THE 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICRL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

C. S. Rowland
Captain, Army Air Corps
99th Bomb Group
Armament Officer

The Group Flew B-17 Flying Fortresses For A Total Of 395 Combat Missions From North Africa & Italy To Bomb European Targets During 1943, '44 & '45

Robert A. Duffy
First Lieutanant Ordnance Corps, Commander
99th BG Ordnance Company

Vol. 17, No. 3 **August 1997**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TELL AND RE-TELL THE STORIES!

It was an honor and a privilege to speak at the Memorial Day celebration of my Legion Post, on the day the Legion honors the veterans buried there. I watched as Gene Scott, received the command to place the poppies on the graves, and then, carried out the command with military precision. He would place the poppy near the headstone, then stand back at the base of the grave, come to attention, and return a snappy hand salute to the veteran lying there. Each time he did this, the name of the veteran lying there was read by the Post commander.

This was not a drill to remember war. These were people, gathered to pay respect to others, who, among them was a Medal of Honor winner; a Marine who finished his fight at Iwo Jima, giving his life, while saving his team members.

The poppies, the hand salute, the names read, got to me. Questions came, like:
'if this person were alive and could talk, what stories would he tell? Where had he been? What would his eyes have seen?' A GI Joe, perhaps? A Navy swabbie, maybe? A Marine grunt, possibly? An Airman? An officer, or an EM? Just where did he serve?'

I wondered what stories would they each tell? Then, I thought of us ... the 99ers! The Reunions! The Newsletters! The letters to the Editor! THE STORIES! THE STORIES!

Freedom's Lamp and Liberty's Light never burns brighter than when THE STORIES are told, and the paths of memory are re-traced! There are no heroes, just people remembering! But it is then that the revelations of the warriors becomes clearer, and the price for the United States of America comes into bold, emblazoned view.

THE STORIES need to be told and re-told again and again! Others coming behind us need to know, feel, and understand what it was like at 25,000 feet! in mortal combat, with the flak and the fighters, and the smell of pending death and tragic losses. These

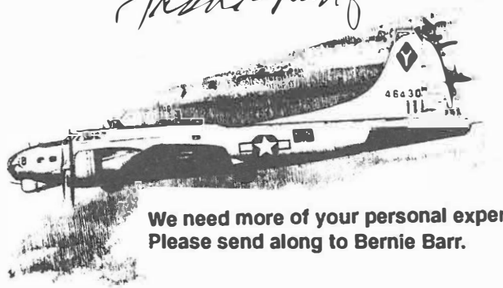
stories cannot die. Though we cannot cast them in concrete or steel to assure their immortality, we can tell and re-tell! The pictures are there, but can be lost! Didn't someone write: 'If you've a bell, ring it! If you've got a song, sing it!'? I add: 'If you've a story to tell, tell it!'

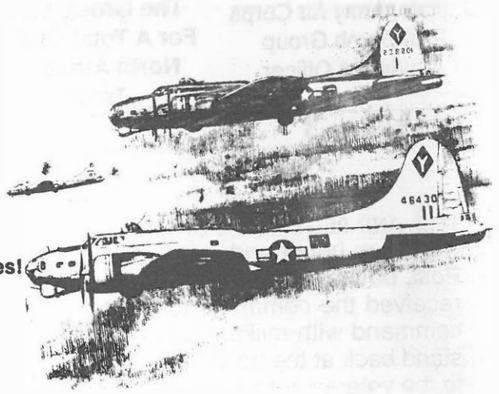
The mud of Foggia's flightlines - the missing holes in formations - the counting - the waiting - the 'stand-downs'; they belong to us each in our particular parts of the war! For some, many times over the target, for others, only a few! Together, the memories were made and the 99th did it together - with each person as part of the team!

Just as the world can never forget the Holocaust, Dachau, and Auschwitz, never can we forget 395 missions - those who flew them and those who helped to get them flown!

I salute you, the 99th and the stories! Tell them and re-tell them! Help the generations coming on to remember - that this is what America is! The land of Freedom and the land of Winners! Until next time, and when we see you in Baltimore! God bless America!

Fran Sprankle





We need more of your personal experiences! Please send along to Bernie Barr.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM C. CALVIN ** IRWIN H. ISAKSON

JAMES V. O'DONNELLY * CLARK J. ROARTY

Members send sincere prayers and sympathies to the families and friends.
MAY OUR COMRADES REST IN PEACE.

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A custom in parts of Africa is that of asking every chief for his "losako", or life motto, that central ideal around which his life operated. When an African chief was asked what his "losako" was, the old chief slowly and reverently replied: "WHEN YOU PASS THROUGH THE JUNGLE, BE VERY CAREFUL TO BREAK A TWIG, SO THAT THE NEXT PERSON CAN FIND HIS WAY"! Today we should ask ourselves 'What is my "losako"?' ... that guiding premise with which we live our lives ... to fulfill our purpose in life ... our reason for existence!

Here in the Midwest during the warm and even, hot days of summer, some would say: "Oh, for the mountains" or "the ocean." It's true that we often think other places may be better, more cool, more comfortable. But each place has its responsibilities and each its opportunities. Each place is home to those who live there, and "a place away" to those who don't!

Thinking of our life direction and where we are as persons, I was reminded of a passage from the writings of Reuben Youngdahl, brother of Judge Luther Youngdahl of Minnesota, in his book, "GOING GOD'S WAY!" He writes

> "A boat was floundering off the shore. A storm was raging high. The Coast Guard rescue squad was alerted. The captain hollered to his men, above the raging wind: "Launch the boats". But a frightened sailor replied: "But sir, the tide is going out. We may be able to reach the boat, but we will never get back." "Launch the boats," the captain repeated. **"WE HAVE TO GO OUT. WE DON'T HAVE TO COME BACK."!**

In the courage of that spirit, long ago now, we became members of the fighting force called 'the 99th'! And a vital part of the now historic 'United States Army Air Forces'.

Never in the world's history has the force of fear, suspicion and hate been stronger than that of fifty plus years ago, when Freedom's light went out for the millions. It is well for us to remember 'we were there'. Some of us never came back - but we did! And now the lamp of Liberty is brighter because others have gone and some of them have come back. A challenge is before us. The Light of Freedom - the beat of Liberty's drum - are seeming to be overwhelmed by other forces. Forces that say things other than 'Let's stand tall and be free in the world!' I am reminded of the dedication and commitment of many, perhaps like the story of ...

> A young couple, happily married, moved to a little island upon which was located a lighthouse. They both loved their work, as they were privileged to help guide the ships along safely to their destinations. One day the husband became ill. They came to take him to a hospital. As the boat was pulling away, his parting words to his beloved wife were: **"MIND THE LIGHT! MIND THE LIGHT!"**. After anxious waiting the boat returned; the wife knew from the look of the pilot that her partner had died. Left alone, she resolved that she would make good the trust that her departed loved one had placed in her. She would stay there to **"MIND THE LIGHT!"**

What's your purpose? Where do you stake your claim? Our challenge is **"MIND THE LIGHT!"** What is your **'LOSAKO'**? God bless you all, my brothers and sisters! Until next time! Chaplain Fran

Fran

NEWS, NOTES, LETTERS & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

***** CHANGE OF ADDRESS *****

MILTON ROSS, 7000 20th Street, #929, Vero Beach, FL 32966
DAVID CONNER, 35-128 Merit Parkway, Cathedral City, CA 92234

Editor Bernie Barr sends a note saying he found a book written by David Conner most interesting. The title is "The Memoris and Musing of a POW, Escapee." David was a crew commander in the 346 Sq. His story is an actual account of his experiences when he was forced to bail out over Yugoslavia, his encounter with guerrilla forces, and internment in Stalag Luft III. Included is his attempted escape, liberation, and return to American occupying forces by his own means.
The history of WW II, and most of Americas' military engagements since then, have been written under constraints imposed by our national security agencies as required during the conduct of our "Cold War" with the Soviet Union and other Communist dominated nations. The enactment of the Freedom of Information act and the collapse of the USSR has changed much of that, but the history books written as many as fifty years ago, with controlled and restricted information, still remain unchanged.
David's shocking revelations make a strong case for major changes in the conduct of our nation's foreign affairs. Combined with his often humorous account of his personal adventure, this is a compelling work.
The book with numerous illustrations has a heavy duty plastic binding, with a clear front cover, and thermal bonding.
If interested send $10.00 per copy (includes postage) to David Conner, 7050 SW Hoodview, Beaverton, OR 97008-8816. (Editor's note: At $10.00 David will not make money.) David's Phone # is 503-646-4304. FAX moden is the same number.

Bernie Barr has a FAX machine. The number is the same as his regular phone number (505-884-7970). When sending Bernie a FAX do not have the hand held phone piece off the 'hook', and dial as follows:
*82-1-505 884-7970

Roy Worthington has a FAX machine. His FAX number is:
Leave hand held piece on hook and dial 1-909-697-0353.

VIRGNIA & MORT MAGEE report a great successful Spring Mini-reunion with 44 attending the banquet. Mike Hayman told your composition editor that he and Ginni attended and enjoyed themselves. Mike is one of our young associate members.

You may order name tags directly from Bell Company - dial 1-800-828-3564 Give your name, squadron, & dates of service with 99th.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES will provide discount fares to BALTIMORE REUNION September 7 thru 17. Call Meeting Desk at 1-800-433-5368 and give Code Number H2087

VINCE & LUCIANN BELL, WARREN & HELEN BURNS, and CHUCK & GLADIE BIGBEE made a trip back to old Italy and Tortorello, etc. Their story will be in our next newsletter.

PERSONAL PHOTOS FOR FRONT PAGE OF OUR NEWSLETTER. Please send Bernie a WW II photo. As space is available it will be printed. THANKS.

ROBERT G. MACK presented an ancient tapestry to the Air Force Academy. His account will be in our next newsletter.

