



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society



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Editor George F. Coen

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1, 1984

Society Officers:

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER.....

Lawrence Cortesi does it again....His latest book "ROMMEL'S LAST STAND" is now on the stands and it really gives great credit to the 99th Bomb Group and its action during the Month of April 1943. He also gives credit to Fay Upthegrove and George Coen for assistance in research for the book. JAMES FLEX a navigator on YANKEE DOODLE OF THE 347th Sq.(and our Host in Houston last May) gives this review of the book.

So here goes nothing: The book is by Lawrence Cortesi. It is fairly accurate. The scenario takes place from March-April 1943 in West Africa.

It would be called OPERATION FLAX. All of the air units in Africa would be used extensively to support all ground operations.

Our 99th Bomb Group had just arrived in Africa in Feb. 1943 and we were ready for combat by March 1, 1943. We would be attacking air fields, shipping and transportation in Sicily, Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, and Southern Europe and not to be excluded all enemy held positions in Africa. Generals Carl Spaatz and James Doolittle would coordinate the Air Force Operations.

Embarkation and debarkation points would be primary targets. Gen. Doolittle asked Col. Faye Upthegrove if he was ready to attack shipping. Col. Upthegrove and the 99th were ready.

In March of 1943 the busiest base was Naples, Italy. The Bay of Naples sheltered every kind of vessel. From battleships down to small harbor crafts. It was a frequent target for allied bombings. I myself and the 99th Bomb Group made many sorties to that city.

Although the Cortesi file deals with all of the Air Corps Units, both American, British and even the German Air Force. Hermann Goring's Flying Circus had air superiority when we arrived in Africa in Feb. 1943. Two months later we were top dog. We fought against tremendous odds. Needless to say we knocked many, many enemy aircraft and destroyed hundreds of planes on the ground by our perfect bombing.

General Spaatz asked Col. Upthegrove if his 99th Bomb Group could handle surface shipping on the sea and in the harbors. Col. Upthegrove's reply was affirmative. We did one helleva job of sinking ships, bombing harbors and airfields. We were also known as the bridge busters. The book has Col. Upthegrove's picture in it. It also shows the "Yankee Doodle" with Dean Shields and Capt. Harry Burrell in front with several other pilots. Maj. Al Orance of the 416th.

B-17's over Trapani. The plane is the Yankee Doodle over the Mediterranean. Wrecked German planes at the Boca de Falco after the 99th attack. And the famous shot of the coverage by the 99th of Boca de Falco in Sicily. I was on that raid as on the others. We bombed it on Palm Sunday and the frags had total destruction. B-17's over Madaelanna Harbor. 99th BG. Raid on Trapani airfield by our group. Page 151 the attack on the harbor. Page 178 & 179 the attack on warships in Reggio de Calabria harbor. On page 190 on the raid mentioned above we lost one B-17, 11 crew members killed and 20 wounded. We did have to pay a price

for some of our victories. On page 218 and 219, Gen. Doolittle flew with Col. Upthegrove on the raid to Boca de Falco. They were in El Diablo, the Col.'s plane. We were attacked by over 86 planes on this mission. Lt. Dean Shields with the wrong bombardier in the Yankee Doodle scored direct hits on 5 planes on the ground. You should buy the book if you were there. It is a very good account of that two month period that allowed us to gain air superiority.

There no doubt are others who were involved in this operation and we would welcome your comments to enhance our records of the event. Let us hear from you!

Based on your mandate at our May meeting TOM GAMM is proceeding to design a 99th banner which will be displayed at our meetings. He is still in the design stage and as soon as it is produced we will put a photograph of it in this newsletter for all to see. Good Luck TOM and keep us informed of your progress.

Those of us who were at the Houston meeting in May will remember a special picture of a B-17-YANKEE DOODLE- painted by the artist ROBERT AUTH of 530 Hillview Drive Boise, Idaho and presented to the 99th Historical Society by ART COZINE of 1808 Amber St., Boise Idaho. This will be displayed at all of our future meetings for us to enjoy. Our thanks and appreciation to these two gentlemen for their thoughtfulness and kindness in remembering our organization with such a great treasure to be remembered.

As a member of the 15th Air Force Association I have reviewed some of the statistical information - I see that it shows that only one (1) French Croix De Guerre was awarded to the 15th Air Force. I'm sure that this must be incorrect - I received one which was awarded to me in 1951 - There must be others who received this award. If you did please let me know so we can correct the official records.

For those who have attended our annual meetings must realize that we try to run the general meetings in a business like atmosphere and straight to the point and in as short of time frame as possible. At our May meeting one of our members thought that it might improve our procedure if we installed a Parliamentarian and a Sergeant at Arms. I personally think that we have been doing quite well without them but if you want to add them to our organization let me know. If I don't hear from you I will assume that you are happy with the present set up. If I hear from you we can vote on it at our next meeting. Thanks for your input.

For all you HOT AIR BALLONISTS the Albuquerque Hot Air Balloon festival will be held here on October 6 - 14. I'm sure over 500 balloons will be floating in the sky at one time. It is quite a sight. Come and enjoy!

LET US MEET IN SEATTLE IN JULY 25 - 29 of 1985!

your friend

bernie barr
7413 Vista Del Arroyo
Albuquerque, NM 87109

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY VISITS ALBUQUERQUE

George Coen and I met at Cutter Flying Service, located on the Southwest corner of Albuquerque International Airport, to welcome the arrival of Sentimental Journey. The date was Friday, July 6. TV and radio reporters were out in force to record this historic event. Even the two of us were interviewed.

This B17-G was accepted by the Air Force 13 March 1945, did time in the Pacific theater and after the war was modified for photo-mapping service at Clark Field, Manila, PI. Later it was assigned to the 3215th Drone Squadron, Patrick AFB, Florida. Then on 27 January 1959 it was transferred to the "Boneyard" at Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ. Within a few months it was acquired by the Aero Union Corporation and old 83514 received a civilian number, N-9323Z. For the next 18 years this B-17 was used as an air tanker for dropping slurry on forest fires. In January 1978 it was purchased for the Confederate Air Force, Arizona Wing. Members of the CAF have completely restored N-9323Z to the original combat configuration. They are touring 25 cities this summer and placing it on public display. Be sure to see this '17 if it comes to an airport near you.

Lou Boatwright

BOOK REVIEW

By V.P. Lou Boatwright

ROMMEL'S LAST STAND Cortesi, Lawrence, Zebra Books (subsidiary of Kensington Publishing Corp) 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, 264 pp, \$3.25 plus \$0.50 for p&h.

This is the eighth book written by Mr. Cortesi about WWII actions and published in paperback cover by Zebra Books. It is primarily an account of "Operation Flax" conducted by the Allied Air Forces out of North Africa during the month of April 1943. The 99th BG was a key unit responsible for success of this operation. It is given prominent mention throughout the book.

By March 1943, Rommel's Afrika Korps had been pushed back to Tunis by the Allied Armies, British from the East and Americans from the West. The British Navy controlled the Mediterranean and had cutoff supplies sent on ships from Italy. The German Army desperately needed reinforcements of both men and material. A massive airlift from several airfields located in Italy and Sicily was attempted. The purpose of Operation Flax was to stop this resupply effort.

The book is written in a style that is easy to read, gives the reader an insight into some of the higher command planning and is repetitious in a few places. I found it entertaining, interesting and completed reading it in two evenings. Highly recommended for 99ers.

NEWS, DUES & VIEWS

Leo Drouin writes in to say that, contrary to our reprint of the Press Release in the July Newsletter, he is a native of New Hampshire.

Quite right, Leo, we are happy to admit the AAF's error. After all, if it weren't for allies such as Ireland, Texas and New Hampshire we might not have won the war.

The Society welcomes all who have any interest in the 99th as Associate members. Associates have all the rights and privileges except that of voting.

We have been happily locating old 99ers and converting them into new members. As we grow, we are able to take advantage of economies of scale, especially in the Newsletter. This results in a respectable surplus in the treasury. We have therefore increased the size of the Newsletter from time to time, commensurate with the surplus and with the projected budget. We are also incurring one-time expense in the printing of the Group War Diary, an activity which provides us with addresses for The Search, which leads to new members, which beefs up the treasury. A serendipitous circle indeed.

The latest 400 pages of War Diary to be viewed and sent in for printing seemed to contain lovely escape stories, as well as the aforesaid home addresses.

For you new members, we operate with 1943 addresses of 99ers, using the Albuquerque Public Libraries telephone directories, mailing out postcards by the hundred to people of the same last name as our comrade, and we have a very respect able success rate. So send us your old orders if they give the men's addresses and we will work on them.

For current addresses, those with zip numbers, we simply send a Newsletter First-Class, and if it is not returned we put the man on the mailing list for about a year. He then gets a courteous note with another First-Class mailing saying that this issue will be the last unless he cares to join. So, gentle readers, that is where your dues and donations are going. No salaries, no profit, lots of conscientious work. Your Board of Directors is kept informed of these routine decisions, and it is expected that you will inform them and us of your wishes.

As a further service to authors, historians, and flak-dodgers we have begun to compile Daily War Diaries consisting of the Group Diary for the mission, plus the four Squadron Diaries for the same mission. This work has lagged lately, but Romeo wasn't bilked in a day.

We are now working over the prints of Escape Statements, starting with Rex Carnes' crew. We cannot notify each of you at this time, but we can furnish copies as desired. Or do you have copies of your statements?

We would like some POW stories. Was anybody in the Sagan Camp?

Thank you, Hans-Heiri. And thank you for the account and drawings pertaining to the shooting down of Sugarfoot. We have Swiss friends here and we expect to get a translation of Colonel Ruegg's Diary for the next Newsletter. I just wish that the 99ers were as faithful correspondents as you and Gino, bless you. It means a lot to us old war-horses. geo.

Our thanks to Lawrence Cortesi for the copies of "Rommel's Last Stand." They are being read for review by Lew Boatwright and Bernie Barr. I detailed a search for more copies to a sharp-eyed grand-daughter and she found the book at the bookstore as well as at our grocery store.

The pictures turned out very well, but my main interest was in the historical research. I was amazed to read of our personal part in setting up the massacre (which was a series of massacres with a casualty rate of from 60 Percent to 100 percent per mission). The book confirms what I suspected, that we were up against some big-time Krauts, even if it was the Soft Underbelly. Two of the late-lamented had something like 120 kills between them, and there were of course some survivors with equally long tallies, men such as Hartman Grasser and Johannes Steinhoff. There is even a picture of Smiling Albert, with a smile, of all things.

