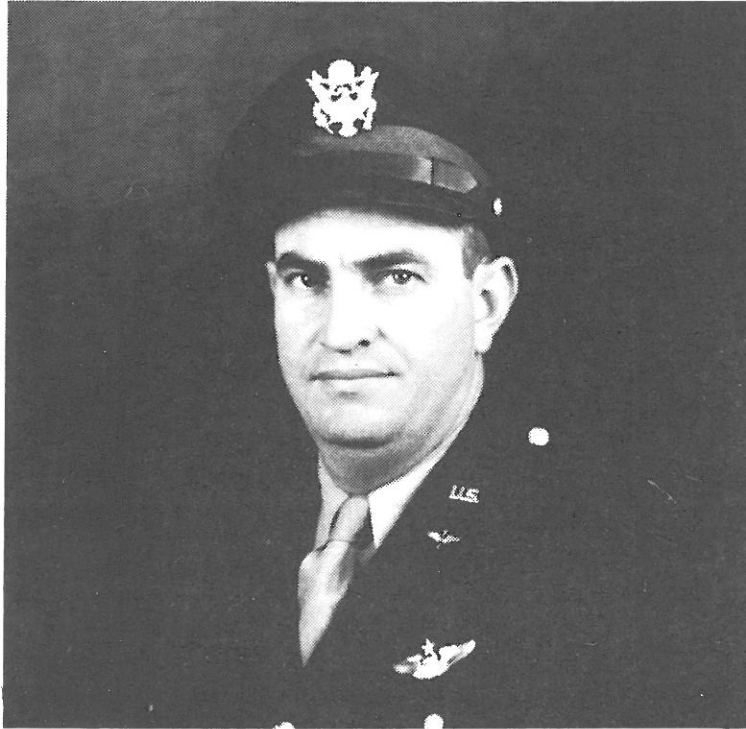




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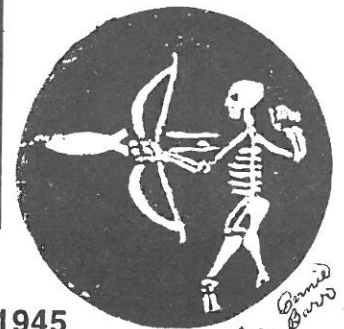


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347th

99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



476th  
Gunnid  
Barr

Colonel Ray V. Schwanbeck  
Last Combat Group Commander of 99th BG in 1945

THE 99th BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 16, No. 1

FEBRUARY 1996

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

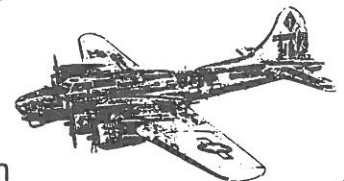
A couple of Sundays ago I received a phone call that really pointed out what the 99th BGHS means to me. We are a group, like none other in our lives, that is drawn together by our mutual experiences during WWII, a long way from our families and loved ones. I took 10 minutes of my not too valuable time to send a card to one of our members. He in turn tried 3 different times to call and thank me for thinking of him. Jim Sopp told me he is in the same nursing home as his wife who is in the advanced stages of Alzheimers. He is nearly blind and has his affairs in order, but he took the time to try and finally get me on the phone to thank me !!! Just imagine the impact we can have if we all take 10 minutes this week and send a note to one of our members !

Now is the time for all members to start thinking of your choices and I repeat, your choices , for the leadership roles in the 99th BGHS for the coming year. The Nominating Committee is Joe Chance and Jules Horowitz. Let them know your wishes.

The San Diego reunion is just three months away. Look for registration forms in this issue and get them in as soon as possible.

Best Wishes and God bless the United States of America !

*Jim Smith*  
Jim Smith





## THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



A friend passed this poem into my hands and for this I am thankful. It seems so appropriate for days when maybe we need reminders to be thankful...thankful for life, and friends, and each of you, my brothers and sisters.

THANK YOU, GOD, FOR A HUNDRED THINGS....

"Thank you, God, for a hundred things -  
For the flower that blooms, for the bird that sings,  
For the sun that shines, And the rain that drops,  
For ice cream and raisins and lollipops.

Thank you, God, for the gift of time -  
For the clocks that tick, and the bells that chime,  
For days gone by, And future cheers,  
For seasons and moments, for hours and years.

Thanks for the people who give life pizzazz -  
For folks who play sports, those who act and play jazz,  
For friends and for families, For folks of all races.  
For hands that give help and for bright smiling faces.

Thanks for the planet you give as our home -  
For the sky with its clouds, for the oceans' white foam,  
For the creatures and critters,  
The lakes, falls and fountains,  
For hills and for valley, for canyons and mountains.

Thank you, God, for the gift of your Son -  
For the love Jesus shared, for the battle He won  
Over death, for the promise  
That He would be near  
To lead and to guide and to hold us so dear.

Thank you, God, for a hundred things -  
For autumn and pumpkins, for dragonfly wings,  
For Thanksgiving dinners,  
For seashores and shore,  
For a hundred things, and a thousand things more. "

Thanks to you for the many "thank you's" that came our way for the 1995 Reunion in St. Louis!  
We look forward to 1996 and more things to enjoy in San Diego! Greetings to ya'all! God bless you!

*Francis W. Grantz*  
Francis W. Grantz



## NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS

Dear Bernie:

This is a letter of thanks to all those people who attended our 99th BGHS family get together in Omaha, NE. I received more thanks on this get together than on Hampton, VA. reunion. I couldn't have done it without the help of James & Marge Smith who haul refreshment from home and also was the gofers this and that. I also wanted to thank Jerry Buckingham for all his help as a gofer. We need the children of members to take an interest in the group.

I hope this letter finds you and yours in good health and that the both of you have whip the Bug that made the both of you so sick. Billie and I are in good health.

I know you don't like these mini get together but those that attend really like them, they are more intimate and not so noisy. We all gathered at one big table, something like a family get together one person talked and the others listened, heard some wonderful stories. Not just war stories but things that happen to them in their life, very laid back. Even the banquet was informal these that wore jackets were made to take them off. Lots of laughs.

Missed the both of you

*Bob*

Dick Dempsey and I have kept in touch with each other. Today I received a letter from him. He is home from the hospital now after a bout with pneumonia. Even prior to the hospital he is on oxygen 24 hours a day. I thought it would be nice if some of the 99th would pop him a line. He thinks of the 99th BG constantly. Regards s/Julie

Dear Bernie,

Things are quite hectic here in Brookfield. Have been busy getting out over 100 copies of the book, 50 from our members. Have many friends here who also wanted a copy.

I hope I am not repeating myself.

Enclosed are letters from C.E. Ben Franklin of the 15th. Air Force Association.

Also, Dr. Harry Crosby of the 100th. Bomb Group and Author of "A Wing And A Prayer" that I highly recommended. He no sooner read my book, and out came his great endorsement. I was looking for the writing instructor to point out where I could have done better.

The November newsletter is great. I was glad to see Col. Ford Lauer on the cover. The other pictures are great also.

Member, Milton Stout had an interesting story and well written. He could write a good book. We are looking forward to a great reunion at San Diego. It sounds like another winner.

*Jim Bruno*  
Jim Bruno

Jim sent two letters—they were combined and edited.