May 16, 1997

Dear Bernie:

In the May 1997 issue, James Ryan writes a letter to you about two crew members whom he is trying to find. I did a computer search and found five people with the name of Frank Susko; three being in PA where he indicated the crew member might be. They are listed below:

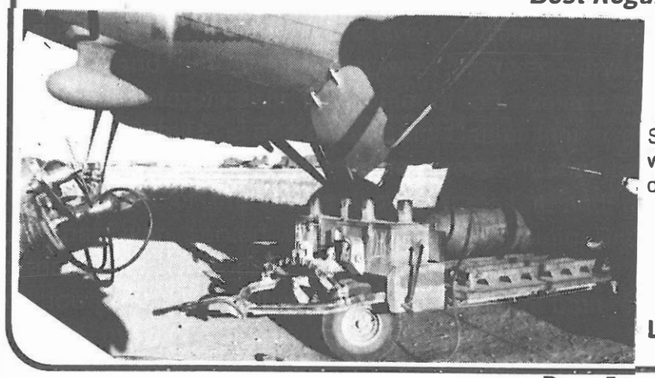
FRANK SUSKO 47 E. CENTER ST. NESQUEHONING, PA 18240
PHONE 717-669-6435
FRANK D. SUSKO 72 LINDEN PL. APT. 16 SEWICKLEY, PA 15413
PHONE 412-741-4221
FRANK S. SUSKO BETHEL PARK, PA 15102
UNLISTED PHONE
FRANK SUSKO 556 NELLIE ST. MASURY, OHIO 44438
PHONE 330-448-0182
FRANK SUSKO 3212 33RD AVE. S. MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55406
PHONE 612-722-7339

I would suggest that James start at the top and see if we have hit the jackpot either directly or finding someone who knows of the party he is searching for.

I found no listing of Bert D. Bunnel anywhere in the US. Since there are names such as Robert which could be shortened, the first thing to check is that Bert is his correct given name. It is always possible that he could be living with someone with a different number or even that he may be deceased. There are no Bunnels listed in the State of Utah who might provide a contact.

Mercedes and I are looking forward to the Baltimore reunion. The outline of the reunion in the Newsletter looks like a winner.

Best Regards: Len Hopen



Starting on page 10 is a story by the gentleman who supervised the loading of any and all bombs dropped by the 99th.

Loading 1000 lb. 'Block Busters'

James J. Cunningham and Jules Horowitz responded to our request for 'Stories' for the newsletter. The first story appearing below was written by Richard M. Valleau a Ball Turret Gunner on Terry Barton's crew.(Sq. number not identified by James Cunningham.) Jim was in the 416 Sq.

*******NOW THE MEMORY LINGERS ON . . . . RICHARD M. VALLEAU******

H-hour . . .H-hour Let's go! Ah Nuts-Get The Hell Out! The sound of the jeep and the sound of that C.Q.'s voice is enough to drive a guy nuts! Well I hope we have a milk run today boys. All of us made a rush for the helmets, we washed and beat it to the mess hall and believe me it was a mess. All week we've been having ceral and flapjacks but today for a change we have flapjacks and ceral. I don't know why the cook never had them patented. They were the nearest thing to synthetic rubber that I had ever seen. After that hearty breakfast we went to the Enlisted Men's briefing tent. As usual the briefing officer was late. I kept saying to myself "Please God no flak or fighting today." The Briefing Officer speaks - "Well boys today's target, 9 August 1943, is Messina, Sicily. We're going to hit the Marshalling Yards. The altitude will be 29,500. No need to worry because intelligence reports the flak is light and inaccurate." (Sigh) That was encouraging. From there we boarded our trucks and rode to our ships. Hold it up Mac! He stopped the truck and we got off at "Jig Jig" our ship. It should have been named "Flak Catcher" because it had more holes in it than a seive. As usual we checked our guns, then waited and smoked excessively. Kelly, the waist gunner, was really "sweating it out" for it was his '13th' mission, providing he accomplished it. As usual Harper, our radio operator, was half lit up. Our pilot, Terry Barton, was cool and collected. Maybe he just never did show his actual feelings. He was a swell pilot, the cream of the crop! . . . The time has come! We all got in the ship, got our escape kits and braced ourselves for the take off. With a load of 500s I always sweated it out, but the take off was good as usual. We headed for the Mediterranean Sea. The amountd of ships on the mission cannot be disclosed,but there wasn't much. Shay, the Engineer, called up - "Hey you guys you better fire your guns". I climbed down into the ball turret and fired the guns. Engineer from Ball -"Guns OK", Waist OK, Tail OK, Top Turret of Nose OK. Pilot from Engineer - "All guns OK" Pilot to crew - "We're now at 12,000 feet, better put your oxygen masks on and stay on the ball! We all got to our positions our nerves tense as usual which is just a natural reaction, not a sigh of cowardness. Navigator to crew "15 minutes from target". I don't want to pity myself, but the ball turret is the loneliest position on the ship, no one to talk to, all by myself. "Bomb bay doors going down". Puff, puff straight ahead was a wall of flak. "Bombs Away", Bang, Puff, more flak. I knew it hit the ship because it rocked like a boat. I had a funny feeling when I saw that flak. I knew we were going to get it and bad. BANG! It happened so fast I didn't know what happened! The glass on the side of my turret shattered and I felt a sharp pain in my left thigh. I looked down and saw a large hole in the side of my flying suit. I felt my leg and my glove was red with blood. It's a funny feeling when something like that happens. You start to think how silly it is for people to go around shooting at each other. But war is war. I still can't understand it! "Feather number one" said the pilot, "feather number two, feather number three". Wow! If he feathers four we'll have to glide and that's impossible. I don't know how many prayers I said but they sure did help. (Sigh). We're out of range of anti-aircraft fire, what a relief! All we have to sweat out is landing somewhere on one engine. Pilot to Navigator - "Is Everything OK"? Navigator -"I got hit on my glasses and the glass shattered and some of it is in my eye". Pilot - "What is the nearest place to land"? Navigator - "It's about 150 miles from here, do

you think we can make it"? Pilot - "I hope so". Pilot to crew - "Get your parachutes on and be ready to bail out". "Never mind , I'm gonna try to ride it in, brace yourselves! I was out of the ball turret and bracing myself against the bulkhead. We were going down pretty fast, but Terry straightened it out and made a good landing considering that all engines but one were out. We got banged up but no one was injured. We all got out and ran away from the ship because the engines were smoking. The smoke ceased and everything was OK, The ground felt wonderful. I was so happy I felt like crying, I must admit there was a tear in my eye. When a person is so close to death and cheats it, it's really something to be happy about. We called the tower and they sent an ambulance out. Joe, the co-pilot,got a piece of flak in his leg. Lesney, the navigator, got glass in his eye, and I got flak in my legs. We went to the hospital and the Doc did a swell job at fixing us up. It was a Limey hospital and they were all very sociable. They gave us some tea and something to eat. After that we went to our ship and looked it over. Here is what we found: One tire had been shot up, the ball turret was full of holes, and if it wasn't for the left gun a piece of flak would have gone through my side, but the gun stopped it! There was approximately 250 holes in the ship. It was beyond repair. We took all our belongings out and went to a cargo ship that flew us to our home base. It felt good to get back. Everyone thought we went down, but we fooled them! "Chalk up another one" I said to thae Operations Clerk. "That makes me have 12 missions, only 38 to go! I guess I'll go to sleep and try to forget that nightmare. Little did I know that there would be many more - even worse!

"Finnis" La Guarre

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This story is copied from Jules Horowitz's diary.

Mission #40, 1/7/44, Target - Weiner Neustadt

I nearly crashed on takeoff. Part way down the runway I found the horizontal stabilizer trim rolled all the way back. It was OK when I preflighted the plane earlier. I know that a B-17 wasn't made to takeoff at 50 knots * * . anyway we got off OK. On the way to the target we hit heavy cloud layer, and when I broke through the top of the clouds I saw only one other plane from the 99th. Our new Sqdn. C.O. who was leading for the first time was not following standard SOP.

I saw the 2nd BG several miles ahead, and redlined the power in order to catch up with them before I met with some undesirables. My Bombardier wanted to salvo the bombs to lighten the load, but I forbade him to do it, lucky for me! When we got to their target it was covered with clouds, so the Group dropped on the alternate target -- Maribor Airdrome. I stayed with the Group until we got back to the 5th Wing area, and returned to our base.

My new plane didn't have tail markings when I joined the 2nd BG. since I was a guest and didn't have a specific position in the formation, I picked the safest spot to fly. I positioned my plane behind and below the Colonel's lead. To me everything was normal. When the group dropped their bombs I followed suit.

A week later, in town, I met some buddies from the 2nd BG. I then discovered how lucky I was. I didn't know what radio channel they were using so I wasn't privy to their excited radio chatter. They informed the lead plane of my place in the midst of their formation. The Germans used a captured B-17 to give ground batteries course, speed and height. They thought I might be the enemy B-17. The C.O. told them to watch me, and if I didn't drop bombs when they did to open fire and shoot me down. I'm glad I didn't know about it at the time!

Jules Horowitz, Pilot - 348th Sq.

While we are tuned into Jules let us correct his E-mail address that was published incorrectly in our last issue. His correct address is:

JULES 11 @ JUNO.COM

If you are into the E-mail bit please give Jules a note. He is compiling a list of E-mail addresses of 99th members.

The following article is from the June 16, 1997 of the New Yorker written by HERBERT MITGANG:

THIS IS WAR DEPT.

The other woman in the Fifth Bomb Wing's history.

I hadn't thought of my old outfit, the Fifth Bomb Wing, for a long time, so I was pleased to see that the Fifth had made news recently - then chagrined to learn why: First Lieutenant Kelly Flinn, the first woman B-52 pilot, had been forced out of the U.S. Air Force for sexual improprieties. It seemed like a crock.

The ex-Lieutenant's case brought to mind an incident that occurred in 1943 in North Africa, when a glamorous American woman in a tailored correspondent's uniform showed up at our headquarters, then located in a former gambling resort in Biskra, close to the action in eastern Algeria. Margaret Brourke-White, already famous as a photographer for Life magazine, had talked Lieutenant General Jimmy Doolittle, of the Twelfth Air Force, into letting her take pictures during an actual combat mission. Doolittle called Brigadier General J. Hampton Atkinson, the commanding officer of the Fifth Bomb Wing, and told him that he had granted her permission to go aloft but left the final decision to his discretion.

When Bourke-White appeared at the casino in Biskra, normal activities stopped. Uniforms were pressed and shoes polished. An attractive American woman visiting our wing! She came equipped with a Speed Graphic, a Graflex, and a Rolleiflex or two. Officers and enlisted men competed to get into her pictures or, at least, to carry her camera bags. When she spotted a gaming table with a green baize covering, she requested that maps be placed over part of it and that "Hamp", our C.O., General Atkinson, who was movie handsome - and his briefing officers pose as if they were planning an attack. It was a faked shot but made for a dramatic picture and didn't hold up the Second World War for more than a half hour.

