed with you as he was a member of the Society.

Request: Would you please pass to Bernie the following info?

The letter from Les Hansen in the Sept. 1, 1991 edition. I was the Bombardier he referred to in the letter. His memory is excellent, I'm from Kansas, my first name is Lawrence. I was red-headed in those days. We both had decided we would refuse to be on Glassford's crew if there was any way out. If picked of course (sic). I forget who was co-pilot, Herb Holdsombeck?

See you in SD.

W.B. "Red" Warner

Dear Bernie;

I was on the mission to Innsbruck 12/27/44 and the accounts in the paper are correct.

This was my 3rd mission and the reason I remember so well was when I got back, I found a World Telegram informing me my father had died on the 19th of December and I was notified on Dec. 28(?)th, 1944 evening.

Lt. Klopping was Pilot, Lt. Lyle Beuchler was Co-Pilot.

O.H.Peltzer 2515 Coolidge, Wichita KS 67204

The Diamondbacks has been completed. This is a history of all B-17s assigned to the 99th BG. Cost is \$6.00 which includes postage.

5th Bomb Wing History of Aircraft Assigned is also available. This is a history of all B-17s (including the 99th) assigned to the 5th Wing. 130 plus pages. Cost is \$16.00 which includes postage.

Send your request to Dick Drain, Box 664, Westcliffe CO 81252.
Allow 30 days for delivery.

Glad to hear you "fired" yourself. After I retired for the second time, I realized there was no future in work. I have been busier than ever and don't see how I would find time for more work if I was so inclined.

Dick Drain, 416th et al

AND HERE IS A SAMPLE FROM PAGE 10

229604	Thundermug	---	Xfer from 2 BG 28-3-44. no msns with 99 BG. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. Xfer to 463 BG 9-44. SAL OS 14-10-44.
229613	----	---	Xfer from 2 BG 28-3-44. no msns with 99 BG. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. to U.S. 27-2-45. to Bush Field 3-7-45.
229619	Road Hog	---	asgd to 301 BG 19-3-43. Xfer to 2 BG 14-11-43. Xfer to 99 BG 28-3-44. no msns with 99 BG. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. Xfer to 463 BG 9-44. to U.S. and Bush Field 18-6-45.
229628	Mel's Mess	---	Xfer from 2 BG 28-3-44. no msns with 99 BG. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. to U.S. and Bush Field 23-5-45.
229652	----	347	asgd to 301 BG 28-5-43. Xfer to 2 BG 14-11-43. Xfer to 99 BG 28-3-44. 2 msns with 99 BG. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. to U.S. and Bush Field 3-7-45.
229696	Fort Alamo II	416	asgd 11-5-43. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. 131 msns. declared excess 15-10-44. SAL OS
229775	Wongo	346	asgd to 97 BG 16-4-43. Xfer to 99 BG 14-11-43. Xfer to 483 BG 31-3-44. to U.S. and Altus 22-6-44.

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The 99th Bomb Group Historical Society, Albuquerque, New Mexico.



THREE HUNDRED FORTY SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES

SQUADRON HISTORY

FOREWORD

This is the record of the 347th Bombardment Squadron of the 99th Bombardment Group (H), AAF. In it, you will find the history of our outfit--its personnel, progress, travels, happenings both serious and amusing, from the Squadron's beginning in 1942.

It is hoped that this record will be a living, breathing composition, as the Squadron itself is a breathing, living being and that someday it will be a valuable source of memories.

This record was inspired by our first Squadron Commander, Captain (now Major) Lawrence S. Semans, and carried on later by Major Lewellyn T. Boatwright, Jr., his successor.

The growth of the 347th has been due largely to their guidance, suggestions and advice.

He may be called the "Old Man" of the 347th, but if you see an erect, athletic figure bustling around faster than anyone else, it's probably Major Semans, our first Squadron Commander.

The "saga of Semans," or "From Private to CO in 12 Years," began in Uniontown, Pa., in 1907, where the Major was born Lawrence Sutton Semans. The Major doesn't recall if he was flying before he walked, but he did plenty of it later.

He was in the class of 1929 at Princeton. There's a popular conception (believed to be circulated by Princeton men) that Princeton men automatically acquire a smooth technique with women. Anyway, the Major married Sarah Beeson in 1934, now has two children--eight-year-old Henrietta (born on Dec. 7th, incidentally) and five-year-old Pauline.

