

# 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



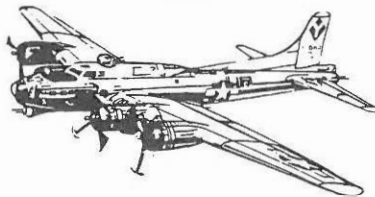
346th



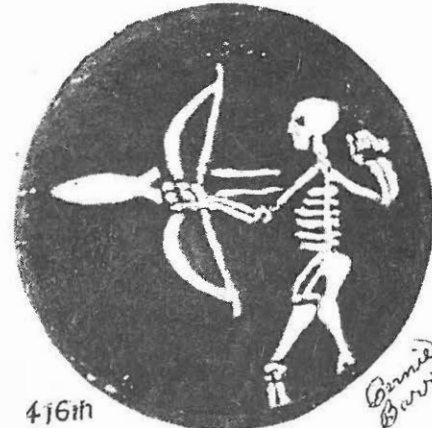
347th



348th



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS  
395 COMBAT MISSIONS  
1943 AFRICA - EUROPE 1945



416th

*Bernie Barr*

## THE 99th BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 15, No. 2

MAY 1995

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In a very short time we will all meet again in St. Louis. Hopefully the attendance will be high since Fran Grantz has put together a super program. We had about 265 folks at Hampton, VA. We hope to attract over 300 at St. Louis. I know Fran and those helping him expended a great amount of time and effort setting this reunion up for us. This will sound repetitive, but now that we have a very good newsletter the editor needs material. I've been told by Bernie Barr (Editor) and Roy Worthington (Publishing Editor) that they need typed or printed "items of interest" to be included in each issue. It has been suggested that we have an OTBF (over the back fence) section for personal items, i.e. weddings, births, trips, etc. To Al and Chris, how about a description of the Elderhostel sojourn we enjoyed after the Ontario reunion. You might inspire others to enjoy similar experiences. If any member would like to host a future reunion, please let the Board know since we are open to all ideas. Please try to become ACTIVE since this is your organization! Sorry for the preaching . . . that's Fran job. See you in St. Louis.

*Jules Horowitz*

Jules Horowitz, May 1, 1995

**Congratulations are in order to M.J. Larkin ("Lark") for being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) 51 years after being nominated for the award. The award is for a July 16, 1943 mission that demonstrated his superior airmanship. We will provide you more information about this mission in a later issue.**

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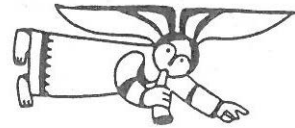
Bernie Barr, 7408 Vista Del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109 has the logo used on the cover of this issue in an 11"x17" color poster for \$6.00. He also has 6"x17" colored posters of the Patches II logo. \$6.00. Patches II without logo has been printed in prior newsletters. Bernie also has a limited number of squadron logo pins for \$3.50. for the the, the, & the squadrons.



**THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER**  
**REFLECTIONS ON LENT**



LENT is a forty-day season of preparation for Easter. These forty days correspond to the forty days our Lord was in the desert being tempted by the devil before He began His ministry. In the early church Lent was the period of preparation of candidates for baptism. It is a time for prayer, giving, study, and self-denial. G.K. Chesterton once said, "A white post will only continue to be a white post if it is painted white every year; otherwise it will become a black post." Our lives are like that. We Christians need to have an annual renewing period. Lent is such a time.



**ALMIGHTY GOD**, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**GOSPEL : Luke 4:1-13**

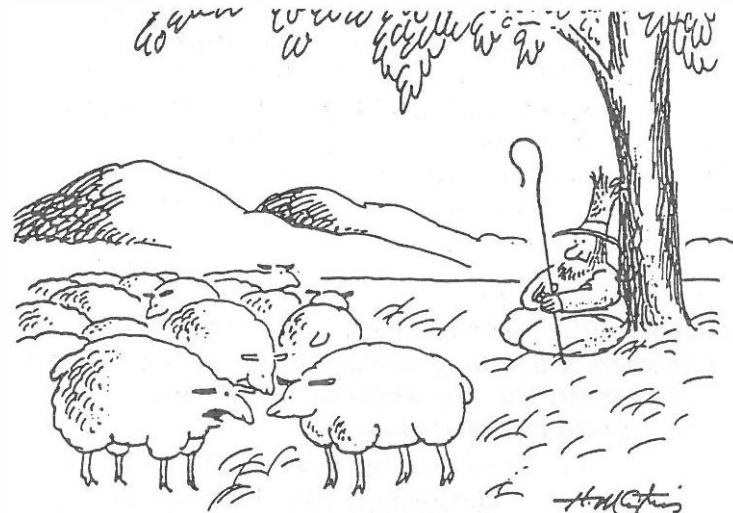
**JESUS, FULL OF** the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.

If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.



God will mend  
a broken heart  
if you will give  
Him all  
the pieces.

May the peace of Christ  
rule in your hearts  
and the fullness of his  
message live  
within you.



By  
Bernie

"Don't tell old straw hat over there, but the Lord is my shepherd."

**NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS**

PATRICIA CARROLL writes that she would like to continue her membership in the 99th BGHS since she has enjoyed the newsletter and the reunions.

ANNCY GOODNOW 1-800-888-2461 x5123 CST would like for anyone that knew her father CLAUDE S. LOGAN Apr to Oct 1945 a radio operator to call her.

JAMES F. BRUNO recommends that you read the book WING AND A PRAYER THE story of the BLOODY 100th. His book on the 99th should be published soon. Gen UPTHEGROVE gave him heaps of material and photos. Should be good.

MILTON C. STOUT is writing a book about his experiences as the one in charge of the Italian civilians that worked for the 99th while in Italy. He recommends using the US Air Force Historical Research Agency for info on Air Force historical documents. Write HQAFHRA/ISR 600 Chennault Circle, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424. This is the repository for 99th BGHS records.

Dear Bernie

On Sept 2, 1943 I arrived in Oran Africa with other replacement gunners. Stayed one wk then on to Tunice, but the convoy needed the trucks to load ammunition so they dropped us off at Algiers. All of the gunners stayed there for 2 or 3 days. Myself and three others decided we didn't want to hang around. We swipped a weapons carrier and drove to Tunice, found the 99th location and somehow ended up in the 416th Sq. We saw Major McDonald the CO at the time and introduced ourselves as replacement gunners. He asked for our service records, which we did not have, needing gunners he accepted us anyway. Needless to say Maj Mac confiscated the weapons carrier. Time has erased the names of the others with me on this excursion. I think Wilbur Dixon was one of them. Would you publish my letter to see if some one remembers I would like to hear from them. I read the excellent article by Walter Schilot about coming back on two engines. I can relate to this experience as we came back on two engines from Reginsberg on Feb.22, 1944 Capt Shaw was pilot. We landed and this ship 889 did not fly again.

s/Clarence Danielson

Walter Butler, Treas.

During my tour of duty with the 99th, Nov.1943 to June 1944, I collected and saved issues of the STARS & STRIPES which I brought home with me. After fifty years I dug these copies out of my foot locker and clipped those news releases that covered missions that the 99th Bomb Group participated. I have mounted these clippings on 8 1/2 X 11 pages and have made copies of such. There are about 25 pages stappled in this booklet which I have given to a few of our 99th members and they seemed too have enjoyed the clippings to the extent that they have suggested that I make this information available to our Historical Society Newsletter. Would the NEWSLETTER be interested?

Also, during my tour of over-seas assignment, I was promoted to Squadron Bombardier of the 348th Sq., and through some persuasion with the Photo Lab. I acquired a number of bomb strike photos which I still have and would be willing to share if the Newsletter would be interested. There are some 20 or 30 bomb strike photos, which were censored and released by Col. Seamons, Operations Officer, of the 99th BG. in 1944.

Sincerely,

Clarence D. Sweem

When you gave Bernie a copy of the Stars and Stripes material which I will use when I find space for it. It does not specifically refer to the 99th BG but will use if possible. Thanks, Bernie.

Dear Jules,

16 March 1994

Received all the material concerning the VFW. Just happened to have the 500+ page history of the 15th Air Force in my files. So I extracted about 40 pages of the material and added a list of the 5th Wing missions flown to Yugoslav targets. Sent all this off to Vern Pall in Kansas City yesterday. He should have enough research to do an article. Don't know why he just doesn't do his own research since so much is available. Twenty years in the USAF surely didn't teach him very much. Well anyway, we will see what he comes up with. I probably would have to ask Fab since I don't belong to the VFW. I did at one time but dropped that and the Legion when they got too political for my taste. In my research I didn't find any 12th AF units that hit targets in Yugo. The B-25s and B-26s appeared to target Italy and German occupied islands. The B-17s and B-24s didn't hit Yugo until the 15th came into existence.

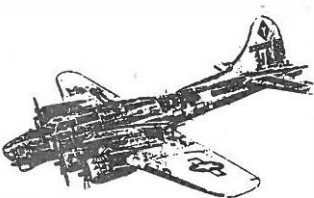
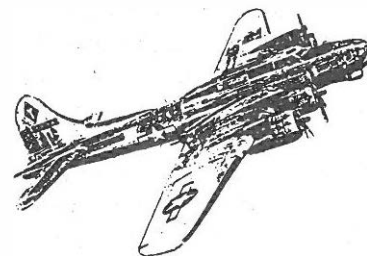
I have never heard a word from George Coen about the historical material. I do have all the history films that George has (or had) so I would not be interested in them and neither would Maxwell since that was where they came from.

New subject: I had a call from Jim Peters telling me an Austrian had found the wreckage of a B-17 last year near Innsbruck. Then a Thomas Grundhuer from Cincinnati called my on the same subject and said he had just come back from a ski trip to Innsbruck. He gave me the name and address of the Austrian. Jim and I have provided the Austrian with details on what to look for to positively identify the aircraft, i.e., engine serial nrs., machine gun serial nrs., where the plane identification number is located, etc. There is a strong chance that this is plane 297734 MIA on 29 Dec 44 in the Innsbruck area and flown by Homer McClanahan [see his story in last Newsletter]. They won't be able to get near the crash site because of the snow until late July or August this year. Then we may find out something about it. I have a list of all engine and machine gun ser. nrs. which were on planes that were MIA [world wide]. I am sure that not all are on this film I have but there are many thousands of numbers.

That's about it for this time.

best regards,

Dick Drain  
3307 Glouster Street  
Springfield OH 45503  
513-399-6681



Hi DICK, George has no additional materials and had never considered doing a 99th history. We have printed all of the Group daily diaries and missions. As I get space the individual squadrons are copied from film and published in the newsletter. Some day we may complete them. If desired by anyone, these newsletters could be used in writing a condensed version of the 99th BG history. Luck to who tries.s/Bernie

HI BERNIE

2/22/95

Thought that you might like to read this and maybe share it with other 99ers. (Article that Bob Mack wrote and Eastern Airlines Retiree Assoc. published in their publication) I hope George is doing O.K....I Really promote you Gents. Right now I am caught up in tension tech. I am trying to sell my house and move over to the East coast....Any way I am caught up in a change of life or something like that. I spent part of this afternoon climbing a ladder to fix one of the items an inspection company deemed necessary to correct..after that I crawled around the attic to fix a vent that needed a screen and so on...fixed a few hair line cracks in the stucco and along with the tension of the house inspection...I'm ready for a hot bath and some sack time. If conditions permit I will do some writing for the newsletter. I thought the PFF crews were short shifted to begin with and I resent anyone blaming the losses on weather. Read Len Dieghtons book "BOMBER" For the details. Hard to come by. Bernie....Thank you for the work you all have done for the 99th. Now you are recognized by an additional 8,200 more people. Eastern had a bunch of 99ers in it's ranks. GOD bless you all s/ Bob

#### 99TH BOMB GROUP

1994 marked the fiftieth anniversary of our B-17 crews tour in Italy during WWII. When I left U.S. Forest Service volunteer work at Sliderock Mountain in Colorado in July, I decided to visit the four remaining crew members who are still in touch. Along the way, I visited with Manny Bettencourt in Colorado Springs. Manny and I met on trail crew work many years ago and he has been a good friend ever since. A graduate of the Air Force Academy and a Vietnam veteran he is active in aduate affairs as well as local and state civic concerns. This will partially explain the enclosed letter from Colonel Coppock. During a non tourist tour of the academy museum I spoke to him about the few small items of Rickenbacker memorabilia that I had acquired and of my concern that the future would not treat them very kindly. The museum is dedicated to the Air Force icons and I noticed an absence of anything relating to Captain Eddie. As a result of the conversation, I sent my few treasures out to Manny and the letter from Colonel Coppock illustrates the appreciation of the individuals concerned.

The visits with my old friends from the B-17 days were very moving and that led to another situation involving memorabilia. We are all members of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society which is affiliated with the 99th Strategic Weapons Wing stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota. I sent some of my WWII memorabilia to Lark Larkin who is the 99th coordinator and he placed them with the Ellsworth Heritage Museum. Lark's return letter mentioned that the items were appreciated and they were always in need of good quality artifacts representing our activities during WWII. Let me digress for a moment and relate a C.S. Lewis type story. When I was a youngster growing up on Long Island my great ambition was to be a military pilot. Most of my neighbors were aware of my desire and the man most responsible for my becoming a cadet and subsequently a pilot was a kind gentleman I always addressed as Mr. Ellsworth. He managed the local branch of the Com Exchange Bank and he notarized my enlistment papers. That simplifies the relationship but you can imagine my pleasant surprise when I received Lark Larkin's letter on stationary that bore the logo of the

"Ellsworth" Heritage Museum. I have the feeling that Captain Eddie and Mr. Ellsworth would have been pleased with the summer's activities. I have been to the Air Force Academy a number of times and it is well worth the time to visit this facility and especially the Cadet Chapel which is an outstanding example of the beauty man can create when properly inspired.

All this brings me to a request for information. During my time on the ferry crew at JFK, I frequently had the pleasure of working with Charley Bruner. That spelling may not be correct but Charley was the hangar foreman associated with the ferry crew. He also was a member of the 99th Bomb Group and had been in Italy when I was there. We used to reminisce about our tour and he had many tales to tell. I know he would be interested in the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society. If anyone remembers Charley, please advise him that he can contact the 99th through Walter Butler, 8608 Bellehaven Place, N.E. Albuquerque, NM 87112.

