



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

VOL. 4, NO. 3 MAY 1, 1984 Pres.; Bernice Barr. V.P. Lou Boatwright;

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER-----

Treas. Walter Butler, Editor, Geo. F. Coen

Just a few more days and we will be together in Houston for our annual meeting. Jim Flex has informed me that he has everything set for the reunion May 4-6. I do hope that you have made the necessary plans to join us and visit with a great group of people. See you there!

In response to the request for info on the June 2-11 mission to Russia I received this from an ole friend in Tallahassee Florida.

Dear Bernie,

Enjoyed as always your mailing of Mar 1, '84 report.

Am enclosing a copy of one of my mementoes that was written by my ball turrent gunner, Jack Gotthold, on the June 2, 1944 mission to Russia.

---Jack was lost in an aircraft accident during a salvage operation in the South Pacific after the war.

Also enclosing a copy of my official records issued on the 15 Jun 1944 by Capt. W. H. Lowrence, Jr. Operations Officer of the 348th Sq.

Enclosed is copy of Special Orders #189 that sent the "Harmon Provisional Gp" to North Africa via Hampton Road Va. and the " Empress of Scotland" to join the Group.

Maybe this information will be of some value to you in your research.

Looking forward in meeting you in Houston!

The Seattle '85 get together sounds great! Count me in for an approval vote! I would like to see a B-17 Commemorative Stamp-would be great for the grand children!

If I can assist in anyway please let me know.

Kindest regards

s/Paul J Cannedy

The material that Paul sent was great and George and I have reproduced it put a copy in our files and sent a copy to Carol Rizzo. This is the kind of things we like to get and can use to enhance our records. George also received a report from Sam Hess - thanks to each of you. Please if you have information and materials - kindly send to us. In the Nov. '83 news letter mention was made about one-aircraft missions. To my pleasant surprise George received the following letter.

Nov. 19, 1983

Dear George:

...There is another reason I am writing is your comment in the latest news letter as of Nov. 1, '83 that you didn't know too much about single-plane missions. Well if you are close to the President Bernice Barr, He and I and nine other men flew one of the daylight missions. The target was around Innsbruck, Aust. The weather was overcast at the base, we were supposed to have ten/ten cloud cover to the target and back. I think there were three radar planes in on the raid each to act as decoy for the other. Each plane had their own target and took off at interval. The take off was smooth we flew on radar all the way to the I.P. we turned on our target, tossed out the chaff to throw off their radar. Then the sky cleared up I mean there wasn't a cloud in the sky. We were only a few thousand feet above the mountains, we flew down the valley between the two mountains. I know we wern't too high because you see the flashes of the anti aircraft guns and I

"28 Oct. 1944 - Target: Marshalling Yards, Munich Germany. One aircraft, piloted by Lt. Buffalo was dispatched to the target. The bombs were dropped through the overcast with unobserved results. The mission was flown at night and was the first operational night combat mission flown by the squadron....." (Squadron 416 records). So you see that we went to extremes and every means to inflict damage on the enemy.

Carol I think this will be all for now -

/s/ Bernie

As we approach Mother's day this the year of 1984 I'm reproducing an article published 40 years ago in the weekly bulletin of the 416th. Sq., TARGET by the late 99th. Gp. Chaplain Harold T. Whitlock

MOTHER'S DAY, 1944

Any fellow who needs a Mother's Day to make him think of his mother is in a sad state. Everyday ought to be filled with a deep sense of gratitude for all that we owe her love. That we might be born, she faced agony and possible death. That we might live when we were helpless, she denied herself ease and comfort and recreation. She nurtured not only our bodies, but our minds and souls as well. From her we got our fundamental character and disposition. On her breast we first learned the meaning of love. In her constant concern for us, in doing those many little unnoticed things, we found the security that we might grow and develop.

This day gives us a special chance to express our gratitude and love. Write her a long love letter today and tell her that it is what she stands for that keeps us human amid the grossness and boredom of war.

We can never hope to repay her for what she has given us - she does not ask for any pay. She wants our love, and a life that is worthy of the many sacrifices she has willingly made. Let us determine on this Mother's Day, to be the kind of son she dreamed we might be

HAROLD T. WHITLOCK
Chaplain, 99th Bomb Gp (H)

Jim Peters, Scottsdale, Ariz, thinks that the 99th was continued during 1953-56 as a B-36 SRW. If anyone has additional info. let us know.

The audit of the financial accounts has been completed and found to be in conformity with standard practices of expenditures and receipts. Your money is continuing in the good safe hands of Walter Butler.

Well so-long for now and if you can 't make it to Houston I'm sure you will miss a great affair and lots of fun.

Your friend,
Bernie

NEWS, DUES, AND VIEWS

by George

Our search of the records has resulted in 29 new members since the the last letter. Now you new members can furnish us your old 1945 addresses of your buddies and we will find some of them for you.

Walter Butler has sure taken a big load on himself, and off me, and this has allowed us to concentrate on News and Membership. We have enlarged the Newsletter once again and still cannot print all the wonderful historical accounts which we are getting. The plan is, when the rush is over (WERIC), to put out pamphlets on individual missions for sale at cost, about 10 cents per page, maybe less. And perhaps with pictures. So send in more letters, even if we do not get them into print in the News. We haven't forgotten you; don't go to the 98th or 100th.

I am heading for Organpipe Cactus National Monument as soon as this has been taken to the printer; in other words I am not only out of the hospital but am again taking the steps two at a time. See you at Houston. Let me remind everybody that when we receive a current address of a 99er we put him on the mailing list for the newsletter at once. So send those addresses to us even if they aren't 40 years old.

george

remember seeing a chalet half way up the mountain, the flak was light compared to some of the other targets I flew over. It rocked the ship a little and sound like hail on a tin roof a couple of times. The reason I said the flak was light as a tail gunner on the flight you can see the black puffs. I think the reason we didn't get clobbered the Germans must of been in town or sleeping, and they thought we were a photo or recon. ship, or figured the weather was so bad nobody would be flying and went on leave. I don't know if we hit the target because right after we dropped our bombs we turn into the clouds again. You can ask the Colonel if he can add to it. ... I can't think what the target was. I know it was near Innsbruck. ...

Yours Truly
s/Robert J. Bacher

Dear Robert,

I know that this is a late response to your Nov. letter ... Your account of our one plane daylight mission is correct. Our target was the marshalling yards at Innsbruck, Austria. As I remember the mission we broke into the clear about 15 minutes before bomb drop and then another 15 minutes back into the soup ... I admit that my record keeping of crew members back then was not good and unfortunately I do not know the names of the others with us. Thanks to you - I now know who the tail gunner was. Thanks.

My wife, Doris, and I are leaving for Europe on the 29th March for a visit but we will be back in time to attend the reunion in Houston 4-6 May. I do hope to see you there - we can swap stories and enjoy ourselves. These get togethers are fun and we meet such interesting people - again.

Your friend,
Bernie

This is a more complete account of the Innsbruck mission that I had written and sent to Carol Rizzo. There are nine other crew members out there that may be able to add more details. If you were on that mission please contact me. I know that Robert Bacher was the tail gunner - Who were the others?

Feb. 29, 1984

Hello again,

As winter approached the sky of Europe became overcast and it was impossible for mass formation flying. In order to keep the enemy off balance it was decided that we should continue our bombing of prime targets through the overcast using radar as the target identification and aiming instrument. As Group Operations Officer I volunteered for the first of these missions. The official Squadron record.

"26 Oct. 1944 - Target: Marshalling Yards, Innsbruck, Austria. One aircraft, piloted by Lt. Col. Barr dropped on the target. The bombs hit slightly short of the assigned area. Several enemy aircraft were seen in the target area, but none were encountered. Flak was heavy and intense, but no damage was suffered. There were no casualties." As we dropped the bombs we should have been flying on instruments without visual reference to the ground - however this was not the case. We had been flying in the clouds all the way from Foggia and was approaching Innsbruck when all of a sudden the clouds disappeared and we were (one airplane) in bright sunlight and clear sky. We had about 15 minutes of flying time left to be over Innsbruck and release our bombs and escape back into the clouds would take another 15 minutes. The question what should we do? Go home? No doubt a wise choice. Continue on to the target and face the enemy fighters alone? What were the odds? Well after a short call to the crew on the interfone - we decided to strike the target. It would be a lot of lost effort if we did not. We did continue the mission made a visual bomb run on the marshalling and dropped our bombs. As we made the bomb run flak filled the sky with those horrible black and grey puffs that was visible to us but the steel shells fragments going in every direction was not seen. As we got rid of the bombs one of the waist gunners reported enemy fighters approaching. These fighters made several very close circles around us but thank goodness they did not make an attack against us -I'll never understand why! I'm not sure why we made the bomb run in bright daylight -perhaps had we not we might have thought ourselves - chicken. We did and we survived. My Group Commander Col. Ford J. Lauer did not approve of our actions and neither did Brig. Gen. Charles Lawrence, the 5th wing commander. But they did say they admired our courage but not our foolish actions.

79 Boght Road
Watervliet, NY 12189
Oct. 20, 1983

Dear George:

Enclosed are the photos that you and the others of the 99th BG Assoc. were kind enough to allow me to borrow. I sincerely appreciate your efforts and I hope I will not disappoint you on the Operation Flax book, which I expect to have completed about the first of the year. It should come out in mid-1984.