Major Semans' military career began in 1929 when he was an enlisted man in the Pennsylvania National Guard. He received his flight training at Brooks and Kelly Fields, Texas, finishing in 1931; and then went on the reserve list until 1940. During this time, he was a bond salesman in Pittsburgh, Pa., but don't hold that against him. Came '40 and the Major shoved off for Langley Field, Texas, later hit MacDill in Florida, Gowen in Idaho, and finally turned up our boss.

OUR DAY

To the USAAF, the beginning of the 347th Squadron was just another extract. But to us, the squadron members, that extract was the beginning of (we hope) great things. What it actually did was transfer a cadre of men from the 43rd Bombardment Squadron at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, to the new, fledgling 347th.

Changes were made in the personnel of the cadre, but on Sept. 28, 1942, an advance unit set out to set up shop at the Army Air Base, Walla Walla, Wash. Two days later, the remainder of the cadre (including mascot "Barney," the laziest and most affectionate St. Bernard this side of the Alps) followed.

It was Indian summer in Walla Walla in those October days when the squadron was struggling to get organized. All four squadrons were squeezed into one small orderly room, which looked like Grand Central Station on a holiday week end.

We had one lone ship, hard-working "122," which was flying eight hours a day. Practically everyone grabbed a ride in it, but no one could dislodge Lt Richardson from the co-pilot's seat. He hung up 120 hours by the end of October (Major Semans flew 70 hours and Lt Cantwell 50, as pilots).

By November 1, organization was almost complete and full second phase training started. Flight leaders Capt Burrell, Lt Covert, later Captain, and Lt (now Captain) Clark arrived and were checked out O.K. Eight crews came from the 43rd at Gowen. We adopted the squadron insignia--the flying Jackass, and we had three planes.

Thus, the squadron sweated out its growing pains, but meanwhile, all this was going on.

At Walla Walla, the Squadron received additional personnel and began the phases of its raining. Light fog and intermittent bad weather hampered flying activities and so it was decided to move the Group and Squadron.

Sheet No. 1. War Diary. 347th Squadron, 99th B.G. A.P.O #520

25 Sept. 1942 to 15 Sep 1943. Prepared by Philip J. Barnes, 1st Lt., A.C.

Nov. 15, 1942

The movement of the 347th Squadron to Sioux City, Iowa, has been completed and a full training program instituted. This involves night flying and occasional ground classes from 0130 to 0330 hours.

Dec. 1, 1942

Training operations are greatly hampered by a blizzard and the runways are blocked by snow.

Dec. 2, 1942

All airplanes are out of commission. Maintenance is impossible as work has to be done in the open and the temperature did not go above 10 degrees during the day.

Dec. 25, 1942.

Memories of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." A happy day.

Jan. 4, 1943

All packing completed and we are scheduled to move tomorrow. A bad ice storm and blizzard during the night.

Jan 5, 1943

The Air Echelon pushed off for Salina, Kansas to pick up their full complement of planes and equipment while the Ground Echelon moved to Watertown, S.D under the command of Major Frank Dunnington, the Group S-2.

Jan 22, 1943

The Air Echelon moved to the Army Air Base at DeRidder, La., to get in more test flights and practice on water navigation.

Jan. 25, 1943

Air Echelon moved to Morrison Field, at West Palm Beach, Florida.

Feb 4, 1943

At last the departure of the planes and crews to their overseas destination from West Palm Beach. The planes took off and headed for Boringen Field, Puerto Rico.

Feb. 6, 1943

Slated to leave Boringen Field but had to turn back because of weather.

Feb. 7, 1943

Left Puerto Rico and flew to Atkinson Field, Georgetown, British Guiana.

Feb. 8, 1943

Made Cal de Caens Field at Belem, Brazil, after a flight through bad weather that almost forced a turnback.

Feb. 9, 1943

Flew to Natal, Brazil.

Feb. 10, 1943

Getting all planes ready for the long over-water hop.

Feb. 11, 1943

Left at 0115 and arrived at Bathurst, British Gambia at 1300.

Feb. 12, 1943

On to Marrakech, French Morocco.

Feb. 13, 1943

Many training flights at Marrakech. Getting supplies and transportation lined up preparatory to leaving.