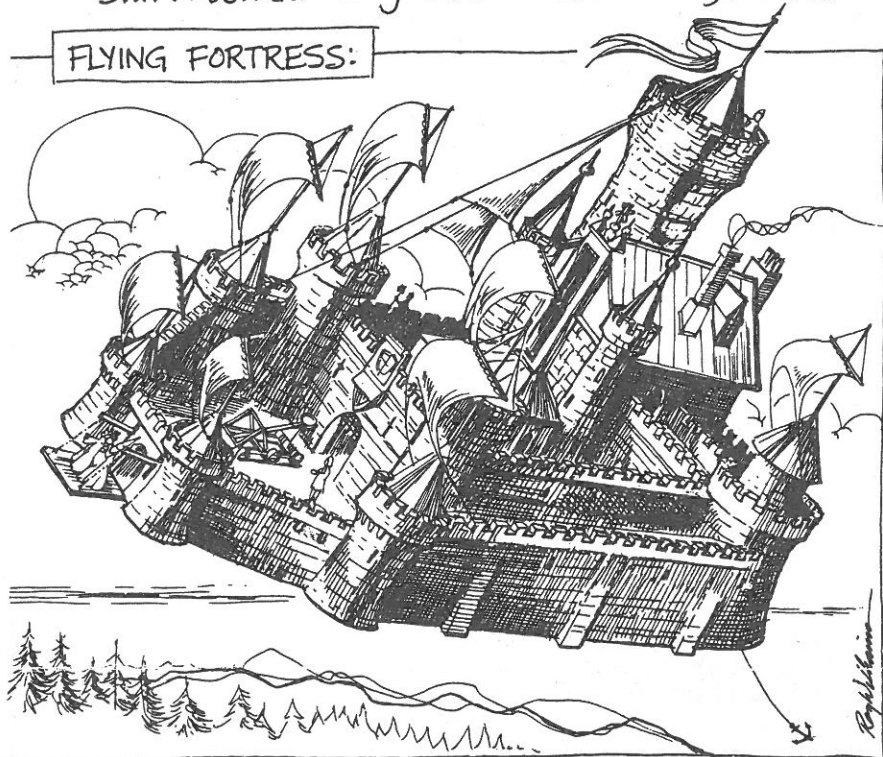
Bernie and Doris Barr pose with their grandson Marine Pfc Robert S. Barr on Nov. 10, 1995 as Robert completed Boot Camp at San Diego.



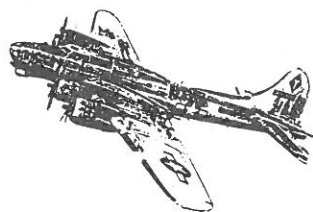
Lark Larkin sent this photo to show the 99th BG display on the wall of the Museum at Rapid City. They need more WW II items - Please send yours.

Smithsonian Magazine - Joe Kenney's files

FLYING FORTRESS:



ZIGGY



AN ADVANCED NORTH AFRICAN AIR BASE -- On his way home from North Africa is Capt. William W. Henderson, Jr., 25, of P.O. Box 258, Lufkin, Tex., a Flying Fortress pilot who has completed his allotted 50 bombing missions.

Henderson began combat flying April 5, 1943, with a mission to Milo Airdrome at Trapani, Sicily, and finished up October 24 with a raid on Wiener Neustadt, Austria. In between, he flew with his Fortress group on many a smashing raid on targets in Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, southern France, Germany, and Greece. He has been awarded the Air Medal and nine Oak Leaf Clusters.

Born at Bogalusa, La., Henderson was graduated from Murphy High School in Mobile, Ala., in 1934, and studied chemical engineering at Georgia Tech in 1935-37, and at the University of North Carolina in 1937-38. Unmarried, he was employed as a pulp and paper laboratory chemist in Mobile and Cavarlash, Ga., until enlisting as a cadet Aug. 15, 1941.

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

It was on January 29 that 2nd Lt. George N.A. Brandt, Jr., a 24-year-old former RCAF pilot of Oceanside, Cal. (706 M. Pacific St.) thundered his Fortress "Queenie," down the runway. The target was the railroad yards at Fabriano, Italy, and Brandt was shooting at the half-century mark.

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

15TH ARMY AIR FORCE -- Staff Sergeant James D. Kirkpatrick, an AAF Flying fortress tail gunner of 1606 18th St., NE, Canton, O., has been credited officially with destroying a Messerschmitt 109 German fighter in the skies over Aviano airdrome in Italy, January 28.

Kirkpatrick's victory--his first in aerial combat--was verified by the other members of his bomber crew who saw the fighter crash on the ground.

"The enemy plane roared out of the base to the right of our tail, firing all the way," the gunner said in describing the victory. "I poured about 300 rounds at him while he came in to within 50 yards of my plane. He started to smoke, fire came out from around the engine and he went down."

My congratulations on the great job you and Roy are doing with the Newsletter. I'm delighted your good offices as editor find a place for the "war room" diaries! I like perhaps many, want to know more about what went on! Some of us started the war late and missed all of the "big bangs"; so the records and the stories from the real veterans, to me, is most important. I am grateful for your work and the time you give for our Bomb Group! Some day I'll write my diary and you'll know why I say I'm grateful!



PRESS RELEASE

FROM: 99th Bomb Gp.  
THRU: 5th Wing (US)  
Nov. 23, 1943

By S/Sgt. William Brink Jr.

AN ADVANCED NORTH AFRICAN AIR BASE -- Returning to his base today was a Flying Fortress pilot who three months ago bailed out of a flaming Fort over Italy, was beaten and lashed by Italian captors when he tried to escape, but later toiled more than 100 miles on foot through German-infested country to the safety of the American battle lines.

The pilot was 1st Lt Eldon R. Dahl, 28, of 31 S. Wilson St., Bozeman, Mont. On Aug 25, 1943, during a Fortress raid on Foggia, his ship was shot up and sent crashing to its death by 25 to 30 attacking enemy fighters. Dahl was flying his 41st mission.

The tall, dark-haired pilot floated to earth almost on top of the small village of St. Andres di Consa, about 45 miles south of Foggia, and was seized immediately by Italian military police. Clapped in the local jail, he was pounded with fists and lashed with a rope in three separate attacks by police who became enraged when he stole a pistol from one of them and made an unsuccessful attempt to escape.

On September 11, after the Italian armistice, Dahl fled a quarantine camp north of Rome where he had been taken. The Italian guards simply left. The pilot lived in caves and cabins in the hills for a month before starting his long trek south. He reached the American lines November 14 after a host of adventures, including capture by two German soldiers whom he outwitted and disarmed. He escaped by leaping into a ravine, breaking his wrist and lacerating his face.

Back at his base, Dahl was decorated with the Purple Heart and raised to a first lieutenantcy. Still bearing marks on his face and with his wrist in a plaster cast, he recalled that coming off the target all four engines of his ship were smoking; three from mechanical trouble and one from fighter fire.

"I called over the interphone and told the crew to prepare to bail out. Something exploded in the cockpit and I was hit in the right elbow. It wasn't a bad wound, though.

"I went to the nose escape hatch to bail out. We were at 23,000 feet. I made a delayed jump, falling 10,000 feet before I pulled the ripcord. After the chute opened I looked up and saw the ship start down out of control. The engines were still smoking and one was on fire.

"I saw three or four other chutes in the air. Maybe there were more--I don't know for sure."

Halfway in his descent Dahl saw a Messerschmitt 109 dive on him. But it peeled off without firing.

"I came down on the outskirts of the little town, and all the people and children were yelling and shouting and running towards me. When I landed I tried to run but the military police had me surrounded."

Dahl was taken to the local jail and placed in a cell. A few hours later, he was allowed the freedom of a room adjacent to the cells, and it was here he stole a pistol when a lone guard went away for a moment, leaving his coat and pistol behind.

"The police were very careless. I took the pistol and hid it under my clothes. I decided to wait for the chicken dinner I had ordered before making a break. They asked me what I wanted and I said fried chicken. I got it."

The pilot waited for nightfall and saw his chance when a guard led the way into his cell to show him his bed.

"I stuck the gun in his back. I expected to get the key quietly and get away, but the guard became terrified and screamed. Then the other guards came running up and I surrendered the pistol before somebody took a shot at me."

The chief of police ran in, learned what had happened, and seized a chair to assault Dahl. Two other guards took the chair away from him and the three started in on Dahl with their fists.

"There were no lights in the cell and I got away from most of the blows by ducking in a corner. A couple of hours later, the same two guards came back again and gave me another beating. I don't think it was brutality, just anger because I had taken the gun. They probably got hell from the chief."

After a restless night, Dahl was attacked in the morning by the two guards, one of whom lashed the pilot with a rope.

"I crouched in a corner and ducked my head in my arms to protect my face. Most of the blows landed on my shoulders and back. Then they led me out of the cell and somebody kicked me. I was taken to a room and placed at a table with all the police lined up in a semicircle before me. I thought I was in for a real beating. But instead, they gave me macaroni."