It is especially pleasant to recall that the British at the time were quite insistent that we go out on night missions and that the Krauts also recognized that we could not really fight. For you who were not there, this all transpired just 10 days after our defeats (three of them) around Kasserine Pass, when the skies cleared so that we could take the Peace Ships out on little group discussions with the Boche. It is sure nice to know that we racked up some of those who got their Iron Crosses in Poland and France.

So thanks again to friend Cortesi for digging out the records and putting the facts together. Incidentally, my information had previously come from a P-40 pilot in the bar of the Refuge (what was left of it after that bomb hit) and his story was that his outfit was escorting B-25s back from a little raid on the radar station at Ustica and that the bombers had some 75mm ammunition left over which they used on the ME-323s. According to this snaggle-toothed desert rat, the big 6-engined planes were loaded with gasoline and could not stand point-blank 75mm fire, so they ditched and waved white flags from the wings to no great effect. I have not burdened Mr. Cortesi with any of this beer talk, and he has not credited the B-25s with any such capers. How about it, gang?

MORE NEWS, DUES AND VIEWS

Incidentally, if you wonder at the B-25s having cannon ammunition left, you are ready to read "The Ultra Secret". This book details how we really set up such items as the Massacre, Yamamoto's killing, and other little tea parties. And for those of you who wondered about the sinking of the Sicilia, well there is a little note about the German generals slipping out of Tunisia on the hospital ship, a fact which Ultra noted.

So thanks again, Larry Cortesi, and we will look forward to your book about the Rome campaign. gfc

QUOTES

The US Air Forces were some of the most practical users of Ultra, even if a little impulsive at times.

The Ultra Secret, Dell Books, 1975

In the bitter 11th hour, a stark order for Arnim arrived from Hitler: "The German people expect you to fight to the last bullet." Arnim conceived his own interpretation of "the last bullet": It would be the last shell fired by the last tank. Then the weapons would be destroyed and Army Group Africa would give up.

On May 11 the last seven tanks of the 10th Panzer Division, their desert-yellow paint peeling, ran out of fuel and fired a final defiant salvo toward the Hammam Lif-Hammamet line. The next day Arnim capitulated.

The War In The Desert, Collier

Scrounging on Cape Bon also paid big dividends. At an airport near Soliman, at the base of the Bon peninsula, the boys found a German truck depot. The machines, all new, had been hastily sabotaged by the retreating Nazis - so hastily sabotaged that each truck had been wrecked in a different manner. Some had their crank cases cracked, some were immobilized with broken wheels and others had radiators split with pickaxes. This proved no problem at all for a pair of experienced scroungers. Replacing damaged parts with good ones, Benny and Charlie, with the help of several of the squadron mechanics, acquired three spanking new Ford trucks for one day's work.

In one truck the boys found a live grenade, with the pin pulled, balanced on the motor block. The grenade was resting on the spring which, when released, set it off. The slightest jar would dislodge the grenade. The boys managed to take off the fan belt without dislodging the explosive.

from "Mediterranean Sweep", Thruelsen and Arnold, 1944

The Secretary of State for Air, Sir Kingsley Wood, perfectly evoked the mood of a war in which neither ally was minded to strike a mortal blow. Urged to bomb the Black Forest and ravage Germany's timber supplies, the little man replied, outraged: "Are you aware it is private property? Why, you will be asking me to bomb Essen next!"
from "1940, The Avalanche" by Richard Collier

Douhet had not only brushed aside the possibility of anti-aircraft defense from the ground (which had proved feeble enough in World War I) but had demolished even airborne defense as a futile waste of effort. The Second World War was drastically to revise such concepts.

From Arms and Men, Walter Millis, Mentor Books

The following is from "Mediterranean Sweep", 1944. Our copy was given to the Society by Jim Peters. We have been unable to obtain a second copy.

ITEM. (The following might well be a typical military phone call in the Mediterranean Theatre, Code names of exchanges are in actual use.)

Hello . . . hello; is this Nonesuch operator? I want to call Zigzag. Nonecuch . . . I get Zigzag by going through Gimcrack to Gigodo? Thank you. Give me Gimcrack, please. Hello, Gimcrack? Give me Gigolo. I get Gigolo by going through Gipsy Lee to Ognu? Give me Unfold then . . . You say that line is busy? No, Nutmeg, I am not through. . . Gimcrack, then give me Underwear and I'll try to get Gigolo through Gorgeous and Growl to Georgia Rear . . . Hello, Underwear-Gorgeous please . . . No, Gimcrack, I'm not through . . . Yes, Underwear. You say the line to Growl is out? . . . Yes, I'm calling from Negative-no, I mean Nutmeg. Then how can I get-oh yes, how can I get Zigzag? You'll route what? Sorry, I can't hear you. You say Ozone has a direct line to Knicknack and they can route me through Outgo to Nearby for Zigzag? . . . Hello, hello . . . no, this is not the 159th Medical Dispensary, this is Major Underwear-I mean Major Smith . . . Hello, hello . . . Who's this? . . . Oh, it's you, Nutmeg . . . Well, give me Grandstand, down at the field. I'll fly over to Zigzag tomorrow and save time.
* * * * *

His (Rommel's) professed aim was to instill in the Americans in the Allied line "an inferiority complex of no mean order." Feb. 1943.

from "The War In The Desert", by Richard Collier, Time-Life

When fifty urns containing the ashes of the dead men, who had all been cremated, were delivered to us, we could no longer escape the truth. We were in the hands of murderers.

The order for the shooting had come from Hitler and Himmler had carried it out. Himmler's second in command, Kaltenbrunner, had immediately issued what has since become known as the 'Sagan order'. The essential part of this order is quoted textually:

'The Fuehrer has ordered that more than half the escaped officers are to be shot. Therefore I order that the Kriminalpolizei are to hand over for interrogation to the Gestapo more than half of the recaptured officers. After the interrogation the officers are to be taken in the direction of their original camp and shot enroute. The shootings will be explained by the fact that the recaptured prisoners were shot while trying to escape, or because they offered resistance, so that nothing can be proved later. The Gestapo will report the shootings to the Kriminalpolizei giving this reason.'

"Free As A Running Fox", Wing Commander T.D. Calnan, Ballantine Books, published 1970

One of the better known (activities), of course, is the combat assignment of the Fortress with the Israeli Air Force, which used the B-17 to bomb Cairo and other Egyptian targets. That air war was a parody of reversed roles. Israeli pilots - many of them Americans - flew Messerschmitt ME 109F fighters in escort of the B-17s, which were intercepted and attacked by Egyptian Spitfires. . . .
from "Flying Forts", by Martin Caidin

He (Molders) ended gloomily: "...I wonder if Goring really is the general, politician, and strategist that we need. It isn't enough to be able to lead a mass of mercenaries..."
from "1940, The Avalanche", by Collier

The 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society
2908 Aliso Drive NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Gentlemen:

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I read your fine bulletin.

Here is a short saga of my airforce career with the 99th Bomb Group, 416th Bomb Squadron.

Let me start in the middle after extensive phase training in the United States.

The ground echelon of the 99th Bomb Group were shipped to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey and after a few days we embarked by boat in a large convoy from Staten Island bound for Oran, Africa.

En route and near the island of Gibraltar, the engines suddenly went dead after a loud roar and we limped into Gibraltar for repairs escorted by a lone British corvette and after repairs continued on to Oran.

We were assigned a field as a staging area and bombs were bursting all over but after they subsided the following morning we left by train for Navarin, Algeria where we finally met up with our air echelon.

I was the Sgt. Major running the orderly room for the 416th Bomb Squadron assisted by some exceptionally fine personnel like Arnold Eydenburg, Joe Mortorano, Leo Treleven (Wisconsin) and "Red" Caldwell (Alquippa, PA).

After a short stay we embarked by boat to Bezerte and thence to Tunis where we were based for about 1 year.

During my entire stay overseas, I performed all the legal work for the Red Cross representative, there was an abundance of divorces.

The 1st Sgt. at the 416th was Peter Hurey from Gary, Indiana. After our stay in Tunis we went to our last stop, Foggia, Italy. Major O'Rourke was the Squadron adjutant and a Major Weeden (a lovely gent) was the executive officer.

A few months after we arrived in Foggia, Italy. Sgt. Hurey and myself were leaving the orderly room to go to our tent at about 6 p.m. (dusk) and all of a sudden I saw a plane falling in flames and both Sgt. Hurey and myself started to run to a point where the plane was about to crash when I suddenly realized it was a British Wellington bomber out for a night mission and was carrying a 4000 pound bomb and I then yelled to Pete to run to the tent and jump into a foxhole which I did and regretably he did not -the plane crashed and the bomb diffused and the shock caught him in the spleen and he died that evening in a Foggia Hospital.

Temporarily I was assigned the duties as first Sergeant and then I asked to be relieved and I suggested Jimmy Egan who took over the duties and made a fine leader.

Sometime in early 1945 the airforce came out with a directive requiring a legal assistance officer at every post, camp and station and while I was qualified as an attorney, I was an enlisted man.

A few days later the Group Adjutant, Captain Sarosy called at my orderly room and suggested that if I would fly some combat missions as an aerial photographer gunner, I would receive a battlefield commission.

Accordingly, I accepted and flew five straight missions. Wiener Neustadt, Austria and others and my last mission was to Ruhland, Germany, a synthetic oil plant right outside of Berlin.

After being commissioned I spent the rest of my stay overseas at Group Headquarters occupying various assignments as trial judge advocate, acting adjutant and administrative officer.

Again it was a pleasure that I commend you on your lovely bulletin.

Sincerely,
Joe Warner

P.S. I enclose check for \$100.00 to assist you in your fine work and I would appreciate receiving copies of all your bulletins.

Hans-Heiri Stapfer
Bergstrasse 35

CH-8810 Horgen/ZH

SWITZERLAND

Horgen, 12th May 1984

Dear George:

Thank you very much for your kind letter and the magazine. It is very interesting, as always. We have a very cold and rainy weather now. I hope the summer is coming soon.

During my duty I found a soldier living at Bad Ragaz, where "Sugar Food" was shot down by Swiss Anti Aircraft Guns. He gave me two addresses of newspaper published in Ragaz. So they published a little story about this accident. The result was very successful: about thirty people wrote to me and gave me more information and pictures.

