99TH BOMB GROUP

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

1943 • • AFRICA/EUROPE • •1945

395 COMBAT MISSIONS

THE 99th BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 14, No. 4 **NOVEMBER 1994**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Reunion at Hampton, VA was enjoyed by about 260 members and associates. It was kind of special since the weekend was dedicated to those unsung heroes of the 99th without whose efforts the Group wouldn't have been able to compile the outstanding record that it did. The folks I'm referring to are the ground maintenance crews, the cooks, clerks and all the other support personnel without whose efforts the flight crews and planes couldn't have done the job they did. At our Saturday Banquet we had five ground crew folks address the audience.

I think our Group rates pretty high with the Military. I'm referring to the 30 minute flight displaying the prowess of the F-15 Eagle at Langley AFB. We even had our own commentator, an F-15 pilot describing each maneuver to come. It was most impressive. We also had the opportunity to look into and sit in the cockpit of an F-15. The trip to the Air and Space Museum was also enjoyable. Many thanks to BOB BACHER and LEN SMITH for arranging a GREAT weekend!

Before I left for Hampton I received a letter from Col. Sluder, C.O. of the 325th Fighter Group that provided escort for the 99th on many missions. He berated John Plummer for the article that appeared in our August newsletter. I left for Hampton before reading the article, nevertheless I was quite upset by the letter and I felt that it could not go unanswered. From my personal experience (50 missions from July 43 to Feb. 44), after reading Plummer's article at Hampton, I agreed with **both only partially** My position was most definitely in the middle. Anyone else having an opinion please write to Editor Bernie B.

Our St. Louis group is working real hard to make our next reunion a bang up affair, so make your plans now to attend. **(A schedule of planned activities & registration form are included toward the back of this issue.)** GOOD HEALTH TO YOU ALL!

Jules Horowitz

Jules Horowitz
Oct. 7, 1994

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

I looked over someone's shoulder in the "ready room" [another word for Hospitality Room] at our Reunion in Hampton and saw some pictures...they were old pictures! Remember the last time you looked at some old pictures?...in an old album? Pictures of family and friends from scenes of yesterday? We often do this for information about the family, our forebears, our buddies from bygone 99th days! One thing is characteristic of all these old snapshots..THEY WERE IN BLACK AND WHITE. They are typical of what our photographic world was like back then..it was all in "black and white"! We don't remember them as "black and white". They only represent what we remember...a garment, a sport coat..a tie..a scarf..hair color..shoes..toys..home furnishings...all in COLOR. The uniforms..the planes. They all were alive with the colors...something our memories see and keep remembering.

COLOR!. Remember when the networks promoted going to color telecasting...one said they were now "IN LIVING COLOR", and with it came the peacock spreading its beautiful, colorful tail, with all the rainbow shades of COLOR. When we see old movies, we are apt to say, "why isn't that in color?"; the response is "that was made BEFORE color". Color was always there...God's whole world is in LIVING COLOR! Think for a moment...how it would be if all around us, everything we saw...everything we looked at...was in BLACK and WHITE! What a dismal, dreary and unexciting world this would be! God choose the colors to give us an array of variety and change. Just look at the colors of Fall, now so soon faded and gone...all the shades of yellow, red, brown, gold, russet...the darks..the lights...indescribably beautiful on every hillside...all free for a look.. a peek at God's wonderful world.. If, for that reason alone, and there are so many more, what better cause for a oyful, exciting celebration of THANKSGIVING!!

THANKSGIVING is ablaze with color...more important, the color of warmth and gratitude...the color in a person's soul. As a friend said to me: **"IT IS THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR; THE ONE SEASON TO REALLY THANK GOD FOR ALL HIS BLESSINGS. ..FOR ALL HE HAS DONE AND GIVEN US!"**

As you read this, my friend, now is the time to prepare to truly celebrate the time of Thanksgiving..not with food, feast and banquet; though that's part of it, I guess...but with a joyful, overflowing personal celebration of gratitude to God a THANKSGIVING in living color..the color of your soul in exciting celebration in the spirit of the Psalmist when he said: **"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS!".**

Nel and I wish you a HAPPY THANKSGIVING...a fresh, new one! Blessings on you and your kith and kin!

Francis W. Grantz

Psalm 19:7-14

7 The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;* the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

8 The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;* the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean and endures for ever;* the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,* sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

11 By them also is your servant enlightened,* and in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how often he offends?* cleanse me from my secret faults.

13 Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;* then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,* O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS

Bernie S. Barr
7408 Vista Del Arroyo NE
Alburquerque, NM 87109

I was a tail gunner on B-17's with the 99th / 416th squadron. We all remember our 1st combat mission. With each "green crew" it was the policy to send along an "old timer" for moral support etc.. Our target for the day (7 November 1944) was Maribor, Yogo Solvia and it was exciting. What I mean is, we were not really worried about the black puffs of thick smoke that surrounded us. At this stage of flying combat we were not scared. It would hit us later, that someone was firing real guns at us and they meant business. That's when the prayers started flowing. I seen my first plane go down in flames, etc.. We were flying at 17,000 ft. and it was cold in November.

Well after "bombs away", and the flight was heading back to base, the plane commander usually gave the order to remove oxygen masks if we were flying below 10,000 ft. I did, and looking around I noticed that the whole front of me was a sheet of ice. It was from my oxygen mask exhaust parts. My whole "May West" was covered with ice. I unhooked my mask and was rubbing my face, when to my concern something was stuck to my chin skin. I guess I called up and voiced my concern. The "old timer" crawled back to my tail position and said "frostbite, hold your hand over it until we land". So I did. All crews remember the gory films we had seen back in the States on this subject. By the time we landed my chin looked like a cows udder. I was grounded from flying.

In the mean time the rest of my crew kept on flying. My pilot Vince R. Smith had to pull operation Officer duties and he was determined that I get caught up with the crew in flying. So every chance he would get , he would see that I got on the next day list to fly. I flew 11 days in February 1945. I would do nothing except eat, fly and sleep. Day in and day out. On my 26th scheduled mission I was assigned to fly with a new "green crew" fresh from the States. The target was Padua in North Italy (railroad bridge) in April 1945. I remember the crew all wore "Red Baseball Hats" and they were ready to win the war. I know they tried to ignore me, because I had that "old timer" look. I guess I had a certain look,when I observed their happy go lucky attitude. It was a job that had to be done and I was getting edgy with each mission.

The take off and flight to the target was uneventful. We carried 16 - 250 lbs. bombs. At the IP something happened. Since we maintained radio silence, I was not aware of trouble. But I noticed every once in a while, something flew past my left window. It was pieces of metal.

They got bigger and bigger and we started losing altitude. I finally called up front and asked what was going on. The pilot rang the bail out warning bell.. One ring, I secured my guns, grabbed my chute and crawled out of the tail section into the waist section. The pilot had just given instructions to "lighten the aircraft". I looked out the left waist window and the No. 1 engine had caught fire, but the pilot couldn't feather the prop and it kept

windmilling until the prop shaft twisted 20 degrees and the prop was slicing big gobbs of the cowling off. We headed for the front lines in North Italy losing 500 ft. per minute throwing out all our ammunition, flack suits and we dumped our bombs into the Adriatic Sea. We had to keep our speed below 120 or the sparks would fly.

I had taken up the right waist door exit position and had the headsets on listening to the pilot and the co-pilot talking. At the same time, I am going over in my mind the steps I would take when the bail out bells would ring. I would pull the etison handle on the door and give it a kick and out I would go.

It was a known fact that in North Italy at the front the German Maussia rifles were stacked like cord wood, and I wanted a good deer rifle to take home, and I wanted to bail out with a parachute for the first time. All of these thoughts were going through my mind. At the same time, I noticed the actions of the "green crew" had changed in my eyes. They were acting like a combat crew should act. Meanwhile, over the intercom the co-pilot pointed out another airfield coming up along the coast. But the pilot keep saying "Not yet!, Not yet!" Be damn, if the pilot nursed that plane to home base. Came in kinda hot and bounced three times on landing and I'm told the prop fell off on the second bounce. Cussit, no deer rifle for me.

When I seen my pilot Capt. Smith, I told him, no more volunteering me to fill aircrew slots. A guy's hair could turn grey with any more missions like the last.

Donald G. Chandler

P.S.
Would like the "Red Cap Crew" to identify themselves and let us know.

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CAN YOU HELP ?

KRISTINA WIAND, 5945 Whittingham Drive, Dublin, OH 43017, Phone: (614) 761-3764 and/or **ROY DOBMEYER,** (419) 678-2023 ask to talk to anyone who knew her uncle and Roy's brother - **1st Lt. PAUL FRANCIS DOBMEYER** - a bombardier in the 348th Sq. He was shot down on 7/4/43 while on a combat mission. There might have been one survivor - **T/Sgt JOHN S. FINNEGAN** - now someplace in California. Kris asks that you call either of them collect. **PLEASE CALL IF YOU KNEW PAUL !**

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NOTICE: 12TH AIR FORCE VETERANS

An Association has been formed for all eras and all units. Annual dues are $5.00. Contact VICTOR TANNEHILL, 12 Air Force Assn., 6164 W. 83rd Way, Arvada, CO 80003. Phone: (303) 423-5706

Col. C. L. Sluder
1025 Cuatro Cerros Tr. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123-4168

31 August 1994

Mr. Jules Horowitz, Pres.
99th Bomb Group Historical Society
3507 Oaks Way #911
Pompano Beach, FL 33069

Dear Mr. Horowitz:

For some time I have been priviledged to receive copies of your newsletter and have had the pleasure of having lunch periodically with local members of your organization. These meetings, including pilots, navigators, gunners, have invariably been cordial and most enjoyable.

I have just received your newsletter of August 1994 and feel impelled to reply to the article "Putting the USAAF's Bomber Oriented Aerial Combat in Perspective, Fifty Years Later" by Lt. Col. John A. Plummer.

I was a member of the 325th Fighter Group (the "Checkertails" - NOT the 99th Squadron or 332nd Group) from July 1943 to September 1944, assuming command of the Group in April 1944. Upon being assigned to the 15th Air Force and moving to Italy in December 1943, we were equipped with the P-47. We used this aircraft, primarily escorting B-17s and B-24s, until May 1944; it was not adequate for the job at hand, because it did not have the range or "staying power" to perform adequately the necessary escort role. We did, however, score significantly with it, to the benefit of the bombers. Its most productive mission was on January 30, 1944, when it shot down 37 German aircraft over Udine, Italy, and probably destroyed 6 more, when they were scrambling to intercept the B-17s twenty minutes behind us. Subsequently, very little fighter oppostion was encountered in this area.

In late May 1944 we were re-equipped with the P-51 and on June 2 we escorted the task force of B-17s, including the 99th, to Russia. No enemy action was encountered en route. On June 6 (D-Day) we escorted the bombers to Galati, Roumania; they happily reported that there were no enemy fighters and the trip was a breeze. They saw no enemy fighters because we saw them first and destroyed 6, discouraging several more.

Plummer is most complimentary of your gunners, and rightly so. In his euphoria, however, he loses touch with reality. The B-17G had eight gun positions. One enemy fighter destroyed could result in 8 victory claims being submitted by the crew. A flight of four B-17s could claim 32 victories. This, of course, is an exaggeration; but the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, published by the War Department a few months after the War, drastically reduced

the victory claims that had been recorded by the Bomb Groups. As I recall, the total claimed exceeded the total production during the War.