Thanks for the forum ... It is nice to keep track of raunchy old friends through the newsletter.

BOB MACK  
Destin, FL

"Schusse auf die Befreier" (Shooting at the Liberators) by Peter Kamber-Review by Alex Mussard.

This book is about the aerial war between Switzerland and allied air forces in WWII and the treatment of internees. It incorporates earlier work by R. Anthoine, H.H. Stapfer and J.P. Wilhelm as well as interviews or statements by almost a hundred U.K. and U.S. and the Internees Association Newsletter.

Kamber believes that Switzerland shared the guilt of having made the war possible and contributed to its duration, as a result of combined fear of Germany and opposition to Communism. describes a number of cases where disabled planes were shot down unnecessarily and ruthlessly; an unavoidable result of strict interpretation of neutrality. A chart shows that at least 20 U.K. flyers were killed and at least 16 U.S. airmen were killed.. If the questionable cases are included 26 U.K. and 23 U.S. were killed. Swiss civilian casualties from all aerial activities: 84 killed; 70 wounded.

You will find this book a convenient guide to the experiences of a number of U.S. flyers over and in Switzerland, and material to support claims to P.O.W. status.



In the end, freedom survived even though it took a long time for truth to prevail.  
 Published by Rotpunktverlag, Postfach 397, CH-8026, Zurich, Switzerland  
 ANNOUNCEMENT \*\*\*\*\*  
 PRICE INCREASE- "Strangers in a Strange Land vol.2-escape to Neutrality" by  
 Hans Stapfer and Gino Kunzle. Initially \$9.95 Now \$12.95  
 "Haven Heaven Hell"-by Roy Thomas is \$21.00 includes postage. Part 1  
 SPECIAL - BOTH BOOKS- \$32.00 includes postage. Check or MO:  
 Roy Thomas, W6722 Hwy 11, Monroe, WI 53566

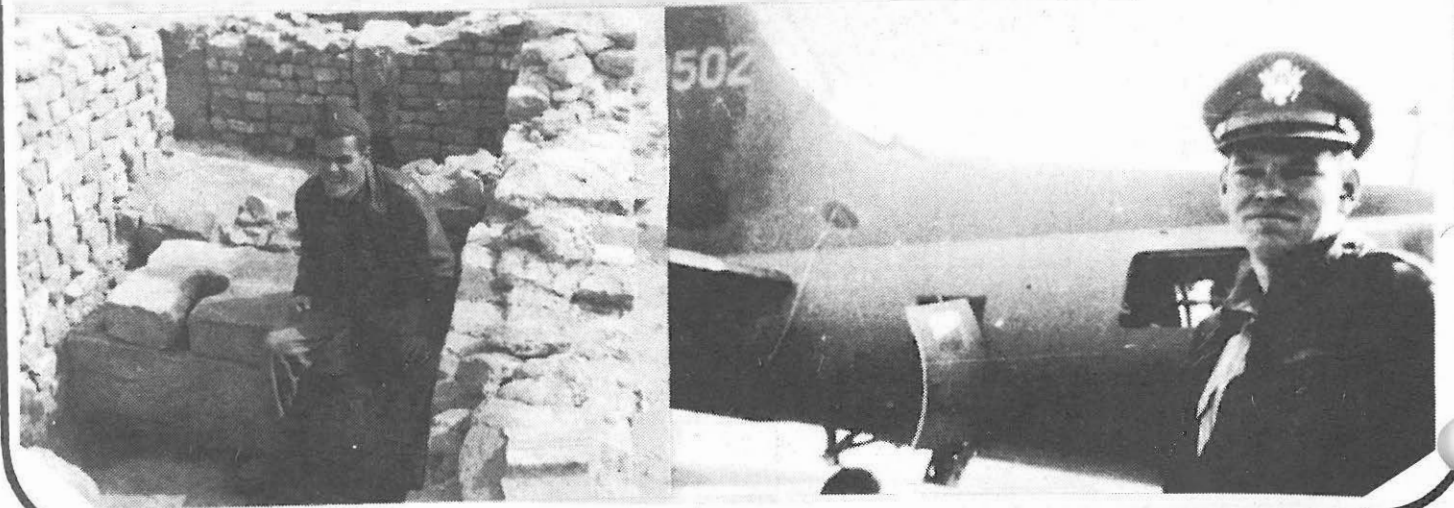
Victor Fab Fabiniak  
*Victor Fab Fabiniak*

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MAXINE KRUGER COVERT sent us this picture of "Cotton Eyed Joe" which her husband Charles Betts Covert (deceased 3/15/68) flew on the Schweinfurt Raid. "Chuck named his B-17 Cotton Eyed Joe after the dance and recording by Adolph Hofner. He said 'If a B-17 can be as bodacious as that dance, I'll get home'. And he did! The dance is still the most popular among Texans"



LOOK AT THIS--Here we see Lt W. W. (Bill) Henderson relaxing among the Roman Ruins at Kramissa, Algeria and Lt George F. 'Trigger' Coen-Navigator and BTO doing something by the side of their airplane 229502.



DAVID W. WARN writes, "Dear Bernie: Please include the enclosed 99th Bombardment Group Unit Citation for the 23 April, 1944 against the Weiner-Neustadt Aircraft Factory, Austria. Thank You Thank you David. I am also including a photo of the distinguished members of the ceremony that made the presentation to members of the 99th BG. Photo from J.F. Bruno. . . B. Barr.

HEADQUARTERS  
 FIFTEENTH AIR FORCES  
 APO 520  
 C-UPD-bmr  
 22 October 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS )  
 NUMBER 4095 )

Citation of Unit . . . . . I

SECTION I -- CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department 1943, and Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

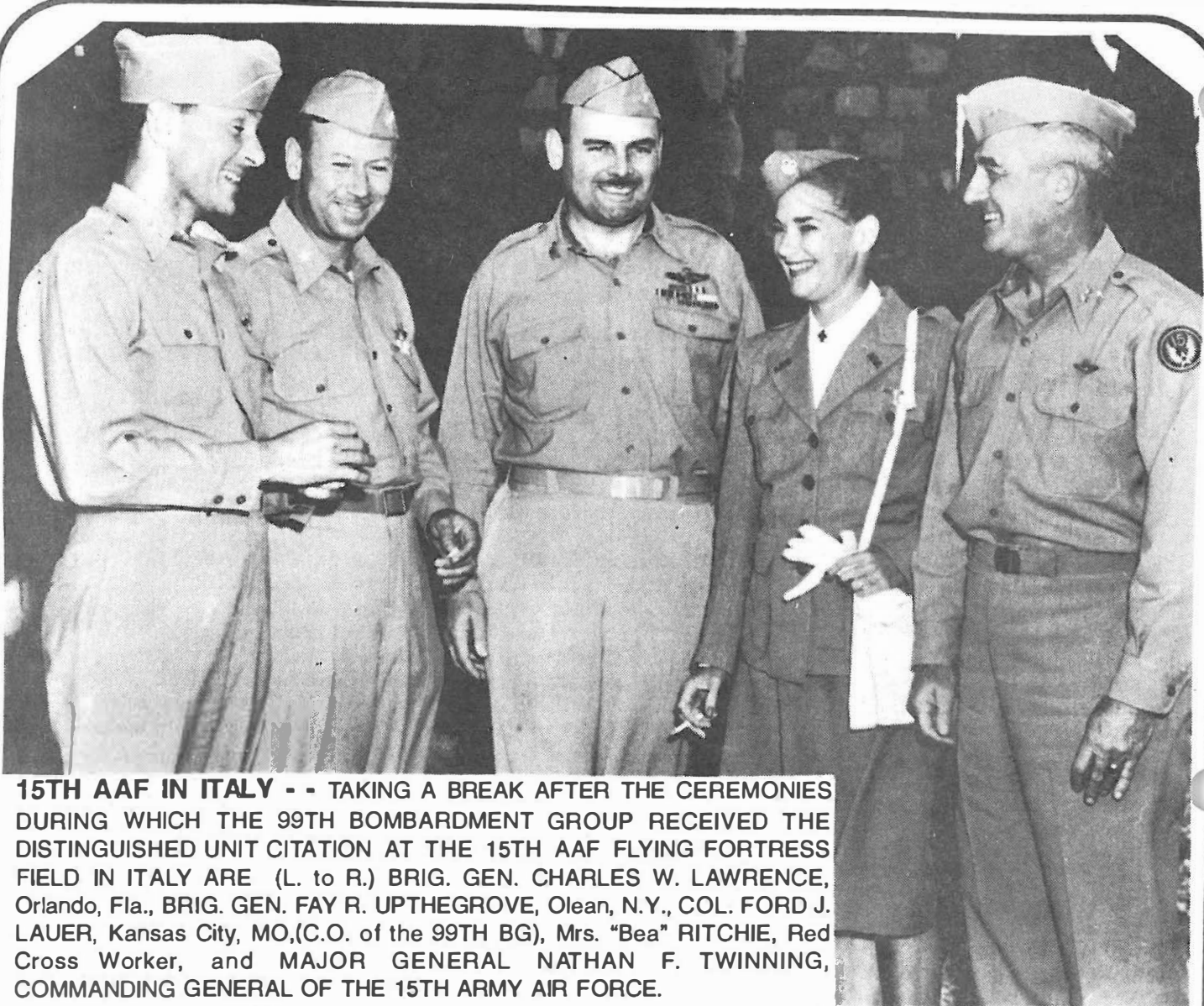
99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP. For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 22 April 1944, the Group was notified to prepare maximum aircraft for a bombing mission against the Weiner-Neustadt Aircraft Factory in Austria. The primary objective of the mission was to destroy the Fluggen Fabrick Work I portion of the plant and a successful completion of the mission would seriously crippled the Axis aircraft production which was needed vitally to supplement the dwindling strength of the enemy air force. Prior to the attack, the ground crews worked tirelessly and with grim determination to have their aircraft at the peak of mechanical perfection to insure the successful completion of this important operation. On 23 April 1944, thirty-six (36) B-17 type aircraft, heavily loaded with maximum bomb tonnage, took off, and, assuming the lead of their Wing formation, set course for the objective. Approaching the target, the Group was attacked by approximately twenty-five (25) highly aggressive single and twin engine enemy fighters, which, firing rockets, cannon and machine guns, made desperate efforts to break up and destroy the bomber formation. Despite this heavy opposition, together with intense, accurate and heavy anti-aircraft fire from approximately one hundred (100) guns encountered over the target, displaying outstanding courage and determination, the gallant crews battled their way through the enemy fire, bringing their damaged aircraft over the target for a highly successful bombing run. Despite the overwhelming odds against them, they maintained a compact formation dropping their bombs in a well concentrated pattern in the immediate target area, scoring numerous direct hits and destroying many buildings. Five (5) enemy fighters were destroyed and three (3) damaged on the ground. Although thirty-one (31) of the Group's bombers were riddled with flak and bullet holes, all ships returned safely to base. Through their bombing accuracy the enemy was dealt an irreparable blow, further crippling his single engine fighter production at a most critical period. By the conspicuous gallantry, determination and airmanship of the combat crews, together with the superior technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 99th Bombardment Group has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

A TRUE COPY OF TRUE COPY:

OFFICIAL:  
 /s/ J. M. Ivins  
 /t/ J. M. IVINS,  
 Colonel, AGD,  
 Adjutant General.  
 A TRUE COPY:  
 /s/ N. M. Scarborough  
 N. M. SCARBOROUGH  
 Captain, Air Corps.

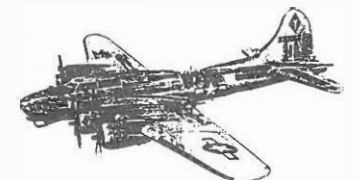
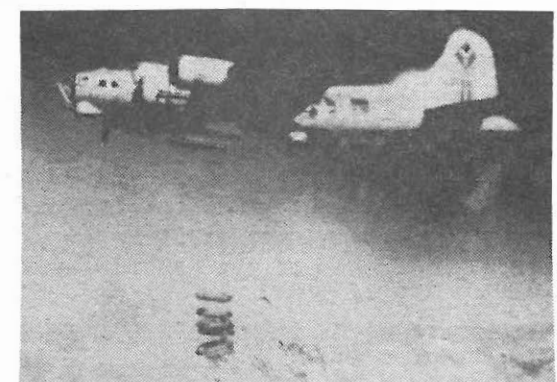
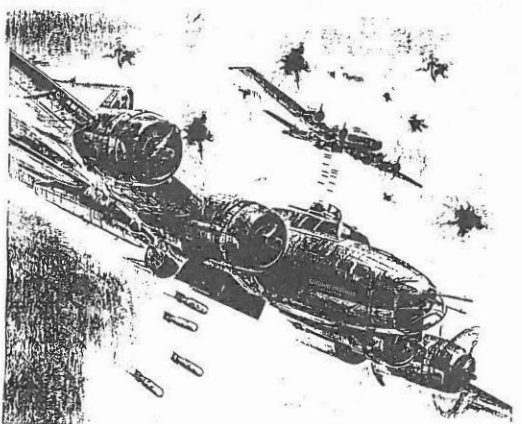
*James E. Sullivan*  
 JAMES E. SULLIVAN,  
 1st Lt., Air Corps,  
 Assistant Adjutant.



**15TH AAF IN ITALY - - TAKING A BREAK AFTER THE CEREMONIES DURING WHICH THE 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP RECEIVED THE DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION AT THE 15TH AAF FLYING FORTRESS FIELD IN ITALY ARE (L. to R.) BRIG. GEN. CHARLES W. LAWRENCE, Orlando, Fla., BRIG. GEN. FAY R. UPTHEGROVE, Olean, N.Y., COL. FORD J. LAUER, Kansas City, MO, (C.O. of the 99TH BG), Mrs. "Bea" RITCHIE, Red Cross Worker, and MAJOR GENERAL NATHAN F. TWINNING, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE 15TH ARMY AIR FORCE.**



**99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)**



**NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS**

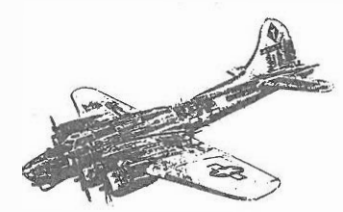
The following editorial from our local newspaper makes me wonder!!! Since I flew against the JAPS and missed many a good opportunity to get killed I **DON'T LIKE THIS!!!** This in addition to the news report that President Clinton has accepted an invitation to attend a celebration in Russia to acknowledge the end of the European War but has declined an invitation to visit England for the same purpose. Each of us knows the dangers we confronted and the sacrifices all Americans made to win the WWII. **TO IGNORE THAT FACT IS** difficult to hear and impossible to understand. You may be able to forgive him but I can't. **NEVER!!!!**

**ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL**

**Don't Revise History To Satisfy Sensibilities**

Notwithstanding President Clinton, Aug. 14, 1945, was "V-J Day" — Victory over Japan, the day Japan accepted Allied surrender terms. The observance of its anniversary should not be renamed to avoid offending anyone or to satisfy any absurd sense of politically correct history revisionism. The president, however, in deference to modern-day Japanese sensibilities, has changed "V-J Day" in pronouncements for commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, to "End of the Pacific War." Nowhere in official material on the end-of-war observances does the term V-J Day appear. Additionally, a planned anniversary ceremony at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii has been scaled back, reportedly at the behest of the Japanese government.

The ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Japan's formal surrender was to include heads of state from all nations that fought in the Pacific, including Japan. The ceremony is still planned, but leaders of other nations no longer are invited even though their service personnel played significant roles in bringing the war to its conclusion. The administration changed its plans to avoid embarrassing Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama. Lest the president and others forget, Japan was the only aggressor in the Pacific and Asia during World War II. Tens of thousands of American, British, Australian, Filipino, New Zealand, Dutch, Canadian, Chinese, Indian and Burmese soldiers were killed by the Japanese in the Pacific and Asian theaters of the war. Thousands more Allied prisoners of war were tortured and abused by the Japanese. Like it or not, modern-day political sensibilities or not, in the minds of World War II veterans and Americans alive at the time, the end of the "Big War" will always be known as V-J Day. Let's keep it that way, in deference to their sensibilities.



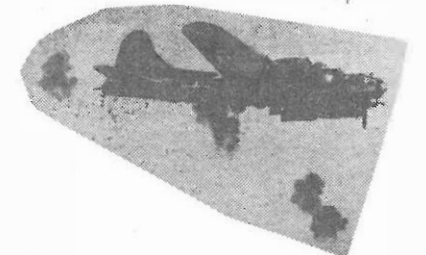
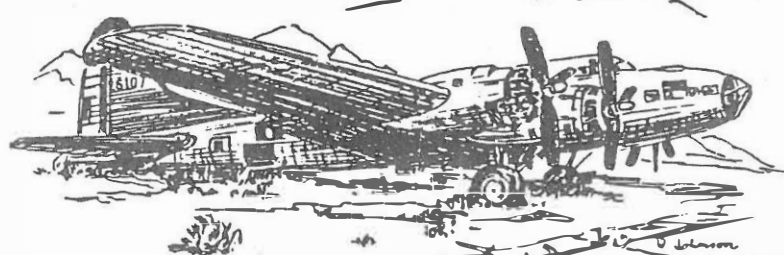
**Mark Russell**  
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

**AS THE 50TH** anniversary of the victory over Japan approaches, the Administration says that it will not refer to "V-J Day" lest Japan be offended. Which I suppose rules out "The Nagasaki Demolition Derby."

What's wrong with V-J Day? All commemorations should be canceled if Clinton is just going to get up there and proclaim, "We beat somebody, but, shoot, ah don't remember who." If there is to be an event at all without mentioning Japan, let's pick a country that is expendable. Get ready folks, for the big anniversary coming up in September — V-D Day, when we whupped Denmark 50 years ago.

(c) 1995, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

*Once an Eagle. B-17F 1943*

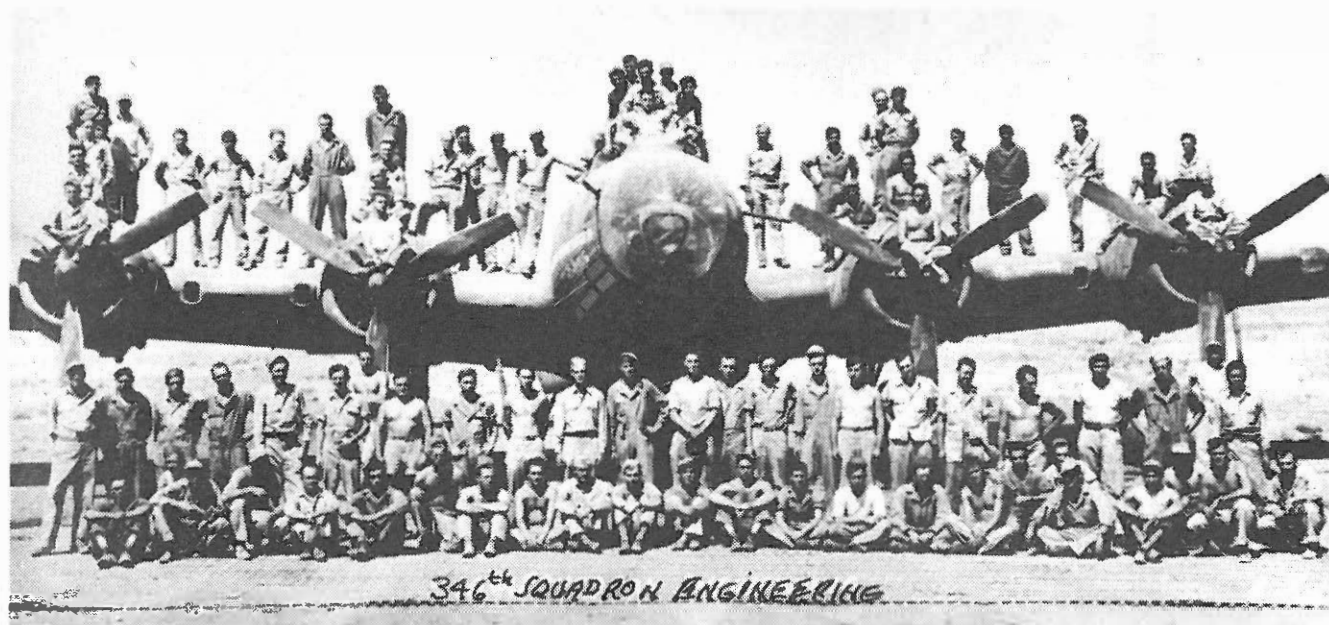


**OVER THE BACK FENCE (OTBF) ITEMS**

Since our last reunion I've been on a cruise to the Caribbean stopping at different ports. Its all very nice if one doesn't mind putting on weight, (at least one pound per day. This June my **significant other** and I will fly to Fairbanks. We then go overland to Anchorage via Denali Nat'l Park, after which we board the Crown Princess. After 7 days we arrive in Vancouver, then back to Florida. Jules H.



FRED H. DAVIS, 513 South Drive, Marshall, MO 65340 - 346th Squadron furnished us this photo of the 346th Engineering members. Fred is the first man standing on the wing on the right side of the fuselage as you view the photo. The photo was taken in Foggia, Italy. Fred reports that his twelve year old grandson, Derek, loves airplanes and enjoys reading our newsletter. We hope to see both Fred and Derek in St. Louis.



### NEW MEMBER ROSTER

WILLIAM J. ANDERSON, 1714 Beacon Hill Road, Lexington, KY 40504 - 348TH SQ.  
 VERNON BALDWIN, JR., 500 Wooded Crest Drive, Waco, TX 76712-3268 - 416TH SQ.  
 JEROME A. BUCKINGHAM, JR., 637 South 44th Avenue West, Newton, IOWA 50208 - Associate  
 BRUCE L. EARNHARDT, 18 Briar Drive, Hampton, VA 23661 - 416TH SQ.  
 HOWARD SADLER, 2717 Highland Avenue South, No. 804, Birmingham, AL 35205 - Associate  
 JOHN ABRAMSON, 3105 Runnymede Road, Louisville, KY 40222 - 347TH SQ.  
 ROBERT J. NORI, 573 Keller Avenue, Elmont, NY 11003-3734  
 DAVID WEINBERG, 3950 North Lake Shore Drive, Apt. 428, Chicago, IL 60613

### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

LEROY J. GARVIS, Iowa Veterans Home, Malloy Hall, 209A, Marshalltown, IA 50158 - 416TH SQ.  
 DAVID C. CONNER, 7050 Southwest Hoodview Place, Beaverton, OR 97008-8816 - 345TH SQ.  
 DELBERT D. LAUDNER, 2678 Sawgrass Street, El Cajon, CA 92019-4550 - 348TH SQ.  
 ROBERT F. RUTH, 9 Reading Drive, Apt. 123, Wernersville, PA 19565 - 346TH SQ.

TAPS • TAPS • TAPS • TAPS • TAPS

CHESTER M. CHASTAIN, JR. • FRED C. HUEGLIN • RUSSELL MANCHESTER

JOHN G. McGINTY • WILLIAM R. McKINNEY • AUSTIN TERREL • MILTON C. SEEGER

THEODORE PANEK • JOSEPH S. UPCHURCH • MAX L. DUNN

DAY	EVENTS
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- Additional crews arrived this day. Second Lieuts: Ralph E. Adams, Charles H. Bilhartz, Morris Borenstein, William H. Calhoun, Jack R. Finter, Frank P. Hopkins, Theodore Janicki, Chester Jankowski, Lester Lempert, William H. Lorenz, John E. Mahan, Jerome D. Perkel. Enlisted combat personnel: S/Sgts: Dwight W. Edgmon, Lynn M. Farnum, C.D. Greer, Fred E. Nichols, William J. Waters, Sgt. Theodore W. Bolton, James W. Chason, Paul N. Crider, Dominic S. Delicata, Robert Gross, Charles M. Lindley, Clifton W. Malcolm, James C. Moore, Selvy D. Moran, George V. Pierson, George Romontio, Samuel W. Ritter and Frazier B. Smith. With the squadron having the greatest number of crews in its history, the quartering situation is a bit difficult. Many of the new crews slept in the S-2 tent and Orderly room till space could be arranged. Major Aspegren, Lt. Wrigley, Lt. Blakemore and Lt. Kirkendall and a crew of enlisted men took off to a trip to Cairo, Egypt. Lt. Lider, S/Sgt Ward and Satterlee left the squadron with orders for home. Nonoperational this day.
- Lt. Peringsmith and Lt. Vernon left the squadron and received orders that will eventually take them home. Both had rendered conspicuous service to the Group and their presence will be missed. We wish them luck. Pfc William N. Smith assigned to squadron. Today 5 B-17s with Tokio tanks took off at about 0730 for a bombing mission at Wiener Neustadter, Germany. A/C 918 circled this field and then landed because of a leak in gas tank. A/C 343 became an early return when it was discovered, while en route, that the oxygen apparatus in the ball turret had been severed. 313, 383 and 129 continued with the Group and bombed the target at about 1228. Flak: heavy, intense and accurate and the formation encountered between 35-40 Me 109s and Fw 190s. Preliminary reports indicate target well hit and that 4-7 B-24s were shot down and one B-17 exploded while over the target. Our three B-17s returned. 383 landed at Foggia owing to lack of gas, while 313 and 129 landed at Ponte Olivo, Sicily. Both to stay overnight. Bomb load used: 5.1000. A/C 918 took off for a test hop. Pilot, Lt. Donohue. Our S-2 was taken for a ride as Lt. DiPasquale, Sgt Pitsch and Cpl Williams joined as passengers.
- Practice mission today. Gunnery school for new crews. A/C 383 which participated in yesterday's mission, returned from Foggia at 1100. Interrogated by our own S-2. Reported that 129 and 313 may stay and depart for this base tomorrow.
- Nonoperational. A/C 129 and 313, which flew in the bombing mission on Nov. 2nd, took off from Ponte Olivo, Sicily and landed at this base about 1045. Mission shows no mishaps for this squadron. Sgt Dowling, waist gunner of 313, claims to have destroyed an Me 109 while over Germany. Today the Group held a barbecue party, to celebrate the Group's successful completion of 100 combat missions. Steak, beer and a good "feed" was extended. Guests and speakers included Col. Upthegrove, Gen Spentz, Gen. Doolittle, Col. Frost and others. Gen. Doolittle commented that we are now the 15th Air Force and no longer the XII bomber command. The set-up not to be much different except that our targets would now be Germany. Complimented the Group's fine work. Gen. Spaetz declared he carefully scrutinized our work and record and hoped it would continue. Ceremony was impressive, and we felt that the presence of rank did much to raise our spirits, as it openly recognized our existence and marvelous work. Barbecue was followed by entertainment and dance music.
- Nonoperational. Scheduled bombing mission canceled because of weather. Again a raid on Turin ball bearing factory was planned but the enemy has gained another respite by the neutral power, -- bad weather. overcast over the field most of the day, followed by intermittent rains and continual drizzle throughout the night. Pvt Benjamin Birnbaum, new addition to squadron. By the good graces of our barbecue committee, beer was

served us this evening--probably the surplus of supply of the party's allowance. Cold and dampness robbed us of its taste and otherwise complete enjoyment.