As well I was able to get in touch with Col Rüeegg, commander of Flab Det 21 that shot down "Sugar Food". He confirmed that the plane was nicknamed "Sugar Food" under the bombardier's compartment. A girl was painted on the tail.

After my duty (there are 3 weeks to the end) I will go to Bad Ragaz and will look for new information. This is about a car hour away from my home.

Further, "Sugar Food" was not an original 99th BG plane, the plane went to the 99th BG on 24th June 1943 together with the crew ferried "Sugar Food" to Africa.

You mentioned in your letter that you found Pratt and he found King. This was very, very interesting to learn. I am sure they have a lot of new information concerning "Sugar Food" and its unfortunate crew. So I would very interested in getting the addresses of Mr. Pratt and Mr. King.

The pictures I got from several people will be copied soon. This for your information.

Well, George, this is all for this time. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



October 19, 1943

Non-operational. Practice missions for new and old crews.

October 20, 1943

Our crews were alerted but the scheduled mission was cancelled. The new crews put in more practice and pilots were checked out. Movie tonight was "Meet John Doe," with Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck.

October 21, 1943

Escorted by 24 P-38's, our bombers went on mission #97 to the RR bridge at Terni, Italy. Thirty-four planes took off at 0617 led by Col. Upthegrove, and reached the target at 1012, with two returning early. They dropped their 1000-pounders about one mile ESE of the target. Moderate flak, inaccurate, was encountered and six ME 109's attacked, six of our bombers being damaged. All planes returned safely at 1303. In the evening Headquarters FM held a party with fried chicken, beer and a Red Cross girl to play bingo with.

October 22, 1943

Our crews were alerted but at 0525 the scheduled mission was cancelled. Tonight there was a two-hour, all G.I. stage show which a large crowd enjoyed.

October 23, 1943

Today was the start of a big operation. Sixteen men, including S-2, S-3, armament and engineering personnel took off at 1100 in transports for advance bases in Sicily and Italy. Beginning at 1230 our bombers roared off for the same destinations. Combat crews carried rations for two days, bedding rolls and were instructed to wear uniforms showing their rank. Obviously a big operation and those left behind begin the "sweating out" process. The movie was shown in a strong wind to a big crowd, despite the absence of combat crews. It was "Little Old New York," with Alice Faye and Fred MacMurray.

October 24, 1943

Sunday and the group continued to sweat out the combat crews. Everyone waited anxiously for noon -- target time -- because special radio signals were to be sent by the planes indicating the success or lack of success of the mission. Finally the word came -- "Washout" -- and everyone concluded that weather must have interfered. No planes returned this day, so we must wait until tomorrow for the details.

October 25, 1943

Beginning at 0800 the planes began to straggle in. It developed that Mission #98 was a washout because of complete cloud cover over the target. The target was the Messerschmitt works at Wiener Neustadter, Austria, and the attacking force included the 99th, 2nd, 301st, plus 36 B-24's and P-38 escort. Of our planes, some salvoed bombs near the target, some jettisoned nearby and others returned their bombs. Planes with Tokyo tanks were based at Comiso, Sicily, for the raid, while the others based at Grottaglie, near Taranto. Just after dawn on the 24th they took off from their respective fields, rendezvoused over Foggia and proceeded in perfect order to the target. The weather was clear until within five miles of the target, then there was complete undercast. Only one fighter, a ME 109, showed up, but he didn't attack. Flak was intense and heavy but was directed at other groups which followed us over the target area. Of 36 of our planes taking off, eight returned early because of mechanical trouble, while the remaining 28 got back from the mission safely. Col. Upthegrove, leading, finished his 50th mission. Back home the combat crews generally praised Italy as superior to Africa. They described green grass and trees, said the chow was good, and that the airports were in good shape as to runways but ruined as to buildings. In the evening the clouds opened up and poured down the heaviest torrent yet. It stormed most of the night.

October 26, 1943

Non-operational. Runways were closed after last night's rain. The ground is soggy and the mud sticks to shoes like glue. There is a great deal of pick and shovel activity as men who found their tents flooded hastily dig drainage ditches.

October 27, 1943

Non-operational. The clouds have cleared and it is sunny and cool. Movie on base was "Hunted Men," with Lloyd Nolan.

October 28, 1943

A mission was scheduled but cancelled because of weather.

October 29, 1943

Lt. Col. Thurman led mission #99 today to the Turin ball bearing factory. Thirty-five ships took off at 0820, teamed up with the 2nd Bomb Gp. and an escort of P-38's. Three of our planes returned early. In the vicinity of the target, however, there was .9 cumulus clouds so the planes turned to the alternative target of Genoa and found a hole through which to drop their bombs. Hits were scored on the tracks and marshalling yards and on buildings and an overpass. A lone ME 109 appeared but did not give battle. Flak was moderate and heavy, but none of our planes was damaged and all returned safely at 1610. Toward evening it clouded up and just before movie time it began to rain. The show was cancelled.

October 30, 1943

Today's mission was the one we have been sweating -- No. 100. With Major Burrell leading, 35 of our planes took off at 0640 in another attempt to bomb the Turin ball bearing factory. But it turned out to be a sad day. There was complete overcast and our planes couldn't find the target. They got back safely at 1620 after a heavy rain had drenched the field. No flak or fighters were encountered. But the milestone was past, and the group set Nov. 4 as the date for a big celebration here of the event.

October 31, 1943

Today our planes set out for some pinpoint bombing of the Antheor RR Viaduct in southern France. Major Aspergren led mission #101, and 20 of our planes took off at 0650. Arriving at the target at 1310, our planes found the 301st under them and had a hard time dropping. But they let go their 500-pounders, scoring a good concentration of hits on the railroad and viaduct and many near misses caused damage. Three fighters appeared but didn't attack and there was no flak. Ship #405 piloted by Lt. Donahue of the 346th lost oil out of #3 engine over the target and had to pull out of formation. With a windmilling prop Donahue made it safely to Decimomannu, Sardinia, where he landed with the engine afire. Major Aspergren accompanied him and brought the crew back. All other planes got back safely to land on a muddy field after another heavy rain.

November 1, 1943

Non-operational. Ten new combat crews arrived after a rail trip from Casablanca and were assigned to squadrons. Combat personnel has increased to such an extent that pyramidal tents are lacking, and many of the new men are sleeping on the ground or in office tents. Movie on the base tonight was "Fleet's In," with Dorothy Lamour, William Holden and Jimmy Dorsey's ork.

November 2, 1943

Our bombers equipped with Tokyo tanks took off early today for a long mission. Those without Tokyo tanks stayed behind. Meanwhile, transports took S-2, engineering and maintenance personnel to Ponte Olivo in Sicily where the planes will land after the mission, before proceeding home tomorrow. Those on the ground begin the sweating out process, and shortly after noon a radio message says the mission was successful. We must wait until tomorrow for the details. It was sunny and much warmer today.

November 3, 1943

At about 1030 our ships began to come in and we learned all about yesterday's mission -- #102 -- which was to the Messerschmitt works at Wiener Neustadt in Austria. Of 19 of our aircraft which took off yesterday, 16 went over the target, three returning early because of mechanical trouble. Although the weather was cloudy enroute, it was CAVU over the target and there were direct hits on small buildings, installations and some hits or

damaging near misses on the tracks. The bombing was a rushed affair. Although we were supposed to be the third group over the target, we got there first, and Lt. Col. Thurman, our leader, circled to wait. When the other groups showed up they fell in behind us and in Col. Thurman's words we "were pushed across the target." Flak was intense, accurate and heavy, although mostly directed at groups behind us. Forty to 45 German fighters showed and attacked. two Forts of the 2nd Bomb Gp. and four Liberators were seen to go down. All ships returned safely to their Sicilian base, remained overnight and proceeded here today. Movie on the base tonight was "Flight for Freedom," with Rosalind Russell and Fred MacMurray.

November 4, 1943

Non-operational and today was the day for our big celebration -- of the 100th group mission. Festivities were scheduled to begin at 1530, and shortly before that time it began to rain. But luckily the rain quit and stayed away while all personnel gathered around the huge barbecue pit to eat steaks and drink beer. There was music by the 301st Bomb Gp. orchestra. Then at 1730 Col. Uptegrove went to the microphone and reviewed our first 100 missions, paying tribute to flying and ground personnel alike. He then introduced distinguished guests for the occasion, including Lt. Gen. Spaatz, chief of the new 15th Air Force, and Maj. Gen. Doolittle, chief of strategic operations. Gen. Spaatz said our group was destined to play a leading role in the forthcoming operations of the 15th, which he said would be devoted largely to targets in Germany. Following these ceremonies there was a movie, "In This Our Life," with Bette Davis, followed by open house and free drinks at the enlisted men's club, and a dance at the officer's club.

November 5, 1943

Our crews were alerted and briefed at 0710 but the scheduled mission was cancelled because of weather. There was a complete overcast here and later in the morning a steady drizzle began.

November 6, 1943

Only one squadron, the 346th, participated in today's mission, which was #103 for the group. Seven planes led by Maj. Evans took off at 0853 for some pinpoint bombing of RR bridges near Orbetallo, Italy. They dropped their 1,000-pounders from an altitude of 2,500 feet, which was an unprecedented low for us. Boys on the raid said they could feel and hear each explosion. On the Fiora bridge there was possible damage to tracks south of the bridge; on the Orbetello bridge there were damaging near misses at the center. This was an easy one for us as far as opposition was concerned, for there were no fighters and no flak.

November 7, 1943

Our crews were alerted and briefed at 0710, but the scheduled mission was cancelled because of weather.

November 8, 1943

Thirty-seven of our bombers took off for mission #104 -- target the ball bearing plant at Turin, Italy. They were off the ground at 0911 with Major Burrell leading, and 11 returned early because of mechanical trouble. The ships were over the target at 1420 and dropped 312 500-pounders, covering the target area completely. There was probable extensive damage from hits on plant and industrial buildings. Seven ME 109's appeared but did not attack (we had P-38 escort) and there was no flak. At 1720 the planes began to drift home. Later at night it was learned that ship #490 of the 347th squadron, piloted by 2nd Lt. O. W. Carson, had crashed in Sardinia after running out of gas and its crew was to be returned by transport plane. Ship #769, also of the 347th and piloted by 2nd Lt. M. E. McDonnell, was coming for a landing at Adjaccio, Corsica, with three engines feathered when it got mixed up in traffic with two Spitfires taking off. The pilot pulled up and out over the bay where he made a water landing. The life rafts failed to spring but all except two men were picked up by boats. Sgt. W. D. Burke and S/Sgt. O. E. Wright were missing. Neither could swim, but according to the pilot their life vests appeared to be inflated.