Plummer states that "The gunners on these great combat aircraft shot down more enemy aircraft than all of the P-38s, P-39s, P-40s, P-47s, and P-51s combined." (He should not have included the P-39 as an effective air-to-air fighter.) What is his source for this statement? I do not have figures reflecting the total Fighter claims during WW II, nor the total claimed by the Bombers.

Plummer derisively comments several times that "our highly touted fighter escort were frequently not there." This is quite true: there were occasions when we intercepted the enemy fighters several miles from our bombers and prevented their attack. On July 31, 1944, we were assigned to escort B-24s attacking Bucharest. "Con-trails" were observed in the distance while approaching the target and we intercepted about 45 ME-109s and FW-190s, destroying 18, probably destroying 1 and damaging 12. The residue fled. When the mission returned to base I received an irate phone call from one of the bomber group commanders. He let me know that he didn't appreciate our running off and leaving his formation, and it was a good thing that they didn't see any enemy aircraft or I would really be in hot water. I don't remember whether or not I told him to go to hell.

Another reason we were sometimes "not there" is because we would arrive at the rendezvous point, on schedule, with no bombers in sight. If continued searching failed to produce our bombers we would continue to the target and escort whomever we could find. Overall, we were not terribly impressed with the bombers' navigational abilities.

The first bomber I flew was a Keystone B-3. I have time in several others, including the B-17. I don't know why it should be more difficult to navigate something with 2 or 4 engines than an aircraft with only one engine. One day, we followed a lone B-24 down the coast of southern France, with all the shore batteries shooting at him. He could easily have moved out to sea to avoid their fire and we could have taken him home. On another occasion a shot-up B-24 pilot bailed-out his crew over a lake near our strip and then landed on our runway. One of the crewmen drowned. Shortly after the War I was in charge of closing Ellington Field, Houston, TX. The project included ferrying AT-7s to the west coast. I found that I had the ideal man to put in charge of the flight - a combat B-17 squadron commander. Major "X" led his flight to El Paso. The weather was down to about 75 miles visibility, no clouds. The Major over-flew El Paso late in the afternoon, ran out of gas, and crash-landed in New Mexico. The rest of the flight landed at El Paso.

Yours Truly,

s/ Chet Sluder

ROBERT H. PENOYER 123 North New avenue Apt D Monterey Park, CA 91755 is looking for information about his father S/Sgt Harold E Penoyer. IF YOU KNEW OR HAVE INFORMATION CONTACT Robert.

My father was a member of the **Army Air Forces, 99th Heavy Bombardment Group, 348th Squadron**. He departed the United States for the European Theater on February 4, 1943. On July 5, 1943, his B-17 was shot down over Sicily. He was wounded and five of the other crew members were killed. As I recall, his plane crashed over the Mediterranean. My father parachuted out of the descending aircraft and was unconscious by the time he reached the water. Because he was unconscious, he did not know the circumstances of his capture. With his legs seriously wounded by shrapnel, he was hospitalized and bedridden on Sicily. He said that from the hospital he could see smoke rising from Mt. Etna. He also said that during his time in the hospital American bombers made raids over Sicily during the day and British bombers made raids during the night. s/ Robert Penoyer

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JEFFREY L. ETHELL Rt 1, Box 3154, Front Royal, VA 22630 (703) 6361616

I would like to find out if any 99th Bomb Group veterans took color slides or movies from before World War II through the Korean War. Since I am showing all areas of the globe and all aspects of military life, both ground and air scenes, every slide would be of interest, even on the home front with the family and girl friends. I would like to borrow original Kodachromes and movies, duplicate them here (not in a lab) and return them. In writing over 50 books over the past 25 years I have never lost or damaged anything loaned. Should they be published, proper credit would be given and a new generation would see the war as it was experienced first-hand.

In addition, if any 99th Bomb Group members have recollections about their wartime tour, whether they be funny, tragic or hair-raising, in the air or on the ground, combat or not, I would like to consider them for inclusion as well. s/Jefferey Ethell

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CARLO MONDANI Via Vivaldi 11 41030 Bomporto (MO) Italy would like for you to provide him information about the bombing of MODENA-North Italy Po Valley) made by the 99th BG on Feb 14 and June 22, 1944.

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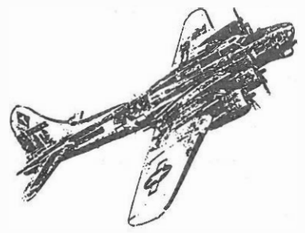
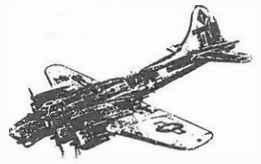
TAPS ○ TAPS ○ TAPS ○ TAPS ○ TAPS

Kenneth William Merideth

Funeral services for Okemah native Kenneth William Merideth, 73, were held at 2 p.m. Tues., Aug. 2 at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Okemah, with the Rev. Clem Dozer officiating, assisted by Rev. David Rose. Merideth died Sat., July 30 in Okemah.





Dear Walter, Bill Church

The May issue of the News Letter listed names of four of our 99th Buddies who had recently passed away. One of the names was someone whom I knew personally. I would appreciate having his story printed in the News Letter. His story is not exactly typical but the man himself so typified the type of person that made up the 99th Bomb Group during WWII.

Bernie Raftery's name was among those listed in the Taps section and I consider myself fortunate that our paths crossed three times in the past 50 years. The first time was that period from late July of 1943 to early January of 1944. We were both attached to the 346 th squadron. The second time was in June of 1944 in Miami, Fl. when we were enjoying some R & R before receiving state side assignments. The last time we got together was at our Rapid City Reunion.

Bernie was a navigator on Lt. Crooks crew flying out of North Africa and then from Foggia in southern Italy. Although I cannot remember the mission numbers or the targets, I do remember that Lt. Crooks crew had some rough missions. On two occasions they could not make it back to our base due to battle damage and were forced to land at the first friendly field. On both occasions, the planes were totaled.

The second forced landing was the one on which Bernie was credited with saving the life of their Bombardier, Lt. Sharak who was hit by flak. The first aid Bernie administered in flight and later, on the way to the hospital, prevented a fatal loss of blood.

Each of the unscheduled landings of the Crooks crew took them about a week before they returned to the squadron. Since news did not travel fast in those days, we did not know their fate until they were unloaded from some truck in our squadron area, much to the delight of everyone. I don't think they ever flew again as a complete crew after the second emergency landing.

On January 11, 1944, the 99th was to lead a mission to bomb Piraeus Harbor, followed in by three other groups, the 92nd, 97th and the 301st. I remember the mission well since I was leading the 346th squadron that day. Our new Squadron C.O. Major Hedrick, who completed a tour in B-25s, was flying his first B-17 mission as my co-pilot. All went well. We assembled our squadron and started to form on our group. Then events started to take place which would have such a profound effect not only on Bernie but many others.

Our flight engineer tapped me on the shoulder and informed me that a waist gunner, whose name I cannot remember (nor would I disclose it if I could remember) had forgotten his chute. There were no extras on board. I knew what I had to do but as a 1st Lt. with a Major (as well as my new C.O.) sitting next to me, he had to be part of the decision. One glance in his direction and I had his concurrence. We had to abort.

It wasn't easy for us to leave the formation. We were on radio silence, but after lowering our wheels, feathering one prop and a bunch of hand signals to the left wingman to assume the lead, we headed back to the field.

Waiting at the end of the runway with engines running was Lt. Donahue with a make-up crew, including Bernie Raftery as navigator. When our aborted plane came into view, Donahue took off to form on the end of the 346th as tail end Charlie. I recalled at briefing that morning, that a stand by plane would be ready to replace the first plane to return early.

Several hours later, when the group returned, we learned that cloud cover was encountered over Greece and that Donahue's plane exploded. Broken clouds prevented any good view of parachutes nor was there any accurate information as to what caused the plane to explode.

In June of 1944 most of my original crew and I were in Miami Beach for some R & R. One day Bob Bjork (Bombardier), Bill Blakemore (Navigator) and I were walking down a busy street when we came face to face with Bernie Raftery. A much thinner and more gaunt Bernie but nevertheless the Bernie we all thought went down in Donahue's plane back in January. After a lot of hand shaking and back slapping, we herded Bernie into the nearest watering hole where he related his story of what happened that day.

He said the squadron encountered some very disruptive clouds prior to reaching the target. The formation was scattered. Just before going into the clouds, Bernie said he saw another Group low and to the left. Once in the clouds, he had the sensation of the plane banking left followed by the plane shaking as if it was stalling. After that, all he remembered was a very bright light. When he regained consciousness, he was outside the nose free falling. He opened his chute and landed safely in a field. On the way down Bernie saw two other chutes and also noted the general direction of the falling plane.

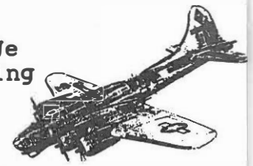
It wasn't long after he landed, that he was approached by Greek Partisans who helped him locate the other two survivors, T/Sgt Sidney Sherris radio operator & S/Sgt Verne Trinowsky tail gunner. Later the plane was located and the bodies of five crew members were buried. They were:

1st Lt	T. H. Lilly	bombardier	Pvt. J. Douglas waist gunner
T/Sgt	J. Briggs	engineer	Sgt. Ritter waist gunner
			Cpl Brans ball turret gunner

The pilot, 1st Lt J. Donahue and copilot 1st Lt. G. Schroeder were not in the plane and must have been blown out from the explosion.

The small group of survivors spent a couple of months walking across Greece before being loaded on a small boat for a trip to friendly territory. That was the extent of story as Bernie related to us in June of 1944.

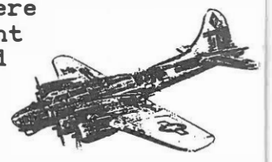
The third time I cross paths with Bernie, was through the 99thBGHS. I noticed his name on the Roster and gave him a call to verify that he was the Raftery I knew so long ago. We exchanged several phone calls and since there was an up-coming reunion in Rapid City, we planned to meet there.



It was in Rapid City where I learned the full extent of the losses sustained in the Jan. 11, 1944 Pireaus Harbor mission. Bernie himself, did not become aware of the total story for many years later. Among the people with whom he corresponded about the mission, was Steve Birdsall who furnished a lot of the information regarding the other three Groups of the 5th Wing which participated in the mission that day.

All available evidence indicates that a chain reaction resulted from Lt. Donahue's plane colliding with one or more planes of the 301st Group. Those planes in turn, took out others so a total of five from the 301st and two from the 97th. The 5th Wing losses that day were eight B-17s and of the 80 fliers involved, fifteen survived.

In spite of Bernie Raftery's brushes with disaster, he stayed in service as a navigator on B-47 bombers and in several other capacities. He retired after 24 years of outstanding service. While stationed in Germany, he met and married his wife Trudy. They eventually moved back to the Washington, D.C. area where he spent the remainder of his working career with Government Intelligence Agencies. He is survived by his wife Trudy and three sons.