In the evening, a serious matter was discussed by some of us in the intelligence section of the Fifth's all male headquarters: Where would Margaret go to the bathroom? And where would she sleep?

The problem was resolved in an ancient droit-du-seigneur manner, updated by modern consenting adults in uniform. General Atkinson found room for Miss Bourke-White in his private quarters, a fact not easy to conceal around Biskra. As Vicki Goldberg confirms in "Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography, " "Atkinson was Margaret's first wartime liaison but not her last. In places where women were scarce and death a constant promise, the atmosphere was charged with desire and longing."

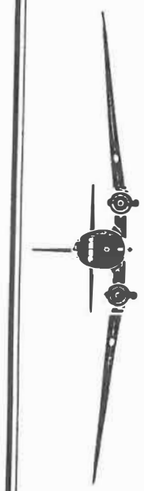
Just after dawn on January 22, 1943, Flying Fortresses from the Fifth's 97th Bomb Group took off and bombed El Aouina, in Tunisia. General Atkinson was in the lead plane. Margaret was on board, filming the mission. Their B-17 returned without mishap. Several weeks later we were happy to see her pictures of our headquarters and Fortresses in Life magazine. Not long after that, the war moved on across the Mediterranean to the mainland of Europe.

To be sure, there's a vast difference between the incidents involving the two women whose names, for better or worse, are part of the Fifth Bomb Wing's history. Except, perhaps, in human terms.

See next page for a photo of Margaret Bourke-White.

Margaret
Bourke-White

Associate Member Mike Hayman sent an update on the SAC Museum move of 38 miles. He was able to take some photos of the SR-71, B-47, & B-25 under way to the new location west of Omaha off I-80. The museum at the new location will house about 38 restored aircraft (including our favorite, a B-17). We carried a few photos of the museum constuction in the February newsletter. If your traveling on I-80 west of Omaha in the future drop in for a look-see. Mike also sent a list of pilot noted discrepancies in the maintenance flight log and the maintenance man's comments. See Page 35.



The Stooge

I'm the copilot, I sit on the right,
I'm not important, just part of the flight.
I never talk back, lest I have regrets,
But I have to remember what the Pilot forgets.

I make out the flight plan and study the weather,
Pull up the gear and stand by to feather.
Make out the forms and do the reporting,
And fly the old crate while the Pilot's accourting.

I take the reading, adjust the power,
Handle the flaps and call the Tower.
Find where we are on the darkest night,
And do all the bookwork without any light.

I call for my Pilot and buy him cokes,
I always laugh at his corny jokes,
And once in a while, when his landings are rusty,
I come through with "Gawd, but it's gusty!"

All in all, I'm a general stooge,
As I sit on the right, with the man I call Scrooge.
I guess you think this is past understanding,
But, maybe, someday, he'll give me a landing.

—Anonymous

Memories of LT. ROBERT A. DUFFY the Commander of the Ordnance Company serving our 99th Bomb Group. His Company was responsible for loading each of our aircraft with the required bomb load for every mission. Photo on cover. Bob tells me that Brutta is Italian for Ugly.

BRUTTA FOGGIA

August, 1995

As my Memoir of the year September '42 to November '43 with the 92nd Fighter Squadron, this discourse on the period November '43 through October '45, covering my time in the 99th Bombardment Group, has been largely based on my memory. These events occured more than fifty years ago, and I have no personal record covering the period because we were forbidden to keep diaries. Most of my chronology comes from the notes published by the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society and from a few letters home which were saved by my parents, now deceased. The reminiscenses come from the flyers who had the adventures and suffered the risks, wounds, and great discomforts attendant to the air operations with which we were associated. This history is meant to memorialize the work of keeping the group ready for the combat missions flown. It is also meant to leave my children with a record of that period of my life. Since my memory is imperfect, apologies should be made if this is not as precise as a historian would have it. Also, like most of us, I am apt to remember my own activities in a favorable light, and the vertical pronoun "I" may be more pronounced in the telling.

My transition from the fighter world to that of the 99th Bomb Group was filled with dramatic events. The campaign for Sicily had been successfully concluded and the allies had invaded the European mainland. General Bernard Law Montgomery's 8th British (and Allied) Army had filtered across the Strait of Messina onto the toe of the Italian boot after their success in eastern Sicily. The Western half of Sicily had been conquered by General George S. Patton's U.S. 7th Army. Six days after Monty's lodgement in Calabria, the U.S. 5th Army, led by General Mark Clark, followed with an assault on the shinbone of Italy at Salerno. Italy surrendered amid all of this but Benito Mussolini, ejected and imprisoned by the newly formed Italian government, escaped and took the remnants of his Fascist government north to join his German allies. He formed a new administration to continue the war against Allied forces on the Italian mainland in strength from mid-September on.

British paratroops took the port of Taranto and, joined by Monty's rapidly advancing army, quickly took the Adriatic port of Bari. In short order the British captured the important airfield complex surrounding the city of Foggia. North of that area the going got rougher and the 8th Army slowed

down. The left flank of the army was mired in the Appenine mountains of Abbruzzsi where the American 5th Army joined them only to be stymied by a clever and determined German force. Aided by the miserably rugged terrain and the fall of winter rains, the Germans halted the advancing armies. A bitter, drawn-out mountain campaign ensued in vile weather. It was the worst winter in Italy's recent history.

The enormously important major ports; Naples, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, Taranto, on the Gulf of Taranto, and Bari, on the Adriatic, were all in Allied hands by October I, 1943. The airfield complex at Foggia served as the major operating base for the air war against the Axis from the south for the remainder of the war in Europe. Eventually, about 2000 aircraft of the U.S. 15th and 12th Air Forces and the RAF's Desert Air Force were flying off these fields. Most of the 12th Air Force moved eventually to operate out of Italy's west coast and Sardinian and Corsican airfields where they supported the 5th Army and it's Allied ground forces. The RAF operated many of it's planes out of Foggia through that winter of '43 and '44 until the 8th Army moved north. Although this enormous concentration of air power on the Foggia plain was not a new phenomenon, it still was a strange transition. As a major, Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York City during this time, had, in World War I commanded a U.S. Flying Service pilot school here, and of course, the Germans and Italians had operated from the fields prior to their capture by the 8th Army. They had been bombed by our 99th Bomb Group during their tenure, and we had taken casualties over the very fields from which our planes now flew.

This plain had been the granary of ancient Rome, and Foggia had been a garrison camp during the pre-Christian era. In the perilous years when Hannibal challenged the Roman Empire, a great battle had been fought just south of Foggia (near the present city of Barletta, forty miles or so south) at Canne. It has been estimated that about 50,000 men (our total in 10 years of Vietnam warfare) were killed there in that battle. In the Dark Ages the area became a swamp, but the Fascist government in the 1930's reclaimed the land and established state farms making the former malarial wilderness again a productive agricultural enterprise. Our air operations disturbed, but did not completey disrupt, that essential activity. Although we fed ourselves, not too lavishly, with what our strained logistics system supplied, there was a considerable civilian population to be fed. We did have a few lean months ourselves when German bombers sunk an ammunition ship in Bari harbor, damaging port facilities and disrupting the supply system.

The British town major in Foggia did not have an easy job. The Allied Military government, established immediately after the 8th Army moved through, had to police and maintain a cooperative, non hostile local populace or our operations would be threatened. I feel that they did an excellent job; I do not recall any incidents of sabotage on our field, although there may have been some elsewhere as the armies moved north. From Foggia we could reach targets from southern France adjacent to the Spanish border, to just south of Berlin and southern Poland, to the Greek Islands to our east, therefore we had no occasion to move our base north for the duration of the war. Some of our airmen (evadees shot down in the north) were exposed to hostile civilians in northern Italy, south Germany, Austria and the Balkans. Those of us in Foggia escaped all that. We lacked comforts, and we had occasional air raid alerts, but our bivouac was a reasonably safe and secure home.

The 99th began operating immediately from Foggia #2, the Tortorella sattelite field which had been used by Luftwaffe JU-88s before the field was captured by the 8th Army. Our aviation engineers quickly restored runways with their small dozers and by laying down steel pierced planks. The field was ready for operations by early December.

By mid-December, C-47s had taken most of the ground echelon to the new base, and I, with the heavy equipment, followed in convoy aboard an LST which sailed into a bomb-damaged but useable Naples harbor well before Christmas. We trucked in convoy across the Italian peninsula (and it's spine the Appenines represented) in pelting rain and through mud over miserable roads. Our campsite, just north of the airfield, was a hillside on a farm which included a cup-like depression. This was the site where my company commander, First Lt. Ken Weidner, had established our bomb dump (wisely, I might add, since a munitions explosion would vent upward sparing our camp). An Italian family still occupied the farm we were on, and there were aircraft not bomb-sheltered on the adjacent airfield. I was to remain there for the duration of the war.

We lived in pyramidal tents and eventually had all wooden flooring to keep us out of the mud. Almost immediately, we began constructing a semi-permanent building. We hired local Italian artisans who cut building blocks out of the live tufa (an adobe-like, dense, wet clay). They built these bricks into walls which we roofed with canvas first, creating a reasonably comfortable shack with two or three rooms. We had portable Briggs and Stratton gasoline driven generators for light. A substantial mess hall was quickly erected in similar fashion. An outdoor shower and open but adequate latrine were next. We hauled water in a standard Army

tank trailer towed either by a 3/4ton weapon's carrier or by one of our bomb-lift tow trucks. Everyone dug a slit trench next to his quarters for air raid protection. It was cold and windy. Aircraft fuel tanks, salvaged from derelicts, were filled with water, roof-mounted, and served as solar-heat elements for "in-house" hot water. In time our camp (except for the almost ever-present mud in winter) became fairly comfortable. The flooring came from the dunnage timbers which braced our munitions during transit. Our chairs and stools were the metal crates which protected the bomb fins. The fuel was pressed paper soaked in used motor oil. This paper came from the rollers which encased each bomb to protect the welded lugs used to hang the bomb in the release shackles that were attached to the bomb racks of our B-17s. The pressed paper rings permitted the bombs to be rolled, rather than lifted, when moving the munitions. The bomb we most frequently employed was the 500 pound general purpose munition which required four strong men with lifting bars to move. With the rollers and the winch, two men could handle these 500 pounders...an important saving. The oil-soaked, pressed paper protective rings created a good hot fire for heating water to clean our mess gear, to warm our mess and sleeping quarters, and in time, our remarkable showers. Perhaps our greatest coup was the acquisition of a steam-driven Italian road roller. I never knew and did not attempt to learn where the roller came from, but it's boiler supplied hot water for the camp!