November 9, 1943

Non-operational.

November 10, 1943

All four groups of the wing set out with P-38 escort today to bomb the M/Y and RR bridges at Balzano. Thirty-two of our planes took off at 0711 for mission # 106, with Major MacDonald leading. Eleven ships returned early, but the rest went over the target at 1212, scoring direct hits on the railroad bottleneck and hits in a portion of the M/Y. Fifteen ME 109's were seen with 12 engaging, and the flak was heavy, accurate and intense. At 1600 only 11 planes returned with others stopping enroute home for gas. But later it was found that ship #061 piloted by 2nd Lt. Jerry Wickliffe of the 346th was missing and no clue to its whereabouts. Ship #179 piloted by 1st Lt. Robert W. Hain of the 347th also was missing. The double feature movie for tonight was washed out when the projector broke down early in the program.

November 11, 1943

Non-operational.

November 12, 1943

non-operational. In the officer's club today Col. Upthegrove gave an address before the officers of the group. Surprisingly his talk touched more upon political and economic questions at home rather than the war over here. The Colonel revealed himself as a close student of world affairs. The import of his address was that the soldier must understand the issues of war if he is to be a successful citizen after it is over. Movie on the base tonight was "The Son of Monte Christo," with Louis Hayward and Joan Bennett.

November 13, 1943

Non-operational. This day T/Sgt. Kenneth Titus of the 346th returned from Italy after being missing since July 22, and he brought with him a tale of adventure rivaling a movie scenario. A member of Lt. Hunter's crew when it met disaster over Foggia, he was literally blown out of the airplane and descended safely by parachute. He was unable to account for other members of the crew, but related that later on in his adventures an Italian officer showed him Lt. Hunter's flight log and claimed nine bodies had been found. His adventures included capture by the Italians and then by the Germans, escape and a long journey down the Adriatic coast on a bicycle, a swing around the battle line on a raft made of reeds which sank five miles offshore, and freedom.

November 14, 1943

It was non-operational but there was plenty of air activity as we flew all our planes equipped with Tokyo tanks to the 97th Bomb Gp. field and received non-Tokyos in exchange. This swap set everyone to speculating on its meaning, and caused ground and air crewmen alike to grumble over the battered condition of the planes we got in trade. Ship #179 of the 347th (see Nov. 10) flew in from Adjaccio where it landed after the Balzano mission. Lt. Hain, pilot, related that he had to feather an engine just short of the target and fall out of formation. Four ME 109's immediately attacked and sent a 20 mm into the #5 gas tank. The shell failed to explode. The top turret gunner, Sgt. F. G. Terhune, drove off the fighters, destroying one and probably destroying a second. The ship was almost out of gas when it pulled into Adjaccio. Lt. Hain had to wait for repairs before he could return. Still no word on #061 missing from the same mission.

November 15, 1943

Non-operational. The B-25's of the 310th Bomb Gp., who had not been operating for many weeks, were scheduled to leave our field today, reportedly to take up coastal patrol duties. But we are not through playing host yet. Now we will have a Wellington outfit stationed here. British officers have been in evidence for a week completing the arrangements. Movie on the base was "When the Daltons Rode," with Randolph Scott.

November 16, 1943

For mission #106 today 22 of our planes led by Lt. Col. Thurman took off at 0850 to bomb Istres Le Tube Airdrome in Southern France. Two planes returned early because of mechanical trouble. At 1247 the planes dropped 240 500-pounders, scoring hits on the south hangers and covering the barracks area thoroughly. Flak was heavy, accurate and intense, and 12 to 15 ME 109's and FW 190's attacked. Five of our bombers were damaged. S/Sgt. T.

C. Titus, waist gunner of the 346th squadron, was killed by a 30 caliber slug that pierced his heart. S/Sgt. J. R. Brennan, another waist gunner on the same ship with Titus, was wounded in the leg by another slug. Among three claims for enemy aircraft destroyed was one by S/Sgt. Frank Carr of the 346th, who shot down a ME 109 despite the fact that 40 below zero temperatures had frozen him almost rigid at his guns, swelled his hands and neck with frostbite and three times clogged his oxygen mask. Fellow gunners who were idle because of frozen guns fed him ammunition and changed his oxygen mask. All planes returned safely at 1700.

November 17, 1943

Our crews were alerted and briefed but the scheduled mission was called off because of weather. In the afternoon a USO stage show was presented, and in the evening a large crowd saw a Technicolor movie, "This is the Army."

November 18, 1943

My 1st Mission (BELIEVE)

Twenty-eight of our planes took off at 0654 for mission #107 to the Eleusis Airdrome at Athens. Major Burrell was leading and flying his 50th and final mission. Three planes returned early because of mechanical trouble. At 1042 the planes dropped 550 frag clusters on the target, scoring hits across the full length of the target area and probably destroying or damaging 17 enemy aircraft. Flak was moderate and fairly accurate and three to five fighters showed but did not attack. After stopping for gas in Italy, the planes returned at 1705. Pilots reported the Italian field was muddy. A 347th ship got stuck in the mud and by night had not showed up yet. Another 347th ship also was missing. A sidelight of the raid turned up when it was found that S/Sgt. George A. Streetman, one of our flying photographers, had saved his ship and crew from almost certain destruction when he freed a single frag bomb which became lodged in the framework of the bomb bay. Streetman without hesitation went into the bomb bay to try to pull the bomb loose by hand. It was stuck tight. The arming propeller was turning all the time, and the photographer had approximately 47 seconds to get it loose before it became subject to detonation at the slightest touch. He returned to the radio compartment, picked up a spare machine gun barrel and jabbed the bomb loose in time.

November 19, 1943

The 347th ship which got stuck in the mud returned safely today, but we received word that the other 347th plane, #179, crashed into a mountain. Full details were lacking, but it was known that all aboard were killed. The dead, 2nd Lt. D. W. Carson, pilot; 2nd Lt. J. R. Jamison, co-pilot; 2nd Lt. J. F. O'Connell, navigator; 2nd Lt. R. K. Stuhlman, bombardier; gunners T/Sgt. B. Vance, S/Sgt. W. H. Dobbs, T/Sgt. G. T. Riley, Pvt. W. R. Emond, S/Sgt. C. F. Mohney, and S/Sgt. E. G. Weide. Around noon today more than 40 British Wellingtons flew in to be attached to our base. The last of the B-25's of the 310th Bomb Gp. scooted out before them. The Wellingtons flew in from all directions with no apparent heed to traffic pattern. One overshot the runway by half its length and had to ground loop at the end. It broke in half. Movie on the base tonight was the "Ox-Bow Incident," with Henry Fonda.

November 20, 1943

Non-operational.

November 21, 1943

Non-operational.

November 22, 1943

2nd ✓

Forty of our planes took off at 1007 today to bomb the submarine base at Toulon, France. It was to have been an all-out effort with four groups taking part, but all ships turned back short of the sortie line because of cloud coverage. Not counted as a mission. No flak or fighters, and all our planes returned with their bombs at 1515. Movie on the base tonight was "Lucky Jordan," with Alan Ladd -- all about a gangster who gets into the army and tries to use mob tactics on it.

November 23, 1943

Non-operational. A terrific wind today kicked up dust reminiscent of old sirocco days at Navarin.

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November 24, 1943

Led by Major MacDonald, 35 of our planes took off at 0900 today for mission #108 to the submarine base at Toulon, France. There were two early returns, but the rest of the planes went over the target at 1312 to drop 396 500-pounders. The whole target area was covered and there was a great amount of damage. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. Five ME 109's appeared but did not give battle. Ship #502, piloted by 2nd Lt. S. E. Adams of the 416th squadron, went down into the sea coming off the target. Six 'chutes were observed. 346th squadron planes covered and dropped life rafts, food, water and other emergency equipment. The remainder of the bombers came back safely at 1615. Before the planes took off, Col. Upthegrove, commanding officer of the group since its inception, left on D.S. for a trip by air back to the States and a vacation. Lt. Col. Thurman, deputy commander, assumed command in his absence. Everyone felt a sense of loss at the Colonel's going. Whatever the group had accomplished had in large measure been due to his leadership. In a warm personal message to the group, the Colonel said there was little prospect of his returning to the 99th, although he will come back to foreign duty in January. But, he said, no matter what job he is given to do he will always have his eyes on the 99th and wish it well. Movie tonight was "Henry Aldrich Swings It."

November 25, 1943

A mission was scheduled for today -- Thanksgiving Day -- but it was cancelled because of weather. So everyone relaxed into sweating out the big Thanksgiving dinner. And it was worth waiting for. A sample menu from Headquarters included turkey with dressing, candied yams, cole slaw, giblet gravy, fresh onions and radishes, pickles, apple pie and pineapple ice cream, bread and fresh butter, oranges, hard candy and coffee. Most men agreed it was the best meal they'd had since coming overseas, and somehow tasted better than last Thanksgiving dinner in the States.

November 26, 1943

Thirty-nine of our planes led by Maj. Evans took off to bomb the Recco Viaduct in Italy. It turned out to be a mission for the books, or Ripley. The weather looked extremely bad here, with a low ceiling. Our planes found it difficult to assemble at the rendezvous point and finally returned to the base. However, a 347th squadron ship piloted by 2nd Lt. T. G. Judge was lost altogether and finally hooked on to a group going target-ward. It was the 2nd Bomb Gp., our competition for the day. Lt. Judge flew right on and dropped his bombs near the east end of the viaduct, returning safely at 1545. It went down in the books as mission #108A, with 38 early returns and one plane over the target, and Lt. Judge as group leader! Movie on the base was the old favorite "Intermezzo," with the late Leslie Howard and Ingrid Bergman.

November 27, 1943

Led by Lt. Col. Thurman, 41 of our planes took off at 0905 today for mission #109 to the M/Y and bridges at Grizzano, Italy. There were two early returns, and 39 ships went over the target at 1236, dropping 456 500-pounders to score eight probable hits on the RR viaduct and near hits on the highway bridge. No flak or fighters, and all planes returned safely at 1610.