Bill Church

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SPECIAL REQUEST

In stripping up the newsletters I have used our B-17 outlines to separate items or fill in borders. Our ground crews and equipment were equally vital for mission success. If anyone has photos of ground equipment (any kind) I would appreciate receiving same (any size). I will make sure they are returned to the owner when I make copies to use in our newsletters along with the flying machines. ...Send to Roy Worthington, 16786 Air Force Village West, CA 92518-2918 (Please use all 9 zip code digits.)

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Your newsletter composition editor requests you take advantage of the relatively inexpensive word processing services available today to have the material you submit for printing in future newsletters set in a medium to bold faced type of 10 or 12 point size. 'Writ' by hand and the light gray printed matter generally produced by dot matrix printers do not make suitable material for clear printing in our newsletter. It is best not to fold your submissions. Mail the original flat in a suitable envelope. We will return your material in good shape. If you don't want to send your original please have your pages photo copied at a quality copy service so the material we receive is good 'black' copy. We don't want this request to prevent anyone from sending newsletter material. If you cannot comply send us the best you can and we will do our best to make it ready for the printer. Much Thanks !

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

(OFFICE OF ACofS, A-3)

LONE WOLF

M-O-N-O-G-R-A-P-H

IN WHICH A DISCUSSION OF SIXTEEN LONE WOLF MISSIONS IS PRESENTED

FOREWORD

IT IS THE CONTINUING COMMITMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE TO DESTROY THE ENEMY WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HE CAN BE ATTACKED. HIS INDUSTRIES MUST BE DEMOLISHED, HIS COMMUNICATIONS DISRUPTED, HIS RESOURCES DEPLETED, HIS MODE OF LIVING MUST BE MADE SO UTTERLY HOPELESS THAT HIS NATION WILL COLLAPSE IN A TOTAL DEFEAT. FOR MORE THAN A YEAR THE AXIS HAS FELT THE OPPRESSIVE WEIGHT OF DAYLIGHT VISUAL ATTACKS BY FORMATIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE. SINCE THE MIDDLE SUMMER MONTHS THE HUN HAS EXPERIENCED EVER-INCREASING DAYLIGHT NON-VISUAL AS WELL AS VISUAL BOMBINGS DELIVERED BY THIS AIR FORCE. NOW, BECAUSE OF RECENT TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL DEVELOPMENTS, AND THROUGH THE COURAGEOUS EFFORTS AND PERSEVERANCE OF OUR AIR AND GROUND CREWS, THE ENEMY IS BEING SUBJECTED TO ATTACKS BOTH BY NIGHT AND BY DAY, IN FAIR WEATHER AND FOUL. OUR PRESSURE UPON HIM IS CRUSHING. NO LONGER AT ANY TIME IS HE SECURE FROM THE MIGHT OF OUR OPERATIONS. TO THE MAXIMUM LIMIT OF ITS CAPABILITIES THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE CONTINUES TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENT TOWARD ULTIMATE ALLIED VICTORY.

Nathan F. Twining

NATHAN F. TWINING
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING

DECLASSIFIED
EO 11652

I. INTRODUCTION

1 The purpose of this monograph is to present an account of the experience of the Fifteenth Air Force in its execution of individual PFF (hereafter referred to as Lone Wolf) bombing attacks on enemy installations. An attempt is made to list the factors which motivated the development of this tactic, to describe the operational procedures followed in its employment, to record the results achieved by Lone Wolf attacks, and to set forth the tactical doctrine for this type of operation as established by the Fifteenth Air Force.

2. A Lone Wolf bombing operation is a coordinated attack made by a force of unescorted bombers making individual or small formation bombing runs under non-visual conditions either by day or by night. Targets for Lone Wolf forces are high priority targets, some of them situated deep in enemy territory, and many are defended heavily by flak and fighters. Bombing is usually accomplished by Fifteenth Air Force-developed-PFF synchronous methods. Enemy defenses are negated by weather conditions, for Lone Wolf attacks are projected only when 10/10 sky cover is forecast both as undercast and at high altitude bombing level. Standing orders require that Lone Wolves return to base if visual conditions are encountered.

3. Lone Wolf tactics were developed in order that the Fifteenth Air Force might fulfill more completely its commitments toward the successful conclusion of the war. Besides the actual destruction caused to enemy installations by Lone Wolf bombing, it is believed that this type of operation possesses considerable harassing value. Since 25 October 1944 to date, 12 December 1944, 627 Lone Wolf sorties were dispatched on 16 operations. On all occasions when Lone Wolf tactics have been employed, unfavorable weather conditions precluded conventional-type operations.

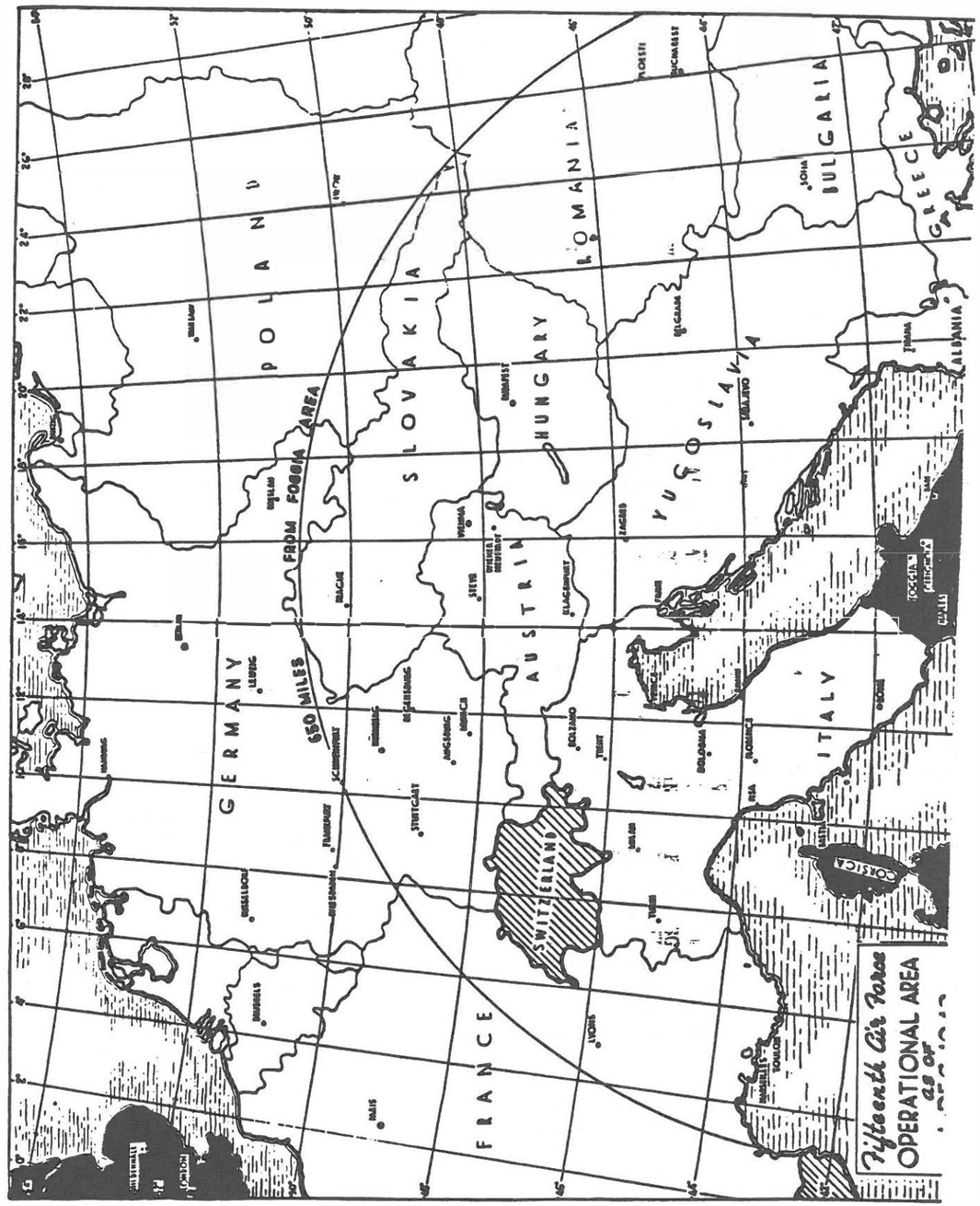
II. DEVELOPEMENT OF LONE WOLF TACTICS

1. Necessity for diversification of winter operations.

The necessity for extreme diversification in planning to minimize the effect of bad weather on strategic air operations during winter months has long been acknowledged. The acuteness of the situation became evident during the winter of 1943-1944 when heavy bomber operations of the Fifteenth Air Force were so often curtailed due to adverse weather conditions. During the summer months, when it became apparent that operations from Italy during the winter of 1944-1945 would be more than ever important, much consideration was devoted to a possible solution to the problem of winter weather restrictions to operations. The retraction of his forces by the enemy toward his homeland reduced considerably the area available to this Air Force for waging air war, thus depriving us of that flexibility for employment of our forces to the East and West which was enjoyed formerly. On the West, South France and central Italy were no longer target areas. The Po Valley was no longer a continuing commitment. To the East, almost all Balkan targets had fallen into Allied hands. These areas for operations were no longer on the priorities list. This situation necessitated resort to every possible improvisation within our means toreduce to a minimum the effect of inclement weather on our operations.

2. Weather considerations.

Base, route and target weather prevailing in Fifteenth Air Force operating areas during late fall, winter and early spring have definite characteristics. Southeastern Italian bases have operational weather about seventy five percent of the time but, unfortunatly, some of the most unfavorable base weather occurs frequently at the time when target



weather is good. When a frontal system passes over South German target areas from the northwest, the locality becomes operational, but the routes and bases become poor. Often, by the time the bases improve, a second storm on the same frontal system is approaching the target area making it non-operational. Although frontal weather is at its peak during these months, the cloudiness associated with it is of short duration. Bases experience lowest ceilings and greatest rainfall when a low pressure area is centered over the Southern Balkins or Adriatic, and a high pressure area is situated north of the Alps. This condition brings very strong northerly winds to Southeastern Italy, producing very poor flying weather at bases and on lower routes while flying conditions are good north of the Alps. This situation usually persists for a period of two to four days. Persistent low pressure over other parts of the Central Mediterranean also bring prolonged poor weather to bases, but with higher ceilings and smaller amounts of rain.

The most important factor contributing to unfavorable operating weather in winter as well as during summer is the influence on meteorological conditions introduced by the Appenines, Alps, and Dinaric Alps. But for them, route conditions would usually be good when target conditions are good. These mountains greately affect the height and extent of cloud systems. Air currents more or less horizontal over level land and oceans acquire a marked vertical compotent in passing over mountains. This is the origin of the vertical type cloud system so prevalent in this section of Europe. Vertical wind velocity components over the mountains increase the extent of cloud decks and make them continuous to high levels, with turbulence extending even above cloud tops. The height to which mountains disturb the airflow varies with the speed of the wind, but extends normally two to three times as high as the mountains. When encountering stratiform or horizontal type cloud systems, it is possible to fly between layers of cloud toward good weather without much danger of the cloud layers merging. Vertical type cloud systems, continuous and turbulent to high levels, cannot be penetrated by formations of heavily loaded aircraft. Norma operations over South European mountains can succeed only when winds over them are light or air masses are stable and dry.