Because of your help, I have featured the 99th in this book more than I had intended to do. I am covering the 99th missions on 5 April 1943 when they attacked Trapani Drome to knock out potential escort fighters for aerial convoys; 10 April, when the 99th hit the Maddalena naval base to knock out potential Italian warships for convey escort; 11 April when they hit Trapani Harbor to knock out tankers slated for North Africa; and 20 April when they hit Sidi Ahmen to knock out some transport planes that had run the Palm Sunday massacre gantlet.

I have enclosed the negatives I took of these pix and I hope they will be of use to you. Most of the pix came out quite well. I have enclosed an identification sheet with the negatives so that you will know what the pictures are. I hope that members of the 99th might like prints that you can make from the negatives. As for paying me, I would feel insulted. I should pay you for your fine cooperation.

Which brings me to the next point: I have in the works, 1-2 years in the future, two more stories, the battle for Rome and the strange mission of 29 Jan. 1944, when the 99th BG along with other 15th AF units knocked out the Udine-Villaerba airdromes in N. Italy to stop the heavy Luftwaffe attacks on the Anzio beachhead. This was an important raid in which the 325th FG deceived the German radar men to draw out interceptors before the bombers, including the 99th, went in for their attacks. The assaults devastated the airfields. On the Rome story, I intend to cover the final days, from 28 May to 4 June, 1944. If you know of anyone who can furnish me information on the 99th on these dates, or who can send me pix, I'd sure appreciate any help.

Meanwhile, thanks again for your help. Hope to hear from you again.

Yours cordially,
Larry Cortesi
Larry Cortesi

ps: I have also enclosed a Xerox copy of the sheet in the Zebra Books current catalog which will tell you which of my books on WW II are available, in the event you want to buy any.

Hans-Heiri Stapfer
Bergstrasse 35
CH-8810 Horgen/ZH
SWITZERLAND

Horgen, 3rd January 1984

Dear George:

Enclosed please find the article for one of the next issues of your very excellent magazine. I hope the pictures came out well. Of course you can keep them.

I also ordered a hat after I saw the advertisement in your magazine. I hope the article will find your interest. All the best for this year.

Sincerely,
Heiri

Fortunes of War

This is a story of a 99th Bomb Group plane for 99th BG buffs. A story happened during the last World War. A plane didn't come back to the base, nearly normal for these days, but not usual were the circumstances.

During the last World War was Switzerland a neutral country, well respected from the Axis and Allied Forces. It was also a heaven of refuge for badly damaged planes, seriously wounded crew members and those they had enough from the War. In fact, Switzerland was a very useful point in the map of every Bomber pilot.

76 B-17 Flying Fortress came down in Switzerland. The first plane did it on 17th August 1943 as Regensburg was attacked. "Battle Queen" landed at Uzenstorf near Berne. 1st Lt Paul Rapport from the 390th Bomb Group made a belly landing in a grassfield.

The second plane on the same day came from the 100th Bomb Group, later nicknamed "The Bloody Hundred", also a very suitable nickname for this day, the 100th Bomb Group suffered the highest losses on his day. "High Life" a B-17 F-85-B0, Serial Number 42-30080 landed at Dubendorf-airfield. Both aircrews were interned.

In Switzerland, these Boeings were used for several test flights. "Impatient Virgin" a plane from the 388th BG came down in Dubendorf on 6th September 1943 was the first airplane painted with Swiss signs. Further planes with Swiss signs were a 96th Bomb Group plane and a 463rd BG B-17. The last mentioned plane came down at Altenrhein airfield.

But back to the 99th Bomb Group. It was the first Bomb Group with Boeing B-17 in Switzerland. Two on the same day, one plane, a Mickey ship from the 346th Squadron on 27th February 1945. It was a Boeing B-17 G-55-VE, Serial Number 44-8187. The plane was on the mission to Augsburg, Bavaria.

In October 1943 was the 99th Bomb Group based at Oudna, Tunisia. Still under command with the 12th Air Force with three other B-17 outfits, the 2nd Bomb Group, 97th Bomb Group, a former 8th Air Force unit. One of its airplanes, a Boeing B-17 F-1-B0, Serial Number 41-24370 flew in England and North Africa. "Berlin Sleeper" was probably the first B-17 with 100 Missions.

At least we won't forget the last Group the 301st Bomb Group. All these Groups were part of the 5th Bomb Wing together with the 1st and 14th Fighter Group.

The last 12th Air Force heavy mission was to Wiener-Neustadt near Vienna. The Messerschmittwerke in this large industrial city were bombed for the first time on 13th August 1943 by 8th and 9th Air Force Liberators. But for this attacks were 89 Fortresses and 25 Liberators in the air on the 24th October 1943.

The mission on 1st October 1943 was scheduled to Munich and Augsburg, the secondary target was Feldkirch in Austria, a town only a few miles away from the Swiss border. 42 Heavies from the 99th Bomb Group took part of this attack.

One crew, probably an original 99th crew was on its 50th Mission. A magic number for all American fliers. The end of all the horror over Germany. The mission was not a milk run. Munich was always far from easy and Augsburg was an equal target.

The crew for this flight in aircraft 42-30126, a B-17 F-85-B0, built in the Seattle Boeing factory on 12th April 1943, was;

Pilot	B.C. English	1st Lt.
Co-Pilot	D.M. Prentice	2nd Lt.
Navigator	L.S. Finseth	2nd Lt.
Bombardier	I.B. Pattern	2nd Lt.
Gunner	Peter Malchiodi	T/Sgt.
Radio Operator	J.S. Carroll	T/Sgt.
Gunner	Marion Pratt	S/Sgt.
Radio Operator Ass	Charles R. Bargett	S/Sgt.
Gunner	E.D. Whoedon	S.Sgt.
Gunner	Noris King	S/Sgt.

The airplane was probably christed "Sugar Food" and belonged to the 416th Squadron. The plane was painted in the usual olive drab and grey factory finish.

Since it was not possible to attack Augsburg, the 99th BG chose the secondary target, Feldkirch. The Group flew in close formations with two times 15 planes and one time with 12 planes. Over Feldkirch, the Group was attacked by some German Messerschmitt fighters.

The last formation flew at 12.30 h into the Swiss airspace, still in fighting with the Messerschmitts. An airwar over neutral Switzerland. More as 20 Messerschmitts engaged the last box of 15 planes.

Leading plane of this formation was "Sugar Food". Over Bad Ragaz, a town in the Canton of St. Gall was the this particular plane hit by an anti aircraft gun from the Flab. Det. 21 (Anti-Aircraft-Unit 21).

"Sugar Food", hit in the left wing exploded. Parts of this unlucky plane were found in a square of six miles between the towns of Pfaffes and Bad Ragaz. Two men from the crew were able to escape: Radio Operator Carroll and Gunner Marion Pratt.

Gunner Noris King was blown in the air as the fuselage of the plane broke into two pieces. He also survived the accident and was like his two other fortunate buddies not seriously hurt.

Three bombs of "Sugar Food" exploded near the Street from Ragaz to Landquart and the Rhine river. Fortunately nobody was hurt. A fourth bomb was found near a bridge, called Tardisbruecke but this bomb didn't explode.

No doubt, the Swiss 75 mm anti aircraft guns were deathly for "Sugar Food", but the plane was badly shot up by German Messerschmitt Bf 109 over the Reich territory. Several holes caused by 20 mm Messerschmitt guns were found in the fuselage and the wings. One hole was found in a tokyo tank, the plane lost fuel.

A 75 mm Swiss anti aircraft gun hit in this wing was the end of this plane. A further hit went into the tail gunner compartment, and a third 75 mm round exploded near to the airplane and endamaged the fuselage near the radio operator's room.

All parts were well examined by Swiss, later were this parts shipped to Dubendorf-airfield. 12 Guns were found and 3100 rounds for these guns.

It was the first time that Switzerland shot up American planes. But not the last time.

Sure is that the flight over Switzerland was an error. The aircrews lost the orientation and was unable to locate that they were over neutral territory.

The seven unfortunate crew members were buried at Bad Ragaz. Together with the five men from the 99th BG crashed at Alvaneu in that plane was a blind passenger, he was also buried. Joseph Monoley, the first American airmen killed in Switzerland was also buried here at Bad Ragaz. Moloney belonged to the 100th Bomb Group and died during the Stuttgart attack on 6th September as the plane crashed into Lake Constance (Bodensee). His body was found as the plane, a Boeing B-17 nicknamed "Raunchy" was lifted up from the ground of the lake together with the plane.

In honour of Sgt. Joseph "Joe" Monoley was the American airmen camp at Adelboden, Switzerland called "Camp Monoley". The camp was a first class hotel, better known with the name "Palace Hotel". It is still existing and one of the best hotels in place.

Continued on Page 19

THE 99th WAR DIARY, CONTINUED.

We have discovered a second Official War Diary, which results in a discontinuity. Sorry, fellows, in a well-run war such things would never occur. geo.

May 3, 1943

A sad day for the 99th Bomb Group. Briefing at 9 A.M. readiness after briefing and at 11 A.M. crews were told to eat. Weather had been bad for days and the forecast was for a continuance. 1 P.M. were assembled. Time passed. At 3 P.M. we were ordered to attack 150 barges and tank landing craft in Bizerte Harbor. We took off at 1555 hours and left our rendezvous point at 1625. The weather thickened. As we took off it was .5 overcast. A cold front moved in as the airplanes took off. The weather was solid all the way to the target. No recall. A hole in the overcast permitted bombardiers to see the harbor. Instead of 150 barges there were only 15. Col. Upthegrove said: "Let's get the hell out of here and go home." Three airplanes reached home base this night. The others were scattered all over north Africa. Captain Max Davis and Lt. McLaughlin's crew bailed out. Colonel Upthegrove found a hole and dove through it and landed safely. Major Lowry nearly hit a mountain. Lt. Mosely landed in a salt lake. Colonel Rainey made a water landing. Four out of 11 men were saved including the colonel. The others died of exposure or were drowned.