November 28, 1943

Non-operational. Moving day is near, with a lot of speculation on where we are going in Italy. Today we begin packing up and some squadrons clamp down restrictions on passes. According to plans, most of the heavy non-essential equipment will go in an advance echelon by boat. The planes and operating personnel will go later, followed by a third echelon which will clean up what's left of this place. Our days in North Africa are numbered.

November 29, 1943

Thirty-eight of our planes led by Major MacDonald took off at 0810 today for mission #110 to the Fiano Romano L/G, Italy. There was one early return, and when the planes got to the target they found a 10/10 overcast. There was nothing to do but bring the bombs back and all planes returned safely at 1450. No flak and no fighters. Personnel turned out in force tonight to see "Air Force," the Warner Bros. saga of the B-17, and fairly authentic at that.

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November 30, 1943

Our planes took off today for what would have been mission #111 to the sub pens at Marseilles, France. But they were recalled by radio and returned at 1120. Reason unknown. Packing continues in earnest. Enlisted men get rifles and ammunition. Stoves prove the hardest thing to give up. But for payday we get good old American greenbacks (gold seal) and convert our francs to the new money.

December 1, 1943

Thirty-eight of our planes took off at 0915 today for mission #111 to the Fiat ball bearing factory at Turin, Italy. There were six early returns, and 32 bombers led by Major Evans of the 346th went over the target at 1315, dropping 384 500-pounders which caused severe damage to the target by direct hits. Flak was heavy, accurate and intense and 11 fighters engaged. Eleven bombers were damaged but none were lost, and our gunners received credit for six enemy aircraft destroyed. The planes began to trickle back at 1720 but many of them were out at advanced airdromes where they had to stop for gas. It developed that 2nd Lt. Donald Frye of the 348th, in turning back short of the target because of engine trouble, made a bombing run on Villanova airdrome on the way back and wiped out a hanger, two pursuit planes and a large four-engined transport. In another bit of individual bombing, Lt. Wardwell of the 347th, who turned back because of frozen oxygen lines, salvaged his bombs on the rail station at Diano Marina and claimed to have wiped it off the map. Unfortunately, neither plane had a camera along to prove it. Movie tonight was "Background for Danger," with George Raft.

December 2, 1943

Non-operational. Packing continues in earnest as the first contingent of men prepares to shove off tomorrow.

December 3, 1943

A mission was scheduled but cancelled because of the weather. *ME, TOO. UNFORTUNATELY* The first traveling party, consisting of almost all of the 347th and 416th squadrons, plus some headquarters and other squadron men, under command of Capt. John Hough of Group S-2, shoved off by truck for Bizerte at 1100. They drew C rations for one day and expected to be loaded on landing barges by tonight or tomorrow. A small crowd saw the final movie here, Abbott and Costello in "Hit the Ice."

December 4, 1943

A mission was scheduled but cancelled because of weather at the target. It was a beautiful day here, sunny and warm.

December 5, 1943

Non-operational. Still sunny and very warm.

December 6, 1943

Thirty-six of our planes took off at 0940 today for mission #112 to the Grizzano M/Y and Bridges, Italy. Three planes were early returns. Led by Lt. Col. Thurman, the remainder tried to find the target through cloud coverage and failed. They proceeded to alternate targets which were also closed in. Finally at 1815 the group set down at Foggia #2 in Italy for the night.

December 7, 1943

A quiet anniversary of Pearl Harbor day. It was scheduled operational for a while, but our planes were still at Foggia and began to straggle in today. Two had to stay in Italy because of engine trouble, but all others were reported safe from yesterday's mission.

December 8, 1943

Twenty-one of our planes led by Capt. Bankhead of the 347th took off at 0950 today for mission #113 to bomb shipping at Porto San Stefano, Italy. There were no early returns, and our planes went over the target at 3,500 feet to drop 252 500-pounders. Thirty-two vessels were hit directly or damaged, while seven small vessels were probably damaged. In addition, there were hits on warehouses, docks, railway tracks and highways. There was no flak, and no fighters appeared. All our planes returned safely at 1530.

December 9, 1943

A mission was scheduled for today but cancelled because of weather. In Italy, meanwhile, the first contingent of the water convoy arrived at Foggia #2 after an overland trip from Naples. This then is the new base -- a place we once bombed and where our planes have found haven just the other day (Dec. 6). It has one steel-matted runway and beaucoup wrecks of German planes lying around. Currently Bostons, Beaufighters and Baltimores of the South African Air Force are stationed here. The South Africans are moving to one side of the field to make room for us on the other side. The water convoy consisted of all vehicles and drivers. These men reported that 500 personnel had been left behind in Bizerte because of some mixup in assignment to boats, and it appeared likely that they would be straggling in for weeks. The trip was made by LST's, which the men said were roomy and comfortable. They landed at Naples after two days and two nights on the water, and then proceeded to Foggia over a scenic mountain highway. The men set about setting up their new squadron areas. The 347th squadron hastily threw up a mess hall so there would be food for all hands. So far only the 347th and 416th are in evidence, since the men of the other two squadrons either were left at Biserte or are in the rear echelon. At Foggia the men experience bitter cold nights and extremely damp climate. The morning dew turns the base into a sea of black, gooey mud which the sparse sunshine of the day fails to dry out. Tonight it rained hard and the men living in tents spent a miserable, wet night.

December 10, 1943

Non-operational in Africa. In Italy the men continue with the work of laying out squadron areas and setting up group headquarters. Group is several miles from the air-field, located in one of Mussolini's rural developments consisting of schools, first aid station, barn and picturesque Catholic church. The group is also evicting families from several houses close by to be used for living quarters. Group headquarters was occupied by 3 Wing of the SAAF, whose men are still moving out. Squadron areas are anywhere from two to three miles away from group, which will tax the transportation problem.

December 11, 1943

Today the flight echelon consisting of all planes, combat personnel and some ground personnel, left Oudna at 1100 for Foggia. Transport planes also were pressed into service to carry essential equipment. In Italy the planes began to roll in around 1400, while the combat crews hastened to throw up tents. The squadron areas are beginning to take shape now, although for a while the whereabouts of the 346th was a mystery, and CO Major Evans was said to be keeping it a secret. The hardworking 347th mess, still the only one on the field, was over-taxed and the men had to sweat long chow lines to get something to eat. we felt at home now that our Forts were huddled on the field, although most of us wonder when the first air raid will come. The South Africans shook their heads gloomily at the sight of the Forts, and said "that'll bring Jerry." Also our men got the new experience of hearing heavy guns grumbling at the front -- only 70 miles away -- during night barrages. Many men hastened into town to see the damage wrought by our own bombers on Foggia. It is tremendous, and somewhat awesome to see the evidence of our destructive power. The marshalling yard is in shambles and few buildings in the town are untouched. Best estimates say 10,000 people were killed in our raid on the town itself. The Italian populace seems to be in deadly fear of the Fortress, but they brighten up when told that we are no longer hostile. There is abundant evidence that these people went through hell.

December 12, 1943

The work of setting up speeds today as we learn it will be operational tomorrow. Group S-2 and S-3 are virtually intact, but lights and telephones are lacking. We are in good shape, especially since the 416th got a mess hall going, thus relieving the strain on the 347th. Tonight British Intelligence reported that the Germans would be coming our way. And at 0130 in the morning the red alert was given. Most of us thought the real thing was here at last, but nothing happened. The all clear came and sent everyone back to bed. Meanwhile, the scheduled mission was cancelled. Additional personnel and equipment arrived today by transport plane. they were to have come yesterday, but the transports were unable to make two trips in one day as planned. Weather was responsible.

December 13, 1943

Our new base really began to take shape. Squadron areas are now well defined. Group is virtually intact except for a mess, necessitating a long trip of several miles to one of the squadrons for chow. Some 346th and 348th men pulled in from Taranto after a trip by LST. They were part of the group stranded at Bizerte. We got some lights and telephones. We now have a direct line to Wing and to the field tower, as well as communication with the three squadrons. It is operational for tomorrow, the ships are loaded with gas and bombs, and it seems likely we will get underway from our new base. This evening there was a yellow alert, but the all clear came after a few minutes. Much rumbling of guns at the front during the night.

December 14, 1943

In our first operation from Foggia #2, 34 of our planes took off at 0735 for mission #114 to the Athens-Eleusis airdrome in Greece. Three planes were early returns. The remainder, led by Major MacDonald of the 416th, went over the target at 1045 but there was a .5 cloud coverage. Some planes dropped on the original target, while others dumped on Hassini Airdrome, and on shipping in Piraeus harbor. Net result was one E/A probably damaged and hits on the runway, revetments and dispersal areas of the airdromes, and possibly one vessel damaged in the harbor. Flak was moderate, accurate and heavy, and 15 ME 109's and FW 190's engaged. None of our bombers was damaged, while our gunners entered claims for three enemy aircraft destroyed. At 1401 our planes were down, with three stopping at Bari for the night to refuel.

December 15, 1943

ARRIVED AT FOGGIA, ITALY

thirty-three of our planes took off at 0957 today for mission #115 to the M/Y at Balzano, Italy. Three were early returns. With Lt. Col. Thurman leading, 30 went over the target at 1245 to drop 360 500-pounders. Hits were scored in the M/Y and on the tracks and rolling stock. Sheds and a bridge were hit. A large explosion was seen in a goods siding. There were no fighters but flak was intense, accurate and heavy, and 17 of our ships were holed. None lost, however, and all returned safely at 1510.

December 16, 1943

4 FEW NEXT DAY → 3rd

Thirty-two of our planes took off at 1037 today for mission #116 to the RR yards and bridges at Padua, Italy. With Major Evans of the 346th leading, all 32 planes went over the target at 1300, dropping 384 500-pounders. The marshalling yard was well covered with hits, and in addition repair shops, storage depots and an industrial plant were hit, while a gas works was possibly hit. Flak was slight, inaccurate and heavy, while three fighters appeared but did not engage. All planes returned safely at 1500. On a raid that would have consumed seven or eight hours if sprung from North Africa, our bombers made it from here in four hours and 23 minutes, thus proving the utility of our new base.

December 17, 1943

It was scheduled operational, but the mission was cancelled because of weather.

December 18, 1943

Non-operational.