6. Bombing operation today on two railroad bridges north and south of Orbetello, Italy. A/C 026, 513 and 061 to bomb the bridge five miles north of Orbetello, while 477, 526, 856 and 407 to bomb bridge south of Orbetello, on the Fiora River. Bomb load: 6x1000, take off from Oudna #1, 0850. The B-17s flew as a formation and when nearing Orbetello, split into two elements to bomb respective targets. After turn they joined and returned to base at about 1415. No flak, no fighters. Bombing altitude was at 3000 feet. Mission fairly successful altho no direct hit on either bridge was achieved. Tracks of the double track railway on approaches to the bridge torn up. Near misses on bridge. Major Evans led the attack on the North bridge while Lt. Notebaert led that on the South bridge. No mishaps. Squadron meeting this day of all enlisted personnel near orderly room. Routine discussion. Major Aspegren return late in afternoon from his Cairo trip. Had good time and, like Marco Polo, brought riches and oriental merchandise back for distribution amongst his Occidental friends. Officers now have access to dining facilities in Tunis. Steak principal attraction. Good place, good food. The following are now Pfc's: Becerra, Golden and Hambrick. Montanez is now a Corporal. Those busted are: Kalaha, from S/Sgt to Pvt. Pvt. Mote is now a Sgt, while Cox made Tech.
7. A quiet Sunday, except for a war going on elsewhere. Cold. Rain. Nice?
8. Bombing mission today. Target: Turin ball bearing factory. 12 B-17s took off from Oudna #1 at about 0855. Two early returns: A/C 856 and 026. Those with Tokio tanks, 343, 383, 918, 129 and 313, returned to base about 1717. 526 landed at Alghero for gas and arrived here at 1820. 477 landed at Decimomanu at 1635, 513 landed at Alghero for refueling and arrived here at 1950. 407 turned back 20 minutes from the target, landed at Decimomanu for gas and arrived here at 1846. 061 presumably landed at Alghero. All ships returned this day except 477 and 061. Bomb load: 12.500. Bombing was a success. Consensus of opinion indicates factory hit by concentration of bombs and destroyed. No flak. Fighters observed, but no action. T/Sgt Torres and T/Sgt Oistad finished mission #50. Likewise, Lt. Notebaert. Crews said today's weather was cold and the mission caused most of them to feel the penetrating sub-zero conditions. After considerable preparations to hit this target and several postponements occasioned by inclement weather, we do not believe this factory will bother us for quite some time, if at all.
9. A/C 477 and 061 which participated in yesterday's mission and which landed at Decimomanu, returned this morning at 0905 and 1000, respectively. This accounts for all our planes on the Turin raid. No casualties or mishaps. Lt. Lippmann and S/Sgt Austin transferred to P of E. Home. Four officers and one enlisted man of 310 Bomb Sq, relvd [?] from rations and quarters. Dinghy drill for crew 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15.
10. Bombing mission to the marshaling yards of Bolzano. 12 B-17s scheduled to fly. A/C 383, 313 did not take off. 343 circled field and landed. 129, 6513, 407, 856, 526, 026, 477 and 061 and 918 took off at 0710. Only 129, 513 and 407 reached and bombed target. The remainder returned early, due either to shortage of gas or mechanical difficulties. Aircraft 061 not heard from. Still missing. Bomb load 12x500. Flak: Heavy, intense and accurate. About 15-25 fighters engaged the formation, mostly Me 109s and some FW 190s. Return at this base was by individual plane and at various hours. Target apparently well hit as photos show good bombing along yards. Major Aspegren, commanding officer, received his orders and left for the Port of Embarkation--back to the United States. Likewise: S/Sgt Joyce, Montgomery. Major Richard E. Evans promoted to post of Commanding Officer. Gunnery school for new crews.
11. Meeting this morning of all combat men. Lectured by Major Evans and Lt. Patterson. Lt. Helms lectured the navigators as did Lt. DiPasquale, on matters pertaining to S-2, interrogation and logs. No word yet received on A/C 061. Those missing are Lt.

Wickliffe, pilot; Lt. DeWitt, co-pilot; Lt. Isert, Bombardier; and Lt. Ellsworth, navigator. Enlisted combat crew: T/Sgt Prochaska, S/Sgt Arlinghaus, Sgts Chestnut, Hogan, Jusniarek and Pinkard. We anxiously await some word of their safe whereabouts. Our planes seem to be duty stricken--for they have gone over long routes and on constant battles. The long range missions require Tokio tanks and those without must necessarily land at an emergency field to refuel. It is hoped that soon new planes designed to cover the long routes will be sent to this theatre. As it now stands, not as many planes cover the target as intended on take off. Armistice Day. Twenty five years ago, another war, other anxieties came to an end. It was then a glorious day. We reflect that if we choose proper leaders, intelligent, capable and fearless, after this war is won and the peace established, we may celebrate the coming armistice for generation upon generation--uninterruptedly. A nation at war is but the reflection of its peoples' strength and will. That of America's is being demonstrated. That of Nazi Germany's--well, our action and might is in full force.

12. Weather canceled today's scheduled bombing mission. Lt. Fennessey took off at 0344 on a weather flight, returned at about 1000. T/Sgt Vanderwall off to the P of E. A/C 405, left at Sardinia after the Antheor raid of Oct 31st, was brought back to the base this day. Col. Uptegrove addressed all officers under his command at the Officer's Club. In a well constructed speech he covered military, social, economic, and political problems as they affect the soldier and the welfare of the nation. Fighting this war is but the beginning of our problem to keep America strong and provide her with leadership and farsighted action. His unexpected topic of discussion proved stimulating and found much praise among those of his audience.
13. Nonoperational. S/Sgt Kenneth Titus, who disappeared with the entire crew, piloted by Lt. Hunter, on July 22, 1943, in a raid over Foggia, Italy, was back in camp today for a visit. Apparently, he and some of the crew escaped and he successfully managed his way back to Allied territory. Detail information or facts unavailable as such matter is regarded as secret by the High Command and those successful in escape and prohibited from divulging any information. He will be sent to the States for permanent duty thereat. Quiet day.
14. Another Sunday. This day the squadron did something about its mess. Enlisted men and officers worked in mass [sic] to improve their shelter diners. From morning well into the afternoon, a veritable battalion of laborers toiled at their jobs until by evening both messes took on the semblance of something really outstanding for a field. We are proud of this accomplishment for it represents the concerted efforts and planning of many men and officers with good cooperation among the several departments. We may not have been tops in our appearance when it came to mess, but we now boast of the best. It definitely has had a bearing on morale. Comments of approval and outspoken pleasure were voiced everywhere. Formula: Ingenuity, will and work. A trinity that can always bring good results. Much credit goes to Major Evans for his active interest and personal wishes to do everything possible to make this squadron tops in every respect. The spirit has caught on! S/Sgts Breed and Tirella broken to privates. Likewise Cpl Brukaradt. We transferred our Tokio tank ships to the 97th. We lost 313, 343, 405, 918, 129 and 393. In return, we got 775, 418 and 230. Not exactly an equal exchange.
15. Lt. Notebaert, S/Sgts Cresser and Hamilton assigned out of squadron and now headed for P of E. Inspection held this day by Major Evans. Entire area in clean and orderly arrangement. Movie tonight. Too cold even to see the Daltons in action.
16. Six B-17s took off on a bombing mission this day. Target: Le Tube A/D, France. Bomb load: 12x500. Mission accomplished and fairly successful. Flak heavy, intense and accurate and 10 to 15 Me 109s and Fw 190s attacked the formation. S/Sgt Gillis, waist gunner in 477, was killed in action over the target by enemy fighter pursuit. A 30-calibre hit him in left chest. S/Sgt Brennan, also in waist of same plane, received a wound in his leg. No further casualties altho 477 had several holes in the plane. All landed safely at about 1610. Sgt Carr, on his fourth mission, claimed the destruction



- of an Me 109. Because of the cold, he was frost-bitten in the hands and neck and Lt. Connors, his pilot, landed at Decimomanu to secure first aid for him. Took off immediately thereafter and returned to base.
17. Scheduled mission to Villa Perona [?] canceled on account of weather. Cold continues. British Wellington outfit located adjacent to our base. Expect about \_\_\_\_ of them. Three had landed this day. Mess situation has improved considerably to the enjoyment of all. Other squadrons take notice. THE REST IS ILLEGIBLE.
  18. Six B017s took off from Oudna #1 at about 0640 on a bombing mission. Target: Athens Eleusis A/D. Bomb load 24 x 120 (frags). Mission accomplished and fairly successful. Planes landed at San Panerazio, Italy at about 1320 to refuel and then landed safely at this base around 1725. Participating aircraft: 418, 526, 407, 513, 477 and 856. Flak: Heavy, intense and accurate. A few Me 109s and FW 190s were observed but were engaged by P-38s. Plans to rearrange our area sketched out by Major Evans. Purpose to consolidate positions and obviate wide dispersal for which there is no present need. This will necessitate removal of some tents closer to center of activity. Lt. Patterson in hospital. Recurrence of old malaria. He is rather sick and we hope for his speedy and complete recovery.
  19. Nonoperational. Quiet day. Mr. Carriga, Group's new Red Cross representative, was our guest at dinner this day. As was Chaplain Whitlock and a Jewish chaplain.
  20. Practice mission this day. Six of our B-17s engaged in local formation flying. During the evening, a practice night mission was also had. The new crews are being kept in combat shape and receiving the benefit of experienced hands. Lt. Col. Hampton (just promoted) visited our area and checked by way of a short inspection.
  21. Nonoperational. Quiet day. We just loafed and rested. Caught up on some work, completed camp improvements. It was a Sunday without a name.
  22. 10 B-17s took off on a bombing mission. Target: Dock yards and facilities at Toulon, France. Planes returned with bomb load at about 1515 as they were unable to reach target owing to solid overcast. They flew to tip of Corsica and then West for about 100 miles but could not get clear, even though attempting a climb to 27,500 feet. A/Cs participating were 026, 223, 338, 396, 407, 418, 513, 526, 775 and 856. Planes in flight for five hours and ten minutes. T/Sgt Oistad, Owens and Torres transferred to XII Bomber Command for P of E. Windy day and that plus a mild cold gave us another introduction to a new type of African weather. Seems to be no limit to the possibilities in this strange land. Col. Upthegrove visited the Officers Mess this evening and sat as our guest. We had hamburgers and cake and a nicely arranged, balanced meal. May it continue.
  23. Yesterday's mission, tho at first credited as one, was subsequently revoked for reasons best known to the Higher authorities. Pvt. Scott and Cpl. Murphy on mission "X". Radio familiarization school for our navigators, pilots and co-pilots. It was learned today that the high ward of "Legion of Merit" has been conferred by [on?] Sgt Rose and Sgt Bailey. Sgt. Hall, who recently completed his fifty missions, received the Distinguished Flying Cross, for his excellent photographic work on bombing operations. Lt. Antonik, once of this organization, received the same award. Our squadron is more than taking its share of honors and decorations and indicative of the spirit, ability and high qualities of these men in their respective fields.
  24. 9 B-17s took off at about 0855 from Oudna #1, on a bombing mission. Target: Docks of Toulon, France. A/C 407 returned early after being 20 minutes from the target. A/Cs 526, 856, 418 and 396 returned at about 1540. 513, 223, 338 and 026 landed at Decimanamu, Sardinia to refuel. Back to base at about 1700. Flak: Heavy, moderate. Four Fw 190s observed; they made a few rear attacks and were then engaged by our P-38 escort. One of our elements broke from the formation en route home to investigate the ill-fated happening of a Fortress belonging to 416th. That plane landed in the water and sank. Eight were seen to parachute. Our planes tossed life rafts, water bottles, Mae Wests and emergency rations to the survivors who were floating about the water. No mishaps for any of our squadron.

25. Scheduled mission to Villar Perosa again canceled, presumably because of bad weather. Thanksgiving day was celebrated quietly. We elected to have dinner at 3 p.m. The personnel shared an excellent dinner--in fact the best ever enjoyed overseas. Menu: Excellently cooked turkey; dressing, cranberry sauce, beans, corn, bread, hot cocoa, oranges and apple pie. Generous helpings to all and the repast was genuinely enjoyed by all. We too silently rendered thanks as did our Pilgrim forefathers. We are thankful that we are alive and that the war is definitely in our favor; that America has had the strength, resources and will to wage this war and bring to justice the tyrants and fanatical despots whose bid for world supremacy would have strangled that which is most prized by civilized man: freedom. May next Thanksgiving see the world at peace.
26. Eleven of our planes took off on a bombing mission. Owing to overcast, it was difficult to assemble over the rendezvous point and the scattered elements could not unite into formation. The mission was canceled and all planes ordered to land. In two hours from take off, our planes returned safely. Meeting later held amongst all pilots, co-pilots and navigators. Meeting of those placed on the advanced echelon for mission "X" held today. "Intermezzo" played tonight. The delicate love story of two artists and the inevitable frustration. Whether in "War and Peace" love is always dominant and appreciated. Early to bed.
27. 12 B-17s took off from Oudna #1 on a bombing mission. Target: Grizzano M/Yds and Bridges, Italy. Take off at 0855 and return at 1605. 513 returned early. Bomb load 12x500. Formation was wide of target and could not return to it as a following formation scattered them. Our bombs dropped in hills and adjacent area. Bombing poor. No flak over target. Flak over Leghorn, Elba and Bologna. No fighters. No mishaps. Lt Fennessey and Sgt. Dunlap finished 50th mission. Promotions: Captaincy for Patterson and Johnson. The following made 1st Lt.: Oehlert, Raftery, Rehak, Schneider, Schroeder, Truslow, Blum, Chommie, Danielicki, DiGiovanni, Greenfield, Heinton, Krayenbuhl, Lilly. Sgt. Clark transferred to 33rd Pat. Hospital. Guests for dinner: Col Hampton and Capt. Sarosy. Drizzle during afternoon and rain at night. Damp.
28. The Squadron has begun to prepare itself for the long-heralded plan of movement. department heads met and planned the movements and respective action to be taken by each. Italy the goal. Place, time and route unknown. Line and area busily engaged in collecting, crating and packing. Again we move nearer the enemy.
29. 10 B-17s took off on a bombing mission. Target: Fiano Romano A/D, Italy. Frags. take off at about 1805. A/Cs: 526, 396, 223, 338, 477, 025, 407, 775, 513 and 418. Target not hit and bombs returned because of complete undercast. Ships to base safely at about 1600 [??] No mishaps. Formation returned flying at 6000 feet. Could be heard over base but not seen. Ceiling was at 2000. Flew to coast and under clouds and landed safely. Preparations for coming movement continues. Three echelons will evacuate according to latest plans. Air echelon will be last and fly crews and equipment with them.
30. 11 B-17s took off on a bombing mission at about 1800. While en route and near Sardinia, the formation was ordered to return to its base, which it did about 1100 [??] hours. Moving preparations continue. Pay day at 1630 hours.

War Diary 346th Bombardment Sq(H) Tortorella Field

Month of March, 1944

Prepared by A.DiPasquale, 1st Lt. A.C. Asst S-2

DAY

EVENTS

1. Lt. Richmeir and Lt. Leksell went to rest camp at Isle of Capri. Those there the previous week returned, except Sgt. Parisi, who stayed at the 118th Gen Hospital at Naples. He had received wounds in a mission and probable secondary infection set in two of his digits. Capt. Kusterer named Squadron Executive Officer while Major



McMillan was transferred to 348th Squadron. Lt. Masters of 348th transferred to this Squadron as Adjutant. Ten of our aircraft took off on a mission this day but were recalled. They remained alerted until 1330 hours.