May 4, 1943

Last night was a memorable night for the officer and men left behind in operations and S-2. We sat or stood waiting for word from this airplane or that. "Did you hear from Buck", "How's Mac", "How about the colonel", "Any word from Lowry" and so on. Tense faces in the grim half light of the poorly lighted tent: Vain attempts, even hysterical attempts to laugh it off with a wise crack. The tent filled with anxious pals of the men on the flight. Telephones rang continually. Each conversation had to be shouted or relayed over the field telephone. This ship lost. That ship down. "How's Mac", "Any word from the colonel", "How about Aspegrin", "Anything on Kaufman". Frantic attempts to get a word of encouragement. The night wore on. At 4 A.M. we went to bed. Up at 6 to worry and sweat out the missing airplanes. All but two crews accounted for. Later we learned about Colonel Rainey's crew. We lost six airplanes and seven men.

May 18, 1943

From 20 to 25 fighters were encountered and 2 of our aircraft received slight damage. The claims for enemy aircraft are as follows: Ship #490, 347th, 1 ME109 dest; ship #026, 348th, 1 FW 190 dest, ship #769, 347th, 1 ME109 damaged, ship #492, 348th 1 ME109 damaged, a total of 2 E/A destroyed and 2 damaged. Ship #486 was damaged by fighters #2 engine being shot up and a tire shot up. The rest of the 348th escorted the damaged ship to Bizerte and came on later in the evening.

May 19, 1943

Today the group flew Mission #19 to Sciacca, Sicily. 28 ships of this group took off and 1 returned because of mechanical trouble and 3 others because they were spares. Clouds covered the target about 14,000 feet and they turned back about 40 miles from the target. The target was a landing ground and the ships carried a total of 448X120 # frag. bombs all of which were brought back to the base. No flak or fighters were encountered and no damage was received and no claims were made. A call was received in the evening that the following day would be non-operational.

May 20, 1943

The day was non-operational but three ships took off for familiarization flight. One of them on landing at Bone received a flat tail tire and stayed there awaiting a new one. Three new ships and crews arrived and were assigned as follows: Ship #179, 347th, Ship #178, 348th and Ship #174, 416th. In the evening Wing ordered frag. bombs for the following day but all ships were loaded from the last mission when no bombs were dropped.

May 21, 1943

Today the 20th mission was flown to Castlevetrano A/D, Sicily. 25 ships of this group took off and 6 came back early due to mechanical trouble leaving 19 over the target. The 19 ships dropped 456X120# frags or a total of 27.36 tons on the target. The bombing was coordinated with the 97th Bomb Group and all results are shared with them. The damage done was as follows: 48 out of 80 A/C on field destroyed or seriously damaged. Underground stores hit with resulting fires. Repair ships hit and fire resulted. The flak encountered was heavy, moderate, and accurate and a few ships received slight damage due to flak. About 25 fighters were met and some of them used serial-bombing tactics for the first time in this area. Between the flak, fighters and aerial bombing, ten of our ships received some damage. Two claims were made by this group as follows: Ship #489, 347th, 1 ME109 destroyed; Ship #129, 346th, 1 ME 109 damaged. In the afternoon Wing called declaring the following day non-operational.

May 22, 1943

As stated above, today was non-operational and in the afternoon a bomb load for the following day was given. About the same time rain started and ruined the field for the proposed night flying and postponed load of bombs until 1900. The bombs were loaded at that time and at 21:00 Wing called declaring the next day non-operational.

May 23, 1943

The day was non-operational and in the evening a few ships were loaded that had not been loaded the night before. Tonight 3 ships of the 416th did some night flying as ordered by Wing. The field was lighted by truck and jeep lights on the end and up each side of the runway.

May 24, 1943

Today the group flew mission #21 to La Madalena, Sardinia to bomb shipping in the harbor. 28 ships of this group took off coordinating with the 97th and 4 ships came back because they were spares. 287X500# bombs or 71.75 tons of bombs were dropped in the vicinity of the target but results were rather unsatisfactory. The damage done was as follows: Hits or near misses on two small M/V's and 1 near miss on a large M/V, some damage done to buildings on the land and on one jetty. The flak encountered was heavy, slight and accurate but no damage was done to our ships. No fighters were encountered or seen. The highlight of the day was the arrival of about 300 of the ground echelon bringing a lot of the equipment. The Squadron messes were set up and most of the personnel enjoyed chicken for the first time in months. At night six more ships did night flying. Three from the 347th and 3 from the 348th. The ships were again loaded and the 3 ships of the 347th which flew had to be loaded at 23:30 after the night flying was done.

May 25, 1943

Today mission #22 was flown to Messina, Sicily to bomb ships, docks and dock area, coordinated with the other heavy groups. 28 ships took off and 23 reached the target. 3 of the five that didn't get to the target were spares and the other two returned because of mechanical trouble. The 23 ships over the target dropped 264X500# bombs or a total of 66.25 tons. The mission was very successful as the entire target area was well covered. No specific claims can be made as it was in coordination with the other groups. The flak encountered was heavy, moderate to intense and accurate. Because of flak five ships were damaged and one destroyed. Ship #174, 416th Squadron, Capt. Goad pilot. The ship was hit right over the target and a large hole was observed behind the #3 engine which caught fire a little later. Although the ship not quite a little way from the target it lost altitude rapidly in the last few minutes. Major Orance followed the ship down and observed 3 men bailing out before the ship crashed. They reached the water safely and Major Orance and crew threw them life vests and rafts. The ship however was seen to explode as it struck the water. The crew had just been transferred into the group a few days before with the exception of Capt. Goad, operations officer of the 416th, who was checking the pilot out on his first mission. It is not known which three men bailed out of the ship. 20 ships

came back to the field, the first landing at 1616 and the last at 1735. However the last to come in ship #366 had landed at Bizerte to get gas enough to return to this base. Ship #526 had trouble with 2 engines and landed at Bizerte for repairs. Ship #489, Lt. Bankhead pilot, was still unaccounted for at the end of the day but was seen to have dropped out of the formation and the target and was again seen near the water pursued by 6 ME 109's. All together 40 enemy pursuit were seen and many of them encountered and 2 of our ships were damaged by them. However the following claims are made: Ship #490, 347th, 1 FW 190 destroyed; ship #489, 347th 2 ME 109's destroyed and 1 ME 210 probably destroyed; ship #473, 347th 1 ME 109 destroyed and 1 ME109 probably destroyed; ship #026, 348th, 1 FW190 destroyed, ship #856, 348th 1 ME109 destroyed; a total of 2 FW190's destroyed, 4 ME109's dist, 1 MM210 Prob. destroyed and 1 ME109 probably destroyed. A call was received later in the evening that the following day would be non-operational. The big news beside the mission was the arrival of the rest of the ground echelon some 800 strong. They arrived about 7:30 in the evening and went to work pitching their pup tents in their squadron areas. The evening was spent in joyous celebration for the meeting of many friends after a separation of 5 months.

May 26, 1943

This day was non-operational as was the following.

May 27, 1943

Relaxation on the part of the combat teams was the main order of the day. The newly arrived ground echelon continued to familiarize themselves with their new location and to become re-acquainted with their customary duties. About 13:30 on this date a motor convoy lead by Major "Curley" Hampton, genial Group Adjutant, arrived from La Senia. The convoy consisted of 11 two and one half ton trucks, ten gasoline trailers and seven command cars which were welcomed to relieve the transportation shortage.

May 28, 1943

Today mission number 23 was flown to Leghorn, Italy where orders read to bomb the oil refinery. Three other heavy groups participated in this raid, 27 ships took off for this raid, but 5 returned early, leaving 22 from the 99th to visit the target. These planes dropped 264X500 bombs on the target (total of 66 tons). During the raid our planes met only light and inaccurate flak. We claim to have damaged one of the five enemy aircraft encountered. Otherwise the raid went off as planned.

May 29, 1943

Another non-operational day in which the combat personnel rested for their next mission.

May 30, 1943

Today Sunday and Decoration Day, but was no holiday for the 99th. At 0721 hours the first of 33 of our aircraft left the ground for mission 24, the Capodichino Airdrome in Naples, Italy. Before reaching the target, four of our aircraft returned to this base with mechanical defects, leaving 29 over the target. Our aircraft dropped a total of 689X120 frag clusters onto the target (41.34 tons). As we flew over the target there were 95 enemy aircraft on the field. As we left the target 51 of those aircraft were damaged or destroyed. Six of these were burning as a result of direct hits. Other minor damage was caused to the enemy when our bombs hit barracks, repair shops and other buildings. During the raid the flak was heavy, moderate and accurate. Our aircraft encountered 30 enemy fighters, destroying 12 and probably 7 additional. Six of our aircraft were damaged by the enemy but they all returned safely to the base.

