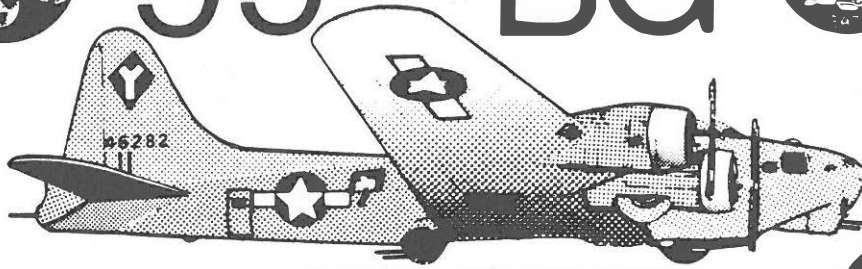




99th BG



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS
HqSq, 346th, 347th, 348th, 416th
395 COMBAT MISSIONS
1943 AFRICA - EUROPE 1945



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Newsletter

Vol. 8 No. 6 *Sadie Hawkins' Day Issue*

Nov 1 1988

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

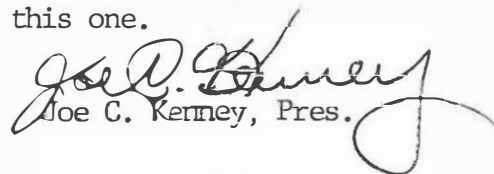
GREETINGS:

We are only four and one-half months from our next Reunion at McAllen, Texas on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of February, 1989. The time is moving faster than any one of us would like. In speaking with our Reunion Chairman Jeff Waguespack, he tells me that the McAllen Chamber of Commerce will mail the preliminaries along with registration and all other pertinent information on the 99th Bomb Group Reunion. You should have received that information by this time. In any event we need to make our reservations very soon. Look forward to another wonderful 99th Bomb Group Reunion.

I am in correspondance with Milton Radovsky, 10710 Lockridge Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20901. Milton was a Navigator in a B-24 Bomber of the 461st Bomb Group, 15th Air Force and he was shot down over Linz, Austria on the 25th of July, 1944 when we all hit the Hermann Goering Tank Wurks at Linz. He is writing a book regarding that particular mission and would be most appreciative of hearing from those of us who flew that "mean" one. I was on that one and I know there were at least 299 more of us that had that experience in our Group. In any event it would certainly help him in his most extensive research and compilation of that one. He'd like to hear from the Ground Crews as well giving account of what they did in getting ready for it and what they had in battle damage to repair when we returned.

Richard Fabiniak, one of our 99th men, attended the Memorial Dedication of the Swiss Internees Association at Wright Patterson Air Force Base on September 9th. He informed us that there is no side walk leading to our 99th Bomb Group Memorial and that it appeared that the grass was not trampled down indicating that no-one was going up to view our Memorial. He believes we need to have that sidewalk completed leading up to our Memorial and I must agree with that. This is something we will take up at our Board of Directors meeting at McAllen, Texas to correct this problem. We thank Vic Fabiniak for his observation and concern. That concern is ours as well.

Again, let's get our reservations in to Jeff so that this Reunion will run smoothly and help us to have those vital reservations in time for that Confederate Air Force program at Harlingen. I believe this is popular and for that reason we need to be certain that we do have a place to stay. Look forward to this one.


Joe C. Kerney, Pres.

LETTERS

Captain Robert G. Mack
888 St. Andrews Drive
Destin, Florida 32541

Dear Professor Marcus,

Thank you for your letter and the monograph. Needless to say, both are well appreciated. If you do not desire the return of the monograph, I will send it on to our historian, Mr. George Coen. Your comments in regard to a busy schedule fall on receptive eyes because I am a student at Pensacola Junior College and I often observe Professor Duke operating at full pace.

The enclosed booklet, available at any convenient bookstore, is quite interesting and it may offer a small insight into the categorization of missions. I don't think that the establishment of mission units was the sole providence of the theatre commander. There are too many factors to consider, the least of which would be the attitude and influence of another theatre commander operating the same type of equipment, albeit not the same type of mission. The Fifteenth Air Force flew a majority of long-range missions--a practice that started in Africa and continued until the end of the war. We learned early on to conserve both fuel and oxygen. The three cockpit members, Henry Lewondowski, Paul Noak and I were the only ones who used oxygen until we cleared 10,000-14,000 feet. There were a number of times that we ran out of fuel in specific tanks and lost the corresponding engine(s) in sight of the airfield or in the traffic pattern. Oddly enough, fuel was not a problem on the X missions because we did not have the demands of formation flying to contend with. The overall average of a crew of my circa was 35-40 sorties as opposed to 50 missions. This would appear to be about 100 hours more than a crew flying 25 missions, which was the average for the Eight Air Force. I would think that the extent of target defense and length of time to reach the primary objective and return were important factors in determining double oil single credit for missions. I am sure that George Coen can offer a more positive comment on this.

Ted Arthurs, who is a neighbor and a retired Command Sergeant Major of the 4th Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, is fond of saying that things could be worse. He spent a year in a rucksack outfit in the Vietnam Jungle at a time when he could have fit comfortably behind a desk at headquarters. He and I both believe that if you are exposed to combat long enough, you will ultimately achieve zero attrition. In Vietnam, the cap was one year for troopers and six months for officers. The shorter tour was to expose more officers to combat experience. This is a factor with missions. The survivors are valuable to the future of the Air Force itself. There is also the old adage that I will try not to mangle, which states that one can never plumb the depths of man's endurance if he has hope. When I flew element lead, I carried interpreters who were Holland or German Jews whose families had been exterminated by the Nazis. The young men had no cap that I knew of and their hope most probably was to destroy the madmen who had devastated their lives. I would say there was a definite psychological curve related to mission requirements. A common joke was that when you got to 47 missions, you started to take Atabrine tablets again because you knew that the light at the end of the tunnel was not another train. I should point out that a good number of crews did volunteer for a tour of duty in another theatre of operations after they had returned to the States.

In regard to the Eight Air Force, which was overdressed, overpaid, oversexed, and over in dear old Blighty, there were a number of indications that an imbalance was obvious. I often heard reference to the F.B.I.--Forgotten Bastards of Italy, and I partially remember the pamphlet issued in Naples before shipping Stateside that stated, "You too can be a gentleman even though you were at Anzio or in the Fifth Wing." In late 1944, we hosted a squadron of Eighth A.F crews on a shuttle bombing R.O.N. By chance or by choice, they were put up in tents in a very muddy section of our area. It was nice to hear the outraged remarks of classmates who formerly extolled the advantages of barracks life in England as opposed to our bivouac in Italy. There was always the usual rivalry that exists between units. However, it was intense, good-natured, and as far as I knew, it was never malicious.

It has long been my opinion that a nation can never afford a war because it decimates its most valuable asset--its youth. Most specifically, its movers and doers. We have left our best people in foreign graves and had they survived, they most certainly would be making a needed impact on today's manners and morals, to say nothing of our politics. This is why I contribute what little I can and I know that you will commemorate old friends, past and present, in your history of the Fifteenth Air Force. Thank you, and if I can be of further service, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Respectfully,
Bob Mack

ADDENDUM:

- o Interpreters scanned the fighter frequencies and picked up information as to where they were being directed.
- o The Fifth Wing reference applies to the one wing of B-17s--the other four wings were "Boxcars"--the German euphemism for B-24.
- o I am opposed to wars whereby our young people die for political expediency--but I surely am not a pacifist in this world gone mad.



84-34 86th Street
Woodhaven, N.Y. 11421
July 14, 1988

Dear Jules:

I was in the 348th of the 99th after you pioneers had made the job easier and I want to express my congratulations to you for a job well done. Not having attended previous re-unions I can't make comparisons but can say that you did an outstanding job. Along with the help of your friends you provided a perfect atmosphere for the meeting. I might also add that the efforts put forth by all the officers of the Historical Society is greatly appreciated by all members. Please accept my "Hip - Hip - Hurray" in the spirit in which it is given.

Looking back - there are a few thoughts which may be worth considering for future re-unions.

1. - Would it be possible to publish a list of the attendees?

2. - As the turnover on Combat Crews was a continuing process - Would it be possible to indicate on future "Roster Lists" the dates of service in the various squadrons? Possibly a solicitation in the Newsletter would produce the additional information from the membership. I'm sure it would entail a lot of extra work, but am also sure the information would serve as a memory jogger and of extreme interest to most of us survivors.
3. - A possible income generator for future re-unions. A group picture of the attendees of each Squadron would be of great interest to the general membership. I suspect that at a reasonable fee copies would go like hot-cakes.

In any case the Fort Lauderdale re-union was a really delightful experience for me and my girl. We look forward to many more of them.

Sincerely, *Tony Robinson*
Tony Robinson - 348th '44&45

c/c
Joe Kenney
Walter Butler
Harvey Jennings
Al Schroeder
George Coen
Dick Dempsey

8426 Lopez Drive
Tampa, Florida 33615

17 May 1988

Dear George,

Regarding the listing of tail number and names in the Newsletter of May 1988, Tail number 25948 had the nickname of Thunderbolt given by the ground crew. However, the plane crew commander was Howard C. Carver. It was a B-17F that traded to the 97th Bom Group for a B-17 sometime in November of 1943. It was shot down on 19 December 1943 but was being flown by a Lt Dawson of the 97th.

It might help if you checked my article that was published in the Newsletter in November of 1984.

Your listing also shows 25832 being downed over Augsburg on 19 December 1943. There were no planes downed over Augsburg that date--we could not get through to that target or to Munich, so we bombed Innsbruck. My crew was shot down in 832 on that date over that target. Actually, the crew was Carver's crew but he was still in a hospital in Africa and I was flying his crew that day. The airplane was assigned to Julie Horowitz but he was off to Capri with his crew--one of the first of our crews to go to rest camp. None of the crew listed in the May 1988 Newsletter as being on board 25832 were members of my crew that date--19 Dec 1943. I think I named all of them in the article published in November of 1984.

My airplane was getting a complete overhaul--new engines--the works, but as far as I know, it had not yet been officially assigned to me. The plane had belonged to Major Max Davis who had finished his tour and was en route home.

The 832 I was flying had 110 missions on it and the last one on 19 Dec 43 made 111. It must have been an original with the 97th when they first arrived in England.

Hope this helps in correcting the listing.

As ever
Cy Stidd

Dear Cy;

10sep88

Here at HQ we are answering mail from last December, and you expect service within 60 days! Remember, Cy, Romeo wasn't bilked in a day! All of these things will be taken care of WTRIO (When the Rush Is Over).

Seriously, we are overwhelmed at the moment and have been unable to give proper attention to the plane list here. But we are now working with Dick Drain and we do think that he will introduce a note of sanity into the plane list.

best

george

Dear George ---

29 July 1988

Enclosed list is my computer's "second whack" at the aircraft list. I came up with a few discrepancies that only you or the members can resolve:

- a. Newsletter (NL) Sep 85, p.6, picture of plane. 712 is readable but it looks like the other nrs. may be readable from original photo. Can you make them out?
- b. NL Nov 86, p. 24. A/C from 346 BS crashed on takeoff reported by James R LaCuran. Ser. nr. of A/C?
- c. NL Mar 85, p. 20. Report of Mission 128 (according to Mission List this should be mission 129) states one aircraft lost from the Group on 10 Jan 44.
- d. NL May 86 letter states the A/C the crew flew on 25 Jun 43 was named Our Favorite Bitch (229468). Your May 88 list gives the name Vicki. Which is correct?
- e. 232071, Turnip Termite, must have been renamed after I left the Group in the summer of 1944 to Nine Wolves and Poppa. I don't blame the crew that did it because that sure was an ugly termite. It even fogged my film when I took a picture of it.
- f. Al Henke letter in NL Jul 86, p. 24 states A/C 244 was named Widow Maker and flown by the Wilson crew. In NL Mar 87, p. 24, he states the Bruce Borman crew flew 244 (believe this is 23244) and it's name was Smiley. Something wrong here!
- g. In your May 88 list you have Ramblin Raider 229413 and Ramblin Raider 229606 MIA at Foggia. I deleted 606 since that was supposed to be an 8th AF plane.

That's about it for now. Too bad we didn't have the record keeping that the 8th AF did. The Group I flew with there has the complete picture of every mission -- full plane ser. nr., complete crew list, take off and landing times, position in formation and over target, etc. Maybe that is one reason the 8th AF has had more books and articles written about it than the 15th. Was counting the MIA's for the 99th and they seem kind of low. The Group I flew with in England flew only 300 missions and lost 176 planes. The 100 BG (in our Wing) flew 306 with 219 losses. And the 95 BG lost 196 planes in flying 320 missions. But that's the way things were.

keep counting

Dick Drain, 416th BS
Box 664
Westcliffe CO 81252



Dear Mr. Butler;

I read a clipping in the Union Bulletin where you are trying to find crew members of the 99th Bomb Squadron.

There were two that worked for my Father in their off time and who became friends of our family. We wrote to them till they were reported missing in action. I have often wondered if they returned home. Their names were: Joe Janon of New York and Bob Larsen of Minn. Don't remember for sure the towns they came from. I have some letters here that were returned tous by the Air Force.

If you have their addresses please send them to me and if you know them, tell them to write to me.

My parents' names were Willis and Kathryn Hunt. They have since passed away.

My name is Edith and my sister's anme is Thellisa. My brother was Billy, since passed away also.

God Bless you'
Thank you Edith Hunt Pfiffner
1210 Ruth Avenue, Walla Walla WA 99362

Dear Edith;

While we do not have any pertinent information about Joe and Bob, surely one of our readers will remember them.

God Bless!
 george
Bill Redding
183 Clearview Dr.
Midlothian TX 76065

George,

Greetings from Texas. I hope you had a fine reunion in Florida. George, I had written you earlier last year about my dad's aircraft. The A/c # I gave you was not totally correct. I had the last three digits right. The serial # was 42 32041. I received this from MACR 6518. Does anyone have a picture for this serial # in your collection.

thanks
Bill Redding

Dear Bill;

We will search the files WTRIO, but meanwhile, perhaps somebody out there in the blue has a snapshot.

geo

Dear Walter:

I am trying to locate the remaining crew members of a B-17 stationed in North Africa. The aircraft was named SAD SACK.

My brother Don was Radio Operator and flew 50 missions during his tour.

I would appreciate your help if possible. thanks
Mike Shrein P.O.BOX 3 Bensalem, PA 19020

Dear Mike;

If we had a few more clues we might be able to shorten the search. There were four B-17 Groups in North Africa from April to December.

Our plane records are incomplete, but Dick Drain is gathering the data and may have an idea. Also, the information will probably come in slowly. This will go to Ped Magness of the 97th, but I do not know whether we still have contacts for the 301st and the 2nd Bomb Group.

GOOD LUCK george

Dear Walter;

I have been reading (2nd time) a good book, "Those Who Fall" by John Muirhead, a day to day account of a pilot in the 301st Bomb Group. The 99th is mentioned also. I would like to recommend it.

R.J.Willis



I.L.Hawkins
29 Birch Ave.
Bacton, Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 4NT
Tel. Bacton781561

Dear Mr. Coen,

I'm writing to ask your permission to reprint Colonel (now M/General)Upthegrove's outstanding 1943 talk in the March 1989 issue of "Framlingham Times: please. (As in the May 1988 issue of the 99th BG H. Society Newsletter). . . .

Thank you in anticipation, sincerely, Ian Hawkins.

P.S. There were 57,027 R.A.F. Bomber Command casualties (i.e. K.I.A.) during WWII and it remains a national scandal that R.A.F. Bomber Command personnel were not awarded a 1934-1945 campaign medal.

Dear Ian;

We are delighted to give permission to reprint General Upthegrove's speech. It may interest you to know that the Upthegroves were at our July 1988 reunion in Florida, where we 99ers attempted to thank 'Our Colonel' for the training which enabled so many of us to survive to become great-grandfathers.

It may also be of interest that many of our younger generation are pressing for a return to medieval warfare in the name of humanity. The supposed benefits of alternate methods of killing are not obvious to us ex-infantrymen.

I look forward to reading your book COURAGE, HONOR, VICTORY, published by the 95th Bomb Group Association, 18.95 Pounds.

saalem aleicum george
22sep88

Dear George;

Sept. 8.9.10 the Swiss Internees had their third reunion. We had over 100 in attendance, a good turn-out for 286 members. I was able to attend only one hour, for the memorial dedication. . . . George, when I was in Dayton at the Memorial Park, the first place I went to was our memorial. It looked sick out there in the grass, which was wet with dew, and the grass was not tramped down, from people going to look at it. It is the only memorial without a sidewalk leading to it. I went to the office and asked why there was no sidewalk. They told me it was up to our Bomb Group to put it in, and it was the only one without a sidewalk. . . .

I received an interesting letter from Robert Moser, who was flying on our wing that Feb.27 mission over Augsburg. Their B-17 was blown up over the target, all were PWs and the pilot, Cornelius Shields was killed on that mission. I have the MACR (Missing Air Crew Report), and he requested for me to send him a copy of it. It had 31 pages. . . .
A 99er - Vic Fab.

Dear Fab;

Thank you for the copies of the MACR. As we approach the publication of a 99BG History we will try to assemble all of the MACRS.

Good luck to the Internees.

I will pass on your comments about the Memorial. We barefoot types would never notice the lack of sidewalks.

best george

9, Tan-y-Buarth,
Bethel,
CAERNARFON,
LL55 1UW.
U.K.

Tel. 248 670632.
May 3 1988.

Dear George,

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about the 99th B.G. and Tortorella Airfield when I telephoned you. I was very pleased to receive the newsletter, which I think you are doing a great job on.

As promised I am enclosing two copies of the map of the area to the east of Foggia which I believe is where Tortorella Airfield was situated. The area I have edged in green on one of the maps was the site of the Regia Aeronautica/Luftwaffe airfield known as Foggia #2, and as I think many 15th A.F. airfields were built on these existing sites, this may be the exact location of Tortorella.

If you can put me in contact with anyone who served at Tortorella and can recall any details of the airfield I would be most grateful. The sort of information I need is the position of the runway, taxiways, aircraft dispersal/parking areas, control tower, bivouac areas or any thing connected with the time it was home for the 99th B.G.

I am hoping to compile an accurate record of the airfields used by the 15th A.F. in Italy as a lot of work has been done over here on the bases of the 8th A.F. but nothing appears to have been done on the bases of the 15th. As you know there is nothing left of the airfields in Italy, unlike the more permanent structure of the airfields in this country, so by corresponding with ex-15th A.F. personnel appears to be the only way of gaining any information on this subject.

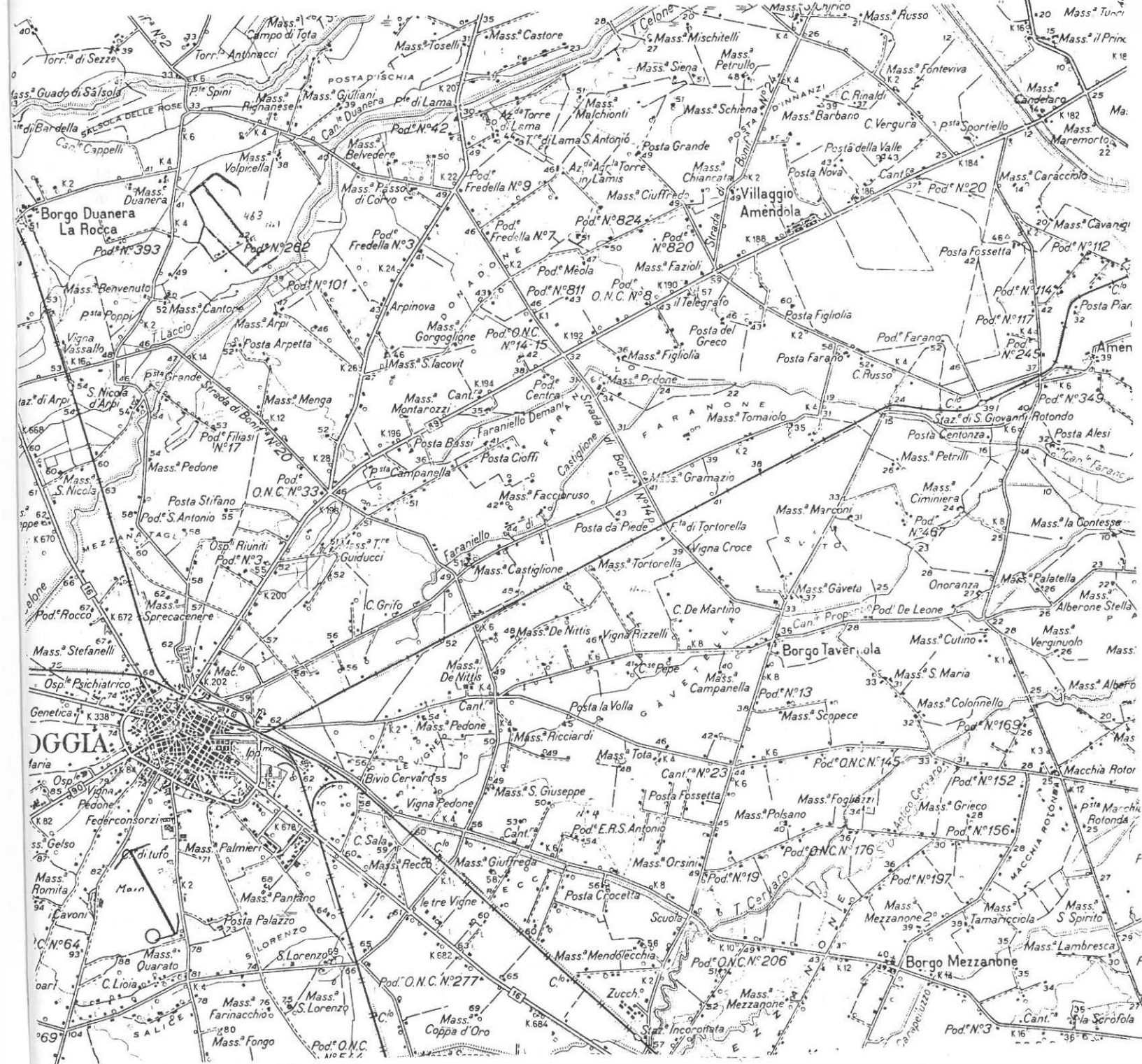
The scale of the map incidentally is 1:100,000 so 1 mile = 5/8 inch.

