



THE 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 3, NUMBER <sup>5</sup>~~6~~, SEPTEMBER 1, 1983

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER-----

Once again, greetings from Albuquerque. To those of you who are interested in the pictorial record of the recent Reunion here in May, George Coen and I ( he did the work) compiled what we thought was a general review of the going's on. George has returned it to the publisher and you ( if you ordered a copy) should get it sometime soon. Reunions, Inc., 2418 E. Robinson St., Orlando, Florida, 32803 is the publisher if you should need to contact them.

As with all volunteer organizations, assistance from the membership is needed to keep it going. This is reiterated in a letter that I just received from Herb Frank, President of the 19th Bombardment Association.

Dear Bernie,

Thanks for sending me the newsletter of the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society. It is very interesting and much better than mine. One thing you have going for you, is that you have help. Outside of a membership chairman (which I was only able to get as of recent date), I do all of the work. I am chief cook and bottle washer for the outfit. I am not complaining, but some help would sure be appreciated, especially when I get laid up in bed. This last winter was a tough one for me. (Enough tears.)

I see that some of the boys from the 19th also belong to the 99th, like yourself, and I think that this is wonderful. All of the men of the Air Force should belong to at least one unit. We had some wonderful men when we were in there, and it would be good if they would stick together. You probably have the same problem as I do. I have a lot of men, and I mean hundreds, that I have contacted, that will not join, even when the reunion is in their hometown. I guess every man has his own ideas and we won't be able to change them.

Keep up the good work with your 99th boys and someday we can get together and talk about all of it. See you.

Herb Frank  
93rd Squadron

Hi Herb.

Just looking at the list of your board of directors... they should be able to accomplish great things as they did during the combat days of WWII. From reports given to me by Ray Schwanbeck, who has attended your get-together, you have been doing a great job. Hope to join with you one of these days.....Bernie.

I talked to Jim Flex the other day and he assured me that he is going

to put on a super event for our 1984 Spring Meeting in Houston. He has set the tentative dates of May 11, 12, and 13 with the meeting to be held at the Nassau Bay Hotel just across the street from the National Space Center, where we will receive a special tour. He will give us more specific details as we approach the meeting date. I'm giving you these dates so we can plan ahead and meet in Houston next May. He had just received our last newsletter and has added another name and tail number to our aircraft list... YANKEE DOODLE, 229473, which flew with the 347th Sqdn.

I have just completed a class in aural rehabilitation and speech reading at the VA Hospital conducted by a vivacious young lady, Lynda Rosin. Now before you read further, take out your pocket book and remove a \$1 bill, and look at it as you read the following:

#### THE GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States became a country on July 4, 1776. On that same day, Congress appointed a committee of men. This Committee was to prepare a design for a Great Seal. Three of the men were leaders for our independence. They were John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. It took these men and others who worked with them six years to prepare the seal. Congress approved the design in 1782 and passed a resolution accepting it. The design was symbolic of the new country. The Great Seal expressed what the founding fathers firmly believed. The pyramid on the left hand circle is symbolic of strength and duration. Nothing man-made has been stronger or more enduring than the pyramids of Egypt. Count the steps of the pyramid. Thirteen is symbolized in many ways on the seal. Each use of thirteen represents the thirteen original states. Above the pyramid is an eye. This represents the eye of Providence. Our founding fathers were God-fearing men. They believed our progress must always be under His watchful eye. The Latin words "Annuit Coeptis" mean, "He has favored our undertakings." This was another expression of the faith of the founding fathers. The Latin words "Novus Ordo Seclorum" mean "A new order of the ages." They are symbolic of the beginning of a new life in the New World. The Roman numerals at the base of the pyramid are:

M = 1000	L = 50	
D = 500	XX = 20	a total of 1776
CC = 200	VI = 6	

This adds up to the year when the United States began as an independent nation. The dollar bill is one of the few places where you will see the reverse side of the seal. This side has never been officially used as a seal.

In 1782 Congress chose the eagle to be our national bird. This was the same year the seal was adopted. Benjamin Franklin did not want the eagle to represent our country. He believed the turkey was the truly American bird. He thought the eagle was a lousy bird (and he meant it literally). Can you imagine the awkward turkey on all our official documents and decorations? The eagle seems a much better symbol of strength and courage. The olive branch in the right claw of the eagle is a symbol of peace. How many leaves are on the olive branch? A bundle of thirteen arrows in the left talon is symbolic of military readiness. The shield has thirteen stripes to represent the States. Holding the stripes together is a bar which is a symbol for Congress. It represents the body of our government which holds together the states. Each of the thirteen stars stands for a state. A banner is in the eagle's beak. On the banner are the Latin words, "E Pluribus Unum." That means "one out of many." One nation out of many in the world.

Thanks, Lynda, for permitting me to use this material. I have been

around for a few years, but this great bit of historical information had escaped me before. Please pass this along to others.

In May of 1945 I was flying B-29's at Pratt, Kansas, when I read that the 15th Air Force had conducted a bombing raid on Berlin. Why did they go so far north into targets normally hit by the 8th Air Force? Now after all these years I've gotten an answer! Yes, George (you know who) Coen brought me another book which gives the answer and a heck of a lot more information. Since Ray Schwanbeck led the 99th Bomb Group on the mission, I've asked him to read the book and give us a review and personal observations as he remembers what took place. The book, "Target: Daimler Benz", by Lawrence Cortesi. We should have Ray's remarks to include in the next newsletter.