Several days later, the police chief and the guards who had done the beating took Dahl to Avellino where he spent two nights in two different jails.

"The jails in Italy are very deplorable."

Removed to Benevento, Dahl was turned over to an Italian Air Forces officer and taken by train to Rome, where Italian intelligence officers spent a day questioning him.

"They seemed most interested in what kind of ship I was flying, but of course I didn't tell them anything. I was feeling pretty good because coming into Rome on the train we went through the marshaling yards where our Fortresses had bombed. The damage was devastating. It cheered me up a lot."

Dahl was sent to a quarantine camp in an old monastery 50 miles northeast of Rome where he was when the armistice was signed.

"Church bells were ringing in a little village nearby and the people were singing and shouting. Our guards tried to tell us it was a feast day, but they got ready to leave and the doors of the camp were thrown open. When the news of the allied invasion came, the Italians seemed to think the Americans would drive up in a jeep the same afternoon.

"We posted our own guards and next day about 80 of us went back into the mountains. We lived for a month in caves and cabins, dodging the Germans and living on the Red Cross parcels of food we had brought with us and food supplied by the Italians.

"On October 12, I started south, alone. I figured I could make the front lines. I had no compass, but I carried a reserve of food--a can of beef, cheese and bread. Most of the time, I begged from the Italians. When I could get food, ate good, but sometimes I got pretty hungry.

"I kept walking, keeping off the roads and sleeping where I could--mostly in caves and barns. Several times I went into towns at night and found shelter. Once, I slept in the home of an Italian family who had two Germans sleeping upstairs.

"I had been wearing civilian clothes given me by Italians, but as I got near the front lines, I changed back to my uniform and wore a civilian overcoat."

On the last lap of his journey, Dahl was scrambling down a cliff when two German soldiers spotted him and fired. He had to throw up his hands and surrender.

"They were artillery observers. One was an officer with a knife and the other an enlisted man with a rifle. They asked me if I was an Italian and I said no. They asked me if I was British and I said guess again. Then they asked me if I was an American and when I answered yes, they broke into smiles.

"The enlisted man asked me for a match and I saw my chance. As I handed him the matches, I knocked the gun out of his hands and leaped into a deep ravine. I broke my wrist and scratched my face, but scrambled up and ran like hell. I took cover, and although the Jerries passed within a yard of my hiding place, they didn't find me."



His wrist swollen and painful, Dahl toiled the last few miles across the lines. Several times, he picked his way through German mine fields.

"When I hit the American lines, I couldn't believe it. Then I saw a lieutenant driving a caterpillar tractor with a big U.S. star on the side and I was convinced. I had come a hundred miles, but that was as the crow flies and not up and down mountains.

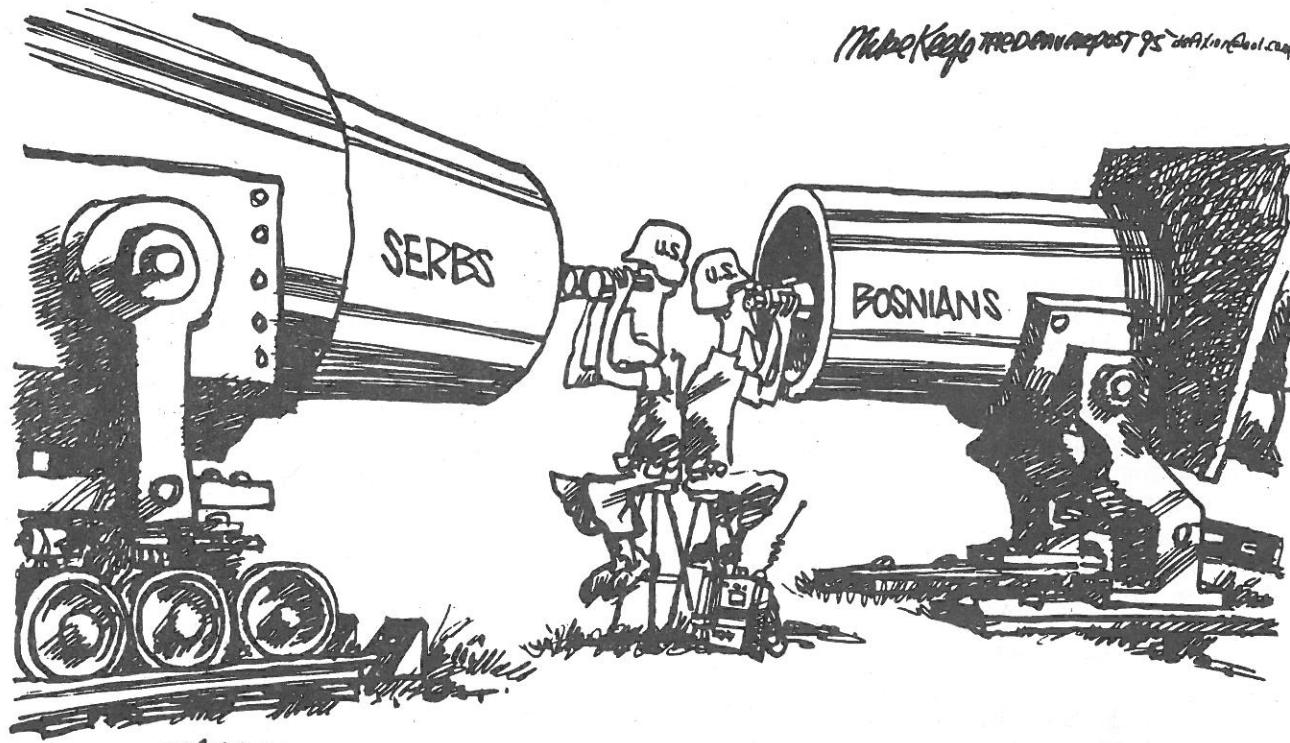
"It was an American engineer outfit and they gave me a shot of brandy. They asked me what I wanted to eat. I said steak, and I got that, too. I ate a second meal, and then it was chow time, so I ate again."

Dahl was given new clothes, and his wrist treated, received his first bath in two months and went to bed. He was taken to Naples and flew back to North Africa in a C47 transport.

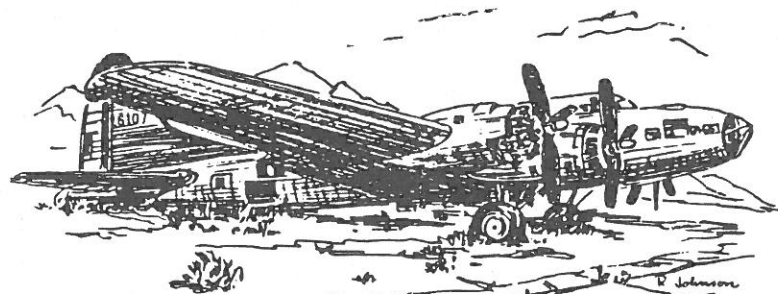
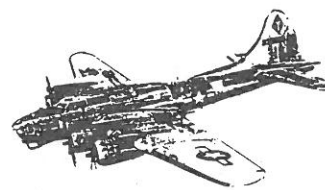
The pilot, who is married to Bunny Dahl of Bozeman, expects to be sent back to the States for a much-needed rest.

VERNON E. FAIRBANKS  
Major, Air Corps  
S-2, 99th Bomb Gp.

*Mike Kopp FREEDOMPOST 95 2014/04/01.com*



THE MISSION: RADIO IN IF YOU SEE ANYTHING FUNNY.



Once an Eagle. B-17F 1943

The Abbey, knowing fourteen centuries, died slowly, painfully



## † Life and Death of an Abbey †

... as seen and described by Sgt. Stanley Meltzoff



They came to find an hermitage

Fourteen hundred years ago St. Benedict chose the heights of the mountain above Cassino to found a monastery. The Roman Empire had crumbled to pieces and Italy overrun with northern barbarians. To make a sanctuary for Christians safe from murder and pillage St. Benedict built a rude fortress chapel. There in his cell St. Benedict wrote his "Rules for Monks" which urged a life of poverty, learning, diligence and prayer.