December 19, 1943

Thirty-two of our planes led by Major MacDonald of the 416th took off at 0852 for mission #117 to the Messerschmitt factory at Augsburg, Germany. Two were early returns. Because of weather over Augsburg, the planes dropped on the alternate target, the M/Y at Innsbruck, Austria. At 1210 they loosed 334 500-pounders, scoring hits in the area east of the yards and hits at the mouth of a railroad tunnel. Flak was moderate, accurate and heavy, while from 30 to 40 ME 109's and FW 190's engaged. Two of our planes were lost -- #832 piloted by 1st Lt. C. C. Stidd of the 348th, and #223 piloted by 2nd Lt. A. J. Simpson of the 346th. Of the first plane it was known that it went down afire over the target, with eight 'chutes observed. Nothing was known of the second. in addition, eight

planes were damaged and some returned with dead and wounded. Our score: two dead, four wounded and 20 missing. But our gunners received credit for eight Jerries destroyed, 1st Lt. T. J. Davis of the 348th had a rough time piloting on his 50th mission. One engine was knocked out by fighters and a second damaged, but he came home to count 60 holes and none wounded. As he landed the prop of the useless engine flew off, but plowed harmlessly into the ground. Today Col. Charles W. Lawrence became our new commanding officer. He is fresh from the States, having left Orlando, Fla., where he was director of the AAF School of Applied Tactics, December 7th. He is 42, and a veteran of 6,000 hours on every type of plane. He was graduated from West Point in 1923 and is a long-time friend of Col. Upthegrove, whom he succeeded.

December 20, 1943

4th

Twenty-seven of our planes took off at 0935 today for mission #115 to Athens-Eleusis airdrome in Greece. Five were early returns. Led by Lt. Col. Thurman, 22 went over the target at 1305, dropping 264 500-pounders which destroyed one enemy aircraft on the ground, and blanketed the target area. Flak was moderate, fairly accurate and heavy and gave some of our planes trouble. It hit the plane of Capt. R. R. Schaefer of the 347th and forced him to limp home on two engines. Eight to 10 ME 109's and FW 190's appeared and our gunners got credit for three. All planes returned safely at 1500.

December 21, 1943

A mission was scheduled but cancelled because of weather. Col. Lawrence, the new CO, went up with Maj. Burrell of the 347th for a little familiarization work with the Fortress.

December 22, 1943

Our crews were alerted and briefed at 0730, but the mission was cancelled because of weather. Col. Lawrence had been scheduled to go on his first mission. Group S-2 held aircraft identification classes for combat men to fill the time. By order of higher headquarters, these will be a regular feature of non-op days.

December 23, 1943

Non-operational.

December 24, 1943

Non-operational. Instead the group conducted a practice mission realistic in all respects except for a bomb load and target. On this Christmas eve few men could help thinking of home and the Christmases of other years. A truckload of mail showed up, helping the situation.

December 25, 1943

5th

Christmas, 1943, and we attempted to send our respects to the axis with mission #119 to the M/Y at Udine, Italy. With Major Evans of the 346th leading, 37 of our planes took off at 0925. Five were early returns. But the target was closed in, and so were all the alternates. Frustrated, our ships brought their bombs back at 1420. Meanwhile, a cold snap set in as the group celebrated Christmas as best it could. Church services were crowded. The Quartermaster came through with another big turkey dinner with most of the trimmings. The traditional carols and songs of the season flourished on the radio. Late in the day mail began to roll in by the truckload and few men failed to get at least one package from home. Gay Christmas wrappings looked out of place in the otherwise drab surroundings. The movie, "Juke Girl," drew only a handful, since it played here last week. Transportation was provided for some men to see the Ella Logan show in town. Most heartening event of the day was President Roosevelt's disclosure that General Eisenhower would lead the European invasion forces. In a world of uncertainty this concrete fact somehow gave men hope that the war is progressing, that the end is not too far off. And to cap the day the group got a surprise present when word was received that seven men of ship #223, which was lost on the December 19th raid, had been picked up alive in the Adriatic. They had been adrift for seven days without food or water and were brought to a hospital in Foggia suffering from shock, fatigue and exposure. Those saved were Lt. W. G. Rayson, Lt.

H. H. Jacks, Lt. T. J. Edger, T/Sgt. P. M. Tramble, S/Sgt. L. W. Lawson, Sgt. J. W. Scott and S/ Sgt. F. C. Bradbury. The only one able to talk coherently was Lt. Rayson, the bombardier, who said that the pilot, Lt. A. J. Simpson, and gunners S/Sgt. R. A. Thorne and PFC W. N. Smith were presumably still adrift on another raft or lost. He related that their ship had been crippled by enemy fighters and had made a water landing 60 miles south of Venice. The seven rescued were in the 10-man raft and the other three in the five man raft. The men had lashed the two rafts together, but a storm on the fourth day separated them and the men in the smaller raft disappeared. Sgts. Tremble and Lawson became delirious. Two Spitfires flew over on December 24 and returned to shore. Later a British Walrus tried to land but the seas were too heavy. It dropped food which sank 20 feet away from the starving men. On Christmas afternoon an LCI hove to and picked them up. They were taken to Termoli and thence to Foggia. Certainly no better Christmas could be imagined for them.

December 26, 1943

A mission was scheduled but cancelled because of weather.

December 27, 1943

Non-operational.

December 28, 1943

Twenty-nine of our planes took off at 0945 for mission #120 to the M/Y at Rimini, Italy. Two were early returns. Led by Capt. Bransom of the 348th, 27 planes went over the target at 1230, dropping 311 500-pounders. Undercast spoiled the aim and most bombs landed in the southwest part of the city. No flak or fighters and all planes returned safely at 1415.

December 29, 1943

6th

Twenty-seven of our planes took off at 1005 for mission #121 to the M/Y at Ferrara, Italy. There were no early returns, and led by Lt. Col. Thurman, the planes went over the target at 1230 to drop 300 500-pounders. The southern portion of the yards was hit. There was damage to rolling stock and tracks, car shops, a RR bridge and a sugar factory. No flak or fighters and all planes returned safely at 1525. During the afternoon formations of Wellingtons came in, presumably to be based here. Tonight there were terrific explosions and a huge fire on the line. The concussion shook buildings and tents and many men dived for foxholes, believing an air raid was at hand. At the movie in the briefing barn, a full house was watching Errol Flynn in "The Sea Hawk" when the explosions came. There was a wild stampede as the building shook, but once outside the men regained their heads, kept lights out and headed for foxholes. In a few minutes it was apparent that it was no raid, and the show was resumed. Later it was found that a landing Wellington had collided with another parked on the field. The ships burned for a while, giving British personnel time to get away. Fuel tanks and bombs laying by the parked plane then exploded. Our ships, parked across the runway, felt this blast, eight of them being damaged. One broke in half and had to be put on the salvage list.

December 30, 1943

Twenty-six of our planes took off at 1022 for mission #122 to the M/Y at Rimini, Italy. There was one early return. Led by Major Evans of the 346th, 25 ships went over the target at 1317, dropping 300 500-pounders which really plastered the target. The entire M/Y was covered with hits causing heavy damage. There was one large explosion, believed by crewmen to have been an ammunition train. RR bridges and many shops and warehouses were hit. There was slight flak and five fighters engaged, but all our planes returned safely at 1455.

December 31, 1943

Non-operational. On this New Year's eve there was much lamenting on the eves of yore. But native wine and whisky flowed freely and by midnight there were a hell of a lot of drunks.

UNIT HISTORY OF THE 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) HEADQUARTERS
MONTH OF JANUARY, 1944

A. ADMINISTRATION

There was no change in organization or station during the month, the 99th being still a part of the 15th Air Force stationed at Tortorella, Italy.

Strength on January 1 was 25 officers and 48 enlisted men, and on January 31, 26 officers and 48 enlisted men. The officer gained was Capt. John J. Morris, transferred from 5th Wing January 9 to our group S-3.

There was a good deal of shakeup in headquarters offices during the month. On January 2, Capt. Dent C. Davis, Jr., engineering officer of the 347th Squadron, became Group engineering officer, succeeding Major Martin Sorte, who was transferred to 15th Air Force the same day.

On January 3, Lt.-Col. Wayne E. Thurman, deputy group commander, went to 5th wing on detached service with A-3.

January 17, Capt. Philip J. Barnes, S-2 of the 347th squadron, was transferred to Group S-2, replacing Capt. John Hough, who assumed Capt. Barnes' position in the squadron.

On January 21, Col. Thurman was officially transferred to 5th Wing.

January 25, Col. Fay R. Upthegrove, our commanding officer since the inception of the group, arrived from the States after a rest period of several months. The same day, Col. Charles W. Lawrence, CO in his absence, went to 5th Wing as commander of the Wing.

On January 26, Col. Upthegrove left on detached service to the 304th Wing at Carignola. The same day, Col. Thurman came back to the group as acting CO.

Completing the juggle, Col. Upthegrove, on January 30, was officially assigned to the 304th as commander of the new B-24 Wing.

B. BATTLES

January was a month of record operation for the group. We flew 24 missions -- Nos. 122 to 146 -- to set a new record for any month since being in operation. Twelve of these 24 were flown consecutively, but this failed to top the record 13 -- in a row -- set last July.

In general, our activity was part of a vast air strategy to support the new allied landings south of Rome, which took place January 22. To do this, we smashed at railway communications feeding axis troops in the south, including Rimini, Arezzo, Prato, Poggibonsi and Fabriano. In addition, we pounded at airfields in the Rome area -- Quidonia, Ciampino and Cantocelle -- as well as in northern Italy and southern France. Sandwiched in these operations were three attacks on Sofia, Bulgaria, one of which was successful.

C. CASUALTIES

None for January.

D. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

In ceremonies at Group headquarters on January 8, Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining, new chief of the 15th Air Force, pinned a Distinguished Flying Cross on Col. Thurman for participation in a secret mission July 9-10, 1943. 1st Lt. Samuel B. Hess, Group communications officer, received a Legion of Merit for outstanding services last spring when the air echelon was separated from the ground echelon, but was not present to receive the decoration.

WAR DIARY OF THE 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) HEADQUARTERS
MONTH OF JANUARY, 1944

January 1

The men who celebrated New Year's Eve with local liquor suffer hangover pains today. Fortunately it was non-operational. Bright spot of the day was the beaucoup turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Unbright spot--rains and wild wind which hit a new low for Italian weather. In the evening good crowds showed for the movie, William Powell and Myrna Loy in "Love Crazy."