Well friends, if you don't want to continue to read my bits of info as well as George's, please send us new material-- we are eagerly awaiting to hear from you. There are great stories to be told and we are in a position to pass them along to all our members-- like the story of the airplane blown out of the sky and the tail gunner floats to earth safely, captured by the Germans, survived and is now living well and happy. (Tail Gunner, when am I going to get your written account of this terrific story?) Let us hear from YOU!!

So long for now. Your Friend,

*Bernie*  
Bernie Barr  
7413 Vista Del Arroyo NE  
Alb., N.M. 87109  
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George:  
Enclosed are a couple of pictures of the new Hat. I know you gave me a spot in the last newsletter on the hats--But would like a good shot in the next newsletter with a picture of the hat. Price will be \$8.00 for first hat and \$6.00 for each additional. I ordered extra hats in case some would like to order for their children and grandchildren.  
Jack Field



To: Jack Field, 1126 Washington, Glenview, Illinois 60025.  
Dear Jack,

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ 99th BG Caps.  
I enclose \$8.00 for the first cap, and \$6.00 for each remaining cap, to be sent postpaid to the address below.  
I would also be interested in ordering a flight jacket with the 99th BG insignia if there is enough interest to warrant a run at an approximate price of \$24.00.\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*BOOK REVIEW\*\*\*

"Target: Daimler - Benz", by Lawrence Cortesi, 1980, \$1.75, Leisure Books  
 In the process of locating The Real Colonel Uppie, we have received from Lawrence Cortesi a lovely copy of this book. I could not put the book down, for it details the activities of the Soft Underbelly without giving credit to the Eighth for crashes, casualties, and successes.

The Daimler - Benz complex was ~~at~~ Marierfelde, near Berlin. It was the target of three massive raids in March 1945, one by the mighty Eighth, and two by the little ol' Fifteenth resting down there on the soft underbelly.

Cortesi has done a real fine job of historical researching, and has produced a real first-rate thriller on a subject almost unknown to the general public. Ray Schwanbeck led the 99th on this raid. I mention this in case Ray has forgotten about it.

The problem was that Der Grosser Reich had obtained in Hungary a large tonnage of fuel for tanks and jet aircraft, and the ME-2625 were apparently capable of raiding the bomber formations with impunity. The PSI fighter escort had been unable on the first (BAF) raid to protect the bombers, and the ISAF inherited this little problem.

This raid was the longest of the war for the Fifteenth, and Cortesi's account is well written and well researched. Get this book if you have to rob the granddaughter's piggy bank to do it.

"Enemy Coast Ahead", by Guy Gibson, a Bantam War Book, 1979, \$2.25.

This is a story of the British bombing effort from Day One, back in the Stringbag days. It is well told, and it is worth a place on the airman's bookshelf. Gibson became the last survivor of the earlybirds. At the time of his death he was acting as Master Bomber and had been flying Lancasters for at least two years - a far cry from the Swordfish - Marylan - Hampdon days. It is a good reminder of our own P-36/ B-18 days.

gfc

\*\*\*BUSINESS\*\*\*

Beginning with the May Issue, the 99BGHS Newsletter has been prepared on a word processor owned and operated by Pat Coen. In my unbiased opinion, Pat is doing a very good job as de facto editor.

\*\*\*REUNIONS\*\*\*

Nov 10-13, 1983

- 15AF 40th Anniv. Ben Franklin, 15AF Assoc., PO Box 15, MAFB, Cal., 92158<sup>6</sup>  
 97BG St. Louis, MO Sept. 16-17, 1983  
 Clarence Hammes, 15 Avilla Heights, S. Alexandria, ARE 72002  
 Don Hayes, 1640 Cambridge Dr., Walla Walla, Wash., 99362  
 463 Swoose Group Amarillo, TX Oct. 6,7,8, 1983  
 John Boyett, 3500 E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79104  
 98BG Las Vegas, Nev. Oct. 10-13, 1983  
 Cory O. Orne, JR., P.O. Box 553, Lake Pleasant, NY 12108  
 8AFHS Houston, TX Oct. 12-16, 1983  
 449BG Tuscon, ARE Nov. 4-6, 1983  
 J. Kruckmeyer, 600 E. Naranja Dr., Tuscon, ARE., 85704  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 99thBG Houston, TX May, 1984  
 Jim Flex, P.O. Box 1185, Dickinson, TX 77539

\*\*\*CHANGES OF ADDRESS\*\*\*

- |                    |                      |               |          |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|
| Raymond L. Nestor  | 2949 Dogwood Cr.     | Thousand Oaks | CA 91360 |
| Dean C. Kuhn       | 4215 Summitview Rd.  | Dublin        | OH 43017 |
| John F. Trapuzzano | 204 N. Washington    | Margate       | NJ 08402 |
| Paul N. Crider     | 2527 Letterkenny Rd. | Chambersburg  | PA 17201 |
| Walter E. Schildt  | 2715 Westwind Rd.    | Las Vegas     | NV 89102 |
| John W. Brinser    | 113 Winberly Way     | Bristol       | TN 37620 |