Feb 15, 1943

Watertown, S.D. is chiefly remembered by the Ground Echelon for the steaks at the Hotels Lincoln and Grand, the fine welcome from all its people, and the weather that dropped down to -38° , so that even Barney, the big St. Bernard dog was content to huddle by the fire. The big Squadron Dance on February 12, 1943, was accorded highest plaudits by townsfolk and members alike. The concert by S/Sgt Porges made local history, especially his "Kemp Street Blues," an original composition named for the main street of Watertown.

Feb. 23, 1943

Ground echelon departed for Oklahoma City by train. Ugly rumors that we may be kept in U.S.A. as a processing unit. Everyone praying it isn't so. Long-awaited furloughs start and end March 6, after six days for everybody.

Feb. 25, 1943

Arrival of Ground echelon at Tinker Field, Oklahoma City.

Mar. 2, 1943 - Mar. 10, 1943

Air Echelon on to La Senia A/D at Oran, Algeria for O.T.U. school, which involved high-altitude flying, gunnery, bombing, and ground school. All the planes were checked by the base personnel, modifications installed and made ready for combat.

Mar. 11, 1943

Major Semans and Major Boatwright and Capt Burrell proceeded to the 97th Bomb Gp Field at Chateaudun and accompanied them on a mission.

Mar. 17-19, 1943

Ground Echelon departed from Oklahoma City for Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, N.J.

Mar. 21, 1943

All Air Echelon heavy equipment loaded and sent by transport plane. Fortresses were loaded to depart from Oran.

Mar. 22, 1943

Squadron took off and flew to the field of the 301st Bomb group at St Donat, Algeria. A camp was established there and a few practice missions accomplished.

Mar. 25, 26, 27, 1943

Started to set up our own base at Navarin, Algeria.

Mar. 29, 1943

In the Air Echelon, Major Boatwright became Squadron CO and Major Semans became Group Operations Officer.

The Ground Echelon was getting a taste of processing, with Lt Davis acting as Supply Officer and staying up all hours issuing, salvaging, and exchanging clothes and equipment.

Mar. 31, 1943

The first mission, against Villacidro A/D, Sardinia, was led by Col Upthegrove. All planes returned safely to base, heavy flak but no enemy fighters encountered.

The combat crews were disappointed in the lack of action and are looking forward to a little trouble from enemy sources.

At night, much difficulty was experienced in getting bombs to the planes and servicing them because of the lack of ground personnel and inadequate facilities of the service group. The bomb servicing was finally completed by help of personnel from other groups.

Apr. 2, 1943

5th Wing declared this a holiday and the day was spent in getting all the ships in condition. They were loaded and made ready to go.

Apr. 14, 1943

Planes took off to bomb Monserrato A/D, Sardinia and the first casualty was reported. S/Sgt W.F. Bowen was killed by machine-gun bullets when a 20mm shell exploded in the tail-gunnery compartment.

About 25 E/A encountered. Lt Harold S. Luther, Lt Jack E. Cook, and S/Sgt Richard E. Mesner each credited with one ME-109 probably destroyed.

Apr. 17, 1943

Six B-17s bombed port of Palermo, Sicily. Mission accomplished and all planes returned safely. Heavy flak was encountered and 12 enemy fighters. S/Sgt William D. Stanbro credited with one ME-110 destroyed.

Apr. 21-24, 1943

These were nonoperational due to intermittent rain that made mud holes of the landing fields and roads. On the 23rd, we experienced rain for 12 hours that started at 1500.

Apr. 28, 1943

Ground Echelon left Camp Kilmer, N.J. and boarded the "Edmund B. Alexander" at Staten Island for overseas duty. The good ship pulled out of the harbor early the next morning. Goodbye America, hello Air Echelon!

May 3, 1943

The target was Bizerte Harbor, Tunisia; on the way back they ran into a solid overcast from 200 feet up to 11,000 feet. The ETA was 1900 hours and at that time 50 trucks and jeeps were placed around the runway to light it up. Only one plane reached the base and the lights were left on until after midnight. During the evening until 2300 hours calls were heard from the planes over the command sets and VHF. Other calls were received from various points giving places of landing.

Planes piloted by Capt Harry R. Burrell landed at Fountain Chaide. Plane piloted by Lt Col Leroy A. Rainey made a crash landing in the Mediterranean. Lt Col Rainey, S/Sgt Murray, S/Sgt E.P. May and T/Sgt Hall reached shore safely. Lost on this flight was our first co-pilot--the boy who flew 120 hours last October, and who was popular with all--1st Lt Preston E. Richardson. He and T/Sgt Lief Soiem died at sea, while S/Sgt Bonaldi, T/Sgt Rohan, Sgt Daniels, 2nd Lt Alfred Greig, and 2nd Lt Joseph Collins are listed as missing.