Mountains surrounding or lying adjacent to target areas also have considerable influence on target weather. Over some Fifteenth Air Force targets, when certain wind directions prevail, the weather resulting from these conditions is similar to that experienced over continental plain areas devoid of bold topographic features. However, in most instances, the greater portion of our target weather is affected strongly by mountains. Favorable weather conditions occasionally prevail over targets north of the Alps when a down-slope wind caused by a northerly flow fro the Mediterranean sweeps over the mountain crests causing cloud breaks in the lee. This condition is, however, always associated with degenerating route conditions whi are concomitant with cloud build-ups on the South Alpine slopes.

During the winter months, most favorable operational conditions are associated with two types of meteorological phenomena; one, the encroachment of a frontal condition into Western Europe, and the other, the presence of a continental high pressure area over Western Czechoslavakia. Because of the situation of the South-central European mountain systems, frontal conditions which produce southerly or southwesterly winds in Germany, Austria and Hungary produce ahead of them ideal operational conditions. It is extremely difficult, however, for this Air Force to tak advantage of these conditions because of the fact that frontal disturbances move rap idly across the continent, affording only a fleeting opportunity to put them to advantageous use. A more static situation, making possible normal operations for more than one or two successive days, exists in the instance of the continental high pres sure area. Only stratiform low cloud and fog in the target areas are associated wit this condition.

The frequent passage of frontal systems and their strong reaction to South European topographic features causes the chief restriction to normal heavy bom er operations of the Fifteenth Air Force during the winter months. Storms moving in from the Atlantic from north-west to south-east proceed rapidly across the British Isles, France, the Low Countries, and Western Germany but, when they come into contact with the mountain chains in South Europe, their speed decreases and they almost come to a standstill, causing unfavorable flying weather for extended periods. It i often the case that portions of storms, centered north of the Alps, spill over into the Mediterranean where they lie off the west coast of Italy, penned in by the Appen ines, or in the Adriatic, held static by the Appenines and Dinarics. Unfavorable route and base conditions always accompany this situation.

Of those three weather areas - base, route and target - which must be considered when executing normal heavy bomber operations, this Air Force is trouble most frequently by route weather over mountainous areas. Target weather is the second most frequent deterrent to our operations and base weather causes relatively few stand-downs.

Weather conditions which favor Lone Wolf operations usually occur when a frontal system lies along the Alps and extends past the Carpathians, up through Poland. Analysis of weather conditions shows that weather which is too bad for normal operations may be, on the other hand, too good for Lone Wolf operations. Weather conditions at base and enroute may be so unfavorable as to prevent normal operations; yet the target may be clear, thus prohibiting Lone Wolf operations. For penetration by single aircraft into fighter-defended areas, the sky coverage in these areas should be 10/10 at bombing altitude. These conditions are as unique as is totally clear weather. Single sortie aircraft can be dispatched only when weather conditions are such as to give protection to bombers, yet which are not so severe as to cause lossee due to icing and turbulence.

3. Objectives of Lone Wolf.

The objectives of the Fifteenth Air Force in executing Lone Wolf operations are to effect destruction of enemy targets assigned as priority commitments, to affect adversely the level of enemy morale, to cause an interruption of the usual wartime activities of the enemy by forcing his population to take refuge in air-raid shelters, and to maintain the pressure of attack on Southern Germany.

4. Evolution of Lone Wolf operations.

It is believed that Lone Wolf operations, as conceived and executed by the Fifteenth Air Force, are a new departure in USAAF heavy bombardment tactics. The embryo of Lone Wolf tactics was an outgrowth of the experience of this Air Force acquired during the execution of night sortie reconnaissance missions for pathfinder scope photography. In June and July of 1944, two B-17 aircraft and one B-24 aircraft were equipped and set aside as reconnaissance ships to operate over enemy territory at night. The photographs obtained by these aircraft were used to improve our radar intelligence and in the preparation of much-needed PFF target and navigation material. Approximately 20 night sorties were conducted on these operations without loss or positive encounter with enemy night fighters. Territories reconnoitered extended deep into German territory from Ploesti to Blechhammer and Brux.

Conclusions drawn from these operations were: Navigation by pathfinder methods alone was highly feasible despite conditions of cloud cover and darkness. Night fighter defenses of the enemy were not believed to have been committed against individual, high-flying aircraft. Based upon this initial experience, it was thought that the threat of enemy fighters to single-aircraft operations could be discounted to a considerable extent. Bad weather could be penetrated with comparative safety, provided that aircraft were not required to pass through areas of extensive turbulence and icing.

Further experience was gained in night flying and navigation during the preparation for and in the execution of the attacks preceding the invasion of Southern France. During several practice operations and on the actual D-Day mission, Fifteenth Air Force heavy bombers took off in darkness, rendezvoused in boxes of six aircraft each and navigated to the battle area by pathfinder methods. These operations further pointed toward the feasibility of single-sortie bombing operations by pathfinder aircraft.

It wasn't until 29 October that it was felt that the Air Force was ready to commence Lone Wolf operationa of an experimental nature and on a limited scale. On its maiden operation the Fifteenth Air Force dispatched six pathfinder aircraft in complete overcast conditions to bomb Klagenfurt, Austria. This mission was executed in the daytime under orders that aircraft which encountered sky coverage less dense than the 10/10 forcast coverage would return to base. These aircraft bombed the primary target without incident, two returned early and one bombed an alternate target. No losses or positive encounters occurred. After several small raids both day and night, a large scale operation was effected on the third of November when, for the first time, forces from every wing in the Air Force was dispatched. A total of 84 aircraft took off to bomb four different targets on this daylight attack.Again there were no losses and the mission was considered successful. Since this day, there have been numerous raids which have led to the development of more or less standard operating procedures. These will be discussed in a later section of this publication.

5. Effect of Main Operational Committments of Lone Wolf Effort.

Before embarking on the program of Lone Wolf operations, a policy qas established which dealt with the extent to which the personnel and equipment requirements of the project should encroach on the efficiency of the standing commitments for normal Air Force operations. Because of the great size and high priority of the task to which the Air Force had been assigned for the winter months, and because of the scarcity of critical equipment and personnel classificationd available for PFF operations, it was decided that in no way could the Lone Wolf program be allowed to interfere with the normal efficient employment of our main bomber force. In the light of this decision it was projected that individual PFF aircraft operations would be limited to a specific set of circumstances which were:

a. Lone Wolf operations would not be laid on if PFF aircraft serviceability was so low that this type of operation might jeopadize the efficiency of normal operations.

b. It was necessary to limit the wffort expanded on LOne Wolf so that the replacement flow of equipment and personnel could maintain a PFF force adequate in size for normal Air Force operations.

III. FORCES AVAILABLE

1. Availability of Personnel and Equipment.

A statistical breakdown of the aircraft and crews available for Lone Wolf operations is set forth in Table A. As has been discussed previously, the primary consideration as to the size of the force which could be employed on these operations was the effect they would have on the PFF effort available for our main operations. For instance, although as many as 75 aircraft were available for Lone Wolf attacks on 3 December, the greatest number that it was thought wise to dispatch was approximately 53.

The shortage of Micky operators provided a concurrent, though not a cumulative restriction on the maximum pathfinder force available. This shortage, resulting from a diversion of pathfinder operator allotments from this Air Force to other theaters, became increasingly critical over the period reported. At no time was the actual number of operators available smaller than the number of operational aircraft on hand, but the strain on the operators in the Air Force was excessive. In isolated extreme cases a pathfinder operator flew a daylight mission and was scheduled to fly a night mission in the same twenty-four hour period. Instrument-trained crews were never a limiting factor to Lone Wolf operations. All pilots of the Air Force held instrument ratings, which were revalidated by the completion of an intensive training program. Three weeks of such training was carried out prior to the first Lone Wolf mission.

The number of pathfinder aircraft available for night operations has been always less than that which can be dispatched for attacks during daylight. It has been felt that only aircraft which have been modified and equipped with flame dampeners should be dispatched on night missions, whereas on day missions it has been possible to dispatch both modified and unmodified aircraft. Also, night operations have had a more adverse effect on pathfinder serviceability for normal operations because attacks made during darkness are twelve hours out of phase with the normal Air Force effort.

2. Modifications Needed.

In the period during which the initial Lone Wolf operations were executed the chief factor which limited the scale of effort dispatched was the shortage of modified aircraft. Because it was felt that they were more capable of participating in the early stages of the project, the 5th and 47th Wings were given first priority for modifications to pathfinder aircraft. The rapidity with which this modification was effected is indicated by the data recorded in Table A.

Listed below is a description of the modifications which were deemed necessary for the conversion of standard PFF aircraft to Lone Wolves.

a. Camouflage - Dull dark grey paint job over the entire aircraft.
b. Heated de-icer and pressurization of H2X set - Necessary parts not available. Substitute plan provided for reinstallation of de-icers and pressurization of H2X by tapping in on de-icer pressure lines.
c. Flame Dampening - B-17 and B-24 flame dampener kits were made available and installed.

SECRET

In order that aircrews may take advantage of daylight visibility during the initial climb phase of an operation, it is customary, whenever practicable, to dispatch the force during daylight hours for attacks either during the daytime or shortly after dark. It is believed that aircrews can make favorable use of all possible visibility in daylight to avoid thunderstorms and other conditions which cause icing. Under conditions where base weather will not be entirely favorable, it is usually projected to dispatch the force at such a time that its return to base will be during daylight hours, thus facilitating instrument let-downs in conditions unfavorable to visibility.

The latest innovation of Lone Wolf is the flying of two to four-ship formations under conditions of restricted visibility. This procedure was tried, employing formations of two aircraft each on a day when visibility within high cirrostratus clouds was several hundred feet. The operation was successful and consideration is being given to the possible employment of formations composed of three or four non-PFF aircraft flying on one Lone Wolf leader. This tactic would allow for the multiplication of the effective bomb load of a Lone Wolf force, increasing greatly the efficiency of this type of operation.

Typical Weather Situation - An Example.

On 3 December 1944, 53 Lone Wolves were dispatched to bomb the Industrial Area at Linz and the Innsbruck Marshalling Yards. The weather situation which prevailed is typical of that condition which favors single-aircraft operations. See illustration on next page.

The weather situation on this date favored Lone Wolf operations for the following reasons:

a. Weather at the target and over that portion of the route which lay in enemy territory afforded 7/10 cloud cover at bombing altitude, negating the threat of fighter opposition.

b. The condition prevailing over enemy fighter bases, 4/10 sky cover at low levels and 7/10 cloud at medium altitude, clouds containing ice and precipitation, introduced a hazard to the flying of enemy interceptors.

c. Base weather was favorable for the flying of heavily loaded bombardment aircraft.

Under the conditions prevailing it was possible to dispatch the force in good weather. On their departure from the base areas the bombers were able to climb above the icing level before middle and high cloud layers were encountered in the upper Adriatic, could effect a bombing run under conditions when there was but small prospect of fighter opposition, could withdraw from enemy territory in the overcast, breaking into the clear for landings at bases.