\*\*\*LOST\*\*\*

- |                       |                  |               |          |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|----------|
| Chuck Reagan          | 2308 W. Wis. Ave | Milwaukee     | WI 53233 |
| Roy H. Auchterlonie   |                  |               |          |
| Joseph B. Devine      |                  | Sigourney     | IA       |
| Clifford R. Erikson   |                  | Burton        | OH       |
| Allen J. Ewoldt       |                  | Hartley       | IA       |
| Thomas W. Berube      |                  | Munising      | MI       |
| Charles J. Bickner    | Freeburg         | Brooking      | OR       |
| Eldon R. Garner       |                  | Walnut Grove  | MN       |
| John J. Moore         |                  | Cornwallis    | MT       |
| Herbert R. Parker     |                  | Roslindale    | MA       |
| Herbert O. Perry      |                  | Sutherlin     | OR       |
| Ray F. Schnellbacher  |                  | Burbank       | CA       |
| Vernon F. Schoedinger |                  | Elmdale       | KS       |
| Edward J. Cadger      |                  | Miami         | FL       |
| Charles L. Oreben     |                  | Patterson     | NJ       |
| Clifford M. Randleman |                  | Minneapolis   | MN       |
|                       | Sigafoose        | Muscatine     | IA       |
| Paul B. Waarala       |                  | Chandler      | AZ       |
| Stanley J. Aldridge   |                  | Hancock       | MI       |
| Francis C. Alvey      |                  | Los Angeles   | CA       |
| Robert J.O. Barr      |                  | Bardstown     | KY       |
| George E. Bransome    |                  | Houston       | MS       |
| Robert J. Burke       |                  | Burleson      | TX       |
| Hunter R. Capers      |                  | Beverly Hills | CA       |
| Flake Casto           |                  |               | TX       |
| Albert E. Davis       |                  | Los Angeles   | CA       |
|                       |                  | Escalon       | CA       |

\*\*\*FOUND\*\*\*

- |                        |                       |                |              |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 407 Maxine K. Covert-  | 514 Burnside          | San Antonio    | TX 78290 347 |
|                        | Hudgins               |                |              |
| 408 John E. Roquemore  | 1714 Cesery Blvd. #12 | Jacksonville   | FL 32211     |
| 409 Walter F. Juszczyk | 44 Russell Rd.        | Falmouth       | MA 02540     |
| 410 R. Boggio          | 2407 Gloucester Way   | Riverside      | CA 92506 416 |
| 411 Frank Sieder       | 13206 Cleveland Lane  | Ft. Washington | MD 20744 347 |
| 412 Tony Lutkis        | 130 Argyle Place      | Kearny         | NJ 07032 416 |
| 413 Herbert D. Partlow | 9240 S. Harding       | Evergreen Park | IL 60642     |

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 1983 Membership, \$10\_\_\_\_  
 1982 Newsletters, Optional, \$5\_\_\_\_, 1981 Newsletters, \$5\_\_\_\_  
 NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
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\*\*IT WILL NEVER FLY\*\*

Boeing Engineering and Construction Company's Pacific Bulk Transportation Project would deliver 10 million tons of coal a year 650 miles from central Utah to Oxnard, California. The coal would be exported to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

( from Intermountain Paydirt for August 1982) gfc

\*\*\*TAPS\*\*\*

Buck Holdern, from Bedford VA, died from heart attacks about two years ago. He was from the 347th Squadron and was in Walker Booth's ground crew.

John D. Carlock

I would appreciate any information on Sam Levine, bombardier on one of the three planes lost at Gerbini. Inquiries to the War Department have produced only the information that the 99th was engaged in an air battle at Gerbini.

gfc

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Horgen, Switzerland, 17th July 1983

Dear Mr. Coen:

Thank you very much for your interesting letter dated of 13th June 1983. Please apologize my very long delay of answering, but I had a lot to do the last time.

The Newsletter is very interesting for me and I am very happy to enter the 99th Bomb Group. Please let me know the duty for this year, I will send you the money in cash?

Unfortunately I have to go to the Army tomorrow for 17 weeks. I am transmitter in an anti-aircraft gun unit at Emmen, near Lucern. So I have to put away my hobby for this time. Very bad times without B-17 and B-14.... But I promise you to write an article for your newsletter about these two planes here in Switzerland. I also have some pictures of the plane as well a picture as they are buried here in Switzerland. It is possible to print this picture in the newsletter?

I also plan to write a story about this planes here in Switzerland in "Cockpit", a Swiss magazine. So I would be most grateful for any information concerning these planes. It is possible that you send me the mentioned photo for copying?

Well, I must close for this time. I have to do with packing all items for my duties. Best wishes from Switzerland to you.

Sincerely,

Heiri

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20th June 1983

Dear Sir,

Let me introduce. My name is Tomas Polak and I am of Czechoslovakia. I am interesting in history of war aviation, especially, I collect the statements about fighter pilots and air gunners. Your address sent me Mr. Wood.

I beg You to be so kind as to send me a list of commanding officers of 99th Bombardment Group and every squadron of 99th Bombardment Group and a list of 5 best air gunners of 99th Bombardment Group with the statements about their score, squadron and distinctions.

I hope You can help me in this matter. Awaiting Your reply.

Yours Sincerely

Tomas Polak

Sidliste K.G. 1198

744 01 FRENSTAT p.R.

Czechoslovakia

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18 August 1982

Dear George---

Glad to join up with the 99th Bomb Group once again. Our crew came to Italy with the 463 Bomb Group and transferred to the 99th in March 1944. We received our initial baptism to war over Ploesti on 5 April 1944. I can give you the names of my crew but have lost track of them over the years. Perhaps I can get back in touch. They were Raymond D. Thompson, pilot; Donald D. Thomas, cp; Robert O. Geise Jr., Nav; David L. Adams, Bomb; Gene H. Nelson, eng; myself as Radio-Op; Kenneth E. Broughton and Don B. Wilson, waist gunners; Marvin D. Burchette, ball turret; and Wesley L. Williams, tail gunner. Lt. Adams was taken off flying status after a few missions and sent to 15th AF Sqs. He was replaced by Lt. Francis K. Hanft. Don Thomas was promoted to left seat and got a crew of his own and was replaced by Raymond D. McGinnis. Bob Geise was such a fine navigator that he was sent to another crew (I think maybe Sqdn lead) and was replaced by Calvin E. Straney. (Cal was later killed over Dusseldorf in Sept. 1944.)