May 13, 1943

"Edmund B. Alexander" arrives at Mers-el-Kebir after strenuous--and almost solo--trip across the Atlantic.

May 15, 1943

Word was received by the Air Echelon that the next 3 days would be holidays. The personnel left for Algiers, Oran, Constantine and other cities. Others went to view the nearby Roman Ruins at Djamilia.

It was learned today that the ground crews were in Oran and would arrive as soon as transportation permitted.

May 21, 1943

Mission against Castelvetrano. Mission accomplished and all planes returned safely with no casualties. 30 E/A encountered. S/Sgt Jack D. Guerard credited with destroying one enemy ME-109.

May 25, 1943

Our planes took off to bomb Messina and accomplished their mission. The plane piloted by Lt H.B. Bankhead landed at Tunis with 2 engines out from flak received over the target.

S/Sgt Fred B. Manship, Radio Operator, died from flak injuries. Pilots reported opposition from 20-30 enemy planes.

S/Sgt E.A. LaRoche destroyed one FW-100, Lt J.A. Boyle destroyed one ME-109, Lt J.S. Flex destroyed one ME-109, S/Sgt E.P. May was credited with one ME-109 destroyed, and S/Sgt Herrmann credited with one ME-109 probably destroyed.

May 26-27, 1943

Ground Echelon arriving at Navarin by train and motor convoy. There were joyful reunions between the Air and Ground Echelons who had parted the previous January in Sioux City.

June 2, 1943

This was a holiday but we were honored by some distinguished visitors: Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Lovett and Lt General Carl Spaatz.

June 7-11, 1943

The island of Pantelleria was bombed until it surrendered on June 11th.

June 12, 1943

Lt Philips J. Barnes assumed duties as Squadron Intelligence Officer.

June 13, 1943

Brigadier General Atkinson presented awards to the combat crews.

June 14, 1943

We were visited by Major General Doolittle and Air Marshal Viscount Trenchard of the R.A.F. They spoke for a short while at the briefing tent.

June 17, 1943

Word was received that several German paratroopers were captured at St. Arnaud. Extra precautions were taken to guard the planes.

June 22, 1943

The main excitement is the anticipation of an Arab revolt tomorrow at 1800 hours, all personnel were confined to the base.

June 23, 1943

No one was permitted off the base due to the threatened Arab trouble. However, there was no report of any actual uprising.

June 25, 1943

On the mission to Messina, Sicily, Sgt Thomas Shannon, waist gunner, was killed instantly by a piece of flak while S/Sgt Walter Schneider and Sgt Ray Potter were wounded.

June 26, 1943

A disaster overtook the 1071st Ordnance Company, located Northeast of the field. While unloading 500lb bombs from a truck convoy, the bombs exploded with a terrific roar, sending smoke a mile into the air. The Ordnance Company and Service Squadron had 16 men killed and 4 badly injured.

June 27, 1943

We were visited by Mr. Pierre Hauss of International News Service. He spoke on Germany and stressed that they would be a tough enemy to defeat.

July 1, 1943

Today marked the start of another month of history for the Ninety-Ninth Bombardment Group. The day was spent getting all aircraft in commission for the expected "big push." Invasion rumors of Europe were frequent. During the afternoon, we were subjected to heavy winds. They covered everything with dust and blew down the Group briefing tent and the 347th Orderly Room tent.

July 4, 1943

A very hot day with a temperature of 103° at 1100 hours. Wind blew in from the desert and added to the discomfort of the heat. About 1345, a spectacular fire broke out in the Ordnance dump. A large quantity of incendiary bombs and some frags exploded and burned. Large columns of smoke poured from the scene for almost two hours before the fire burned itself out.

July 5, 1943

Seven planes of our Squadron took off to bomb Gerbini Airdrome in Sicily. The mission was accomplished in spite of the opposition of more than 100 enemy fighters. The following men received credit for enemy planes destroyed: S/Sgt J.D. Guerrard, 1 ME-109 destroyed; S/Sgt J.F. Burkhardt, 1 Ma-202 destroyed; Lt Dean Coleman, 1 FW-190 destroyed; Lt T.C. Hawke, 1 Ma-202 destroyed; Sgt W.D. Brust, 1 ME-109 destroyed; and S/Sgt H.H. Klug, 1 Ma-202 [destroyed].