IV. PHASING THE OPERATIONS

1. Operating Procedures.

When the first Lone Wolf missions were flown, only one Wing participated. Allotment of take-off times, rendezvous areas, lines of departure and target times was not difficult. Later, when aircraft from all Wings participated, special care in planning was necessary to avoid possible congestion in local base areas, enroute and especially at the target. Take-off times were scheduled to prevent congestion in rendezvous areas. Several lines of departure were established near bases or at least in the southern sector of the route. A block of operating time was allotted to each Wing, which then divided its time block among its various Groups. Aircraft were scheduled to pass over their assigned line of departure at specified times and altitudes. To insure further against possible confusion and collision enroute, not more than two Wings were committed against any one target. Corridors of flight were established so that attacking forces might be separated laterally. Sometimes a line was established so that the bomber stream proceeded to the target on one side of the line and returned on the other side. Later, when the entire attacking force was assigned to one target, measures to insure closer timing were effected.

Lone Wolf S.O.P. currently in use provides that timing will be accomplished by the close observance of wing blocks of target time, all aircraft proceeding to the target area at standardized cruising speeds. Sufficient interval between time blocks is allowed to insure that aircraft from different Wings will not be in the rendezvous area at the same time. Definite routes are assigned to and from the target areas. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of the Groups and Wings adhering to the assigned target times. Allotment of time at the target is based on the arbitrary measure of the length of time required by a force of twelve aircraft to effect individual attacks. This time block is set at six minutes, thirty seconds per airplane. An interval of not less than five minutes during which no attack is scheduled is allowed before the next time block for bombing is assigned.

Target altitudes are based usually on the vertical distance required for the spacing of six aircraft. This determination is dependent largely on current target weather. The first six aircraft of a twelve-aircraft attack unit (arbitrary designation) are staggered down at 500 to 750-foot intervals below the leader. The seventh aircraft flies at the same altitude as the lead and the remaining five are staggered down at the forementioned intervals. For example -- if the first aircraft was assigned a bombing altitude of 26,000 feet, the remaining planes would fly respectively at 25,500; 25,000; 24,500; 24,000; 23,500; (seventh plane) 26,000; 25,500; 25,000; 24,500; 24,000; 23,500. Other methods of fixing bombing altitudes have been and are being employed, all following roughly the same general pattern as that described above.

Weather reconnaissance aircraft are employed normally to reconnoiter the route prior to bomber take-off time for the purpose of transmitting current weather observations to Air Force Headquarters. Based on these reports, the final decision is made as to the advisability of executing the mission, diverting the bomber force, or cancelling the entire project. Every safety precaution is observed to insure the success of the operation.

3. Chronology of Operations.

25 October - KLAGENFURT AIRCRAFT FACTORY (DAY).

The first experimental bombing attack by Lone Wolf aircraft was staged in daylight on 25 October. Six aircraft were dispatched at ten-minute intervals to fly in cloud layers to the target which was Klagenfurt, in Austria. The attack was to be delivered from normal bombing altitudes, target time 1200A, and bomb release was to be made by PFF synchronous methods.

Two aircraft returned early and one aircraft, owing to insufficient cloud over target, bombed a target of opportunity. All six aircraft negotiated the route to and from target on instruments, penetrating a front enroute. Over the target, however, clouds were ten-tenths low, no middle, three-tenths high. Three aircraft proceeded to bomb target on PFF, despite the absence of sufficient clouds to provide defensive cover against possible fighter opposition. All aircraft returned safely to base.

This mission indicated that fair weather conditions in the target area could detract from the success of this type operation.

26 October - INNSBRUCK MARSHALLING YARDS (DAY).

Twelve aircraft were dispatched according to plan at one-minute intervals against the marshalling yards at Innsbruck. After flying instruments from base to crest of Alps, the bombers broke out into clear weather near the target. Five aircraft returned early and seven bombed the target visually.

On this mission the aircraft were spaced vertically at 1000-foot intervals within attack units of four aircraft each. The lead aircraft of each succeeding attack unit flew at the same altitude as the lead plane of the first attack unit. Altitudes were: 25,000; 26,000; 27,000; 28,000; 25,000; 26,000; etc.

M/IAH flak was encountered at the target. Seven unidentified enemy aircraft were seen; six in the Udine Area and one in the target area. The fact that these aircraft did not attack gave encouragement for the further exploitation of this tactic.

Tentative conclusions were that this type of operation is feasible for a specific set of weather conditions and provides a means for effectively harassing the enemy on occasions when a large-scale bombing effort is not possible.

28 October - KLAGENFURT AIRCRAFT FACTORY (DAY).

Ten B-17's were dispatched from the 5th Bomb Wing. Ten B-17's attacked the primary target. All aircraft bombed by synchronous PFF method. The execution of this mission was almost ideal -- all aircraft bombed the primary target by PFF as briefed, no malfunctions occurred, no enemy aircraft were encountered, and all bombers returned safely.

28 October - MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARDS (NIGHT)

Twelve B-17's were dispatched from the 5th Bomb Wing. Eight B-17's bombed the primary target, all by synchronous PFF methods. Due to mechanical and PFF malfunction two B-17's bombed a target of opportunity. For the same reasons three sorties were abortive. S/IIH to IAH flak was experienced at the primary target. One

unidentified aircraft was seen in the target area but no encounters were reported. This first night operation was considered highly successful. Aircraft participating in the attack were dispatched just prior to darkness. All aircraft returned to base safely, although some sustained battle damage from flak.

After having completed three day-missions and one night-mission it was concluded that harassing effect of this tactic was significant and satisfactory. Night operations seemed to offer more protection to our bombers, making it possible for the force to operate under less clouded weather conditions than could be penetrated in daylight.

30 October - KLAGENFURT MARSHALLING YARD (NIGHT)

Six B-24's were dispatched from the 47th Wing. Three bombed the primary and three were abortive. Four Ju 88's were seen in the target area but were evaded successfully.

This operation was executed following a daylight operation against the same target. This was a further step toward a solution of the round-the-clock bombing problem.

2/3 November - VIENNA SOUTH ORDNANCE PLANT
MOOSBIERBAUM OIL REFINERY
KLAGENFURT AIRCRAFT FACTORY
MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARD

During the hours of darkness on 2 November, 15 B-17's were dispatched to bomb the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery. Five aircraft bombed the primary and two bombed alternates.

On the following day the largest force to date, totaling seventy-four aircraft, was dispatched. Each of the five Wings was assigned an individual target. A maximum time interval of one minute between bombers was established. Target times for the Wings were so arranged that each Wing had complete freedom for the use of base areas for a period of forty minutes, thus precluding congestion in base areas where instrument flying conditions prevailed.

13 November - BLECHHAMMER SOUTH OIL REFINERY (NIGHT).

This was the first operation during which aircraft penetrated enemy territory to their maximum range. Thirty-one aircraft were dispatched against Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, one of the highest priority strategic oil targets of Europe. Of the force participating in the attack 15 bombed the primary, 4 bombed alternates, and 12 aborted. This was a night mission and target times were spaced from 2007 to 0322 hours. Extended timing plus the use of long-delay fuses made effective prolonged harassing of the enemy.

Surprise was achieved by the bombers which initiated the attack. The refinery was in full operation with lights ablaze and smoke pouring from the stacks of the boiler houses. Orange flames and explosions were observed in the target area. The first bomb strings walked through the refinery.

On this mission two aircraft were lost (1 crash-landed, 1 ditched - crews safe) and two are missing. These losses, the first to occur on Lone Wolf operations, were thought to have been caused partly by adverse weather.

15 November - LINZ BENZOL OIL REFINERY
INNSBRUCK MAIN MARSHALLING YARD (DAY)

On this operation the first attempt was made to achieve coordination among all forces of several Wings assigned to the same target area. No difficulty was experienced. Of 99 aircraft dispatched; 66 bombed primary targets, 10 bombed alternates, and 23 aborted. Five aircraft are missing from this operation.

24/25 November - LINZ BENZOL PLANT
MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARD (NIGHT)

This attack was planned to achieve coordination between time of attack and heavy cloudiness immediately in advance of a fast-moving frontal disturbance. Timing permitted returning bombers to land after first light under conditions of deteriorating base weather. Of 63 aircraft dispatched; 28 bombed primary targets, 18 bombed other targets, and 17 aborted. One aircraft was lost and two are missing.

12 December - BLECHHAMMER SOUTH SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT (DAY)

On this date 91 pathfinder aircraft were dispatched in an Air Force stream consisting of individual formation elements of two aircraft each and spaced at one-minute intervals. 79 sorties were effective. Completion of this mission brought the total number of effective sorties of this type to 460. Aircrews were instructed to fly in high cirrus clouds for protective cover against enemy fighters. This operation was projected to test the practicability of employing small formations operating under conditions of restricted visibility. Pilots reported no difficulty in maintaining formation positions and experienced no exceptional fatigue or vertigo. This type of operation enables one or two non-micky aircraft to fly in formation with a lead and deputy-lead pathfinder aircraft. Advantages to this tactic are: doubled tonnage of bombs dropped on the target with no appreciable loss in accuracy, mutual protection afforded by bombing aircraft in small formation, psychological aid to crews as a result of mutual support, and reduction of early returns due to micky equipment failure by employment of deputy-lead pathfinder. It is projected that in the future three or four-ship elements of this type may be employed so that a greater striking force may effect heavier attacks under cover of bad weather. Such eventual employment will change this type of operation from a tactic of chiefly harassing value to one capable of delivering consistently heavy blows against vital enemy installations.

V. STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

1. Breakdown of Effort Expended.

All data recorded in this summary was compiled from current operations reports submitted by Groups and Wings.

Of 627 aircraft dispatched on 16 missions; 297 (47.4%) bombed their assigned target, 146 (23.2%) bombed alternate targets, and 184 (29.4%) aborted. Of the total aircraft dispatched, 4 were lost and 13 are listed as missing. This corresponds to an attrition rate of 2.7% and compares unfavorably with the less than 2% attrition experienced on normal operations of the Air Force during the same period. Effective sorties for the effort expended total 443, 70.6% of the force dispatched. Of that portion of the force (330 aircraft) which was prevented from attacking the briefed target; 131 (39.9%) were deterred by inadequate cloud cover, 88 (26.6%) by mechanical malfunctions, 75 (22.7%) by PFF failures, 12 (3.6%) by loss of the aircraft, 10 (3.0%) by icing conditions, 7 (2.1%) by enemy aircraft, 5 (1.5%) by excessive turbulence, and 2 (0.6%) by personnel failures. The percentage of the total

Lone Wolf effort which was non-effective (abortive) was 29.4%. This figure compares favorably with that achieved by the Air Force during this same period when the percentage of non-effective sorties of the total bombers dispatched on normal operations amounted to 31%.

See Table A at end of report for a further breakdown of operational statistics.

2. Results Achieved.

The extent of destruction created by Lone Wolf attacks during the period under consideration is not known. The conditions under which the operations were executed preclude bomb strike photographic or visual assesament. On two occasions, when bombing was accomplished under visual conditions, crews report the targets hit. On the day mission against Innsbruck on 26 October, crews bombed visually and claimed direct hits on the marshalling yard. On 13 November crews attacking Blechhammer South Synthetic Oil Refinery at night found the target clear and, in the case of the first ship over the target, even lighted. The lights were extinguished when bombs from the first airplane exploded in the target area. Crews making attacks subsequent to the initial release report fires in the target area.