Forgot to mention that we flew with the 416th Bomb Sqdn. Saw some mention of the raid to Wiener Neustadt and the Group getting the Unit Citation. Checked my old WWII stuff and came up with the order. Am sending a copy along to you. Read it again and then got kind of scared. But anyway my kids enjoyed reading it. Kept a diary also and noted that on this mission we had to crank the bomb bay doors open before the run, and then crank them shut afterwards. Diary sez temperature was -62 degrees F. and "the bomb pattern was extremely good considering the circumstances." It also said our ship "Turnip Termite" was peppered full of holes but suffered only skin damage. And the log book said that the flying time for the mission was 6:45. So I guess I flew that one.

Seems like most of the B-17's in the 416th at that time were named after characters from Al Capone. The "Turnip Termite" had a chin turret so it was either an F or G model. Had lots of pictures of all the planes in the Squadron but they were stolen after I came back from overseas at Santa Ana. We flew all of our missions in the same aircraft, and I often wondered if she survived the war. In all, our crew flew 25 missions with the 416th and even flew the "double" on 12 May.

Another crew and ours were transferred to the 8th Air Force toward the end of May 1944. For those of you who never made it to the land of Brussels Sprouts, let me say it was like going home. Nice housing, so to speak, ate off plates, and time off in London every once in awhile. We flew with the 570th Bomb Sqdn., 390th Bomb Group. We were smart enough not to get on the list for the shuttle raid to Russia. Those crews were very eager to see "sunny" Italy. They had a different opinion when they came back, however. All the crews with the exception of Cal Straney came through untouched. Hope to make it to one of the reunions one of these days.

Dick (Richard E. Drain, 6730 Alter Rd., Dayton, OH 45424)

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In the Nov. 1981 issue we noted the strange case of Col. Fay Upthegrove mentioned in "Operation Bismark Sea" as C.O. of the 38th BG. General Upthegrove has written that he was indeed the Commanding Officer of the 38th here in the United States, before he assumed command of the 99th Bombardment Group.

Comes now author Lawrence Cortesi who confirms that there was only one Colonel Uppie, a fact which comes as no surprise to the 99th.

He thank you both.

gfc

(Another member Remembers an action)

Chicago  
Oct. 18, 1982

Dear George,

Since I have been so uncommunicative lately, I thought it might be a little redemptive if I were to update you on "life with the old guy".

The enclosed article (by Andy Rooney) provided me with an additional reason for writing to you today. One might feel that Mr. Rooney waxes a bit maudlin, but to an "himself" Irishman like me, his article provides me with the right amount of nostalgia and sentimentality. I will never forget May 25, 1943 and Bob Goad's tragic death, along with that "brand new" crew on its first mission. Bob was Operations O.D. for that mission, and I remember having a very serious talk with him the night before in the Operations tent. He was in a quandary, wondering whether he should fly our own 229482 with his own crew, or whether he should, as Operations Officer for the 416th, shepherd the new crew. Typical of Bob, his sense of responsibility won out, and he assigned Fred Zitkowski to our crew, assigning himself to the new crew.

On the morning of the mission, I had a brief word with him after briefing. I said, as we parted, "Bob, I'll see you in the coffee line when we get back." He smiled and said, "I'll be lucky to get to Malta today." (Our alternate was Malta.)

We were on his left wing when he took his first hit. I could see him clearly trying to use the radio; he kept pressing his throat mike and his mouth was moving in an attempt to communicate. I don't know whether he was heard, because I was not hearing the stand-by channel, but I don't think he heard anything. He made a left turn, and Zit, who was flying our airplane, turned with him. Bob could see me in the right window of our airplane, and he made a signal to me indicating his desire to leave the formation. I called Zit and told him, "Bob wants you to let him out." We did a crossover, and shortly thereafter Bob must have experienced further difficulty with the controls, because his airplane went into a descending spiral from which it never recovered.

It is interesting that Rooney attended the Bedford reunion even though he had flown only one observer mission to Wilhelmshaven with the 306th, and even though he is "not much for reunion". With the state of my health, I can't be useful in reunions yet, but hope springs eternal. I spent last week in the hospital, but I am ever optimistic that I may yet get to Albuquerque, at least for a short visit with you if not for the April bash. The older I get the more I realize what we had in the 99th. That magnificent Camaraderie is now a blessing in happy memory, with warm thoughts of name after name, all too numerous for this sheet. I highlighted Robert E. Lee Goad in this letter because his demise was one which was of course very close to our crew--Barton, Franck, Walker, Lillis, Goodman, et al.

My very best to you and yours

Andy Collins

Dear Andy;

Thank you for the historical account, as well as for the newsy letter. I regret you had to cancel our meeting here in Albuquerque in September, but the latchstring is always out to the 99th. Enroute home from Muskegon I located Don Hemmingsen, still in Algona, Iowa, but at a new address from 1961. I did not get a very good view of things on May 25<sup>th</sup> reunion; it seems like Goad was on our left wing, and it also seems that on that day I got hit on the helmet (steel, thank heavens) by a very solid

own empties clear back to the bulkhead beyond the hatch, with both earphones shattered. Almost bailed out in the sudden silence but finally crawled back to my position and went back to shooting when I saw that the props were still churning. By then Bob was far below. So thanks again for your account for the files.