Our bomb lift trucks looked somewhat like a wrecker with a fixed crane and hand-powered winch that lifted bombs to the surface of the low-profile bomb trailers. They were hitched nose to tail and towed by the lift truck. Each trailer with bombs fit neatly under the bomb bay of the B-17s. An armorer assigned to that plane, and our ordnance crewmen, lifted the munitions (using a hand-cranked winch mounted in the aircraft to the bomb-bay racks) where the bomb hung until released by the bombardier over the target.

Arming the bombs required insertion of a nose fuse and a tail fuse, safing the fuses with an arming wire that was held, with the bomb, in the aircraft- mounted shackle. If the bomb was dropped live over the enemy, the arming wire remained in the bomb's shackle. If jettisoning over friendly territory, the wire, preventing the bomb from arming, was released with the bomb. The arming wire passed through the fuse propeller until the bomb was clear of the bomb bay doors. In free-fall the propeller in the fuse turned through a set number of turns to arm the munition. A safety pin fit over the release mechanism until the aircraft cleared friendly territory. Generally, the bombardier was responsible for removing this pin in flight prior to arrival over the target. At times, the

pilot, (the aircraft commander), could and did choose another crewmember to do this. That enabled the bombardier (who had the least restricted view from his perch in the nose) to keep his eyes searching the sky for enemy fighters in front of the aircraft.

One of the duties of the ordnance crew was to collect and count the pins after each sortie. Crewmen exposed to the enemy fire and the hazards of combat were not keen on dropping dud munitions, and a quick ticket to the "dog house" came as a result of the unfortunate bombardier coming up short or worse empty-handed when the safety pins were counted. A friend of mine, now a vice-president of the Aerospace Corporation, spent his early teen years in Vienna during our raids. He commented on the large number of dud bombs dropped and wondered why. That was a legitimate question.

Early in the game, the ordnance officer did all the fusing, but it soon became evident that this procedure would not work. A typical load was twelve 500 pound general purpose bombs. Twelve arming wires had to be inserted in twenty-four fuses, and twenty-four Fhanstock clip-s had to be added to the ends of the arming wires to keep them from inadvertently slipping from between the fuse propeller blades. Six to ten aircraft per squadron flew on each mission. "Maximum Effort" missions required that every flyable aircraft be launched, and in that case, up to fifteen might be flown. Four squadrons had to be armed each night, and we did not know until late in the afternoon which aircraft were to fly the next morning, what the munitions load would be (they varied with the target), and what the take-off time would be. Eventually we worked out a system under which we would begin loading our trailers in the afternoon before we knew the exact load (betting that 500 pound bombs would be called for). If we were wrong, we had half of our trailers empty and could load those with the correct munition, unload the 500 pounders (previously loaded), and reuse the trailers after we had started filling bomb bays.

After discovering that there was not enough time or energy available for every fuse to be installed by the ordnance officer, the sergeant in charge would fuse the munitions, and I, or one of my colleagues, would inspect the job. The whole procedure took most of the night, and if by chance, the target designation was changed for any number of reasons, all hell broke loose. Weather was the most likely reason for change, but bomb load or fusing differences could also change the program. We had to unload and reload at times, just catching the last aircraft to taxi out of the "hard stands" where the airplanes parked for servicing. I don't recall one case in which we were unable to accommodate the operations people. It was

exhausting duty, so we did not see much daylight unless a "stand down" was declared by the 15th Air Force.

The 15th Air Force, the just organized American Strategic Air Force in the Mediterranean Theater, had moved it's headquarters, under Jimmy Doolittle, to the city of Bari, south of Foggia on the Adriatic Coast, late in '43. The B-17s, four groups at first, eventually were organized in six groups as the 5th Bombardment Wing, all based north of Bari (around Foggia). A B-24 wing was located at Cherignola midway between Foggia and Bari. Other B-24 wings were south of Bari toward the heel and instep of the Italian boot. The B-24s had a range advantage over our B-17s, but frequently they assembled in formation over or near and just east of Foggia, particularly when targets were designated in Central Europe or Northern Italy.

The British Strategic Air contingents flew almost exclusively at night, but their operating airfields were scattered about the plain of Foggia. The RAF's Wellington (Wimpy) was a large, twin-engine, partially fabric covered aircraft, and one squadron flew from our airfield. Adding the returning RAF to the mass of 15th Air Force planes, coupled with some 12th Air Force aircraft; and our wing of escort fighter aircraft, put many planes in the air in the early daylight hours. It takes only a minor stretch of the imagination to have the sky totally covered with expensive aluminum encasing many human beings. The din was remarkable! Traffic control must have been a nightmare. Very Flares were used for emergency situations--an aircraft returning with wounded crew or a returning battle-damaged aircraft needing priority for our runway would fire a red flare triggering emergency vehicle deployment and causing shifts in the sequence of landing operations.

The aviation ordnance functions in the Mediterranean Theater had been reorganized in October of 1943, just before and during our move. The ordnance platoons of each combat squadron were withdrawn (on paper) and reassigned to a service group (the 324th in the case of the 99th Bomb Group) as aviation ordnance airdrome companies. Each company was then assigned to a combat group for duty. The net effect was that no physical changes occured in work situations, but as the units moved to Italy in late '43, the four platoons assembled in one camp and operated one munitions supply and service area (termed the "bomb dump" in our case). This grouped resources much more efficiently (all, for instance, messed together) and operated as one military unit. A group ordnance officer was designated, usually the senior department officer present. In our case, we rarely saw him because the duty station he selected was with group

operations miles away from our camp. Our contact was by field telephone from his office at group headquarters. Life was markedly different from my cozy little fighter squadron. This was a big business!

The 99th Bomb Group had trained in the northern United States (Geiger Field near Spokane, WA., and Sious City, IA.) and had been operational for six months in the Mediterranean Theater when I joined them at Oudna, near Tunis. They had established a strong presence in the 5th Bombardment Wing, and it, with escorting fighters was absorbed into the newly designated 15th Air Force. The group's reputation was greatly enhanced by it's effort in supressing enemy opposition to the Allied invasion of Sicily by bombing, in the face of fierce opposition, the airfields and transport to be used by German and Italian forces in countering Operation Husky. A Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) was awarded the group for neutralizing the airdrome complex at Gerbini, Sicily just prior to the Allied landings.

I arrived to assist in breaking camp for the move. On the 3rd of December, most aircrews and a few ground crewmen flew out of Oudna in rainy weather destined for the new operating base. It did not take long to perceive the marked difference between the tone of the fighter group and that of the bomber group. In the 92nd Squadron (a third of the strength of our fighter group) all of us knew each other intimately, and despite our losses, there was a light-hearted air about the unit. The cocky little fighter pilots lifted everyone's spirits. We all shared the same rough discomfort of tent and dugout in the cold Tunisian winter of '43 and the searing heat of the desert fringe that summer near Orleansville in western Algeria. The highest surface temperature on earth had been registered near Orleansville, and in recent years, the city was levelled by and enormous earthquake. I'm not sure what the temperature reached in summer '43, but it was miserably hot.

The fighter squadron was divided into three flights for tactical deployment, and the flyers did tend to group themselves informally by flight. The senior lieutenant or captain flight leader assigned his men to dugout or tent quarters, eight men to a tent or dugout for the enlisted men and half that number for officers. The nominal leader of the enlisted men was the master sergeant line chief rather than the first sergeant (one rank below the line chief), who was the administrator and disciplinarian. We few, non flyer technical officers tended to flock together, although this was not a" hard and fast" rule.

The bomb group was distinctly different since the flyers flew and socialized as crews. The four officer crewmen generally teamed up with

another crew of officers to form a sleeping arrangement of eight to one pyramidal tent. The enlisted crew members, all gunners when in action, were bunked with other enlisted men at the direction of the squadron first sergeant and were exempt from most of the menial tasks performed by "rank and file" military men since time immemorial. I won't attempt to depict the hazardous existence these brave fighters experienced in combat aloft. There are, however; wonderful accounts extant written by the men who lived the tale. Our 99th Group Historical Society bulletin carries many of them. One of the very best I've read is Tomlin's Crew, written by J. W. Smallwood, a 99th Bomb Group bombardier shot down over Germany in early 1944. The book was published in 1992 by the Sunflower University Press in Manhattan, Kansas.

Two cultures evolved in bomb group life. In one culture, life was tenuous and extremely uncomfortable and hazardous almost daily since we could launch missions at rapid intervals from the Italian airfields. In the other culture, life was arduous, tedious, and uncomfortable but generally safe. We worked every night to ready aircraft for the next day's mission. The cultures crossed during "stand down" days. These non operational days were usually occasioned by bad weather at our primary target or, as we experienced in '44, the Italian weather itself. March of 1944 was particularly odious. Occasionally the enroute weather was the cause for a "stand down". We had the Alps between us and Central Europe and the Dalmation Alps between us and eastern (Greece, the Balkans, etc.) targets. Clearing the high peaks in these mountains with heavily laden aircraft was an added hazard much complicated by bad weather.

Sports were the principal means for "cross cultural" contact, and our ordnance team did well in these. Liberty in town was another meeting ground although "Bruta Foggia", as the locals referred to our nearby town, lived up to it's description. It was an ugly city. Early on, the hot showers and baths provided through the American Red Cross were a big drawing card. Their associated canteens gave the men inexpensive coffee and doughnuts and the opportunity to see and talk with the clean and lovely American women who served them. The Red Cross took a bum rap because it charged for their refreshments while supported by contributions from the American people. Turns out that Eisenhower did it! The British Forces ran a canteen service they termed NAFFI that charged their military a fee, and the Brits convinced the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces that in fairness U.S. troops should be similarly taxed. Eisenhower complied as we thought he always did to his British allies' suggestions. The charges were nominal in any case. The Red Cross operated a similar service at most American bases. These mobile canteens, "Clubmobiles", cruised the

flight lines and brought hot coffee, donuts, and the smiling "Donut Dolly" to the G.I.'s. In our rough and ready fighter existence (in close support of the ground forces in Africa and Sicily), we never saw this civilizing presence. Bomber service was distinctly better in this respect.