79 Boght Road
Watervliet, NY 12189
Jan. 4, 1984

Dear George:

Thank you for the array of pix you sent me, more than I can ever use. I will be making copies of many of them for use in two upcoming future books, the battle for Rome, and the Udine raid. I hope you do not mind if I keep them for a few weeks because I am awaiting some pictures from the Archive center in Washington and I want to do my copying all at once. I assure you, you will get the pictures back, plus the negatives of any pictures of which I make copies.

Meanwhile, I hope you have a pleasant holiday. My book on Operation Flax, which heavily featured the 99th Bomb Group, is now complete, but at this time I have no idea when the book will be out. I'll let you know when it's out (probably mid-summer) and I'll surely send you a copy and perhaps two.

Meanwhile, again, if you would be so kind as to put my request on your next news letter (anyone who participated in the Udine-Villaorba raid on German airfields in northern Italy on 31 Jan 1944) it would be appreciated.
yours cordially,
Larry Cortesi

31 October 1983

Mr. Lawrence J. Cortesi
79 Boght Road
Watervliet, NY 12189

Dear Sir,

George Coen asked me to answer one of your questions regarding my photos. You had asked about the Kowtowski-Lutkus group. These fellows were original members of the 416th Sq, 99th BG.

Kowtowksi, John P.	Sq Nav	Bad Penny crew	Acft 42-29509
Buck, Sidney E.	Pilot	Lady Luck crew	Acft 42-29488
Barker, Caleb N.	CP	Lady Luck crew	Acft 42-29488
Gutz, Theodore F.	Bomb (SQ)	Bad Penny crew	Acft 42-29509
Fitzpatrick, Ray F	Nav	Lady Luck crew	Acft 42-29488
Amundson, Veryl A.	Co-pilot	Shanker Ali crew	Acft 42-5765
Lutkus, Anthony E.	Bomb	Lady Luck crew	Acft 42-29488

I notice that George also sent a photo of Hell from Heaven, Acft #091. This was not a combat aircraft but was the first aircraft assigned to the 416th Sq when the unit was organized at Walla Walla, Washington. I was its pilot, Buck the co-pilot, and Kowtowski and Gutz, the navigator and bombardier, respectively. This aircraft was named by the inmates of Walla Walla State Prison.

Another item, Acft 42-29488 was destroyed in a crash landing in the Sahara Desert after the 3rd of May raid on Biserte and Tunis. Buck made a wheels up landing with full bomb load on board. The plane caught fire and blew up, but not until all crew members had safely evacuated.

Sincerely,
Carl D. Mitchell
228 Wilder Place
Shreveport, La. 71104

May 30, 1984
Downey, Calif.

Dear George,

Three weeks ago, in Houston, I said I'd write you a letter explaining a long search I have conducted with negative results. I am enclosing a picture of a 99th BG, 347th BS aircraft which sustained bomb door damage similar to an event that took place on the aircraft in which I rode one of my last missions. I kept very "skimpy" records of my activities at the time. I've seen this picture in several publications, but have never seen any indication of the crew, target, or date. I am particularly interested in contacting the navigator of the crew with which I was involved! Here's the story.

The time and place is January-February 1945 at Tortorella Field, Foggia, Italy. I was assigned as a replacement ball turret gunner with a new combat crew. Mind you, my tally was over 45 missions at the time. Everything seemed to proceed normally until we reached oxygen altitude-10,000 feet. Comfortably situated in my turret I was aware of what seemed to me to be excessive changes in power settings for the engines. Sometime thereafter the pilot asked the bombardier to jettison one 500 lb. GP bomb. The bombardier complied. However, the both bay doors failed to open. The lower 500 pounder on the left hand bomb bay rack was released, fell on the left hand bomb bay door deforming the forward inboard corner, but not enough for the bomb to make it's way out! It had pulled the arming wire in it's descent, and the fuse propeller was spinning at top speed! I rotated the turret, stood on the seat with oxygen hose stretched to watch the bombardier and engineer try to open the door and release the bomb, which they eventually did. Whew!

I returned to my normal duties, all bombs were subsequently dropped. Then we dropped out of formation to return to base alone. Fuel consumption had been high, and the flight deck crew felt fuel management would be more efficient out of formation. The target had been Graz, Austria if I remember correctly. I think it must have taken place on 2/1/45.

This next part of the story should certainly jar the memories of anyone who was on board that particular aircraft that day!

Enroute back to base with the flat lands of northern Italy below us, the pilot asked the radio operator to contact "Sand fly" tower and get a heading for home. Shortly thereafter this information was passed to the pilot by interphone. The new info did not coincide with the heading the navigator had given to the pilot earlier. Upon hearing this, the navigator advised the pilot that the new heading would place us over the Luftwaffe fighter fields at Udine, Italy within a short time. The pilot heeded that low combat time navigator, and we returned to base safely. For my part I prayed the hinges on that door would not fail! That semi-vertical shingle looked awfully menacing in front of my turret.

The aircraft our crew (Gordon Marshall-pilot) ferried to Foggia was #44-6400. The aircraft in the picture is #44-6430; so I assume this latter plane was delivered to the 347th near the same time as ours.

If anyone out there could shed a bit of light on this subject, please, do so. Thank you and all the others for a great 99th BGHS!

I am enclosing a second 347th aircraft picture that I'm quite sure will be quite familiar to many late joiners (6/44 to ?/45). Our waist gunner told me it was still active when he left in April of 1945. Those smudges are water marks from developing-not smoke from flak bursts! Aircraft #44-6282.

Best Wishes Always,
Edgar Jenkins
12312 Marbel Ave.
Downey, Calif. 90242

Mr. George F. Coen
2908 Aliso Drive, N.E.
Albuquerque, N.M. 87110

May 22, 1984

Dear George:

Now that the dust has settled, after the reunion of the 99th, I would like to write you as you requested about the special mission to Romania by two crews of the 346th Squadron.

I was First Radio Operator of a crew headed and piloted by Capt. Bert Twamley. However, on this mission our pilot was Major Roy "Knobby" Worthington. Only skeleton crews were sent, consisting of a Pilot, a Co-pilot, a Navigator, a First Engineer and a First Radio Operator, and only two planes were sent. It occurred on October 30th and 31st of 1944.

Evidently, the Russian Army had just liberated the Ploesti Oil Fields and occupied the capital, Bucharest. This was about the time that the four power-rule had been agreed upon by Russia, the United States, England and France, with regard to occupied territory. Naturally, our government and particularly the State Dept. was anxious to get people into Romania to begin the implementation of this rule. Each of our planes carried ten people, some military and some civilians, but all connected to the State Department.

We left mid to late afternoon of the 30th, across the Adriatic and occupied Yugoslavia, in a two-plane formation. As we were armed, but without bombs, Major Worthington requested the Engineer and myself to check out and test fire the top-turret and ball-turret respectively. We arrived mid-evening, in rather inclement weather, but encountered no problems along the way. We were bussed into the center of Bucharest, where there were already a small group of Americans. The town appeared to be pretty well battered and bombed out. Yet, the largest hotel - The Athenine Palace - was pretty much intact and the upper floors had been taken over as the Russian Army headquarters. The first four floors above the lobby were used as sleeping quarters for transients and we were assigned rooms accordingly. The hotel restaurant and night club were functionary and we had an excellent dinner, hosted by a Russian Colonial with an interpreter.

The town was fully occupied by Russian G.I.'s and we were advised to not venture out into the streets at night because the troops were shooting wildly, celebrating their victory and had plenty of vodka on hand.

We were all hoping to be weathered-in for a few days, but unfortunately the weather cleared and the next morning we were bussed back to the airport and returned to Italy.

I understand that you are in close contact with Wayne Snyder, currently of the Confederate Air Force. It just so happens that Wayne was operations officer during my tour and he may be able to give you more information about this mission. As you can see from the copy of my tour enclosed, we were credited with a combat mission of 9 1/2 hours duration.

Trust you will be able to add this to the archives and history of the 99th, which you are compiling.

Very Truly Yours,
Fred C. Hueglin, Jr.

3445 Clearpool
Memphis, Tenn 38118

Hi Erv.

On the morning of Feb. 8, 1945 I was in the 48th Sq. 99th Bomb Group. I was flying Ball Turret with a crew that I don't recall the names of anyone. We were flying about mile behind the 416th Sq. as we were banking to go over the target. I was looking at the 416th Sq. banking to right, I saw two planes collide, one plane broke in half, the other went into a flat spin. One chute opened in the plane that broke in half.

We flew within 3 or 4 hundred yards of him. The tail section went below us. I reported to the crew that the two planes collided. We kept calling for them to bail out. But only one chute open that I could see. I have told this old war story quite a few times in the past 39 years.

I read the Kosharek story in the Nov 1983 99th B.G. Historical Society. Then is when I found out that he rode the Tail Section down I could not believe it. I was really surprised and happy that five men got out.

T/Sgt Dillard Limbaugh U.S.A.F. Ret.

Dear Mr. Butler -
DELIGHTED to get Vol. 4 # 1 & 2 of the 99th Bomb Gp. Historical Society.

I was with the 347th Squadron, 99th Bomb Group from May to late November or early Dec. 1944 and flew 39 actual missions - credit for 51 counting the double credit ones, and about the last half of the missions flew Squadron lead position (pilot).

Visited our old field in Italy in 1976 - now a vineyard although our squadron Operations Office is still there and has been there since about 1700. No more remains of wrecked German Ju88s though.

Our crew has kept pretty good contact. My wife and I live on our own small island off the coast of SE Alaska.

Warm regards
Warren C. Christianson
P.O.Box 798
Sitka AK 99835

Dear Warren;

We had been actively searching for you for more than two years and are delighted to have finally located you. Welcome back to the Group.
sincerely

George

* * * * *
Gino Künzle
c/o Sarfati
Via Zezio 33
22100 COMO - Italy

July 4, 1984

Dear George,

It seems impossible to me and yet over two months have elapsed since you sent me your letter April 24 and a sense of guilt was slowly snaking its way in my mind, so I thought I should at last decide myself to write back, a belated reply being always preferable to no reply at all!

Let me begin by thanking you for your thoughtfulness in sending me back issues of the 99th BG newsletter, which always contain interesting bits of historical information. I guess Bernie Barr was instrumental in suggesting this kind action so please extend my thanks to him. I had the pleasure of meeting him here in Como during April and it was great to have the privilege to chat with a man with 100 missions on his credit! (Bernie had already flown 50 missions in the Pacific before joining the 99thBG) I only regret he stayed here for too short a time.