With best wishes to all the Collins'  
George

Andy Collins visited Albuquerque on Monday of 1983 Reunion Week but could not remain for the orgy. Martha and I had a nice evening with Andy, who has changed little in 40 years. However, Andy no longer has to stand on one spot twice to throw a shadow. gfc

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Nov. 16, 1982

Dear George:

In a previous Newsletter someone inquired how those three German prisoners were captured.

Well, being on guard duty, I believe it was Jig-Jig, it was my responsibility. When we pulled guard duty we used our carbines. Three weeks prior to the capture, another GI and I went hunting off the base with our carbines about a mile from the base (Notary). We went to a gully about 10 to 15 feet deep. We thought there would be something there to take a potshot at, anything. However, no game, so we went to target practicing. We inspected the magazine carbine and tried to fire. We were amazed - the damn cartridges would not fire. I believe the cartridges had no primers. So we returned to the base.

Now I'll tell you the true story of the capture of the Germans with my trusty carbine. (I'll bet those Krauts must have seen our marksmanship, so they figured my gun does not work, so they have a fair chance of being taken prisoner, since the gun was useless.)

When we were on guard duty we would squat like a catcher playing baseball in front of the plane's wheel. It was normal guard duty routine. Just before dawn I heard voices behind the plane. I assumed some G.I.'s were shooting the bull and the voices travelled. I checked in back of the plane. Pitch black, nothing there, and dawn will be breaking in a short time. So when the dawn came I saw the three Germans in back of the plane and motioned with my arm to come to the front of the plane and indicated to them to stand there. Did I take my carbine off my shoulder? Hell, No! They saw my marksmanship in the gully. Was I scared? No, since I saw no weapons on them and they were very congenial as I stood about 8 feet from them. I asked if they understood Polon (Polish). I'm bilingual; I could speak Polish, so I assumed we could communicate. However, the Germans went so fast through Poland that they did not have a chance to learn the Polish language. Let's get back to the facts- what does the Army Manual of Arms state about guard duty? Do not leave your post. So I yelled to the next plane guard to call the Sgt. of Arms, and it should be relayed to the Officer of the Day. No action, so I indicated to the Germans to wait. It was lighter and a jeep was coming on the taxi strip. Who the driver was I don't know, but I told him to take the prisoners to G-2.

So, as you can see, 416th captures three Germans in Tunis. When I yelled, I believe the other guards assumed I was flipping.

Sincerely,

Joe Micek

Note - I worked on Jig - Jig, Josie X, and the Queenie, 46683.

Thank you, Joe. As we heard about it, the Germans were festooned with grenades and mines, all thirteen of them, and it really wasn't all that funny when we got into the Big Iron Birds that morning to conduct our little discussion group over Italy. Your account is a lot funnier; Thanks again, Joe.

gfc  
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PRESS RELEASE TO THE 99TH BGHS:

JUNE 1983 Longmont, Colorado: As I look back on the most memorable experience of Mid-May 1983 in Albuquerque, NM, we have nothing but fond memories of all our experiences as members of one of the very finest WWII units in existence at that time. We played a small but not insignificant part of that great struggle. I am truly proud to have been a member then as I am now to participate in these grand reunions. I want to thank one and all who assisted in the 1983 reunion and I want to thank personally each one present who traveled some long distances and some short. Let's all meet again in Houston, this time bring the rest of the crew.

NOTHING FINER THAN A 99'ER

Rex A. Carnes, 416th

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December 20, 1982

Dear Mr. English:

From my memory, and a few notes, I wish to share the following with you: The 99th Flying Crew "railroaded" from Souix City, Iowa to Selina, Kansas early in January 1943. There we were issued equipment and each crew was assigned a B-17 E. The 99th flying crews moved their new B-17's to De Ridder, LA., for a few days; then, on to West Palm Beach, Fla.-Morrison Field.

Engines were carefully checked for oil consumption, equipment was loaded and early in February, 1943, the group flew the B-17's via Southern Route to Natal, Brazil, Bathurst, Gambia, and to Marrakeck, Morocco. There, for several weeks, we stood in chow lines with Charles DeGaule, Martha Raye, and were introduced to Vienna Sausage, before moving to Oran, Algeria. Personnel from the 99th and others were very helpful as we prepared ourselves for the first missions, practicing our formations, bombing and gunnery.

In March, 1943 the 99th moved to Navarine, near Setif, some 50 miles west of Constantine, Algeria.

Enclosed are the Serial Numbers of B-17's assigned to the 347th and 348th in Selina, Kansas. Also shown are the pilots names and his crew number, as my notes listed them.

I am preparing copies of several pictures that I have which may be of interest to the Society. One is a picture of 229473, Yankee Doodle, featured in Flying Magazine, September or October of 1943. (Probably in formation over the peninsula East of Tunis.) One is Crew 12, 347th after 50 missions and one of several members of the 347th and 348th onetime in September, 1943, while we were based near Tunis.

I, also, have 100ft of 16mm Black and White movie film taken of Crew 12, 347th, before, during, and after a mission from our base near Tunis. I plan to have a copy of this made for the 99th Society.

I really enjoy the Newsletter and its information on 99th people. The check is for current dues and miscellaneous expenses. Keep it up.