Best regards,

Craig R Pugh
Craig R Pugh.

Dear Craig;

It was good to talk to you on the phone. Thank you for the two copies of the map of Foggia. I shall print it in the Newsletter along with your letter and probably some of our Gentle Readers will send the information you need. As a card-carrying African, I was never in Italy, so I cannot help.
george



PRESS RELEASES

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST August 5, 1944

YANKEES ON THE STEPPES

BY EDMUND STEVENS
Moscow by Wireless

The young fighters of our Eastern Bomber Command are not only plastering Nazis from Soviet bases but are also winning Russian hearts, setting a pattern for postwar understanding.

Had anyone publicly prophesied a year ago that American bombers would presently be operating from bases in the Soviet Union, he would have encountered skepticism verging on complete incredulity. The obstacles, physical and otherwise, seemed overwhelming. Yet today, amid the vastness of the Russian Steppe, silvery Forts of our Army Air Forces Eastern Command are taking off regularly on missions into enemy territory. This accomplished fact is the greatest evidence yet produced of improving relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and a tribute to the men of both countries whose imagination and foresight made it possible.

Set down in the midst of a Nazi-devastated area liberated by the Red army, I saw a United States Army camp which is as familiar looking as an American baseball diamond. Everything from mess kits and tinned meat to seventeen-ton gasoline trucks is strictly G.I. The personnel, officers and enlisted men, hail from practically every one of the forty-eight states. They all admit that Russia is about the last place in the world they ever expected to land in and they are still rubbing their eyes and wondering how they got here.

Most of them like it fine and feel quite at home. To begin with, the surrounding landscape, with its endless fields of waving wheat, lush pastures and leafy forests, might well be somewhere in the Midwest. Such country is a feast for eyes starved for the sight of vegetation after dreary months on the African desert or on the barren, sun-scorched hills of Southern Italy. The people, too, look clean and healthy, quite unlike North African Arabs or poverty-stricken Southern Italians. Also, everyone is friendly and hospitable, and despite the language difficulty, it didn't take the G.I.s long to make friends both with Russian soldiers with whom they work and with the people of the near-by town, especially the girls, whose looks, they say, compare favorably with home standards.

The idea for an American bomber base in Russia was first proposed by Gen. Hap Arnold himself, but two other men, an American and a Russian deserve the main credit for the actual setting up of the bases and for the spirit of friendship and understanding that has prevailed there throughout between the two nations. They are Brig Gen Alfred Kessler, the American chief of staff, and Maj Gen Alexei Perminov of the Red air force, commander of all Russian personnel at the base. Kessler is the rugged outdoor type, forty-five years old. He is a New Jerseyite by birth, a Californian by adoption, and a West Pointer. The day the first bombers flew in, Maj Gen Robert Walsh, freshly arrived from South America, assumed command, but Kessler has remained on.

From generals to privates, the Americans and Russians worked side by side preparing quarters, clearing runways, installing equipment and making ready to receive planes and combat personnel. Early in the game, the Americans discovered that the direct, rather than the devious, method was best in dealing with their Russian associates. If you wanted something or didn't like something, you got on better if you came right out and said so openly, without hinting and beating around the bush.

Thus, in the early days before the bulk of personnel and shipments of Army rations had arrived, the Americans ate with the Russians, who provided food and ran the mess. The Russians soon discovered the American liking for nice juicy steaks. But at the same time, since some Americans failed to do full justice to the large helpings of boiled cabbage, which was the only available green vegetable at that time of the year, the Russians concluded that Americans were entirely carnivorous.

So, for a while, with clock-like monotony, the Americans got nothing but juicy steaks three times daily. Though this diet palled on the palate, the Americans hesitated to say anything, for fear of hurting the Russians' feelings, until they were finally prompted to do so by sheer desperation. The Russian answer was, "Why didn't you tell us in the first place?"

Early in their stay in Russia, the Americans were introduced to the vodka treatment. Whenever there was a party or banquet they found they were expected to drink toast after toast, bottoms up, tossing off whole tumblerfuls of the liquid dynamite, and that anyone who flinched from the ordeal was eyed askance. They discovered various devices for reducing the dire effects, such as swallowing chunks of butter to protect the stomach lining.

An American Army interpreter who, come what might, had to keep a clear tongue in his head, mastered the sleight-of-hand trick of dumping his vodka under the table. Noting that the American chief of staff was having a hard time with the endless toasts to Roosevelt, Stalin and lasting Soviet-American friendship, he let his superior in on his little secret, but with disastrous results. For at the next banquet, the chief bungled and was caught red-handed trying to dump his vodka. Thereafter, the Russians watched him with an eagle eye, and always made sure he drank it.

The retreating Germans left the usual havoc and destruction in their wake. All airfield hangars are a mass of ruins and rubble, and most of the living quarters were either burned or blown up. Consequently, much improvisation and makeshift were required, especially at the outset. But the Russians, with their traditional hospitality, did their best to make the Americans comfortable. The first Americans were housed in one of the few buildings that had escaped complete destruction. The Russians had carefully demined the area as soon as they retook it from the Germans, but one day a Red-army sentry discovered a suspicious wire. Sappers were summoned, and they proceeded to trace the wire. Immediately after, the Americans were asked to vacate their quarters while the sappers gingerly removed several tons of cleverly hidden high explosive.

The chief barrier to complete harmony and understanding was the language difficulty, and the Army personnel department did its best to mitigate this by providing a sprinkling of men with some knowledge of Russian or, failing that, of Polish, Czech or some other kindred Slavic tongue that would give them a head start in making themselves understood. One of these is Lt Albert Jarov, of Seattle. Born in Odessa, Jarov, when he is off duty as operations-control officer, is busy thinking up ways to revisit his native city. Jarov's assistant is Lt David Morriss, of Washington, D.C., who studied Russian at the Georgetown Foreign Service School. His last station was in New Guinea.

But even those who don't know a word of Russian do their best by means of sign language, although they don't always get their point across, as when an American mechanic tried to ask his Russian helper for his cigarette lighter, and the latter ran and got a blowtorch. Sometimes minor difficulties occur when some perfectly harmless English expression sounds like a fighting word in Russian. At one point, a Russian general complained to the American chief of staff that the Russian girls waiting on mess tables wanted to quit, asserting that the Americans had insulted them. Matters were satisfactorily explained when it was found that the Americans had merely been asking for a second helping of peaches, which in Russian sounded suspiciously like a request for something quite different.

Occasionally some practical joker takes advantage of the language difficulty, as did a certain G.I. who wanted to teach the Russian soldiers to address the American senior officers as "jerk". But there's one Russian word all Americans were taught right off the bat, and that is "Stoi," which means "Halt." When a Russian sentry, including those guarding camp, shouts "Stoi," he really means it seriously. Americans have been taught to answer "Americanski soldat," which immediately identifies him, especially when it is pronounced with an unmistakable American accent.

A dozen round-faced Russian girls in bulging G.I. coveralls help out on K.P. The main jobs are opening the ration cans and dumping the contents into huge pails, and then dishing it out on the chow line. There's nothing fragile about them, and once, when two G.I.s were staggering uncertainly with the weight of a mighty soup pail, one of the girls motioned them to set it down, and then lifted it easily and carried it unaided.

Instead of trying to memorize the girls' Russian names, the boys in the cookhouse have provided them with American nicknames. Such monikers as Fatty, Tubby, Blondie and Freckles are graphically descriptive; one of the girls is called "New York" for no apparent reason, since she comes from Kharkov. The girls take all this badinage with puzzled good nature, ascribing it to the eccentricity of the Americans. Besides their wages, they get three square, daily meals of G.I. food, and look as though they thrived on it, though they complain that American food is too sweet and that they miss their sour cabbage, soups and black bread.

American and Russian mechanics who work together are trying hard to learn one another's language. Often they place bets as to who can make the fastest progress, but, in general, the G.I.s admit the Russians are better. All Russians carry around little notebooks in which they jot down English words and phrases spelled phonetically with Russian characters, together with their Russian equivalents. As a rule, the crews trained to service bombers consist of three Russians under the direction of one American. The Russians assigned to this work are picked mechanics and the Americans are amazed at the ease and swiftness with which they catch on.

This Russian aptitude explains why, when bombers came in for the first time, they were quickly and efficiently serviced. The Russians, for their part, are pleasantly astonished at the willing way in which our boys show them anything they want to know without any hesitation. After working with our men on our machines and equipment all day, the Russian mechanics attend special night classes conducted by their own engineering instructions, and anyone who fails to measure up to the high standard of aptitude is promptly transferred elsewhere. Thus, besides serving a strategic purpose, the bases function as training schools for the Russians in the structure and operation of American equipment.

Contact between Americans and Russians at the base isn't confined to working hours. Almost every evening there's some form of entertainment. During intermissions, a Russian translates the program announcements into halting English, and if there happens to be a comedy act, there are brave attempts to explain the jokes. Everyone laughs, whether he gets the point or not.

Shows are usually followed by dances, and since there are only three American nurses in camp and no Wacs, most of the G.I.s date Russian girls and teach them to jive or cut a rug to the time of a hybrid jazz orchestra. Singing is also a popular pastime. All this social activity is permeated with the warmest spirit of camaraderie, despite the obstacle of language.

I met a group of five inseparable companions--Joe from New York, Shorty from Pittsburgh, and Nikolai, Kostya, and Misha from Leningrad, Moscow, and Rostov, respectively. For the most part, they just sat around and grinned. When I saw them the two Americans were initiating their Russian side-kicks into the mysteries of chewing gum, and trying to get over the pont that you weren't supposed to swallow it. This American institution has already become popular in the neighborhood, and only the restricted supply prevents the habit from taking firm root. Another American institution that is gaining a following is baseball.

An air of excited expectancy reminiscent of the night before Christmas pervaded the base on the eve of the scheduled arrival of the first bombers. High-ranking United States Army and Red Army officers were on hand for the occasion, as well as large groups of Anglo-Americans and Soviet press correspondents. Amb. Averell Harriman and his daughter Kathy arrived that afternoon.

Next morning the weather was distinctly thick, and rumor circulated to the effect that the flight had been called off. We hung around the signal tower at the edge of the airport, waiting for some definite word. Presently it was announced that the planes were on their way and that radio contact had been established. Thereafter, regular reports apprised us of their progress. As the time for their arrival approached, medical personnel appeared on the scene, with stretchers and ambulances, but happily, as the planes landed in swift succession, not a single flare was fired to indicate casualties.

The sole man on the entire mission to require medical attention, we later found out, was a bombardier of a plane that had landed at another base. He was Lt John Johnson, of Draffin, Kentucky, who had to have his appendix out. He had felt pain the previous day, but like many others, on hearing they were slated to fly to Russia, he determined to go along. In similar spirit, when one of the planes developed engine trouble shortly after its take-off from an Italian base, the crew radioed back to the field to have a spare plane in readiness, in order that they could land and immediately transfer to it and catch up with the formation, so as not to miss out. For the most part, the men of these combat crews were veterans. Many had more than fifty missions chalked up to their credit, which would normally entitle them to leave, but they had stayed on in order to take part in this first flight to Russian.

The people on the field had a surprise when Lt Gen Ira Eaker, commander of Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean, stepped off the lead plane. His first act was to pin the Legion of Merit on Maj Gen Perminov, handing him a citation signed personally by President Roosevelt.

As each crew came off the field, it reported to Intelligence, and then headed for the chow line and rest at camp. But despite the long flight, few were in the mood for repose. Having come all this distance, the men wanted to see things. Although previously there had been some talk of the town being off-limits until the planes took off on their return flight, in less than no time most of the combat crews were headed for town. They were accorded a heroes' welcome.

For the next couple of days the Americans were in evidence everywhere. Like all American troops, they were inveterate souvenir hunters, and every one of them was bent on getting some memento to take back with him as evidence of his trip to Russia.

In forty-eight hours they had conquered the town and learned more about the Russian people and got closer to them than many foreigners do in a year. Said Maj John S. Cunningham, of Milton, Massachusetts, "These people go around holding their heads up, and make every effort to look presentable. This is more like the States than anything I've seen since I left home."

Though all the boys made out pretty well, the biggest success was probably scored by Lt William Dacko, of Roslindale, Massachusetts. The son of Russian parents, he learned to speak and write the language at a private school run by an Orthodox priest in Boston. This was his first opportunity to use it on Russian soil. On his first visit to town, he met a girl named Valka, who took Dacko and his buddy to her house and introduced them to her sister and family, and fed them a substantial meal of borsch and potatoes with sour cream.

Unfinished Business

The next day being Sunday, Valka took Dacko to church. Dacko was enjoying himself so thoroughly that he was rather downcast at the prospect of an early departure, especially as Valka promised him her photograph the next time he came to see her. After two days of being grounded by weather, most of the fliers were eager to get airborne, but many, like Dacko had unfinished business in town, so it was with mixed emotions that they assembled for briefing on the evening of the third day. The news that they would be returning to Russian bases and not flying on back to Italy after the next mission was received with general satisfaction.

The most carefree members of the Eastern Command are Col Paul Cullen and the four other pilots who fly P-38s on photographic missions over target areas. They talk casually of running over to Capri for the week end. When they transferred to the Eastern Command bases, part of their group remained behind.

Among the latter was Lt George Myers, twenty-one, of Flora, Illinois, and Indianapolis. The day before the bombers took off for Russia, he was sent out on a photographic-reconnaissance mission with other members of his group. Somewhere around the crest of the Carpathians he lost contact with his mates. After cruising about, he spotted some planes in the distance and flew toward them to investigate. They proved to be five German Focke-Wulf 190s. They chased him, but he outdistanced them.

Lost in the Sky

By that time, as he was running low on gas, he decided to head for Russian instead of trying to get back to Italy. On the ground below he could see gun flashes, which he took to indicate the front.

Seeing a good-sized city with an airport, he made for it, but before landing he buzzed the airport just to make sure it was inside the Russian lines. As he raced low over the field, ack-ack and small-arms fire opened up on him. It was distinctly unhealthy, so he gathered altitude and flew on. Checking his map, he discovered the hot place was Jassy, and decided rightly it was still in German hands.

Presently he saw water which looked like the Black Sea. He headed inland and, seeing another city with an airport, circles and landed. This proved to be a city on the lower Dnieper. The Russian airport authorities were puzzled by the irregularity of it all, as Myers had neither passport nor other means of identification beyond his uniform and dog tag. They were also perplexed that neither pilot nor plane carried any arms whatever. Photographic planes don't. However, they soon sized up the situation, and the colonel took him home, where he gave him supper and lodgings and introduced him to his wife and daughter, who welcomed him as a hero. Next morning he was flown up to an American base. Having no foreknowledge of the Eastern Command's existence, he was astonished to find American bombers parked all over the field, and still more surprised a few minutes later when, in the midst of a typical American camp, he ran into four members of his group.

From commanding officers down, the men of the Eastern Command are keenly conscious of their unique responsibilities--of the fact that they are here not merely to do usual routine jobs required of Air Force ground crews everywhere. They know they are a selected bunch with a diplomatic mission to perform; that it is up to them to prove, both the the people here and the folks back home that Americans and Russians can get along and work together harmoniously at close quarters, and to show our Eastern ally that the American people want to be friends with them. The progress made so far is up to the best expectations, and augurs well for the future of Soviet-American relations, both now and after the war. As one G.I. put it, "For all our differences, we and the Russkis are very much like each other."



FORMER LOCAL MAN LANDS BIG BOMBER ON A "WHEEL AND HALF"

WITH THE 15TH ARMY AIR FORCE--A blown tire on take-off from an Italian base failed to keep one B-17 AAF Flying Fortress pilot from flying his 50th mission and coming back to make a wobbly but perfect landing on a "wheel and a half."

It was on January 29 that 2nd Lt George W. A. Brandt, Jr., a 24-year-old former RCAF pilot of Oceanside, Cal. (708 N. Pacific St.) thundered his Fortress, "Queenie," down the runway. The target was the railroad yards at Fabriano, Italy. Brandt was shooting for the half-century mark.

"I was about two-thirds down the runway when the right tire blew out," he said. "Luckily I had flying speed, and yanked the plane into the air.

"Once up, I tried retracting the wheels, but the blown tire was at such an angle that the wheel wouldn't go into the [nacelle?]. I sweated around with the darn thing awhile, trying dives and climbs until it finally went up into retracted position.

"I could have landed then, I suppose, but I wanted No. 50. Anyway, by this time the other planes had assembled in formation so I joined them and we headed for the target."

After a successful mission, Brandt circled his field until the runway was clear of other planes. Anxious watchers gathered on the ground. The pilot elected to come in on his wheels rather than bang up the plane by "belly-flopping."

I told the crew to gather in the radio room and prepare for a crash landing," Brandt continued, "and had the engineer release the emergency hatches so we could get out in a hurry after landing. The I made a normal approach, using full landing flaps and as little throttle as possible."

"Queenie" skimmed in and balanced delicately on its good left wheel and tail wheel until it lost speed. Then the 25 ton monster settled on the useless tire, lurched, but never wavered from a straight line.

"I kept it straight with the two right engines and a touch of left brake," Brandt said. "I cut the switches. We were stopped on the runway."

The quiet, stocky pilot learned his flying with the RCAF in Canada in 1941 and first saw service in the U.S. Air Forces as a flying sergeant in 1942. With a commission and a Fortress he first flew in combat in the Mediterranean Aug. 6, 1943, with an attack on Messina, Sicily. Before flying No. 50, he ranged over Italy, France, Greece, Germany, Austria and the Balkans.

Born in Pasadena, Brandt was graduated in 1938 from Laguna Beach, Cal, high school where he was president of the senior class and was voted the school's outstanding trackman in his last year. His wife, Ladean Brandt, lives in Baton Rouge, La.

War Diary

We had read only two pages of this superb account of one man's service when we set it aside for copying for inclusion in this month's newsletter.

We are indebted to our own **George Frame** for this account which answers a lot of questions. George has almost total recall, and from his recollections I can almost see Africa.

We thank you, George.



gfc

The summer of 1936, an old man near our farm in eastern New Mexico had an old Curtis Robin airplane and he would let me fly with him. Often times he would land in our cow pasture, and we would take off from there. I was really excited about flying. I must have been about 15 or 16 years old. This old guy would let me handle the controls sometimes which consisted of two large wheels on the flight controls. Not long after that an older friend of mine joined the U.S. Air Corps and was assigned to a bomber group at Kelley or March Field. At the time I think he was flying the Boeing B-18'. I was eager to join the U.S. Air Corps, but I wasn't old enough, nor was I out of high school. This friend would write to me and tell me about the U.S. Air Corps and all of the excitement....it sounded exciting to me at the time, etc.

When World War II started in 1939, and when Hitler invaded Poland and drove across France, I would keep up with all of the events, as I had a short wave radio which would bring in all of the action. Many times I could get Hitler's speeches direct from Germany. Many of his speeches were way into the night, but I would stay up to hear them. At the time I had an idea that the United States would not be able to stay out of the war in Europe....sooner or later we'd be in it regardless.

Life Magazine, which came out every week would show the Battle of Britton. It would show the RAF vs Germany's Luftwaffe. The magazine would feature actual gun camera shots of the RAF when they would down a German plane. Also, I kept informed about the Flying Tigers in China.