I have also had the good fortune of corresponding with Norris W. King, one of the three survivors from the Sugar Foot crew. It was most rewarding to me to have a confirmation of my theory as to the identity of the two gunners shown on the photo I sent you and that was published in the January issue. They are from left to right Joe R. Carroll and Marion D. Pratt, the latter having joined the association. as I can see from the roster

update in the May issue. I would like to know how the detectives of the 99th search team have managed to locate them from the tiny drop of info (name and A.S.N.) supplied to them.

I wonder if such a spectacular success can be repeated for the survivors of the other 99th ship lost on the same day, Lt. Cantwell crew. I noticed that Lt. Cantwell was mentioned in the war diary for the period Jan. 25, -February 24, 1943 as published on page 7 of the March issue. So it appears he was a charter member of the 99th BG. Again there is mention of him for May 1, 1943 on page 13. Last, I discovered on page 16 that ship #856 (full serial 42-5856) flown by Cantwell on Oct. 1, 1943 had joined the group with a new crew on May 16, 1943. I wonder if anyone knows who was that crew.

As for "Sugarfoot" I can read for June 24, 1943 on page 13 of the May issue: "...another crew, that of Lt. English brought in aircraft 42-30126..."

** I have been out of Como for the whole month of May, but WHAT for June ?!!*

I find the idea of publishing the war diaries a very good one: as you can see from my previous comments, there is a wealth of historical information to be found there. My only regret is that no mention is made of which war diary the text is extracted, that is if this comes from the group diary, squadron diaries or else.

As for the third "Swiss" 99th BG B-17, I was very pleased to see that Gene Agnew took the pain to reply almost a year ago and that his letter had been published in the November 1983 issue. I'm glad to report that after much trouble, I have been able to obtain the names of the other crew members.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the official report which hopefully will enable you to locate other crew members in addition to Morat. If you also pass over the info to Mr. Agnew it could be a nice touch for his birthday on July 26 !!

Does any one know who was the Group commander in late February 1945 replacing Col. Lauer after his departure in January? Also who was the 416th BS CO and the 347th BS CO on October 1, 1943. A major Kane was the 346th BS CO in late February 1945. Did you already locate him?

Again, if any 99ers find photos or other info in their files pertaining to the 3 "Swiss" B-17s, kindly let me know.

With renewed apologies for the late reply, I remain,

With all best wishes,

Gino
Gino

To Gino Kunzle; c/o Sarfati, Via Zezio 33, 2210 COMO - Italy

Dear Gino;

Many thanks for the Missing Aircrew Reports (MACRs). My first bit of work is to try to locate the men. Of the ten-man crew, only John Morat is a member, so the other nine men, all of whose home towns are given, go onto my Prospect List, and in the course of time the persons of the same last name in their home towns will receive postcards from us. However, I see that "Fab" Fabiniak and Leon Estes have already answered the call. So thanks again, Gino, for your help.

george

*Im ersten auf der Welt... Stunden
Abend da erigisturium 1000. 1943
stolz alle da Gefährten der
Krieg und gründen unser Tot
die Frau der Heimat über junge
die Freiheit der Welt geben
milder Abend brühte sich die
schöne Heimat aus und alle
wir die Konsequenz unserer
aus der Pflicht erfüllung in
wählte alle auf. Auch Sie
Pflicht erfüllt und andere
guten Tage mit neuen
glücklich, wie wir.
Aber unser Weg ist klar
wären unser Maltern;
und in der Luft wissen und
Die Neutralität der Waffen
die junge an Gefährten und
bewirgt und innig nach.
Gefährten und Auswertung der
finden sich als Bilanz auf der
des Tagesbuches.*

Der Kor

From the Files of D.O. Fleming

ALL IN
B13
JA

By Daniel De Luce

Allied Headquarters in North Africa, July 24-(AP)-battle freshmen on the eve of the Sicilian invasion, soldiers of the United States 45th Division, drawn from almost every state of the union, can now be regarded as one of the fightingest outfits that ever conquered foreign soil.

If they are a sample of the scopes of divisions still training in "Back Home" maneuvers, it means that General George C. Marshall and his staff have gone a long way toward solving the problem of transforming millions of civilians into combat-wise troops capable of meeting the best of the Axis armies on at least an equality basis.

Under studious, bespectacled Major General Troy Middleton, former dean of Louisiana State University, the "Fighting Forty-Fifth" went into Sicily as the right flank of the Seventh Army and inside of one week won battle honors at Soglitti, San Croce, Camerina, Comiso, Pagasa and Vittoria.

Capturing Comiso Airdrome, one of Sicily's "Big Ten," was a hard struggle but the 45th smashed up the narrow winding mountain road to 3,000 feet and slugged it out with German armored cars and tanks. That was the first enemy air base to fall to the Allies.

In taking Ragusa the 45th claimed to be the first division to liberate captured Americans in Sicily. Two American bomber gunners, Sergeants David Fleming of Jackson, Mich., and Allen B. Huckabee of Temple, Texas, shot down on a raid July 5, were freed by the first bunch of 17 soldiers in two jeeps to enter the town.

The gunner pair said the most hair-raising experience they had was undergoing 14 American air raids in the space of 20 hours before the Forty-Fifth occupied Ragusa.

"You sure look good to us," they told their rescuers.

It is a far cry for boys from four corners of the United States to a landing in the rough Sicilian surf.

No maneuvers could equal that in realism but for nearly two years this division, originally drawn from such western States as Oklahoma, Colorado, and Texas, has been training for rugged tests like Sicily.

It shipped to North Africa only a few weeks before the "Day" and the men barely had time to read their Army instruction books about the land of the Sahara and the Atlas mountain rebellions before they re-embarked and received the pamphlet about Italian customs and people.

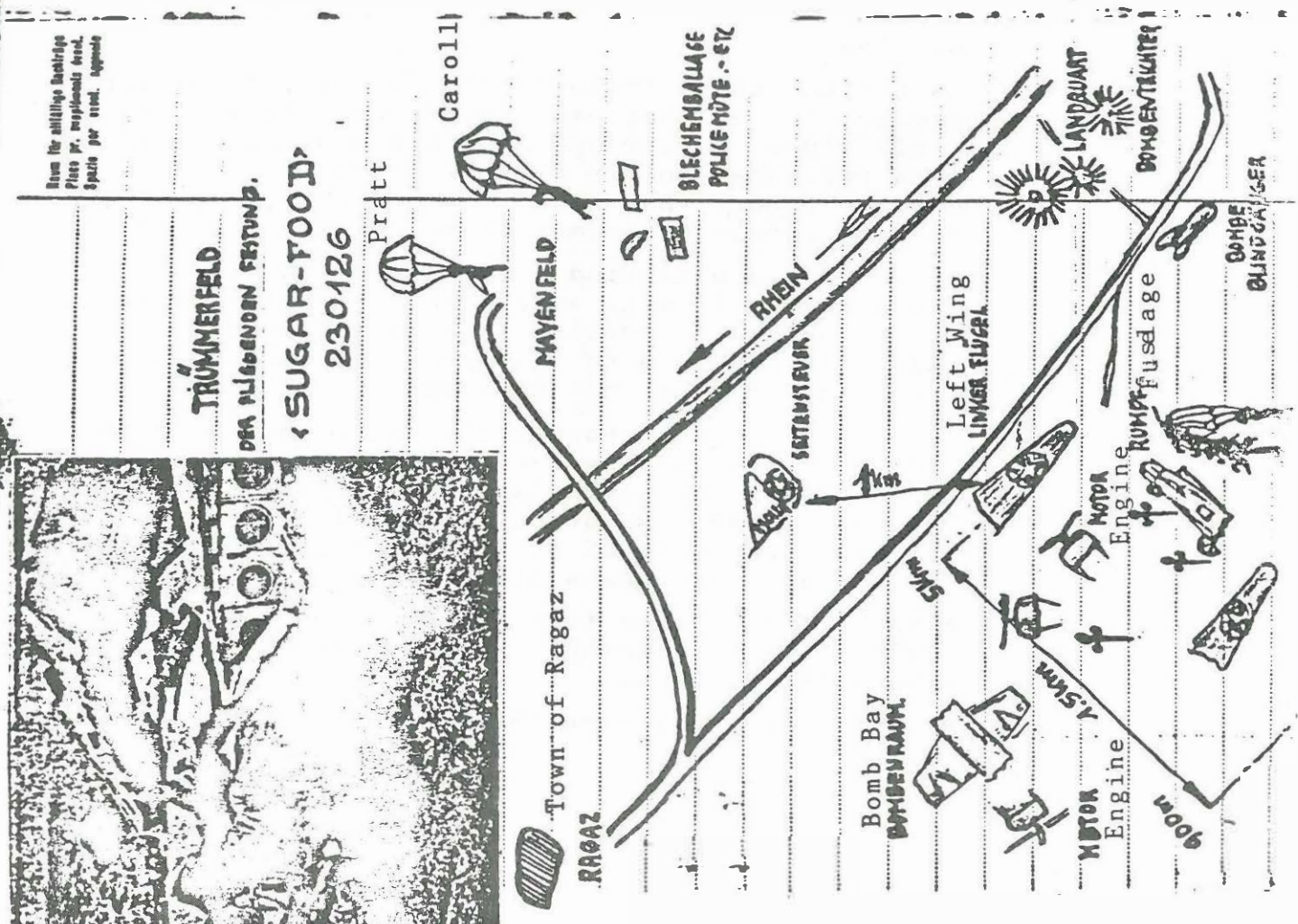
MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL, SEPTEMBER 1984

1984 Dues, \$10 _____. This includes the 1984 Newsletter.
We have old newsletters for \$5 per year for 81-83. 81__82__83__.

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



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JAMES SANBORN

Dick Dempsey informs us that James Sanborn of the 347BS passed away last September from Legionnaire's Disease and leukemia. Mrs. Sanborn's address is 1529 US 31 North, Traverse City MI 49684.

TWAMLEY, BERT M.

We have notice without details of the death of Bert Twamley on June 30, 1984.

J. Carlyle Annan

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

894 Claydon Way

Altamonte Springs

FL

J. Carlyle Annan
Walter J. Trawka

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THE 99TH BOMBARDMENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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1983

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