Dean W. Shields 0-728929

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March 20, 1983

To the 99thBGHS:

Sorry that I almost let my subscription lapse. I wouldn't miss your newsletter for anything. Enclosed is \$25.00 for the coming year, and the remainder to help you carry on your fine endeavor.

Incidentally, I would like to add another B-17 plane name to your list. It was the "Mary Wiss", a silver G model. Now, if that sounds like an odd name for a fighting lady, let me explain. I came to the 347th at Foggia in February, 1944. Thirty-four B-24 crews, me included, came into Foggia. We were all grouped together and some Colonel informed us that we were all being assigned to B-17's. Well, you never heard such cheers of joy, all of us were very happy. Not that the B-24 wasn't a good plane, but we had heard many tales of the prowess of the B-17. The only sad note - thirty-three of the crews were distributed among the 97th, 92nd, and other groups, while my crew was assigned to the 347th. We felt that we had lost many friends with whom we had trained for eight months.

Anyway, due to our transition to the B-17 (it really was easy after the B-24), we didn't start combat flying until early April. The first five missions I was to fly with an experienced crew while the remainder of the crew flew with an experienced crew (pilot). On their second mission, to Steyr, all of my former crew were shot down. Well, I almost never flew with the same crew consecutively after that. So, not knowing the protocol of naming planes, and the one I was flying being unnamed, I got a Sergeant who could paint to inscribe the plane the "Mary Wiss", the girl that I had left behind. I left about two months after the naming, and perhaps the plane had a short existence as many did. But there's the story of another name. You all are doing a great job. Keep it up.

Sincerely,

Bill Shaw

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June 3, 1983

Dear George:

Wayne is on a TDY, so I,m writing to thank you for the set of 99th newsletters. Frank English has sent us a few from time to time, but this is the first full set and we greatly appreciate them. We always enjoy it and insure that it is passed around the headquarters where it receives great interest and excellent reviews!

I'll send the poem to Paul - I know how much he will appreciate it since he called me long distance from Seattle to ask for it.

No sneaking in the back door for anyone from the 99th!!! If you didn't make it to the 15th, we nevertheless built on your excellence as we were established with veterans who showed the way. Your heritage is our heritage and we are proud to have you ALL aboard. I told Frank the last time I wrote him that if we work together we can make a real difference.

I know that your reunion was a great success. Frank will fill ~~in~~ in - I'm sure.

Look forward to seeing you in November.

My best to you and the 99th,

C.E. Ben Franklin

Executive Director

15th Air Force Association

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March 27, 1983

Dear George and Frank:

Many thanks for all the space devoted to my requests in the March newsletter, and to the numerous members who supplied information. This note is mainly to pass on what might be of interest to Carl Mitchell and the "Bad Penny" crew. As I believe I've mentioned, the 483rd traded some of their new B-17G's for older 99th B-17F's. The 483rd had trained on old 8th Air Force war wearies like "Memphis Belle", so probably took this in their stride... more or less. Anyway, a 483rd veteran named Ray Rozycki informs me that 42-29509 flew twelve missions with them, bringing her grand total to 126. She flew the 483rd's first mission, April 12 1944, which was flown from Tortorella because the 483rd's field (Sterparone) was not completed.

I hate to keep coming up with new questions, but can anyone explain the late-war markings of the 99th to me? It seems that some "silver" B-17G's had two colored bands around the fuselage, and that the cowl rings were painted the same color. Kenn Rust, in his "Fifteenth Air Force Story", identifies these markings as an additional squadron identification, and lists the reputed color for three of the squadrons - White = 347th, Yellow = 348th, Blue = 416th.

Additionally, some of the aircraft with the color bands and cowlings have a letter, again in color, in front of the fuselage bands.

At no time were the normal Roman numeral squadron indicators dispensed with, so these color markings and their extent and "lifespan" are kind of a mystery. I'd like to confirm the colors, find out which color the 346th may have used, and generally learn more about these apparently temporary markings.

Hope all is well with you. I'm sorry to see Frank stepping down, his cheery comments will be missed by all I am sure.

Sincerely,  
Steve Birdsall  
31 Parkland Road  
Mona Vale 2103  
Sydney, Australia

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your letter of March 27. All I can remember about markings is some nice yellow prop bosses, which we repainted over-night as we realized that they would be an aid to enemy fighters.

We use Kenn Rust as the Bible around here; he knows more than anybody else, except you and me.

Best wishes,  
George

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September 28, 1982

Dear Mr. Silvis,

I saw in the Air Force Times and Sergeants Magazine about the pending reunion of the 99th Bombardment Group. I wish I could say I would be there but it would be impossible at this time.

I was assigned to the 416th Bomb. Squadron in October 1943. When the 99th was still in Tunisia. I was a 2nd Lt. Bombardier and I recall my first mission well - The Marshalling Yards at Bolgano, Italy. I was eventually promoted to Squadron Bombardier and completed my last mission in April 1944. I was one of the unfortunate ones who was caught up in the initial "R & R" program and returned to Italy instead of the stateside PCS. However we eventually returned stateside without further combat.

Like so many others when the war was over I asked to be released and was discharged as 1st Lt. in September 1945. I re-enlisted in 1947 as a SSgt. and remained until I retired 30 Nov 1973 as CMSgt.

I had a rewarding career in the military service and considered my assignment in the 99th Bomb Gp as the most exciting part.

I will be with you in spirit when you toast the friends that did not make it home from the war and the buddies who have since passed on.