My folks were not to keen on me joining the U.S. Air Corp. After I finished high school I joined the service at Clovis, New Mexico. It was at Clovis where Cannon Air Force Base is today, is where the old Barn-Stormer would come and put on air shows. I remember one of the old pilots by the name of Tex Rankin. He had his name painted upside down on his old World War I Jenney. As he would make a low pass over the field he would flip over so everyone could read his name. The old air shows were really exciting. There were a lot of women pilots also. I recall once when a woman pilot crossed the field at 200 miles per hour and picked up a red flag with the wing tip not more than 10 feet from the ground.

At Portales, New Mexico with a group of other young men, I took the bus to the Santa Fe Induction Center. On the way we stopped at Vaughn, New Mexico. At the time, in the bus station at Vaughn there were slot machines to play. I had about \$ 10.00 left in my pocket, so I got some quarters and started playing the machine. I must have put in two or three quarters with no luck. About that time some guys at the bus station started playing the slot machine, finally they gave up, so I said to myself "what the heck", so I played one quarter....nothing happened, then I put in my last quarter, and behold I stuck it rich. \$ 35.00 came rolling out. I was rich, because in 1942 thirty five dollars was a lot of money for a young kid. This really made the other guys playing the machine mad and started cussing everyone.

When we reached Santa Fe, New Mexico all of us guys stayed at the La Fonda Hotel while we were processed at the Induction Center and waiting to be shipped out to the army camp at Fort Bliss, Texas. When we left Santa Fe, we were placed on a Greyhound bus to Albuquerque. From there we went by train to El Paso, Texas. At the Army Reception Center in El Paso, we were given all kinds of vaccination for: Yellow Fever, the Plauge, Typhus, Chlora, etc. All together there must have been about six or seven shots.

The Yellow Fever shot would be the one which would cause us the most trouble, according to our drill instructor. I remember the morning when we were to get the shots. It must have been about July 3rd, as I went into the service June 30, 1942. We were marched over to the medics and lined up outside in the hot July sun. In El Paso the July sun can reach 110 degrees without any trouble. The sun didn't hurt me as I was from New Mexico and use to the heat, but those poor GI's from the east really suffered. I was standing in front of an older man who had been in the army before, and he told me, when you go in for the Yellow Fever shot, to come out and sit down over in the shade of the building and hold your head down between you knees and you will be O.K. We had noticed a lot of tough guys were saying "nothing to it". As they would walk away from the medics, they would go about ten feet and faint dead away. I took heed to the older man and was O.K. We must have been given all of the shots at the same time, because everyone was really ill for about most of the morning. That afternoon we went on a five mile hike up the mountain. If you have every been to El Paso you will notice there are few trees on their mountain.

At El Paso we were given our first uniforms. In the army there are only two sizes.....large or small. It was at Fort Bliss where I first had my taste of Army Chow. I thought to myself, surely this can't be food. It was there where I had my first taste of S O S..

During World War II all of soldiers were pooled together, " young or old". This was especially true for Army Reception Centers such as Fort Bliss. Often times you would see some poor GI that had been drafted and sent to some base, and later his family would show up, only to find out that he had been shipped out,, perhaps all the way across the United States. What made it even worse, his wife or children didn't have any place to stay, nor did they have any money. You see most people were just coming out of the great depression and no one seem to have money or a place to live.

After I was shipped out of Fort Bliss, I was assigned to Sheppard Field Texas. At Sheppard we would go through all kinds of training and drill instructions. The army use to like to repeat every thing. At Fort Bliss I had drill instruction, but I got to repeat it again at Sheppard. At Sheppard we had a parade ground we called " shady nook". The only problem. There were no trees less than five miles away. Sheppard was really a hot place that summer of 1942. No aircondition in the barracks or nothing. The drinking water was like hot water and we had to take salt tablets to keep from heat exhaustion. At evening review of the flag, sometimes we would have 20 or 30 GI's faint from heat exhaustion. When these GI's would faint we would just let then lay there until after retreat and then the medics would come along and do something for them.

At Sheppard there were 12 mess halls and nearly every Friday night when we had fish, at least one of the mess halls would have food poisoning. I never at the fish. One of the things about the mess halls. You had to eat everything you took on the tray, whether you liked it or not.

After a few weeks at Sheppard, I was given orders to ship out. Destination unknown at the time, as all military personnel were kept in the dark as to which train they would be on, etc. As we left the base, the train headed north through Amarillo, Texas and into Colorado. The next morning we would stop at Pueblo, Colorado and stay there most of the day waiting for more troops to join us. While in Pueblo, many of the local town people would come down to the train, and a lot of the girls would stand around and talk to the GI's. Late in the afternoon we pulled out and headed north again. Our next stop was Salt Lake City, Utah. Our stay in Salt Lake would be for about two days. I remember the base well, as the wind would blow and cause a grey looking dust all over the place. It wasn't much of a base to be stationed at. While there I remember that a group of flying Staff Sergeant Pilots landed there in T-6's. These guys were really hot pilots, and they were on their way to joining a fighter group in California. In about two days we pulled out of Salt Lake Air Corp base and headed north again. This time we went through Idaho and into Washington state. Our destination was Walla Walla, Washington. Here we would join a B-17 Heavy Bomber Group which had just be formed out of Idaho. Walla Walla was sure different the Sheppard Field. It was a lot greener, but it sure rained a lot. I was assigned to the 347th Sqdn., of the 99th. The group was getting training on the B-17's. The aircrews would get flight training while ground personnel would get further training on the service and repair of the B-17's.

While at Walla Walla we would be issued jungle equipment of all kinds. We didn't understand why we would be getting this kind of equipment as the base sure wasn't in the jungles. We had all kinds of rumors going around at the base. Some said we were to be shipped out to the South Pacific, etc. Some even said they knew we were to go to New Guinea somewhere. Training continued, then one day we were ordered to turn in all of the jungle equipment and make ready for departure the next day. Destination unknow again for most of us. When we boarded the troop train, which consisted of about 30 coaches pulled by one of the largest steam engines I had ever seen, I noticed that we were heading east.....for two days we went east across the northern plain states of Wyoming, Nebraska and Montana. The train really picked up speed when we reached the plain states. When we would go through some of the small towns we would just about blow them off as speeds would be around 80 miles per hour. I couldn't understand why the hurry. On the third day we pulled into Sioux City, Iowa. At Sioux City Air Base our group would get further training. Then one day we were given orders to pack up again. This time we were headed north on the train. The further we went north the deeper the snow was getting. Soon we were into South Dakota and headed for Watertown, South Dakota. As we pulled into Watertown, the wind was blowing and a heavy snow storm was on. When we got off the train we loaded onto trucks and went out to the airport. The base had just been opened, and we were the first GI's to be stationed there. Our living quarters were nothing more than tar paper shacks. It was really cold in Watertown during the winter of 1942, as the temp would reach 40 below zero with deep snow every where. The ground was frozen solid and when you walked on it, it was like walking on broken glass. Snow would be piled up against the tar paper shacks we were living in and it was like being at the North Pole.

Most of our time was spent at the canteen on the base at Watertown. And when we were not doing this we would go over the fence and walk into Watertown at night. We were suppose to get a pass but seldom did. I remember one time that a bunch of us guys decided one night to run to the bath house in our birthday suits . The bath house was about two city blocks from our living quarters in the tar paper shacks. That night it must have been 30 below zero when we all made a run for the bath house.

Our butts were just about frost bitten....After we had taken a shower we made another run back to the living quarters in the tar paper shacks. I remember that my feet sure did hurt for a long time.

Christmas 1942 was spent on the base at Watertown, South Dakota. The people in the community really treated the servicemen great. At one time they gave a banquet for all on the base....there must have been five hundred people to come out for the event, inclusive of all on base and local town folk. We would have basketball games with the local high school players, etc. We would be invited out on the farms to hunt pheasant. The winter's in South Dakota were always full of game birds of all sorts, rabbits, etc. Not far from the base was a large lake which was frozen over about 36 inches thick, as it stayed about 40 below zero all that winter. On the lake, the local farmers were cutting ice to be stored for the summer. The ice was cut by large hand saws and the farmers would use horses to drag the ice into the long wooden sheds along the lake. Each cube of ice would be covered with straw and then another layer of ice put into place until the ice shed was filled. To me that was interesting since I had never seen such down in New Mexico.

I remember while we were still in Sioux City, that we lost a B-17 during a night training mission. " In the Air Corps " we had a phrase that went something like this. " They bought the farm". This meant that when a plane crashed all all lives lost....they had " bought the farm". Well that night when the crew on that B-17 bought the farm, it was snowing and the visibility was less than a mile. As the plane approached the runway, the snow really started coming down. The pilot, I'm sure couldn't see the runway. He either overshot the field or lost the runway, resulting in crashing into a small hill with a loud explosion and a ball of fire. I remember that night, and hearing the plane pass over our living quarters very low....then all of a sudden the ground shook with a flash of light and explosion.

Most of January 1942 would be spent in Watertown, South Dakota doing just about nothing. Other units of the 99th were scattered all over South Dakota. One at Mitchell, some at Rapid City, etc. One of our jobs were to pack supplies for an overseas assignment. We knew that we were bound for overseas....but where was the question?

We had a GI in our unit that wasn't nothing but a trouble maker. I remember one time at Watertown when this guy went into town and started throwing full whisky bottles in a drug store. In Watertown that winter all drug stores carried whiskey bottles out on shelves much like soap, etc. Finally the cops came and put this guy in jail back at the base. The guy had been nothing but a trouble maker from the day he was assigned to the 99th. The squadron would regret later that he wasn't booted out of the air corp right then and there....

About the 15th of February word came that we would be soon leaving Watertown. Destination unknown to most of us..... The day we boarded the train to leave Watertown, the whole town just about turned out to say goodbye to us. The departure was suppose to be a military secret but I think about all in South Dakota had knowledge of it...

For the next couple of days and nights we continued to head south. Then one day we went past the federal pen at Leavenworth, Kansas. I knew right then that we were bound for some place either in Texas or Oklahoma. Rumors were that we were to go to Tinker Field, Oklahoma.

The next morning we reached Tinker Field, Oklahoma. As the train come to a stop we were told to debark. Later that morning we were assigned living quarters. In just a little while we were told to assemble outside our quarters. Lt. Scarborough advised that we were to be given two three day passes, and that we could either go into Oklahoma City and spend the leave or go home, that is if you didn't live more that 300 miles from the base. That wasn't much of a deal, since most of the troops lived in the east such as New York, Penna., N.J. etc. By then most of the GI's give a dam....they just went. All of us took our three day passes and went into Oklahoma City to try and get a train or bus, which was nearly impossible as you had to wait about two days to even get a ticket home. When I saw that it was nearly impossible to get out on a train or bus, I said to myself, I'm not waiting around here. I simply walked out the front door to the train station and walked across the street to a street car line. In just a minute a street car came along. On the front of the street car it said something about going west, I can't remember. When the car stopped I asked the driver if it went close to Hi-Way 66, and he said yes.

When the street car reached the end of the line it was just across the street from the old 66 Hi-Way. I walked across the road and waited for about five minutes. " I said to myself", I can be in New Mexico in a very few hours, I'll just thumb a ride with someone, since I had done this many times. In just about five minutes a Shamrock Fuel Truck stopped and asked if I wanted a ride and where was I heading. I told him New Mexico, so he told me to get in as he was going to Amarillo, Texas. I rode all the way to Amarillo and he let me out at the Amarillo Greyhound Bus Station. I took the bus all the way to New Mexico and I was home before my passes even started.

After my leave was just about over, I took the bus back to Tinker Field. While at Tinker we just about did nothing. We did however get the usual marching and shots the army had for us. Then in about a week we heard rumors that we were to be shipped out for someplace in the east. Finally we were placed on another troop train and headed east. For four days the train continued going east. We went through cities such as St. Louis, Mo., Cincinnati, Ohio, Wheeling, W. Virginia, Pittsburgh, Pa., and finally to Trenton, N.J. Finally on the fifth day out of Tinker Field, we pulled to the outskirts of New Brunswick, New Jersey. The army camp was just a litte way from down town and it was know as Camp Kilmer. It wasn't much of a base, as it was in the swamps and thick with trees. I longed for the wide open spaces of New Mexico.

At Camp Kilmer, we still didn't have much to do other than wait. The army always had a phrase " hurry-up and wait". Again we had to take infantry traing over again. We would run, climp ropes and obstackles. One morning we all climbed into trucks and drove to Fort Dix, New Jersey. At Fort Dix we went out to the firing range. I remember that we had some new GI's that had never fired a gun before and were scared to-death of them. This never was a fear because on our ranch I had used all kinds of guns to hunt with. I was well acquainted with rifles.

At Kilmer we had no idea as to why we were there in the first place. Rumors were that we would ship overseas from this base soon, and the rope training was for getting off a ship if it were sunk a sea. While there we would hear that many ships were being sunk by the German U-Boats just off the coast of New York.

While at Kilmer, the base was under constant alert, as GI's were being shipped out every day. Kilmer, during World War II was the shipping point for all going overseas, and you didn't dare mention, even causally what outfit that was scheduled to go. We were grilled nearly every day to keep our mouths shut. We use to see signs saying, "the slip of the lip will sink a ship". I often wondered if the Germans knew more about it than we did.

Our B-17 Group was alerted several times to be shipped out, but at the last minute the alert would be cancelled. "It was kinda like the man on death row". We always had our bags packed and ready to go at the moments notice.

Nearly every night all along the east coast there were black-out alerts. Often times we would hear the air raid sirens making a loud wailing sound. It made chill bumps down the back of your neck. Once I was in town when the alarm was sounded at night, every thing went black and a wierd feeling would come over you. What made it even worse in the winter of 1943 was the damp and low clouds that hung over the New Jersey countryside making it more spookey, etc.

I think the entire time I was at Kilmer a lot of us didn't eat at the mess hall. Most of us ate at the canteen. I remember that we had a Ft. Lt., who would put on a Pfc jacket so he could eat with us. I can't think of his name. Most of our group was assigned to this Lt., and he would take us out to drill, only we didn't do much drilling. After we would go over hill we would all fall out and shoot the bull for the aloted time we were suppose to be drilling. This Lt., was a pilot on a B-17 and I think he was left at Sioux City when he joined our sqdrn.,. He was a Yale grad., but he was really interesting. After we were shipped to North Africa this Lt., was a pilot for General Doolittle at various times. I think the guy was a star football player at Yale.....

At Kilmer there was no way you could make a phone call anywhere without going through the base telephone exchange.

At Kilmer there were troops that had very little training. I remember one time when we talked to a GI that was in a tank outfit. He said that he had only been in the army about a month and was being shipped overseas. Another time we talked to some GI's that had been shipped out but their boat was sunk not far from New York and were back at Kilmer at the time.

It wasn't long after Easter Sunday when we were alerted to get ready to go. I can't think of the exact date. I remember that it was early in the morning perhaps about 4:00 when we boarded a troop train which had come into Kilmer to get us. I do remember that it wasn't much of a day as it was misty rain, low clouds all around. In a little while the train pulled out of Kilmer slowly and we were on our way to the New York harbor. After about two or three hours, the troop train went aboard a ferry boat, which carried us up the Hudson River to a ship that was tied up at pier # 3. I remember seeing this number on the pier. We were told to get ready to get off the train and stand by with our bags. It wasn't but a few minutes when the office in charge, said, when I call your name you are to take your bags and go up the "gang walk" of the ship.

As I stood waiting for my name to be called out, I noticed along the hull of the ship its name. I read out, "The Edmond B. Alexander". We later learned the ship had been a German World War I steamship, and had been down in South America for all those years. When World War II came along our government needed ships very badly so they took it over. It had been brought to the Brookly Navy Yards and outfitted again for service. We also learned this was its maiden voyage since repair and out fitting.

In just a few minutes I heard my name called out and I went up the gang walk with my bags. As I went onto the ship, a thousand things crossed my mind.....would I ever see the United States again. At that moment..... I really realized that I was about to enter into World War II and this was for real.

On board the ship, there were perhaps an estimated 8,000 GIs. The troops were from all kinds of units. Some were from the tank units, U.S. Air Corps, infantry. We even had a black unit. In those times the black troops were seperated from the white troops. I remember that all of the black troops were placed in the hole of the ship up forward and no white troops were allowed in that area.

Most of our unit was quartered below deck in the mid-section. I thought to myself, I'm not going down into the hole of the ship, I'll just stay somewhere on top deck. So a bunch of us just dropped our bags down near the mid section and made ready for the journey. I really don't think anyone cared just as long as we were on the ship.

About two or three days before we left Kilmer, we had been assembled together and told not to buy a bunch of goodies to take along on the ship, as the Red Cross would be giving out all sorts of goodies once we were on-board. Somehow I didn't believe the guy, so I went to the PX (Post Exchange) and bought me two boxes of butterfinger candy bars which I stowed in my bags. I said to myself, these just might come in handy, as you never know if the Navy had any food worth eating. I would later be thankful that I had gone to the PX for the purchase of the candy.

Even today some forty five years later, every time I see a butterfinger I'm reminded of the two boxes I took along during World War II.

When we finally went on board the "Edmond B. Alexander" it must have been about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Just as soon as we put down our bags we started watching the longshoremen load the ship's hole with supplies. This was really interesting to me, a kid from New Mexico, who had never been on a ship larger than a row boat. You see we didn't have to much water in New Mexico.

The Edmond B. Alexander was about 800 foot in length and about 200 ft., across at the middle. It was the biggest thing I had ever seen. Aboard the ship were thousands of GIs and several hundred longshoremen making the ship ready to sail the next day. Most of the supplies were in wooden crates so we really couldn't tell what was in them. However, we could see that some of the cratescontained some kind of explosives. I remember some of the GIs standing close to me as we looked into the hole, saying, I sure hope those crates doesn't have bombs in them.

Just as I figured, all that afternoon prior to our sailing the next morning we didn't see a single Red Cross worker handing out goodies that we were promised. I said to myself, it's a good thing that I brought along the candy bars.

Just as darkness was descending, we were advised that soon we could go to chow.....we would soon really find out what it would be like to eat at a ship's galley. There were long lines of GIs trying to get in to eat... everything was in a state of total confusion. It reminded me of when I was on the farm trying to slop the hogs, as food was nothing more than Navy beans....bread and coffee. "I was really glad at that instant that I had brought along the butterfinger candy bars"

The "Edmond B. Alexander" was tied up at pier # 3, just across from downtown Manhattan, and early the next morning I was awakened from sleep by loud voices on the pier. I immediately went to the rail to see what was going on, and when I looked over the side of the ship, you could see men removing the huge ropes that were holding the ship to the dock. In just a few minutes I could hear the tug boats starting to push the ship out from the dock into the Hudson River....we were on our way to sea. Just as the tug boats pushed the ship out, the morning sun was just starting to come up and its rays of sunlight were making long streaks of light through the sky-scrapers of downtown Manhattan. The whole morning sky was an orange ball, and you could smell the early morning smells of the waterfront. In just a little while the ship was out in the middle of the Hudson River and you could feel the ship's engine starting to turn the screws in the aft section. As we looked over the side you could also see the churning of the water caused by the ship's large screws. About that time, it seems that..... every GI on the ship rushed to the rail to see the departure and to say goody to the United States. As I stood by the rail I noticed that everything was real quite, not a single GI was making a sound.....I'm sure that each had thoughts going through his mind....

At first the ship moved slowly down the Hudson River, past the Statue of Liberty and through the narrow channel of Staten Island, on past Brooklyn, then out into the Atlantic Ocean. It took us most of the day to get out to sea. The ship sailed along the coast for a long time, then it started going further and further away from the shore. I remember that we then took a southern direction and sailed this position for about two days. Frequently, we would see B-25s making low passes over the ship as they were flying coastal watch for us, as Germany U-Boats were active in the waters just off the coast of New York. During the first couple of days, the Navy gun crews would test fire their guns. The first time the gun crews went into action, just about every one was a little scared as we didn't have any idea what was coming off.

The Edmond B. Alexander's Navy gun crews had several 6 inch cannons on the aft and forward decks, and had 20 mm guns along the side and top decks plus a bunch of 50 caliber machine guns scattered along and at various points on the ship. The navy gun crews would have alerts all through the day and night and would make a mad dash to their guns each time the ship's siren would be sounded.

The fourth day at sea we joined a very large convoy of ships. Just to the port of our ship, was the battleship "Texas". I remember that as far as the eye could see...nothing but ships. It was a sight that I shall always remember, and right in the middle was the Edmond B. Alexander. Not long after we joined the convoy, we took up a more eastern direction. The ship would run a "zig zag" course most of the day, and I'm sure it also ran the same course at night. Each evening just before sunset you could see flying fish all along the side of the Edmond B. Alexander. Sometimes you could see the fins of sharks and other kinds of fish in the ocean. At night you could look over the side of the ship and see the foam of the sea against the ship making a white phosphorescence light. During the early journey the sea was relative calm and the nights would be totally dark, on the distant convoy of ships you could see the dark shadow or outline of the nearest ships....there were no ship running navigation lights. It was a total black out so the German subs could not see us.