The rules of St. Benedict stipulated that the monks should collect and preserve the knowledge of antiquity. For a given time each day monks copied and repaired old manuscripts. Each generation of monks added a new building or improved an old one. Many great architects and painters left their mark on the labyrinthian complex of cloister and chapel, refectory and library.

The Benedictine Gregory carried the evangel to England, and St. Robert brought them to France. The Benedictine Abbeys of Montecassino, Cluny, and Citeux became the greatest of Europe.



Worked in the quiet cells



# Come Fly With Me . . .



THE B-17 FLYING Fortress at war. Above it's seen flying through German anti-aircraft bursts called flak. Crewmen would half jokingly remark the flak was thick enough to walk on. The most frightening moments were if it caught

you at your altitude. There was no way of avoiding it because you had to keep formation. You knew the bursts dead ahead wouldn't go away. They were tracking you.

## B-17's In War; Air Combat Told

*(This piece is the second of two parts. Last month's issue focused on "Sentimental Journey", the restored Flying Fortress owned by the Mesa based Arizona Wing of the Confederate Air Force. Picture yourself in the author's shoes. He'll be describing his 17th combat mission to Augsburg, Germany in World War II. In this episode, you will be his ghost rider over alien skies. You will be him, the flight engineer and aerial gunner. So hold onto your seat and let's go to war.)*

technical training schools where you learned how to be an airplane mechanic. Also, we'll assume you earned your gunners wings and were subsequently assigned to B-17s where you met the nine other men who will become your crew in combat. You spent three more months as a crew in countless practice missions before you are ordered overseas to the ETO and Mediterranean theater of operations.

Aerial gunners had something to fortify them, to make them proud. It was called the...

### Gunners Creed

"This is my ship. I have faith in the pilot who flies it. I know the navigator will direct a true course. I trust the bombardier to destroy our objective. I believe in the abilities of the crew. Yet the safety of my ship and the success of our mission depends on me and my guns. I vow sol-

### Part II

## The B-17 In Time of War

by Bill Somers

One doesn't go to war without some preparation. Let's assume you've had your basic training and graduated from two

## Bombers Blast Germans In Montecassino Abbey

### Ground Troops Cut Down Nazis Fleeing Building

When it was through the Abbey was not only a symbol of our civilization, but a collection of a good part of its most precious objects. The monastery held four separate libraries comprising some 150,000 volumes; of these, 40,000 were priceless manuscripts.

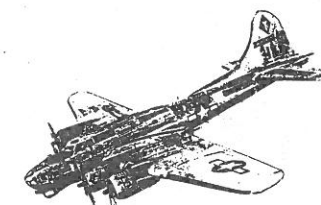
In February, 1944, men from the north hid behind the walls of the Abbey of Montecassino. The hills on which the Abbey stood stretched across the valley floor like a huge arm barring the road to Rome. The German fist clenched around the monastery and had to be loosened before the road would be open. Before the Abbey the 5th Army hesitated for weeks; then, seeing that German guns were mounted there, the decision to destroy them and the Abbey was made.

Forts came over in the clear morning, medium bombers in the afternoon. All during the night the Long Toms pounded away. Next morning smoke lay over the valley floor but the walls which had taken so long to build still stood. Then dive-bombers attacked in waves for a whole day and during the next night the artillery fired steady salvos.

Allied troops on the surrounding rim of hills gazed at Montecassino at first as if watching a newsreel; later they turned to look only occasionally.

The bombing shown in the sketch below was made at such a moment. American mule skinnners turn to watch the hill to which they will return later in the evening with supplies. Sikhs watch the little knob of a hill which Indian troops fight to hold. Dominion troops look down to where New Zealanders are fighting.

In the foreground a peasant woman complains that the soldiers are killing her young olive trees. The soldiers shrug at that. They watched the death agonies of the Montecassino with little more regret. Nazis who had fired on them were there. German positions had to be blasted from the hill before the Army could resume its march to Rome.



ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Feb. 15—Ground soldiers of the 5th Army looked on this morning as planes of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force, including Flying Fortresses, dropped bombs on the monastery and the German network of defenses on Abbey Hill above Cassino.

Spared thus far by Allied artillery although the Germans were using it for military purposes, the Abbey was smashed to a smoking shell by the bombers.

The aerial blow was intended to break the stalemate in the Battle of Cassino by driving the Germans from the hallowed hill from which their guns and their observers look down into Allied positions.

Probably no one tactical situation in the war had caused such bitterness among men at the front as did the presence of the Germans in the hallowed Abbey. Not only was the enemy there safe from Allied artillery but he actually used the heights and the building for gun positions.

Bombing of the monastery came only after the Allied command had made every effort to avoid direct attack on this historic Benedictine shrine and after the 5th Army had warned civilians to leave the massive building. Persistent, bald-faced German use of the monastery as the site of artillery and machine gun emplacements and as an observation point finally made the delivery of counterblows necessary to Allied military security. Abbey Hill has been described by military observers on the scene as the dominating strategic height in the Cassino sector.

The first air attack on the abbey came at 0930 hours. Ground observers witnessed direct hits on the monastery, then saw 50 to 100 German soldiers run out of the big marble building. Allied ground forces immediately opened fire on the fleeing Nazis. After a second bombing attack, an estimated 200 Germans were flushed from the white, castle-like abbey and Allied artillery roared into a barrage that smothered them with exploding shells.

Up to late yesterday 5th Army artillery commanders had carefully avoided firing on the monastery. Yesterday they shelled the enemy-held section of the Montecassino area with leaflets that warned all Italians to leave the Benedictine structure.

"The time has come," said the leaflet text in part, "when, against our will, we must train our guns on the monastery itself. We give you warning so that you may save yourselves."

There was no official information as to whether there were still monks and civilian refugees in the religious edifice when the attacks started. The towering monastery used to house, besides precious art treasures of ancient times, the great tomb of Saint Benedict, which thousands of pilgrims visit twice annually in times of peace.

Down in Cassino, American troops had fought their way into possession of a third of the town. Bitter house-to-house struggles continued in the ruined streets of this great obstacle in the path of the Allies' northern drive toward Rome.

The massive Benedictine monastery on Montecassino which the Allies were forced to bomb today to silence German guns was a white, castle-like building of marble and stone. Its ten-foot-thick walls and narrow windows dominate the whole countryside. At one corner of the central courtyard a tall watchtower commanded the terrain on every side.

Benedictine monks, who carried on research work in all the Christian arts and some of the sciences, equipped the monastery with an observatory and a meteorological and seismological station. Forty monks and 200 students lived in the monastery in normal times.

The monastery had one of the finest libraries in Europe with 80,000 volumes and 1,200 ancient manuscripts, including that of the Third Mass of Christmas Night. The abbey church was erected in the 17th Century and was an excellent example of Baroque architecture. It glittered with gold mosaics and frescoes and was richly ornamented with the paintings of old masters. It is believed that many of the monastery's art treasures were removed before war approached the ancient cluster of buildings.



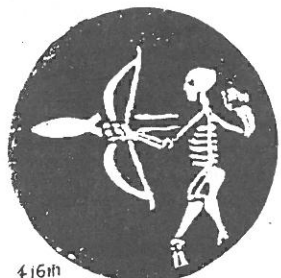
346th



347th



349th



416th



emly to perform my duty. I am the ship's gunner."

With that preamble duly noted, let's focus on the job description of an aerial gunner. That's what you are now, you know. For only one raid, but your life depends on it. You must remember the B-17 is a most effective gun platform and bristles with 13 air-cooled .50 caliber machine guns. Its effectiveness can be either applied or defeated by the way the gunners in your crew perform their duties in action. Your gunners belong to one of two categories: turret gunners and flexible gunners. You are the flight engineer and your battle station is the top turret with its twin fifties.

#### To Be A Gunner

All gunners should be familiar with the coverage area of all gun positions and be prepared to bring the proper gun to bear as the conditions may warrant. Of course, you, the ghost rider, know all this. You should be an expert in aircraft identification. And since you are in a Sperry turret, failure to set the target dimension dial properly on the K-type sight will result in a miscalculation of range.