Despite the crossing of cultures at sports and social events, there was a difference. It was not eliteism on the part of the flyers because it was they who were exposed; nor was it an inferiority complex on the part of us who were relatively safe. The difference occured because we worked all night, the flyers, all day; they went home (rightly, of course) after a set number of missions, we stayed on. They died, we lived; and all of us were exhausted.

A long-standing friend of my wife is an artist whom I met for the first time recently at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, where his work was on display. At that time I learned that he had flown from Italy with a B-17 Group. He had been an enlisted gunner and was now a recently retired professor of Ceramic Art. When I got around to asking him how many missions he had flown, he shyly answered, "a half". He had been shot down on his first mission, had spent many months as a POW, had marched with his fellow prisoners west and south to evade "liberation" and perhaps further imprisonment from the advancing Soviet military.

When I first joined the 99th Bomb Group at Oudna, two veteran officers had just organized the 6632 Aviation Ordnance Airdrome Service Company out of the four platoons assigned to the squadrons of the 99th (346, 347, 348, and 416 Bombardment Squadrons). They were good, intelligent and competent soldiers who had worked with the group during it's training at various bases, mostly in the northwestern United States. They had landed with the group's ground echelon in the spring of '43 at Arzew near Oran in western Algeria. Both had moved with the group to it's early operating base at Navaron south of Constantine, on the fringe of the Sahara Desert in eastern Algeria. The group's final North African base was at Oudna near Tunis after the Axis troops surrendered in Tunisia. From these African operating sites the 99th Group had supported the landings in Sicily and the invasion of Italy.

The senior officer, Ken Weidner, became the first company commander. I believe he had been an engineer with Linkbelt, a power transmission company and mechanical manufacturer in the midwest. Pat Vesey, the other veteran officer in the newly established company, was a jovial Irishman having all the charm and chutzpah of the "ward heeling" eastern

politician, which he may well have been. They were both in their mid to late twenties, five to ten years older than I, and we were all mint-new first lieutenants, Ordnance Department, Army of the United States (AUS). The distinction was important because AUS officers held wartime rank not necessarily carried over to a peacetime military establishment. A more formal company arrangement would have had a captain as commander and lieutenants as leaders of the four platoons. The Army Air Forces at that time had probably 300,000 officers of which about 3,000 were ordnance--not enough to fill all of the needs for complete manning. I would guess further that of that total 300,000, about half were aeronautical rating holders (pilot, navigator, etc.), and all the rest of us were in business to support those flyers. Enlisted men who flew as gunners, flight engineers, and communicators probably added another 150,000 fighting men. At peak the Army Air Forces numbered about 2,000,000 in World War II.

The two "old-timers" (I had preceeded them by six months in the theater by being a 92nd Fighter Squadron member in the invasion of Morocco in November of '42), left me at Tunis to clean up and move the heavy equipment by LST to Italy. I would give both Pat and Ken credit for organizing a solidly run well working company. Pat, very adept at looking out for "number one", arranged a transfer immediately after we got settled in Italy. Ken became the group ordnance officer as soon as that position was authorized and soon they were both captains. I and the the successor officers in the company remained lieutenants throughout the war in the company which I now commanded.

An extremely competent and very much admired officer had led the 99th Group through it's training and it's introduction to combat. Colonel Fay Upthegrove taught our group the vital necessity for air discipline in tight formation flying for precision bombing and the tactics for defeating the interceptors they soon encountered. Shortly after our move to Italy, he was given command of a wing (a number of groups) of B-24's based near us at Cerignola, a city south of Foggia and nearer to Bari, site of our 15th Air Force headquarters. Upthegrove was rewarded with the star of a brigadier general. A West Pointer, he served the peacetime Air Force gaining the rank of major general before retirement. He very recently died at his home in Pennsylvania. It was to Upthegrove's new wing that Pat had himself transferred and I never saw him again. Of course, I often saw Weidner, but most of our communcation was by field phone when our bomb load was determined for the next day's mission. I became the official company commander on March 13, 1944.

Soon after arriving at our operating base (Foggia #2, Tortorella), I acquired two wonderful officers who did most of the line work of the loading areas at the aircraft hardstands of the flying field. First Lieutenant Mike Vaccariello came first and he served as company executive officer (second in command) for the remainder of the war. Mike was an elegant, soft-spoken Californian--bright and responsive, he served well. Skip Rucinski, a tall and taciturn college basketball player from St. Bonaventure College in Olean, N.Y. (also a first lieutenant) joined us soon. He, too, was very competent, industrious and dedicated. Eventually we were joined by Al Clark, a sharp New Englander from Vermont with a marvelous sense of humor and a crackling Yankee accent. He worked well and fit beautifully into our operational routine as the fourth lieutenant we were authorized. We had a harmonious tour of duty together.

When, in time, the bureaucrats gave up on the separate ordnance company idea and we were officially reassigned to operating groups, we all elected to remain together because we were more efficient that way. It was a seamless transfer of authority and no difference was discernable at the 99th Bomb Group headquarters nor at the bomb squadrons of the group. I credit Ken Weidner's accumen for that happy circumstance. He was politically astute and a very smooth operator. At the working level we loved our separate but equal existence in that slightly remote site. We were not ideal neighbors, so we got no complaints because we live with our cache of explosive ordnance instead of bringing our bombs up to the squadron bivouac areas. Incidentally, a terrible explosion at Navaron, in North Africa (in the bomb dump serving the 99th Group) killed 23 men when bombs being rolled off the open tailgate of a delivery vehicle detonated. They should have been individually hoisted out carefully and stacked using the bomb service truck, a system we insisted on during my tenure as boss.

I never saw any of these wonderful officers again after the war with the single exception of Al Clark, who somehow wandered into my ken while I was a student at MIT in 1952. It was a brief contact that I lost shortly after leaving that school assignment.

The winter months of '43 and '44 were miserable early on. We did not fly daily in December and January because it rained so much with occasional snow falls. On the other hand, we were fully engaged just getting our quarters set up and learning the ropes of our new existence. Our flyers had to learn the idiosynchracies of the airfield which had an interesting ridge at the end of the single runway where a railroad crossed! We had several air raid alerts per night at first, and to our north and west there

was a constant din of artillery fire. I was used to that because of my stint in Tunisia the previous winter, but it was all a bit scary for the uninitiated. The Germans were certainly within earshot just to our north. Across the Adriatic in the Balkans a very large occupying force was engaged in battle with partisans. Some estimates put the size of the German occupation there at 300,000 to 350,000 troops.

In the previous fall an agreement on strategic priorities had been reached between the senior Allied commanders. It had been decided earlier between governments that the cross-channel invasion of Europe would occur in the spring of '44. The military leadership concluded that Germany's air force had to be target No. 1 if that invasion was to succeed. The decision makers who carried the day felt that the best strategy would be to fight the German air force in the factories before they flew. Their subsequent rationale said that since most Axis aircraft production was concentrated in south central Europe, both the British-based and the Italian-based Allied strategic air offense should aim for those assembly plants first. The Foggia-based 15th Air Force became a major part of the air offense plan. The RAF would continue their night raids against the same targets. Our location permitted force projection from the south to threaten the highest-priority targets, but the Italian campaign on the ground interfered often. Anzio, Cassino and the attacks against the German logistics system in support of the Axis forces in Italy demanded our commitment.

The British-based U.S. 8th Air Force had been carrying the brunt of the daytime strategic air offensive. Their losses in late 1943 were brutal. The RAF operating from Britian at night bombed with less precision and inflicted heavy civilian casualties which brought strong condemnation for their Bomber Command leader, Air Marshall Arthur Harris, even from some citizens of his own country. Just as it seemed that the Italian-based strategic air resources could be brought to bear to relieve the 8th and the RAF Bomber Command, the two Allied armies in Italy ground to a halt. As a consequence we became, for a while, a tactical-support force bombing rail transport and port facilities supplying the German defenders dug in across the Italian boot. Stymied before Cassino, the Allies concocted a surprise landing of a corps behind the German lines at a beach near Anzio. Our group, as a part of a much larger effort, attempted to isolate that area. We got off quite a few missions despite our muddy field and the poor flying conditions.

In retrospect, I think we must admit that we were less than effective. The German commander, again Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, was successful in transferring a reasonably large group of defenders from

within Italy and the Balkans. The Anzio beach-head was contained. Four months later, in the middle of May, the VI Corps escaped from the killing ground it had established for itself. During those grim four months of entrapment, German artillery pummeled at will the beached Allied (largely American) force, extracting a long list of casualties (60,000) as the butcher bill for our audacity. The 99th dropped anitpersonnel munitions on the besieging Axis troops. We, the ground support for the 99th, got our workout keeping aircraft ready for action on short turn-around sorties. Despite these tactical support missions, we did not completely neglect our more global responsibilities. On one mission to Pireaus Harbor in Greece, on the 11th January, the 5th Wing lost eight B-17s. Of that total, as many as six including one from the 99th, may have been lost due to a chain-reaction series of midair collisions in dense cloud cover over the target. In spite of our bad weather that winter, the aircrews flew, died painfully, but carried out their missions.

In another effort to break the deadlock at Cassino the 99th and it's companion groups found out about total war in a still controversial operation. Enormously expensive in human life, assaults on Monte Cassino by Americans, the French, and finally by a New Zealand corps which included the British 8th Army's Indian Division, failed. The New Zealand corps commander, Lt. Gen. Bernard Freyberg, after prodding by a deputy (British Maj. Gen. Francis Tuker, who did not want to attack with his infantry), fell for the argument that the Germans were using the monastery atop Monte Cassino as the observation and control center commanding their defense. General Tuker, commander of the Indian Division, was an intellectual who fancied himself the one truly knowledgable practitioner in the art of modern warfare, and he demanded that "blockbuster" weapons be employed to obliterate the monastery if he must attack with his troops. Major General Mark Clark, the American commander, demurred and the British and American Air Force chiefs were reluctant. Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander, the British field marshall in over-all command (despite Vatican assurances that the Germans were not occupying the Benedictine abbey), ordered the monastery destroyed and we did.

