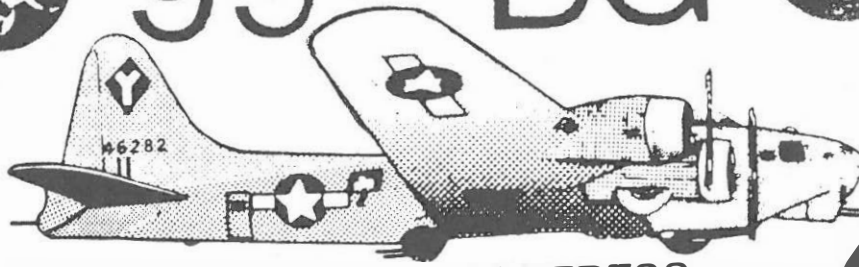




# 99th BG



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



## THE

# 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

## Newsletter

Vol. 10 No 1

Jan. 1 1990

SOCIETY OFFICERS, 1989-1990

PRESIDENT - BILL SMALLWOOD  
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HISTORIAN - GEORGE F. COEN  
EDITOR - GEORGE F. COEN

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear George:

I gather that we both checked on Chris Christiansen, after learning the news about Huntsville's freak tornado. It was good to know that both he and Sue escaped injury, and also to find out that the facilities in town that the 99rs will be occupying next April are intact.

On the way home from a late fall sojourn to Florida Nancy and I stopped off in Savannah, Georgia. I wanted to renew acquaintances with Sheldon "Monk" Hanneman, a fellow flyer, and roommate in a German prison camp, Stalag Luft I, in Barth, Germany. "Monk" and I spent fourteen months together in 1944/45, but recognition even after forty four years of separation was instant.

As we talked in Savannah he reminded me that his outfit had been the 324th Fighter Group, stationed first in North Africa, then Sicily and finally Italy. Hanneman had piloted a P-40 fighter/bomber and was shot down over Monte Cassino on April 1st., 1944.

While visiting the home of Sheldon and Verla Hanneman we passed by Hunter Field. All at once it flashed back that this was the air base where our crew, the Dale Tomlin crew, had been sent to "Staging Area" in December, 1943. It was here that we picked up a brand new Fortress, B-17G and then awaited orders to fly it overseas along the southern route.

With a smile I explained to "Monk" about having come upon six cases of bourbon whiskey in the plane's waist section. Mysteriously, noone in the crew would admit to knowing anything about this booze, about who was responsible for such a special cargo. Finally, on January 16, 1944 we landed at "Foggia Main", turning over our plane to Operations and to higher authority. In no time at all I noticed that the new "Fort" was being towed away, the cases of whiskey safely on board. Could it be that some of those welcome shots we were handed out following a mission came from the cargo delivered by the Tomlin crew?

Best Regards

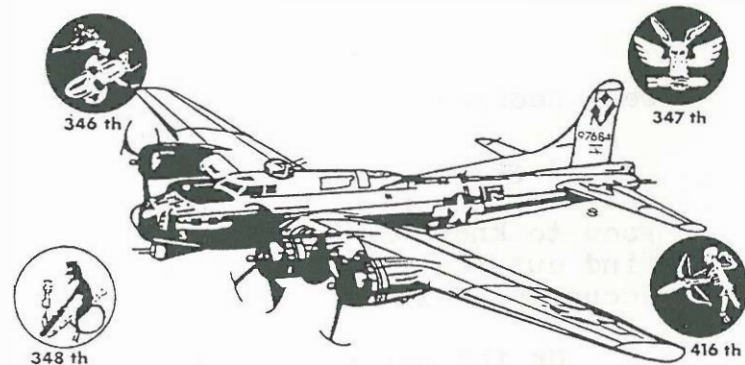
*Bill Smallwood*

Furthermore, ole buddies, Bill has called in from the North Pole his wishes for a Merry Christmas to one and all - may your shadows never grow less.  
geo



# 99th BG

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



NEW BUMPER STICKERS!! ORDER YOURS NOW!!! BERNIE BARR 7413 VISTA DEL ARROYO ALBUQUERQUE, NM  
Zip 87109-2940 HAS THEM FOR DELIVERY--3 for \$3.00 or 6 for \$5.00 ORDER NOW!! 99th Bomb Group  
Caps \$10.00 for first \$8.00 for each other, you order.

28 November 1989

Dear 99thers,

We have had several calls in reference to the tornado that struck Huntsville, Alabama on 15 November 1989. The area in which our reunion is to be held was not affected. We will be anxiously awaiting your visit.

Our questionnaire in the earlier newsletter made mention of a train ride on a steam powered locomotive. However, this will not be possible as the locomotive was sold to a Canadian firm.

The questionnaire also indicated other areas of interest. Golf was chosen as an activity by many.

Herb Holdsambeck, our golfing coordinator, has provided information for you golf enthusiasts on the 3rd page of this letter.

Reunion Information is set forth below. Be sure to provide full details where necessary. (Please print or type)

Dates--18-22 April 1990.

Lodging-Huntsville Hilton, 401 Williams Ave., Huntsville, AL 35801. The prices for the rooms include all taxes. The Hilton provides free transportation to and from the Jetplex. Four handicapped rooms on the ground floor are available.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nights Standard room x \$54.00/per night = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Nights Towers (Concierge Floor) x \$84.25/per night \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to make your own motel reservations you can call 1-800-445-8667. If you want to have us make your reservations, let me know.

3197

*CHERYL*

544

Our business luncheon meeting will be at the Hilton, Friday, 20 April. The visit to the Space and Rocket Center will be Friday evening and will be a real treat! The costs include transportation to and from the motel, admission and a Bar-be-Que.

Our Saturday morning breakfast will be a southern style breakfast at the Hilton.

Our Saturday evening banquet will be held in the Von Braun Civic Center's North Hall which is a short walk from the Hilton. We are planning a dinner dance this year in response to numerous requests.

Our hospitality room has plenty of elbow room.

**REGISTRATION**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Served: \_\_\_\_\_

**FEEES AND ACTIVITY COSTS**

	<u>Number</u>		<u>Total</u>
Registration	_____	X \$12.00 Ea.	_____
Business Luncheon	_____	X 8.50 Ea.	_____
Space & Rocket Center Tour	_____	X 18.00 Ea.	_____
Southern Style Breakfast	_____	X 8.00 Ea.	_____
Banquet	_____	X 22.00 Ea.	_____
<b>Totals</b>			_____

Mail to:

H.E. "Chris" Christiansen  
 4520 Panorama Drive SE  
 Huntsville, AL 35801-1211

Phone: (205) 534-8646

**AIRLINES**

I have contacted 3 airlines about discounted fares. Each would like to be the exclusive carrier but since all airlines do not service all areas of the country I was able to determine that the Supersavers are a better deal than a group rate especially if you are over 62 or are a member of AARP where discounts of 5 or 10% in addition the supersavers rates are available.

I could still try to get a group discount if I could get a "show-of-hands" of those that intend to fly in. If you would drop me a note before 01 February, I might be able to negotiate a better rate.

**REUNION GOLF**

The most convenient Golf Course for our play during the Huntsville Reunion is the Redstone Arsenal Course--championship quality--6911 yds. from the blue tees, 6623 yds. from the white, and 5443 yds. for the ladies. Slope Ratings are 121(blue), 119(white), 103(red). Redstone rents clubs for \$4.00, green fees are \$8.00 for Military & Gov. Employees & \$10.00 for guests. 2 bag carts are \$12.00, 3 bag \$14.00, 4 bag \$16.00, pull carts are \$1.50. Redstone has reciprocal agreements with all Army courses - so bring your membership card if you have one and play for free! Rules are that there must be one Military (active or retired) in each foursome and my guess is that will be no problem.

Our newest and best municipal course was damaged by the tornado but should be back in play by the time you get here. We have two other public courses in town (Jetport & Colonial - both championship courses) and there are several other great places to play nearby. So golf courses are not a problem and the weather will be great! We can get tee times and have tournaments (fun or serious) or we can just play, play, play!

To get the golf planning underway, please let me know by the end of February (or sooner) what you would like in the way of golf while you are in our great city. I need to know:

Military status \_\_\_\_\_, Handicap (USGA) \_\_\_\_\_, other \_\_\_\_\_) Walk \_\_\_\_\_, Ride \_\_\_\_\_, Need Clubs \_\_\_\_\_(right or left hand \_\_\_\_\_), Would like a tournament \_\_\_\_\_, A scramble \_\_\_\_\_, Want to just play and smell the flowers \_\_\_\_\_, How often do you play golf at home \_\_\_\_\_? Are you a member of an Army golf course \_\_\_\_\_? Do you want to play some golf before the reunion \_\_\_\_\_?, after the reunion \_\_\_\_\_? Say when and how much \_\_\_\_\_!!!

We have two Alabama State Super-Parks nearby. They have good challenging golf courses and lots of other facilities and real nice accomodations- "Joe Wheeler" at Rogersville and "Lake Guntersville" at Guntersville. They are about an hour West and East of here, respectively. If you are driving in for the reunion (or just want to extend you visit) you may want to stay for a few days at one of these parks - they are nice! Call as early as possible for reservations - 1-800-ALA PARK.

Herb Holdsambeck  
 3000 Dupree Drive  
 Huntsville, Alabama 35801 (205)883-4581

## Letters

December 3, 1989

Dear George;

Enclosed are the final reports on Aircraft No. 43-15382, a C-47 based at Kunming, China. There are times when I think it is good to reflect on the experiences of others during our times of trouble and conflict and this comes from an entirely different type of flying than that of our own experience.

A close friend, Bob Walkinshaw of Casper, Wyoming, Editor and Historian for the 322nd T.C.S., an Air Transport Group out of Kunming and he publishes a bi-monthly bulletin just as you and Walter do. Bob was a Pilot in this outfit.

The story goes that Pilot Ray Sweezey, 1st Lt., Co-Pilot J. H. Cameron, 1st Lt., Sgt. Francis L. Lacy, Engineer and Crew Chief, Cpl. William A. Doane, Radio Op., and an unidentified O.S.S. Major bailed out near Kunming on January 15, 1945. The mission they'd flown was to Poseh, China to pick up this O.S.S. Major. They left Poseh at 17:00 on their return trip running into bad weather all the way. Pilot Ray Sweezey, (Bob Walkinshaw says he's quite a character and could easily qualify as the hero of a humorous book of China War Stories), relates that the stormy weather included rain, lightning and St. Elom's fire around the props. They lost their generators with total electrical failure at 20:00. They finally spotted a C-46 going in and Ray closed in tight to follow that C-46 down through the heavy overcast. Suddenly the lights on the C-46 were shut off and the C-46 banked and dived into the overcast leaving them still on top with their major problem. They bailed out after exhausting their fuel with the Engineer, Radio Operator and the O.S.S. Major leaving the plane at the same time and they landed close together. These three made it into Kunming that night with the Pilot and Co-Pilot arriving there the next day. Pilot Ray Sweezey related to Bob Walkinshaw that it is a heck of a long way from the cockpit to the cargo door when you are alone on a plane in trouble like they were.