Each night as it was about to get dark our group of GIs would stand along the rail of the ship and talk about what we would do if the ship would be attached at night, and how we would get off of the ship. Nearly every night we would be joined by a Fst. Lt., by the name of Commando Burt, that's what we called him. He was one of the Lts., who would wanted us to climb ropes, etc., back a Kilmer. I wish that I could remember this guys name, but I have forgotten it. This Fst. Lt., had been a shoe salesman prior to coming into the service.

On the seventh day we were in huge ocean swells, sometimes you could only see a few hundred yards on each side of the ship. One minute the ship would be down in the bottom of the swell and the next on top. The ship would go up and down and side to side, and this made a lot of us sea sick. Each time the ship's bow would go down it would plow into the waves and ocean spray would come crashing down on the ship's bow. It was like riding on a giant roller coaster.....then all of a sudden the sea went dead calm....you could see for 30 miles. It reminded me of the great plains of west Texas.

It wasn't long after that, in the middle of the night when we heard a loud explosion in the aft of the ship, and then all of a sudden the ship stopped dead. We could tell that something was bad wrong, however, we didn't get an alarm to put on our life jackets or nothing. Finally someone said that we were having engine trouble. When the sun came up the next morning you could not see a single ship in our convoy...we had dropped out of the convoy during the night. All that day the Edmond B. Alexander was dead in the water. Then finally late in the afternoon of the eighth day we started to move on our own power. But instead of going 22 knots we just limp't along at about 5 knots. Later we found out the main engine had exploded during the night and just quit....the mechanics of the merchant marine repaired the engine to where we could at least move.

I remember when we were stopped in the water you could see for at least 30 miles in any direction. The ship would just drift with the ocean current. One minute we would be straight and the next the ship would slowly turn around. Everyone was just a little scared, however there were no one that became panic'd....we just accepted it and trusted that all would be O.K. I remember that Commando Burt said that if we get out of this alive it will be an act of God or a Miracle. We were just lucky because if a German U-Boat had come upon us, it could have sunk the ship without any trouble. A sub could have sent us to the bottom without any trouble at all.

When you are on the ocean in dead calm conditions your mind plays tricks on you. You think you can see land....towns....farms and all kind of things.

As our ship limp't along at 5 knots, we learned that we would put into port at Gibraltar where we could get the engine repaired. About a day before we reached Gibraltar, our ship was approached late one evening just before sundown, by a low flying seaplane coming out of the north. This really shook up everyone, especially the navy guy's manning the guns. This was the first time we noticed the navy gun crews man all of their guns. In just a few minutes the seaplane started using its blinker lights, and then it made a low pass along side of the ship. As it passed we could see on the airplane side, "U.S. Navy". It was a Navy patrol bomber looking for the Edmond B. Alexander. Later we learned that we were about 500 miles off the coast of Spain, just south of the Azores, right in the middle of Hitlers' sub operations.

The night before we reached Gibraltar, I remember seeing lights along some shore, or at least I thought I was seeing lights. We later learned that we were north of the Maderis Islands. The lights were sure a welcome sight. It wasn't long after that when we started seeing other lights. I think this was either Spain or Portugal, as the next morning about 6 o'clock we entered into the " Straights of Gibraltar", and soon docked at the Gibraltar seaport.

After about a day at Gibraltar, our ship's engine was repaired, and then, late in the afternoon we headed out to sea again. This time we were in the Mediterranean....at the time we had no idea where we would be going, however, I noticed that we were not far off from shoreline just to the south....this was North Africa. As we pulled out of Gibraltar the ship would first turn one direction and then go another as we were passing through a mine field. I know it was a mine field because you could see something that looked like wooden boxes in the ocean. Then the second day out of Gibraltar we slowly docked at the seaport of Oran, North Africa.

In a little while, I think it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, we pulled along side the harbor and the ship was tied to the pier. It was announced over the ship's loud speaker that it would be some time before we were to leave the ship. In the meantime we watched the Arab longshoremen and other GIs unload the holds of the Edmond B. Alexander. It was noticed the ship's holds contained all kinds of aviation gasoline in 55 gallon drums....chemicals....explosives....bombs....you name it, it was on the Edmond B. Alexander. At the time we thought that if a German U-Boat had fired a round at us when we were dead in the water we would have gone up like the atomic bomb.

As we were being tied up at Oran, a bunch of men on shore said, " hey you guys are suppose to be sunk", because only yesterday they had heard " Axis Sally", the Germany Propaganda Radio queen, state that German U-Boats had sunk the Edmond B. Alexander at sea.

When the ship had tied up at Oran it must have been about 3 o'clock. Finally about four hours later we were told over the ship's loud speaker, for all 99th personnel to get their bags together and assemble along the deck to the gang walk to exit the ship. As we walked down the gang walk some of the men again told us more about what they had heard " Axis Sally" say on the radio. They told us , the convoy which we were in, had sunk a German sub the next day after the Edmond B. Alexander had dropped out during the night..." Truly it was an Act of God that we were spared".

It was while we were on the boat that we would experience our first taste of C-Rations. I remember the food we had on the boat was about the worse that I had ever experienced.....mostly navy beans...hard bread and water. However, I did fair pretty well since I had brought along the butterfinger candy bars. The butterfingers were about all I lived on. Regarding the C-Rations: some GI said he had found food in wooden boxes....so we broke into the cases and had our taste of C-Rations for the first time....they sure were a delicacy....

C-Rations consisted of food in tin cans. For breakfast you would get a can filled with powdered eggs with bits of ham in it. It was kinda like eating potted food of some kind. Along with the breakfast can you would get another can that contained flat hard round bread, with a packet of instant coffee or tea. For lunch you would get a can of beans with the same flat round hard bread with an instant drink. For dinner or supper, you would get a can of meat hash with the same round flat hard bread and drink.

After we got off the ship, we assembled along side with our bags. We were told to leave our bags near a bunch of trucks which were parked not far away, as they would be hauling our bags to the next base. After putting down our bags, we all assembled in lines of eight to ten people abreast and started marching off the dock. We must have marched about a mile....as we were marching I remember that Tommy Shannon, who had been in the field artillery, started singing, " when the casons roll on" and he wanted everyone to sing along with him. Tommy Shannon would be killed in combat not long after that... After marching for a while we were loaded into trucks and taken to our next base which was at the Oran airport. Here our quarters would be " pup-tents" and this would be the kind of living quarters we would have for about the next six to eight months.

It was at Oran when we would have our first air raid by the German air force. At about 1 o'clock in the morning, the air raid warning signal sounded. We all jumped out of our pup tents and started looking towards the seaport....all you could see were AA tracer shells going off. It looked like a " Fourth of July" fireworks. About that time everyone started running for a fox hole as someone said that " German Para-Troops were landing at the airport". We all grabbed our rifle's and ammo and took off. For some reason I couldn't believe this was the real think. I said to myself, this must be a dry run. But about then a guy standing next to me started crying and was really shook up. Come to find out this GI had been at Pearl Harbor when the Japs bombed it. When I saw this guy I had a feeling this was for real and took off to the fox hole. I later learned this guy was Tiny Allen. Tiny was a big GI about 6' 4" and weighed over 200 pounds.

For the next two or three nights, the Germans would send over their bombers to raid the harbor at Oran. It was a good thing that we had gotten off the Edmond B. Alexander. I remember the Germans would wait until the full of the moon. In North Africa the moon is just like it is in New Mexico....really bright. " We called this the bomber moon".....many a night we would see German bombers come over when the moon was fully bright...

In a day or so, we were loaded into trucks and taken to a railroad depot. Here we loaded on to what is known as 40 & 8, which meant in France, either 40 men or 8 horses to each box-car. The 99th ground personnel rode this train as it crawled across the North Africa desert. The train was run by the French Railway System of North Africa, and I don't think it went more than 30 miles per hour all the way to our next destination. We must have rode this stupid train for three or four days, and I doubted that it was more than 150 miles. As we would ride this train we would see thousands of Arab children, where they come from no one knows. We use to throw them cans of C-Rations as we went past their towns, These kids would chase the train for a mile or so. I remember that it was really hot that summer in North Africa and as we would go through these little towns the flies would be every where. All of the local Arabs would be in rags. I think they were just about to starve to death. As we would go past grave yards the smell would be about all you could stand....you see when the Arabs would die they would make a box and put the body in it and cover the body with cement and place it on top of the ground, and when the cement would crack or a bomb hit the grave yard the body would be exposed.

Finally we reached our airfield in the middle of a wheat field. Here we put up our pup-tents and other equipment and were in the business of fighting the war.

Our airfield wasn't more than a wheat field leveled off for airplanes to take-off and land. The sand and wind would blow day and night. After about a week of this I decided to dig me a hole in the ground and put my pup-tent over it. This worked out a lot better as it was cooler during the hot day time. Sometimes the temperature would reach 110 degrees in the shade, only there wasn't any shade in a 100 miles. We had what was known as "Socorro's" meaning hot winds off the "Sahara". These winds would blow for three days and night straight, and then suddenly the wind would stop for three days and nights.....then start all over again. Sometimes the dust would be so bad you could hardly breath. At one time the 99th issued dust mask for us to wear, but it was hard to work on the airplanes in them.

The airplanes continued to fly missions and the ground personnel worked on the airplanes day and night. Sometimes an engine would last but a few hours before it had to be changed. Often times the mechanics had no spare parts, so they would cannibalize another airplane to keep some airplanes in the air. I have seen many of the ground personnel work around the clock to keep airplane flying. Often times after they had work all day and most of the night, for rest they would get to guard the airplanes at night.

At one time spare parts were so in short supply that parts were hand made. When we had to fuel the airplanes we would roll up 55 gallon drums of gasoline and using a small hand pump to pump 1800 gallons into the B-17 after a mission. Sometimes it would take nearly all night just to service the aircraft with fuel.

When the wind wasn't blowing, you had hordes of flies every where. Where the flies came from was a puzzle. The flies would get into your C-Rations as you tried to eat. You would eat with one hand and fight the flies with the other.

North Africa was a far cry from the cold winter in South Dakota. Our wheat field landing strip was near a railroad and a little place called Navarin. Much of North Africa reminds me of New Mexico more than any place we have been. Sometimes we would go into the little village of Navarin....we called it Satif.

It was ironic....when I joined the air corp it was to get away from the sandstorms and the hot weather.....where did I go but to a place that would make New Mexico look like a sissy. In my early childhood I had lived in the Dust Bowl of West Texas and had lived through the Great Depression, but I had never seen anything like this.....it was an experience I will never forget.

It was at Satif, where one day at lunch time....about 35 black troops were unloading bombs, when all of a sudden the entire bomb dump went up in a terrific explosion. We were standing in chow line about 2 miles but we could feel the explosion. Bomb parts were flying all over the place. Out of the 35 GIs I think at least 30 were killed that day. Then not more than a week later, at the railroad junction, some GIs were unloading aviation fuel, when all of a sudden the train caught fire. It was possible to see the smoke for miles. I think the black cloud when up to about 1000 feet. The GIs were lucky as no one lost their life in this accident.

The 99th continued to operate from the wheat field landing strip. At that time the planes were bombing in Italy and Sicily. It was on a mission when Sgt. Shannon (we called him Tommy) was killed. Sgt Shannon was flying waist gun that day and a piece of flak hit him in the throat.

The day that Tommy Shannon was killed was on my wife's 18th birthday, July 25, 1943. When the plane came into land I knew that something was wrong as a red flare was shot from the plane, signaling that dead was onboard, which would give the first priority to land. The plane stopped at the end of the runway and the medics removed Sgt Shannon from the plane. Blood was all over the waist gunners position. The next day we had Tommy's funeral, and he was buried at a little military cemetery outside of Constantine, North Africa. I served as one of the "Honor Guards". I can't remember all who served, but I think other than myself, it was Sherman Miller and perhaps Gordon Hunsberger.

It was while we were at Satif when we had three GIs go "berserk". These guys were really off their rocker or they were crazy like a fox.... one guy tried to kill another, and then one of the others was sent to the section 8 ward, and we later heard that he tried to steal the base hospital's commander's jeep in the nude. I think this was the guy who wouldn't pull off his leggings when he took a bath. I think this even went on before we ever left the states. Perhaps these guys went off their rocker thinking that they would never return to the states. This crossed my mind a few times but I always thought I'd make it back somehow.

It wasn't long after we were at Satif when the build up for the invasion of Sicily was taking place. We would see thousands of trucks go by our base. Also, we would see hundreds of gliders being towed by C-47. It wasn't long after that when one day a B-17 landed at our field but no one could get close to. We had rumors that it had some kind of secret radio equipment on it. Later we learned that its purpose was to fly along the coast of Sicily and disrupt the German radar as the troops would land.

It was at Satif where we had a B-17 crew chief trading the airplane for eggs. The crew chief told this Arab if he would bring him eggs every day that soon the airplane could be his. It wasn't long, when one day the airplane flew away and the poor Arab didn't get a thing. I think this crew chief was from somewhere in New Jersey.

Arabs use to sell us eggs for just about nothing. If it hadn't been for the Arabs, we called them A-Rabs, we would have just about gone hungry as the food wasn't so good that summer....One of the foods that I remember consisted of rice and small prunes. The only problem you could hardly tell the prunes from the flies that were everywhere.

On about August 20, 1943 (my birthday) the 21st., we packed up and started moving to another base in North Africa. This time we were heading east into Tunisia. As we were going east I can recall seeing thousands and thousands of German POW's moving west....some were walking while others were on the 40 & 8 troop trains. This was the famous Afrika Corp., of General Rommel. Most of these troops were young guys. They looked like the cream of the crop. The further east we would travel the older and younger the German POWs were.

It was later that we heard that many of the German POW were being shipped to the United States on the Edmond B. Alexander, the ship which we had just come over in. Most of the Afrika Corp were sent to work prisons not far from my home in New Mexico. I think most of them were sent to POW camps near Herford, Texas. Years later my mother-in-law was in West Germany and talked to a former German POW who had been at Herford, Texas.

As we were going east into Tunisia we would meet the 40 & 8 trains hauling the Germany and Italian POWs. These troops would ask us for food and cigarets but we were not allowed to give them any. I think they wanted the cigarets so if they passed a gasoline dump they could throw the matches and cigarets in to start a fire. Most of the German troops were well dressed but the poor Italians were just about in rags. You could always tell when you went past a German POW camp, it was always clean and well kept. We couldn't say this for the Italian camps.

The road to our next base in Tunisia went along a paved highway and you could see where some of the fighting had taken place as we would go pass burned out tanks, trucks and often times you would see where both German and American had died in battle as graves were all along the road. The highway took us through some grape vineyards, and sometimes these vineyards would go for miles along the highway.....this was French wine country of North Africa. I remember one time that we stopped along the road and all of us jumped out of the truck and ran into the vineyards to get grapes. We were supposed to wash the grapes and not drink water from any well. This may account for many of us getting the GIs back at Satif.

After about four days on the road we finally reached our next base which was some twenty miles south of Tunis. The airfield wasn't nothing more than the desert scraped out for a landing strip. About a month before we got there the American and Africa Corp of the Germany army had fought it out over the base, as there were still some equipment around the base. Not far from our tent we came across a couple of planes that had been shot down. We heard later that some of the GIs had come across a dead German officer. He was later buried not far from the spot after officials checked his identification.

The base at Tunis was kinda like in a flat mesa with small hills all around. The country side was much like you will find in New Mexico. The days would be hot and the nights cool. The Africian desert can really be pretty, and I felt like I was back in New Mexico. I can remember that the moon would shine so bright at night, as this was in the middle of August. However, about 4 o'clock in the morning you would reach for cover as it would really get cold.

At first when we moved to the Tunis base all of our tents were in company street until one day General Doolittle flew over in a B-25 and word came down pretty quick that all tents would be not more than 200 feet from each other. He said that he didn't want to give the Germans an opportunity to wipe us out all at once. We moved out tent to the top of a small hill over looking the runway. We use to stand outside in the morning and watch the B-17s take off. From our tent you had an excellent view of all of the tent areas and the entire field. I remember that late in the evening just before sundown you could go outside the tent and hear just about everyone talking as the sound in the African desert at about dusk would travel all around us. I remember that some guy about a half mile from our tent was a trumpet player and nearly every evening this guy would practice his trumpet just as it would get dusk, it sure did sound pretty. I never did know what the guys name was.

In the African desert the early morning and late afternoon were the best part of the day. Until you have lived in it you cannot appreciate it. Its much like many parts of New Mexico, it had a certain kind of an enchantment.

While at Tunis, late in the evening just before dusk all of us walked down the hill and attend an open air movie. I think this must have been where the drive in theaters got its start. As all of us would attend the movie you could see guys taking their sheep skin flying jacket and some kind of a cushin to sit on, and all would gather around the movie screen, waiting for the sun to go down behind the hills just to the west of the base. Sometimes we would have to wait until about 8 o'clock because the western skys would still have an orange glow to them, much like you see in the great plains of Texas and New Mexico. Finally about 8:30 or 9 o'clock the movie would start. Sometimes we couldn't see the movie to well as the moon would come up and shine so bright and the African desert would just be like day light....it was really an experience I can even see today. Along about 10 O'clock while attending the movie the African desert would start to get cold, and you would see the guys putting on their sheep skin flying jackets...some would take along a GI blanket to keep warm during the movie. Frequently the movie would last until about midnight...

The 99th continued to bomb in Italy and in southern Europe. The group would hit places like Naples, Foggie and the aircraft factories in southern Austria. By then the 99th had about 100 missions under its belt.

I remember one time, our group had just about all landed late in the evening....it was just before dusk or later, but our runway lights were still on, when all of a sudden we heard this airplane. I knew it wasn't one of our B-17s as they have a particular sound of its on. Anyway this airplane had a sound like the engines were out of synchronization. I knew that wasn't one of us....I told one of the guys that's a German, and about that time this airplane dropped the brightest dam flare I had even see. Right then I thought we were in trouble, but in just a second, a British AA unit just to the west of us starting shooting at the plane with their 90MM guns. The shells from the gun were going off just above us and we could hear flak from that gun hitting the ground....all the guys around us starting looking for a fox hole about that time. I think the German plane had plans to make a bomb run on the landing strip, but the British AA unit chased him off. Later we heard that a RAF Fighter shot the plane down to the east of us.

It wasn't long after the plane incident, when one morning just after daylight when some of our guys were guarding some airplanes down on the flight line, when about four or five German soldiers came walking along on the flight line. Immediately they were captured and took to group headquarters. Come to find out these guys were hiding in the hills all this time and became hungry and wanted to surrender. I think Gordon Hunsberger, one of our guys would could speak German tried to talk to them, but they couldn't understand him to well.

Many times we would be alerted that German or Italian Para-troopers had been dropped near our base. When that happened we would all be issued Thompson machine guns and would stand guard at the airplanes, however, we never did see any of the German or Italian units.

The Africian desert would be so bright at night from the moon shining that we would get under the airplane wings so that no one could see us....we could see anyone as we would stand guard. Sometimes one of us would sit in front of the main landing gear of the 17s while the other guy would sit in the rear. This way we could observe any activity going on around the airplane at night without anyone seeing us.

My military occupation specialty was that of a radio, electrical and communications (mos 754), and I was assigned about three or four B-17s to make sure that all equipment was operational. When I wasn't working on the radio gear, I would often times help out with some of the mechanical work. Frequently the crew chief and I would do engine run-ups. I was trying to learn every thing I could about the 17s.

At Tunis I was assigned to such aircraft as Cotton Eyed Joe...Axis Ass Ache.... Old Man Mose just to name a few. As a communication specialist I would keep all the transmitters tuned....do repair on the communication throughout the aircraft and make sure all the antenna's were still on the airplanes.

I remember one time that our sqdn., got a young lieutenant who had flown P-38s and wanted to transfer over into B-17s. This Lt., needed to be checked out in the 17s before he starting flying missions, so one day I was down on the flight line, the pilot who was going to check out this guy was a Capt., anyway this Capt., and the Lt., wanted to know if I would like to go along while they shot landings and takeoff, so I said sure. That day I said...it would be nice to check out some of the radio equipment in the air. We had made about four or five take-off and landings, when this Capt., said to the Lt., "how about shooting one more landing"... As we went around and lined up with the runway, I noticed this Lt., was touching down about midway down the runway. First I thought he was going to stop, when all of a sudden he pushed the throttles forward and was making another take off, only this time we didn't have much runway. The 17 had used up all the runway and we were running in the grass at the end of the runway, when all of a sudden he yanked it off the ground. We just damn near hit the deep gully at the end of the east runway. Anyway, this Capt., said, "hey" that was damn close.

Another time I went for a ride with Capt., Bankhead, and I didn't realize he was going to altitude or I would have put on some flight gear. The airplane had had an engine change and he was going to slow time the engine. On that test hop there were about four or five guys. That day I was flying at the waist position, and as the plane went to altitude it got colder and colder. It must have been about 40 below zero at..... 30,000 feet. I never was so cold in all of my life, as the waist position.....in the old E model had no window, and the frost was building up on the 50 calibre machine and around the windows. In just a little while one of the guys flying waist with me, who was in armament, "said would you like to test fire your 50". So both of us test fired the 50s. It sounded like two jack hammers in a telephone both.