Gunners must be thoroughly familiar with the Browning aircraft machine gun. They should know how to maintain the guns, how to clear jams and stoppages and how to harmonize the sights with the guns. Remember back in gunnery school when they made you disassemble and assemble the seven major groups of the gun blindfolded with gloves on in 30 minutes. When they made you strip and assemble the gun's more than 150 parts in an hour. You did it and that's why you're here now.

The importance of teamwork cannot be over-emphasized. One poorly trained gunner or one man not on the alert can be the weak link that could destroy the whole crew. Finally, each gunner should fire the guns at each station to familiarize himself with the other man's position and to insure knowledge of operation in the event of an emergency.

#### To Be An Engineer

What we have just discussed is only half your job description. You are flying in the author's shoes. You are ghost riding the upcoming mission. You are the flight engineer, the other half of your job aboard the Flying Fortress.

As a qualified combat engineer you must know your airplane, its engines its armament equipment thoroughly. This is a big responsibility. You must work closely with the pilot, checking engine operation, fuel consumption and the operation of all equipment. You must be able to work with the bombardier and know how to cock, lock and load the bomb racks. You should have a general knowledge of radio equipment and be able to assist in tuning transmitters and receivers. As the flight engineer you are the chief source of information concerning the airplane.

Now that your job description has been spelled out, you should feel confident as you go into battle. You are well trained. You are part of a crew of ten men who have trained and worked and fought together. You are ready for action.

#### H-Hour

The klaxon horn sounds over the loudspeaker at 3 a.m. It's H-hour. It's time to rise and shine because you read the bulletin board before hitting the sack and your crew was listed to fly this day. It's a cold, but clear February morning on the plains of Foggia, Italy. You dress in long johns and O.D.s. You'll collect the rest of your gear after breakfast. Oh, and when you're at breakfast keep coffee and juice consumption to a minimum. You know what happens if you're up there and have to go with all those clothes on and those 40-degree below zero temperatures. You can't even find it.

Enlisted men are trucked to the flight line. They draw their flying gear which includes chest-type parachute, harness, electrically heated suit, oxygen mask and flying outerwear, flak suit and helmet.

This will be your 17th combat mission. You are a combat crewman with the 348th Bomb Squadron, 99th Bomb Group in the 15th Air Force. You have been assigned to ship No. 665. You've flown it twice before. Once to Blechhammer's oil refineries and once to Vienna and its oil refineries. You'll know the day's target when your officers return from briefing. In the meantime you can give your ship a cursory inspection and meet with the crew chief who was responsible for readying 665 for the mission.

#### Prepare For Takeoff

Next you toss your gear up into the forward escape hatch which is just behind the plexiglass nose and quarters the bombardier and navigator. You swing yourself up into the narrow confines of the cockpit. Your top turret is directly behind the seats of the pilot and copilot. You now must install two gun barrels into their jackets and set them correctly. The barrels were cleaned after landing the last mission. Now stack your chute on the deck next to you along with your shoes. You won't believe how ice cold they'll be on your return. Seems as if it takes hours for them to thaw out. If real trouble develops, don't forget to tie them to your harness if you have to bail out. Your sheepskin lined boots you wear over your heated silk slippers on the raid are not made for walking. Oh yea, don't forget to clip on your parachute in the excitement.

The officers arrive. You are told by your pilot Bob Neely today's target will be the marshalling yards in Augsburg, Germany. Your 665 seems to be in good shape and you trade quips and then honest injun concern as the pilots begin preflighting the plane's engines. Soon we're rolling off our hardstand and into line for takeoff. The weather is cold, the early morning sun lends a sparkling brilliance to the ocean of 6-man tents that abound around the field.

You're ready for takeoff. You dread the always testy ride down the steel matted runway with the heavy bomb load. It's always a scary beginning of every mission. You're carrying six 1000-lb bombs. Brakes are off and you begin your run. Slowly you build up speed. You begin yelling now when you reach 80 mph. You stand between the pilots and call out 85, 90, 95, 100, 105 - come on, with this load you need another 5 mph to get off the ground. The weight is frightening. Engine noise is deafening. You need to lift off now. Will this lumbering giant ever get into the air? It will and it does.

You breathe a sigh of relief as your aircraft begins its laborious climb up into formation. After you join your squadron, you rendezvous with the 21 other planes in your group and at a higher altitude your group joins other groups in the wing until you're all collected. You are now an armada of B-17's on the way to war over the German motherland.

#### Target: Augsburg

This is what we know about your target for the day - the day being Feb. 27, 1945. It will be located a little northeast of Munich and a bit south of the Danube River. Flying time will be a little short of eight hours.

The city of Augsburg is the main East-West line from Vienna via Munich to the Rhine Valley and is joined by the main Berlin-Munich line which runs through Nuremberg. The railroad yards have a through capacity of 2000 enemy box cars in a normal 24 hour period. Briefing indicated 920 units in the marshalling yards.

The target is shaped like an inverted "Y" and is 3000 yards long and 600 yards across at its widest point. The target is located on the southwest outskirts of the city. Outstanding natural features are the Lech and Wertach rivers which flow north on the eastern and western sides of the town, meeting at a point three miles north of the yards. They are surrounded on all sides by a closely built up area.

#### Expect The Worse

Don't forget. You're flying this mission, not me. You're the ghost rider on this flight. The word at morning briefing was that there is a possibility of harassing attacks by 15 to 20 enemy fighters and/or a few ME-262's from the Munich area. It is conceivable the enemy could move in effective fighters for the defense of this target should he so elect. Any of our stragglers are warned to be on constant alert for North Italian based fighters. The worst possible scenario is 65 to 70 enemy fighters.

To my ghost rider. You're airborne now, no turning back. More from briefing: enemy ground defenses at the target is 88 heavy guns. Since your route back goes within 60 miles of the Swiss border, we are expected to honor Swiss neutrality. Therefore planes still with bombs on the return are ordered not to jettison them in Swiss territory but to return them to base.

You've had briefing reports. Now the real thing. You're over the target. Intense, heavy and accurate flak peppers your 99th Bomb Group formation of 28 planes. The flak is predominantly of the tracking type and it was tracking you very accurately. It started over the target and followed your formation off the target and during the rally. You were under extremely heavy fire for six to eight minutes.

#### Two Planes Down

Eight of our aircraft sustain major flak damage and seven receive minor damage. In all our group loses two planes to flak, fifteen were damaged. Twenty one men are missing. You watched two of our planes go down while under heavy fire. But you really believed three planes were lost. That third plane had to be your friend and tail gunner Vic Fabiniak flying in the 346th squadron next to us. You concede you never saw his plane go down, but it did for sure and accounts for the third down — aircraft that day. The 97th Bomb Group flying near us also lost two planes.

I can tell you what Vic told me many years after the war. His bomber was disabled when hit by flak and it seemed to be maintaining altitude. It was last seen over Austria, left the formation and flew toward Switzerland. Vic said they lost their third engine on the way down and before they crash landed in Switzerland where they were interned for the duration.

Of the two ships you did see go down, one took a direct hit to its right wing between No. 3 and No. 4 engines. That ship caught fire and you watched it veer off and go down in flames. You saw six parachutes and some were on fire. Your friend Dwight Reigert was in one of those parachutes. The time was exactly 1:20 in the afternoon. You watch in anguish from your top turret as he and his crew bail out. You didn't know him then, but you did after the war. He was captured in the very railroad yards you bombed. He became a German prisoner of war.

#### Visual Bomb Run

The other B-17 just blew up. It evaporated in mid-air with pieces and parts all over the sky. Both of these aircraft belonged to the 346th squadron. You in your beloved 348th

squadron were to survive without serious damage altho your 665 took flak fragments from nose to tail. Your bombing altitude over the target was 23,500 feet. And you made a visual run — meaning no clouds, a clear view of the target.

At the same time those B-17's were hit you were having trouble with your No. 2 supercharger, but got it fixed in time. I guess you were pretty traumatized in the heat of battle, being your first exposure to enemy action but because you're only a ghost rider on this mission you really won't have to worry. Tonight you'll sleep comfortable at home in Fountain of the Sun.

In all, that Augsburg mission cost us plenty. Our raiding force lost at least four B-17's, four B-24 Liberators and a B-25 medium bomber. Some of the crews became P.O.W.s, some were interred by neutral Switzerland and others died.