Each of us had significant problems to deal with and I believe this is a good example.

Christmas approaches rapidly and I can't believe it's this late in the year. I am thinking that my time table has me ready for about Labor Day. In any event, our best to you and Martha.

Sincerely regards;

Joe C. Kenney

28 August 1989

Dear George --

First off, thanks to Walter for sending me the long awaited missing copy of the Newsletter. My collection is now complete. Somehow, I never did get that copy. For that, he will receive "favorable mention" in my B-17 list.

After getting into more of the stuff I brought back from the Archives, I am convinced that D.J. Sopp's plane was 46182. He flew his missions in the summer of 44 and that is when 46182 was assigned to the 346th. That is the only 182 trinome that was assigned to the 99th. I had written him a letter explaining my view and asking for comments. And 46182 was not an F but a brand new G. It was not retired, but was MIA on 2-12-44 at Blechhammer. I had a reply from D.J. and he allows as how I just might be correct. So the issue of "Battlin' Bobby" is now closed. What threw me initially was he said the plane was a late model 'F' which is not the case. Per his request, I sent him a short history of the plane from the time it left the factory until it was MIA in December 1944.

In the papers I got from the Archives, I have "aircraft assigned" lists for planes from Mar 44 through May 45. I also have "gains & losses" lists for the same period of time. I found a list submitted to 5th Wing by the 99th listing all the MIA a/c, operational losses other than MIA, and losses not considered operational. This had a date of Jan 45 on it. No problem there since the "gains & losses" lists I have gave me the losses to the end of the war. I also got the same information for a few months for the 97th and 483rd. I have been exchanging information with the 483rd archivist to the mutual benefit of both groups. The 97th got the short end of the stick with all this plane swapping. In late summer 1944, about one half of their assigned aircraft were old B-17F models, a few of them ones we had transferred to them in November 1943. I made a quick search of the 5th Wing files to get most of this information. Going through that stuff was like searching for stuff in your attic, all mixed up and in no particular order.

I noticed in some of the letters from the members that they mention flying missions in B-17Es. I can clear that up. There never were any 'E' models assigned to the 99th when it was deployed overseas. If so, we would probably have gotten them from the 301st or 97th if there had been any in the theater. But they got rid of their 'E' models before they came overseas. They went to the 8 AF with 'F' model a/c in the 124xxx series and brought them to Africa in November 1942. Some of these planes ended up in the 99th later on.

I found another error in the 99th WD. On 11 Jul 43, they reported that 230393, 230396, and 23045 came into the Group. It turns out that 23045 is really 230405 and it was assigned to the 346th. Thanks to the good bookkeeping by the 'scribes' in that Sqdn, I was able to resolve that. I kept wondering why 23045 never showed up on any of the load lists I have. Anyway, the record card on it says it crashed on 20 Sep 43 (wiped out). The 99th "losses" lists do not mention a 23045. It was assigned to one of the B-17 groups assigned to the 12 AF about May 43, however.

I am not able to figure out the serial nr. for "Patches". As you know, the plane was supposedly zapped over Messina on 25 Jun 43 and came home all

shot up with 2 engines out, etc. Unfortunately, there is no mention of this incident in any of the WD pages (348th or 99th) that I can find. And there is no information on this mission in the Archives. Therefore, I am sending you a list of the B-17F a/c that I have which were assigned to the 348th. I did not include the ones we got from the 2 BG on 28 Mar 44 when we gave them our Gs and got Fs since they would not have been involved in this mission. I also asked the 483rd archivist if "2nd Patches" had that name before it was transferred to us and am waiting on his answer. Although the write up on the mission said the plane was all shot to pieces, don't put too much stock in that. The ground crew frequently had planes like this flying again in a short time. An example of this is 238096, a B-17G that Judge flew on its first mission on 10 Feb 44. The WD says the plane was scrapped. Not so! It was repaired and flew several more missions with the Group and was transferred to the 2nd BG in the swap of Gs for Fs on 28 Mar 44. There are a few other similar examples that I have found during my research.

The plane Max Davis flew that day may even have participated in the 5 July Gerbini mission. I would suspect it was one of the 23xxx, 25xxx, or 229xxx series of planes. It could also have been a plane assigned to one of the other squadrons which Max Davis flew this day as this happened quite often.

I also need info on 502. I surmise that most or all of you survived that swim. I have a copy of that mission in my files. About the nicest thing they had to say about your crew was that you were swimming fairly well. And like most of the other missions I looked at that had crews MIA, they threw away the post mission interrogation sheet which listed the crew. Sometimes, however, the interrogator was dedicated and would write "MIA" or "Did not return" on the sheet and would leave it in the mission folder.

I still have much material to go through. And I am planning on at least one more trip to the archives. I need to find out which sqdns. about 37 of the 46xxx and 48xxx series of a/c were assigned to. These series of planes started arriving in July 44 and kept coming until the end of the war.

Notice on the print out I am sending that I have again changed the format of the list. Using the other format, the list ran to some 33 pages. Using this format, I managed to get that down to about 22. I believe the list I gave you at McAllen had about 13 pages and that was in the old format.

Here are some of the planes I would submit as candidates for short writeups.

25143	Dirty Gertie
25388	Never Satisfied
25769	Cotton-Eyed Joe II & 229480 Cotton-Eyed Joe
25786	Whizzer II
46413	---
46282	---
124351	Tail End Charlie
229467	Flak Dodger
229472	Sweater Girl
229473	Yankee Doodle
229474	Warrior
229482	Robert E Lee
229509	Bad Penny

Dear George ---

My trek to the East is over. On the way there, the wife suggested it might be appropriate if I made another trip to the Archives. So while she was visiting her sister, I went to D.C. and spent 3 more days researching the 99th and 5th Wing records. I came away with enough material to finish the plane list. I now have found Sqdn. assignments for the remaining planes. Also copied the names of the crews that were MIA from the summer of 44 to the end of the war. Except for some possible fine tuning, the list is now about 100% complete.

I believe I have now identified Rodger the Lodger and Patches. Here is how I did it:

- Tips from Rex Greathouse (I'm sure his nr. 029 is 026) saying the two planes were B-17Fs and they flew the Cassino mission.
- Information that Delgado (on the Higgins crew) told his sister that he flew in Patches.
- A review of the load list for the Cassino mission on 15 Feb 44.
- In the pix you sent of Patches, I can nearly make out the serial nr. It certainly looks like a 229 something. And that looks like 23026 in the background.
- The Higgins crew flew 229856 after they started flying with the 346th. They flew that ship until it was traded to the 483rd.
- Five 346th Fs flew the Cassino mission. Rodger the Lodger and Patches were B-17Fs. Three of the Fs on that mission were 25477-Able Mable, 229526-Bugs, and 229775-Wongo. Thus, Rodger the Lodger and Patches had to be the two that are left. Those two are 23026 and 229856.

The other 346th planes flying the Cassino mission were Gs (297436, 231797, and 231815). 297436 is Silver Meteor, 231797 and 231815 were not assigned to the 99th until Jan and Feb 44, respectively, so neither of those can be Patches. And since Rodger the Lodger also flew the Cassino mission, and since the 346th a/c lists do not have an 029 trinome, Rodger the Lodger has to be 23026 and Patches is 229856. Does that sound realistic? Anyway, I have added those names to the ser. nrs. on my list.

Both Patches went out in a blaze of glory. Patches was MIA with the 483rd on 10 May 44 over Wiener Neustadt and 2nd Patches, which came from the 483rd in the 'big swap', crashed on takeoff on 24 Aug 44.

I got into my pile of stuff that I copied from the 5th Wing archives and found that I now have aircraft assigned lists (from Mar 44 - May 45) for all 5th Wing Groups except the 2nd BG. It seems this was a report that was started in Mar 44 and continued to the end of the war. Too bad they didn't do this from the beginning. Seems like they kept their records like they dropped bombs - haphazardly! Using those lists and the aircraft record

cards I will be able to determine the planes that were assigned to the 2nd BG. I already know a lot of them from seeing what was xferred from/to them from the other bomb groups.

There was still a bit of swapping done from the summer of 1944 on but it was done mostly via the Depots. If for instance, the 99th sent a plane to the Depot for repair or something similar, they might or it might not get the same plane back. Usually they did, but sometimes not. Also the 5th Wing kept a pool of aircraft which I assume were doled out to the Groups as needed. As to replacement aircraft, they were usually sent to one of the Depots, but sometimes they were flown direct to a Group. Someone somewhere apparently made this decision.

I made a much more thorough search of the 5th Wing files this time. There is a lot of junk in there but I did get some very interesting data. I reviewed every remaining 99th BG mission folder that I didn't get to my first time there. I copied enough load lists so as to be able to equate all those 46xxx and 48xxx a/c to the proper squadron. I would have liked to copy all of them but that would take a ton of dimes. Shame on the lazy 416th interrogators on some of the late missions. In many instances they did not list the entire crew who flew that particular mission. Sometimes they just listed the pilot, or the pilot and copilot, and sometimes they left the sheet blank. Pity the fellows on the crew other than those two who may try to get the big picture of their missions from the Archives. On the missions I flew they listed me as flying the ball turret, and the BTG as the radio op. That was because the BTG was already a T/Sgt. when we came to the 99th. The TO called for a Tech as radio op and by golly they made ole Marvin Burchett the radio op. And when I did make Tech, they still listed me as a Sgt. They even listed our engineer as a 2nd Lt. on one mission sheet. Oh well!

As I suspected, I found Joe Greeley's name in the 346th flying Weary Willie 2102855. Shucks, he was only about a year off in his dates. I also found out that the F that Joe Kenney thought he flew on 13 Aug 44 was in reality 232055 Dinah Might. I will have to drop him a note about that. So much for us 'old guys' memories. The one thing I do remember is that I slept every chance I got. Never played ball or attended a movie either in the 15th AF or the 8th AF. Who wanted to play ball in the 8th when London beckoned? I had a call from Dean Kuhn (347th) from Columbus a few days ago. He wanted to know how to get things from the Archives. Sent him a letter listing all the pitfalls and wished him luck in getting material and driving on the Beltway.