July 9, 1943

A special night mission was flown to Sicily by the Group. Capt H.R. Burrell flew a plane from our Squadron that had the secret equipment. The Ninety Ninth Bombardment Group had the honor of leading the invasion of Sicily.

July 16, 1943

Lt Thomas C. Hawke died of flak injuries received in the raid over San Giovanni, Italy. A Bombardier, though mortally wounded at the start of the bomb run, he dropped his bombs on the target.

July 18, 1943

Nonoperational today, the first since July 2nd.

July 19, 1943

Rome was bombed today and great care was taken that no religious or historical shrines were hit. Herbert L. Mathews, of the New York Times, flew in the plane piloted by Capt H.R. Burrell.

July 25, 1943

The big news today was that Benito Mussolini resigned as Premier of Italy.

July 22, 1943

The target was at Foggia, Italy and fifteen enemy fighters were met. T/Sgt William J. Murphy destroyed one ME-110; Lt Jack B. Abrams destroyed one ME-109; S/Sgt George T. McCluskey destroyed one ME-110; S/Sgt James E. Purnell destroyed one ME-109; T/Sgt Donald F. Gregory destroyed one FW-190; T/Sgt Ruben M. Wilburn destroyed one ME-109 and one ME-110; S/Sgt Joseph J. Macchiaverna destroyed one ME-109.

Aug 2-4, 1943

Entire Ninety Ninth Bomb Group moved by plane and motor convoy to Mohammedia, Tunisia.

Aug 6, 1943

First mission flown from Mohammedia base to Messina, Sicily. The flak was heavy, intense, and inaccurate. No enemy fighters were encountered.

Aug 7, 1943

An air raid was directed at Bizerta by the enemy. Intense activity was noted toward digging fox holes.

Aug 15, 1943

A mission was first planned but later canceled. Tonight we had a 90% eclipse of the moon.

Aug 17, 1943

The first time we dropped bombs in France, at Le Tube A/D, Marseilles. Thirteen fortresses took off from our squadron and all returned safely, though six of them had flak holes.

At 2100 hours, some 75 enemy bombers raided Bizerte. The sky was red with tracers and several of the enemy bombers were reported brought down before the rest were driven off.

Aug 19, 1943

An engineering and operational record was established for the Squadron and the Group today. Of fourteen planes assigned to the Squadron, fourteen took off on a mission to Foggia, fourteen went over the target and dropped their bombs and fourteen returned safely. Thus, well-earned credit was bestowed on an excellent ground crew and an efficient air crew.

Aug 30, 1943

Brigadier General Atkinson presented Colonel Upthegrove with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Silver Star. Major Boatwright and Capt Burrell were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and other awards were given to men of the Squadron.

Sep 8, 1943

Today we bombed Frascati, near Rome, and the headquarters of the German Eighth Command. The town was completely destroyed.

At 1730, it was announced that Italy has surrendered. We later heard that Allied troops had started their invasion.

Sep 13, 1943

Today was the first holiday in ten days.

Sep 15, 1943

The crews were alerted until 1430, when we were notified that there would be no mission.

MISSIONS OF 347TH BOMB SQUADRON - 1943 (Continued)**Mission No. 69****August 29, 1943**

Seven B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0720 hrs. to their target which was the M/Y at Orto, Italy. There were no early returns, and all planes dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. The flak was reported as heavy, moderate, and accurate. All planes returned safely to their base at 1245 hrs. There was no damage done to the A/C and no injuries among the crew members.

Mission No. 70**August 31, 1943**

Six B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0830 hrs. to their target at M/Y Pisa, Italy. There were no early returns and six planes dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. There was no flak over the target, but the flak over the Leghorn Oil Refinery was reported as heavy, moderate, and inaccurate. From 4 to 6 E/A were encountered. There was no damage to our planes and none of the crewmembers suffered injuries. All planes returned safely at 1545 hrs.

Mission No. 71**September 2, 1943**

Thirteen B-17s took off from Oudna #1 Field, Tunisia, 0640 o'clock for bombing mission, target Marshaling Yards, Bologna, Italy; one plane returned early; 12 planes returned safely at 1340 o'clock. Plane piloted by Lt. R.E. LeBlond lost the number 3 propeller. No casualties. Pilots report a moderate concentration of heavy flak, 5 enemy fighters encountered.