May 31, 1943

The month of May was ushered out with Mission 25, a raid on the Foggia Airdrome in Italy. Our specific target was the grounded aircraft on the southwest side of the airdrome. At 0903 hours the first of our aircraft took off. Twenty three aircraft were over the target dropping 527X120 frags (32.62 tons) and damaging or destroying 18 of the grounded aircraft. Our aircraft were bothered by heavy, moderate and accurate flak, but only four were damaged by fire. Ten enemy fighters were encountered and our gunners destroyed one and probably another. All of our aircraft returned safely from this, then their longest mission (8 hours).

June 1, 1943

Today was a well deserved holiday in which many of the personnel visited nearby cities and resorts. In the evening three planes of the 346th squadron went up on practice night missions for two hours. One new aircraft was gained by the Group 42-30095. An incident of interest on this day happened when Lt. Mitchell, on a familiarization flight, landed at Bone. The plane was being taxied almost to a stop when it slipped into an unmarked shell hole. The plane was damaged slightly, but the accident was cause enough for the crew and passengers to remain overnight at Bone.

June 2, 1943

Today was another holiday but in the afternoon we were honored with some distinguished visitors. Assistant Secretary of War for Air Lovett and Lt. Gen. Carl Spaatz of the NAAF accompanied by Lt. Sarah Bagby, WAAC, secretary to the General, visited the Operations Office and spoke with Col. Upthegrove, Lt. Col. Rainey and Major Dunnington. The visitors departed after spending an hour here.

June 3, 1943

Today was another mission day. Briefing was completed on schedule. Target for the day was Arancia in Sardinia. The crews were at the aircraft ready to take off when the mission cancelled. During the day we received one new plane, 42-5842. About 18:00 hours General Partridge of the Bomber Command paid the Operations Office a short visit. This evening six aircraft flew on a night mission.

June 4, 1943

This day was another holiday. We added another plane to our field - 42-3164. Preliminary plans for tomorrow's mission kept the various operations and intelligence personnel occupied.

June 5, 1943

Today mission 26 was flown to La Spezia Harbor in Northwest Italy. The targets in the harbor were three battleships of the Italian Navy. One of the battleships was assigned to each of three groups - 99th, 97th, and 301st. The 2nd Group contributed 12 aircraft to each of the three groups. Planes from the 99th Bomb Group took off from both runways starting at 09:30 hours. Fifteen minutes later 34 aircraft were in the air. Riding with Colonel Upthegrove during the raid was Major General Doolittle. At 10:00 hours all planes on the mission held the rendezvous over our airdrome. There were about 120 Fortresses in all. At this same hour Captain Macdonald's plane - 818 - landed with the tail-gunner and waist gunner suffering from wounds received when the right waist gun went off. The plane was damaged on the side by the door. One other plane, that of Lt. Buck, returned early due to engine trouble. The 99th had 32 planes over the target and dropped 28x1600 Armor Piercing bombs and 50x2000 bombs, for a total of 72.4 tons. As a result of the raid there were no direct hits on the battleships, but the 99th had many near hits within 100 feet of their target. The dock was severely bombed with several hits. There was one explosion on the dock of a ship tied to it. During the raid flak was heavy and intense, particularly from the battleships. One of our aircraft was damaged by flak. No enemy fighters were encountered and all of our aircraft returned safely. During the day we gained two new aircraft, 42-29627 and 42-3133.

June 6, 1943

Today was a well deserved holiday for our combat teams. Two new aircraft were received, 42-29790 and 42-23189.

June 7, 1943

Today we flew mission number 27. This mission was to bomb the city of Pantelleria on the tiny island of the same name. In this raid, the 99th was represented by only three squadrons, the 416th not being scheduled. Twenty-one of our aircraft took off between 10:30 hours and 10:46 hours. Three aircraft returned early, leaving 18 over the target. From these, 216x500 bombs were dropped (54 tons). The target was completely covered with our bombs. One warehouse was seen to explode. Smoke was pouring from many points in the city. One string of bombs landed in the harbor which was congested with landing craft of several descriptions. During the raid the flak was heavy, moderate and accurate. One of

our planes was damaged, by flak. A total of 25 enemy fighters were spotted and one of our planes was damaged by them. The combination of our gunners and Lightning fighter escort chased the enemy. Our gunners accounted for 6 fighters lost for the enemy. During the conflict, 3 crew member of Lt. Patterson's plane (586) were wounded. Lt. Patterson landed at Tunis for first aid and found it necessary to leave one of his wounded crew there. The remainder of the crew returned with the plane in the early evening. The 17 remaining craft arrived home on schedule. This evening we scheduled 6 planes to fly a practice night mission. However after an hour in the air, Major Semens ordered the planes to land because there was an air raid alert at Philippeville.

June 8, 1943

Tuesday and another mission to the tiny island of Pantelleria. This time our men were after the heavy gun emplacements on the island. Between 0930 and 0947 hours 28 of our aircraft took off. Four planes returned early, one due to mechanical trouble and three spares. Twenty-four went over the target and dropped 131x1000 bombs (65.5 tons). The target was well covered in spite the fact that some of the bombs fell into the sea. Direct hits on the gun positions were observed. During the bomb run, flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate. Five ME-109's were encountered but no damage was done. After the bomb run, surface vessels were seen to move toward the shore of the island. On the way back to the base, the planes of the group passed in review formation over Sousse. All of our aircraft returned safely.

June 9, 1943

Wednesday and another raid on Pantelleria, this being mission #39. This was an afternoon raid. Between 1255 and 1308 hours 28 of our aircraft took off, using both runways. Again the target was the gun positions on the island. All of our aircraft went over the target and dropped 168x1000 bombs (84 tons). During this raid there was the enemy opposition. Again the target was well hit. All of our aircraft returned in time, for supper.

June 10, 1943

Today was one of the busiest days in the history of the 99th Group. Our aircraft made two more raids on the island fortress of Pantelleria. The Italian government ordered the leader on the island not to surrender. Again it was up to heavy bombers to force the enemy out of the island. This morning D-hour was 0450 hours. Thirty-three aircraft took off on both runways starting at 0715 hours. At 0825 hours one ship returned with a runaway prop. The other 32 aircraft flew over the target and plastered it with 384x500 bombs (96 tons). Again no enemy opposition was met. One target area was well hit by our bombs. All of our aircraft returned to the field by 1155 hours. The combat crews had lunch and rested while the ground crews were refueling and reloading bombs. After a very short briefing, the crews and planes were ready to go again. Thirty-four aircraft took off in 15 minutes, starting at 1446 hours. All of these planes flew over the target and dropped their loads of 408x500 bombs, or 102 tons. As usual, the gun positions were blasted with deadly precision. All of our aircraft returned safely to the field. After both raids today our planes returned over the field in magnificent formation. Today the 99th alone dropped a total of 198 tons of bombs on the target. When the crews returned early this evening from the second raid, they were greeted with the news that there was to be another mission tomorrow. They all retired early, tired from their big day.

June 11, 1943

Today was another operational day, but one which will go down in the history of the war. Our mission number 32 was again on Pantelleria. Twenty-eight aircraft took off, starting at 0920 hours. All of these planes were over the target at 1130 hours. Many crews claimed to have seen the white flag of surrender and consequently some bombs were not dropped. We dropped, however, 102x1000 bombs or 51 tons. At 1200 hours the Island of Pantelleria surrendered to the gorpower of the Allied forces. The 99th played a most important part in the capture of this small island. After today's raid our planes all returned home, glad that they were finished with Pantelleria. More bombs were dropped in the seige of that island than were dropped by the Allied Air Forces during all of April.

June 12, 1943

Today there was no rest for the combat crews - another mission was flown. This was number 33 and was our second visit to Castelvetro in Sicily. H-Hour was at 0600 hours, followed by briefing at 0715. Between 0831 and 0838 hours 21 of our aircraft took off, using both runways. Four planes returned early, one with a crew member ill, two with mechanical trouble and the fourth, a spare. Seventeen of our aircraft, representing three squadrons, 346, 348, and 416, were over the target, the airdrome, at 1110 hours. A total of 404x120 frag bombs was dropped (24.24 tons). The target was extremely well covered. There were from 30 to 35 planes caught on the ground. Many fires were started in revetments. The flak during the raid was heavy, slight and inaccurate. No enemy fighters were encountered, although one enemy plane was noted above the target. All of our aircraft returned safely and without damage by 1326 hours. News came in the afternoon that tomorrow would be a holiday and that awards would be made in the morning.

June 13, 1943

The big event of the day was the presentation by Brig. General Atkinson of awards to the combat crews. There were 267 air medals and 6 oak leaf clusters given in this our first presentation. Later in the day, Col. Upthegrove departed for a short rest.

June 14, 1943

Today was another holiday, allowing everyone to rest. During the day two distinguished persons visited our headquarters: Major General Doolittle and Air Marshall Viscount Trenchard of the Royal Air Force. Later in the day a new airplane (42-30119) arrived and was assigned to the 346th squadron. This brought our total to 48 aircraft.

June 15, 1943

Today the vacation ended at 0320 hours in the dark of the night. Briefing for the 34th mission was held at 0435. The target for today was Boccadifalce Airdrome at Palermo in Sicily. Twenty-eight of our aircraft were off the ground at 0600 hours. Five of these returned early, 3 as spares and two with mechanical trouble. Twenty-three planes went over the target and dropped 431x120 frags and 65x300 demolition bombs, or a total of 35.61 tons. The target was well covered and considerable damage was caused. All of our planes returned safely at noon. The remainder of the day was free. This evening quite a storm blew in from the west bringing dust, then rain to settle the dust.