#### End of Mission

Your flying time for that Augsburg raid was 7 hours and 40 minutes. When you landed you have a few odd chores to do before you leave the aircraft. You fired practice rounds from your machine guns before entering enemy territory. Those gun barrels have to be cleaned. Also, a tanker is waiting. It's your job to gas up after the mission. You climb the wings lugging the heavy line and refuel 665. Now you can go home. There's two ounces of mission whiskey awaiting. It's on Uncle Sam. He takes care of his fly boys.

You didn't know, but the two planes your 99th Bomb Group lost today were the 71st and 72nd lost in this war to date.

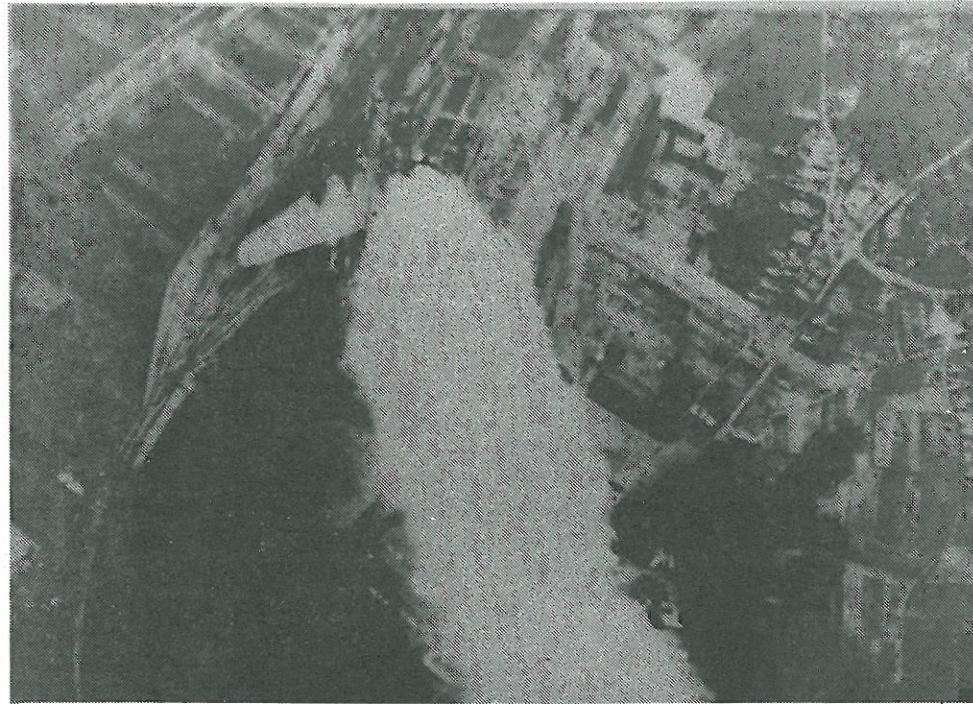
Your ghost ride is at an end. You've experienced a Flying Fortress on a wartime mission. The storied legends of this 4-engine bomber in World War II are many. It played a decisive part in our victory over Germany. It's strategic use in daylight raids deep into the German heartland had a devastating affect on German resistance on land, sea and air. An estimated 4,750 B-17's were lost in this punishing air war in Europe. It was a noble cause and heroic airmen played a small part in the victory that was finally achieved.

I hope, friend, you enjoyed the ride in my place. You gotta admit, it's a helluva story to tell the grandkids.



AUTHOR FONDLES twin .50 caliber machine guns at his top turret outside the aircraft. Inside he would fly with 375 rounds for each gun. This photo taken just before a combat mission 50 years ago. Bombers were deployed at airfields on the plains of Foggia in Italy.





COMPLETELY ENGULFED in flames, the Flying Fortress is seen in its plunge to earth. Bombers in the 15th Air Force concentrated their attacks on marshalling yards, oil refineries, aircraft plants and other industrial targets over East Germany, Rumania, Hungary and Italy while the 8th Air Force targeted western Europe and Scandinavia.



THE DOOMED aircraft in this photo is seen just after being hit. It's on fire and falling out of its formation. Air crews watch from their ships and try to count the parachutes, if any, as the plane begins its fatal fall.

### NEW MEMBERS

JIM JENKINS, P.O. Box 574, Brentwood, TN 37024-0514 Associate  
 ROGER JARVIS, 17101 Golden View, Anchorage, AK 99516 Associate  
 IRVING LERNER, 16 Richmond Avenue, Worchester, MA 01602-1504 346th Sq.  
 WILSON S. SNOW, 64 Townsend Road, Belmont, MA 02178 346th Sq.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

TOM E. GAERTNER, 1150 Sterling Oaks Drive, Wadsworth, OH 44281  
 JOHN L. KALISH, HC 63 Box 4A, Jones Mills, PA 15646-9701

TAPS • TAPS • TAPS • TAPS • TAPS

FRANCES FABINIAC • DAVID O. FLEMING • BETTY KALISH

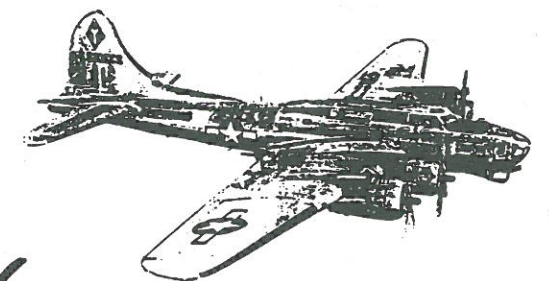
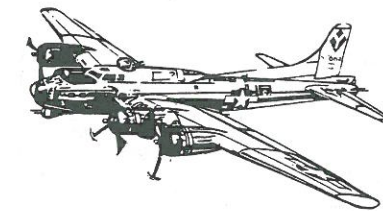
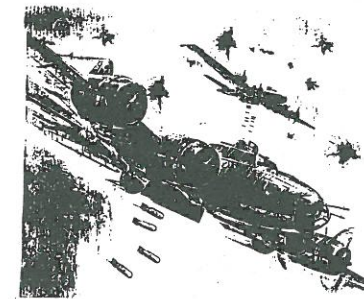
JOE LESCH • NICHOLAS LYKOS • ALVIN J. DUPRE

#####

KARL AFFENZELLER , BUCHTASTRABE 5 , A-4240 FREISTADT, AUSTRIA-EUROPE requests that a member of 1st Lt. Richard A. Schwarz crew that was shot down on April 25, 1945 please contact him and send a photo of him and /or crew. PLEASE RUSH!

#####

12/30/95 - - To Maybelle & Joe Chance, Biller & Bob Bacher and others that have asked or wondered about my hand. On Dec. 4 Dr. Pribble, a hand surgeon, operated on the knuckles of my index and middle fingers of my right hand. He removed the arthritic portions of bone to eliminate the pain that I had been having. The operation is a success. Pain gone, knuckles stiff with little or no flexibility, fingers flexible and usable. Cast removed Dec. 27. I'll be OK. Thanks for your concern and thoughtfulness. s/Bernie



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

BEHIND THE MEN WHO FLY.....