Mission No. 74
September 6, 1943

Ten B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 1055 hrs to their target which was Pomigliano A/D, Naples, Italy. There were two early returns due to leaks in the oxygen system on both ships. Eight ships went over the target, but only two ships dropped their bombs. The target was overcast so there were no observations. Flak was reported as heavy, slight, and inaccurate. There were no E/A encountered over the target or on the trip. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1610 hrs. There was no damage done to our planes, and none of the crewmembers suffered injuries.

Mission No. 76
September 8, 1943

Seven B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0906 to their target at Frascati, Italy. This town was the headquarters of the German High Command in Italy. There were no early returns, and all planes dropped their bombs over the target. They were loaded with two 2000 lb. and two 1000 lb. bombs. Six E/A were encountered, and flak was reported as heavy, moderate, and accurate. There was no damage done to our A/C, and none of the crewmembers suffered injury. All planes returned safely to their base at 1430 hrs.

Mission No. 77
September 9, 1943

Nine B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0600 hrs. to their target at Capua, Italy. There were no early returns and all planes dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. The highway and railroad bridges were well covered with hits by the bomb groups. No E/A were encountered, and flak was reported as heavy, slight, and inaccurate both as to altitude and deflection. There was no damage done to our A/C and none of our crewmembers suffered injuries.

Mission No. 78
September 10, 1943

Ten B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0745 hrs. to their target, Isernia, Italy. There were no early returns and all ten ships dropped their bombs over the target. There was no flak at all, and no E/A were encountered. None of our planes suffered damage, and there were no injuries among the crewmembers. All planes returned safely to their base at 1300 hrs.

Mission No. 79
September 11, 1943

Nine B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0950 hrs. to their target, the Highway and Railroad bridges at Benevento, Italy. There were no early returns and all ships dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and inaccurate. No E/A were encountered. None of our planes suffered damages and there were no injuries among the crewmembers. All planes returned safely to their base at 1630 hrs.

Mission No. 80
September 12, 1943

Nine B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0940 to their target which was the A/D at Frosinome, Italy. Three planes returned early due to mechanical trouble. Six planes dropped their frag bombs over the target. There were no E/A encountered and flak was reported as heavy, slight, and inaccurate. There was no damage done to our ships, and none of the crewmembers suffered injuries. All planes returned safely at 1443 hrs.

Mission No. 81
September 13, 1943

Nine B-17s took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0700 hrs. to their target of the highways and troops at Torre Annunziata, Italy. Eight ships dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. No E/A were encountered and flak was reported as being heavy, slight, and inaccurate. All planes returned safely to their base at 1330 hrs. There were no injuries among the crewmembers.

Mission No. 82
September 14, 1943

Seven B-17Fs took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0545 hrs. to their target at Eboli, Italy. There objective was to bomb troop concentrations and highways of escape. No enemy A/C were encountered and there was no flak at all. All planes and crewmembers returned safely to their base at 2115 hours.

Mission No. 83
September 16, 1943

Nine B-17Fs took off from Oudna Field #1 at 0705 hrs. to their target of the highway and railroad bridges at Benevento, Italy. There was one early return due to mechanical trouble, and eight planes dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. There was no enemy pursuit, and no flak over the target. Flak at the Capua A/D was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate. None of our planes were damaged, and there were no injuries to any of the crewmembers. All planes returned safely to their base at 1245 hrs.

SHEET NO. 1 War Diary, 347th Squadron

Oudna #1, Natoua

Month of September 1943

Prepared by Alphonse F. Sentous, 1st Lt., A.C.