After about an hour's test hop, Capt., Bankhead put the 17 in a steep hard left turn, pulling about all the Gs the 17 could stand. I looked up at the airspeed indicator and we were reaching pretty close to the red line. We did this for about two or three turns then the airplane leveled off and by then we were just east of the runway, just over the old Roman ruins that lay just to the east of the base.

Speaking of the old Roman ruins. From all indications the ruins had at one time been an aqueduct from Tunis to some place out in the desert. It was estimated the aqueduct must have been at least 2000 years old. Once we flew along it for about 60 miles into the desert.

During the month of August 1943 our group was active on missions nearly every day. I think from the records that was our best month. Our ground personnel worked many long hours keeping the 17s in the air. If we didn't have spare parts we would just cannibalize one of the airplanes. Many times I have seen the mechanics work all night long. When we had to keep

the planes flying, often times our mechanics would have four or five 17s in a circle, taking parts from one to make another go.

Tunis was a very pretty city as it had the European look in many respects. There were parks, wide city streets, etc. Not far from the city was the "Mediterranean Ocean" and it was so blue and pretty. When I would get some time off I would go into Tunis and take a small train and go up to a place called "Cape Bone". Here I could go swimming in the ocean. It was a lot of fun as I had never been in water like an ocean, and it was a change from being out in the African desert.

It was at "Cape Bone" where the Afrika Corp., of the Germany army tried to escape back to Italy. It was here where thousands of Germany's best were killed. Also, it was over "Cape Bone" where the German airforce was destroyed. From all accounts there were as many as a hundred planes shot down in the sea just off "Cape Bone" as the Germans tried to reinforce their troops.

There's a book titled, Rommel's Last Stand, and it tells all about the air battle over "Cape Bone" and just off the coast of Tunis.

At "Cape Bone" the 99th had a rest camp for GI's to go to, and I spent about a week there during the month of August 1943.

When the Germans were defeated in North Africa, especially around Tunis and Bizerte, they left tons of equipment. Much of the equipment consisted of German VW, the military type, guns, motorcycles, etc. I think about everyone had a German motorcycle to play around with. I remember there were quite a few guys on the flight line that had one.....they were a lot of fun to ride.

Just before the invasion of Sicily, as we would sit out at night upon our hill where the tent was, we could watch as German planes tried to bomb the invasion fleet at Bizerte. Many a night we watch as the German planes were being shot down. About all you could tell when they were downed was a long trail of fire. It was much like watching a star fall at night. Bizerte was about 30 miles from our base at Tunis.....

Our squadron armament (the GIs loading the ammunition and bombs on the planes) really worked endless during the summer of 43. These guys worked all kinds of hours. What made it really difficult was the constant changing of bomb loads. Just about time they had loaded the planes with frags or 500 pounders, word would come down from Group Headquarters to change the bomb load. This would really cause havoc with moral, as they thought Group was playing games with them.

When the bomb load was changed, this meant that armament had to spend another three or four hours unloading and reloading the 17s. This really took its toll on moral.

It was just before I went into the hospital with hepatitis that "Tiny Allen" was murdered. The GI which we had trouble with back in Watertown, South Dakota, by the name of Saunders was the guy that killed Tiny. You will recall that someone in our sqdn., was determined to take Saunders with us overseas regardless of what he did back in the states....Well this guy finally killed a person. He should have been shot long before he killed Tiny.

The night Saunders killed Tiny, he and Tiny got into some kind of a hassle over loading bombs on one of the airplanes.

According to the accounts we heard, as Tiny was walking past this guy's tent at night, Saunder's said "hey Tiny". As Tiny turned to see who called out his name, Saunder's shot him with a German rifle.

I remember the next morning, Saunder's was standing right next to me in the chow line. He acted like he had did nothing more than shoot a curr dog. Later that morning the military police came out to the base and took Saunder's to jail in Tunis. Later not long after that we heard that Saunder's tried to escape and he was killed by the military police.

About all I can say about Saunders is that he should have never been taken overseas with the 99th. He should have been booted out of the service long before we went overseas.

It was at Tunis where I contacted "Hepatitis (yellow jaundice)". The 99th had a lot of us in the hospital at one time. We were told that we had contacted some kind of bug or virus and there wasn't much could be done about but hospitalize us for a few weeks.

For about a month before I finally went to see the medics, I would be so sick to my stomach, and every time I would go to chow I'd be so hungry, but when I looked at the food it would simply make me want to go out and vomit. The only problem, I couldn't vomit, maybe if I could have I would have felt better. About the end of three weeks I had lost twenty-five pounds, down from about 160 to about 130. Finally I went on sick call and the medics said, "your're going to the hospital". In just a little while they drove me to the 65th station hospital some 40 miles south of the base. The hospital wasn't far from the Roman aqueduct which I mentioned before.

In the hospital they took all food from me, and gave me nothing but "butter bean juice". The medics there made several tests, but the one I remember most was the blood test. Every time they would take blood it would make me so sick. I think the problem was their medics didn't know how to draw blood.

In about a day the medics gave me some kind of laxative, and the army always had some kind of saltz. This caused me to have the GIs and vomit for about a day. The medics told me they were trying to rid my body of infection or toxic chemicals which I might have. This is when I was told that I had liver infection.

For the next month I didn't write to my folks as I didn't want them to worry. If I had of written, the address would have shown a hospital address, and besides I was to sick to write to anyone.

According to a "Bible" which I carried all though World War II, I made a notation that I went into the hospital on November 12, 1943 and was expected to leave December 12, 1943.

The first meal which I had was on Thanksgiving Day, 1943.....I well remember that day, even today and on Thanksgiving. I think about every thing in the mess hall was eaten that day, as many of the GIs were allow food for the first time.

I remember that we had a red headed nurse in our ward, and she was as tough as nails on the GIs.

On December 12th I was released from the 65th Station Hospital, and was transported back to the base at Tunis. Upon arrival it was learned our squadron, the 347th had already departed for Foggia, Italy. I reported to a unit which was flying the sick and wounded over to Italy, and I caught a ride with a group flying C-47s going to Foggia. I often wonder what would have happened should I not reported that day.

Before I left the hospital that day, we had an ole army colonel who would come into our ward nearly every day and inspect the troops, regardless whether you felt like getting out of bed or not. His main object was to see if you were wearing dog tags or not. He had a big thing about that and always made a issue out of it if you were not wearing dog tags.

The morning I left, this colonel said, "son if you want to get over hepatitis you had better not take a drink, whether it be wine or beer or whatever in the alcohol line for at least a year, otherwise it will kill you put you right back in the hospital". It was nearly a year before I even had a can of beer, and then it made me very sick, so I decided the colonel knew best.

The airplane ride to Foggia was through a real rough rain squall that produced some violent air turbulence. The storm just about made everyone air sick. The pilot was a young Capt., who had towed gliders in the invasion of Sicily, and he told me that when they were towing the gliders to Sicily, the U.S. Navy started firing upon them as they approached shore and a number of C-47s and gliders were shot down. He said, "about then he cut his glider loose and dived for the deck to escape from the gun-fire"

As we approached the coast of Italy the weather broke a little and I noticed that we would fly directly over Mt. Vesuvius outside of Naples, Italy. After we passed over Mt. Vesuvius we ran into a heavy cloud formation all the way to Foggia. In just a little while the navigator pointed to the pilot, and "said down down", and about that time the co-pilot put the C-47 in a hard right turn and made about three or four 360s and we broke out of the clouds just above the Foggia airport.

As we were making the 360s I thought to myself, I hope this guy knows where we are at as there were a lot of mountains in Italy, and I didn't want to "buy the farm" right then.

That night I would get to sleep on the wet soggy ground as the tent I was assigned didn't have a bed. The air-field and tent areas were one soggy mess of mud. "Right then I wished that it were possible to go back to North Africa in the land of sunshine"

When I reached Foggia, it never crossed my mind that here would I be for the next 22 months, but as time passed I learned to enjoy the country side and did get a chance to travel in Italy.

During the next twenty-two months the 99th continued to operate out of Foggia. The targets would be such as: Linz Benzol plant, Austria, Regensburg, Prufening (Messerschmitt works) Ploesti oil refinery, fly to Russia, hit targets around Vienna, Austria, also hit targets in Yugoslavia, bomb the "Abbey of Monte Cassino" and hundreds of other targets....as the air war continued our losses became less and less. The total number of missions which the 99th would fly consisted of 395.

The most talked about targets were Polesi, flying to Russia and the bombing of Monte Cassino. Monte Cassino was the one that I remember the most. The Germans were holding up the 5th Army there and something had to be done as there were a lot of ground pounding GIs getting killed trying to take the hill. It took nearly an Act of Congress to get to bomb it. The problem was, that, "Abbey" at Monte Cassino was a Catholic Monastery and the German army was using it to direct gun fire on our troops at the base of the mountain. Finally, our government had to get the approval of Rome to bomb it. It had to be destroyed.....and so at 9:28 of the morning of February 15, 1944, a flight of 142 B-17s Flying Fortresses unloaded 287 tons of explosives bombs right on the monastery, which resulted in complete destruction of the "Abbey". After that our 5th Army was able to go forward again. Moreover, it took a total of 3 months to get the final approval of Rome at the cost of some 9,000 lives.

When our airplanes were not flying we got the chance to go to the beach at a little seaport town just east of the base. The beach along the Italian coast was really nice, and we had a lot of fun swimming, etc. This little beach town wasn't bombed during World War II. However, Foggia was really knock to hell. There wasn't hardly a building that didn't have damage.

I remember when we were still at Tunis our group hit Foggia and caught an ammunition train in the railyard junction. This just about leveled the entire town. It was estimated that perhaps 200,000 people lived in Foggia at the time of the first bombing and I have heard reports that at least 10 percent were killed.

It wasn't long after the 99th moved to Foggia when a bunch of us guys went down by the railroad junction. You could see the effects of the ammunition train explosion, as whole sections of the town was completely destroyed. While at the junction an old Italian man, "said that adjacent to the railroad was a theater", and the day it was bombed there were about two hundred children at the movie, and when the bombs hit, it leveled the theater killing all of the people inside.

All around Foggia you could find pieces of guns, trains, buildings, etc., from the effects of bombing and destruction....."War is a terrible waste"

The "poverty" was something no one could really believe, especially around Foggia. As an example: when we would go to chow and have left overs we would dump them into fifty-five gallon barrels, and as soon as we dumped them left overs into the barrels, these poor Italians would fight over the slop in the barrels. I think a lot of these poor Italians were starving to death. I always felt sorry for them and would often times take extra food for them as I would go out to the barrels. Frequently there were other GIs doing the same.

I think Benito Mussolina and Hitler just about raped the country around Foggia. After they left the Italian Communist moved in and took over, and even today is a communist stronghold.

At one time we had an old Italian barber and he use to tell us that he couldn't buy bread in their stores unless he had a communist card.

The 99th had a rest camp in Rome, and frequently we could go there for about a week about every six months. That was a real treat as Rome was a very pretty city. It was much like cities in the United States as they had all kinds of parks, etc. I think perhaps I visited Rome two or three times.

Once there were about 30 of us flew up to Rome in a B-17 and none had parachutes. On the way up to Rome we ran into some pretty heavy clouds and a lot of air turbulence. At the time I thought to myself, if the airplane had trouble we wouldn't have much of a chance because we were over a rugged part of Italy's mountains, but luck was with us that day.

After staying in Rome for about a week I decided that it would be nice to take the train back to Foggia and see what some of the country look liked. On the way back we passed through a lot of tunnels just east of Naples and the country side was real pretty. The train engine was driven by some GIs and they would really take us fast around the many curves throughout the mountains. As we would go around the curves on the railroad the Italians riding the train would really get excited. I think they were afraid of the American engineers driving the train. I'll admit I think the engineers were taking us a little to fast, since from Naples to Foggia was about 90 miles and we made the trip in about an hour and twenty minutes.

From the time I left the United States (we refered to it as the States) during the Second World War, for a total of about 29 months, until I returned, the 99th personnel lived in tents. In North Africa we lived in "Pup Tents" and when we reached Italy we lived in "five man squad tents"

It was in Italy where we really put to work the good ole "American Ingenuity". Our tents were very comfortable, as we had wooden floors taken from the railroad junction depot I spoke about before, electric lights, a brick walk, gasoline stove and the works. For heat we obtained a fifty-five gallon barrel of 130 octane aviation fuel, and through a connection of pipe to the barrel we ran the pipe under our floor to a stove we made. The stove was made from cutting a fifty five gallon barrel in half, and running a steel pipe we borrowed from an Italian railroad, up through the top of the squad tent. The stove not only provided heat in the winter, but it served to cook our spam or whatever we had to eat.

For fuel in the stove the 130 octane aviation gasoline would really heat up the tent and make an excellent heat source of food.

New Year's Day 1944 was really a "Blowout". It had been raining for about a week, and the weather people advised that for us to expect some real bad weather, and suggested that we check our tents. So we went outside the tent a really drove the corner stakes of the tent down, and tighten and secured the ropes holding the tent.....it was a good thing as in about a couple of hours the wind off the Swiss Alps really came down our side of Italy. The wind was clocked at 90 miles per hour.....many of the tents were blown away but ours stayed put.

Late in the spring of 44, I was hitch hiking to Bari, Italy a city about 100 miles south of Foggia. That day there were a lot of GIs hitch hiking and pretty soon an ambulance came along. I noticed this ambulance would stop for other guys, since they were scattered along the highway. As the ambulance would stop for these guys I noticed that they wouldn't get in. I couldn't understand what the problem was.....finally it stopped for me, and the driver said, "get in". As I started to sit down in the back I noticed they had a corpse laying on the floor all wrapped in a GI blanket. About that time the driver said, "he want hurt you he's dead"

The driver said, "the body was a young officer" who had been killed on a recent mission and they were taking him for burial at Bari.

It was a custom when anyone was killed to wrap the body in a GI blanket and place it in a wooden box for burial, and sometime just a blanket was wrapped around the body.

When I was an "Honor Guard" at Tommy Shannon's funeral he was wrapped in a blanket and the body placed in a simple pine box for burial.

It was our custom in the farm community where I come from in New Mexico to place the body in a wooden box for burial, so it wasn't strange for me to see this in the army. Also in our community all people were expected to attend funerals when someone died, so seeing the dead wasn't unusual... ..this was just part of life.

The summer of 44, a bunch of our squadron was watching a group of B-24s take off and get into formation, when all of a sudden we saw one of the planes go into a nose dive and catch fire. It wasn't but a few seconds when it hit the ground in a ball of fire. The plane fell just a few miles from our base at Foggia, and immediately after that one went in, we saw five others do the same thing...we couldn't believe what we were seeing.

It was learned the next day that some GI was placing bombs on the landing gear, and when the B-24s would take off and get about 500 to 1000 feet the bomb would explode sending the planes crashing to ground.

Immediately the CID was called to the base and an investigation begun. Come to find out some guy was getting paid a thousand dollars for each plane destroyed. He was caught trying to sabotage another plane the next day. Immediately the guy was tried, and we heard he was executed right on the spot. Later we heard the German SS was behind the sabotage operation.

Another time a B-24 landed at our base with a critical wounded pilot who had been hit by flak in the back and butt. This poor guy was screaming and crying with pain. Our medics finally got this Capt., out but we later learned that he died from loss of blood and shock.

Once I was setting in a B-17 by the runway listening to the take off communications when all of a sudden another plane ran into the one just in front of him. He really cut up the tail section of the forward B-17, but no one was hurt.

Another time our airplanes were lined up along side the runway, much like you see at airports today, waiting for their time to move onto the runway, and the dust was so bad the planes could hardly see, when all of a sudden this 17 lost a tire and come crashing into the line of 17s lined along the runway. That time we were "NOT" "lucky as a couple of pilots were killed.

Near the end of summer 44 one of the 99th squadrons had a 17 that was about to take off on a mission with full fuel and bombs. Went the plane reached about three quarters runway he cut the power, then all of a sudden he gave full throttle again. By then the 17 was just at about stalling speed...he was just mushing along just above the ground.

At the end of the runway about four or five hundred yards was a railroad bed just about 10 foot above the level of the runway. As this 17 was trying to take off the ball turret and the tail section hit the railroad bed and the plane started making a crash landing. When it hit the ground all four engines props dug into the ground and tore loose from its mountings

All four engines went bowling along their separate ways as the plane settled onto the open field just beyond the railroad embankment in a cloud of dust.

When the pilot was questioned, "he said" he didn't have full control as the "gust locks" were still on, that's why he chopped power to reduce pressure on the control surface in the tail section (rudder and elevator).

The gust locks were a handle between the pilots near the floor. Its purpose was to lock the rudder and elevator when the airplane was on the ground so wind couldn't flop around the control surfaces. This little pilot error could have kill the crew...they were just lucky.

The airplane's bombs or gasoline didn't explode or burn, it just tore the underside of the airplane and landing gear off, plus ripping out the ball turret...

The 99th was the first group to use a parachute to stop an airplane during landing.

The particular 17 had its brake lines shot out and couldn't stop. The pilot knew he had a problem, so one of the gunners who had been a parachute rigger suggested that he drop a chute out the tail gunners escape hatch as the plane touched down on the runway.

The gunner rigged a static line to the radio gun mounting, and as the airplane touch down, the gunner popped the chute out the escape hatch.this was the first time a chute was used to stop an aircraft during a landing.

Note: Recently I saw the picture of the chute landing in a publication, and I told one of the 99th former members that I actually saw this happen at Foggia about the middle of 44.

Another time we had a gunner about 100 yards from one of the 347th airplanes discharge about 10 rounds of 50 cal., amo into a 17 while it was being preflighted....

All gunners were told not to charge their guns while on the ground. Well this young gunner did...the rounds of amo went right between the crew chief's legs and hit an oxygen bottle, setting the 17 on fire. The crew chief jumped out and the 17 burned right to the ground. All 2700 gallons of 130 octane fuel went up like a flash. The plane had a full load of 500 pounders, but they just fell out of their racks as the plane burned.

Everyone expected the bombs to go off but they didn't...everyone was just lucky.

While at Foggia, the guys in our tent made a dark room to develop pictures. In just a little while we were developing pictures for just about everyone in the squadron. Our only problem was that we couldn't get regular photo paper. Capt., Bruce B. Church, our communications officer said, "he could get paper for us" out of group, so he furnished all the paper.

Later I became friendly with an old Italian man at the little beach town I spoke about before. This old guy developed most of my pictures, and they have lasted over 40 years, so they must have been good.

Mail call was a big event in every GIs life while being overseas.

Nearly every day I would receive one or two letters from my wife Margaret, and she would receive one from me because we wrote each other regardless of whether we received any mail or not.

Once in a while I would receive a package from her. Often times she would send cookies or a package of Campbell soup.....this was a change from army chow. To receive a package it would be necessary for me to send a letter request. With the request she would take it to the post office where it would be verification stamped. Sometimes the post office would let her use the same request over and over.

V-Mail letters were the thing during World War II. V-Mail was a form of microfilm. The purpose of V-Mail was to save space on ships or planes. I doubted that many times it would ever go by plane like today.

Food in Italy was a lot better than in North Africa. Seldom did we have to eat the C-Rations anymore. However, we still had a lot of spam and SOS. Generally we would take the spam back to our tent and put it together with eggs and some local vegetables and cook on our stove which I wrote about.

While in Italy we had a lot of Malaria as the area was infested with mosquitos which carried the malaria. To combat this the medics had us to take once a day a little yellow pill called Atabrine. This pill had a bitter bitter taste and often times I would hide it in the food which I would eat. The Atabrine made your skin turn yellow. You could always tell a new GI to the unit because his skin wasn't yellow yet.

The war in Europe was winding down somewhat and our planes didn't fly as much, and we really didn't have to much to do. Often times then we would go to the beach and go sailing with the Italian fishermen, etc. Or, you might hitch hike down the coast of Italy to Bari.

The best way to travel in Italy during the Second World War was to hitch a ride with someone. Frequently about then we would hitch a ride and go to Rome on some of the B-17s.

Once I was hitch hiking to the beach when two black GIs picked me up in a truck. In the back were two one thousand pound black bombs and I was riding with them. The truck driver would go around curves real fast and these bombs would smack together real hard. This kinda shook me up as I remembered the bomb dump that went up in North Africa.

In the spring of 1945 we really began to hear rumors that soon we would be pulling out of Italy. It seemed like a dream that we would ever leave Italy, you see by then we had been overseas about 29 months.

In just a month or so the war in Europe was about over. I remember well the night it was announced that Germany had surrendered. I don't think a GI went to bed that night, as we took aviation gasoline and started a big fire and played around the flame all night. Some guys got drunk on Italian vino while other cooked just about every thing in the mess hall.

For the next couple of weeks about all the 99th did was play soldier. The big wigs thought we should learn how to march again. Also, we had to qualify on the rifle range and learn all over again how to shoot a .45.