2. Personnel in camp still talking about the Regensberg raid. Without a doubt, it will prove one of the toughest missions yet fought by our squadron and Group. Today, our planes went up the beach head in an attempt to strike at the enemy troop concentration points. Bombing was not especially effective. Awards came through for some of our personnel: DFSs for Lt. Kline, Major Evans, Capt Holms, Lt. Bjork and Silver Stars for Sgt Colbert and Lt. Fennessey. Lt. Blakemore also got a DFC.
3. An assistant engineering officer given to the Squadron in the person of 2nd Lt. John Martin. He is fresh from the States, having departed Feb. 1, 1944. We looked at him in wonder. Seems pleasant and capable. Our planes took off on a delicate mission to hit the marshaling yards of Littorio, Rome. Care taken at briefing to point out that religious buildings were not to be hit. Results of bombing quite fair. No mishap. The squadron has settled down considerably on its area and resigned to a bitter campaign this Spring. Spirit is good and even after ten months of overseas duty, the will to finish this war and put out work towards that end is still very strong. However, it is plain that men are beginning to think of home and looking for that great day to come. All of which proves that wars are silly.
4. Scheduled mission scratched due to bad weather. Nothing eventful in area or squadron.
5. Operation again not possible. Today the first ration of beer was issued to the squadron in its overseas history. It was a sensation! A bottle to a man and boy the next week can come as soon as tomorrow. Stage show in town and everyone has taken the opportunity to see it. It is considered unusual and higher in standard than the usual
6. Intermittent rains. Mud covered the field. Can much else be said? Oh yes, awards and decoration ceremony held. Col. Lawrence presented Purple Heart and Silver Star to T/Sgt Martin S. Colbert, Distinguished Flying Cross to 2nd Lt. Robert P. Kline. Air Medals given to many of our combat personnel. Lt. Zuckerman received Purple Heart also. Likewise to Lt. Janicki.
7. Lts. Kline, Zuckerman, Weisberger and Janicki, Sgt. Bailey and five other enlisted men departed on orders for week of rest at the Isle of Capri. Ten of our aircraft took off with a bomb load of 500s to bomb the sub pens at Toulon, France. Bad weather made raid impossible and they turned for home when about 30 miles South of French coast. Scattered rain throughout the day.
8. Both Lt. Lexasell and Richmeier returned from rest camp. Sgt. Parris assigned to Group for duty. Operation not scheduled as heavy overcast prevailed for area. #513, which participated in yesterday's mission and had stopped at Corsica to refuel, returned this day. At 2000 hours, the Red Cross served coffee and doughnuts at the Enlisted Men's mess hall. A good attendance. Engineers began building a road between our area and the 416th. Here's hoping the Wimpy's don't mistake it for a landing strip in their nocturnal operations.
9. Operational activity canceled. S/Sgt Sidney S. Sherris, 32255633, has been declared officially as a prisoner of war. Sgt Sherris was declared MIA when the plane piloted by Lt. Donahue disappeared in a raid over Piraeus Harbor, Greece, 11 January, 1944. Major Headrick, squadron C.O. has been transferred to Group as Deputy Commander. Capt Schraeder is now commanding officer. No official date as to transfer yet.
10. First Lieutenancy for Lt Adams and Lt. Gregoire. Bad weather and no mission. Rain most of the day and even the birds were grounded. No fueling requires all vehicles to

be immobilized when going to town. Chain and lock of steering wheel the approved method. Vehicles also to have trip tickets. Personnel also required to be dressed in proper uniform when visiting town. Reporting a fact--the personnel in camp did not react favorably to this. Major William J. Headrick has been transferred to Group and is now Deputy Group Commander. Simultaneously with the transfer he was promoted to Lieut. Colonel. Unofficially, Capt. Schroeder is the new commanding officer, but no official word as yet.

11. Our planes went off on a raid to knock out the marshaling yards at Padua, Italy. Capt. Schroeder and Lt. Adams were the pilots leading the Squadron. Results were fair with no mishap of consequence. Movie at Group, and the pictures are still many years old--pictures many of us have seen in civilian days. Why can't we get new ones? Our Squadron personnel are part of a Group basketball team and played intersquadron and inter-Group games. We are now Wing champions and soon scheduled to play the 15th Air Force Team.
12. A drenching rain greeting us this morning and briefing held as usual. Mission canceled and we spent a quiet day in the tents and drew our PX rations. Rain and mud, mud and rain, will it ever stop. 1st Lt. David Woodward, O-912104, assigned to this squadron as Asst. S-2. On SD to Group S-2.
13. No flight activity. It appears that some of our crews may be sent to England. A "Pathfinder" school may be attended. Those considered are: 2nd Lt. Lester Lempert, 2nd Lt. Richard Trisler, 2nd Lt. Henry Pujol, and 2nd Lt. Perkel. A crew of six enlisted men is also contemplated. It rained most of the day and night.
14. Major Baucom received orders to go home. He will have the privilege to [go] home in a B-17. Will go to Bari and from thence to Tunis, pick up a Fortress and thereafter commence the flight homeward. Major Baucom was well liked by those of the Squadron and a very able deputy commander. He was one of those pilots and leaders who did things effectively but in inconspicuous manner. His job was well done and we shall miss him. He will leave tomorrow at about dawn. Tonight the entire camp was alerted for a possible air attack. Blackout was complete and everyone in readiness. No incident took place. The rain has left the roads in a bad condition and mud and soft earth make transportation difficult.
15. Major Baucom left this morning. One of the coldest days since our stay in Italy. Ice and frost in evidence everywhere early this morning. Lts. Ahern, Calhoun and Borenstein promoted to First Lieutenant, effective March 9th. 2nd Lieuts Benjaminson, Grant and Kittleson, relieved from duty and assignment and sent to a special training school. Staff Sergeants Hanson, James, D, and Ledgerwood left squadron and received orders eventually taking them home. Capt. Allen W. Schroeder, became squadron commanding officer by order effective 10 March, 1944. Private Cummings having been in arrest of quarters has returned to duty. S/Sgts Bradbury, Lawson and Scott who had been reported MIA on December 19th are now back to duty with the Squadron. Ly Rayson is the only officer of that crew back with the Squadron. These men belonged to the crew of Lt. Simpson.
16. Late last night four crews with planes came to this field and joined our squadron for rations and quarters. They are members of the 773rd Bomb Sq, 463d Bomb Gp. The Squadron has been divided among those of our Group. With us will be 16 officers and 23 combat enlisted personnel headed by Major Dean. These men will eventually get a field of their own and at present are awaiting their ground echelon. They flew over directly from the States. Their planes will engage in our combat operations and their crews will mix with ours. Yesterday, nine of our B-17s took off to bomb enemy held town of Cassino at the V Army front. Thousand pounders were used and the day was marked by an unusual concentration of bombers and fighters sent over the front to blast at the enemy installations and positions. All our planes returned without mishap. Another attempt was made in the afternoon but owing to bad weather the target could not be reached. This day may mark the turning point in the slow progress made on the Italian front. Crews reported seeing A-20s, P-47s with bombs, mediums, B-24s and many B-17s.

17. Lt. Lempert and his crew left the Squadron and departed for England. They will see duty in that theater. With him went Lt. Trisler, Lt. Pujol and Lt. Perkel. T/Sgt Edgemon, T/Sgt Water, S/Sgt Pierson and S/Sgt Lindley also joined. The sun came out with full power and helped considerably to dry out the fields and camp area--sogged into muddiness by previous heavy rains. Personnel quite enthused over the 2500 ton bombing rained upon the Cassino fortress on the Vth Army front. That, taken with Secretary of War Stimson's statement that the Allies have accomplished their strategic purpose in Italy, would indicate that the "bomb line: will now begin to move up and systematic gains can be expected. During the winter, we pinned down some 27 German divisions. The crews of the 463d Squadron, attached to us, attended ground school this day. The following promotions were made: Dominick J. Aquilino made M/Sgt; Harold V. Ryan made T/Sgt; and Edwin T. Jensen made Sergeant. The following appointed to grade of Corporal: Pedro I. Becerra, Gust J. DeMereos, William E. Brukart and Albert D. Lyman, Jr. Pvts. Martin Luther and Raymond H. Neus made Pfc. More members of the 463rd Squadron arrived and became attached to our squadron for rations and quarters. Most of them are ground crews. The following officers received promotions to the rank of First Lieutenant: Joseph T. Connors, David F. Zuckermann, Jack Jr. Finger, Charles W. Kevan, Robert P. Kline, Lester Lempert, William H. Lorenz, Charles A. Neri and Alvin J. Smith. Effective date of promotion is 28 February 1944. Lt. Connors and Lt. Ahern relieved from duty upon completion of 50 missions and on way home.

Ten of our B-17s took off with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb Fischamend Market A/C Factory in Germany. Take off at about a little after dawn. No bombs were dropped into target because of weather and four of our planes salvoed over enemy territory. Some fighters were engaged but no casualties. All returned safely.

18. Today our Fortresses attacked Villaorba airdrome with frag bombs and did a good day's work. Target fairly well hit. Opposition by fighters was heavy and by their rockets brought down five B-17s. none from our squadron. Three members from our crews claimed destruction of three Fw 190s. All returned safely.

19. Our aircraft bombed the enemy installations at Klagenfurt, Germany, with 500-pound bombs. Again fighter opposition was encountered and severe, heavy flak. Sgt. Caraway claimed destruction of an Fw 190 and several of our planes returned with flak holes. Lt. Smith and T/Sgt Fiedler finished their 50th mission. Weather is growing milder and the skies begin to look clearer--an indication of bigger and more frequent bombing days to come.

20. No activity and the camp reverted to personal interests. Crews went for showers, to shows and Red Cross in town. Others took care of their laundry. It was a beautiful afternoon. The officers club and mess is about completed and furnished. An opening due in several days. Details will be written upon the occasion. Six B-17s, with pilots, co-pilots, radio men and engineers took off on a practice mission.

21. Dinghy drill for crews held by squadron. Scheduled operations canceled. Red Cross entertained our enlisted men in the mess hall this evening. A four-piece band played for them while coffee and doughnuts were served. Some young hostesses present sang and mixed in among those present and it appears that a swell time was had by all.

22. Today we opened the officers mess. This is a product of the Squadron's own efforts and willingness. The structure is 80 x 21 feet. It was built by Italian labor. Materials were supplied by scavenger hunts in which many contributed. The walls are of solid stone with many window openings on the side. Doors are on the north, east and west sides of the building. The south side is attached to the officer's kitchen--which was among the first structures put up by the squadron. The ceiling slopes from west to east and is covered with red tile--supported by heavy wooden beams. Inside, there was built a semi-circular bar and a large fire place opposite it. Chairs are spread about for comfort. The mess is enjoyed over ten tables, each seating four men. Those who wait get the food and utensils from an opening near the kitchen so that no in and out traffic is necessary. A fifty-gallon barrel has been converted into a heating stove and

by gas-gravity method a constant fire burns within it. The floor is of handsome tile and easy to keep clean. The lighting fixtures were put up by the communications department and the energy comes from a generator some 150 feet away. Improvements, decorations and comforts will be added as time goes on. we are quite proud of it and already it promises to be the greatest morale lifter of them all. Comfort in the middle of a field.

Word received this day that T/Sgt Stanley J. Prochaska, 33202327, who was reported MIA when Lt. Wickliffe and his crew went down on the Bolzano raid of November 10, 1944, is now an Axis prisoner of war.

Our planes went out this day to raid the enemy marshaling yards at Verona, Italy. They returned with their bombs unable to see the target. Some squadrons of the Group bombed the objective, with results not yet definite.

23. A record H hour this day when our planes were called upon to hit enemy installations deep in Austria. They were called by Wing when over Yugoslavia and returned back to the base about 1100 hours. It rained most of the day with a pronounced chill over the entire area.

24. Operations again precluded by the inclement weather. An idle day spent in camp and reading and letter writing became the order of the day.

25. Bad weather continues and planes not able to finish their mission. Little activity about the camp other than the usual.

26. New crew came to the Squadron this day. They are: Pilot, 1st Lt. Adam J. Hrostowsky; co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Edward T. Callmeyer; Bombardier, 2nd Lt., Joseph P. Lawinski; Navigator, 2nd Lt. Stanley Perlman; gunners: T/Sgt Dominic G. Colino, T/Sgt William E. Robison, Jr., S/Sgt, Jesse Cabrera, S/Sgt Raymond A. Flint, S/Sgt, Robert J. Geraghty, S/Sgt Jack A. Reynolds.

This evening the officers threw a party to inaugurate the opening of their new club and mess. Group officers were invited and among our guests were Col. \_\_\_\_\_, Lt. Col. Headrick, Lt. Col. Seamans, Major Fairbanks, Captain Sarosy, and many other officers from the several squadrons. Music was furnished by the 39th's excellent and now experienced band and hostesses came in the form of red Cross girls and nurses. The party was an outstanding success and broke up early in the morning.

27. Again nonop. Today the following enlisted men left the squadron on orders, who, having finished fifty mission in combat flying are on their way to the United States. The squadron has lot all its G model planes to other Groups and in exchange received the older F models. We think the move was a good one for morale purposes. Either all of the flying personnel have Gs or all Fs. Having some fly Gs and others Fs in the same mission created friction and those flying the older models had their gas situation to "sweat" out in addition to other hazards. At any rate, the usual talk is no longer heard. The change will undoubtedly affect our strategic bombing for the better and the strength will no longer be divided. Movie tonight: Hilarious and uplifting was the reaction to the showing of "Princess O'Rourke"--starring Olivia DeHavilland and Bob Cummings. by way of adding to the omission noted, the men who left are: t/Sgt C.R. Ingolie, S/Sgt I.C. Carson and S/Sgt P.A. Frank.

28. Operational today with ten ships. The squadron is again flying B-17 Fs, and cannot be expected to bomb targets over the Alps. Of course, the Combat men are faced with missions here in Italy and may again back up the fighting of our Fifth Army. Today's target was Verona Railroad Yards and visual observation expressed good results.

29. Today brought forth perfect flying weather and as scheduled, a mission was completed to the great Italian rail center at Turin, Italy. Spring ever and rolled up shirt sleeves came out in abundance today when the sun came out bright and clear. the native Italians say it is just a prelude to what this summer will be. Nineteen officers and forty-eight EM of the 773 Sqd., 463rd Group attached to us or rations and quarters were dropped from the squadron. In return for those, eleven crews of the 815 Sqd., 483



Bomb Group were assigned to the squadron for rations and quarters. They brought in eleven new B-17Gs which will be flown by our Squadron.