So other than adding a few frills to the plane list, I consider it finished for now. Still have to go back to the archives to dig up more material on all those missions I flew with the 8th AF.

regards,

Dick

IN A PREVIOUS LTR, I SAID THE 97TH & 201ST HAD NO 'E' MODELS IN ENGLAND. I SHOULD HAVE SAID THEY BROUGHT NO 'E' MODELS TO N. AFRICA. I SEE NOTHING IN THE FILES I HAVE THAT ANY B-17ES SERVED IN N. AFRICA OR ITALY.

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

GREETINGS!

A great deal of effort is being put forth by a number of our members. Several of them are writing books, men like our President Bill Smallwood. I marvel at the very high level of research that Bill is putting forth on this project and look forward to the day when we will be able to buy a copy and read what he has to say regarding Regensburg and following experiences.

And then I think of the efforts of each Reunion Chairman and the tremendous amount of putting those complex things together and this happens in every case. We need to lend any and all support we can to our current Chairman, Chris Christensen, in Huntsville, Alabama. That each Reunion has been successful indicates that tremendous effort each year.

Others include our ever present efforts by Historian George Coen and by Walter Butler in the production of our bi-monthly bulletin. Much has been done by others like Bernie Barr and by Lew Boatwright and these are all continuing efforts.

Milton Radovsky is another individual who is writing a book and this one in it's entirety about the Herman Goering Tank Wurks at Linz, Austria mission. Efforts on his part took him to Linz last year for further information on that fateful July 25, 1944 day.

We need to keep these men in mind for their interesting efforts. Many of our own have written articles that have been published by George and staff and these have all been most interesting and crucial to the success of our bulletin. It would be great if more of our support crews wrote and told of their experiences. There have been several very interesting diaries from this area and this is an area I have felt we needed to cover more adequately. It would be well to hear how a Crew Chief solved the many problems he was confronted with when the air crews brought a shot up B-17 home. Or one of the crew members, what he experienced. How about Ordinance? Or how about our cooks and bakers or the motor pool? Let's hear about these!

Another individual who is working tirelessly is Dick Drain. He is compiling all the information he can regarding each B-17 that was assigned to the 99th Bomb Group and what happened to that particular airplane either during the time it was assigned to our group or after it left. His monumental efforts have certainly benefitted me in my inquiries about numbers I was not clear of.

With the passing of several of our members I am always concerned that each of them had experiences that were unique and pertinent to this group and experiences that really should have been conveyed. We hope to hear from those of you who can share these with us and this draws us all closer together which is the way it should be.

Yours Sincerely;

Joe C. Kenney, Chaplain

## ....CREDITS.....CREDITS....

Rambling around the other day we bumped into a bunch of boys who didn't know about getting credits in high school and college for their labors in the Army. It has been done and it is easy to do. Of course, you have to fill out a form--so what! Your I&E office has a form to send to the school where you intend to enroll. Part of it you fill out, the rest comes off your record. It has all the poop on your army training and jobs. The school has books showing what training and experience that covers and they assign academic credits as they can. Basic training might count as PT; radio school might rate credit in Physics and so on. We've known of men who graduated from high school without taking any courses at all--just finished their credits with army work. Colleges do the same thing. We heard of one chap who collared sixteen hours credit--a whole semester.

There are some other tricks in the credit bag too. For a man who has been out of school a long time and learned a lot on his own, we have general educational tests which he can take. If he proves he knows his stuff, he might get a high school diploma without ever having been in school at all.

See your I&E Officer or non-coms. This service may be able to help you.

## ARE YANKS LOUSY LOVERS?

Some French girls think the Yanks are lousy lovers according to a poll conducted by the Parisian weekly, "Saturday Night."

Many Yanks, according to the poll, are either "too loud, too devil-may-care," or "too unbearably drunk," French girls believe. Also, "They can't distinguish respectable women from the other kind."

OUTDOOR THEATRE

For the rest of the summer, the outdoor theatre will be used as the entertainment center. Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday will see the regular movies shown and Thursday nights will have the news briefing followed by the GI movies. All shows start at 2100 hours (the generator willing).

Following is the schedule for the next week:

MONDAY 23 JULY - 2100 hours

"THREE'S A FAMILY" - Charlie Ruggles

WEDNESDAY 25 JULY - 2100 hours

"DARK WATERS" - Merle Oberon

THURSDAY 26 JULY - 21 hours

"GI MOVIES"

SATURDAY 28 JULY - 2100 hours

"NATIONAL VELVET" - Mickey Rooney

STAGE SHOW

On Sunday, 22nd of July at 1430 hours, the open air theatre will be rocking with joy for the "Just For Laughs" show will be there. Six G.I.s, all former Hollywood and Broadway entertainers who have been traveling around Italy cheering up the boys, will bring an hour of songs, comedy, and dancing sure to please you.

Don't forget, Sunday, 1430--come early, take a sunbath and relax. It's good for you.

## FRAGS

346

The ink was scarcely dry on your correspondent's premature statement that the atmosphere around the 346th was less like a Repple Depot when the orders came out transferring 56 over-86 point men into units \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_

....Sgt Orville "Thirsty" McCloud who will be reigning by the time this issue goes to press. . . .The Squadron baseball team covered itself with glory by neatly trouncing the 347th nine to the tune of a 15 to 3 score. . . .The Orderly Room has been a haven of quiet for the past several days primarily because Sgt Geiger has been at Rest Camp. Soon, though, he will be back and with all that rest behind him, he will probably be in good voice. Sgt John Stephens has been seen about town regularly in the vicinity of a bar of dubious reputation--so dubious that if one wants to come out of it alive it is necessary to make a bodyguard of a husky bar fly who haunts the place. . . .The longest face in the organization is being toted around by Cpl William "84 Point" Blank. That case battle star has been too elusive for him to pin down. If one were inclined to pun, one might say that he has consistently been drawing a blank. . . .And that's the dirt for this time from the 346th Bureau of Organized Confusion.

347

Say--can't I find someone to write this column With all the additional "Guineas" working (?) on the casars, the payroll has developed into a full time job and I don't find time now to write enough to my lovely Irish gal. Our "Big Abner" is Ed Murray--former 5th Army man who was among the very first Americans to enter Rome in this war. He reminds me of Mculdin's man minus the beard--and snores like a P-38 buzz job! A good man though, and he has made a favorable impression on the rest of the fellows. Ol' "Worry Wart" Bono never lets the idea of money bother him. Always have to ferret him out to sign the payroll and collect his money--and that hair of his!--he continually brushes it out of his eyes (it's all of an inch long). The men in the Orderly Room have put the entire squadron through a "screening" of Service Records and dare the examiners to find something wrong. (They always can, \_\_\_\_\_) "Skinny" Andelman returned from \_\_\_\_\_ with a glow of contentment on his entire person--could be Dan Cupid was there too? They say there are a lot of WACS there and Andy is the guy that could connect. \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_

348

Most popular suggestion being offered by GIs in the Squadron, "How about using our 8 by 8 from five to ten each night as a \_\_\_\_\_ into Foggia?" \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_

. . .Said one, "At least this is the first positive move back towards the States since we left in the spring of 1943." No chocolate milk (cocoa) or lemonade in the mess hall in over a month. Warm water doesn't seem to hit the spot with such wholesome meals. Lots of the boys are asking, "Porkey"??? Beware of Eyeties stealing your belongings. Remember, they shouldn't be in and around the tent area in the first place!!! Cairo boots and cigarettes top the list of Eyetie favorites. . . .A capacity house saw a running version of the 346th Dog Show the other night Just can't keep a good dog like "Rags" down, says we!!!

Major Quay and Capt Kem have been practicing up on their "Oui Oui's" in stead of "Si Si's". . . .It's off to Cannes Rest Camp for these, our C.O. and Executive!!!. . . .Three cheers for the person responsible for starting the Daily Bulletin;" a darn good idea. Mail call at 4:30 p.m. instead of 1300 hours the next day is a decided improvement. No morale-builder like mail, you know. . . .Anyone wanting to have a riot of a time, just attend the Red Cross Dancing Class in Foggia every Wednesday evening from seven to eight p.m. . . .The dilemma of the telephone wires this past week was strictly confoozing and not at all amoozing--for everyone!! We thought we were isolated on the Plains of Foggia before this--BUT LOOK AT US NOW! Many of the boys in the squadron are taking advantage of the facilities at the Red Cross Beach at Manfredonia. Strictly a good deal for fellows who enjoy a dip in the Adriatic. . . .Bon Giorno for now, Mia Civili.

Hq.

It is the wish of the C.O. that every man in the Group be given the opportunity of attending a Rest Camp. Though the quotas are small now, they will be expanded shortly. Within the next few days a roster will be posted on the Bull Board and every man in Hq can indicate his desire as to a Rest Camp. \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_.

## HERE TIS

Vol 3, No. 7

29 July 45

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Arts and Crafts Shop

Hop from your job to your favorite hobby in the new shop provided by Special Services for this purpose. Rather than waste an evening or that spare time during the days of occupation, why not drop around back of the open-air theatre to utilize this time with wood-caring, clay-modeling, metal-craft, leather-craft, knotting and braiding, or model airplane building. All the equipment needed is available at the shop and Lt Ed Shillite, S/Sgt Deaner, of the 347th Sq., or S/Sgt Rid of the 416th Sq. will be around to give you a few tips--if you need any.

There are a million and one projects you can make, but here are some that the big three, above, made while in Rome. (Ah-a-a Roma -a -a!): Leather wallets, plastic broaches, wood carvings of delicious women, clay models and animals, and more women, ash trays out of metal, and watch bands, gun straps, and bracelets of leather braid. Let's see some of your ideas worked out at the Hobby Shoppe, open all day until show time in the evening. By the way, don't sweat out the movie--come in and look the place over. (Case the joint).

The shop will be open for business Monday, July 30th, and will stay open 7 days a week, 1300 hours to 2100 hours. Come in and browse around.

Florence Brain Factor

The names of thirty one men from the Group who would like to attend the three-month course in "The Artistic, Cultural, Social and Economic Aspects of Life in Italy, Past and Present," have been submitted to Air Force. The course will start August first and will last until 1 November, during which time all those enrolled must remain at school, regardless if their names come up for redeployment. This course is being given by the University of Florence, and is not part of the G.I. University of Florence.

Due to the fact that many other units are now entitled to enroll their men at the University Study Center, the Group's quota has been cut to thirty six. It is hoped that in the near future, the quota will again rise to its previous figure.