Other than playing soldier about all we did was go to the beach and play baseball with the WACS in Foggia.

In about a week some of us were told we soon would be rotated back to the States to form another group for B-29s. The selection process depended on how long you had been overseas and group campaigns. You needed a 100 points to rotate back to the States, and I had 115 points.

On or about 15 July 1945 I was advised that I would be leaving the 99th Bomb Group, 347th Sqdn., and to be assigned to another 17 outfit going back to the States. This Group was the 301st and I was to be assigned to the 353 Sqdn.

I hated to leave all my friends in the 99th but here was a chance to rotate back to the States.

It was the next day, 16 July 1945 when Gordon H. Hunsberger and I would be re-assigned. There were others but I can't think of any of their names.

The group we were going to were stationed on the west side of Foggia about 20 miles. The 301st had been stationed in England and when the build up in Africa they were sent there. After we had been with this group for about two weeks, one morning we loaded into trucks and were off to Naples to catch a boat home.

When we reached Naples we were quartered in a former hotel used by the General Staff of some Nazi General while the Germans were in Italy. The building was really fancy. It had black marble floors everywhere and large rooms....this would be the first time in 29 months that we would have quarters in a building, other than a tent. I might add it was really nice to be out of tents.

German POWs were used to do all the KP duties and to serve us food, etc.

At this location there must have been about 60 German POWs, and Gordon Hunsberger use to say to these guys, "A Dollar A Day" will make you happy. Gordon could speak German and often times he would try to talk to them. I doubted the POWs had any idea what he was talking about, especially when he mentioned about the dollar a day phrase.

After we had been at Naples for about a week or so, one day we were bused to a ship at the docks of Naples. The docks and harbor still had signs of bombing which the 99th did some two year prior. I think the 99th hit Naples many times.

There was a large ocean liner keeled over on its side in the harbor, and at the fore deck of the ship, "The United States Line". This was to be the ship which we would return to the States on.

I remember that about a week before we were to go aboard the ship at Naples, we had a GI that had a dog with him. This guy had brought the dog overseas with him as a mascot when the dog was just a pup. He had stowed the pup in his bags and carried it onboard the Edmond B. Alexander some 29 months before as we departed New York.

I can't think of the guy's name, but its possible he was in the armament group.

He had raised the dog from a pup to full grown, and he wasn't about to leave the dog overseas, as he had really been attached to the dog.

For about a week prior to going on board the ship at Naples, this guy would put the full grown dog into his barrack's bag and carry the dog around.....he was training the dog not to make a sound. I think the dog had an idea what was about to come off.....

The dog was a German Shepard and was over two years old, and it must have weighed in at about 30 pounds.

After a few days of carrying the dog around, the dog would jump for joy to get into the barrack's bag without making a sound.....he was ready to go anywhere with the guy...

The day we were to go aboard the ship, this guy put the dog into the barrack's bag, while some other GIs divided up his clothing and put them in their bags.

As we went aboard the ship late in the afternoon, this GI with the dog simply walked up the gang walk past the sentry posted at the ship, along with the rest of us.....the dog didn't make a sound. When we got onboard the ship, some merchant marine took the dog to his quarter's and hid it for the trip back to the states.

As we were going on the boat first some guys on the dock said, " you guys are going to the hole" Later it was the guys giving us a hard time that went into the hole. Our quarters were on the " Promenade Deck"

After about two hours, just as it was about sunset we set sail for home with all navigation burning.....it sure was a strange feeling to be headed home after so many months overseas.

As we steamed for home we would pass other ships at sea with all lights bright.....on shore we could see cities that were fully lit up.

At last we realized the war was over in Europe.....soon we went through the " Straights of Gibraltar" and all of their lights were on.....it was a strange feeling and a sight to see.

After the fifth day at sea we ran into an ocean storm that really tossed our ship about...Our ship was like a feather being blown about here and there. When we hit the storm I was sleeping and I felt like I was standing on my head at times.

In just a little while, as soon as it became daylight, I looked out the port hole, and sure enough we were just about standing the ship on its end. We had entered into a summer storm with an estimated wind of about 50 knots blowing right across our bow.

The storm lashed us for three days and nights and many were sea sick. The waves would come crashing down on the deck each time the ship pitched and buck into the sea. Frequently you could look out at the sea and it would have very large rolling waves, much like you would see in the north sea during winter time. These waves would be fanned by the gale causing white caps on the tops. Finally the storm calm down after about the fourth day and we had a pleasant voyage thereafter.

Rumors were that we would dock in New York, while others said it would be Newport News, Virginia. Finally early one morning just as the sun was coming up, we pulled into a harbor. The morning reminded me much of the morning we left New York harbor some 29 months before.

As we pulled into the harbor, I noticed that its possible to read the signs along the road on shore. " I said to myself" this is in english and we are about to dock in Newport News, Virginia.

It took the tug boats about an hour to dock the ship, as a lot of us watched. After the ship had docked, perhaps an hour or so, the gang walk was lowered and we got our bags to go ashore.

The GI with the dog, put the dog into his barrack's bag and simply walked down the gang walk with the rest of us.

As I walked down the gang walk, I thought of all that had happened during my venture overseas, and my mind had thoughts of all the soldiers and airmen that were lost during the second world war. Of all who had died in Italy and elsewhere. " I said to myself".....Thank God for watching over all, you're back on good American soil.

On shore there were no " Bands or Welcome Groups" to meet us. I think maybe the Red Cross had coffee and cookies, and that's about all.

In just a little while we were loaded into trucks and hauled to a nearby camp. At the base I remember it was sure hot and sticky that August day 1945, but I didn't care as I was home even if it was in Virginia.....
.....I could hitch hike from here if necessary.....

About the first thing that we did after arriving at the base was to assemble out in front of our quarters and listen to some " public relation guy" tell us how the war was won. After that we broke ranks and started filling out some forms, advising where we would like to be shipped for furlow.

Finally after 36 months I would be given an official furlow.....sure I had a lot of passes but not a furlow in all my military career.

The next thing which I did was to go to the PX and buy me a half gallon of ice cream and walk down the company street eating the ice cream.

The forms which I filled out allowed me to be shipped to San Antonio, Texas as this was the nearest base to my home in New Mexico. I selected Fort Sam Huston as the base I would like to go to. " I thought to myself" if I get to Texas I can find my way home.

In a few days we were all placed on troop trains which were headed for Texas. At various towns we would drop off GIs....

About half way to Texas our troop train stopped for about a day. We stopped in the middle of no where, and I said, " why are we stopping here". Then late in the afternoon a train engine came along and took us into Fort Sam.

At Fort Sam we were given our furlow's and money to go home on.....I think maybe fifty dollars.

Upon getting military leave, I walked out to the front gate and there were some people who made their living during WWII by taking military personnel from city to city using their cars. It was called " car pooling". To go to Lubbock, Texas it cost me about \$ 10.00.....

The group of GIs I went with drove all night from San Antonio to Lubbock, Texas, we reached Lubbock early in the morning.....from there I hitch hiked onto Clovis, New Mexico.

Before getting military leave at Fort Sam, I tried to phone my wife who was living with my folks in Shiprock, New Mexico, but they didn't have a telephone, so I sent a telegram for her to meet me in Clovis.

I sent the telegram on faith that my wife was with my folks, since she had no idea that I was on my way back to New Mexico, and I hadn't heard from her in over a month.

I had a sister living in Clovis and when reaching there she told me that my mother and wife Margaret were on their way to Clovis from Shiprock. Somehow my mother had received the telegram and called my sister in Clovis.

While waiting for my mother and Margret to get to Clovis, I took the bus to Portales, New Mexico and visited with some people that I knew there. It must have been in the afternoon when I returned to Clovis and meet my mother and Margaret.

It had been nearly 30 months since I had been with Margaret and my folks....

After about two or three days, my mother, Margaret and I drove back to Shiprock. That was the longest ride I have ever made as my mother couldn't drive over 40 miles per hour in their old Dodge automobile, since she was afraid she would have a tire blow-out.

During World War II gasoline and tires were rationed and you had to be careful with your car.

Margaret and I stayed about two weeks at Shiprock before we left to see her folks in Hotspring, New Mexico. It was while in Shiprock, getting a hair cut, when I heard over the radio, the U.S. Air Corp had dropped an Atomic Bomb on Japan.....that ended the war with Japan.

I remember that no one had any idea what an Atomic Bomb was in the first place and couldn't understand how one bomb could end the war....

Margaret and I took the bus to Albuquerque and then on to Hot Springs. It wasn't long after that until my military leave was about over, and I had to report back to Fort Sam.

When I returned to Fort Sam, the U.S. Air Corp hadn't made up its mind whether I would go to Smokey Hill, Kansas to join a B-29 outfit.

After about a week, the military told me that since you have over 100 points and served so long overseas I could get out of the service if I wanted to. I was informed that it would take about a week to process my discharge.

There wasn't any military duty, so most of the time was spent in town. At the time San Antonio had about 100,000 GIs in town each night....every thing was nothing but military for the entire week.

On the morning of 6 September 1945 I was given an "Honorable Discharge" from the Air Corp.....this ended my army career in the United States Army Air Corp.....

Thank you, George!

gfc.



"HERE 'TIS"

ITALY

11 Feb 45

Published Weekly by the Special Service Section, Hq 99th Bomb Group (H). Vol II - 6

TAIL GUNNER BAILS OUT FOR FUN

Nothing more than Jumpin' Jive or a yen to "see what it felt like" prompted Sgt Joseph M. Wilhour, 347th tail gunner, to bail out of his aircraft recently.

Wilhour, while his aircraft was in preparation for landing, after a mission to Regensburg a few days ago, took a quick look at the planes behind him, chose a spot on the ground, and jumped--landing not on his own base, but at another fortress field.

"Frankly, I was disappointed," he said, commenting on his expected thrill. "But, I do know now what it feels like. I picked out a spot and pulled on the shrouds until I landed where I wanted to."

His superiors weren't too pleased with the experience, however; and the gunner himself is now reposing in the hospital with an injured ankle, sustained upon landing.

THURSDAY'S MOVIES DESCRIBED

If you have yet to attend a Thursday night G.I. movie program, you are missing something exceptionally entertaining and worthwhile. G.I. movies are a complete bill of fare of special short subjects designed to entertain and inform. They are made up of cartoons, travelogs, song shorts, sports shorts, and, surprisingly enough, recent news reels. Normally, accompanying these are Combat Bulletins and "The Army-Navy Screen Magazine."

Attending the Thursday night shows is a simple way of keeping up to date on world events--pictorial information spiced with laughs. Give them a try, and you'll be back for seconds.

INFORMATION FILES RESHOWN

For the benefit of men who did not have an opportunity to see the series of information files dealing with the background of the War, special arrangements have been made for their re-showing. Beginning Thursday night, February, immediately following the G.I. Movies, "Prelude to War," first in the series of six, will be shown. They are not fictional movies, not designed to entertain--but are factual and documentary historical records of the causes and events leading up to our participation in the war, shown in superb pictorial realism. Much captured enemy film is included in each picture. Start Thursday night and plan to see the entire series in turn. It will give you a lasting perspective on the War.

99TH SCORES HIGH AGAIN IN BOMBING

by

Capt Paul Franklin, Gp Operations Officer

In the late fall and early winter of 1944, the 99th was experiencing a new low in bombing accuracy. It seemed as if something always went wrong about the time we were on a bombing run. Missions were SNAFU and the men themselves became disinterested. Even the bombardiers were reluctant to examine their mediocre bomb-strike photos.

Early in January, a change began to take place. What it was, or what caused it, none seems to know. Perhaps it is similar to the sprint a "miler" puts on when the finishing tape is in sight; perhaps it was our fairly large turnover in personnel; it could even be due to our changed policy on training and tactics. At any rate, early in January one squadron, bombing visually, got a "shack" in North Italy--the score 75%. Next the group went to Yugoslavia and did one of the best bombing jobs the "Diamondbacks" ever attempted. They attacked in six separate task forces, and only a negligible number of bombs fell outside the 1000' circle. The bomb concentration was so great on our aiming point that all the bombs could not be plotted. Thus, our score was only 64%. Then came the day when Major Schroeder and his team bored through almost solid weather to find a hole through which to hit a high-priority oil refinery in Austria. Another direct hit, and congratulations from Generals Twining, Born, and Lawrence.

These were the highlights of the 99th for January. The results when reduced to dry figures and graphs still make an exciting story, for they show that this outfit is capable of being about the hottest thing in the Italian sky. From the very bottom of the cellar to the top of the heap in thirty days! Not an accomplishment to be sneered at!

"FRAGS"

346th

Saturday's jam session wound up a howling success. Carlson and Company blew, banged, and blasted out the most wonderful, musical noises. Russ Williams almost threw a thyroid gland jitterbugging. Dick Stallmeyer, Joe Gilmarlin and Art Porter operated their own private bar after Adams shut up for the night. . . .Pancho has gotten to the stage where he sends in requests to the Foggia radio station. By the way, do you know that Pancho's first name is Trinidad? Cute ain't it? . . .When Nate Wolinetz goes to town, he really gets that fruit salad on. He wears his Unit Citation, Good Conduct, African Campaign, and Typewriter Ribbons. On him, it looks good. . . .Curt Gradsicki, capable manager of the Rattlers quintet, astounded one and all when he threatened to get a hair-cut. 'Tis rumored Curt posed as the "after" in the Kreal Hair Tonic ads. . . .Joe Cantley, he of the chin hirsute, is the Tortorella representative of the Boston Department Store that sells mess kits. Joe claims business is very good with Jim Priestly already making a \$.35 down payment on one. . . .Sol Zito has come out in favor of a strip-tease Olympic as suggested by the "Balkan Bombshell." Sol claims Margie Hart would win hands down--he should know, as he's a former program salesman of the "Star Burlesque in Brooklyn.

347th

This is being written at 5:30 a.m., believe it or not. Gotta get it in before "Here Tis" goes to press. Now what have I got to write about? Oh yes, Bronze Stars. Congratulations to M/Sgts Redd, Miller, and Wildes; T/Sgts Stickel and Price; and S.Sgt Peterson. We know how hard you worked to get it. . . .Mustn't forget S/Sgt Vachata celebrating his second anniversary overseas on his kisser. . . .Also must remember to warn all B-17s to stay out of Cpl Joe Schoof's way when he's behind the wheel of a jeep. Gasoline fumes intoxicate him and he's dangerous. . . .That's all my fatigued brain can think of right now, see you again soon. Ho hum, where's the sack?

348th

This column's a fooler if it goes like I plan it. It'll look like it's prose but it's verse-you can scan it! So be patient a while with a war-weary clerk, with a deadline to meet and a mountain of work. . . .The infantry scare has the boys going crazy. Should they work a bit harder or try being lazy? . . .The Eyeties run round like screwballs from Goontown. But they're the backbones of McMillan's Boontown. . . .New houses, new offices, the P.I. has wings. And we hear that ere long there will be brick latrines! . . .We've uncovered the secret of Stoyor's physique. He goes to noon chow every day in the week. . . .From reliable sources, we quote without question--the Alexander's in port with room for one squadron. So farewell, all you guys, when we're home we will send you, a postcard to read while policing the area.

416th

After an exhaustive impartial investigation as to the diminished food rations at the SQ Squadron Mess, a Board of Inquiry has fixed the blame on those two celebrated chow-hounds, Sgt Warren Cox and Sgt Frank Jones. Cut down on your vitamins boys. . . .One of our Infantry OCS applicants has already acquired the rank of Major without the benefit of appropriate orders. Boy is his face red. . . .Congratulations to M/Sgt Traco and S/Sgts Briggs and Steltznor on their recent award of the Bronze Star. . . .Only the Arm. boys know and they won't tell, why they call their handsome co-worker Jeffrey Massour, "Mattress Cover." . . .Cpl Sunny Merling is all smiles these days. He has finally been awarded the Good Conduct Medal which he richly deserves. . . .'Tis a long story regarding the delay in gaining recognition, but the "Nozzie" as he is known to his intimates, had a peculiar flair for doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. . . .Two days after payday the winners have banked their dough or sent it home and the losers whine and fret and then sit back and wait for next payday to try their luck.

Hq

Good weather has set in, the club is nearing completion and Cpl Joyce Dale has returned. . . .Oh yes, we had a gas mask drill. Starting Tuesday we shall resume our daily volleyball games from 10:00 to 11:30. Balls and gloves are also available at Sp. Serv. for those of you who want to get the kinks out of your arms. . . .Swinging doors, comfortable arm chairs, wall seats and bar stools are some of the innovations planned for the new club. Under the direction of Sgt Charley Karchnyak (typewriters fixed, camera's built, cartoons drawn, interiors decorated and what have you) we shall soon have a club that even _____ will condescend to go to. . . ._____ a brief stay in Rome, Cpl Joyce Dale returned to the 99th. Upon arrival, he was presented with the Good Conduct Medal.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Arabian horses are trained to respond instantly to the sound of a certain whistle. The final test in the training program is one in which the horses are placed in a high-walled corral within sight and smell of fresh water. They are given neither water nor food for days. On the last day, their legs and shoulders are sore from the repeated efforts to batter their way out.

Then, the gate is opened and the horses make a head-long dash for the water. Just as they almost reach it, the whistle is sounded. This is the final test to their response to rigid discipline. Only those thoroughbreds who return without drinking are considered good for breeding purposes.

You and I had some moral training at home, now we are being tested to see whether we have moral character and are fit for life. The temptation is all around us, and the "still, small voice" whispers in our souls. How do you respond?

The foundation of all worth-while living is to be found in your faith; develop your conscience and your will-power by worship and self-discipline. Be worthy of your parents and your training. Be worthy of your future hopes. Going to church will help you--try it next Sunday.

Protestant, Catholic and Jewish services are advertised on your Bulletin Board. Keep yourself morally fit. GO TO CHURCH

Chaplain Harold Whitlock

CHURCH SCHEDULE

Catholic: Sunday Mass
0900,, 1600, 1830
Wed. & Friday--1830

Protestant: Sunday
0800-347; 0845-Ord.
0930-348; 1015-416
1830-Hq.

INQUIRING REPORTER

"What does the word 'morale' mean to you?"

M/SGT "ARTIE" SHAW: Morale is something I'd have lots of if my girl was here.

S/SGT ELMER GILL: Morale is like rotation--there is no such word.

SGT CHARLES FRISSELL: To me, morale is what goes up when I read about the Russian Army and their terrific thrust towards Berlin.

PVT DICK CATALANE: My morale, I guess that's what it is, is always high when I get plenty of sack time.

SGT KRALIK: (Pointing to a picture of New York's skyline) Being there, not here.

SGT BRODER: Winning nine hundred chops this pay day spelled MORALE.

SGT JOE RUSSIN: A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou.

MOVIE SCHEDULE

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY

"CANTERVILLE GHOST" with
CHARLES LAUGHTON & MARGARET O'BRIEN
1800-347th, 416th & Hq.
1930-346th, 348th & Ord.

WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY

"SHOW BUSINESS" with
EDDIE CANTOR, GEORGE MURPHY
1800-346th, 348th, & Ord.
1930-347th, 416th & Hq.

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY

"G.I. MOVIES" extra attraction
"PRELUDE TO WAR" first in the "WHY WE FIGHT" series.
1800-One showing only

SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY

"CHINA" with
ALLAN LADD & LORRETA YOUNG
1800-347th, 416th & Hq.
1930-346th, 348th & Ord.

NOTICE: SECOND SHOW HAS BEEN MOVED UP TO 1930

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Tampa, Fla (CNB)--A 22-year-old veteran, who, under the GI Bill of Rights, may receive \$50 a month subsistence while resuming his studies, has enrolled in the 6th grade of a public school here.

Sports for Sports

Basketball: Last Wednesday night, the 346th Rattlers soundly whipped the Bombers 37 to 27 and thereby took sole possession of first place in the National Division. High scorer of the game was Alabama's own Ed Spoar who accounted for 15 points in spite of being guarded by the best man on the Bombers. Wellborn, Wood, Tidmarsh, Sobelewski and Nowzcgycyk played their normal steady game. Monday night the Rattlers go against the "Quanto Costa Quintet." This oddly named five have yet to lose a game in thirteen contests so you can be sure it's going to be quite a brawl.

Ping Pong: The second and last ping pong tournament got off to a fine start Friday evening with the 346th bowing to the 347th, 2 games to 5; the 348th taking the 416th, 5 games to 2, and Hq. defeating Ord., 8 games to 1. Capt Popella, Lt _____ M/Sgt Huska and Cpl Kodar gave ample proof that the 346th was not going to be a pushover this tournament. Lt Oberman and Sgt Joe Russin answered a last minute call to arms and came through gloriously for good old alma mater, Hq. Det. It was a fine birthday present for Red Rubinton, the Captain of the team who is in the hospital. We're looking forward to some top-notch games this Friday--seeing you.