30. Today is operational with Sofia, Yugoslavia feeling the weight of our B-17s. Other than that it has been a routine day and all the diary material we have is the assignment of five men of the 347th Sqd. They are 2nd Lts James Veldheer, O-751952; Raymond B. Schuck, O-752628; and Sergeants Louis Endelman, 32625443; Robert E. Marbin, 35714118; and James G. Smith, 32469462.

31. Today is nonop but it is pay day and the cards and dice are being broken in. The combat men were down on the line all morning cleaning the guns in the planes.

HEADQUARTERS 99TH BOMBARDMENT GP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES  
APO 520

31 March 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records  
TO: Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention Historian (through channels)

1. Unit history of the 347th Bombardment Squadron for the period 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1944.

- a. The present designation of the unit is \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Changes in organization
  - (1) There has been no change in unit designation.
  - (2) There has been no transfer of the unit.
  - (3) There has been no change of Commanding Officer.
  - (4) Captain Russell A. Potter (O-401048) assumed duties of Sq S-3 on 2 March 1944.
- c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted
  - (1) Month of March 1944
    - (a) 1 March 1944 - 75 officers and 338 enlisted men.
    - (b) Decrease of 2 officers - increase of 23 EM
    - (c) 31 March 1944 - 73 officers and 361 enlisted men
- d. No new station
- e. No movement
- f. Campaigns
  - (1) Tunisian [?] - From 31 March 1943 to 13 May 1943 (Air)
  - (2) Tunisian [?] - From 31 March 1943 to 17 August 1943 (Air)
  - (3) Italian - From 31 March 1943 to present date (Air)  
From 12 December 1943 to present (Ground)
- g. Operations

2 March 1944 - Eight of our A/C took off at 0600 hours to their target; Anzio Beachhead, Italy. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their fragmentation bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate. One ME-109 was observed in the target area but did not attack. The only casualty was \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_ by one of the gunners. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1010 hours.

3 March 1944 - Nine of our A/C took off at 0844 hours to their target, the Littorio M/Y at Rome, Italy. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their 500 lb. bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, slight, and inaccurate of barrage type. No E/A were observed and there were no casualties. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1324 hours.

7 March 1944 - Eight of our A/C took off at 0635 hours to their target, the submarine pens at Toulon, France. Due to bad weather, bombs were not dropped. There was no flak reported. 4 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed and there were three encountered but were not aggressive. There were no casualties and 6 of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1415 hours. A/C #143 landed for gas at Cagliari and did not return until the next day. A/C #230 landed at Naples to refuel and did not return until the next day.

11 March 1944 - Nine of our A/c took off at 0850 hours to their target, the M/Y at Padua, Italy. There were no early returns. Flak was reported as being heavy, light and inaccurate with both barrage and tracking types present. 5 to 50 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed but were not very aggressive toward our squadron. We had a claim for one ME-109 probably destroyed. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1405 hours.

15 March 1944 - Nine of our A/C took off at 0755 hours to their target at Cassino, Italy. Lt Thomas G. Judge on A/C #848 was our squadron leader. There was no flak reported at the target but light, slight, and inaccurate flak was encountered at 41°20N 13°50E. Results of the bombing are believed to have been good. Sgt Joe T. Esparza, 18044730, had his face frozen. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1057 hours.

17 March 1944 - Nine of our A/C took off at 0930 hours to their target, the Fischamend Market A/C Factory, Austria. There were no early returns. Our squadron leader was 2nd Lt Thomas G. Judge. Due to bad weather over the primary target, bombs were dropped [on] Sibenek, Yugoslavia and on a bridge at 46°10N 16°20E. Flak over Sibenek was reported to have been slight, light, and inaccurate. 30 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed and encountered. All of our A/C returned safely to their base at 1519 hours.

18 March 1944 - Seven of our a/c took off at 0720 hours to their target, the Villaorba a/d, Italy. There was early return due to mechanical trouble. From 20 to 50 E/A were encountered. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate of barrage type. Major R.R. Shaefer was our squadron leader. Five of our A/c returned safely at 1208 hours but A/C #439 did not return.

19 March 1944 - Seven of our B-17Gs took off at 0957 hours to their target at Klagenfurt A/D, Austria. There were no early returns and all of our A/C dropped their bombs over the target. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate, and accurate of barrage type. 1st Lt R.C. Norton was our squadron leader. 40 E/A were observed, but only 25 were encountered. All of our A/C returned safely at 1547 hours.

22 March 1944 - Eight of our A/C took off at 1149 hours to their target, the M/Y at Verona, Italy. One of our A/C returned early due to mechanical trouble. Flak was reported as being heavy, intense and accurate with both barrage and tracking types present. No E/A were observed in the air. Formation was also subjected to flak along the Adriatic coast from Rimini to Milano Mar [?]. There were no casualties and all of our A/C returned safely at 1750 hours.

28 March 1944 - Nine of our A/C took off at 0830 hours to the target, the M/Y at Verona, Italy. There were four early returns due to mechanical trouble. Flak was reported as being heavy, intense and accurate, with both barrage and tracking types present. 8 to 13 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed in the target area, and from 2 to 8 of them were encountered. All of our A/C returned safely at 1405 hours.

29 March 1944 - Seven of our A/C took off at 0750 hours to their target, the M/Y at Turin, Italy. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate and accurate with both barrage and tracking types present. 8 to 10 ME-109s and FW-190s



were observed and there was one encounter. Results of the bombing are believed to have been exceptionally good. Three of our A/C returned to their home field at 1440 hours but four other A/C stopped for refueling on the return trip and did not return until the next day.

30 March 1944 - Six of our A/C took off at 0700 hours to their target at Sofia, Bulgaria. Flak was reported as being heavy, moderate and accurate. 10 FW-190s were observed in the target area but the bomber escort kept them away from the formation and there were no encounters. Results of the bombing are believed to have been good. We had one early return due to mechanical trouble, and the other 5 A/C returned safely to their base at 1255 hours.

h. Commanding Officer of important engagements

2 March, Lt Floyd E. Calkins lead the group on mission to Anzio Beachhead, Italy. Mission #157.

3 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer, Squadron Commanding Officer, lead the group on mission to the Littorio M/Y Rome, Italy. Mission #158.

7 March, Lt Jesse P. Wheeler lead the squadron on mission to Toulon, France. Mission #159.

11 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer lead the squadron on mission to the M/Y at Padua, Italy. Mission #160.

15 March, Lt Thomas G. Judge lead the squadron on mission to Cassino, Italy. Mission #161.

15 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer lead the group on mission to the Coprano [?] River Bridges, Italy. Mission #161a.

17 March, Lt Thomas G. Judge lead the squadron on mission to the Fischamend Market A/C Factory, Austria. Mission #162.

18 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer lead the squadron on mission to Villaorba A/d, Italy. Mission #163.

19 March, Lt Robert C. Norton, lead the squadron on mission to Klagenfurt A/D, Austria. Mission #164.

20 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer lead the group on mission to the M/Y at Verona, Italy. Mission #165.

26 March, Lt Robert C. Norton lead the squadron on mission to the M/Y at Verona, Italy. Mission #166.

29 March, Lt Thomas G. Judge lead the squadron on mission to the M/Y at Turin, Italy. Mission #167.

30 March, Major Robert R. Shaeffer led the group on mission to Sofia, Bulgaria. Mission #168.

i. The following is the list of verified gunners claims for the month of March 1944:

Mission #160 - Padua, Italy 11 March 1944  
Sgt Frank (NMI) Hennigan 1 ME-109 Probable Destroyed

Mission #162 - Fischamend Market A/C Factory, Austria 17 March 1944  
Sgt Charles E. Hutson 1 ME-109 Destroyed  
Sgt Carl F. Kouse 1 ME-109 Destroyed

Mission #163 - Villaorba A/D, Italy 18 March 1944  
2nd Lt Chester W. Mitchell 1 FW-190 Destroyed  
S/Sgt LeRoy H. Nauf 1 FW-190 Destroyed

j. Losses in action

The following named officers and men are MIA from Mission #163.

2nd Lt Gerald F. Lombard - 0-799415  
2nd Lt Richard D. Miller - 0-748739  
2nd Lt William N. Mack - 0-678734  
1st Lt Kenneth (NMI) Simon - 0-681503  
T/Sgt R.W. Baker - 16018959  
S/Sgt Martin A. Meeler [?] - 38111707  
S/Sgt Aloue P. Mire - 38261545  
S/Sgt Marlyn W. Brandanger - 17157414  
S/Sgt Raymond H. King - 13134668  
S/Sgt Quentin G. Pike - 11031667

The following named officers and men are listed as WIA:

Mission #157 - 2 March 1944 - S/Sgt Wilbert G. Veuter [?], ASN 35677828, frost bitten face.  
Mission #161 - 15 March 1944 - Sgt Joe T. Esparza, ASN 18044750, frost bitten face.  
Mission #163 - 17 March 1944 - 2nd Lt Frederick (NMI) Capello, 0-676917, head bruises and cuts.

k. Awards and decorations

Thomas G. Judge, 0-799925, Second Lieutenant Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross under General Order #88 dated 1 March 1944.

Harold (NMI) Klein, 0-804574, Second Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under General Order #88 dated 1 March 1944.

Floyd N. Calkins, 0-757551, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished flying Cross under General Order #95 dated 5 March 1944.

Frederick (NMI) Cappello, 0-676917, Second Lieutenant Air Corps, Army of the United States. Awarded the Purple Heart under General Order #16 dated 21 March 1944.

Frank J. Kscinski, 16154842, S/Sgt awarded the Purple Heart under General Order #1 dated 21 March 1944.

Incl. War Diary

MONROE B. GROSS  
Captain, Air Corps  
347th Sq., Ass't S-2

HEADQUARTERS 99TH BOMBARDMENT GP. (H) ARMY AIR FORCES

31 March 1944

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Historian (Through Channels)

1. Unit history of the 347th Bombardment Squadron for the period 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1944.



a. The present designation of the unit is 347th  
Squadron, 99th Bombardment Group (H).

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- (1) There has been no change in unit designation.
- (2) There has been no transfer of the unit.
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on 2 March 1944.

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- (1) Month of March 1944
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Mission #163 - Villaorba A/d, Italy 18 March 1944

2nd Lt Chester W. Mitchell 1 FW-190 destroyed

S/Sgt LeRoy M. Hauf 1 FW-190 destroyed

j. Losses in Action

The following named officers and men are MIA from Mission #163, 18 March 1944, Villaorba, Italy:

2nd Lt Gerald P. Lombard - 0-799415

2nd Lt Richard D. Miller - 0-748739

2nd Lt William N. Mack - 0678734

1st Lt Kenneth (NMI) Simon - 0-681503

T/Sgt R. W. Baker - 16018959

S/Sgt Martin A. Moeller - 38111707

S/Sgt Alouc P. Mire - 38261545

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S/Sgt Quentin G. Pike - 11031667

The following named officers and men are listed as WIA:

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Mission #163, 17 March 1944, 2nd Lt Frederick (NMI) Capelle, 0-676917, head bruises and cuts.

k. Awards and Decorations

Thomas JG. Judge, 0-799925, Second Lieutenant Air Corps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under General Orders #68, dated 1 march 1944.

Harold (NMI) Klein, 0-804574, Second Lieutenant, AirCorps, United States Army. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross under General Orders #68, dated 1 March 1944.

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Incl: War Diary

MONROE B. GROSS  
Captain, Air Corps  
347th Sq., Ass't S-2

1 March -- Eight of our A/C took off on combat mission but were shortly after called back due to weather. Little out of our ordinary day has occurred. The enlisted men's mess hall is being walled in on the one side formerly covered by spare sides of a portable hanger. The long wall built of typical blocks of rough quarried stone will contain doorways at either end and several openings for windows. In addition to this alteration, a doorway is being put into the wall at one of the narrower ends of the brick and stucco shed which will be the entrance to a walled-in space, about 10 ft by 10 ft, to be used as a storage space for supplies of the kitchen instead of the pyramidal tent now used. Italian labor, under the supervision of one of our men, are doing the work. A meeting of all enlisted men was held in the enlisted men's mess hall after chow this evening. One of the purposes was to set up a committee which will act as a board of governors for the EM Day Room, now being erected. An auction of some 50 - 50 parcels of cigarettes, food, fountain pens, etc. collected from personnel not returned from missions yielded some four hundred-odd dollars. This is to be used for the purchase of furnishings for the government-paid EM Day Room. The following men are on the committee and will serve until voted out by the EM of the squadron:

M/Sgt Joseph G. Celline - Line Chief

T/Sgt Vincent A. Paltanavage - Crew Chief

S/Sgt Harold E. Grassel - Sergeant Major

Sgt John T. Curley, Jr. - Armorer

Sgt Carrol P. Gray - Combat Personnel

Sgt Meno A. Malaguti - Communications

Sgt Joseph F. McGettigan - Combat Personnel

Sgt Harry R. Orner - Cook

The boys knew that the proceeds of the auction were going to be put to a good cause, so they bid heavily for the articles auctioned. Prices varied from \$12.00 to \$23.00, the highest bid of the evening for 16 cartons of cigarettes.

2 March - A pyramidal tent burned in our area tonight about 1930 hours. Lt Moore and F/O Leiby were the occupants and they were heavy losers in personal articles and clothing. Their fire started probably from sparks falling down on the outside of the tent. This is one of the most inconvenient situations to be placed in because clothing and equipment cannot be easily replaced. We had two fresh fried eggs each for breakfast right off the griddle, together with fresh butter, toast, cereal, and coffee with sugar and cream. This grade of food far excels that we had back in Africa. "Quiet Weekend," the London hit for almost two solid years, played at the British Theater in town for three consecutive days, beginning 28 February 1944.

3 March - Today was operational for our squadron. A new combat crew was assigned to us today. They crossed the Atlantic on a large American vessel unescorted. A C-47 flew them from Oran, Algeria to nearby Foggia Main. The chow was very good this evening, the main dish being fried pork chops. We are promised a 20 ounce bottle of beer each tomorrow evening, but this sounds almost too good to be true. "It's a Date" with a cast of 60 at the Flagella Theater in town under the auspices of the American Red Cross is drawing a good attendance and the fellows are all bringing back good reports on it.