The 348th Daily Broadcast

The "Wheels" of the 348th will collaborate on a 10-minute broadcast over their public address system each day during the evening chow. This broadcast will present daily news bulletins, facts and figures on everything from the war in the Pacific to news from the home front and will keep you posted on I and E activities. It might do well for the rest of the Squadrons to follow suit as such a program is of interest to the men and serves to keep them informed on world activities.

HINTS TO MOVE-GOERS

With the change from the indoor to outdoor theatre, a change in etiquette is needed. For example, the proper thing to do now is to:

- (a) Try and keep vehicle lights off the screen.
- (b) Keep your dogs and other pets home.
- (c) Try not to disarrange the seats--Italian help is scarce.
- (d) Don't throw beer bottles at the screen--The actors can't feel it you know.
- (e) Use mosquito repellent and keep shirt sleeves rolled down.
- (f) Be a boy scout--kind, considerate and courteous to your neighbors.

The telephone number at Special Services is 13 and at I & E it is 81

The one required feature in the whole Information and Education Program--one hour a week discussion--isn't going over so hot with the men. Why? It's our guess that the programs haven't been good enough to capture and hold the men's interest. We have one man in the Group I&E office, Sgt Bucholtz, who is at your disposal to help plan the Orientation hour. Keep him busy!

We are open to suggestions from anyone as to how to improve this angle of the I&E program.

FLASH: Catalogues of the GI University are now at your disposal at the I&E office.

FRAGS

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Since I've been in the army, I've heard a lot of singing and moaning about most every subject under the sun--and I've seen men plenty PO'd--but the other day in the Post Office in Foggia I saw a man about as mad as he could possibly get. This fellow was an officer and it seems that he wanted to send his fountain pen back to the States for repair. The personnel in the office were insistent about having the mailability certificate in the package and it would have meant rewrapping the whole thing. Well, it was done with a great deal of reluctance on the officer's part--who, during the process, was recalling the article in Stars and Stripes about a Major (in another theatre of operations) who had sent some of Hitler's personal silverware home to his wife in the States. To top it off, he wanted to send a money order for more than the amount allowed without a certificate--and this refusal really got him hot. He wanted to know if he should fill the one for \$25.00 out in blood instead of ink. Wouldn't be surprised to see his Congressman get a letter! PT is still bringing out a multitude of surprises among which are the ball playing demons "Slugger" Little and "Hot-corner" Bill Howard. Just wait 'till the "pencil-pushers" put a team out there! . . . This you will all want to see. S-4 Sgt Hafali, in order to get some cleaning up done put on a pair of fatigues and raised a cloud of dust that looked like one of the Tortorella Twisters. R.M.I. Deaner is willing to let anyone umpire the ball games--seems that he has some trouble satisfying the cash customers on the close ones. "Little Han" Amadits on his day off makes a "beeline" for the beer garden first thing in the morning. Wonder what he's going to do now that they don't start serving it until the middle of the afternoon? . . .

416

Rumors--Rumors--Rumors--we're moving here, there, everywhere--a high-pitched scream would go well here--staying right here in Whirlwind Plains seems to be predominating. If you will look closely those eyetic architects can be seen throwing together those never-to-be-forgotten tufa blocks in the vicinity of the mess hall. Oh woe is us!! Make of it what you will, I give up. . . Schurlnight rides again was the cry on everyone's lips as they gazed upon this latest extravaganza. . . With John's rebel drawl, his Italian is out of this world. I expect those eyeties to be whistling Dixie any day now or go without meals. Dee Hogg finally discovered why he continually had 94 cents over in his club bookkeeping--It was his own! He shelled out a few weeks ago and completely forgot about it.

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Late Flash--Mitchell and Meale are off to Cannes. The two Pittsburgh officers wish it could be the Smoke City. And what's this about "Jack" being promoted to corporal for "gallantry in action"????? . . . The 348th is sweating out things in more ways than one. These last ten days have certainly been corkers. . . Capt Tepper and Sgt Eddie Ugal, Squadron I&E representatives are muchly on the ball with the new squadron library, to be located in the War Room between S-3 and S-2. And Rosenthal is placed in charge as "custodian". . . Hail to Lt Carratta and the cooks for serving some cold iced chocolate the other night in the mess hall. Said one GI, "I've been in this outfit for six weeks and outside of coffee for breakfast we've had nothing but warm water to go with the other two meals. This chocolate is a good deal. Hope we can get more of the same. It certainly lifts up a guy's morale in this hot July weather. . . PT program now in full swing as Lt Duffy and M/Sgt Spielberg take this "baby" under their wing. Informality is being



stressed, hoping that the enlisted men will partake of their own accord. . . .Dave Breman is back from Rome after a pleasant seven-day jaunt there. . . .Cries of "Truck, Truck, Who's Got the Truck" are being heard throughout the squadron area daily. Men would welcome a squadron shuttle to Foggia, especially since a great number of squadrons in this area have their own six by six going into Foggia for their men. . . .Rumors that six or seven men are going up to the GI University in Florence for the Aug 8-Sep 8 term. Good luck, STUDENT!!!! Squadron S-2 officer is responsible for increasing the Squadron Library. It's told that the Pittsburgh hot B-24 pilot cleaned out the Bari Officer's Red Cross Club. . . .Marv. Galinsky bowed out in the inter-Allied Ping-Pong Tourney in Foggia the other day, after giving an RAF Tommy a hot tussle. . . .It took the Ities but nine days to build our super-deluxe barracks, and now it is taking them another 15 days to stand in front of the place and admire their masterpiece!!! Looking on the bright side, remember men, if the dust gets you down just remember that you'll be praying for rainless days this winter when we're going to have more mud than we can wade through.   
ARRRIVEDERCI MIA CIVILI. . . .

If you notice anyone walking around talking to himself, he's probably from the 304th Wing, praying that those Battle Stars come through. . . .Just look for the guy praying the loudest--that will be me--Amen.

SPORTS FOR SPORTS

SOFTBALL: The third softball tournament is in full swing now and a rip-roaring one it promises to be. The Hubbas, winners of the last officer's League, started off like a house on fire, beating the Hamburg Hams 6 to 2 and the Eagles 5 to 1. But, their arch enemy, the Hq. Wheels took them over 5 to 4 behind the pitching of Lt Hilberry. In the Enlisted Men's League, the Flak Catchers are off to a flying start copping three straight. Their first game with the 416th Fubars was a rough one however, with the final score standing 11 to 10. The Barracks had victory in their hands in the Hq. Office Boys-Barracks game when Hammons of Hq pulled a Frank Merriwell. The score was 8 to 6, last of the seventh and two out when the Office Boys got on a spurt and placed three men on base. \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE

HARDBALL: The 416th seems to be the only squadron that can't scratch up a team--what's the matter boys? While none of the other squadron teams are professionals, they do play some pretty good games and have a lot of fun--that's the important thing. Come on 416th, join in the fun. You're scheduled to play the 347th Bums this week and if the Rattlers can beat them 15 to 3 and the Redbirds 9 to 5, you should be able to at least put up a respectable game.

TENNIS: The tennis tournament at the 416th is drawing to a close and it looks like the officers have it all over the enlisted men. Capt Moore, Lt Collings and Lt Katz have reached the semi-finals while Capt Strobel and Capt Dougherty are battling it out to see who will get into it. At this writing, they have both won one set and are five-all in the third set.

TENNIS CHALLENGE: The 416th has challenged the other squadrons to a tennis match. O.K. Lt Wetzell, Lt Meanan and Lt Duffy, let's see you get up three singles and two doubles teams and take the 416th on.

SIDELIGHTS: When Tony Galento came down ill before a scheduled fight, the doctor stated it was double pneumonia. After a few minutes of deep thought, his manager, the late Joe Jacobs, said: "Doc, we need all the publicity we can get, can't you make that 'triple pneumonia'? Tony's a pretty big fellow, you know."

ENLISTED MEN'S LEAGUE				OFFICER' LEAGUE							
	W	L		W	L		W	L			
Flak Catchers	3	0	Fubar	1	1	Wheels	2	0	Eagles	1	2
Ordnance	2	0	Whifle B	1	2	Hubbas	2	1	War Weary	0	1
Pelicans	2	1	Short Cir	0	2	Hamberg H	2	1			
Office Boys	1	1	Barracks	0	3						

BIRMINGHAM, ALA: GIs returned from overseas have found these changes in local gals since they went away: (1) they're thinner, (2) they're blonder, (3) they seem more beautiful. (JUST SO THEY'RE WOMEN)

TOLEDO, OHIO: A local manufacturing concern has announced that it has perfected a tear-shaped beer bottle for post war use. (YEAH, BUT DO THEY HAVE EGG IN IT?)

ALEDO, ILL: A husband was stumped by form questions he was asked to fill out in making application for a divorce. The trouble was, he didn't know her name. "I just called her Honey" he said. (NUFF SAID)

CHICAGO: Two gunmen entered the Zenith Cafe barged past the cashier, made for the kitchen and stole 60 pounds of ham--no money. (COULDN'T BE THE SAME HAM WE GET IN THE ARMY)



Sheet No. 1 War Diary. 99th Bomb. Gp. (H), 347th Sqdn. Oudna, NATOUSA

Month of September, 1943. Prepared by Alphonse F. Sentous, 1st. Lt., A.C.

DAY	EVENTS
16	Today was operational for our squadron. Nine of our B-17s took off for their target at Benevento, Italy. No difficulty was encountered and all ships successfully made the mission with the exception of one which had to return early due to mechanical trouble. Thirteen men of our flying personnel, eight officers and five enlisted men, were transferred to the 12th Training Command upon completion of their fifty combat missions. Eleven privates were promoted to the grade of private first class.
17	Some of our officers made a flight to Cairo, Egypt. Major Lewellyn T. Boatwright Jr., our CO, departed under Special Orders at the end of his fifty combat missions, and Capt. Burrell succeeds him as CO. Capt. William A. Clark succeeds Capt. Burrell as Operations Officer. In the evening, there was a movie in the Hqs. area. Today was PX day. A full carton of cigarettes for the first time in 2 months.
18	Mission to Viterbo A/D. A number of B-24s came in from England to operate for the present from our field. They belong to the 44th Bomb Group (H), and we have the 67th Sq. with its seven A/C attached to us. Some of the 44th participated in the now famous raid on the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania, bombing from extremely low altitude. Some of the men claim they saw an ME-210 flying around over the field today. Evidently a captured plane. A gasoline truck caught fire tonight at the refueling pumps. The fire lasted several hours but the truck had been pulled away from the pumps at the start of the fire and no one was injured.
19	Today is Sunday and non-operational. Full quota of our men went to town on pass. Some to swim at one of the numerous beaches. The rest remained at the base, carrying on the usual, uneventful day.