When our crews returned we ground group support people learned of the destruction of the 1400-year-old shrine, and we were troubled. I have read in the notes from our Historical Society about the reaction of the combat crewmen and the intelligence officers. J. W. Smallwood, a bombardier of our 346th squadron, flew that mission. He tells us of the reaction in the briefing room when the mission was described and ordered. I did not attend that briefing, so I have to depend on Smallwood's sobering

account in his Tomlin's Crew - A Bombardier's Story. I know we all felt we had to do everything we could to help the poor damn infantry. Subsequent reports reveal that the German corps commander on the spot, a Roman Catholic general, frido von Zenger und Etterlin, Rhodes Scholar and lay member of the Order of St. Benedict, had forbidden his troops access to the monastery, and some reports indicate that Kesselring himself barred German troops from the abbey.

After the needless bombing, the ruins were occupied by the Germans (15 February, 1944) and no Allied troops ever won that peak. The Germans withdrew in an orderly fashion three months later when they retreated north of Rome and Polish soldiers of the Free Polish Corps under General Wladyslaw Anders ocupied the site.

I learned something about "heat-of-the-moment" decisions from that experience. I have been reluctant to make quick judgments ever since. In fairness, the people responsible were under heavy pressure from all sides when the decision to bomb was made. Political considerations in the Allied countries, really humane concerns about losses in our ground forces, and harsh, frustrated feelings toward the German forces contesting our advances on Rome combined to make the call a really tough one. Two hundred and fifty civilian refugees were killed inside the abbey, women and children included. In a month's time we were back over Cassino with our heavies, this time to level the ancient town of stone buildings itself. Again the 5th Army was further restrained because the defending Germans reoccupied the rubble and would not be dislodged. The 12th Air Force with its medium and fighter bombers inherited the problem. When Kesselring gave the order, the Germans retreated north of Rome, skirting the Allied ground troops at Anzio who were emerging from their confinement. The maneuver was skillfully planned and executed, and the enemy escaped to fight another day--actually a year!

The major air offensive against the Luftwaffe finally got underway on the 20th of February, 1944. The Cassino monastery had been pulverized on the 15th, and the 8th Air Force had begun five days later on the aircraft production industry in Germany proper. We kicked off our maximum effort beginning on the 22nd, and the "big week" was underway. The divided attacks from the west by the 8th and from the south by the 15th split the German fighter air defenses. Even so, that week we lost between the two U.S. Army Air Forces, over two hundred heavy bombers with the ratio 3:2 for 8th vs. 15th losses. The Germans lost many fighters and eventually that loss was telling--about 500 in all, that week. Many analysts feel the loss of the experienced Luftwaffe pilots assured the subsequent success

of the Allied air war. We took heavy losses on one raid, about 20 percent, on the final day of that all-out effort. The target was Regensburg--reachable from Foggia in Italy and from East Anglia in Great Britain--and the attack was coordinated between both forces. This time the Germans elected to concentrate their fighter strength in the south. Our 15th Air Force lost 32 heavy bombers that day. One of the aircraft lost was flown by the euphonious Tomlin's crew.

Ultimately the "Big Week" cost the combined 8th and 15th Air Forces about six per cent of the employed bomber forces. The cost to the German arsenal was two month's production--a very significant impact because of its timing. Overall the Luftwaffe lost 800 day fighters in February and March of 1944 in countering the bomber offensive. As spring emerged in Europe after its worst winter in centuries, the U.S. Army Air Forces and their allies clearly dominated the skies. Mustang P-51 fighters could now escort into Central Europe, even over Berlin, and the toll these superb fighters extracted made an enormous difference.

The whole coordinated press from that week through the following four months is a blur in my mind until Rome fell and the cross-Channel invasion was launched two days later on June 6th. Our guys flew almost daily, and we worked the night through loading all our planes and on rare occasions unloading when last-minute cancellations or target swithches necessitated different munitions. Air Forces resources were being augmented to match the pace of the war. Our wing was reinforced with two new B-17 groups of sixty planes each. Problem: no ground crews were available, and prepared airfields were behind schedule! The solution was to put two squadrons each of newcomers at the airfields of the veteran groups.

Now I had six squadrons to load every night instead of four. We would not have lasted if this back-breaking regimen had gone on for long. Eventually, the new groups consolidated on their own airfields and their respective ground compliments arrived to handle the extra jobs we had taken on. We amused ourselves (in our few resting hours) during those arduous days reading Ernie Pyles' stuff when we could get it and laughing at the plight of Bill Mauldin's "Willy and Joe" as he drew them sympatheticly in our own newspaper, The Stars and Stripes. We cringed at the "Sad Sack's" predicaments in Yank magazine, A.J. Leibling's writings in the New Yorker, Hal Boyle's columns; when we could find them, also realistically illuminated for us aspects of the war story we were living but which we could not experience first-hand. We flew missions from Italy to support the Normandy landings, and even more surprising to us, we began a campaign to support Russian ground forces in eastern Europe.

By a fluke, the net of all this was blessed relief for us. Unknown to us and obviously to the Germans, a government-to-government agreement between the Soviet Union and the U.S. had established support activity in the Ukraine, manned and equipped by the United States, to permit an operation we called the "Shuttle". Aircraft from both Italy and Great Britain flew to three USSR airbases in the Ukraine, bombing targets jointly selected. The 99th Bomb Group participated fully. For us ground crewmen, nothing could have been better. The group operated off our designated USSR field near Poltava in the Ukraine for several missions and then flew home to Foggia, again bombing targets of mutual interest to the Soviets and ourselves. The beauty of this for us was that the Ukranian field was manned by an alternate American contingent, not us the ground element of the 99th. For security reasons we hadn't been informed or involved. In effect, at the peak of the ground war in Europe, we got about a week's vacation. Our aircrewmen unfortunately did not. Still the electrifying news of the Normandy invasion and the fall of Rome raised spirits dramatically.

Elated, I gave everyone as much time off as I could and sent the maximum number allowable to rest camps for recouperation. Al Clark and I took a jeep, a knapsack apiece, our steel helmets and side arms and drove to Rome, nonstop. We got into the city after a pause at Cassino (I have a few pictures taken with Al's camera), and immediately became typical tourists. As a Catholic soldier, I got to be part of an audience with the Pope. Escorted by a military chaplain, I met an American nun from a Polish religious order who's home was within a few miles of my own in the Pennsylvania coal fields. As an English-speaking religous, she was a guide, and she sent a note to her parents by me to be posted home since she had been out of touch for three years. I no longer recall her name, but her family (enormously relieved to hear from her), asked if I could get food and clothing to her. I could, and eventually did, but I've lost track of them all.

Al and I stayed at an exclusive hotel, the Excelsior, on the Via Venato. The Army had just comandeered and now ran the hotel, one of Europe's most prestigious, and I'm not sure what chicanery two lieutenants pulled to get billeted there. We had a magnificent time and, utterly broke and exhausted, left after three wonderful days. It took us 24 hours to drive back in time to prepare the outfit for the return of our bombers. Al and I had spent one evening with a recovering wounded infantry lieutenant in Rome, and we were deeply affected by the experience. He had been a platoon leader and was a part of the liberating force that entered Rome just the week before we got there.

Frustrated by the humdrum of our nightly "total involvement", Al and I leaped at an opportunity that had just been announced when we got back "home". Paratroops were to be recruited and trained in the Mediterranean Theater! I still have the record of my physical exam and marvel at the 140 pound, 36 inch chest, 29 inch waist and 5 foot 8 inch height statistics--along with excellent and robust health comments. I am now thankful for the letter rejecting me because all recruiting had ceased after vacancies were rapidly filled by other probably equally frustrated officers in support jobs. I would probably have been killed.

The summer passed hot and dull, and I was sent to Capri for a rest. Vesuvius was acting up, and at one point one of our airfields in the Naples area was pelted with enough rock and ejecta to seriously damage a large number of airplanes. On the island, looking over the glorious harbor and the peninsula of Sorrento (jutting out of the Gulf of Napoli), one could forget the Foggia plain, but not the war. Everyone else on the island was a refugee in Army uniform or a native catering to the soldiery. It was a change of pace and the setting unmatched for spectacular beauty. Hung over but refreshed, I gladly went back to work. Wartime-regimented vacation was not to my liking, and I worried about my outfit. The only drink we could buy at our billet was a sickeningly sweet concoction of Brandy (local--possibly one month old--and canned condensed milk remotely resembling a Brandy Alexander.)

One night during the fall of '44, we either had a cancellation or got our airplanes loaded earlier than usual. Instead of returning to my company bivouac, I drove my jeep up to group headquarters and the Officer's Club. A crowd of flyers was grouped around a crap table. Occasionally we had beer shipped in those fake brown plastic bottles some bright chemist dreamed up. This happened to be one of the nights beer was available in lieu of the vile bathtub gin and watery grape brandy which was shipped over from north Africa. I stayed to have "suds" and watch the action. The flyers gambled on anything, and the stakes were usually well beyond my limit. I was standing at the end of the table (fingers stiff from the cold outdoors), and had just taken beer in hand when the dice landed in front of me and someone said, "roll 'em". I picked them up, threw out a handful of lire (printed without backing as occupation currency grossly over-rated at one lire per U.S. cent when it was probably worth 1/100 that value) and let the pot ride when I made my point. The next roll was quickly covered by the flyers standing around the table. I rolled crap and quietly faded away from the betting. Before I could sneak off to my company several miles away, a big, handsome captain said to me, "You rolled that as badly as you blocked for Pottsville!" I had been a high school blocking back

(right half-back) on a single-wing-formation football team in Pennsylvania. The rugged captain had been a fullback in the anthracite coal country we both came from and more recently had played for Jim Crowley at Fordham University. Charley Zalonka was on his second duty tour in B-17s, having flown with the 8th Air Force from England earlier before joining our 99th Bomb Group. Charley, much decorated, became our Group lead bombardier and remained in the post-war Air Force, as I did, until he lost his life in the break-up of a B-36 in the fifties. Small world!