Lone Wolf attacks were designed and executed partially for their harassing value. The enemy has come to expect immunity from bombing operations at night, and when the weather is such as to prevent formation attacks. Workers relieved of the fear of air bombardment by bad weather and darkness can go about their work more efficiently. Rolling stock does not have to be dispersed, fire watchers can relax, and air raid shelters are empty. As a result, he is using to the utmost periods of bad weather for maximum production and repair. It is felt that even light attacks carried out around-the-clock and in bad weather destroy the enemy's sense of security and maintain a psychological pressure upon him. The disruption, confusion, loss in time and loss in efficiency effected on the enemy by Lone Wolf attacks has a significant strategic effect.

Participation in single-ship PFF attacks is excellent training for new micky operators. Normally, a new operator is indoctrinated in combat bombing by flying a deputy lead position in normal formation attacks, developing proficiency in navigation procedures and familiarity with his micky set. Single-ship attacks accomplish all this and also afford the new crewman active bombing experience which produces increasing confidence in his equipment.

Listed below is an account of bomb damage inflicted by Lone Wolf attacks. This information is fragmentary because of a total absence of bomb strike photography and only a partial coverage of reconnaissance photography.

OIL REFINERIES: MOOSBIERBAUM, BLECHHAMMER

There is no way of determining tangible results because, in the instance of each Lone Wolf attack, one or more formation attacks took place between the date of the "Lone Wolf" bombing and the reconnaissance photography. It is probable that each attack interrupted refinery operations for a period of from three to six hours. This conclusion is based on information obtained at Ploesti where refinery personnel, when three or more aircraft attacked, fled to fields some distance away. Sufficient heat, steam and pressure were maintained in the refinery to prevent the pipes from being fouled.

INNSBRUCK MARSHALLING YARD

Coordinated interpretation of the bomb strike photographs of the vis-

ual attack of 26 October and reconnaissance photographs of 4 November show that the northwest roundhouse received two or more direct hits, the turntable was damaged, two large sheds were partially destroyed by direct hits, two other sheds were gutted by fire, two shops were damaged by hits, at least six hits were scored on tracks in the yard and sidings and three or more residential buildings near the yards were hit.

Reconnaissance photographs of 7 December, following the 3 and 7 December attacks, show damage to a freight warehouse at the north end of the yard, two or three derailed freight cars, a cut siding at the far east side of the yard, several derailed freight cars in this area, and some new craters in the residential area.

MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARD

No damage is disclosed by reconnaissance photographs. In all cases repair, sorting, and marshalling activities were probably suspended during the alert; locomotives and rolling stock may have been moved out of the yard to country sidings, as was the case in Roumania.

ARMAMENT: VIENNA SOUTH ORDNANCE DEPOT

Reconnaissance photographs do not disclose any apparent damage to the Vienna South Ordnance Depot. Probable results were the suspension of work during the alert.

INDUSTRY AND AIR

Photo interpretation reports do not show any tangible results to the Linz Industrial Area or the Klagenfurt Aircraft Factory.

Reconnaissance photography of 17 November shows six tracks cut in the central part of the Linz Marshalling Yard, severe damage to a roundhouse at the north end of the yard and roof damage to a railroad workshop in the station yard. The "Lone Wolf" attack of 15 November intervened between a formation PFF attack of 11 November and the reconnaissance, so that no statement of the damage resulting solely from the "Lone Wolf" mission is possible.

Probable results were cessation of works in the plants during alerts.

VI. TACTICAL ANALYSIS

1. Degree of Success Achieved by Lone Wolf.

As has been noted in Section V, the damage inflicted on enemy installations by single-aircraft attacks is not readily assessable. In those few instances (Blechhammer, Innsbruck) when bombing runs were made visually, it is known that bombs landed in the target area, inflicting damage on the installations there. It is believed, in the light of experience gained in the employment of normal PFF forces, that there is a good probability that some of the bombs dropped on each Lone Wolf mission struck in the vicinity of the assigned target.

Crew reports from all single-aircraft operations indicate that enemy defenses were well alerted. In all, 118 enemy aircraft were sighted and slight to intense flak was reported over the majority of targets. The extent of this enemy opposition indicates that our operations effected a full-scale alerting of the enemy's defenses and probably drove much of the populace into shelters. This statement is made on the assumption that some bombs struck in and about centers of population, for it is doubted if only a warning is any longer sufficient cause to motivate the much-bombed citizenry of South Germany to seek shelter.

By embarking on a program of single-aircraft operations this Air Force has been enabled to execute 16 missions with a total of 627 sorties under conditions which precluded normal operations. To this extent, success has been achieved in maintaining the pressure of bombardment on the people of Southern Germany. It is not known to what extent Lone Wolf attacks have effected a deleterious influence on enemy morale, but it is believed that these attacks, occurring during the night and day in seemingly impossible flying weather, would accomplish nothing which would improve his spirits.

2. Efficiency of Employment.

As a method for the employment of a heavy bomber force in this theater, it is believed that Lone Wolf has sound possibilities. Because of the limitations imposed on this type of operation by weather, it would be unwise to commit any sizeable force to single-aircraft operations alone but, if a large Lone Wolf force was in existence in this theater, it could be employed as a normal bomber force part of the time and as a Lone Wolf force part of the time, depending on which type of operation was the most practicable under current weather conditions.

The effectiveness of the sorties dispatched on Lone Wolf operations during the period under consideration compared favorably with the effectiveness of the normal Air Force effort. (see Statistical Summary) It is believed that when more experience is gained in the execution of this type of operation the rate of sortie effectiveness for Lone Wolf should surpass substantially that achieved on normal operations.

Because of the small force dispatched on single-aircraft operations against any one target, impressive lists of damage assessments are not forthcoming from Lone Wolf operations. On Linz, the target most heavily hit by Lone Wolves, only 85 loads of bombs were dropped. In the course of normal operations, PFF and visual, the total effort of one or two, and sometimes three, Wings is expended on this target. Were as substantial a force of Lone Wolves assigned this target it is believed that the results achieved by them would equal or even exceed those achieved by normal non-visual attacks.

The attrition rate experienced on single-aircraft operations compares unfavorably with that experienced on normal Air Force operations. Although numerous sightings and a few engagements with enemy aircraft were made by Lone Wolves and some battle damage by flak was sustained, it is the expert opinion of commanders in the Wings and Groups that the bulk of our losses have been caused by bad weather. The overload on the pressure systems of aircraft, caused by the simultaneous use of gyro instruments, de-icers, and H2X pressurization is known to have caused malfunctions of pressure pumps which resulted in the lose of flight instruments. It is known also that the common de-icer systems installed on B-17 and B-24 type aircraft are not entirely satisfactory for all-weather flying. The installation of better equipment in Lone Wolf aircraft and the further training of pilots in bad weather flying would reduce the losses experienced in single-aircraft operations.

It is reasonable to assume that the bombing accuracy of Lone Wolf forces exceeds that of formations dispatched on normal non-visual operations. Fifteenth Air Force experience indicates that the bombing accuracy achieved by a bomber force varies directly with the number of bomb sighting operations effected. Thus far, the greatest number of aircraft dropping bombs on one Lone Wolf sighting is two, whereas the average number of aircraft loads of bombs released on one normal PFF sighting approximates twelve to eighteen.

3. Weather Limitations.

Just as weather limits the employment of a bomber force on normal operations, weather also sometimes precludes the use of Lone Wolf tactics. A set of meteorological conditions, equally as unique as for the ideal employment of normal heavy bomber tactics, determines the feasibility of dispatching a single-aircraft force. As is noted in Section V of this discussion, sortie abortions caused by weather conditions unfavorable to this type of operation are quite common. The ill-advised commitment of a Lone Wolf force to an operation during which weather conditions proved unfavorable to this tactic would result in excessive losses either to enemy opposition or to weather. Although the development of Lone Wolf is a step in the right direction, it is not the answer to the problem of all-weather, round-the-clock bombing.

4. Defensive Characteristics.

Although the size and disposition of the enemy's fighter forces has always been given serious consideration in the planning of Lone Wolf operations, its effectiveness against us on these operations has always been discounted. Of those enemy aircraft sighted by our aircrews on these operations, very few were able to initiate an attack. There is no evidence which proves that we have sustained any loss to enemy aircraft on Lone Wolf operations. It is believed that the reason for the ineffectiveness of the enemy fighter force against us is that, although the enemy can, by using his excellent G.C.I. and A.I., bring his interceptors within close proximity to our Lone Wolves, he cannot effect a kill because of insufficient visibility for proper sighting. The enemy in South Germany is not thought to be capable of firing blind from his interceptors. Until the enemy puts into operation against us equipment which assures positive kills under instrument conditions, Lone Wolf possesses excellent capabilities for defense against fighters.

Some battle damage to flak has been experienced over heavily defended targets by Lone Wolf aircraft. It is probable that some of our losses have been caused either directly, or at least contributed to, by enemy ground fire. As yet it has not appeared advisable on single-aircraft operations to saturate the flak defenses of the enemy to the extent they are saturated during normal daylight attacks. It would be ideal if a large force of Lone Wolves could effect an attack on a single target within an interval of a few minutes, super-saturating the gunlaying capabilities of the enemy. However, because of the difficulties which have been experienced in the correct observance of target times, it has not been deemed wise to concentrate further Lone Wolf attacks because of the danger of mid-air collisions with other aircraft and with falling bombs. It is recognized that the RAF concentrates its single-aircraft night attacks into a very short period of time, but it is pointed out that these attacks take place under visual conditions, at least at the altitudes of flight.

The Lone Wolf tactic does have two advantages in flak defense which are not inherent in normal operations. The great differences (500-750 feet) in bombing altitudes employed by each individual Lone Wolf make it impossible for enemy gunners to cut fuses which will be effective against more than one aircraft. This situation has some advantage over that encountered during normal operations when one fuse setting is effective for employment against all aircraft in a single formation. Single-aircraft operations allow for an increase in bombing altitude not possible on normal operations when formations must be flown. This allows Lone Wolves to bomb from a height where enemy flak is less effective.

Because one of the objectives of the Lone Wolf program is its harassing effect on the enemy, numerous instances have occurred when defensive tactics in the employment of the force have not been applicable. Two, and sometimes three, areas of fighter defense have been penetrated by portions of the force participating in a

single operation. To harass simultaneously several suitable targets it has been found necessary to disregard the threat of rousing a formidable fighter force from more than one defended area. In view of the ineffectiveness of the fighter opposition put forth by the enemy, it is believed that this practice has been proved sound.