- 20 Another non-operational day, and everything unusually quiet. Members of the 44th Bomb Gp., 67th Sqd., were getting acquainted with our boys. We had fresh eggs for breakfast and fresh meat for supper. After supper, "Now Voyager," starring Betty Davis and Paul Henried played at our field. It drew the largest crowd that was ever at any of our shows. The 30 English soldiers under Lt. Behrend, who were on the field since the paratrooper scare, left us today. These thirty had been assigned on DS to our squadron; others to other squadrons. They were originally part of an English Armored Division and are waiting around for new equipment to replace their losses in the battles in this vicinity during the African Campaign.

Month of September, 1943

- 21 The B-24s took off on a mission this morning. Our S-2 and S-3 are working with them since they have an S-2 set up at Group only. they have been accustomed to entirely different pre-flight briefing procedure than we have known and used. Theirs is modeled after the British. Since their participation in the Libyan Campaign, they have been functioning in England where they came to from near Benghazi well east of here. Their H hour was 0345 and briefing lasted one full hour with take-off time scheduled for 3 hours and 55 minutes later. We are flying a practice mission with our B-17s today.
- 22 Scheduled to have been an operational day but the mission was canceled due to weather. A high wind storm and dust blew all day and the mess hall supply tent blew down. Two Red Cross girls were out to spend the day with us. We played Bingo most of the afternoon with them. No mail. Communications installed a radio in the S-2 tent and we plan to give the men regular, daily broadcasts of news with other types of entertainment at night.
- 23 Scheduled to operate but the mission was again called off because of weather over the target. B-24s flew a practice mission. Again no mail.
- 24 B-24s made a mission to Pisa M/Y. No E/A or flak encountered. The mission was highly successful. 6 A/C took off and 1 returned early after a false start with the rest of the mission in the morning. Their first return was due to trouble with a gas cap which was repaired and then were ordered to catch up with the A/C of their Group which were well underway by then. It couldn't be done and they returned. The PX was open today. All cigarettes were inferior brands, although we did get a carton per man. Hot biscuits for supper. Usual shortage of food in the EM mess before the end of the chow period. "Who Done It," starring Abbott & Costello, was shown in the HQ area later.
- 25 Both the 99th B-17s and the 44th B-24s took off on missions today. It has been very busy for us also. The 24s had to return early due to bad weather. We sent out from our squadron 9 A/C. Eight ships went over their target, the eastern end of the M/Y at Bologna, Italy. One A/C returned early due to mechanical trouble. No flak over the target. E/A were up in small numbers, but did not attack us. One plane landed at Cagliari, Sardinia for gasoline. Over 160 B-17s were counted over the field early this morning at one time. Our mess officer informs us that our rations have been cut 10%. A French stage show played in our area tonight.
- 26 Both our B-17s and the B-24s of the 67th Sqd. (44th Gp.) were scheduled to fly, but both missions were canceled because of weather over the target. 1st Lt. Holmes on A/C 473 returned with his A/C and entire crew this morning after being forced down in

Sardinia on the return leg of yesterday's mission to Bologna, because of the shortage of gasoline. There were no unusual happenings to report. Tonight the officers of this squadron held a party in the officer's club.

- 27 Was non-operational for both our squadron and the B-24s of the 67th Sqd. (44th Gp.). There were no unusual happenings during the day. That night we were scheduled to have a U.S.C. Camp Show here at the base, but it was postponed because of illness among the cast. "Stranger in Town," starring Frank Morgan and Jean Rogers played at the outdoor movie.
- 28 Was operational for our B-17s, but non-operational for the B-24s of the 44th Bomb Gp. Eight B-17s took off at 0815 hrs to their target, but had to turn back en route due to bad weather. Today, it rained fairly hard and was rather stormy for a long while. The weather turned cooler, which was really a relief for all.
- 29 Was scheduled to be operational for both our squadron and the B-24s of the 67th Bomb Sqd. (44th Gp.), but the mission was called off due to weather. It turned out to be a beautiful day here, however, and many of the men and officers went to town. Others got out a football and tossed it around for a while, wishing for the chance to see a good game.
- 30 Was non-operational for both our squadron and the B-24s of the 67th Sq. Today was pay day, the one day of the month. A few little games are already in progress, and there will be some midnight oil burned tonight. Everyone is crowding around the radio in the S-2 tent at hours the news is broadcast, anticipating the fall of Naples. Nothing of particular importance happened. Tickets for our sqd. dance on Oct. 5, 1943 were sold after pay call.

Sheet No. 4

Month of October, 1943

- 1 Today was operational for both our squadron and the 67th Bomb Sqdn. (H) 44th Bomb Gp. Our target was the Messerschmitt Factory at Augsburg, Germany. Five of our ships took off from Oudna #1 at 0740 hrs. Four of our ships returned early due to mechanical trouble. Lt. Cantwell and his crew on A/C #856 went on with the group, and joined the formation of the 416th when the group turned back 35 miles this side of the target. Lt. Cantwell and his crew are believed to have been lost about 90 miles this side of the target over Innsbruck, Austria. Seven B-24s of the 67th Sqdn (H) 44th Bomb Gp. took off from Oudna #1 at 0655 hrs. All ships went over the target, the Messerschmitt Factory at Weinernuestadt, Austria, but only one A/C, #32, returned safely. Six A/C are missing from the mission. A/C #232 suffered battle damage. One crew member had a large lump on his head from a piece of flak. 40 to 50 E/A were encountered, and flak was reported as heavy, intense, and accurate. We had chicken for supper this evening, and later there was a show here on our base. The Squadron PX was open today. We got a full carton of off brand cigarettes, two bars of candy, and a package of gum, along with the regular sales of toothpaste, combs, etc.
- 2 Today was non-operational for both our squadron and the 67th Sqdn. of the 44th Bomb Gp. There was nothing unusual happened during the day. We had fresh steak for

dinner and it was enjoyed very much. Roger and Gene came up to visit us for a few days. They are the two little French boys who had been the squadron mascots up until the time that their school started.

- 3 Today was non-operational for both squadrons. Our own and the 67th Sqdn of the 44th Bomb Grp. Nothing of importance happened.
- 4 Today was operational for our squadron, but non-operational for the B-24s. Seven of our B-17s took off from our base at 0815 hrs, to their target, the M/Y at Pisa, Italy. Food was disappointing as usual. "Somewhere I'll Find You," starring Clark Gable and Lana Turner, played on the base here. One man finished his 50 combat missions.
- 5 Today was another operational day for our squadron. Ten of our A/C took off at 0740 hrs to their target, the M/Y at Bologna, Italy. That night, we had our second squadron party since the squadron was organized. It was held at the Oriental Palace, 28 Ave De Madrid, Tunis. Everyone had a very good time, and no one stayed sober. The boys are certainly a changed bunch since the last party in January of this year, in Watertown, 3 Dakota. Most of the boys have lost a good bit of weight, and don't fit their uniforms as they once did. A French stage show played that night here on the base. Three men completed their 50 combat missions.

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Sheet No. 5

Month of October, 1943

- 6 Today was operational for our squadron. Six of our B-17s took off for their target, the M/Y at Mestre, Italy. 2nd Lt. Floyd M. Calkins was injured. Yesterday, a Negro guard squadron was attached to us. This is a great help, because the men won't have to work all day and stand guard at night. We had a heavy rain today, but the ground was so dry that it didn't get very muddy. Eight of our men completed their 50 combat missions. The trial of James E. Saunders came up today over the killing of one of our men at an earlier date. He was found guilty of first degree murder, and given the life sentence.
- 7 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The 67th Sqdn., 44th Bomb Gp. left us today. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 8 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The PX was open today with the sale of a carton of cigarettes, chuckles, and the usual items. Our squadron S-1 and S-3 moved in the winter hut together.
- 9 Today was operational for our squadron. Three of our fortresses took off at 0728 hrs to their target, the Sedes A/D at Salonika, Greece. One ship had to return early due to mechanical trouble. Four other of our A/C took off at 0845 hrs to their target, the A/D at Larissa, Greece. We had three early returns due to mechanical trouble. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 10 Today was operational for our squadron. We flew ships on one mission. Five of our B-17s took off at 0742 hrs to their target, the Tator A/D at Athens, Greece. One of the ships returned early due to mechanical trouble. Church services were held here at the post chapel as usual on Sunday. Nothing else of importance happened.

- 11 Was scheduled to have been operational, but the mission was canceled due to weather. 48 B-25s of the 310th Bomb Grp. (M) came to our base to stay for an unknown length of time. Six of the 379th Squadron are attached to us. We had creamed, shredded chicken for supper tonight. Very good for a change. Tonight there was a movie here on the base. "The Road to Morocco," starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour played. We also had the 5th game of the World Series on the radio hour of WBOS, Boston, Mass. It was broadcast over the radio in the S-2 tent.

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Sheet No. 6

Month of October, 1943

- 12 Today was non-operational for us. One of the longest chow lines at breakfast this morning that we have ever had because of the added personnel of the 379th Sqdn. 310 Bomb Grp. Food was worse than ever today. The kitchen had to feed for two hours and 15 minutes this morning. Nothing of importance happened. We had a few occasional showers.
- 13 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Tonight, "Margin for Error" played at the base here. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 14 Was operational for our squadron. Seven of our A/C took off to their target, the M/Y at Terni, Italy. One of our A/C got pretty badly shot up, and eight of the crew bailed out over the field. The pilot and co-pilot managed to land the ship safely. We had fresh eggs for breakfast this morning. Certainly good for a change. A Major from the Inspecting General's Department made an Administrative [sic] inspection of the squadron today.
- 15 Today was non-operational for our squadron. A good many of our men were on pass. Nine of our men left for the States after completing their 50 missions. No improvement of food today. "Orchestra Wives," starring Ann Rutherford and Lynn Bari, played at the base here.
- 16 Today was non-operational for our squadron. This afternoon we had a USO show here on the base. Adolph Menjou was accompanying the show. Anna Lee played a little love scene with one of the boys picked from the audience. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 17 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Today at lunch we had fresh hamburgers. The first in a long time. The pay-roll was also signed. Church services were held at the post chapel.

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Sheet No. 7

Month of October, 1943

- 18 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Late last night, we got in four new combat crews. They had to sleep outside until this morning when they were assigned tents.