4 March - Five of our A/C and a sixth and seventh crew of our squadron flying 301st Bomb Gp fortresses (all "Tokio" ships) took off for a mission this morning after a couple hours delay due to the uncertainty of the weather, and were recalled when they had reached zero visibility in the curtain of cold rain spread across certain sections of southern Europe this morning. Special orders posted this morning, dated 1 march 1944, promoting five of our squadron personnel. There was fresh meat for chow tonight and beer for us from 1900 hours to 2030 hours. Each enlisted man was given a 20-ounce bottle of beer by presenting his PX ration card. The beer was very good and some of the drinking men managed to get more than one bottle by gifts from some of the nondrinkers. It was made in Foggia out of British hops by one of the corps of American breweries back home. It is hoped that the institution of beer at least weekly will come about. The quart size Italian bottles with plunger caps of rubber



and porcelain wired to the neck are rare commodities in the parts and we have been requested to return them as soon as they are emptied, lest our beer ration be cut for lack of containers. The officers are having a party of their own across the road in the Officers Club, where their mess and Commanding Officer's quarters are also located. There are American girls at their party from the overseas women's Services and their presence is known, though unseen, strangely makes the business for which we are here seem more natural and the "homeward urge," though still strong, is somewhat allayed in a redirection toward their presence.

5 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled because of weather. It was raining and chilly all day and work was stopped on the construction of the enlisted men's mess and enlisted men's club. It was a very gloomy Sunday and transportation to and from church services at Group Hq. in the morning and evening as usual. There are also a few games of chance being conducted in some of the tents as "left-overs" from pay day.

6 March - Today's mission was canceled because of weather. The formation scheduled this morning for the awarding of medals had a very small representation because of take-off time on the scheduled mission. Several of our men were awarded Air Medals and Purple Hearts. The presentation of the medals was made by Colonel Lawrence, our former commanding officer. It has been a very nasty day. Raining and a cold wind blowing. Work was canceled again on our new buildings and some of us are wondering if the EM club is going to be completed in time for our scheduled dance in May. We are hearing an ugly rumor that there may be compulsory close order drill periods to begin in the near future. We had fresh meat stew for supper tonight. "Gentleman Jim," starring Errol Flynn played at the movie here on the base tonight.

7 March - Eight of our A/C took off on mission to bomb the submarine pens at Toulon, France, but were unable to get over the target due to complete overcast. Two A/C landed for gags at fields on the return route and have not come in to home base. The remaining 6 A/C brought all their bombs back home the early part of the afternoon. Today was completely uneventful in the squadron. There was baked ham, raw scallions, potato salad and not sweet potatoes, bread with fresh butter, and raisin pie for supper. A large number of the men came back off of the mission today or returned from town to find that their tents had been rifled and a lot of articles were missing. Cigarettes were the chief attraction for the meddlers.

8 March - Today was scheduled to be nonoperational for us. At 0030 hours, part of us were awakened by a distant siren which was very hard to hear. A few minutes later, the rest were awakened by the charge of quarters who had been notified of the red alert by telephone. The alert lasted for approximately ten minutes. We had a meeting of all enlisted men this morning at 1030 hours. First to be reprimanded by Lt Stusser for not having enough representatives at the formation for issuing awards day before yesterday at Group Hqs. The squadron is now divided into six platoons for the purpose of some form of exercise each day. To start this off, we had thirty minutes of close order drill this morning. Then everyone broke for the mess hall to eat. Afterwards, when the men returned to their tents, they found that they had again been the victims of thieves. It was announced at the formation that five guards would be on duty in the bivouac area each day from now on and that no Italian peddlers would be allowed anywhere in the area. A/C #143 and A/C #230 returned to their home field today after stopping to refuel from yesterday's mission.

9 March - This morning things started to get under way pretty early. First, the cooks were up at 0230 hours. Then at 0440 hours, the combat crews were awakened together with that part of the ground echelon needing to get up. While most of us were eating breakfast about 0515, the mission scheduled for today was canceled, so we jumped back in bed for a few minutes more sleep. Shortly after getting up at the early hour, we were notified that there was a red alert on. There were no lights and we were eating and working in the dark. The weather today has been of the worst sort. Raining and a strong wind blowing. It looked like Xmas time this morning by the number of packages that came into the squadron. There was also a large number of letters. Most of the men probably spent a very profitable afternoon writing letters home because it was too miserable to even go to town. At 1030 hours, there was a formation called in the mess hall for all enlisted personnel and the Articles of War were read by Lt Stusser, our adjutant. We had fried chicken for supper tonight. "Lady Be Good," starring Eleanor Powell and Ann Southern played at our local movie tonight.

10 March - Today started out very early for most of the men. It was raining at H hour and continued on through most of the day. The mission was canceled soon after briefing. There was relatively few places taken today because the weather was so bad. The men have a lot of time for letter writing and there was a lot of outgoing mail today. Only a few letters and packages came in. Work is still at a standstill on the EM mess hall and Day Room. An amusing incident occurred this morning in reference to the meeting a few days ago when it was agreed by all that peddlers would be kept out of the bivouac area. An Italian boy came down through the area toward the Orderly Room crying as if his heart would break. Someone had taken his eggs from him and then kicked him out. It turned out that he was severely warned to keep out of the area in the future. The enlisted men had some very good steak for supper tonight while the officers had fried chicken which the EM had the night before.

11 March - Today was operational and the mission was not canceled for a change. The weather was extremely nice all day and some of the mud dried up. There was a formation this morning at 1030 hours and we had close order drill for 45 minutes. A notice was posted today that there will be a rifle inspection tomorrow. Work was resumed on the enlisted men's club. A good lot of mail came in today. Tonight "This Gun For Hire," starring Veronica Lake, played at our show here on the base. We had fresh meat stew for supper tonight.

12 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled due to bad weather. It rained continually all day long and the area turned from mud to water. Some of the roads in the area have some pretty deep holes in them and water would almost come up inside a jeep. Transportation was furnished to church services as usual. Late in the evening, Special Services called up and informed us that there would be a show at Group Hqs. at 8 o'clock for everyone. "The Nazis Strike" played and also some sport shorts. We had fresh meat stew for supper tonight.

13 March - Today's mission was again canceled. The weather, however, turned out to be almost perfect. Clear sunshine, with just enough wind to help dry the ground. The rifle inspection scheduled to have taken place yesterday was made at a squadron formation in the area this morning. Everyone had been informed in plenty of time that there was to be an inspection, and practically all of the guns were perfect. It was still muddy and work could not be resumed on the enlisted men's mess hall and Day Room. "Love and Fantasy" played at our local theater, starring Betty Fields, Edward G. Robinson, Robert Cummings, Anna Lee, and Barbara Stanwyck. We had fresh scrambled eggs for breakfast this morning and fresh hamburgers for supper tonight.

14 March - We were awakened at 0245 hours this morning by the charge of quarters calling out a red alert. The alert lasted for two hours and was still on a H-hour. The mission scheduled was canceled right after briefing. We had some more rain this morning. Our transportation Section dumped some gravel in some of the deeper ruts in the road and they were almost impassible. We had one new man join our squadron today. We had fresh steak for supper tonight. We received word from Group S-2 today that the German's are expected down in force either tonight or tomorrow night. All of the men have been advised to take the proper precautions in case there is an alert and for everyone to get out of bed. The Squadron Officer of the day is to make a tour of the area to see that everyone is up in the event of an alert.

15 March - Today was a beautiful one. We were awakened this morning at 0230 hours by the C.Q. that there was a red alert on. We had been notified the previous afternoon that the Germans might try to bomb us last night. Everything was buzzing for awhile, but the men did a wonderful job of blacking out the area with not even a stove on as cold as it was. The alert lasted for only fifteen minutes. It wasn't long until H-hour rolled around and a lot of the men had to get back up again. We had fresh fried eggs and pancakes for breakfast. The mission this morning was very successful, but the weather closed in on the second mission



and they were unable to drop their bombs. the weather here is also pretty gloomy this evening. Three of our A/C did not return from the second mission, but have been heard from after landing safely at Naples. Four new ships and their crews just over from the States were temporarily assigned to us this afternoon. We had a very good supper tonight. Fresh steak, gravy, fresh butter and read, glazed fresh carrots, lettuce salad, and coffee.

16 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled after a two hour standby because of weather. It rained until the middle of the day and there was a lot of mud again. Work, however, was resumed this afternoon on the enlisted men's mess hall and Day Room after the sun came out. Two of our A/C returned to our base today and the crew of the 3rd A/C returned with them. The 3rd A/C was left at Naples because of a hole in one of the gas tanks. No mail came in today. The chow lines were a little longer than usual because of the that came yesterday. We had fried pork chops for supper tonight. "Dubarry Was a Lady," starring \_\_\_\_\_ show on the base tonight.

17 March - Today came up bright and shining. About the nicest day we have had since arriving in Italy. We had \_\_\_\_\_ fresh fried eggs apiece for breakfast this morning. A large bunch of mail came in right after dinner. The first in several days. work is progressing on the EM Day Room and it should be completed sometime in April. We had fresh hamburgers for supper tonight.

*These 47-year-old records are hard to read!*

18 March - Today started out very early and the weather was \_\_\_\_\_ clear. One of our A/C, #5439, failed to return from today's mission. There was some mail today. we had fresh steak for supper tonight. "The Man From Down Under," starring Charles Laughton, Binnie Barnes, and Richard \_\_\_\_\_ played here on the base at our local theater.

19 March - Today was operational for us. Seven of our B-17s took off on mission this morning and \_\_\_\_\_ were no casualties. the weather was exceptionally good all day. Nothing of importance happened around the squadron area. Church services were conducted as usual at Group Headquarters and transportation was furnished to and from there by the \_\_\_\_\_. A tent occupied by enlisted men of one of the new crews that's assigned to us on DS burned today, destroying a lot of their equipment and personal belongings. The gas line to the stove had been leaking and gasoline had accumulated under the floor of the tent. We had fresh \_\_\_\_\_ for supper tonight. At 2115 hours, the siren sounded a red alert, but nothing happened and the all clear sounded at 2130 hours.

20 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled. The weather here, however, was very good. A practice mission was flown this morning. A good deal of mail came in today. Nothing much happened around the squadron area. We had fried pork chops for supper tonight. "Shadow of a Doubt," starring Theresa Wright and Joseph Cotton played here on the base. The stage play of "Hey Rookie" playing at the Flagella Theater in town put on its last performance tonight. The men are bringing back very good reports on it.

21 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled. The weather \_\_\_\_\_ uneventful around the squadron. There was a red alert \_\_\_\_\_ on in this area this morning about 1030 hours, but only lasted for a short while. A new combat crew was assigned to us this afternoon. We had fresh hamburgers, onions, potatoes and butter this evening for chow. Also, fresh sliced carrots \_\_\_\_\_ and cream. A large amount of mail came in today. There being no show tonight, the men will no doubt spend a quiet evening writing letters. We had a change in mess sergeant today. Sgt Harry Orner, one of the cooks, succeeded S/Sgt Clifford W. Wilson in this job.

22 March - The mission scheduled for today did not take place until after a standby. It was pretty bad weather this morning early, but improved as the day went by. Nothing of particular importance happened around the squadron. CAMT READ THE

REST. Some mail came in today and a lot of packages. We had fresh steak for supper tonight.

23. March - Today began bright and early with an H-hour of 0310. This was the \_\_\_\_\_ overseas. The ships were recalled after taking off. All work was stopped on construction going on in the squadron. \_\_\_\_\_ it rained off and on all day. We had fresh meat stew for supper tonight. "Little Old New York," starring Alice Faye and Tyrone Power played at the theater here on the base.

24 March - The mission today was recalled shortly after taking off because of the weather. This is getting to be a daily affair now and the men are getting a little disgusted. CAN'T READ THE REST OF THE REPORT FOR THAT DAY. *Nor can I! gfc.*

25 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled. The weather was windy and raining all day. We had toast and scrambled eggs for breakfast this morning. Captain John H. Hough, our squadron S-2, returned from the 26th General hospital this morning. Nothing much happened around the squadron area. We had fresh potatoes and pork chops for supper tonight. After chow, "Lost Angels," starring Margaret O'Day played here on the base.

26 March - Seven of our ships took off on mission this morning, but were recalled and the formation returned to the field about noon. The crews of the B-17Gs were notified on landing to remove their personal equipment from the ships because the A/C were being transferred to another bomb group and that we were getting B-17Fs in exchange. We had roast beef and fresh potatoes for chow tonight. After chow, "Caramelle Carnival," the 99th Bomb Gp. show played at our local theater here on the base.

27 March - The mission scheduled for today was canceled before the crews were awakened which was really a break for them. The weather was nice all day today. The duty Sergeant, with the help of some of the Italian laborers, moved the squadron latrine to anew location. A memorandum from our executive officer came down to the departments on instructions about answering and talking over the telephone. The medical department has a good many customers today with head colds and slight touches of influenza. Nothing of particular interest happened around the area today. "Princess O'Rourke," starring Olivia DeHaviland and Robert Cummings played at the local movies tonight. We had fresh hamburgers for supper tonight.

28 March - Today was operational for us and the men completed a very successful mission. The weather has been very nice all day again. the four crews and their B-17Gs that had been with us on Detached Service pulled out today. All of the men had to turn in one of their mattress covers to squadron supply. We had fresh steak and potatoes for supper tonight.

29 March - We completed another highly successful mission today. The weather is continuing to be very nice. The men who did not turn in the serial number of their guns and have them inspected last week, had to report to the orderly room to have this done today. A notice was posted on the bulletin board today announcing that there would be a salvage of all GI clothing on Sunday 9 April 1944. Four of our A/C landed at another friendly field for refueling and did not return today. Fourteen new B-17Gs with complete crews came in late this evening and are assigned to us on Detached Service.

30 March - Today was operational for us and another successful mission was accomplished. The chow lines were extremely long, but the rations were extremely short as a result of the new crews coming in yesterday. Most of the enlisted men of the new Group are quartered in our new Enlisted Men's Day Room even though it is not quite completed.