One nagging discomfort we all felt was not exactly hunger but boredom with our food. Our cooks did a good job with what they had, and by spring of '44 we were actually getting fresh meat on occasion. There was a priority list and the combat units had precedence, but even they were sparsely provisioned. One of our guys noted on a local map a legend about a preserve or restricted-access area. The chart was Italian so we were not certain what we were reading, but we noted it was on the mountain just to our north. The spur on the Italian boot juts out into the Adriatic Sea crowned with something termed the Promentario del Gargano. Included was a small town, labeled San Giovanni Rotondo, from which a winding road decended to within a very few miles of our camp. It was autumn, and our sharp-eyed informant opined that I was custodian of a small number of riot guns (shot guns loaded with double aught buckshot) which our sentries in the bomb dump carried on guard duty. The informant volunteered to take a friend or two on an armed reconnaisance. I told him to be careful but by all means to go. We had venison for dinner on several occasions after that. Turns out the Royal House of Savoy, the King of Italy, owned the preserve and it was well-stocked--possibly because there was no attrition while the royals were away dodging the war. A side effect of the hunt was a cognizance of the presence in San Giovanni Rotondo, the little mountain town, of a monk purported to carry the stigmata--the signs of the crucifiction on Christ's hands and feet. Padre Pio, the solidly built, brown-robed monk, was venerated locally as a saint. I'm not sure if the Catholic Church ever got around to recognizing or venerating the priest. He certainly was tucked in an out-of-the-way spot, and it may be that this fact alone was significant. His hands were bandaged when I was offered one to kiss in the little church of his parish. He was tonsured and simply-dressed in a heavy, rough robe held at his waist by a white cord. His only language was Italian and that in a very subdued voice as he was shy. I think I read somewhere that he had been moved from a much larger parish near Naples. He was not making headlines where we were.

The war was grinding us all down. We lost aircraft and crews but exacted a severe cost to our enemy. Late in the spring and just after the invasion,

the Petrol Oil and Lubricants on which the German (and any other) military machine ran became a target second only to the aircraft production facilities. The Ploesti oil fields and refineries were a prime objective, and the enemy defended his oil and lubricant life-blood fiercely. The fighters would attack the bomber forces from the IP (initial point or set-up start of the bomb run) to close the target. When the fighters broke off from the attack, the anti-aircraft artillery opened up. Between them the defenses took a terrible toll. The Vienna area and the synthetic fuel (coal processed to create liquid hydrocarbons) plants on the Polish/German border around Blechhammer and Oswiecium (unknown to all of us but also the site of the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp) became primary objectives.

The major continuous oil attrition attacks did not start until the situation on the ground in Italy and on the continent (Normandy) permitted the release of bomber aircraft from the role the commanders had relegated them to, in support of the invasion and the breakthrough to Rome. March had been a dud because of the Italian weather. Although we regularly loaded most of our aircraft, they flew less than half the days of that month. This was no relief for us because we loaded, then unloaded daily. We got better as the weather improved that summer of '44; after the shuttle missions to Russia, we picked up the pace. Big raids were flown against communication/transportation targets in France in preparation for ANVIL, the invasion of southern France. This past summer my wife and I saw destroyed bridges across the Rhone River in Arles and Avignon, still memorializing after fifty years, the efforts of our group and others of the 12th and 15th Air Force to isolate the invasion sites along the Cote d'Azure.

Some of our flyers parachuted into Germany and Austria after being shot down. Smallwood of "Tomlin's Crew" tells that tale excellently. Others were diverted into Switzerland where they were detained for the duration of the war. One of the men who worked in my laboratory at MIT after the war had that experience. The Swiss were strict in their neutrality but kind and understanding while sharing their food and facilitating the efforts of the International Red Cross to ease the plight of the internees.

Others bailed out or ditched in the Adriatic, in Yugoslavia, or in northern Italy. A number of our guys were recovered after walking down the length of the Italian boot--hard to believe, but they did it. William Orebaugh, who lives here in Naples, Florida, had been interned by the Italians when they occupied Monte Carlo in the beginning of their part of the war (1940). Orebaugh was a U.S. consular official relegated to an arrest status in the

area around Perugia (southeast of Florence). Bored with the restrictions placed on his movement and communications, he contacted the local Italian partisans. He eventually ran a band of "paisans" who performed the role of rescuers and helped downed airmen make their way south to Allied lines. We recovered some of our lost airmen through his efforts. He also arranged for specific missions to drop arms and ammunition and, most important, communication equipment. Several of our evadees have written accounts of their return to the 99th for our group Historical Society newsletter. Through the letter and other sources, Smallwood, for instance, learned that he had been shot down by one of Germany's top aces.

In the fall of 1943, the MIT Radiation Laboratory back in Cambridge built a dozen H2X airborne radars--the pilot lot of their program as a part of the overall "Bombing Through the Overcast" project. The 8th Air Force got those sets to use in their Pathfinder lead aircraft. Philco and the Western Electric Company got drawings and specifications for quantity production of these first bombing radars. In the fall of "44 we got the production equipment for some of our aircraft. These we called "Mickey" ships. They operated as "Lone Wolf" raiders at first, but soon enough were available to equip lead ships for formations. Now the enemy could expect their visitations around the clock and in any weather. We bomb-loaders and our aircraft ground crewmen could no longer enjoy "off-time" due to weather such as those twenty days we could not fly in March of 1944. Bernie Barr, a past president and perennial spark plug for our Historical Society, (then the operations officer for the bombardment group), piloted the first 99th BG Mickey mission flying a 416th Squadron airplane against the railroad marshalling yard at Innsbruck, Austria. That yard was used to assemble trains for the run through the Brenner Pass with material for German forces in Italy and the Balkans. It hurt the enemy to experience these raids--now at any time and in any weather.

An ironic side note is the fact that Professor Albert Hill was the head of the airborne components section at the Radiation Laboratory, MIT, during the time our Mickey gear was being developed. Thirty years after these events, Al Hill recruited me to come to MIT when the USAF no longer wanted me on its duty roster. Al still lives in the Boston area where he retired as VP and director of research at MIT, and from the C.S. Draper Laboratory, the place I served as president and director. Al was Chairman of the board of directors of that lab.

And so we all soldiered on, now flying missions day, night, and even some in foul weather. Flyers rotated home after fifty missions. Some kind soul in the administrative line of our theater command structure felt it might

be humane if a few of the ground people could be sent home for a thirty-day leave. An elaborate scoring system was established to determine eligibility, but the heavy weighting went to time overseas. I had been overseas on 7 December 1941, had gone home in May of '42, and had embarked for the invasion of French North Africa in October--I should not have been surprised that I was the first person I know about in our group to be selected for home recuperation leave, and I boarded a large former Matson liner in late December. I landed in Boston a day before Christmas, 1944. When we left Naples, Vesuvius was acting sullen, glowering over the bay and fuming with occasional bright flashes of burning gases. It was hot! Boston, on the other hand, was frigid. We boarded trains in the Boston Army Base and rode to Camp Miles Standish were we were given orders allowing us to go to our homes for thirty days. I did, to the tune of "Don't Fence Me In", which seemed to permeate the environment--on the soot-filled trains, in the bars, and on the radio at home. I'd never heard that tune or the lyrics, but it seemed appropriate at the time. I nearly froze! Much to my surprise, on the old coal-fired train from Philadelphia up into the coal region, I ran into my brother-in-law on his way home--a few days late--on leave for the first time after a two year tour as a Marine corporal in the Pacific.

I spent four cold, snowy weeks at home on leave and saw very few of my old friends because, almost to a man, they were in the Pacific, Africa and the Mediterranean, and many were involved in a growing major battle in Europe. The Battle of the Bulge was underway. When I got back to Camp Patrick Henry, near Norfolk, Virginia; I was given orders for two more weeks of leave as there was no transport available to take us back to Italy--everything went towards Brussels, Cherborg, or Liverpool.

At home I had borrowed my sister's car after her husband went back to the Marines at Camp LeJeune. I did get ration stamps for fuel and liquor, using very little of either, because there was no one available to share. My sister was pleased when I finally departed and she was left with a full tank of gas and a bottle of Four Roses whiskey for the next time her husband got home. I believe I had another telegraphed extension for a final week making my total time on leave two months.

The raging Battle of the Bulge finally ended, and the victorious Allied armies regrouped and entered Germany in pursuit of the beaten but still dangerous Wehrmacht. There was an especial sensitivity, which I felt keenly in Pottsville, because the 28th Division, the Pennsylvania National Guard outfit, had been over-run at the outset in the Hurtgen Forest. Casualty telegrams were arriving daily.

I got out of town feeling very uncomfortable and stopped in New York on my way to Norfolk to cheer up. It was a gay, colorful city, full of uniforms, and I did not have to buy many drinks--in fact, I'm not sure I had to buy any. Soon I was on another crowded train sitting in the aisle on my B-4 bag enroute to Camp Patrick Henry. My life changed completely at that time. Our quarters, while we awaited transportation back to Italy, were cold, breezy rectangular wooden temporary barracks. The coal heat was inadequate, so we gathered nightly at the club because it was warm and lively. A few of my companions were returnees, but most were to be first-timers overseas. Again, I didn't have to buy drinks at the Officer's Club bar because the new guys wanted to know what it was like in Italy, and we veterans spun great yarns and drank much of the newcomer's whiskey. The stories got better in the telling which reminds me a lot of our World War II reunions.

On one of those evenings awaiting our port call, I noticed three young women in Red Cross uniforms seated at the bar. All were attractive, and several of my fellow officers and I engaged them in conversation.

There is an old vaudeville joke about three communities in southeastern Pennsylvania. Pottsville, Pottstown and Chambersburg were always referred to as the W.C. circuit. One of the girls was from Chambersburg, and I came from Pottsville. By the time our ship reached Naples, we were in love. We shared forty-five years of life together until a heart attack took her from us all. She died in 1989 while we vacationed in Italy. We were within a few kilometers of her first wartime field assignment with the Red Cross at Pontadera in Tuscany on the Arno.

I got back to the 99th Group and my ordnance company about the end of February. The air war, fought so successfully by the l5th Air Force, was tapering down in the late winter and spring of 1945. The cost was high. By the end of the campaign (8 May 1945), Mediterranean Allied air forces had suffered about 40,000 air casualties. I can't find the casualty count for the 99th Bomb Group, but they flew 395 missions, so a significant part of that casualty list was ours. A very high percentage of that total, some 28,000, will probably always be listed as MIA (missing in action) because of the grim nature of air warfare.