June 16, 1943

Today was a holiday with very little activity. Col. Rainey attended a meeting in General Atkinson's office during the day and brought back the good news that the 99th was leading group in the Wing from the standpoint of bombing. Our last two missions put us over the top. During the day the large generator which supplies electric power for headquarters and surrounding areas caught fire and was rendered out of commission. The night was spent without electric lights. Plane 42-3251 was received and assigned to 348th squadron.

June 17, 1943

Today was a holiday with very little excitement. Word was received that several German paratroop spies were captured at nearby St. Arnaud. In line with this, precaution was taken to keep all natives from around the planes. Consequently, several Arabs were brought into headquarters from the line. They were questioned and freed. Today Captain Evans and his crew took off on a month's detached service to fly British General Montgomery in a Fortress.

June 18, 1943

Today we flew on Mission #35. It was a return to oft-bombed Sicily where the Railroad Marshalling Wards in Messina was the target. Twenty-eight aircraft took off starting at 0930 hours. Five planes returned early, leaving 23 to go over the target, dropping 552x100 incendiary bombs, (27.60 tons). While over the target the flak was heavy, intense and accurate. It was about the most severe flak that our planes have encountered to date. Five of our aircraft were damaged by this flak. Staff-Sergeant Chondonneit was hit in the leg by flak. Sgt. Luth was wounded by 20mm shells. Ten enemy fighters were encountered and three were destroyed and one damaged. It was difficult to

observe the results of our bombing as there were quite a few clouds. All of our aircraft returned to the field after the raid. A report came out concerning an expected Arab uprising on the 23rd of the month. 13

June 19, 1943

Today was a holiday with very little activity except for several planes going on cross-country hops. In the evening there were six planes which took off for local training missions.

June 20, 1943

Another holiday. Sanitary inspections were held in the squadrons and in headquarters. Plane number 42-29489 was returned from Tunis where it made a landing after being shot up during the Messina raid of May 25. It was to undergo further repairs. This evening the report on an Arab uprising was confirmed by Wing. Another report came from the radio that two Italian leaders were in Algiers for the purpose of discussing peace.

June 21, 1943

Today we flew mission #36 to the railroad yards at Naples. Twenty-eight of our aircraft took off, beginning at 1000 hours. In short order six of our planes returned with mechanical troubles. Twenty-two of them went over the target and dropped 256x300 demolition bombs and 48x500 incendiary bombs (50.40 tons). The target area was well covered and many fires were observed in the railroad yards. Also at the nearby arsenal and torpedo factor there was heavy black smoke. Flak was heavy, intense and accurate and damaged 8 of our aircraft. Several enemy fighters were seen, but none came close enough to bother our planes. All of our planes returned safely. Due to the expected Arab trouble on the 23rd of the month, everyone started wearing side-arms at 1800 hours. A new crew was added to the 416th squadron during the day.

June 22, 1943

Tuesday and a holiday to recover from yesterday's mission. The chief excitement is the anticipation of an Arab revolt tomorrow. Beginning at 1800 hours all personnel were confined to the base on account of the expected trouble. In the evening six aircraft from the 347th and 348th squadron participated in a night flying mission.

June 23, 1943

Today was another holiday and a very quiet one. No one was permitted off of the base due to the threatened Arab trouble. However, late tonight there was no report of an actual uprising. One of our cooks was accidentally shot by a guard set up as a precaution.

June 24, 1943

Today was the third holiday in a row. At 6030 hours four planes took off for Pabat to pick up four new crews. Three of the planes and new crews returned this evening, but the fourth plane was not heard from. Captain Aspegrem took 42-30095 to Rabat on this trip and traded it for a new craft, 42-0313. In addition, another new crew, that of Lt. English brought in aircraft 42-30126, making our present total 51. This morning at 0930 a red alert was sounded on advice from Overcoat. The aircraft was observed near the coast. At 1200 hours the restriction caused by the Arab scare was lifted. Everyone laid down their arms and returned to normal life.

June 25, 1943

Today was a busy day for the 99th. H-hour for today was 0530 and a mission was scheduled to bomb the city of Messina in Sicily. At 0800, 30 of our aircraft took off to start what was to be an exciting mission. During the morning three of our aircraft returned, one with carburetor trouble and two spares. Twenty-seven planes went over the target with a mixed load of bombs. The bomb bay doors on 470 would not open over the target. Five planes dropped mixed loads of 2000 and 1000 pound bombs, while the other 21 planes dropped 300 pound bombs. The totals were 366x300, 8x2000, 14x1000 - a total of 65.40 tons. Our aircraft did a fine job of covering the target.

4 One large building received a direct hit. There was also a direct hit on an anti-aircraft battery. The raid itself was not as easy as it sounds. Our aircraft encountered the worst flak and attack of enemy fighters over and about the target in the group's history. There was perfect co-ordination between the enemy defenses. The 346th Squadron's aircraft 468 was hit by flak over the target and limped away from the target. It was immediately pounced upon by a number of ME-109's. Lt. Hunter, pilot, Lt. Wylie, co-pilot and several members of the crew had been wounded by flak. Despite this handicap, the gunners destroyed seven enemy aircraft for certain and possibly an eighth which cannot be confirmed until one of the gunners recovers enough to be questioned. This heroic crew landed their disabled aircraft at Bizerte. The following crew members were wounded and taken to the hospital, Lt. Hunter, pilot, Lt. Wylie, co-pilot, Sgt. O'Brien, waist gunner, Sgt. Tennis, radio operator, Sgt. Cantley, waist gunner, and Sgt. Walker, tail gunner. Another plane from the 346th Squadron, 762, was hit heavily by flak which killed Sgt. Holmes, waist gunner. Lt. Lippman brought his plane down at Bone with #1 and #2 props feathered. The 347th Squadron also was hit heavily by flak. Plane 769 (Capt. Covert) landed at home with two casualties. Sgt. Shannon, waist gunner, was killed instantly by a piece of flak. Sgt. Schneider, waist gunner, was wounded. On Major Boatwright's plane, Sgt. Potter, top-turret gunner, was wounded by flak. In all, there were 25 enemy aircraft which attacked our planes. Twenty of these were destroyed for sure, with another one still in doubt. In addition one other enemy aircraft was probably destroyed. Ten of our aircraft were damaged. One is badly damaged (42-29468 - Lt. Hunter). It was dropped from our records. Eight of our personnel were wounded and two were killed. All of our aircraft not specifically mentioned above returned to the home base. During the raid, 15 enemy aircraft bombed our formation from above. Today was a rough day and everyone welcomed the announcement that tomorrow will be a holiday.

June 26, 1943

Today was a well deserved holiday with no excitement resulting from operations. A disaster overtook the 1071st Ordnance Company located northeast of the field. While unloading 500 pound bombs from a truck convoy the bombs exploded with a resounding roar shaking the surrounding terrain and sending smoke a mile into the air. In all, 16 men were killed and four critically injured. The casualties were from the Ordnance Company and from the Service Squadron operating the trucks. Col. Upthegrove lead the investigation of the accident.

June 27, 1943

Sunday and a non-operational. We were visited by Mr. Pierre Huss of the International News Service who is an authority on the German situation. He spoke to an audience in the briefing tent and stressed that it would not be easy to defeat the enemy.

June 28, 1943

Today, mission 38 was flown. At 0705 hours, 27 aircraft took off to bomb the harbor at Leghorn in Italy. There were five early returns due to mechanical troubles. Twenty-two of our aircraft went over the target and dropped 264x500 bombs, a total of 66 tons. The flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate. Four enemy planes were encountered, but no damage was caused to either side. All of our aircraft safely and undamaged, landing at 1428. Our airplane 42-5762, 346th Squadron, downed at Bone was turned over to the Service Group and consequently was dropped from our records. During the day, Lt. Col. L. A. Rainey, Deputy Group Commander received orders transferring him to the 97th Bombardment Group (H) as Commanding Officer.

June 29, 1943

Today was a holiday with a minimum of activity. The important events of the day were personnel changes and addition of aircraft. Col. Rainey departed for his new station after bidding everyone good-bye. His departure was regretted by everyone in the group. The office of Deputy Commander was taken over by Col. Richard H. Smith who arrived on the base today. Another one of the original 99ers, Major Frank Dunnington received orders transferring him to Algiers. Two new aircraft were received by the group, 42-3344 assigned to the 346th squadron and 42-30384 assigned to the 347th squadron.

June 30, 1943

Today mission number 39 was flown. At 0945 hours 21 aircraft took off representing three squadrons, 346th 347th and 416th. The target was Bocca Di Falco Airdrome at Palermo, Sicily. All 21 of our aircraft passed over the target and dropped a total of 336x400 bombs (50.4 tons). Some flak was encountered and was discribed as medium, heavy and inaccurate. No enemy aircraft were encountered. The target area was well hit, including a hangar and large aircraft. All of our aircraft returned safely to the home field, landing at 1520 hours. During the day orders were received to have all of our combat crews stand by for the next few days. The next two days were to be non-operational. Major Dunnington, ex Group Intelligence head, departed this station for his new assignment in Algiers.

July 1, 1943

Today marked the start of the 14th month in the history of the 99th Bombardment Group. It was non-operational today. The day was spent getting all of our 51 aircraft in commission for the expected big push. Invasion rumors have been passing around. During the afternoon we were subjected to heavy winds which covered everything with dust and blew down several tents, among the tents were the briefing tent, one of the mess tents and the 347th Orderly room.