ARMORER



ORDNANCE WORKER



TELETYPE OPERATOR

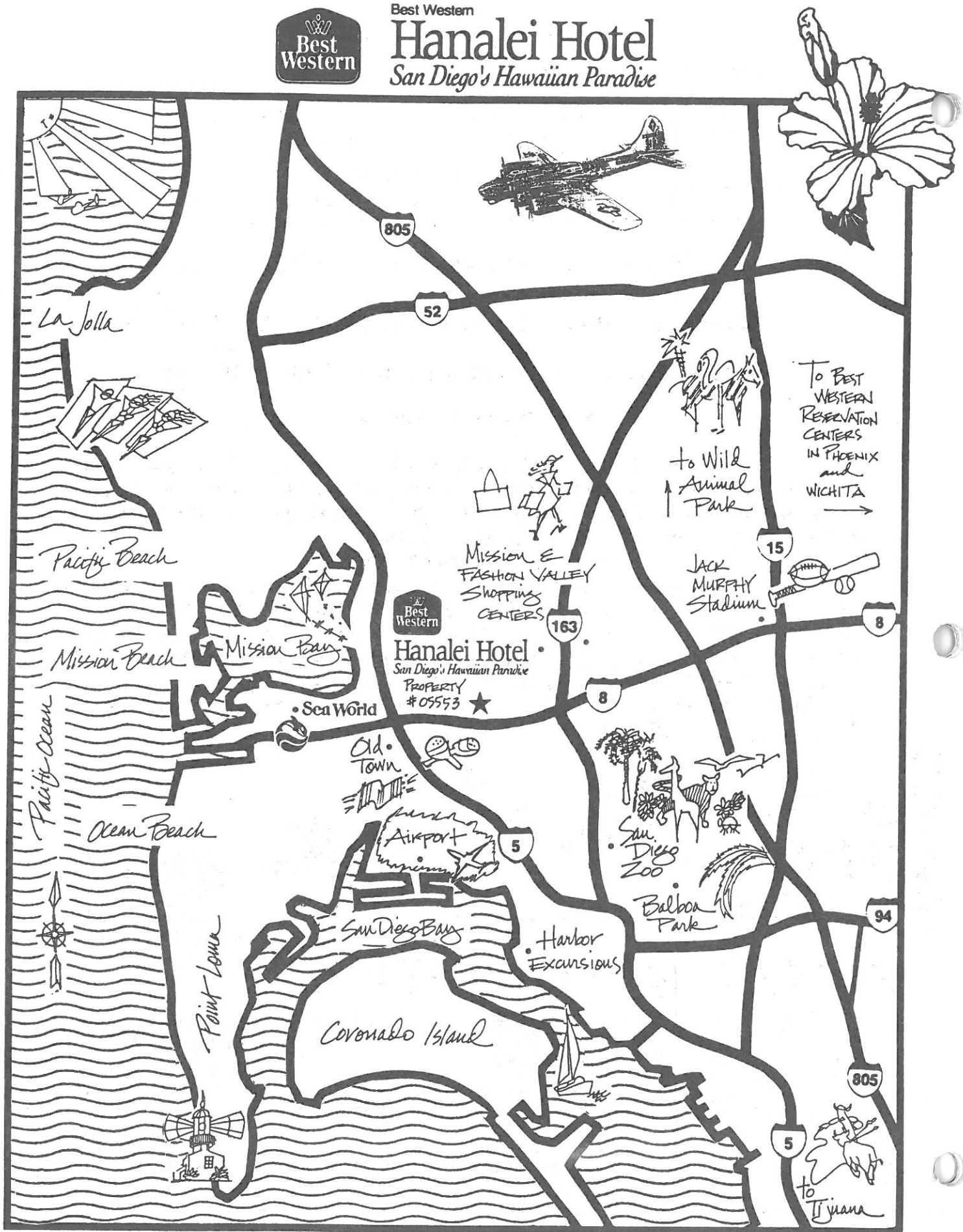


RADAR TECHNICIAN





Best Western  
**Hanalei Hotel**  
 San Diego's Hawaiian Paradise



Map Not To Scale

## HANALEI HOTEL

San Diego's Hawaiian Paradise  
 2270 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108  
 (619)297-1101 (800)882-0858

### RESERVATION REQUEST

GROUP NAME: 99th Bomb Group - Historical Society

DATE(S) OF FUNCTION: May 14 - 19, 1996

FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ROOMMATE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD TYPE: \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF ROOMS: \_\_\_\_\_

RATES PER ROOM: SINGLE: \$67.00 per room, per night, plus city occupancy tax  
 DOUBLE: \$67.00 per room, per night, plus city occupancy tax

1 KING BED: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 QUEEN BEDS: \_\_\_\_\_

SMOKING: \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SMOKING: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP RATES ARE AVAILABLE 3 DAYS PRIOR TO AND 3 DAYS AFTER EVENT.

**ALOHA!**

YOUR RESERVATION REQUEST ACCOMPANYING A FIRST NIGHTS DEPOSIT OR A CREDIT CARD GUARANTEE MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 4/12/96 TO ENSURE ACCOMMODATIONS. ALL UNSOLD ROOMS WILL BE RETURNED TO OUR INVENTORY AND SOLD AT OUR REGULAR RATES. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH. THANK YOU.

CHECK IN TIME IS 4:00PM. CHECK OUT TIME IS 12:00 NOON.  
 ROOM DEPOSITS ARE REFUNDABLE IF RESERVATION IS CANCELLED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF ARRIVAL DATES. PLEASE CALL IF YOU NEED ANY FURTHER INFORMATION. WE LOOK FORWARD TO MAKING YOUR STAY AT THE HANALEI HOTEL, SAN DIEGO'S HAWAIIAN PARADISE A MEMORABLE ONE.

MAHALO!

#### THE ROOMS

- Choice of King or Queen/Queen Bedded Rooms • 4 First Floor Handicapped Rooms Available
- Connecting Rooms Available 12 Spacious Suites with balconies or Lanai and mini-refrigerators
- ADA Equipped Rooms Cable TV AM/FM Radio, Alarm Clock
- Non-Smoking Rooms Direct Dial Telephone with Message alert

**MAKE PLANS SOON FOR THE 1996 SAN DIEGO, CA REUNION  
MAY 14 - 19, 1996**

Hanalei (Hana - lay) Hotel (San Diego's Hawaiian Paradise), 2270 Hotel Circle, North San Diego, CA 92108. Room rate (single or double) is \$74.04, tax included. Please make your reservations early and direct with the Hotel using their 800 number or the printed reservation form included in this and our Nov. '95 issue. **Hotel reservations must be made no later than APRIL 12, 1996 to insure accommodations.** Our reunion room rate is available for the period May 11 - 22, '96 (3 days before & 3 days after our reunion dates.) Handicapped rooms are available.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sqdn. \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information**

<u>DATE &amp; EVENTS</u>	<u>NO. TO ATTEND</u>	<u>FEE BEFORE MAR. 14 '96 (Per Person)</u>	<u>FEE AFTER MAR. 14 '96 (Per Person)</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>TUESDAY, MAY 14</u>				
1. REGISTRATION ALL DAY IN 99TH HOSPITALITY ROOM	_____	\$22.00	\$24.00	_____
2. COMPLIMENTARY MAI TAIS AT POOL SIDE - 5 to 6 p.m.	_____	None		_____
<u>WEDNESDAY, MAY 15</u>				
1. NAVY INSTALLATION & SHIP TOUR - NO HOST LUNCH	_____	\$15.00	\$20.00	_____
2. PAUL SHANK WILL CONDUCT A PERSONALIZED SAN DIEGO TOUR FOR THE FIRST 14 TO SEND FORMS.	_____	\$10.00	N/A	_____
3. AFTERNOON FREE	_____			_____
<u>THURSDAY, MAY 16</u>				
ALL DAY TOUR OF TIJUANA, MEX. CONDUCTED BY PAUL SHANK (NO HOST DRINKS AND BRUNCH)	_____	\$25.00	\$30.00	_____
<u>FRIDAY, MAY 17</u>				
1. MARINE BOOT TRAINING GRADUATION & PARADE.	_____			_____
2. BUSINESS LUNCH AT ADM. KIDD CLUB. (No Host Drinks Available)	_____	\$19.00	\$21.00	_____
3. BEACH PICNIC 4:30 'til 8:30	_____			_____
Continuous Bus Service during period.	_____	\$10.00	N/A	_____
<u>SATURDAY, MAY 18</u>				
1. SAN DIEGO WILD ANIMAL PARK TOUR. (NO HOST LUNCH)	_____	\$26.00	\$30.00	_____

(PAGE 1 OF 2 SEE NEXT PAGE FOR CONTINUATION)

2. SECOND PAUL SHANK SAN DIEGO TOUR. 14 MEMBERS MAX.	_____	\$10.00	N/A	_____
3. GROUP BANQUET & DANCE (No Host Drinks)	_____	\$27.00	\$30.00	_____
<u>SUNDAY, MAY 19</u>				
DEPARTURE BREAKFAST IN OUR HOSPITALITY ROOM - 9 a.m.	_____	\$10.00	N/A	_____

PLEASE SEND THIS PREREGISTRATION FORM (both pages) WITH YOUR CHECK FOR REGISTRATION & THE ACTIVITIES YOU DESIRE NO LATER THAN MARCH 14, '96 TO ALLOW FOR TIMELY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SCHEDULED EVENTS. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO ROY H. WORTHINGTON, S.D. REUNION HOST & SEND TO ROY H. WORTHINGTON, 16786 THOMAS WHITE DRIVE, AIR FORCE VILLAGE WEST, CA 92518-2918. (Please use all 9 zip code digits.)