The unit was performing smoothly when I resumed command of our provisional company. I attributed this more to the dedication of the enlisted men, particularly the sergeants, than to anything we officers contributed. John Kavenagh, who acted as our first sergeant, was a superb leader. Tough, fair, taciturn, and hard-working, he dominated the day-to-

day conduct of our people. I'm not sure where he came from, but he had once been a longshoreman on the Baltimore waterfront. His fists were as big as my head, and I don't know that he was ever challenged physically. Sergeants Price, McCabe, Trace, and Ed Zawilla were most effective as platoon leaders. They were faithful to our responsibilities and maintained order and morale. We had only one court martial and that was more an illness--alcoholism--than a true direliction of duty. The occasional "screw-up" perpetrator supplied the labor for latrine digging as "company punishment" but had a clear service record at the time of discharge after the war. I felt proud of them all, and discipline was never a problem.

Late in the spring I had driven to the group headquarters on some errand when I noticed that the flag was lowered to half-mast. We had so many casualties that the flag was never lowered (to my knowledge). It was our first indication that President Franklin Roosevelt had died.

The effect of the news on us is hard to describe today after half a century has passed. We were stunned, and a sort of melancholia settled over us. We all went to special church services conducted by the chaplains. I thought deeply about how unfairly life treats us at times. This national leader who had been so much a part of our young lives since our grade-school years deserved to taste the victory which we all felt was imminent. He led us in combatting the grave economic depression which had blighted our youth. His wartime leadership was acclaimed by a great majority of our people and by much of the world's population. Now he was gone. The "unconditional" surrender he and Churchill and Stalin demanded of Germany and Japan and its alleged prolongation of the war was the only criticism I felt had any validity.

In Italy, shortly after the President's death, German Forces under Kesselring surrendered. Our group had an effect. The 15th Air Force laid "carpets" of bombs before Allied ground forces in the Po Valley. The 12th Air Force medium and fighter bombers made individual and precise attacks against the enemy positions. This support proved extremely helpful to the eventually triumphant 5th and 8th Armies. It was all over very quickly but not quite fast enough unfortunately for some of our valiant soldiers in that action. U.S. Senators Bob Dole of Kansas and Daniel Inouai of Hawaii were both severely injured in those battles. The access tunnel to Logan Airport in Boston reminds me of this every time I transit it and read the dedication to Lt. Callahan who served with the 10th Mountain Division and died of wounds in that action just days before the ceasefire.
One wonders today how many casualties were suffered on both sides while the bureaucrats haggled over terms and conditions.

Before the end of the war in Italy, and unknown to us, but immediately evident at the end of the Mediterranean campaign, the shift of attention to the Pacific occurred. Senior leaders were transferred quickly and quietly. Pilots and aircrewmen found themselves with orders to transition training in the United States from B-17s to B-29s. We were alive with rumors about the transfer of B-17 groups to the Far East. In retrospect, we could have saved ourselves worry because I don't know where they could have been usefully based. The limited range of the B-17 was an enormous handicap. At any rate, a letdown was inevitable. The 15th Air Force, or perhaps just our group leadership, decided to give us all vacations at resort areas where possible, or just time off for sports and recreation. Our group loaded B-17s with those of us who were "ground pounders" and flew us over all the target areas our flyers had attacked. I didn't get to Berlin or the northeastern German-Polish border targets, but I did overfly all of the north Italy, southern German, Austrian, Hungarian, Romanian and Balkan target areas. The devastation was terrible.

We began to clear our munitions dump very soon after the armistice. The boxes of varied delay fuzes, the stacked olive drab GP (one yellow encircling band), RDX or Composition "B" (two yellow bands) bombs from 100 through 2000 pound sizes in our dump, the clustered anti-personnel bombs, case after case of .50-caliber machine gun ammunition all had to be inventoried and packed for shipment. This was a lot of work, but we took it easy in scheduling the men so they could go to Capri or Naples for a real break.

A "point" system was established to determine priority for rotation home. Wounds, decorations, combat time, battle stars, and months overseas were criteria used to accumulate points. Slowly we began to say "goodbye" to the old-timers. I out-ranked most of the people in the group on overseas time because of my fighter group time, but I had been home on leave so I was deferred for a while. Actually, I was in no hurry because there was that Red Cross girl living in the little town of Cacina next to the night fighter base at Pontedera. VE Day came and went and was no big shakes for us since it followed so closely the cessation of the campaign in Italy and the Balkans.

Our Group was given a quota of a very few places in a rest camp at Cannes on the French Riviera. Maybe as a consolation prize, I was detailed to go. Tough duty! Two songs stick in my mind from those days, "Lilli Marlene", of course, but from an enchanting, tiny chanteuse in Cannes, "Symphonie" haunts my memory. At any rate, very shortly I was aboard one of our B-17s on my return flight to the group at Foggia, "the ugly". We were in the skies above northern Italy when the pilot turned to me (kneeling behind

him for a better view of the Alps) and said, "The Japs surrendered." He had been listening to the Armed Forces radio station. Seconds later the radio operator stuck his head and shoulders between us to tell the air crew that VJ Day was being broadcast as we flew! The aircraft developed an acute illness requiring an immediate landing at the Milan, Italy, airport. The pilot, perhaps overly exhuberant, overran the short runway and our Flying Fortress became mud bound. A voltage regulator in a box of electronic gear under the pilot's seat was declared the culprit. Three days later we flew home to a mighty suspicious operations officer and returned his airplane. We had heard the news of an "atomic" weapon being used twice, and we attributed the cessation to those two events. Not one word of protest did I hear. My Red Cross lady in Cacina did not raise the roof but did arrive in time for us to go through the regulation process for marriage overseas. The Episcopal chaplain for the group performed the Army-authorized ceremony, but we had to repeat the process in the office of the mayor of the Commune of Foggia on the 19th of August. Satisfying both the law and the U.S. Army regulations and beginning a family of five children and their progeny started in the briefing room of the 99th Bombardment Group (H) with the group commander, Colonel Ray Schwanbeck, U.S. Army, giving away the bride. Ray had flown with the 19th Bombardment Group (H) in the Phillipines when the Japanese began the Pacific War. The group executive officer kindly served as best man and made all the arrangements. We couldn't have been more beautifully accommodated. I was given two week's furlough and the use of a jeep. We toured northern Italy "on the economy"--not palatial but not shabby either.

On our strictly G.I. honeymoon, I was facinated when we climbed our jeep high above the city of Bolzano, just south of the Brenner Pass. Atop one of the peaks, overlooking the southern entrance to the pass, was a complete battery of 88MM German anti-aircraft guns. The guns could be depressed to fire down on aircraft flying through the pass.

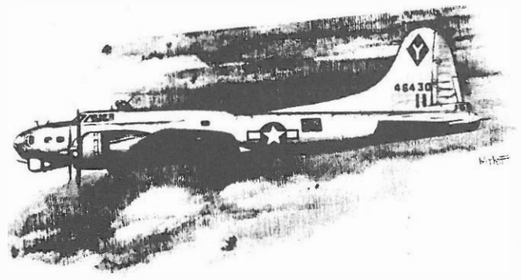
We came home grateful to be alive. I was offered immediate discharge to civilian life, but elected to remain in the service where I served 32 years.

I had the privilege of knowing Bob Duffy for a few years before his retirement as a Brigadier Beneral, U.S. Air Force. Bob was very active in development of guidance systems for our Intercontinental Ballistics Missiles and later as Chief of ABRES (Advanced Ballistics Re-entry Systems Development) he was very effective in matching Intelligence Service information to reentry systems requirements and development. After retirement Bob was C.E.O. of the Draper Laboratories at MIT. Bob had studied under Professor Draper (Mister Gyroscope) while attending MIT. Bob's service to our country was extremely meaningful. I'm very pleased Editor Bernie elected to publish Bob's story about his 99th BG service. Roy Worthington

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots and the replies from the maintenance crews. "Squawks" are problem listings that pilots generally leave for maintenance crews.

Problem: "Left inside main tire almost needs replacement."
Solution: "Almost replaced left inside main tire."
>
Problem: "Test flight OK, except autoland very rough."
Solution: "Autoland not installed on this aircraft."
>
Problem #1: "#2 Propeller seeping prop fluid."
Solution #1: "#2 Propeller seepage normal."
Solution #2: "#1, #3, and #4 propellers lack normal seepage."
>
Problem: "The autopilot doesn't."
Solution: "IT DOES NOW."
>
Problem: "Something loose in cockpit."
Solution: "Something tightened in cockpit."
>
Problem: "Evidence of hydraulic leak on right main landing gear."
Solution: "Evidence removed."
>
Problem: "DME volume unbelievably loud."
Solution: "Volume set to more believable level."
>
Problem: "Dead bugs on windshield."
Solution: "Live bugs on order."
>
Problem: "Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent." (feet per minute)
Solution: "Cannot reproduce problem on ground."
>
Problem: "IFF inoperative."
Solution: "IFF inoperative in OFF mode."
>
Problem: "Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick."
Solution: "That's what they're there for."
>
Problem: "Number three engine missing."
Solution: "Engine found on right wing after brief search."

PLEASE SEND MORE STORIES, YOURS OR SOME YOU KNOW ABOUT.



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Information to be included in your quarterly newsletters issued February, May, August, & November must be sent to Bernie Barr or Walter Butler no later than the first of January, April, July or October.

Member information and stories are needed regularly to keep the newsletter interesting. Everyone has a story or information that will be enjoyed reading. Keep it coming ! If at all possible send type written information, the darker the better.

Walter's address is in left corner. Bernie Barr's address is: 7408 Vista Del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109

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1998 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please check the date on your address label above. . . . If it does not read 1998 or later you will not receive these publications in 1998. Only a few of the 400 current dues paying members (Down from 500 during 1996) have paid for 1998 or beyond. During the next five months please send in your 1998 or beyond dues. The deadline is January 1, 1998, of course, but don't wait until the deadline as you may forget. Mark your calendars to send a check to Walter soon. January 1, 1998 will be here before one knows it ! Make checks payable to 99th BGHS and send to Walter at address to be found in the upper left hand corner of this page. Late payments cause you and Walter unnecessary stress, phone calls, letters, etc as well as $2.00 postage for a newsletter copy for which you are charged.