DAY	EVENTS
16	Today was operational for our squadron. Nine of our B-17Fs took off for their target at Benevento, Italy. No difficulty was encountered and all ships successfully made the mission with the exception of one which had to return early due to mechanical trouble. Thirteen men of our flying personnel, eight officers and five enlisted men, were transferred to the 12th Training Command upon completion of their fifty combat missions. Eleven privates were promoted to the grade of private first class.
17	Some of our officers made a flight to Cairo, Egypt. Major Lewellyn T. Boatwright, Jr., our CO, departed under Special Orders at the end of his fifty combat missions and Capt. Burrell succeeds him as CO. Capt. William A. Clark succeeds Capt. Burrell as Operations Officer. In the evening there was a movie in the Hqs. area. Today was PX day. A full carton of cigarettes for the first time in 2 months.
18	Mission to Viterbo A/D. A number of B-24s came in from England to operate for the present from our field. They belong to the 44th Bomb Group(H), and we have the 67th Sqd. with its seven A/C attached to us. Some of the 44th participated in the now famous raid on the Ploesti Oil Fields in Rumania, bombing from extremely low altitude. Some of the men claim they saw an ME-210 flying around over the field today. Evidently a captured plane. A gasoline truck caught fire tonight at the refueling pumps. The fire lasted several hours but the truck had been pulled away from the pumps at the start of the fire and no one was injured.

- 19 Today is Sunday and nonoperational. Full quota of our men went to town on pass. Some to swim at one of the numerous beaches. The rest remained at the base, carrying on the usual, uneventful day.
- 20 Another nonoperational day, and everything unusually quiet. Members of the 44th Bomb Gp. 67th Sqd., were getting acquainted with our boys. We had fresh eggs for breakfast and fresh meat for supper. After supper, "Now Voyager," starring Betty [sic] Davis and Paul Henreid played at our field. It drew the largest crowd that was ever at any of our shows. The 30 English soldiers under Lt. Behrend, who were on the field since the paratrooper scare, left us today. These thirty had been assigned on DS to our squadron; others to other squadrons. They were originally part of an English Armored Division and are waiting around for new equipment to replace their losses in the battles in this vicinity during the African Campaign.

Sheet No. 2

- 21 The B-24s took off on a mission this morning. Our S-2 and S-3 are working with them since they have an S-2 set up at Group only. They have been accustomed to entirely different pre-flight briefing procedures than we have known and used. Theirs is modeled after the British. Since their participation in the Libyan Campaign, they have been functioning in England where they came to from near Benghazi well east of here. Their H hour was 0345 and briefing lasted one full hour with take-off time scheduled for 3 hours and 55 minutes later. We are flying a practice mission with our B-17s today.
- 22 Scheduled to have been an operational day but the mission was canceled due to weather. A high wind storm and dust blew all day and the mess hall supply tent blew down. Two Red Cross girls were out to spend the day with us. We played Bingo most of the afternoon with them. No mail. Communications installed a radio in the S-2 tent and we plan to give the men regular, daily broadcasts of news with other types of entertainment at night.
- 23 Scheduled to operate but the mission was again called off because of weather over the target. B-24s flew a practice mission. Again no mail.
- 24 B-24s made a mission to Pisa M/Y. No E/A or flak encountered. The mission was highly successful. 6 A/C took off and 1 returned early after a false start with the rest of the mission in the morning. Their first return was due to trouble with a gas cap which was repaired and then were ordered to catch up with the A/C of their Group which were well under way by then. It couldn't be done and they returned. The PX was open today. All cigarettes were inferior brands, although we did get a carton per man. Hot biscuits for supper. Usual shortage of food in the EM mess before the end of the chow period. "Who Done It," starring Abbott & Costello, was shown in the HQs area later.
- Apr 25 Both the 99th B-17s and the 44th B-24s took off on missions today. It has been very busy for us also. The 24s had to return early due to bad weather. We sent out from our squadron 9 A/C. Eight ships went over their target, the eastern end of the M/Y at Bologna, Italy. One A/C returned early due to mechanical trouble. No flak over the target. E/A were up in small numbers, but did not attack us. One plane landed at Cagliari, Sardinia for gasoline. Over 160 B-17s were counted over the field early this morning at one time. Our mess officer informs us that our rations have been cut 10%. A French stage show played in our area tonight.