I wish you my best for a successful reunion.

Respectfully,  
Joseph M. Joffrion  
CMSgt. USAF (Ret.)

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December 30, 1982

Dear 99th,

I was the first and original flight surgeon of the 347th squadron, when we went through the various training phases at Boise, Walla Walla, Sioux City, Watertown, Oklahoma City. Remember Tinker Field? The only place in the world where you could stand up to your ass in mud and have dust blow in your face. My medical section was led by Sgt. Lem Edwards; then there was Carl Sherman, Sam Capitano, Vernon Horn and some of the other names slip my mind.

I was then transferred to the 82nd Fighter Group (F-36's) and Dr. Irving Norman took my place, when we were in Tunis. I do recall many names some of which are listed in your roster in the brochure. Bankhead, Bruno, Stuart. I'd sure like to know what happened to Frank Seidor, Harry Burrell, Maj. Seamans (the first commanding officer), Billy Cantwell, "Blacky" Covert, Sled 9 the first of the squadron to complete 50 missions). I recall many episodes I'd like to reminisce about. Remember when Jimmy Doolittle came to fly with us when we were going to sink the Italian Navy in port at Leghorn? What happened? Nothing. Killed alot of fish.

There were five flight surgeons: Fred Koehne, Ray Beal, Edgar Hughes, Milton Laydon, and myself. I spent an evening with Mike Laydon in Baltimore about eight years ago. After I was transferred. Laydon was ultimately rotated home. I think Ray Beal died about 10 years ago; I'm not sure.

I have quite a few pictures of our African experience. Would you be interested in them for the reunion? Enclose is my 1982 Dues. I'll try to get to the reunion if my own program permits. Keep in touch.

Ted Papermaster  
347th

Dear Ted:

Welcome to the formation. I submit without comment the following excerpt from "Doolittle", by Lowell Thomas and Ed Jablonski. And Dr. Beal will hardly agree with your obituary.

George

Doolittle, as often as he could, tested the aircraft firsthand and became acquainted with his crews on the ground and in the air. His views were based as solidly on practice as on theory; there was no place for luck in his scheme of things. He did not deny the existence of chance, but maintained that "the chap that plans the best and works the hardest has the best luck." But the random machinations of fate could not be denied. As an example of this Doolittle was apt to recall "the most unsuccessful mission I ever led."

Intelligence reported the presence of three Italian warships - two heavy cruisers and the battleship "Roma" - in the harbor at La Spezia, Italy, almost directly north of Tunisia. These ships could pose a serious threat to Allied supply lines in the Mediterranean and Doolittle was determined to get to them.

The mission was approved and Doolittle and his staff "planned well" and "worked hard", and no less than three bomber groups - one per ship - were assigned to the task, more that 100 B-17's. The bombers were armed with 2,000 pound demolition bombs, and 1,400 pound armor piercing bombs. The plans called for the planes to come in at right angles to the ships in the harbor and simply blow them out of the water. The mission was scheduled for June 5, 1943.

The flight out was uneventful - over the Mediterranean, past Sardinia, and Corsica, to the Ligurian Sea. In the lead plane Doolittle cheerfully noted the light flak and the three sitting ducks below in the harbor. The three groups emptied their bomb bays into the ships, the water churned, geysered, and bubbled under the massive attack. The great formation wheeled about and Doolittle led them back to North Africa.

To his chagrin, reconnaissance photos taken after the mission revealed that one of the cruisers had been missed altogether, the other had had a turret blown off, and the "Roma" remained in its berth as if nothing had happened (a single bomb pierced the deck, went through the ship, and came out the bottom without exploding). In short, nothing had come of that mission. "It was something that couldn't happen," Doolittle remarked in surprise. But it had. And to his further chagrin, later, after Italy had pulled away from the Axis to join the Allies, the "Roma" pulled out of port and headed for Malta to be turned over to the British, when near southern Italy a single German plane swooped down upon the battleship, dropped two bombs, and sank it. (He would learn later that the bombs were radio controlled; at the time, however, it was rankling.)

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 \*\*\*PROGRESS REPORT\*\*\*

Membership	Finances	
413 members	Balance 30 Apr 1983	2727.49
45 prospects	Office expenses	431.63
	May Newsletter	446.62
	July Newsletter	398.80
	Dues and Donations	520.00
	Balance 31 July 1983	1970.44
	*****	

SITORY, CANTON, O.

## 50 Air Missions Quite Enough, Army Doctors Learn Hard Way

By The Associated Press.

MIAMI, Fla., Aug. 5.—American bomber crews completing 50 missions over enemy territory can come home with unqualified approval of at least five army doctors of the North African command, a couple of Flying Fortress gunners disclosed. Staff Sgt. Bill Drewes of Upper Darby, Pa., and Sgt. Charles Hudson of Terre Haute, Ind., veterans of the spectacular American raid on Rome, told how physicians accompanied them on an earlier mission over flak-protected Messina. Announced intention of the army doctors, Drewes and Hudson continue, was to determine whether bomber crews could stand the strain of 75 consecutive missions instead of 50.

The raid on Messina was the 40th assignment for both men. As the planes roared over the Axis-held "escape port" of Sicily

—described by Hudson as "one of the toughest flak spots in the Mediterranean"—several of the Fortresses were hit by anti-aircraft fire. All the physicians were wounded, one suffering an abdominal wound and another a broken arm.

"When we landed," Hudson continued, "the two injured doctors were carried off the planes and the others were silent and pretty white. We never heard anything about the additional 25 mission. I guess they were convinced."