July 2, 1943

Another day of non-operations. Nothing but a few test flights took place.

July 3, 1943

Today was the start of an expected frequent use of our aircraft for raids. Mission #40 was flown. At 1150 hours 22 of our planes took off to bomb the Monserrato Airdrome in Sardinia. One plane was spare and he returned at 1402. Another plane, Lt. A. E. Davis, 483, became lost in weather over the target and returned at 1500. As there was a solid overcast at the target, no bombs were dropped and the remaining 20 aircraft returned at 1521. No enemy opposition was met. Here at the base it was hot. The temperature was 104°F and the humidity was less than 10%. A high and hot wind blew in from the desert causing dust storms which added to the misery of the heat. Again, for the second time in three days several tents were blown down. Today Col. Smith flew his first mission with the 99th.

July 4, 1943

Independence day, but no holiday for the 99th. H-hour for today's mission was 0610 hours. Twenty-seven of our aircraft departed this base at 0856 for the Gerbini Airdrome in Sicily. We were loaded with frags. Due to a case of poor navigation and bad weather our aircraft ended up south of Malta. As they did not cross the sortie line, it was declared to be no mission. All on our aircraft returned to the base at 1452. Perhaps tomorrow we can get rid of the frags. There was more excitement at the home base. It was another very hot day. The maximum temperature was 103°F at 1100 hours. That wind continued to flow in from the desert with the dust adding to the misery of the extreme heat. At about 1345 hours a spectacular fire broke out in the Ordnance dump for the second time in 6 days. A large quantity of incendiary bombs and few frags exploded and burned. Large columns of smoke poured from the scene for about 90 minutes then it burned out. No injuries to personnel was experienced this time. No sooner than the end of this fire, there was a large fire in the wheat field adjoining to the 346th area which was started by a careless smoker. Members of the 346th squadron controlled the blaze until it died out. Thus ended the holiday's fireworks. Later in the day, information came from Newmarket that tomorrow's bomb load would be the same as today's.

July 5, 1943

An eventful day in the history of the 99th Bomb Group. In one respect it was our worst day, in other respects it was our best day. This morning H-hour was 0530 hours. Twenty-eight of our aircraft were off at 0807. At 1135, plane number 388 returned with mechanical trouble. As the other 27 planes neared the target, they were attacked by 100 enemy 109s, 190s and 202s. Quite a battle followed during the entry and departure from the target. 640x120 frags (37.4 tons) were dropped on the target doing a good job of hitting the Gerbani Airdrome in Sicily. The last element of our formation was jumped by the enemy fighters and all three planes in the element were lost. One of them was seen to blow up over the target, a second to make a landing on the beach of Sicily where it was strafed by enemy fighters. The third was last seen falling toward the sea. Several of the crew members of these planes bailed out and the enemy planes were reported to have shot at the parachuting men. Thirty-one men from the 3 crews of Lt. Charles M. Graham, Lt. Martin J. Demone and Lt. Albert E. Davis were lost in this encounter. Lt. Davis' crew was one of the four original model crews in the 99th Bomb Group. Lt. Shank on this crew, was group bombardier. On the brighter side our gunner, Sgt. Warmer with 7. Nine of our aircraft were damaged by fighter and 2 men were wounded slightly. The remainder of our aircraft returned to the base. Not all of the excitement today was on the mission. For the second day in succession a fire of great size broke out in the vicinity. This time it was train in the station Navarin. In the heat of the day 104°F gasoline on the train caught fire. In about 45 minutes a tank of gasoline exploded showering the surrounding area with flaming fuel starting many wheat fires. Large stacks of wheat and hay in the town Navarin were on fire and a number of men fought successfully for several hours to save the town and the remainder of the wheat stacks. While the men were controlling the fire in the town, the fire in the railroad train continued to rage. 50 gallon tins of gasoline would explode and fly several hundred feet into the air. Soon the fire spread to a carload of demolition bombs which went off with a resounding roar, showering the area with shell fragments. Eventually all fires were brought under control. Our aircraft, 41-24366 was transferred out to the depot at LaSenia. The remainder of our ground personnel, Major Hitt, Lts. Moll and Leksell and 30 enlisted men arrived by motor convoy from La Senia. Three escaped British prisoners were recaptured at about 2400 in our revetment area.

July 6, 1943

This morning dawned another hot day. The groups flew mission number 42, which was again to the Gerbini Airdrome in Sicily. At 1135 hours 25 of our aircraft took off for the target. It was a rough day in the air. As a result, 3 aircraft returned early with sick crew members. Two others returned with mechanical failure. A total of 20 aircraft went over the target. Lightnings and Spitfires accounted for 3 more enemy aircraft. One Aircraft returned at 1830 hours. During the absence of our aircraft the base experienced the severest Sirrocco winds from the desert. At times the dust was so thick that visibility was nil. The storm subsided in time for our aircraft to make easy landings.

July 7, 1943

Today we continued our operations against Gerbini. Mission number 43 was over the Gerbini Airdromes numbers 4 and 5. Nineteen aircraft took off at 0706. While 10 minutes from the target, one of our aircraft was forced to return with engine trouble. Eighteen of our planes passed over the target dropping 304x300 bombs (45.6 tons). It was difficult to observe the results due to dense smoke, but the target was hit. Flak was slight, heavy and inaccurate. No enemy aircraft were met. our planes returned at 1330 without damage or injury to personnel.

July 8, 1943

The round-the-clock bombing of Gerbini continued today with the 99th participating in mission number 44 over Gerbini Airdrome number 12. Twenty-one of our aircraft took off at 0940 hours. The 416th squadron did not participate in this mission. Three planes returned early, leaving 18 to go over the target, dropping 288x300 bombs (43.2 tons). A runway was hit and smoke was seen to come from 2 buildings. Flak was slight, heavy and accurate. From 12 to 15 fighters were observed, but there was no damage on either side. All of our planes returned at 1600 hours. Airplane 42-30306 was received.

July 9, 1943

(a) Another day and another mission. Today it was number 45 to Sciacca Airdrome in Sicily. This morning we had the earliest H-hour in history of the group - 0315 hours. By 0556, 26 of our aircraft took off. Two of these returned early. Twenty-four went over the target, but no bombs were dropped, because of haze and clouds. The 416th squadron jettisoned their bombs into the sea and the other squadron brought theirs home. Several large allied convoys were sighted heading for enemy territory. Moderate, heavy and accurate flak was experienced and 3 enemy aircraft were encountered. We destroyed one enemy aircraft and damaged another. None of our planes was damaged.

(b) A special night mission to Sicily was flown by Col. Upthegrove, Capt. Burrell, Capt. MacDonald, Lt. McLaughlin in special planes with flame suppressers and secret equipment. This was the longest mission flown being from 1915 to 0415. Capt. Burrell had #3 engine go out and could not feather. Pulled 2300 & 38" from Malta to El Jem and could not get above 3000 feet. Landed there OK but we did not receive word from him until 0830. Mission very successful and Col. Upthegrove and others were first to cross shores of Sicily on the invasion.

July 10, 1943

It was early this morning that we first heard of the invasion of Sicily. It was good news to everyone. We all had been awaiting this event for some time. It is another step toward the end of the war and our ultimate victory. Today we flew mission number 46 to Gerbini Airdromes #4 and #5. There was an early H-hour, it being 0345 hours. At 0625, 26 of our aircraft took off for the target. All of our aircraft passed over the target, dropping 312x500 bombs (78 tons). Heavy, moderate and accurate flak was encountered in addition to 10 enemy aircraft, but all of our aircraft returned unharmed. Our aircraft returned with observations on the invasion which was taking place below them as they flew over the Sicilian shores.

July 11, 1943

Today we flew mission #47, to the Marshalling Yards at Catania on the east shore of Sicily. At 0717 hours, 28 of our planes took off. During the course of the morning four planes returned with engine defects. The remaining 24 of our planes passed over the target and dropped 286x500 bombs (71.5 tons). The bombs fell on the target and did very much damage. Our aircraft were greeted by heavy, intense and accurate flak and 20 enemy fighters. Of these 20, we destroyed 6 and probably one more. Nine of our aircraft suffered minor flak damages. They all returned at 1318 hours. Today four new aircraft were assigned, 42-3045 to the 346th squadron and 42-30393 and 42-30396 to the 348th squadron. These airplanes had been used on the special mission.

July 12, 1943

Finally, today the group conquered the flak at Messina. We had our first mission over Messina in which we suffered no damage of planes or personnel, although the flak was heavy, intense and accurate. It was our mission number 48 and the specific target was the marshalling yards at Messina. Eighteen of our planes took off at 0933 hours. One returned early and the remaining 17 dropped 204x500 pound bombs (51 tons). Four enemy fighters were seen but no battle followed. Our bombing was quite good and much damage was done to the enemy's railroad facilities.

July 13, 1943

Today started at 0435 hours which was H-hour. It was our mission number 49 and the target was the Airdrome at Catania. The 347th squadron did not fly today. Twenty of our aircraft took off at 0712. There were 2 early returns and 18 planes went over the target dropping 216x500 bombs. (54 tons) Flak was heavy, moderate and accurate and 14 fighters were encountered, 3 of which we destroyed. One of our aircraft was slightly damaged. Our bombing was excellent - 98% of our bombs dropped on the target. Many enemy aircraft were caught on the ground and some were destroyed, but the field was ruined. Today four new crews were added to our roster, 3 being assigned to the 348th squadron and 1 to the 416th squadron.