They were given a talk today by Capt Clark our squadron operations officer and Lt Barnes our squadron Intelligence Officer. Tonight we had fresh meat stew for supper. Afterwards "the Amazing Mrs. Holliday " starring Deanna Durbin played at the base here.

- 19 Was non-operational for our squadron. Nothing of importance happened.
- 20 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We had fresh meet for supper tonight. After supper, "Meet John Doe, starring Barbara Stanwyck, played at our outdoor movie.
- 21 Today was operational for our squadron. Eight o our A/C took off to their target, the RR Viaduct at Terni, Italy. All of our A/C returned safely to their base. We had pork chops for supper tonight. A new crew arrived today.
22. The mission for today was canceled because of weather over the target. We had steak for supper. Tonight we had a vaudeville show called "The Good Neighbor Show," in which the 347th Sqdn was represented by S/Sgt Erwin Porges at the piano playing Boogie Woogie and one classical number and PFC Eugene J. Guglielmo, who performed with magic and card tricks.
- 23 Ten A/C took off in two sections. Five at 1230 hrs and five at 1415 hrs. Their mission was of a secret nature, and none of our A/C are expected back today. Squadron Operations assumed the usual duties of the S-2 office in distributing the Escape Kits and Money Purses and radio folders to the crews. Due to the size of the audiences, two showings of the movie "Little Old New York," with Fred MacMurray and Alice Faye. the first show began at 1839 hrs and was immediately followed by the second.
- 24 None of our A/C are expected to return today after taking off yesterday. At about 1300 hrs, a code message came through to the effect that the mission was a fizzle. Lt. Philip J. Barnes, Squadron S-2, left under special orders to attend a week's course on a new system of A/C identification. Lt. Alphonse F. Sentous, Ass't S-2, is in charge of the office during his absence.

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Sheet No. 8

Month of October, 1943

- 25 Today was non-operational for our squadron since our A/C had not returned from yesterday's mission. They came in at intervals late in the morning and early afternoon. One of our A/C did not return because of slight damages done to it while landing on the advance base yesterday. This crew returned later in the day by transport. We had raisin pie for dinner tonight. Afterwards, "Ship Ahoy" played at the base here. The sound bulb burned out, and by the time it was replaced, the rain set in and the show was not completed. Today a notice went on the bulletin board that all blankets to be cleaned by quartermaster must be in by tomorrow morning. This is the third notice this week.
- 26 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We had an area inspection by one of the headquarters officers. At lunch we had fresh hamburgers.

- 27 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We had fresh wieners for dinner. Last night, "Hunted men" played at the base, starring Lloyd Noland.
- 28 Today was non-operational for our squadron. One of our cook helpers, Pvt. Edgar McKinley, died in the hospital today from Malaria, and a blood clot. S/Sgt Glade G. Sibbett was seriously hurt in an accident last night when he was struck by an unknown vehicle on the highway. Tonight, the officers had a dance at the club. Our group orchestra played for them. Our squadron has four men represented in the orchestra, out f a total of nine. We were also given three boxes of hard candy by the group S-4 for distribution to combat members while flying on a mission. Four new men joined our squadron.
- 29 Today was operational for our squadron. Nine of our A/C took off for their target, the ball bearing factory at Turin, Italy. They ran into bad weather en route and chose as their alternate target the M/Y at Genoa, Italy. Tonight we had a show at the base here.
- 30 Today was operational for our squadron. Nine of our A/C took off to their target, the ball bearing factory at Turin, Italy. They were not able to drop their bombs because the target was covered completely by clouds. Food was extremely poor today. The combat members that flew today were served 2 ounces of whiskey in the S-2 tent after they returned from the mission. This will be done after each mission in the future.

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Sheet No. 9

Month of October, 1943

- 31 Was operational for our squadron. Six of our B-17s took off to their target, the RR Viaduct at Antheor, France. All of our A/C returned safely. Today was pay day and the PX opened.

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Sheet No. 10

Month of November, 1943

- 1 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Nothing of importance happened. There was a show tonight here on the base.
- 2 Today was operational for our squadron. Five of our A/C were scheduled to take off, but one of the ships had a tire blow out on the takeoff. The remaining A/C had no trouble. They are not scheduled to return to their home base today. We had a little excitement today when a tent of some of our officers caught fire from a stove and burned to the ground. A good many of their clothes were destroyed, but they did manage to save some of them. Tonight we had creamed, shredded chicken for super together with spaghetti.
- 3 Today was non-operational for our squadron. One of our A/C returned from yesterday's mission. The other three are not expected until tomorrow. We had a show here on the base tonight.

- 4 Today was non-operational for our squadron. A practice mission was flown today. The group gave a barbecue today celebrating its completion of 100 combat missions. The program consisted of the barbecue, music by the 301st band, invocation by Chaplain Whitlock, and speeches made by Colonel Fay R. Uptegrove, CO of the group, Generals Spaatz, Doolittle, and Eisenhower. At 1830 hrs, "In This Our Lives," starring Bette Davis, played at the base here. Tonight, the officers had a dance at their club here on the base, and music was furnished by the 99th Bomb Grp's orchestra. An open house was held at the enlisted men's club, and drinks were served free of charge.
- 5 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Nothing of importance happened. "Arsenic and Old Lace" played here on the base, starring Priscilla Lane and Cary Grant. The show was called off in the middle because of rain, and is scheduled to show again at a later date.
- 6 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The PX was open today. We had good cream of tomato soup for supper tonight.

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Sheet No. 11

Month of November, 1943

- 7 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We just got word that Lt. Breslin, Lt. Marks, Lt. Cantwell, Lt. Boydston, and T/Sgt Rowen are safe and interned in a hospital in Switzerland. They have been missing since the mission on 1 October 1943.
- 8 Today was operational for our squadron. Nine of our A/C took off to their target, the Ball Bearing works at Turin, Italy. Three of our A/C returned early due to mechanical trouble. A/C #769 was forced to make a water landing. Two of the crew are reported as missing. A/C #490 and its crew are still missing. We had a show here on the base tonight.
- 9 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The crew and A/C #490 returned safely to the base.
- 10 Today was operational for our squadron. Seven of our A/C took off to their target, the M/Y at Bolzano, Italy. Two of our A/C returned early due to mechanical trouble. Two other of our A/C returned the same day at the approximate ETA. A/C #384 is reported to have made an emergency landing in Corsica. Tonight we had a movie here on the base in the form of a double feature. "Arsenic and Old Lace" and "Eyes in the Night" were scheduled to have shown, but the projector broke down in the middle of the first show and they were unable to finish the program.
- 11 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Nothing of importance happened. A good many of our men went to town on pass to witness the Armistice Day Ceremonies there.
- 12 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We had fresh scrambled eggs for breakfast. Tonight, "The Son of Monte Cristo," starring Joan Bennett and Louis Hayworth played here on the base.

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Sheet No. 12

Month of November, 1943

- 13 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The PX was open today. We had fresh scrambled eggs for breakfast and fresh meet for supper. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 14 Today was non-operational for our squadron. There was an unusually large amount of mail going out this morning. The boys are getting out their Christmas v-mail greetings. All of our B-17Fs equipped with Tokyo tanks were transferred to another Bomb Grp. and we in turn received their A/C without the extra tanks. Church services were held here on the base as usual.
- 15 Today was non-operational for us. British Wellington Bombers have been flying overhead, and we understand that they are to be based close by. Mail outgoing was heavy again today, but there was only a little mail came [sic] in.
- 16 Today was operational for our squadron. Two of our B-17Fs took off at 0903 hours to their target, the Istres le Tube A/D, France. We had claims come in for two E/A destroyed. Lt. Kenneth Simon, one of our bombardiers, got a slight wound in the finger from a piece of flak. Nothing else of importance happened.
- 17 Today was non-operational for our squadron. We had the U.S.C. show #99 play here on the base at 1450 hrs. Tonight "This Is The Army" was shown here on the base.
- 18 Today was operational for our squadron. Seven of our B-17Fs took off at 0630 hrs to their target, the Eleusis A/D at Athens, Greece. There were no early returns and results are believed to have been good. Two of our A/C landed in Italy for minor repairs and did not return to the base. Nothing else of importance happened today.
- 19 Today was non-operational for our squadron. The PX was open today. We got word early this morning that A/C 179 had crashed into a mountain near Ragusa, Sicily on returning to this base, and all of the crew were killed.

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Sheet No. 13

Month of November, 1943

- 20 Today was non-operational for our squadron. There were a lot of packages came [sic] in today.
- 21 Today was non-operational for our squadron. Church services were held here on the base.
- 22 Today was operational for our squadron. Ten of our A/C took off at 1005 hrs to their target, the submarine base at Toulon, France. All of our ships returned without going over the target due to bad weather. "Lucky Mr. Jordan" played here at our base tonight.

- 23 Today was non-operational for oursquadron. Nothing of importance happened.
- 24 Today was operational for our squadron. Ten of our A/C took off at 0905 hrs to their target, the submarine base at Toulon, France. "Henry Aldrich Swings It"
- 25 Today was Thanksgiving. It was nonoperational for us. Things were pretty quiet. For dinner tonight, we had Turkey, dressing, cake and hot chocolate.
- 26 Today was operational for our squadron. Eleven of our A/C took off at 0910 hrs. The formation was called back to the field but one of our A/C #474 joined the 2nd Bomb Gp. and completed a mission with them. We might put it this way. Out of eleven A/C taking off, there were ten early returns and only one of our A/C went over the target. Maybe Ripley should hear of this one. "Intermezzo" played here on the base tonight.
27. Today was operational for our squadron. Ten of our B-17fs took off at 0915 hrs to their target, the M/Y and Bridges at Grizzana, Italy. Weather was pretty bad and observations of the bombing results couldn't be made. Nothing of importance happened.

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Sheet No. 14

Month of November, 1943

- 28 Today was operational for our squadron. All of the A/C were called back before reaching the target. Nothing else of importance happened
- 29 Today was operational for our squadron. Eleven of our A/C took off at 0810 hrs to their target, the Fiano Romano A/D. They returned at 1500 hrs without dropping their bombs due to overcast in the target area. "Air Force" played here on the base tonight.
- 30 Today was operational for our squadron. All of our A/C were called back to the base before they reached the target. Everyone is busy packing anticipating the movement of the squadron.