Sidelights: Abe Lyman now knows better than to fool with that character among characters, Mo Goldman, the blushing, bashful Boston boy. Mo, with the aid of his secret weapon V 164, took Abe 4 out of 6 games in ping pong and collected ten bucks to make the defeat even more humiliating.

The Special Service Gym in town is now available to the 99th on certain days, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. The 346th and 347th can take advantage of the basketball, volleyball, weight-lifting and boxing facilities in the gym every Friday. Wednesday is set aside for the 348th and the 416th. For further details see the Sp. Serv. Officer in your squadron. They are: 346th-Lt George Wellborn; 347th-Capt Bruce Church; 348th-Lt Hubert Doan; and 416th-Lt Harold Blum. . . .Let's get out there once a week and get the kinks out of those muscles--2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

NEWS FROM HOME

JEFFERSON CITY, MO: The meals are so good at the Missouri State pen that 1500 convicts have petitioned the warden to let them stay as KPs after serving their terms.

ST. LOUIS, MO: A printing company has hired a draft-proof office boy. He is John B. New, 82-year-old veteran of the Spanish American war.

FT. MEADE, MD: A GI arrived at the Separation Center and went AWOL while waiting a discharge from the army.

NEW YORK, N.Y.: Irked when the bartender refused her request for a drink, Kate O'Conner slammed a barstool through the mirror, swept all the cocktail glasses to the floor and threw a bottle of rye at the bartender. "Don't you know how to treat a lady?" she screamed en route to the jug.

SAN DIEGO, CAL: Petros Protopapadakis has applied at the Federal Court here to a change of name. His new name: Petros FDR Protopapadakis.

LINCOLN, NEB: The ominous number 13 has been attached to a bill in the Neb. legislature. It deals with cemeteries.



LETTERS



GEORGE COEN: 30 AUG 88

YOU INVITE ME TO MAKE INPUTS FOR POSSIBLE USE IN 99 BOMB GROUP LETTERS. I WAS NOT IN THE 99TH. BUT AM NOW AN ASS MEMBER. YOU ALL HAVE A MILLION STORIES. BUT NOT MUCH ABOUT THE "LITTLE FRIENDS" LIKE ME THAT TRIED TO HELP. I READ ALL YOUR NEWS LETTERS, AND SO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS. I THOUGHT THAT YOU MIGHT BE A BIT INTERESTED IN SOME ---ONE---PROBLEM THAT US SINGLE ENGINE PILOTS (I COULD NOT QUALIFY FOR MORE THAN ONE ENGINE) HAD.

WHEN I AND OTHER LITTLE FRIENDS WERE PURSUING A BAD LITTLE GERMAN FIGHTER PLANE, AND WHEN WE WERE CLOSING IN TOO FAST, WE NEEDED TO SLOW DOWN, SO AS TO HIT HIM A BIT MORE WITH 50 CALIBRES. I COULD NOT FIND A SWITCH THAT SAYS "REVERSE GEAR" I COULD NOT FIND A SWITCH THAT SAYS "SPEED BRAKES." ALL THAT I COULD DO WAS TO CUT POWER. NOT ENOUGH. I WOULD STILL RUN BY HIM AND LET HIM, POSSIBLY SHOOT DOWN A BIG FRIEND. THIS WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. NOT AS SERIOUS AS A B-17 WITH FIGHTERS ON ITS TAIL.

THERE ARE TWO INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THIS FOR ME. THE FIRST IS THAT AFTER PUZZLING ABOUT THIS PROBLEM FOR HOURS ON THE GROUND AND WITH OTHER PILOTS, WE NEVER SOLVED IT. AND THAT I SUDDENLY REALIZED HOW TO DO IT IN THE AIR, JUST AFTER PASSING UP A GERMAN FIGHTER THAT I HAD NOT HIT ENOUGH.

THE OTHER IS THAT I CAN NOT REMEMBER ANY BOOK OR PUBLICATION THAT DISCUSSES THIS PROBLEM. I EXPECT THAT MANY FIGHTER PILOTS KNEW ALL ABOUT THIS---BUT NO ONE THAT I HAVE READ ABOUT, OR TALKED TO DISCUSSES THIS ..I EXPECT THAT SOME OF THE TOP GERMAN FIGHTER PILOTS WOULD SAY---OF COURSE???

THE SOLUTION TO THIS NEED FOR AIR BRAKES WAS TO DO A VIOLENT BARRELL ROLL. IT WORKED. PULLING BACK THE STICK INDUCES DRAG--WHICH I WANTED. AND LIFT, WHICH I DID NOT WANT. BUT THE UNWANTED LIFT IS COMPENSATED FOR BY THE BARRELL ROLL WHICH LETS UP AND DOWN LIFT CANCEL.

HAVING THUS BRILLIANTLY SOLVED THIS PROBLEM, GERMAN FLAK SHOT ME DOWN A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER. SO IT GOES.

WALT BECKHAM, ASS MEMBER OF 99TH.

Thanks, Walter.

COMMEMORATING YOUR DAYS IN THE AAF WITH The 99th Bomb Group

Imagine the pride of ownership in having a well made, tastefully decorated utility item which recalls memories of the most eventful time in an airman's life.

We offer for your consideration a selection of durable ceramic items which display your aircraft, your GROUP NUMBER and your SQUADRON NUMBER. All pieces are both dishwasher and microwave safe.



The Popular "MEMORY MUG"

A great way to remember your group and squadron. The mugs, top row, have YOUR aircraft on one side and your group number on the other. Mugs on bottom row show your aircraft on one side and your squadron number on the reverse side. Get the Group or Squadron — or both — you'll use these handsome coffee mugs with pride and pleasure.

The ceramic plaque is 6" x 8". Decorations are fired on and into the satin off-white glaze. Plaque is fitted with an easel for shelf or table display or the hook can be used for wall hanging. The feature of this unusual memento is the brass strip with the name of the recipient engraved for permanence. Plaque also displays the Group history in WW II as well as details of your aircraft. Truly a memento to pass from generation to generation!!



Commemorative Plaque & Stein

The 22 oz stoneware white stein is decorated with BOTH the Group and the Squadron numbers. Your aircraft is tastefully displayed on the side opposite the stein handle.



Set of Six Nesting Coasters

These attractive, protective white china coasters are offered in designs which, as an assortment, display your Group Number (2), Your Squadron number (2) and your aircraft (2). They also double as individual ash trays.

Please send me the following commemorative items:

	QUANTITY	TOTAL
MEMORY MUG, GROUP	\$ 7.50	\$ _____
MEMORY MUG, SQDN	\$ 7.50	\$ _____
COASTERSET, 6 PCS	\$20.00	\$ _____
BEER STEIN	\$12.00	\$ _____
PERSONALIZED PLAQUE	\$15.00	\$ _____
ADD SHIPPING, PER ORDER	\$ 2.50	\$ _____
TOTAL ORDER		\$ _____

INDICATE NAME TO BE ENGRAVED ON PLAQUE: print clearly in block letters:

PLEASE PRINT:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Indicate Sqdn #: _____

Indicate Group #: _____

Fill out order form completely. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Send check or money order in full to:

THOMAS TILES, INC. P.O. BOX 10345, SARASOTA, FL 34278

Stop by our plant in Sarasota and do some "hangar flying" 1659 Cattlemen Rd, Sarasota, FL 34232 • 813-377-0869

Your editor has a set of these lovely items, consisting of two mugs with suitable accessories. The mug especially will appeal to all 99ers, because it is designed to hold a can of beer in what appears to be a mug of tea, thus protecting the 99th's reputation as a completely tee-totaling outfit.

Seriously, the craftsmanship is superb, the items seem to be chip-resistant, and an old legend says that one who tipples from Thomas Tiles treasures will never have a hangover.

These lovely ceramics are manufactured by D. Thomas, an alumnus of Ye Olde First Fighter Group. geo.



Our Past President Bernie Barr says:

I have 99th Bomb Group caps postpaid for \$10 for the first cap and \$8 for all subsequent caps.

99th Bomb Group license plates are \$5 each, postpaid. bsb

Bernie's address is :

Bernice Barr, 7413 Vista del Arroyo NE, Albuquerque NM 87109



NEWS, DUES & VIEWS



The editorial staff is deeply grateful to the hallowed traditions which bind this republic together. We are therefore dedicating this issue of your newsletter to the creator of Sadie Hawkin's Day, may it some day be an international holiday! geo.



We find that there are among us some persons who are not aware of this Society's humble beginnings.

The original organizational meeting was held in October, 1980 at the Holiday Inn in Amarillo, Texas and was attended by 9 99ers, seven of whom were accompanied by their wives. It happened that a bomb threat was telephoned in to the motel, and all of us were therefore forced to evacuate the premises. The ladies went shopping while the men gathered in Mike Yarina's trailer. Since we were expecting the Boatwrights to fly over from Albuquerque, we introduced ourselves to the Amarillo Police who encircled the motel while it was being searched for explosives. Thus, we reasoned, Lew and Margaret would be able to locate us in the trailer.

When the ladies returned from the trip downtown, the Police Officer on duty asked Maudie Kenney "Are you with the bombers?", and Maudie indignantly replied "I should hope not!"

Margaret and Lew were unable to get a ride to the encircled motel. The rest of us were reunited, and we were able to re-enter the motel in time for our banquet.

Compadres:

It would be appreciated if those of you who have acquired Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs), would send a Xerox copy to us for the files.

"Chris" Christianson calls from Huntsville Alabama to tell that the 1990 reunion is tentatively set for April 18, 1990. The birds will be singing and the azaleas should be in bloom, and I'll get to continue on and visit my first-grade teacher. See y'all there. Thanks, Chris'.

geo.

We would welcome any accounts of the Poltava trip from anybody who survived that mission. Galaxy Tours has told us that at least one 99er signed up for the tour, but we have received no further information.

I shall always be grateful for Galaxy for reminding me that North African hotels would not be considered first-rate in the US. I was tempted to describe a hotel room in war-time Tunis, but the factual account was so obscene, even by today's standards, that I non-printed it. I slept that night on a little bedside table with my feet on a chair in a vain effort to escape the bedbugs. Mongibodo Boggio can perhaps remember that one!

~~~~~  
OVER THE HILL

This office has had no success in obtaining the complete lyrics to "OVER THE HILL". So far we have only:

"When you're asked for an encore and say you are ill  
You're over the hill, buddy, over the hill

\* \* \* \* \*

"When the mind has wishes the body can't fill.  
You're over the hill, buddy, over the hill  
dum de dumty dum . . .

"With a glass full of water and a little pink pill.

We got the last two verses from Ann Landers' column. We have not been able to get a response from Ann in order to fill in the blanks. Emma Pritchard, our favorite singer, moved on long ago, a copyright search by a local singer has not located any such song in the records, and the West Hotel burned down long ago.

For the information of those among you who did not train at Sioux City, Emma sent the 99th off to war to the tune of the above song. She also sang another song mentioning the coming of "a long cold winter, so you'd better take this fat gal now!" Efforts to locate Emma at the time of the 1957 Sioux City Reunion proved fruitless.

We are under the impression that Ann Landers was a reporter in Sioux City in 1942.



from  
Les  
Hamann  
of the  
416th

"A Little Work for the Boys."

STOP THE PRESS

We have received one more sheet from George Frame. Since the November issue was already pasted up, we are saving this page 23 for the next issue. We tried to remove enough punctuation from the other 28 pages to accomodate this new page, but it didn't work so good. gfc

~~~~~  
QUOTES

August 1988

**Bombed-Out
Runways Can
Get Quick
Resin Fix**

New technology toward the development of an air transportable, containerized prefabricated repair kit for airfield runways gutted by bomb craters is being applied by the Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory (NCEL), Port Hueneme, Calif. Multimillion-dollar aircraft are useless unless take-off and landing facilities are available.

As protected (hardened) aircraft shelters become more common, attack strategies have switched from trying to destroy planes on the ground to demolishing runways and taxiways with specialized airfield-cratering munitions. The capability to have a 60-foot-diameter crater repaired in less than two hours would thus be of paramount importance to Navy and Marine Corps pilots.

One current technique calls for hand construction of full-size fiberglass-reinforced polyester (FRP) crater covers at a repair site, using manual layup procedures. Alternatively, that fabrication process can be performed elsewhere and FRP sections sawed into panels for shipment to pavement-repair sites.

Since neither fabrication method



New resin-transfer molding techniques from the Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory make for better airport runway repair kits. In the picture, a fiberglass-reinforced plastic panel is moved into place to cover a bomb crater.

affords quality control, NCEL is using a recently developed automated fabricating technique referred to as resin transfer molding (RTM). The injection molding method never has been tried for making items the size and geometry of the FRP panels. The new technique places precut 7ft. x 18ft. fiberglass into a steel mold with the bushings precisely positioned. Polymer resin then is

injected under high pressure to form a durable composite capable of withstanding landings by the heaviest aircraft.

Benefits of the RTM technique over hand layup procedures are the elimination of protruding bushings (which get caught by plane tail-hooks), deterioration reduction, and improved quality control (tolerances, dimensions, materials).

We were waiting for Sadie Hawkins' Day; we'd promised that by this memorable occasion. the 56th (fighter Group) would have at least one hundred German fighters tallied. November 6th was the day of promise, and by the morning of the fifth we we still lacked the required number. I didn't make the mission, but the boys flew a Ramrod to Munster. Six enemy fighters went down, and George Hall of the 63rd received the honors - he flamed a Messerschmitt Me 210 for the Group's one hundredth kill. All of our people came home. That night we celebrated in royal fashion, for tomorrow was a holiday. Sadie Hawkins Day, naturally.

p, 164, THUNDERBOLT,

BY Robert S. Johnson

Robert Hoover of the 346th sends us this account of a hard day at the office. The crew consisted of Paul A. Hazleton (P), Harold P. Moon (CP), Lucian J. Miller (AMG), Wilbur F. Mason (ROG), Stephen J. Valovich (AG), Robert A. Hoover (AROG), Irving M. Marshalman (AANG), Lawrence W. Seehusen (AAG), R.B. Richert (N), Norbert Vandenhuevel (B). GFC



Local news

TRAVERSE CITY RECORD-EAGLE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 1988

43 years later, TC man honored for heroism

"The only reason we survived was because the whole crew worked together.

—Paul Hazleton



By KAREN NORTON
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY—The U.S. Air Force waited 43 years to award the Distinguished Flying Cross to Paul Hazleton, but he says it was still great to receive it.

The Flying Cross is one of the highest honors bestowed by the Air Force.

Hazleton, a Traverse City architect, received the medal last month at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He was awarded the Flying Cross for "outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty" during a World War II bombing mission over Linz, Austria, on April 25, 1945.

Hazleton — a 22-year-old pilot at the time — was recommended for the honor by his co-pilot, Harold Moon. But the war ended shortly

after the recommendation was made and it got buried in files shipped back to the United States.

"Everybody was in such a hurry to come home, things got put aside," Hazleton said.

Last year Moon inquired about some personal military records and the recommendation was discovered in a file — still waiting for action. Air Force officials contacted Moon and asked if he wanted them to

pursue the matter and he encouraged them to do so.

Hazleton was notified that he was again being considered for the medal.

"I was flabbergasted," he said. "It was amazing to me that it had been in the files all these years."

First Lt. Hazleton — a native of Petoskey — was a B-17 pilot as World War II came to a close. His squadron — part of the 99th Bombardment Group in the 15th Air Force Division — was flying its final mission on April 25. Its job was to destroy the railroad yard at Linz. Hazleton's 10-man crew had been together eight months and had flown 17 missions. Everything was progressing normally when the aircraft was suddenly hit with a bursting shell.

The windows in the cockpit were blown out and Hazleton was wounded in the face. The plane was at 30,000 feet and the crew prepared to bail out but Hazleton decided they should stay with the aircraft.

"When we got hit we thought the plane was going down, but all of a sudden we realized we still had control so we sat back down and started to fly," he said.

Hazleton's oxygen mask was gone and he drifted in and out of consciousness as his crew made emergency plans to land on a dirt airstrip in Zara, Yugoslavia, some 300 miles away on the other side of the Alps.

"The only reason we survived was because the whole crew worked together," he said. "The radio man did a heck of a job finding the emergency airstrip we went to. The engineer I taught to fly took over in my seat. They should have given the medal to the group — they did a fantastic job."

Moon landed the damaged aircraft and Hazleton was airlifted to a hospital in Italy, where he began a one-year stay in hospitals. He lost his right eye and had other facial injuries.

His crew was greeted by Yugoslavian partisans who took them to a local bar.

"They sang songs and treated those guys like kings," Hazleton said. "At one point the Yugoslavians asked them to sing (the American) national anthem but (the crew) didn't understand what they wanted so they sang the Beer Barrel Polka — the only song we were really good at. This is the story they tell me of what they did that night."

The next day after making some repairs, the crew flew the aircraft — minus cockpit windows — back to the base in Italy.

Hazleton's crew still stays in touch and last year had a reunion in Traverse City. Only five of the 10 are still alive.

"We were together as a crew for eight months but when you go through something like that you develop friendships that go on forever," he said.

JEST A MINUTE VFW

Overstaffed and Overstuffed

Two lions escaped from the Washington Zoo. They knew they couldn't stay together and agreed to separate. They decided to meet on a certain night, one month out, by the Lincoln Memorial.

They met. One lion was pathetically thin and emaciated. The other was well-fed and robust. The skinny one spoke: "I'm going back to the Zoo," he said. "It's impossible out here. I hide in the park and hunt for lunch scraps. At night I fight squir-

rels for peanut shells. I can't survive! But look at you, all fat and sleek. Where did you hide?"

"I hid at the Pentagon," said the healthy one. "Every other day I eat a colonel. As long as I clean up the mess, nobody seems to notice."



From CROSSHAIRS, the newsletter of BOMBARDIERS, INC., page 9, we reprint the latest update on Lew "Ace" Franke.

. . . John W. Galt, San Angelo 43-9 (24jun43) checked in with updating information about "Ace";

"Frankie, as we called him, was in officer pilot training at Goodfellow Field, San Angelo, TX during 1945-46. Some of us in this class were R.I. F.ed (Reduction in Force Cuts) in Jun/Jul 46. Frankie, however went on to graduate (at Lackland Field) with the class. As a side issue, the majority of this pilot class was composed of ex-bombardiers, ex-navigators and POWs...In 1948 Frankie was a Lt. Col. and flew a C-124 into Reading Munc. Airport. About 1976 I saw Frankie again at Madison's Home in Charlottesville, VA. He was then in the real estate business and lived in Colonial Heights, VA."

The 99th will conduct a postcard search of the area. We thank BOMBARDIERS. We also thank Bearded Bombardier Pete Bulkeley for calling this item to our attention. gfc



from CROSSHAIRS for Sep 1988, p.29

AXIS SALLY DIES AT AGE 87... From the 385th BmGp and 457th and Associated Press we learn that Mildred Gillars, known as the infamous "Axis Sally", died at her home in Columbus, OH on 25 Jun 1988. Born in Portland, Maine, she aspired to be an actress but wound up in 1934 teaching English to Germans in Berlin. In 1941 she gained notoriety for her bit on a German radio program. By 1943 she was the highest paid foreign broadcast performer in Germany. After becoming a traitor to America by her almost Jane Fonda type radiowork, she was brought back to America in 1949 for trial. She served 12 years at a federal prison in Alderson W.VA. In 1981 she moved to Columbus OH and taught music at a kindergarten.