"And let me tell you, we really admired those doctors. They didn't squat in their offices and guess about us. They risked their lives and got shot up so they'd really know the story."

Los Angeles Times

## WWII Planes Found Embedded in Glacier

From Reuters

COPENHAGEN—A U.S. salvage team has discovered eight U.S. World War II aircraft embedded under 80 feet of ice in Greenland, Danish military sources said Friday.

The team located the planes, two B-17 bombers and six P-38 fighters, in a glacier 100 miles inland from Angmagssalik on Greenland's east coast. The aircraft made emergency landings on the site in July, 1942, after running out of fuel on the way from the United States to Europe. All those aboard survived, abandoning the planes on the ice.

## AIR FORCE COMBAT UNITS OF WORLD WAR II

### 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Constituted as 99th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 1 Jun 1942. Trained with B-17's. Moved to North Africa, Feb. - May 1943, and assigned to Twelfth AF. Entered combat Mar. 1943 and bombed such targets as airdomes, harbor facilities, shipping, railroads, viaducts, and bridges in Tunisia, Sardinia, Sicily, Pantelleria, and Italy until Dec. 1943. Received a DUC for performance on 5 Jul 1943 when the group helped to neutralize fighter opposition prior to the invasion of Sicily by penetrating enemy defenses to bomb planes, hangars, fuel supplies, and ammunition dumps at the Gerbini airfield. Assigned to Fifteenth AF in Nov 1943 and moved to Italy in Dec. Flew long-range missions to attack such strategic objectives as oil refineries, marshalling yards, aircraft factories, and steel plants in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Received another DUC for withstanding severe fighter assaults to bomb the vital aircraft factory and facilities at Wiener Neustadt on 23 Apr 1944. Other operations included assisting ground forces at Anzio and Cassino, Feb - Mar 1944; participating in the preinvasion bombing of Southern France Aug. 1944; and supporting the Allied offensive in the Po Valley, Apr 1945. Inactivated in Italy on 8 Nov 1945.

Redesignated 99th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy). Allotted to the reserve. Activated on 29 May 1947. Inactivated on 27 Jun 1949.

Squadrons. 346th: 1942 - 1945; 1947 - 1949. 347th: 1942 - 1945; 1947 - 1949. 348th: 1942 - 1949; 1947 - 1949. 416th: 1942 - 1945; 1947 - 1949.

Stations. Orlando AB, Fla, 1 Jun 1942; MacDill Field, Fla., 1 Jun 1942; Pendleton Field, Ore., 29 Jun 1942; Gowan Field, Idaho, 28 Aug 1942; Walla Walla, Wash., c. 30 Sep 1942; Souix City AAB, Iowa, 17 Nov 1942 - 3 Jan 1943; Navarin, Algeria, c. 23 Feb 1943; Oudna, Tunisia, 4 Aug 1943; Tortorella Airfield, Italy, c. 11 Dec 1943; Marcianise, Italy, Oct - 8 Nov 1945. Birmingham @Mun. Aprt., Ala., 29 May 1947 - 27 Jun 1949.

Commanders. Unkn, Jun - sep 1942; Col. Fay R. Upthegrove, c. Sep. 1942; Lt. Col. Wayne E. Thurman, 24 Nov. 1943; Col Charles W. Lawrence, 19 Dec. 1943; Lt. Col. Wayne E. Thurman, 26 Jan 1844; Col. Ford J. Lauer, 15 Feb 1944; Col. Trenholm J. Meyer, Jul 1944; Lt. Col. James A. Barnett, Aug 1944; Col. Ford J. Lauer, Sep 1944; Col. Raymond V. Schwanbeck, Jan 1945; Lt. Col. Robert E. Guay, 8 Oct 1945; Maj. Joseph D. Russell, 11 Oct 1945; Maj. John S. Giegel, 16 Oct 1945 - unkn.

Campaigns. Air Combat, EAME Theater; Air Offensive, Europe; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples - Foggia; Anzio; Rome - Arno; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; North Apennines; Rhineland; Central Europe; Po Valley.

Decorations. Distinguished Unit Citations: Sicily, 5 Jul 1943; Austria, 23 Apr 1944.

Insigne. Shield: Azure, issuant from sinister chief a cloud argent emitting a lightning flash to dexter base or between an eye of the second with pupil sable represented as a rader scope of the third with eyelid of the like, and a globe of the last lines of the fifth encircled by a motion picture film silver. Motto: SIGHT WITH MIGHT. (Approved 3 Nov 1943. This insignie was replaced 7 Feb 1958.)



COMBAT LOSS ANALYSIS  
TWELFTH AIR FORCE  
September 1943

Type Aircraft	Sorties Flown	Number Lost	No. Lost Per 100 Sorties	Number Missing	No. Lost & Missing Per 100 Sorties	Number Damaged
B-17	1,764	12	.68	8	1.13	1
B-24	105	2	1.90	-	1.90	2
B-25	3,394	17	.50	2	.56	61
B-26	1,718	9	.52	2	.64	1
A-36	2,289	11	.48	-	.48	12
P-38	3,393	31	.91	1	.94	1
P-40	1,785	4	.22	-	.22	2
P-51	198	1	.51	-	.51	-
Spit	2,408	1	.04	-	.04	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,054</b>	<b>88</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>80</b>
<b>Total Losses, 8 Nov 1942 -- 30 Sep 1943</b>		<b>925</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>1,136</b>

THE 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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