BREAKDOWN OF STATISTICS

DATE	WING	TARGET	A/C DISPATCHED	BOMBED PRIMARY TARGET	BOMBED ALTERNATE OR TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY
25 Oct	5th	Klagenfurt A/C Factory	6	3	1
26 Oct	5th	Innsbruck M/Y	12	7	0
28 Oct	5th	Klagenfurt A/C Factory	10	10	0
28 Oct	5th	Munich West M/Y	12	7	2
30 Oct	47th	Klagenfurt M/Y	6	3	0
2 Nov	5th	Moosbierbaum O/R	15	5	2
3 Nov	5th	Vienna S. Ord Depot	28	15	2
	47th	Moosbierbaum O/R	11	2	4
	49th	Klagenfurt A/C Factory	11	8	0
	55th	Munich West M/Y	12	8	1
	304th	Klagenfurt A/C Factory	12	8	0
7 Nov	5th	Vienna Floridsdorf O/R	17	10	6
12/13	5th	Blechhammer South O/R	22	13	1
Nov	47th	Blechhammer South O/R	9	2	3
15 Nov	5th	Linz Benzol O/R	36	28	3
	47th	Innsbruck Main M/Y	16	10	2
	49th	Innsbruck Main M/Y	11	7	1
	55th	Linz Benzol O/R	18	9	2
	304th	Linz Benzol O/R	18	12	2
24/25	5th	Linz Benzol O/R	35	18	8
Nov	49th	Munich West M/Y	7	3	3
	55th	Munich West M/Y	7	3	2
	304th	Munich West M/Y	14	4	5
29/30	5th	Linz Benzol Plant	29	18	3
Nov	47th	Munich West M/Y	10	4	5
3 Dec	5th	Linz Industrial Area	12	3	3
	47th	Linz Industrial Area	12	3	3
	49th	Innsbruck M/Y	7	5	0
	55th	Linz Industrial Area	10	0	8
	304th	Linz Industrial Area	12	2	6
6/7 Dec	5th	Salsburg West M/Y	18	4	6
	47th	Innsbruck M/Y	12	1	4
	49th	Innsbruck M/Y	6	3	1
	55th	Salsburg West M/Y	6	1	4
	304th	Salsburg West M/Y	8	2	3
7/8 Dec	5th	Moosbierbaum O/R	17	5	7
	47th	Moosbierbaum O/R	12	0	7
	49th	Moosbierbaum O/R	6	0	1
	55th	Moosbierbaum O/R	8	0	5
	304th	Moosbierbaum O/R	8	0	3
12 Dec	5th	Blechhammer S. O/R	33	23	7
	47th	Blechhammer S. O/R	21	11	6
	49th	Blechhammer S. O/R	7	3	2
	55th	Blechhammer S. O/R	12	5	6
	304th	Blechhammer S. O/R	16	9	6
			627	297	146

Now that you have read the official document from 15th Air Force we will let you in on some individual statements from some of our 99th BGHS that responded to the request to provide their stories. Bernie Barr was the 99th Group Operations and was first to see the orders from the 5th Wing sending us out on the combat missions. As I read the order I thought that bombing a target from the clouds would be an interesting experience and perhaps safer than in the clear sky. So I volunteered and asked the 416 Sq to set up a plane and a crew for the mission. The official 416sq record states "26 Oct. 1944-Target: Marshalling Yards, Innsbruck, Austria. One aircraft, piloted by Lt. Col. Barr dropped on the target. Several enemy aircraft were seen in the target area, but none were encountered. Flak was heavy and intense, but no damage was suffered. There were no casualities." As we dropped the bombs we should have been flying on instruments without visual reference to the ground-however this was not the case. We had been flying in the clouds all the way from Foggia and was approaching Innsbruck when all of a sudden the clouds disappeared and we (one airplane) were in bright sunlight and clear sky. We had about 15 minutes of flying time left to be over the target, Innsbruck, and release our bombs and escape back into the clouds would take another 15 minutes. The question was-what should we do? Go home? No doubt a wise choice. Continue on to the target and face the enemy fighters alone? What were the odds? Well after a short talk to the crew we decided to hit the target. It would have been a lost effort if we did not. We did continue to the target and made a visual bomb run on the marshalling yards and dropped our bombs. As we made the bomb run flak filled the air around us with the horrible black and grey puffs which was visible to us but the pieces of exploding metal was not. As the bombs dropped one of our gunners reported enemy fighters approaching. These fighters made several very close passes but made no attack and I will never know why not. At this point in time I'm not sure why we made the attack-perhaps had we not we might have thought ourselves as chicken.Our group Commander Col. Laurer did not approve of our actions and neither did the 5th Wing Commander Brig. Gen Lawrence. But they did say they admired our courage but not our foolish actions. You may have seen the report of the photo recon mission that stated that the 26 Oct. mission had done much damage to the target area. Bernie

Dear Bernie: May 9 1994

The first day light Bombing of the 99th BGH during WW11.

Date 26/10/44 Squadron 416 A/C NO. 729/PPF Target Innsbruck-Marshalling Yards Country Austria

The crew as far as known;

P- Barr B.S. Lt. Col.
CP-Buffalo C.M. 1st Lt.
N-Schmierer E.W.1st Lt.
B-Jerrem R.L. 1st Lt.
VN.-Snyder J. 1st Lt.
TT-Fredrickson W.L. T/Sgt.
TG-Bacher R.J. S/Sgt.

No record of the rest of the crew.

Take off time 0848 Time over Target 1134 Time Down 1400
Bombs 5001b. No. drop 10 Altitude 27,000 Heading 267%
E/A Encountered one Time just before target Time 1127
It was off at1 o'clock made no attempt to attack.

REMARKS: I was awaken at six o'clock and told I was flying and to go down to the flight line after breakfast.We thought that it was a ~~check~~ out flight,as it was a Mickey ship we went too.Well we

were wrong when we saw the bombs inthe Bomb Bay.About the time we got our equipment in shape the Officer arrive where Lt. Col. Barr inform us that we were going to fly solo in clouds to Bomb a target in Austria.We were going to use Radar to guide us to the Target and back.There was other ships that took off at difference interval,but they all abort.As the tail gunner there wasn't much to do but look at the clouds andanswer here at the oxygen check. When we got to the I.P. to start our bomb run,we broke out into clear sky I mean clear not a cloud in the sky all the way to the target. So there was confab aboard and we all agree that we are so close that we go for it.I saw one E/A at three o'clock but he just seem to ignore us and the flak didn't really start until after we drop our bombs.I understand that Lt.Col. Barr was reprimanded for not turning back when we broke into clear sky.

Now my personal feeling at the time was we weren't as high as the record show till you remember that we were in the alps. I remembers seeing a chalet at the side of the mountain and it seem like I could reach out and touch it, and I thought if they had some eigthy-eight mounted in the mountain it would be a turkey shoot for them.I could see the gun flashes as we flew over the marshalling yards. Sure was glad to see the clouds.

Best regard

Bob

Robert J. Bacher

LONE WOLF MISSION OF ALBERT A. FLEESE-348sq. 7 Nov 1944 Target VIENNA AUSTRIA O/R On 7 Nov. 1944 we took off from Foggia, Italy for a target in Vienna. The weather over the target was a heavy overcast. We were flying on instruments. The bomb load was 10-500 lb. general purpose with 6 to 72 hour delayed fuses. At the briefing we were told to make a hard right turn as soon as the last bomb cleared the ship. I was flying the left waist position and as soon as the ship made the right turn the sky turned black. Had we continued on course we would have been hit with a solid barrage. The mission was 6 hours and 40 minutes long. The crew was Lts. RAMEY, MILLER, VAN BUREN, LANNIGAN, AND SGTS. Tucker, SPROWL, BRUNO, FLEESE, CARSON AND TROST. S/AA FLEESE.

THOMAS N. HUNT
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
8975-273 Lawrence Welk Dr.
Escondido CA 92026-6418

Dear Bernie: *August 30, 1994*

I note you are soliciting stories about single aircraft missions the 99th flew late in 1944. I know the weather was foul for some time, and I was trying to finish up and get home for Christmas (didn't make it). So I volunteered for and flew my next to last two missions as 1st pilot on those trips in November—one a night flight; the other during the day.

Following is taken from my handwritten log of my combat tour:

"Thursday, December 7, 1944–Goup at 2300, 12/6/44, and were briefed for night PFF mission. T/O - 0149 in 187 for Salzburg M/Y, Austria, carrying 10-500# RDX's and leading the Air Force [a reference, I believe, meaning my aircraft was first in a series]. **Hit the target at 26,000', getting only slight flak after bombs away. Chased by a twin-engine night fighter for 20 minutes. Shook him off and returned to base safely. PILOT - Hunt, T. N. 1st Lt; COPILOT - Babers, J.W. 2nd Lt. My 33rd sortie and 47th mission."**

"Tuesday, December 12, 1944–T/O- 0650 on PFF mission in 744 carrying 8-500# RDX's. Flew in two-ship elements in trail. We led 395. Our Mickey went out over the Adriatic, so 395 took the lead. Supposed to go to Blechhammer So. O/R, but the Mickey in 395 also went out. I resumed lead, and we spotted a full M/Y at Hramce, Czechoslovakia. 395 flew our wing and we made a visual run. Stanik was Bombardier and he did a nice job. We really pounded the target from 28,000'. Beaucoup flak after we turned off target. No fighter passes. Both aircraft returned to base safely. PILOT - Hunt, T.N. 1st Lt; COPILOT - Donovan, W.J. 1st Lt; Bombardier - Stanik, F.M. 1st Lt. My 34th sortie and 49th mission."

My recollection of these particular missions was one of trying to stay in cloud cover as much as possible, and maintaining radio silence. They seemed pretty hairy adventures at the time.

Subsequently, I finished my tour on Dec. 15th, with a regular trip as part of the 347th Squadron to Linz M/Y, Austria.

My best regards,

Tom

Dear Bernie,

First, I want to thank you and other officers and servicemen who have performed so well in the service and our society over the past years.

In response to the special request in the August issue of the Newsletter, I wish to advise you that I participated in single night and daylight missions. I cannot tell you which missions they were; however, I am enclosing a list of missions and a copy of a statement relating to two night missions which I flew. I think I participated in three or more missions in the area of Vienna or further east - two night missions and one daylight mission.

I think we flew at five minute intervals. As I recall on one night mission, according to a radio message that we heard, a crewman leaped for an unknown reason into the Adriatic Ocean. The enemy used search lights, but they did not locate us. On one occasion a plane either just ahead of us or behind us didn't return to its base. At the time, we were aware of heat-seeking missiles. The "mickie" equipment was a blessing when we returned with a low supply fuel. I do not recall that our plane was hit by gunfire on these missions.

On a daylight mission which was supposed to be in a cloud cover, we flew for several minutes - maybe as much as 30 minutes without cover; however, as we approached the final bearing we flew into the clouds. Otherwise, the mission was a "milk run".

As far as I know, I was the only copilot who flew single plane missions of this type in the 346th Squadron.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Kinard

1576 SW. Dellwood Court
Portland, Oregon 97225
September 11, 1994

Dear Jules
My friend, Herby Meiser, sent me his copy of the newsletter asking for details of LONE WOLF missions in 1944,
Ourcrew flew several daylight missions. Also called Nuisance Raids in Nov. 1944. On Nov. 24 we were sent on a night mission to hit Linz, Austria marshalling yards. Took off around 10:30 PM and were on the bomb run at 26,ooo ft using radar -bombsight coordination when our B-17 was hit and immediately flipped over into a spin. The cO-pilot, Herb Meiser, said that we were hit by something, possibly a night fighter. at some lower altitude the plane broke up and two of us in the nose section were thrown clear. The co-pilot and radio operaton also got out. We were eventually captured and ended up in STALAG LUFT 1 near Barth, north of Berlin. The surviving crew members were HAROLD MEISER Co-pilot,JOE DOBIES_RADIO OPERATOR, FRANK MARSZALER-NAVIGATOR and TOM SHIVE-BOMBARDIER.
We were eventually liberated in April 1945.
I hope this gives you some added info on the Lone Wolf missions.
Thank You, s/Tom Shive

(report from Richard j. McGee) In general, "LONE WOLF" {although I don.t recall that term being used) missions developed such a reputation that one morning a friend suggested that we spend the day in Foggia as it was rumored that such a mission was forthcoming that evening. The mission of 8 Dec. 1944 was the only time I was crewed with pilot Carlyle Strobel. Believe the individuals (with the exception of Maj. Kane) identified on pg 4 of the Feb. newsletter were members of Strobel's crew at time of this mission. I have no recollection of pre-flight activities-planning-briefing-etc., perhaps I was not included. As for the flight specifically, it was a very dard night, that in spite of the intrinsic apprehension proceeded in a relatively uneventual fashion, except that the bombs were dropped on ETA as the "Mickey" apparatus became inoperative shortely before the IP. After bombs away several search lights illuminated but were ineffective possibly due to our altitude of over 27,000 ft.There was no damage from the few burst of flack observed. I recall that Strobel called "Sandfly" and requested an airline straight in approach for landing.
s/ Richard J. McGee

This brings us to the end of stories reported by members who flew on the "Lone Wolf" missions. There are others but unreported.