Lord Haw-Haw perished shortly after the war at the end of a rope. He was apprehended because his voice was so familiar to two British soldiers to whom he spoke in a park. gfc



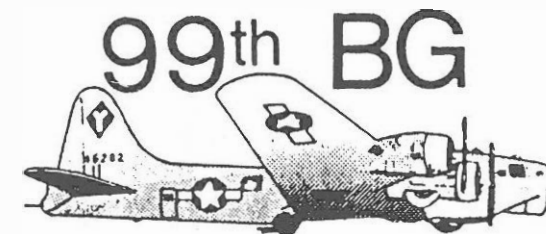
We print the following list of known B-17's worldwide, and wish to thank the 398th Bomb Group for the fine list. We have a few more around the world in our computer files, but their list in such fine order that we are very pleased to reprint it for our members. Ownership of these treasures change from time to time and are difficult to follow. The many that were once used as fire-bombers are no more, the Air Force has secured most of them for the Air Force Base Museums and Wright-Patterson AFB is in charge of most of them. The few that are privately owned seemed to be the only ones at this time that are completely restored. "Sentimental Journey" and "Texas Raiders" owned by the Confederate Air Force are good examples. Others are being restored and soon we will probably see them working with airshows around the country. The C.A.F. should be commended for their vision and dedication in restoring the "Sentimental Journey" to undoubtedly the most completely restored B-17 "Flying Fortress" in the world today. It is on its summer tour for 1988 and will tour up through October 3 to 9 which will put them back at their home base at Harlingen, Texas. I will try to get the rest of their summer schedule into Vapor Trails in this issue. from 97BGR Vapor Trails

Surviving B-17's From Around The World

- 40-3097 B-17 D (BO) "Swoose"
National Air & Space Museum, Silver Springs, MD
- 41-2446 B-17 E (BO) "Swamp Ghost"
Aggiambo Swamp, Papua, New Guinea
Ken Fields, P.O. Box 662, Pampa, TX 79066
- 41-12696 B-17 E (BO) (No Name)
Michael Kellner, 331 Van Buren St., Chrystal Lake, IL 60014
(815) 459-7315
- 41-24485 B-17 F 10 (BO) "Memphis Belle"
Memphis Belle Memorial Association, Inc., c/o Harry Friedman,
626 Shady Grove Rd. S., Memphis, TN 38119 (901) 525-0691
- 42-3374 B-17 F 50 (BO) (No Name)
Edward F. Beale Museum, Beale Air Force Base, CA S/Sgt.
Mark Barager
- 42-29782 B-17 F 70 (BO) "Museum of Flight" *
Bob Richardson,
Boeing Field, 9404 E. Marginal Way So., Seattle, WA 98108
- 42-32076 B-17 G 35 (BO) "Shoo Shoo Baby"
USAF Museum (Dover, DE 19901 Now)
- 43-30635 B-17 G 90 (BO) "Virgin's Delight"
Castle Air Museum, Castle Air Force Base, Merced, CA
Capt. Greg Russell
- 44-6393 B-17 G 50 (DL) "2nd Patches"
March Field Museum, March Air Force Base, CA Maj.
John Freitas (Painted as No. 42-30092)
- 44-8543 B-17 G 70 (VE) "Chuckie" *
BC Vintage Flying Machines, Dr. Bill Hospers, P.O. Box 18099,
Fort Worth, TX 76180 (817) 282-3825
- 44-8946 B-17 G 85 (VE) "Lucky Lady" *
Jean Salis, Carny, France
- 44-8889 B-17 G 85 (VE) (No Name)
Musee De L'Air, LeBourget (Paris) France
- 44-83512 B-17 G 85 (DL) "Heaven's Above"
Lackland Air Force Base History & Tradition Museum
San Antonio, TX. Ma. Nora Patteson
- 44-83514 B-17 G 85 (DL) "Sentimental Journey" *
Arizona Wing (Mesa, AZ) Confederate Air Force
P.O. Box CAF, Harlingen, TX 78550
- 44-83525 B-17 G 85 (DL) "Suzy G" *
Weeks Air Museum, Tamiami Airport, 13908 SW 139 Ct.,
Miami, FL 33186 (305) 232-0141
- 44-83542 B-17 G 85 (DL) (No Name)
Weeks Air Museum, Tamiami Airport,
13908 SW 139 Ct., Miami, FL 33186 (305) 232-0141 (Hulk only.)
- 44-83546 B-17 G 85 (DL) (No Name) *
Silverhill Museum, Chino, CA.
Dave Tallichet, Specialty Restaurants Corp.,
2099 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, CA 92806 (417) 634-0300
- 44-83559 B-17 G 85 (DL) "King Bee"
Strategic Air Command, Omaha, NE Jack Allen, 2510 Clay St.,
Bellevue, NE (Using No. 44-23474.)
- 44-83563 B-17 G 85 (DL) "Fuddy Duddy" *
National Warplanes Museum, P.O. Box 159, Geneseo, NY 14454
(716) 243-0690 Austin Wadsworth
- 44-83575 B-17 G 85 (DL) "909" *
Collings Foundation, Riverhill Farm, Stow, MA 16775
(617) 562-9182 (Using No. 42-31909.)
- 44-83624 B-17 G 90 (DL) (No Name)
USAF Museum, Dayton, OH
- 44-83663 B-17 G 90 (DL) "Short Bier"
Hill Air Force Base Museum, Utah Larry Yonnotti, (801) 777-8623

- 44-83684 B-17 G 90 (DL) "Picadilly Lilly"
Planes of Fame Museum, Edward Maloney, P.O. Box 278,
Corona del Mar, CA 92625 (714) 597-3722
- 44-83690 B-17 G 95 (DL) "Miss Liberty Belle"
Grissom Air Force Base Museum Foundation, Peru, IN 46971
Lt. Col. James Gabriel
- 44-83718 TB-17 H (DL) (No Name)
Museu Aeroespacial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 44-83728 B-17 G 95 (DL) (No Name)
Assumed Musee de L'Air, LeBourget (Paris) France
- 44-83735 B-17 G 90 (DL) "Mary Alice"
Imperial War Museum, Duxford, England
- 44-83785 B-17 G 95 (DL) (No Name) *
Evergreen Air of Mt., Inc., Pinal Airpark, Marana, AZ 85653
Sandy Ellis (602) 682-4181 (Restoring for Del Smith.)
- 44-83814 B-17 G 95 (DL) "Tanker 09"
National Air & Space Museum, Dulles Airport, Washington, DC
- 44-83863 B-17 G 95 (DL) (No Name)
USAF Armament Museum, Eglin Air Force Base, Eglin, FL
Howard Corns
- 44-83868 B-17 G 95 (DL) (No Name)
RAF Bomber Command Museum, Hendon (London) England
- 44-83872 B-17 G 95 "Texas Raiders" *
Gulf Coast Wing, Confederate Air Force P.O. Box CAF,
Harlingen, TX 78550
- 44-83884 B-17 G 95 (DL) "Yankee Doodle II"
8th Air Force Museum, Barksdale Air Force Base,
Bossier, City, LA 71112 Buck Riggs
- 44-85599 B-17 G 100 (DL) "Blackhawk"
Texas Museum of Military History Dyess Air Force Base,
Ablene, TX Capt. Gates
- 44-85718 B-17 G 105 (VE) "Thunderbird" *
Lone Star Museum, Hobby Airport, 8910 Randolph St.,
Houston, TX 77061 Tommy Garcia, (713) 645-7709
- 44-85734 B-17 G 105 (VE) "Five Engine"
New England Air Museum, Hartford, CT Tom Reilly, 500-No.
Airport Blvd., Kissimi, FL 32741 (305) 847-7477
- 44-85738 B-17 G 105 (VE) "Amvet"
American Veterans Memorial, Tulare, CA
Gene Thomas, (209) 688-0660
- 44-85740 B-17 G 105 (VE) "Aluminum Overcast" *
EAA Warbirds of America, P.O. Box 229, Hales Corner
(Oshkosh) WI 53130 (414) 425-4860
- 44-85778 B-17 G 105 (VE) (No Name)
Aero Nostalgia, Richard Dartanian, 7030 So. C.E. Dixon, Stockton,
CA 95206 Jim Ricketts restoring for Mr. Dartanian. (209) 983-0235
- 44-85784 B-17 G 105 (VE) "Sally B" *
B-17 Preservation, Ltd., P.O. Box 34, Horley, Surrey,
RH6 9RQ England
- 44-85790 B-17 G 105 (VE) (No Name)
Art Lacey, Milwaukie, Oregon. Sits atop a gas station.
- 44-85825 B-17 G (VE) (No Name)
Pima Air Museum, P.O. Box 15097, Tucson, AZ
- 44-85828 B-17 G 110 (VE) "I'll Be Around"
390th Bomb Group Association Pima Air Museum, P.O. Box 15097,
Tucson, AZ Gen. Robert Waltz
- 44-85829 B-17 G 110 (VE) "Yankee Lady"
Yankee Air Force, P.O. Box 1100, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

* Flying condition; All others static.



99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Fifteenth Annual Reunion - McAllen, Texas
February 16, 17, 18, 19, 1989
Headquarters Hotel - Sheraton Fairway Resort Inn

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THURSDAY, FEB. 16 (optional)	Golf, McAllen Country Club	Green Fee _____ Cart _____	
	11:30 a.m. Ladies Style Show and Luncheon GABII'S of Reynosa	\$10.00	\$9.00
	02:00 p.m. Bus and shopping tour of Reynosa by Sanborn's	\$14.00	\$12.60
FRIDAY, Feb. 17 (optional)	12:00 p.m. Lunch Meeting	\$11.00	\$9.90
	06:00 p.m. No Host Bar		
	07:00 p.m. Banquet	\$14.00	\$12.60
SATURDAY, Feb. 18 (optional)	10:00 a.m. Bus Ride to Confederate Air Force Show and Museum	\$8.00	\$7.20
	Admission to CAF and Museum	\$6.00	\$5.40
SUNDAY, Feb. 19 (optional)	7:30 to 9:30 Breakfast Buffet	\$8.25	\$7.43

TOTAL AMOUNT: _____

PLEASE MAIL ENTIRE FORM TO: McAllen Convention & Visitors Bureau
P.O. Box 790 McAllen, TX 78502
Ph: 512-682-2871

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: 99th BG - McAllen Reunion



WILLIAM J. NEWTON 11089809

AND

WILLIAM J. NEWTON 14100334

There were 2 William J. Newtons in the 815th Squadron. Both were on combat crews, one an engineer (E) and one a radio operator (R).

William Johnston Newton (R) of the Cinnamon sent the following information after an inquiry about who's who?

"How well I remember that there were two William J. Newtons in the 815th. Somewhere around my 43rd or 44th mission

(by my count) I decided I should maybe check the HQ records to make sure of the correct count. I very nearly had a heart attack when the clerk told me I had only 28 officially. After I regained my speech, I did some further checking and found the missing missions had been credited to the other William J. Newton."

William J. Newton 11089809 has not been located and we do not know what crew he was from. Now suppose William Johnston Newton had gone down on number 44. That would have put William J. Newton (E) about sixteen missions ahead of his crew! He must have been getting Air Medals every few days.

(Prepared by Jake Grimm, 483rd Archivist)

BIR HAKIM, Ballantine, Richard Holmes, 1971

On 12th June (1942) the Germans announced that they had "stormed Bir Hacheim" and went on to announce grimly that "the white and coloured Frenchmen taken at Bir Hacheim, since they do not belong to a regular army . . . will be executed". De Gaulle instantly made a counterthreat. The BBC warned the Germans that "if the German were so far to dishonour itself as to kill French soldiers taken prisoner when fighting for their country, General De Gaulle announces that, to his profound regret, he would find himself obliged to inflict the same fate on the German prisoners who have fallen into the hands of his troops." This threat produced a change of heart in Berlin, which reported, before the day was out, that "On the subject of the members of the French forces who have been captured in fighting at Bir Hacheim, no misunderstanding is possible. General de Gaulle's men will be treated as soldiers." p. 135

AIRBORNE, MacDonald, Ballantine Books, 1970

The next day (13 Nov. 1942) another battallion of the British 1st Parachute Brigade (jumped) at the Cross-roads settlement of Souk-el-Arba inside Tunisia on the main road to Bizerte. Then, in a last desperate effort to win the race for Tunisia, a third battallion of the brigade under John Frost (promoted to lieutenant-colonel) jumped in advance of a British armored thrust near the Depienne airfield, south of Tunis. From this field, which intelligence had revealed had been abandoned, Frost moved overland fifteen miles to sieze the airfield at Oudna, only ten miles from Tunis.

That field, too, had been abandoned; but the next morning, as Frost's men entrenched to defend the periphery, German dive-bombers roared in, machine guns spitting, while on the ground infantry counterattacked with the support of tanks. Meanwhile the attack by British ground troops had faltered, coming to a halt a full fifty miles from the embattled paratroopers at Oudna.

Colonel Frost had little alternative but to fight it out through the day, then in darkness to sneak away and hope to cross fifty miles of rugged mountainous terrain to safety. For four days and nights the paratroopers marched, seeking to elude the strafing of persistent German aircraft, engaging in one fierce ground clash after another with German forces, fending off hostile Arabs who, like vultures, trailed the column in eager resolve to strip those left behind - dead and wounded alike - of equipment and clothing. In the end Frost and 180 men made it out, but 266 others were lost. p. 101

CASSINO, by Dominic Graham

Ballantine Books

"The performance of the 34th Division at Cassino must rank with the finest feats of arms carried out by any soldiers during the war. When at last they were relieved by the 4th Indian Division fifty of those few who had held on to the last were too numbed with cold exhaustion to move. They could still man their positions but they could not move out of them unaided. They were carried out on stretchers . . ." quoted in the above by Fred Madjdalany, p. 65

Something of the feeling of officers for their men can be understood from a passage in a letter written to General Freyberg by the divisional general, F I S Tucker, who was taken ill just before the Cassino battle; 'I am ever so thankful my division is being looked after by yourself. With you there, I know that no single life will be squandered and that those that are spent will be well spent.' p. 68

GESTAPO by Roger Manvell, Ballantine Books

Sir Hartley Shawcross quoted Goethe: 'Years ago Goethe said of the German people that some day fate "would strike them because they betrayed themselves and did not want to be what they are. It is sad that they do not know the charm of truth, detestable that mist smoke and the berserk immoderation are so dear to them, pathetic that they ingenuously submit to any mad scoundrel who appeals to their lowest instincts, who confirms them in their vices and teaches them to conceive nationalism as isolation and brutality." p. 153

The SS attracted the kind of people who were in one way or another misfits in normal society, from whatever level or class or nation they might originate. They were, whatever their psychological motive, the enemies of the people, and the destroyers of their liberties. This is the final outcome of a police state, that the best must be destroyed at the hands of the worst. p. 159



Panzer Leader by Heinz Guderian - Ballantine Books

As an indication of the attitude of the Russian population, I should like to quote a remark that was made to me by an old Czarist general whom I met in Orel at this time (1941). He said; "If only you had come twenty years ago, we should have welcomed you with open arms. But now it's too late. We were just beginning to get on our feet, and now you arrive and throw us back twenty years so that we will have to start from the beginning all over again. Now we are fighting for Russia and in that cause we are all united."

... the most important result of this conference (Casablanca) was the insistence that the Axis Powers surrender unconditionally. The effect of this brutal formula on the German nation, and, above all on the Army was great.... For some time the architects of the destructive dogma of Casablanca boasted of what they had done.

But if Hitler heard the word "operational" he lost his temper. He believed that whenever his generals spoke of operations they meant withdrawals; and consequently Hitler insisted with fanatical obstinacy that ground must be held, all ground, even when it was to our disadvantage to do so.

Of course one question will always be asked: what would have happened had the assassination (of Hitler) succeeded? Nobody can answer this. Only one fact seems beyond dispute: at that time the great proportion of the German people still believed in Adolf Hitler . . .

My condition improved slowly. The heavier enemy air-raids on Berlin, which began in August 1943, did not, however, permit the rest that a convalescent requires.

More from PANZER LEADER, by Heinz Guderian - Ballantine Books.

The Great Powers had deliberately called out the partisans, who fought without regard for international law. . . p.306

The Allied air offensive had brought ever-increasing devastation to Germany during the last few months (written in March, 1945). The armament industry had suffered heavily. The destruction of the synthetic-oil plants was a particularly severe blow, since our fuel supplies were mainly based on these installations. On January 13th the synthetic-oil plant at Politz, near Stettin, was bombed. On the next day the oil installations at Magdeburg, Derben, Ehmen, and Brunswick were bombed, together with the Leuna works and the fuel plant at Mannheim, and on the 15th the benzol works at Bochum and Recklinghausen. Also on the 14th the Heide oil plant in Schleswig-Holstein was destroyed. According to German figures this cost the Allies fifty-seven aircraft, but at the same time the Germans lost two hundred and thirty-six. The destruction of the greater part of our synthetic-fuel industry meant that the German Command now had to make do with such supplies as came from the wells at Zisterdorf in Austria, and from around Lake Balaton in Hungary. This fact partially explains Hitler's otherwise incomprehensible decision to send the mass of the freed in the West to Hungary; he wanted to keep control of the remaining oil wells and refineries which were of vital importance both to the armored force and to the air force. p. 345

I agreed to do so (to protest) on March 6th, since I wished at least to try to ameliorate the sufferings of the German people by means of an appeal to the chivalry of our adversaries. In the course of this appeal I referred to the Anglo-American air terror. I regret to say that this desperate appeal of mine was without success. Humanity and chivalry had both disappeared during these months. p. 346

If the war should be lost, then the nation, too, will be lost. That would be the nation's unalterable fate. There is no need to consider the basic requirements that a people needs in order to continue to live a primitive life. On the contrary, it is better ourselves to destroy such things, for this nation will have proved itself weaker and the future will belong exclusively to the stronger Eastern nation. Those who remain alive after the battles are over are in any case inferior persons, since the best have fallen. (Adolf's words.) p.352

Your Editor and Historian hesitates to date the disappearance of humanity and chivalry so precisely. I would date it at about 1939, or maybe in the planning stages of 1938. gfc

REUNIONS

- 15 Feb 1989 99th Bomb Group, McAllen TX
Jeff Waguespack, 1423 Tulip Ave., McAllen TX 78504
- 1 May 89 Bombardiers, Inc., Dayton OH
E.C.Humphries, Star Rt. 1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor MI
- May 1989 NW Chapter, 99BGHS, Spokane WA
Charles, D. Boggs, E. 250 Woodland Dr. Shelton WA 35660
- Sep 1989 15AFA, Las Vegas NV
P.O. BOX 6325, March Air Force Base, CA 92518
- Spring 1990 99th Bomb Group, Huntsville AL
H.E.Christiansen, 4520 Panorama Dr., Huntsville, AL 35801

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Make check payable to 99BGHS. Your address label shows the date to which you are paid up.

We do not stop the subscriptions of deceased members; we extend the subscription gratis for an extra year. But please remember to send us any change of address.

* * TAPS * *

Preston Underhill

DENVER CITY (Special) - Services for Preston Underhill, 63, of Denver City will be at 2 p.m. Friday in First Baptist Church with the Rev. Bill Merritt, pastor, officiating.

Burial will be in Denver City Memorial Park under the direction of Brownfield Funeral Home.

He died at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday in Lubbock's Methodist Hospital after a brief illness.

He was born in Rotan and moved to Denver City in 1952. He married Genevieve Dougherty on Jan. 11, 1947, in Rotan. He was a veteran of World War II, a 32nd Degree Mason with Denver City Lodge No. 1278, a

PRESTON UNDERHILL

I noticed this funeral announcement of Preston Underhill. Preston was a good soldier and an Air Corps gunner in the 346th Bomb Squadron. He was one of the best farmers in Yoakum County.

My wife and I are going to his funeral - thought you could put this in the newsletter; I am sure the combat crew who flew with Preston would like to know about him.

A member of the 346th Squadron Tech Supply, Donald Speck, Denver City TX.

member of Lubbock Scottish Rite and a member of First Baptist Church.

Survivors include his wife; two sons, Robert Fleming and Sid Underhill, both of Denver City; a sister,

Dorothy Boyd of Hurst; and six grandchildren.

The body will be at the church from 9 a.m. Friday until service time.

CARL E. BLAKE

We got word at the reunion that Carl passed away June 12, 1988. We have no further details.

LAWRENCE W. SEEHUSEN

Lawrence passed away last year. Mrs. Seehusen is presently at Box 919, Apache Junction AZ 85217-0919. from Robert A. Hoover

LARRY CORTESI

I received your letter that you wrote to my husband Larry (Cortesi) Cerri.

I am sorry to tell you that Larry passed away on Oct. 12, 1987. He had a massive heart attack and was gone in 15 minutes.

It was a great shock to all of us and I still can't believe he's gone.

I know he enjoyed hearing from you and loved anything connected with World War II. . . .

Larry loved writing and was always working on a new story. I feel bad that he had to die before he finished all the things he wanted to do.

I don't know if you knew "Cortesi" was a pen name that he used on his books.

If I can help your historical society in any way I hope you will contact me.

sincerely Fran Cerri, 79 Boght Road, Watervliet NY 12189.

Lawrence (Larry) Cortesi was the author of many books, including TARGET DAIMLER-BENZ and ROMMEL'S LAST STAND. Your Editor regrets very much that we never got to meet.

99th Bomb Gp Historical Society
 Walter H. Butler - Treasurer
 8608 Bellehaven Pl. N.E.
 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

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John S. Finnegan	944 Tyler Dr.	Santa Maria	CA 93454
Simon Dorman	329 Sand Broom Dr.	Noblesville	IN 46860
Jesse Meerbaum	202 Waddell Dr.	Hendersonville	NC 28739
Rex Carnes	1920 Carr Dr.	Longmont	CO 80501-1817
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Frank H. Pearce	324 Ridgewood Road	CorAL Gables	FL 33133
Morton Magee	8 Butternut Circle	Ormond Beach	FL 32074
Marion Allen Alley	P.O.Box 515	Grass Valley	CA 95945

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352 Sherman Miller	129A 88th St.	Sea Isle City	NJ 08243 347
Thurston R.D,	Rt. 7	Meadville	PA 16335 416
864 Dean W. Shields	P.O.Box 129	Jasper	GA 30143 347
865 Andrew P. Marcantonio	237 W. Park Place	Newark	DE 19711 347
866 John J. (Jim) Koehne	517 Sherbrook Dr.	High Point	NC 27262 416
867 Richard W. Phelps	37 South Pollard Dr.	Fulton	NY 13069 416