July 14, 1943

Today we reached the half-century mark in missions. The target was the railroad yards at Messina. Twenty-seven planes took off at 0827. There were 2 early returns. Twenty-five planes passed over the target and dropped 299 x 50 bombs (74.75 tons). Flak was heavy, intense and accurate, but no damage was done to our planes. The target was covered completely and much smoke was seen coming from the railroad yards. All of our planes returned at 1500 hours. Following is a summary of our first 50 missions.

PRESS RELEASE

NORTH AFRICA, July 16-----Lean, sun-tanned combat crews of a Flying Fortress Group, "The Fighting Ninety-Ninth," taxied their dust-covered B-17's to rest today at the end of their 50th bombing mission and looked over their record. Now those young Americans are starting on their next 50 missions. There was no celebration at the end of the first 50. The crews came in, hurried over to the Red Cross wagon where smiling, blond "Peggy" gave them coffee and doughnuts and then "hit the sack" for a little rest before taking off again. There are hundreds of bomber crews like these---flying, fighting and working to defeat the enemy---and they will succeed.

July 15, 1943

Today we continued our string of operations with mission number 51, to the Marshalling Yard at Naples. The 346th Squadron did not fly this mission. Twenty-one of our planes took off at 0845. During the course of the day 3 early returns were made. The 18 planes which went over the target dropped 108x1000 bombs (54 tons). The bombs dropped on the arsenal, the torpedo factory and the railroad yards and buildings. Flak was slight, heavy and accurate and no fighters were encountered. All of our planes and personnel returned unharmed.

July 16, 1943

The mission for today, number 52, was to the Railroad Ferry Terminus at San Giovanni, Italy, across from Messina. All four squadrons participated. Twenty-eight of our airplanes were off at 0812 hours, two of which returned early. Our planes over the target dropped 302x500 bombs (76.5 tons). Our bombs hit the target quite well. Several explosions were noted and much smoke arose. No enemy pursuits were encountered, but flak was heavy, intense and accurate. Fourteen of our planes were damaged and one made a forced landing in friendly territory in Sicily. This was 42-29612, which was dropped from our records. In this plane two men were wounded. Another, #918, was hit by flak and the bombardier, Lt. Thomas Hawke, was seriously wounded. The pilot, Lt. Stuart, made a forced landing at Malta where Lt. Hawke died. His body was flown in by Lt. Stuart that evening. Number 472 made a forced landing at Souk-el-Arba with one engine out. Two other combat crew members were slightly wounded. The remaining aircraft returned to the base at 1500.

July 17, 1943

Again today, another mission, #53, was flown. This time the target was the Naples Marshalling Yards in Italy. At 1300, 27 of our aircraft took off. During the course of the afternoon, six of these planes returned due to mechanical trouble. The remaining 21, went over the target dropping 250x500 bombs (62.5 tons). The target was well covered with much smoke over the target. Oil storage tanks and the Royal Arsenal were flaming. Flak was heavy, moderate and accurate but no damage was done. Three unidentified aircraft made passes at the formation with no success. All of our aircraft returned by 2007, the latest return we have had. It was a successful mission.

July 18, 1943

A non-operational day today (the first since July 2nd). However, it was a rest to get the airplanes in shape for a large mission tomorrow.

Continued from page 6

A lot of people from the towns around Bad Ragaz escorted the death American airmen on their last way. The coffins were carried by men from the 8th and 15th Air Force from the Church to the churchyard. An American pastor solemnized the abdication. A Swiss guard fired a salute.

Also on the abdication were the American, British, French and Polish ambassador, as well some German spies. After the war, the bodies would be returned to the States. At all 61 American airmen died in Switzerland between September 1945 and April 1945. The last American airmen killed over Switzerland was 1st/Lt. R.W. Reid, a Marauder Pilot from the 387th Bomb Group, 9th Air Force.

At least I would be most grateful if any of the readers could help me concerning the 99th Bomb Group planes crashed or landed here in Switzerland.

I would be most interested in getting pictures of "Sugar Food" and photos taken at Oudna airfield in September/October 1943. Further I would be interested in pictures of similar Boeing B-17 aircraft from the 99th Bomb Group.

Who can confirm that the nickname of aircraft 42-30126 really was "Sugar Food". Further, I would be interested in getting statements on this particular attack on 1st October 1943 as well I would very grateful for further information concerning losses or damaged planes on this attack.

If you have any information, don't hesitate and write me soon. I am very grateful about any information and hints concerning this plane and its crew. Of course I will pay for all costs.

My best thanks in advance:

Hans-Heiri Stapfer
Bergstrasse 35
CH-8810 Horgen/ZH
SWITZERLAND

Dear Hans-Heiri;

12 March 1984

Best wishes to you-and many thanks for the pictures. We all enjoy your letters, and we would have printed your latest letter in the News except that I was in the hospital and things rather got out of hand.

I enjoyed your mention of the manuevers and wading the cold streams. I was an infantryman in 1940 and can appreciate what you are saying. In fact, as a surveyor I still get to sample our ice-cold streams at 3000 meters and even 4000 meters now and then. But it is worth it to get to see the lovely wildflowers up there.

We expect to get some letters from our fellows about the Oct. 2, 1943 mission and to gather them all together for a little report for you authors. In fact we expect to do this for other missions too. Our young people need to be reminded of how close the Germans came to winning. They do not know how weak we were in 1940, when we did not even have practice hand grenades, little cast iron pieces. We filled beer cans with gravel to the proper weight and practiced with them. Well, at any rate we have passed on something better than that to our sons and grandsons.

We are now in position to furnish information from the War Diaries, plus letters from men who were there, and we will do our best to contribute this to you authors.

Again, our best,

Sincerely

George

SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW

Back in England, some ingenious mind had modified the bomb racks slung under each (Spitfire) wing so that a small barrel of beer could be carried instead of a 500-pound bomb. ... The beer suffered no ill effects. from "Wing Leader" by Group Captain J.E. Johnson. Ballantine Books.

February 22, 1984

Dear George,

Thank you so much for taking time from your busy schedule to write to me. It has been some time since my last letter and I thought, what would be a more appropriate time to rehash the February 22, 1944, raid over Regensburg, Germany, than today the 40th anniversary.

As I recently told someone in a letter, in all of my fifty missions, I believe this was the super, "What in the hell am I doing here mission" and a day I'll never forget. Thanks for sending a copy of the squadron diary pertaining to this particular raid. In your letter you mentioned Steve Birdsall was interested in the fate of #439. I was in the tail of #889 flown by B. J. Shaw, when #439 was hit and slid over us in flames. Our radio gunner Ross E. McKinney could have reached up and touched that plane before it later exploded. I am gradually reconstructing with your help and others, as to what actually happened on that terribly confusing day over Regensburg. As your squadron diary states, we ended up over the target with a right wing man #439 and a left wing man #522. On our plane #889, as I recall, Capt. Bernam Shaw was pilot, Capt. John Morris, Co-pilot, Joseph M. Joffrion, Bombardier, Ross E. McKinney, Radio Gunner, Clarence L. Danielson, Left Waist, Charles L. Coon, Right Waist, myself, A.C. Henke, Tail Gunner. I am not sure about Top Turret, it must have been George Galloway, D. H. Beeman was at Ball Turret and I'm uncertain about who the navigator on our crew was that day. Several members of our crew were completing their missions at the time and we were acquiring replacements to our regular crew. Our aircraft #889 was the one, as stated in your squadron diary, "one of our A/C returned but was damaged from the encounter", this was putting it mildly. We had caught a rocket in the left wing and the wing was flopping all of the way back to Foggia. We had to drop out of formation after the fighters left. We landed about one hour after the rest of the group. As I remember, they taxied #889 into the bone yard for parts. Rivets were pulled throughout the whole plane, due to the vibration and as far as I know the plane never flew again, at least we never used it.

This accounts for the lead plane #889 and #439 piloted by Lt. McGee, now as for #522, this must have been "spoofer", piloted by Lt. Perry, (squadron diary shows Ferry). I believe it should have read Perry. "this plane is missing". I flew three missions on #522. On mission #18, Sofia, Jan. 4, '44; mission #42 flying General Joseph H. Atkinson, to London, England, for a pre-invasion meeting Jan. 27, 1944, and return trip Feb. 7, 1944. Instead of going to a rest camp, we had a chance to fly with Maj. MacDonald to London for two weeks and received credit for two missions as we had to man guns across Bay of Biscay.

Now, getting back to that left wing man that I have wondered about for the past forty years, this mystery was cleared up last December when I wrote a letter to Roland P. Bigley. I had read a letter written by Bigley, published in a news letter dated July, '81, that he was shot down February 22, 1944 flying with the 416th, so I knew we had been close together that day. He called me the day he received my letter and answered my question of the fate of #522. I sure hope to meet him at the Houston reunion. Our left wing #522 stayed with us for some time and had feathered two engines with wounded aboard, after

-2-

the fighters left, they veered off toward Switzerland, headed for the "Promised Land". Roland said, "That was their plan when they left us but later decided to try to make it back to Foggia. They had part of the electrical system shot out and could not transfer fuel so had to ditch in the Adriatic off the coast of Northern Italy near Pola. They were promptly picked up by the Germans and held prisoners for the duration of the war. Aboard #522 that day I believe, was Lt. Perry, Pilot, B. C. Kyrovac, Co-pilot, Roland P. Bigley, Navigator, A. J. Andrzejewski, Bombardier. As for the balance of the crew, I have no record. I flew my 30th mission with Lt. Perry on #509 Bad Penny, Jan. 20th, '44 to Campiano A/D.