MAKE PLANS NOW for the 1995 REUNION - ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, May 16-21, 1995

Sheraton West Port Inn, 191 West Port Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146 [314] 878-1500 or 1-800-822-3535
Cut-Off Date: **April 11, 1995** Room rate $ 65. plus tax. Make your reservations early and direct with the Inn. A city-wide convention at the same time means our cut-off date is FIRM, so get your reservations in early! Delay could mean problems!

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____

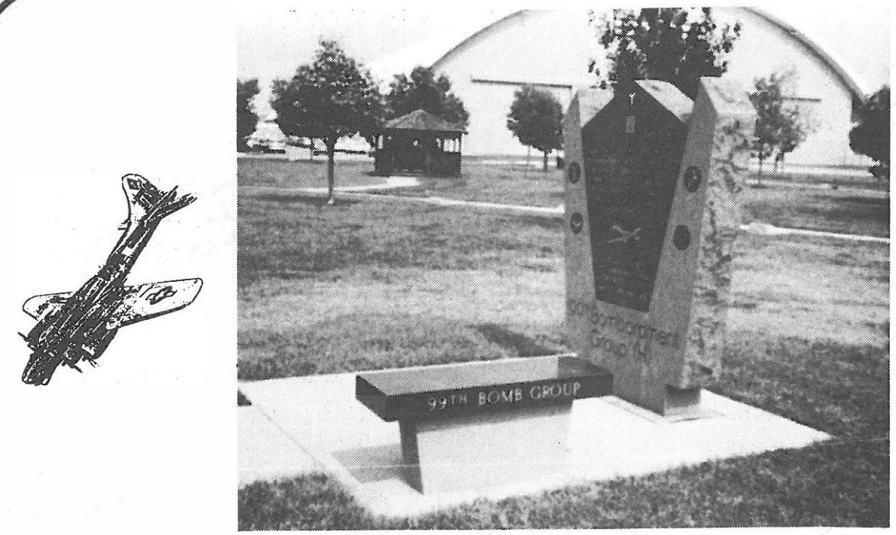
SPOUSE _____ GUEST NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION _____

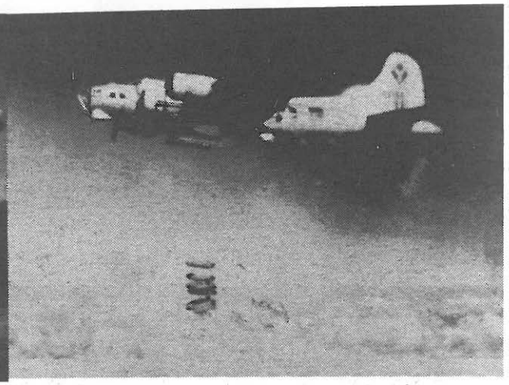
DATE & EVENTS	NO. PERSONS ATTENDING	FEES BEFORE MARCH 15th per Person	FEES AFTER MARCH 15th per Person	TOTAL
REGISTRATION	_____	$ 18.00	$ 20.00	$ _____
TUESDAY, MAY 16th Alton Belle Casino Cruise 6 pm Coupons for Gambling Buffet Dinner at 7 pm Leave West Port Inn at 5 pm	_____	$ 17.00	$ 20.00	$ _____
WEDNESDAY, MAY 17th Sightseeing Tour: Grants Farm, The Hill [Lunch provided], Science Center and Omnimax film 9 am to 3 pm	_____	$ 29.00	$ 34.00	$ _____
THURSDAY, MAY 18th Sightseeing Tour: The Arch, Film & Ride to the Top, Union Station [Lunch on Your Own], Anheuser Busch Brewery, Clydesdales 9 am to 4 pm	_____	$ 29.00	$ 34.00	$ _____
FRIDAY, MAY 19th Scott A F B, Briefing, Lunch at Officers' Club, Tour C-9, Society Business Meeting 10 am to 3 pm	_____	$ 15.00	$ 20.00	$ _____
FRIDAY, MAY 19th Dinner Cruise on the Mississippi Listen to a Dixieland Band 6 pm to 10 pm	_____	$ 38.00	$ 43.00	$ _____
SATURDAY, MAY20th Banquet at Sheraton West Port Dance to the Blue Knights Open Bar at 6 pm Sit down Dinner at 7 pm	_____	$ 27.00	$ 30.00	$ _____
			Total	$ _____

Please send your pre-registrations for the above activities to: 99th BGHS REUNION-St. Louis, Francis W. Grantz, 15655 Clayton Road, Ballwin, MO 63011-2363, phone [314] 394-3314
Shuttle service available from the Airport to the Inn. The Sheraton West Port Inn is located off I-270 at Page Blvd. exit.
The Sheraton West Port Inn is set in a Swiss chalet environment amid the West Port area, which includes shopping areas, restaurants and small shops plus beautiful outdoor areas.



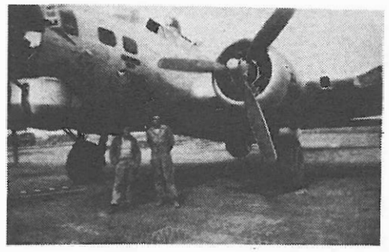
JIM SMITH SENT THIS EXCELLENT PHOTO OF THE 99TH's MONUMENT AND BENCH AT THE WRIGHT/PATTERSON AFB, OH AIR MUSEUM.

"THE WARRIOR "
An original airplane in the 99th. It flew 16 missions before it was retired for use for business & pleasure. Please let Bernie hear from you if you have any stories regarding this or other pieces of equipment.



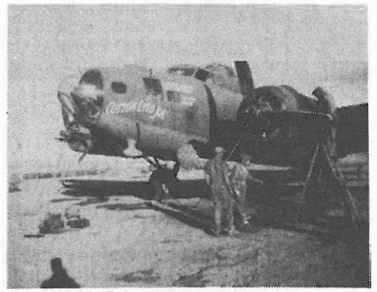
BOMBS AWAY!

For information to be included in our quarterly newsletters (FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, & NOVEMBER each year) you should submit it no later than the first of April, July, October, & January each year. Until further notice newsletter information should be directed to Bernie Barr or Walter Butler. EVERYONE HAS A STORY ! PLEASE TYPE IT IF POSSIBLE AND SEND IT ALONG FOR A FUTURE ISSUE.



"LiL ABNER" & Ground Crew members. We know the names of all the folks in these photos. If you recognize anyone send us a few line or stories about your remembrance of them.

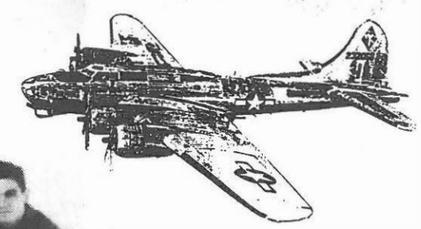
Our homes away from home in Italian farm fields.



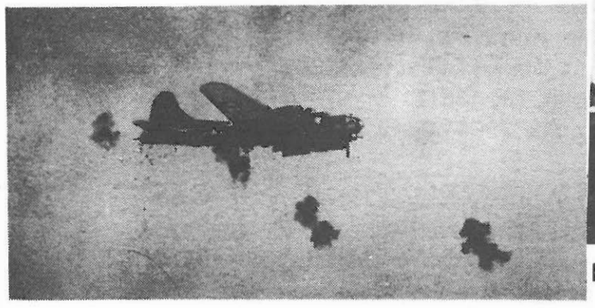
"COTTON EYED JOE"
Does anyone recognize these Ground Crew members ?

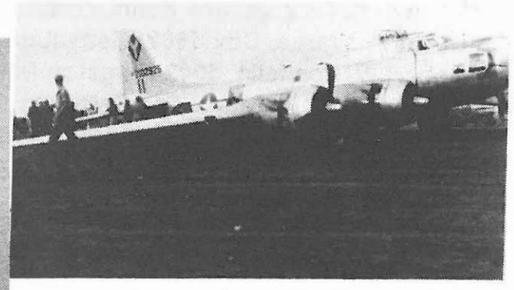
Who is this fine gent?
We know but would like to hear from our members if they recognize him. Send us a few words on how you remember him.

Russian Red Army Girls. Taken in 1944 during a 'Shuttle Mission'. Please write us with any stories this might jog your memory about.



Do you recognize any of these flight crew folks ? Give us a few lines if you will.





Please send us a few words on this incident if it strikes a note with you.

We are sure all flight crew folks remember this sight!

99th Bomb Group Historical Society
Walter H. Butler, Treasurer
8608 Bellehaven Place, N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87112

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A SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES & REGISTRATION FORM INCLUDED ON PRECEEDING PAGE.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU WILL RECEIVE UNLESS THE DATE ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL INCLUDES THE YEAR 1994 OR LATER. 1995 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE NOW AND MUST BE PAID BY JANUARY 1, 1995. YEARLY DUES ARE $15.00 AND YOU MAY PAY IN ADVANCE FOR AS MANY YEARS AS YOU LIKE. MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO 99TH BGHS AND MAIL TO WALTER BUTLER, Treasurer, 8608 Bellehaven Place, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87112.

NEW MEMBERS

William (Bill) Crockett, Box 14, Powers Lake, WI 53159
Leonard Kahn Kirsh, 3117 Trumpet Road, Chesapeake, VA 23321
Jack A. Locovaro, 38 Halos Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312
Chester Osmola, 23846 Linne St., Clinton Township, MI 48035
Earnest C. Ritz, Jr., 609 Kennison Dr., New Carlisle, OH 45344
David W. Warne, Box 4662, Gettysburg, PA 17325
Robert W. Rochelle, 4042 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919
John M. Running, Esq., 617 Caloosa Est. Dr., La Belle, FL 33935
Al L. Irwin, 5998 Edgewood Circle, Dublin, OH 43017
Robert Coon, 1112 W. 10th St., Elk City, OK 73644-6449

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

LEONARD SMITH, 524 Brookwood Drive, Olympia Fields, IL 60461, and his Site Selection Committee are looking for a **Reunion Site for 1996.** If you would like to be the HOST for 1996 or if your can help please get in touch with Len. His phone in (708) 748-2087.