Sheet No. 3

- Sep 26 Both our B-17s and the B-24s of the 67th Sqd. (44th Gp.) were scheduled to fly, but 1943 both missions were canceled because of weather over the target. 1st Lt. Holmes on A/C 473 returned with his A/C and entire crew this morning after being forced down in Sardinia on the return leg of yesterday's mission to Bologna, because of the shortage of gasoline. There were no unusual happenings to report. Tonight the officers of this squadron held a party in the officers' club.
- 27 Was nonoperational for both our squadron and the B-24s of the 67th Sqd. (44th Gp.). There were no unusual happenings during the day. That night we were scheduled to have a U.S.O. Camp Show here at the base, but it was postponed because of illness among the cast. "Stranger in Town," starring Frank Morgan and Jean Rogers played at the outdoor movie.
- 28 Was operational for our B-17s, but nonoperational for the B-24s of the 44th Bomb Gp. Eight B-17s took off at 0815 hrs to their target, but had to turn back en route due to bad weather. Today, it rained fairly hard and was rather stormy for a long while. The weather turned cooler, which was really a relief for all.
- Sep 29 Was scheduled to be operational for both our squadron and the B-24s of the 67th Bomb 1943 Sqd. (44th Gp.), but the mission was called off due to weather. It turned out to be a beautiful day here, however, and many of the men and officers went to town. Others got out a football and tossed it around for awhile, wishing for the chance to see a good game.

QUOTES

. . . our scientists, in 1943 developed a flight suit with legs and torso that could be filled with water—the idea being that when you started to pull serious Gs, the water pressure would build, squeezing the legs and upper torso, and that would help keep the blood from leaving your brain. It worked pretty well, to a point. With these new suits we actually could lead the enemy into a steep dive knowing that he'd black out before we would, an advantage that would allow us to escape or maybe even swing around and shoot him out of the sky.

The problem was that once the legs of the G suit expanded, they stayed that way and we pilots would often have to spend the last three or four hours of the mission with these huge ice-cold water bags sloshing around our ankles. When we finally returned to the base in England, it was all we could do to waddle out on the wing and relieve ourselves after the long mission. While we were at it, we'd open the valve that was in each leg of the flight suit and relieve that too. From certain angles it looked pretty strange to see a guy standing there with three streams of water coming out of him.

p.327 (Large Print, of Course).

PRESS ON by General Chuck Yeager.



PRESS RELEASES

ATTENTION: Terre Haute, Ind., Star

FROM A 15TH AIR FORCE BOMBER BASE, JAN 15 -- Technical Sergeant Donald O. Modesitt, of 2454 3rd Ave., Terre Haute, Ind., an AAF Flying Fortress engineer-gunner, has been credited officially with destroying a Messerschmitt 109 German fighter plane in an attack by Italian-based Fortresses on Guidonia Airdrome near Rome, January 13.

Modesitt's victory--his first in aerial combat--was verified by another member of his bomber crew who saw the fighter crash on the ground near the enemy airdrome.

"Three enemy planes attacked in a wave from above our ship and to the right," Modesitt said in describing the air battle. "One Jerry peeled off of the formation and made a sweep from our tail to our nose. I had my guns on him all the time. He was hit and began vibrating badly, and plunged straight down out of control."



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We continue the subscriptions of deceased members for an additional year, but please remember to send us any change of address.

* * * * *



NEWS, DUES & VIEWS

Major General Lewis Lyle of the 8AFHS gave a very good talk to the organization last September 13. As General Lyle was introduced I realized that he and I had been in the same Regiment back in 1940, he as a Second Lt. and I as a Pfc for the second time. I was unable to ask the General if he remembered the "Be kind to Animals" sign posted on the way to the bayonet range.

We are planning a Memorial Issue pertaining to FRANTIC JOE, as the shuttle mission to the Soviet Union was originally known.

We welcome your accounts of the trips to and from Poltava (or Piryatin) and of your stay in the Soviet Union.

We would like to devote the May issue to this mission if we can.



REUNIONS

April 1 1992 99BGHS Mini-Reunion, Overland Park KS

Jim Smith, 9801 Richmond Dr., Kansas City MO 64134, phone 816-761-0588

May 1992 American Former P.O.Ws, Stalag XVII-B Knoxville TN

Lester J. Levy, 4047 Division, Metairie LA 70002 - Ph. (504) 888-8850

Sep 1992 99th Bomb Group, Rapid City SD

Marion J. Larkin, 3827 Clifton, Rapid City, SD

23Oct 1992 461 BG Dayton OH

Frank C. O'Bannon, P.O.Box 36600, Tucson AZ 85740

or Ed Chan, P.O.Box 117, New Hyde Park, NY 11040



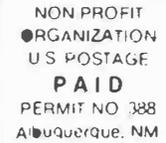
TAPS

SIRSEE HENNIKSEN Sirsee passed away October 21st at his home in California. Frank English.

EDWARD E. GEOFFROY
george

Mail to Ed has been returned marked "Deceased"

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