That accounts for all three of the air craft of the 416th that headed for Regensburg led by Capt. Shaw. Now, George, I would like to meet the person that wrote the squadron diary relating to that day. I wish he had been there in person. This was the first claim I put in for a fighter destroyed in all of my fifty missions and I noticed they CREDITED me with a PROBABLY DESTROYED. If that ME210 made it back to its base I would be surprised as it was on fire, flaming like a blow torch in a dive for the ground. Another thing the diary states the formation was attacked by approximately ten enemy aircraft. Hell! I had nine ME210's lined up in single file coming in on the tail, Lobbing rockets and strafing as they broke away. I would have given my right arm to have been in our old ROBERT E LEE with the ring and post sight instead of that new manually operated tail turret with the optical image sight on the modified "G" which was strictly experimental that day of all days.

Well, George, so much for Regensburg, now back to your letters, sorry to hear we have nothing on Shaw or Morris. I will do some checking on Shaw. His home town in 1942 was Marshall, Mo. His father was a dentist there. The last time I talked to Shaw he worked for Campbell Soup Co. and was being transferred to Omaha, Ne. I will ask Dan Ives to check this out as he lives in Council Bluffs, Ia.

As for Maj. Mac. I will shoot a copy of our orders to England on #522 and this will show where I picked up "David", instead of "Daniel". We always called him "Mac", that's the way he wanted it. So you did know him and I am sure you will agree he was a wonderful person. In your letter you tell about the B-36 crash he walked home from in 1950 near Prince Charlotte Sound. I have a newspaper picture and story showing Mac at the time this happened but I cannot locate it. About the Robert E Lee and Bob Goad, someone may correct me on this but as I remember Mac telling this story; Mac and Bob Goad were very good friends. When Goad was shot down, this was around May 1943, I believe Goad's name was Robert E. Lee Goad and Mac renamed the "Balsanal" the Robert E. Lee in memory of his good friend Goad. I arrived in September 1943 as a replacement and was very fortunate to be assigned to Mac's crew as a tail gunner. Pete Bezek was our crew chief and I am sure he would know the history of the Robert E Lee.

Sounds like you and Bernie are doing a fine job and sure hope you will be able to publish the squadron diaries in book form, that would really bring back some memories to a lot of 99ers.

Better end this, looking forward to meeting you May 4th in Houston.

Sincerely, Al Henke *al*

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

W.F.O'Neill
Warren P. Hoover, Jr.
Wayne W. Snyder
Max L. Dunn
George M. Twomey
Abel A. Braswell

NE 68506
MO 64063
AZ 85206
CA 91701
IL 62901
GA 31776

FOUND

443 Hans-Heiri Stapfer
444 Willis T. Korum

445 Ross McKinney
446 Cyril C. Stidd
447 W. Raymond Whitley
448 Samuel I. Crisler
449 Thomas G. Judge, J
450 William F. Somers
451 Sheridan L. McGarry
452 Arthur B. Cozine
453 Julian W. Parkman
454 Morton L. Marks
455 Richard G. Mesner
456 James W. Knox

MN 55057 347
NY 13031 416
FL 33615 348
OK 74135 347
GA 30201 347
MA 02563 347
AZ 85257 348
UT 84124 348
ID 83706 347
SC 29150 346
OH 44118 347
CT 06801 347
TX 78731
NJ 07013 348
MI 48134 348
OH 44137 348
08742
85029
AR 72501 347
OH 45208 347
CA 94126 Assoc.
OH 43701 416
MD 21234 347
NJ 07036 348
CO 80226 416
FL 32019
TX 77058 347
PA 19111

460 Albert Lopéz
461 Fred Harris
462 Sirsee J. Henexson
463 Polk Laffoon
464 Kathryn Hack
465 M. Dale Pratt
466 William E. Greenwalt
467 William Howie
468 Norris W. King
469 Edward A. Laroche
470 Harold E. Murphre

UNIONS

SWISS INTERNEE REUNION. We plan a reunion of 8AFers in Switzerland in Summer or Fall of 1984. Swiss Alumni are asked to contact me with name, address, combat group, crew assignment, dates and location of internment and date of return to duty or US. I would also like contact with anyone who was at Radio School at Scott Field, Nov. 42- April 43. Forrest S. Clark - M4BG, 220 Fairmount Ave., S. Plainfield NJ 07080. From 8AF News, April 1984

TAPS

STAHLE, PAUL J. My husband, Paul J. Stahle, of the 348th Squadron, passed away on July 25, 1972. Paul returned to the AF after receiving a regular commission in 1947. In 1950 he joined the B-47 program and spent the next 18 years with SAC.

Cass Stahle (Mrs. Paul)

COVERT, CHARLES

This is a belated notice that Charles passed away about ten years ago. Maxine, (now Mrs. Hudgins) intends to attend the Houston Reunion and says that several of their children will meet us there. I am sorry not to have printed this before.

YOUNGBLOOD, REX G. . . . My brother died suddenly of a heart attack in 1958.
yours most sincerely

Kermit L. Youngblood
1911 University
Monroe LA 71203

continued on page 23

* * * TAPS, Continued from page 22 * * *
FRIEDLUND, RICHARD L.. My brother Dick was killed in Korea in 1951 while serving with the Wyoming 300th Field Artillery Battalion.
Sincerely yours, James F. Friedlund, 1721 Brentwood, Casper WY 82604
* * * * *
WHITLOCK, HAROLD (Chaplain) I'm sorry to tell you that my husband died June 25th, 1975. He died quietly in his sleep of heart disease....Harold became an Assistant Professor in History at Memphis State University and really enjoyed it....
Wishing the best to you and yours,
Helen Whitlock, 1847 Baldwin St., Memphis TN 38127

LAXSON, FLOYD . . . Floyd passed away in Oct. 1980..
Sincerely,
Mrs. James E. Laxson, 333 No. Prospect, Colo. Springs, CO 80903

* GIRTON, ARTHUR D. Died some years ago. *

EICHER, MILTON. Milton died a number of years ago. There are six children. They will be very interested in the Newsletter.
My very best to you.
Jan Eicher, 5473 N. Okemas Rd., E. Lansing MI 48823

KEVIN, CHARLES WAYNE. . . Passed away about a year ago. He was my uncle. He was a retired farmer in Madelia, Minnesota where he had farmed for more than thirty years. His widow, Elizabeth Kevan still lives there. Respectfully,
Andy Kevan, 3259 Woodridge Dr., Rt. 3, Box 6700, Twin Falls ID 83301

SIMONCELLI, JOHN. . . My brother John... died in the Veteran's Hospital .. in 1974. . . . he was a prisoner of war in Germany for 15 months....

Thank you very much

Joseph Simoncelli, 80 Catherine St., So. Bound Brook, NJ 08880
KOEHNE, FREDERICK... Dr. Frederick Koehne died April 30, 1977...
HUGHES, EDGAR O..... Dr. Edgar O. Hughes died November 6, 1957..
American Medical Association, Chicago IL 60610

* * * * *
NOIMAN, CHARLES...passed away in 1981. I am his sister-in-law....
thank you

Mrs. Noiman, 3542 Amberacres, Cincinnati, OH 45237

* * * * *
MALAKER, PHILIP. Philip Malaker passed away about 9 years ago.
Mrs. Louis Malaker, 575 7th Ave., Aurora, IL

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL, May '84

1984 Dues, \$10 _____ This includes the 1984 Newsletter. Old Newsletters, \$5 per year, '81-'83

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____ RENEWAL _____ NEW

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Mail to Walter H. Butler, 8608 Bellehaven Pl. NE, Albuquerque, N.Mex., 87112.
Make check payable to: 99BGHS.

As noted on the Application and Renewal blank, we have old newsletters available for 1981, 1982 and 1983 at the price of \$5 per each year. Your current newsletter (1984) is included in your \$10 dues, which means that we are financing both The Search and The Research with the half of your dues not used in printing. And with the very generous contributions from our gentle readers. Thanks again, fellows!

Dear George;

I enjoy your newsletter each time I receive it. I read through it, but it seems that only those that flew have some stories in it. How about the ground crew who took care of those planes? Isn't there someone who remembers them at all.

As you know, my husband Alfred (Frenchy) was with the 99th Bomb Group in 1942 when the Group left the U.S.A. Their first place overseas was Tunisia and all places in Italy to Normandy as a ground crew.

As I think there also must be someone who remembers those men helping them win the war and a word or two would be nice to read about them.

Sincerely yours

Mrs. Alfred Marcoullier
96 Gold St.
Manchester NH . 03103

Dear Mrs. Marcoullier;

Yes, you are right. We often thought about our ground crew while we were flying over enemy territory, depending for our living on those engines and a fragile frame of aluminum.

And we would like to publish more about some of the events beyond the call of duty which took place back at the base. Our new War Diaries will enable us to print some of those events, and I promise to do so.

But the ground crew are precious little help. They are too busy to write; too busy being Bank Presidents or running many-acred wheat ranches to write. So it's back to the records for those stories, but we'll forget the sun before we forget our Ground Crews.

Ray

THE 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2908 ALISO DRIVE NE
ALBUQUERQUE, N. M. 87110



J.O. Grizzell
15 Mohican Cove East
Lake Waynoka
Sardinia OH 45171

1983