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Sheet No. 15

Month of December, 1943

- 1 Today nine A/C from our squadron participated in the mission to bomb the Fiat Aero-Engine and Motor Works at Turin, Italy. Results of the bombing are believed to have been good. There was one early return and four of our A/C which were over the target did not return to this base today.
2. Today was nonoperational for our squadron. The four A/C of our squadron which remained away from base after yesterday's mission have returned. One had been attacked by an ME-109 over Sardinia on the return leg of its flight. All tents of the ground crew who are scheduled to leave on the first echelon were torn down today. The S-2 tent was also pulled down. The twenty men who are to stay behind on the clean-up detail moved their bunks into the Orderly Room-Operations Hut.

## LETTERS

STUART ERDHEIM  
77 West 15th Street, Apt. 4F  
New York, New York 10011  
(212) 255-1753

November 1, 1989

Mr. Wilbur Dixon  
7831 Fall Meadow Lane  
Dallas, Texas 75248  
(214) 744-1005

Dear Mr. Dixon:

I am writing to you in hopes of obtaining information about the 99th Bombardment Group. I am interested in contacting crew members (officers and enlisted men) about their experiences, for a documentary I am doing about the "oil war" the 15th AAF conducted in mid 1944, against enemy synthetic oil refineries.

Is it possible to obtain a list of the personnel and an up to date mailing list of those men still living? If you don't have that - where I might be able to obtain it. (In particular, I would like to speak with the air crews, i.e. pilots, navigators bombardiers and photographers. Although I would also like to speak to ground crew as well, especially Intelligence Officers and OSS men assigned to these units.) Anyone with diaries or photos would be helpful as well.

Do you have a newsletter in which I may be able to place a 'seeking' ad as well?

Besides the 99th BG I am also interested in contacting members of the Bombardment Groups of the 5th and 55th Bombardment Wings of the 15th AAF. Do you have any information regarding other historical societies for these groups? (That would be the 2nd, 97th, 301st, 463rd, 483rd BG of the 5th Bomb. Wing, and the 460th, 464th, 465th, 485th BG of the 55th Bomb. Wing)

If you choose to call instead of write, please feel free to call me collect at (day) (212) 302-1610 or (eve) (212) 255-1753. You can also communicate by fax, at the following number: (212) 302-1603.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,



Stuart Erdheim

## PRESS RELEASES

Those of you who came in late may not be aware that your Society has collaborated with several authors, especially Steve Birdsall of Australia and Lawrence Cortesi of Watervliet New York.

Cortesi flew in B-25s in the South Pacific. He wrote an article for the American Legion Magazine which referred to "Our Colonel, now General Upthegrove", and that is how he and I became pen pals. And that is how we were able to furnish pictures and stories for Cortesi's ROMMEL'S LAST STAND. We were not in time to help with TARGET: DAIMLER BENZ, and now it is too late. Cortesi died about 1986. Salud!

# Watervliet author triumphs with war tales

By Helen S. Edelman  
Special to The Times Union

Truth is a byproduct of interpretation, an invention of the storyteller and his versions of incidents as they coincide with his point of view. Fiction based on such truth may have in its favor the author's ability to weave together disparate interpretations, introducing narration and dialogue to make a cohesive, coherent whole. Life is made larger than life by magnifying its related parts and discarding the distractions clouding the context.

A genre suspended between fiction and non-fiction, featuring the elemental magnetism of both, has evolved in the masterful imagination of Watervliet resident Lawrence Cortesi. Insisting the "World at War" series he produces for Zebra Books (15 already released, two in press, to date) is non-fiction, Cortesi conjoins anecdotal reminiscences of veterans with elaborately detailed research to create reconstituted war stories based on the real thing.

"Authenticity and accuracy are the important things," the 61-year-old former teacher emphasizes in a gravelly voice. "Every name, every date, every event is accurate and I reconstruct the dialogue from the memories of veterans I interview around the country." Frances, his wife of 31 years and a former registered nurse, assists him in his research. Indeed, Cortesi traveled to New Mexico last October to research *The Deadly Skies*. This year he will be at the 15th Bomb Wing reunion in Florida to do personal interviews, view photographs and scan archives in preparation for a book about the unit specially trained to "knock out all the oil storage refineries in Japan to disable the Japanese and prevent them from using their airplanes."



**LAWRENCE CORTESI**

documentarian and storyteller

newspaper accounts, action reports, combat unit reports, books, archive records and narratives.

In the interest of accuracy and fairness, Cortesi also reads the available reports filed by "the enemy" in order to interject balanced insights into the books, a flourish imparting depth to what could otherwise be nothing more than patriotic postscripts.

While the anecdotes are crucial to Cortesi's text, he admits that over time "memories fade" and he relies heavily on the military files made accessible to him by historians and government personnel. His "World at War" books include extensive bibliographies citing

Unfortunately, Cortesi's passion for accuracy forces him to flood the text with jargon and acronyms impenetrable for the uninitiated. It behooves his editors to add a glossary for the benefit of armchair warriors or those who have never donned cap and uniform to join the fray. "I have brought that up with my editor," Cortesi readily agrees, "But it has to be the way it is to be authentic. Also the cuss words. I don't go for swearing or sex in a book just to have it, but sometimes without it the book won't ring true. You can't have a soldier in the heat of battle say, 'Gosh darn.'"

The down-to-earth Siena graduate, (whose classmate in journalism courses was none other than Albany's favorite son, William Kennedy), was born Lawrence Cerri but adopted the pseudonym, (his mother's maiden name), when the Waterford Board of Education objected to his publishing professionally. "They thought it would take away from the time I spent teaching English in their schools," he laughs now, "but by the time I left the school, 21 years later, they were proud to have a published writer on their staff." When Cortesi did leave seven years ago he had no regrets. He earns more as a full-time writer than he did as a teacher, he says, though he doesn't anticipate ever "being rich."

"And besides, I am doing exactly what I want to do and how many people can say that?" he demands, his hands grabbing at the air for emphasis.

As a veteran himself, Cortesi establishes an instant rapport with the veterans he visits. Cortesi was an aerial gunner, 1943-45 for the Air Force, serving time in the Pacific Theater and being decorated with an air medal.

Making heroes out of the valiant Everyman who fought during World War II is Cortesi's way of bringing his fascination with history into focus for new audiences composed of those who lived through all of it, those too young to remember and those born after the fact.

"You'd be surprised at my young readers," he says. "They have been alive during a time that all war is unpopular — the Vietnam War, El Salvador, war is always controversial. . . . Youth is interested in World War II because it was a war in which the whole country had a united front against a common enemy and this notion is inconceivable today."

Cortesi's war books are not particularly popular in the Capital District, he reveals a little sadly, but many have gone into second printings due to demand in the West and Southwest. "But," Cortesi says, "now I'm getting pigeonholed as a war writer and I don't like that."

Not much to worry about here. Cortesi's prolific versatility has produced for sale and publication children's plays and stories; more than 200 magazine articles ranging from interviews with psychics and detectives to an account of team-teaching methods; male adventure and detective sagas; Westerns and biography.

"Some people call me a pulp writer because I study the market and write to sell. I can get three or four different manuscripts out of my research on a single topic," Cortesi explains amiably. "But I don't care what they call me. I make a living doing this. Would it be better to have all my manuscripts collecting dust in a file cabinet somewhere?"

Cortesi's familiarity with the market has led him to his current project, a non-fiction analysis of the role Jane McCrea of Fort Edward, Washington County, played in the Revolutionary War. This book is planned as a hardcover text for use in courses examining women's roles.

A frontier woman, McCrea was killed in 1777. The mystery surrounding her murderers is the subject of the book. McCrea's brother was an American officer and her lover a lieutenant in the British army. She struggled with conflicted loyalties.



**'WOMAN ON THE HORSE' — JANE MCCREA**  
the Washington Co. heroine of a work in progress

"The British were sweeping down from the North. Schuyler's army was routed and his men were deserting." Cortesi says, his voice adapting the smooth, contained excitement of a man who knows the punch line, "Schuyler ordered Fort Edward evacuated but McCrea waited there for her lover who sent her a note. Indians tried to bring her to the British camp to meet her lover. She was brutally murdered in transit. Did Indians kill Jane McCrea or did Americans, feeling betrayed, do her in?"

True to form, Cortesi's book will offer both versions — and his own informed analysis and conclusions.

"This murder changed the course of history, that's why I am writing about it," Cortesi says, "General Horatio Gates took over the American army

and elected to accept the version which blamed the Indians for McCrea's death. This aroused the Colonists against the Indians, who were allied with the British. Men joined the army to avenge her death. When Burgoyne and his soldiers reached Saratoga there were hundreds of Americans waiting there to fight him and he was badly beaten. McCrea was a Joan of Arc and Saratoga was a turning point in the war."

Research for the book is being completed in Ticonderoga and Cooperstown.

Despite the profusion of bylines Cortesi has watched roll off book and magazine presses, he admits, "I still get a thrill to see my name in print. It never gets old." He served a stint as a cub reporter for the Albany Times Union from 1957-1958.

The writer, who never sells his manuscripts through an agent and insists on a contract before submitting his work, spends six to seven hours each day researching and writing. He scoffs at "writer's block." "Can you imagine earning a living this way if you waited until the muse moved you?"

What would my editors say? They'd find another writer, that's what! You can never get a swelled head in this business. Today's hero is tomorrow's forgotten man.

"There's a lot of myths about being a writer," Cortesi smiles, "images of attics in Greenwich Village." His eyes become intensely serious when he focuses on the point. "But it's not that, it's competition and deadlines and rewriting and proofreading and typing, typing, typing. There's 101 things to do. The day is over when you can con the public. I still get rejection slips, it's part of the business, just like selling. But don't forget this," Cortesi says, slowing his speech and tilting his head in body language italics. "I can do this because I'm in America and nobody is going to come and tell me I can't write about this or that."

Now it's clearer that his passion for the World at War books is only part profit; the rest is the sincere soliloquy of an American veteran anxious to memorialize the legacy of friend and foe. "Like war," he concludes on a somber note, "You can win or lose in this profession. It's a dangerous game."

"Pint-sized Tail Gunner" Relives Air Battle

By ELIZABETH FOSTER  
Gazette Staff Writer

Beaufort South Carolina

Sep. 1986

It's been more than 40 years since Staff Sgt Jack D. Pollitzer, a "pint-sized tail gunner" from Beaufort earned a Distinguished Flying Cross for shooting down four enemy planes over Foggia, Italy.

But Pollitzer, now 72 years old, had a chance to relive that day and others last month when he traveled to Seattle, Wash., for a reunion of World War II veterans of the 8th Air Force's bomber groups. The reunion was part of a Boeing Corp. celebration of the B-17 Flying Fortress' 50th anniversary.