Two of our A/C returned to their base today after landing in Corsica yesterday for gas. We had fresh steak and gravy for supper tonight. Part of the new B-17Gs were taken up for test hops this afternoon and a good number of the ground personnel went along for the ride. "Slightly Dangerous," starring Lana Turner played at the local theater here on the base.

1944 31 March - today was scheduled to be nonoperational for us and all of the men that could were off to town early. A good number of our pilots and co-pilots, however, had to test hop those ships that did not go up on flight the previous day. The weather is absolutely the nicest we have had here in the Foggia area. Pay call for the enlisted men was at 1030 hours and the usual monthly games began right away. Not much of importance happened around the area today. We had some very good fried pork chops for supper tonight. We have adopted a new black and white coffee system now. Instead of holding up the chow line by serving coffee on the line, two 15-gallon boilers with faucets on them are placed inside the dining room. One contains coffee with sugar and cream labeled white, and the other contains black coffee labeled black.

I DO NOT KNOW WHERE THIS CAME FROM - READ IT ANYWAY - PUT SOME HUMOR IN YOUR LIFE - HUG YOUR KIDS, YOUR WIFE, YOUR HUSBAND - ANY ONE.

## The World According to Student Bloopers

Richard Lederer  
St. Paul's School

One of the fringe benefits of being an English or History teacher is receiving the occasional jewel of a student blooper in an essay. I have pasted together the following "history" of the world from certifiably genuine student bloopers collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level. Read carefully, and you will learn a lot.

The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so certain areas of the dessert are cultivated by irritation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of a huge triangular cube. The Pramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, once asked, "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Isaac, stole his brother's birth mark. Jacob was a patriarch who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments.

David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

Without the Greeks we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns—Corinthian, Doric, and Ironic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Stynx until he became intolierable. Achilles appears in *The Iliad*, by Homer. Homer also wrote *The Oddity*, in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdosé of wedlock.

In the Olympic Games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the java. The reward to the victor was a coral wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because people took the law into their own hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they fought with the Persians, the Greeks were outnumbered because the Persians had more men.

Eventually, the Ramons conquered the Geeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlies in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

Then came the Middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Dames, King Arthur lived in the Age of

Shivery, King Harold mustarded his troops before the Battle of Hastings, Joan of Arc was cannonized by Bernard Shaw, and victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. Finally, Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

In midevil times most of the people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter Donatello's interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abness on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen." As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted, "hurrah." Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies, and errors. In one of Shakespear's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill the King by attacking his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespear was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote *Donkey Hote*. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*. Then his wife died and he wrote *Paradise Regained*.

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Fe. Later, the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean, and this was known as Pilgrims Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porpoises on their back. Many of the Indian heroes were killed, along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, the Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-Negroes citizenship. But the Clue Clux Clan would torcher and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented law and odor. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposingly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltare invented electricity and also wrote a book called *Candy*. Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the Autumn, when the apples are falling off the trees.

Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian, and half English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The Marseillaise was the theme song of the French Revolution, and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. Then the Spanish gorillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's



flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of a hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code of telegraphy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabies. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the *Organ of the Species*. Madman Curie discovered radium. And Karl Marx became one of the Marx brothers.

The First World War, caused by the assignation of the Arch-Duck by a surf, ushered in a new error in the annals of human history.

**THIS NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOUR STORY! WRITE IT NOW - NO EVENT IS TOO SMALL TO BE IMPORTANT. WHY DON'T WE HAVE MORE STORIES ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE 99TH GB . . . THE GROUND PERSONNEL WHO KEPT THE B-17s IN THE AIR? THE GROUND FOLKS DO NOT TELL THEIR STORIES - DO IT NOW ! OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL FALL SHORT OF ITS GOALS IF ALL ELEMENTS/EVENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. . . PLEASE GET YOUR STORIES TO THE EDITOR !**

## Larkin to receive medal for heroic flying in WWII

By Mark Andersen  
Journal Staff Writer

"I got mine."

Like an old bomb finally exploding, those words reignited the curiosity of former Capt. M.J. "Lark" Larkin, retired Rapid City businessman.

Larkin, a B-17 pilot during World War II, was joking with other Army Air Corps Veterans during a reunion of the 99th Bombardment Group.

"Did you ever get your Distinguished Flying Cross?" one ex-flyer had asked, leading Larkin on.

*Flight of the Queen Ann*  
— Page C2

"No, but I check the mail every day," Larkin bantered.

An Army intelligence captain had told Larkin he was being nominated for the medal after a harrowing B-17 crash on July 16, 1943.

An engineer from that fated flight of B-17 Queen Ann overheard.

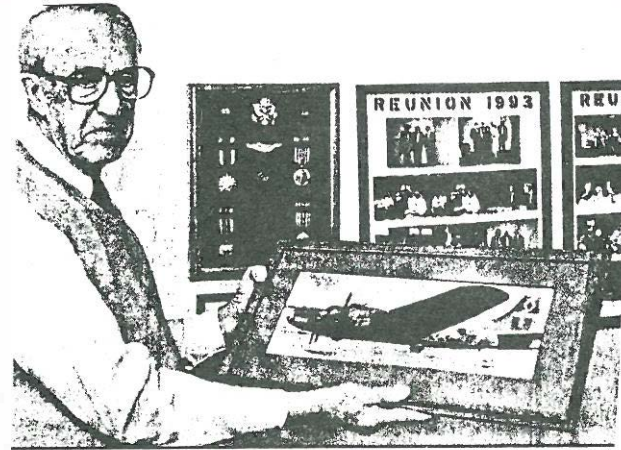
"Well, I got mine," he said.

Sure enough. The former crewman mailed Larkin a copy of the certificate that fall.

"That's what got (Sen.) Larry Pressler interested," Larkin said during an interview in his home. "If the engineer got it, why not the pilot?"

Pressler and his staff went to work.

Darrell Sawyer of Rapid City, state director for Pressler, said the Air Force had no record of



M.J. "Lark" Larkin holds a photo of a B-17. On the wall is his medal case — with room for one more.

Larkin's DFC nomination. And the Department of Defense didn't roll over for Pressler, Sawyer said.

Finally, after seeing other crewmen's accounts and months of letters and phone calls, "The DOD said OK. All right, we agree. He's entitled to it," Sawyer said.

Old photos of B-17s, including Larkin's last, the Bugs Bunny, hang in his den. Next to them, military medals are displayed in a wooden case. There is room for one more.

After Thursday, the case will hold a bronze cross with rays displaying a propeller, suspended by a blue ribbon with narrow red and white bands.

Col. Neal Coyle, 99th Wing Commander at Ellsworth Air Force Base, will present the medal at a base ceremony.

Air Force officials said the DFC was among the most prestigious military awards. It is given only for extraordinary achievement while in flight during combat. "Both heroism and achievement must be entirely distinctive," says the award criteria.

Pressler said it was fitting Larkin finally would receive the medal. "He deserves it for his heroic actions during World War II," Pressler said.

Larkin, though pleased he will get the promised medal, said other World

War II airmen deserved it just as much. "We were the lucky ones who survived," he said.

Larkin doesn't hold the snafu against the air corps. He would have liked his parents to have seen the medal presentation, but now his children will see it.

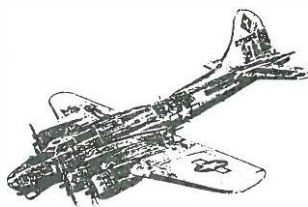
Besides, that's the military.

As a Kansas State University senior shortly after Pearl Harbor, Larkin had driven friends to the Army recruiter.

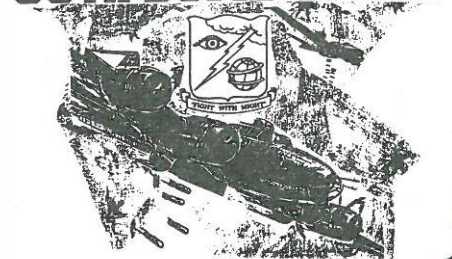
"What about you?" the recruiter asked. Larkin said he wanted to graduate before enlisting.

The recruiter told Larkin he could receive mileage money for signing up, and the service would wait for him to finish school. Meanwhile, he would be protected from the draft.

Larkin fell for it. "They called me up the next week," Larkin said. "But I enjoyed military life."

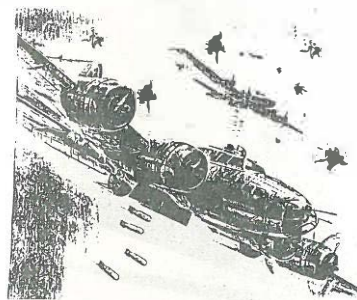


## 99TH BOMB GROUP



THIS IS SANDFLY TOWER, OVER . . . CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY THIS GENTLEMAN?

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By Mark Andersen  
Journal Staff Writer

Sunday, January 29, 1995

Rapid City Journal

## Last flight of the Queen Ann

The black puffs of flak exploding around his plane worried Lt. M.J. "Lark" Larkin.

Unusually dense, the dark puffs obscured the faint, white contrails painting stripes on the blue afternoon sky.

Bursting in typical patterns of one-two-three, the puffs threw shrapnel to tear holes in wings and airmen. Flak had chewed up bomber parts on Larkin's previous 34 missions, but the B-17, which crews called "the old lady's plane," had returned him safely to post-mission doughnut times.

Queen Ann, the B-17 Larkin commanded, flew today as the left wing of a three-plane echelon formation.

Its bombs and those of 25 other planes were now whistling toward the rail yard of San Giovanni, Italy. Materiel moved through the yard to supply Germans and Italians fighting American and British troops in Sicily.

It was a hot afternoon on July 16, 1943, the middle of World War II.

World War II pilot finally to get his medal  
— Page A1

Larkin's plane descended from 29,000 feet to keep the flak gunners from finding their range.

To Larkin, flak was worse than enemy fighters. "You couldn't shoot back."

What happened next, the retired Rapid City businessman can still imagine.

Black smoke filled the space directly in front of the cockpit. Larkin knew what was coming even as two blasts shook the plane.

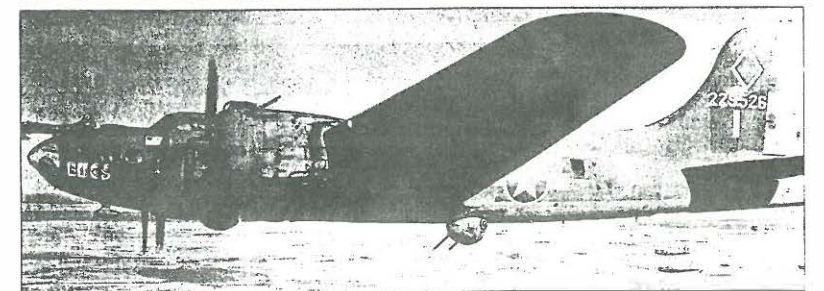
Queen Ann rolled toward the bomber nearest it as explosions cut control cables to the tail. Larkin punched in the autopilot, and the plane rolled back, straightening. But he had no control over the shaking vessel.

"It's like driving a car down a hill with no steering and no brakes."

No. 2 engine was out. No. 3 engine raced. Its prop could not be feathered, and it soon burned off, catapulting away from the plane.

The radio was dead, but intercom reports told of three crewmen injured.

Navigator Lt. Chet Banasiak grabbed an oxygen mask and went to check on their condition. "He was a



Photos contributed by M.J. "Lark" Larkin

A B-17 (top photo) flies through flak during World War II. The B-17 Bugs Bunny (bottom photo), was once piloted by Capt. M.J. "Lark" Larkin of the Army

Air Corps. Larkin was a lieutenant when he piloted the B-17 Queen Ann, which crash-landed on Sicily July 16, 1943.

man you could lean on," Larkin said. Two waist gunners had serious injuries to their legs and abdomen. A third crewman appeared luckier. A small piece of shrapnel had hit him behind the ear.

With half its engines gone, the plane lost altitude and fell behind the formation, an inviting target for enemy fighters.

Amid the vibrations and rattles of the damaged plane, Larkin, Banasiak and the co-pilot evaluated their situation. Over the intercom, another crewman reported he had rigged splices to control cables. The patch gave Larkin lateral control.

The young crew — Larkin at age 22 was among the oldest — listed their options.

If they ditched, parachuting over enemy territory or water, the injured might not survive. If they threw the guns out to lighten the plane, they would be helpless before enemy fighters.

A report: "Fighters approaching at 2 o'clock level," gave them a scare.

In the air, RAF Spitfires look a lot like German Messerschmitt 109s, Larkin said. The approaching fighters began to "flash up," showing their

battleships busily shelled enemy positions on shore, which returned fire. Dropping down through the middle of the flying shells, the Queen Ann's crew could see the black smoke and fire of the explosions on shore and the white watery plumes springing up around the ships.

They would laugh about this at reunions 50 years later.

Past Syracuse, near Cape Passero, the pilots spied what appeared to be a level stretch of sandy beach. Larkin

turned the plane to land. Coming in, the control cable splice gave out, leaving Larkin only engine throttle and faint autopilot to maneuver.

Burrowing in, smelly brown mud and water flooded parts of the plane. Mud had crusted over a bog 5 feet deep, making it look like a beach.

As crewmen scrambled to get out, they found flak had damaged one of the rubber rafts. They pushed the wounded into the second raft.

Within half an hour, British medics, yelling, "Good show, lads," waded through the mud to their aid.

British doctors kept the two wounded gunners. The crewman hit behind the ear was told to move on.

Larkin never found out what happened to his injured gunners. "I don't think they made it," he said.

The rest of the crew continued to fly missions from North Africa within the week.

Intelligence debriefers told Larkin the 99th Bomb Wing's commander was nominating crew members for a Distinguished Flying Cross.

For 51 years, he heard no more about the medal.



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# 99TH BOMB GROUP



## B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

1943 • • AFRICA/EUROPE • • 1945

395 COMBAT MISSIONS



THE 99th BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

One should submit information to be included in our quarterly newsletters (FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, & NOVEMBER) no later than the first of April, July, October, of January. Information should be directed to Bernie Barr or Walter Butler. EVERYONE HAS A STORY! PLEASE SEND IT ALONG (TYPEWRITTEN) FOR A FUTURE ISSUE. BERNIE'S ADDRESS IS: 7408 VISTA DEL ARROYO, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109. WALTER'S ADDRESS IS: 8608 BELLEHAVEN PLACE, N.E., ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87112.