Pollitzer went to the reunion thinking all the members of Crew 26 had passed away, but when he arrived at the hotel, he ran smack into his pilot "Bankie" or Lt. Heber B. Bankhead.

"It turned out to be his brother that had died," Pollitzer said. The two exchanged enthusiastic greetings and then got down to some serious reminiscing.

"We won the war all over again," Pollitzer said.

During his stint with the US Army Air Forces, Pollitzer flew 50 missions to North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, France, Greece, and Austria. There are two stories Pollitzer likes to tell.

One is about the time he "bagged" four enemy fighters after his bomber, The Persuader was crippled by enemy fire. The other is a sadder story--a story about losing a fellow crew member during a bomb raid over Messina, Italy when the plane was almost shot out from under them.

Pollitzer was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "superior marksmanship and expert operation of his guns while maintaining fire for a total of 1,200 rounds" on Sept. 7, 1943.

The way a combat correspondent told it almost 43 years ago, Flying Fortress Crew 26 was flying "tail-end Charley" (the last plane in the last element) during a bombing raid over Italy when flak plowed into the heart of bomber's number three engine.

The Persuader was forced out of formation and immediately a "swarming Jerry pursuit" concentrated their attack on the crippled plane. Pollitzer maintained fire during a running combat of 25 minutes, either destroying or repulsing each fighter that came within his range.

"I had brand new guns, and man, were they sweet," Pollitzer told the correspondent Staff Sgt. William Brink after the mission. "It was the darndest thing I ever saw, they (the enemy fighters) just blew up before my eyes. That never happened before with the two other planes to my credit. I thought I was dreaming or something until the other boys told me they'd seen 'em too."

"It was 30 below zero but my face was dripping wet," Pollitzer told the correspondent. "Another day like that and I'll be old before my time."

Earlier that year, on May 25, 1943, the Persuader was on a bomb raid over Messina, Italy when flak knocked out two of the engines and left the crippled plane the target of enemy pursuits. The B-17 was almost shot out from under the crew and the radio operator fatally wounded, but the plane made it back to North Africa where it crash-landed safely.

Pollitzer wrote of the adventure in a letter shortly after he and his fellow crew members reported back to base.

"As usual we were Tail-end Charley, a very uncomfortable position and also very dangerous," Pollitzer began in the correspondence title "Mission Over Messina."

As the bomber approached the target, Pollitzer looked ahead and saw a solid black wall of flak. "I realized that we were going to have a hot time, as they had our range and altitude almost perfect. I didn't feel so good about the situation."

The bomb bay doors were open and ready for the release of "death and destruction," when something hit the number four engine "so hard I thought we were going to turn over."

The plane fell out of formation and began losing altitude when "30 to 40" enemy fighters attacked the plane. "Every man on that plane had his hands full. They were sticking by their guns like veterans. After what seemed like hours, we had fought them off, and believe it or not, not a single man was hurt."

By this time, the plane had dropped from 23,000 to 7,000 feet and was vibrating more and more from a runaway propeller. The co-pilot gave the command to bail out.

Pollitzer pulled the safety release on the tail door and found it stuck. He tried to kick it open and it wouldn't budge.

"Ordinarily it is hard for me to crawl from the tail into the waist compartment because I have to crawl around the tail wheel. This time, even with my parachute and Mae West (an inflatable life jacket) and all the other flying clothes I had on, it only took a second. I went through the door like an eel," he said.

Pollitzer and about a half dozen of his crew mates stood in the waist section, waiting for the word to go.

When the men were "about to hit the silk," the runaway prop flew off and the Persuader began to level off. The pilot told the crew to prepare for a water landing and throw all the heavy equipment overboard.

When the bomber had dropped to about 50 feet, engine number three, which "had been running like a dilapidated tractor" picked up. More guns, ammunition, and parachutes were thrown overboard.

The plane rose to 150 feet and higher. The crew became ecstatic but their joy was short-lived when a plane was spotted heading toward them. "As it came closer our hearts almost stopped because what should we see but a big white swastika," he said.

The fighter made about 20 passes, riddling the defenseless bomber and crew with small-caliber and 20mm explosive shells. Pollitzer grabbed a .45-caliber pistol and fired at the pilot.

"We were ready to die. We couldn't see how it could be avoided. I prayed continuously when I wasn't busy," he said.

During one pass, a 20mm hit the waist and exploded.

"Freddie (Tech Sgt Fred Manship, radio operator) was against the door. He was hit seven times in the back. It hit him so hard I thought I was hit because I could feel it through his body. He was only 19 years old, but a person never fought by a braver man than Freddie."

At about the fifth or sixth pass, the crew engineer found a few rounds of ammunition in the nose and was firing from the upper turret, but the "Jerry" was undaunted by the bullets.

"We were a lame duck and he was in for the kill. After about 12 or 15 passes, he headed for Sicily with smoke pouring out of his engine. I don't believe he ever reached home.

The pilot was hit in the hand and they had gotten lost during the excitement so it took a little time for the navigator to get their bearings, but two hours later they landed in an open field near Tunis Tunisia in North Africa.

"An ambulance had seen our flares and came to the rescue. Freddie and Banky were rushed to the hospital. The next day, a transport brought us back to our base. Two days later we lost Freddie, one of the swellest kids and one of the bravest men I've ever known."



Tech Sgt Fred Manship received the Purple Heart posthumously; Lt Heber Bankhead also received the Purple Heart and was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross; Tech Sgt James J. Florek, the engineer, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Looking back, Pollitzer admits there were times during the war when he was scared, but there were also a lot of good times and the reunion gave him a chance to remember the time he spent as a gunner.

Pollitzer is a broker for Beaufort Realty Co.

Friday 28th June 1985

## Buck flies high



A RETURN to his wartime "local" on Romney Marsh revived old memories for American flyer Seymour "Buck" Feldman.

The former RAF pilot officer and DFC holder visited the Black Bull Inn at Newchurch to unveil a plaque commemorating the beginning of the V1 attacks on London during World War Two.

Buck, who now lives in Albuquerque, makes a pilgrimage to his old haunts almost every other year, staying with friends Len and Janet Green at Hawkinge.

The plaque is dedicated to the pilots and groundcrews of 3, 486 and

56 squadrons, commanded by R. P. Beaumont, DSO, DFC, and based at the former Newchurch airfield, who, from June to September 1944, destroyed 638 flying bombs.

Part of the inscription reads: "Presented by grateful friends lest we forget."

During the war the Newchurch-based RAF pilots and ground staff used the Black Bull to relax from the air battles.

A painting presented to Buck by the artist George Dunsby of Dover shows the American's former plane flying over a convoy.

Pictured above is Buck with Black Bull landlady Evelyn Francis.

Flying Fortresses were operating from Italian bases seven days after the first echelon crossed the Mediterranean. However, other units continued to operate from African bases.

The move of the 15th air force as a body was accomplished without missing a single day of operations against the Germans in Italy, it now can be revealed.

### Engineers Move In

It was one of the most highly coordinated military transitions carried out in this theater. The first step was construction of new heavy bomber bases in Italy where none existed before.

American and British engineers moved in behind the advancing ground forces during the early days of the Italian campaign and began building air fields under the threat of German artillery. For many days they worked night and day within sound of the front line guns.

*Freeland*

## 15TH AIR FORCE SHIFTED FROM NORTH AFRICA

Attack on Bulgarian Capital Is Fifth in Less Than Two Months.

HEADQUARTERS U. S. 15TH AIR FORCE, Italy, Jan. 10 (U. P.).—American Flying Fortresses bombed Sofia today simultaneously with the release of word that the second largest United

States air force—the 15th—had shifted from Africa to bases in Italy, at least 600 miles closer to the enemy.

Lt Gen. Nathan F. Twining sent a powerful fleet of his 15th air force to strike a heavy blow at the Bulgarian capital and also at the morale of Germany's war jitters satellites in the Balkans.

The bombardment of Sofia was the fifth in less than two months. At the Bulgarian capital railroads converge from Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece. The city is the hub of German communications throughout the Balkans.

### Blast Rail Yards

The first heavy bomber raid on Sofia was on Nov. 24, when Liberator bombers hit it hard. The last was on Dec. 20, when the attacking fleet of Liberators and Lightnings shot down nine German fighters and left the city's railroad yards a mass of flames and explosions.

## NEWS, DUES & VIEWS

We are past the barefoot weather and into the mocassin season, and by the time you read this will have dug the boots out of the trunk. The mukluks remain in reserve.

We have not published a complete roster in this issue, but we promise you that the January 1991 issue will have an up to date roster of Members. With only 45 new members for the twelve-month period the space seemed better used for other business.

Charlie Miller wishes one and all a Merry Holiday Season. Charlie protests that he was omitted from the McAllen Roster. Sorry, Charlie, I just don't speak so good the English. geo.

I refuse to feel guilt about my handling of the TAPS. While I may delay the Casualty Report now and then, I make up for it by occasionally reporting the obituary of somebody who is still hale and hearty. Ask Barry Henderson!

## QUOTES

Robots on Your Doorstep Nels Winkless

Robotics Press

Among the American engineers at Bell then (in 1956) was one Iben Browning, an escaped South Texas cotton farmer with a Ph.D. in biology who had accidentally turned into an expert in inertial guidance. (Actually, he had sent a letter and a set of plans to the U.S. Air Force in 1940 with the suggestion that inertial guidance for aircraft would be a dandy thing and he had some ideas on the subject that might be worth pursuit. The nice people at Wright-Patterson had written back with an explanation that the idea would never work and he should do something practical instead. With this encouragement, he turned to drawing up plans for a nuclear fusion project (also little admired) while more obstinate people like Goddard played with gyroscopes in rockets.

Yet many a pilot like I. Browning during World War II was disquieted to realize as he flew with his copilot in a B-24 that one buzzard with his mind on something else could really do a better job that required the complete attention of two full-grown men. The buzzard didn't leak gasoline all over the place either. On the other hand, the buzzard might not have been adequately interested in the war, so it all balanced out.

. . . Fitzgerald (the whistle-blower) had learned the mournful reality of Admiral Hyman Rickover's wise advice to Defense Department employees. "If you must sin, sin against God, not against the bureaucracy. God may forgive you, but the bureaucracy never will." . . . p.2

THE PRESIDENT THAT FAILED by Mollenhoff

Commander Ruble, navigator of the Enterprise, evidently a reader of spy thrillers, could only mutter in wonder, "That man of ours in Tokyo is worth every cent we pay him."

from "Nimitz" by E.B. Potter

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