PAGE 2 OF 2

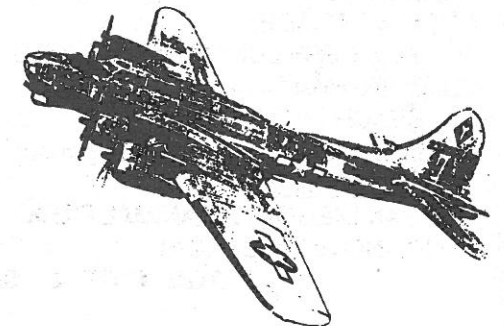
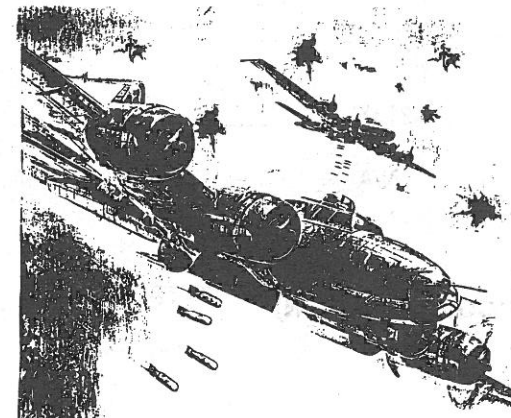
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**SAN DIEGO HOST(S) NOTES/COMMENTS**

SAN DIEGO IS SUCH AN INTERESTING AREA IT IS DIFFICULT TO SELECT THE ACTIVITIES THE MAJORITY FINDS INTERESTING. WE HOPE WE HAVE DONE GOOD' BY THE MAJORITY!

YOUR HOSTS HIGHLY RECOMMEND, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, YOU PLAN ON TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE LOW HOTEL RATE FOR THE 3 DAYS BEFORE AND AFTER OUR REUNION PERIOD TO ENJOY OTHER SAN DIEGO ACTIVITIES ON YOUR OWN. PLEASE LET PAUL SHANK, 3853 NARRAGANSETT AVENUE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92107 PLAN TO COME EARLY AND/OR STAY AFTER MAY 19 SO HE CAN FURNISH YOU WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST.

BE AWARE THAT MOST HOTELS DO NOT OFFER AIRPORT PICK-UP SERVICE IN THE SAN DIEGO AREA. THE HOTELS ENCOURAGE THE TAXI SERVICES TO CHARGE MODEST FARES (APPROX. \$6.00) TO THE HOTELS IN THE HANALEI HOTEL AREA. WE BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND THIS METHOD LESS NERVE TAXING THAN WAITING FOR HOTEL TRANSPORTATION. TO HELP ENSURE TAXI AVAILABILITY WE WILL NOTIFY THE TAXI SERVICES OF THE APPROX. NUMBER OF ARRIVALS ON MAY 13 AND 14 WHEN WE HAVE A COUNT OF YOUR RETURNED REGISTRATION FORMS.

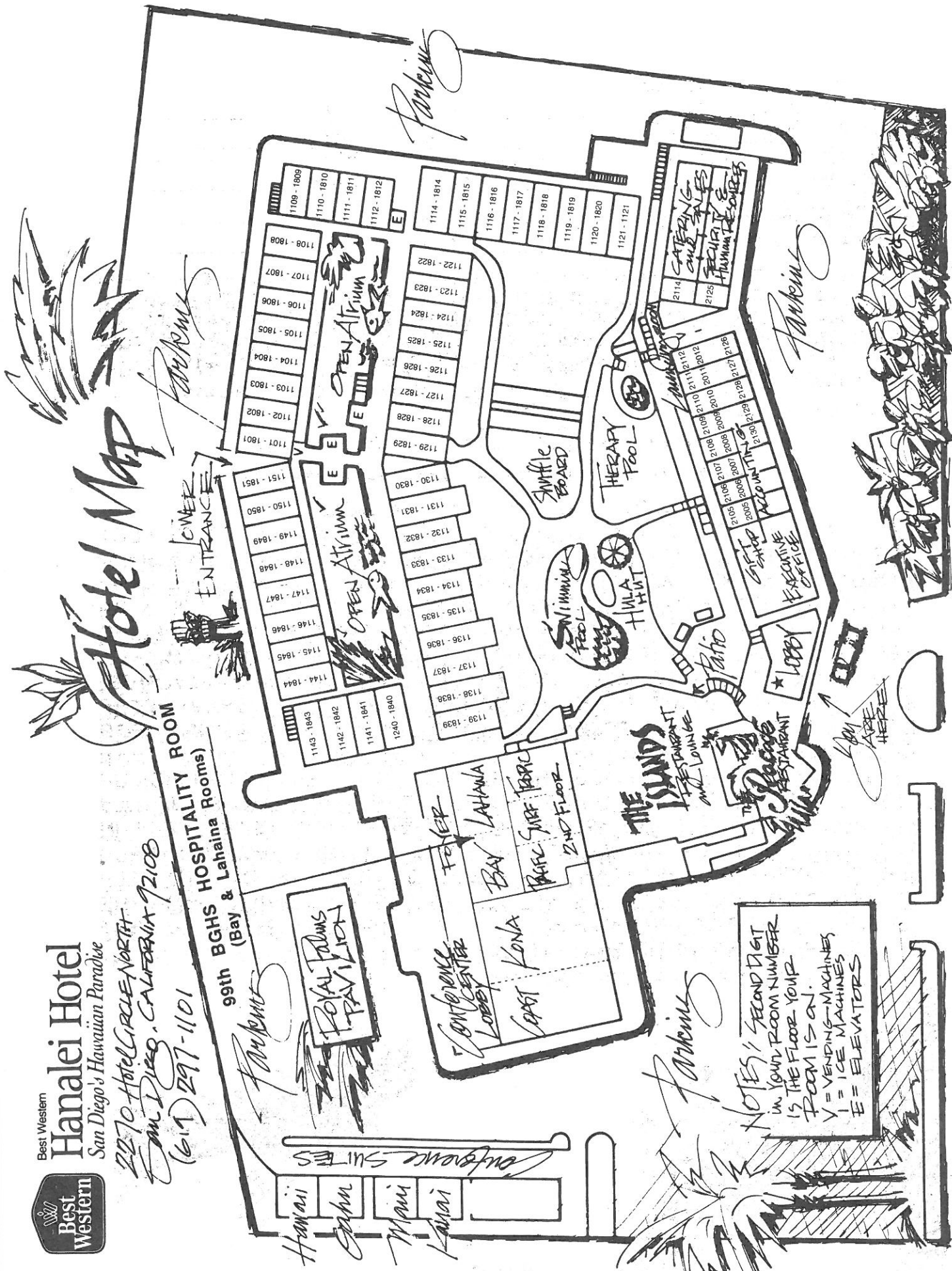




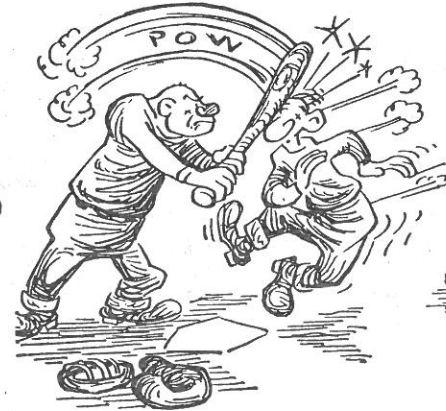


Best Western  
**Hanalei Hotel**  
San Diego's Hawaiian Paradise

2270 HOTEL CIRCLE NORTH  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92108  
(619) 297-1101

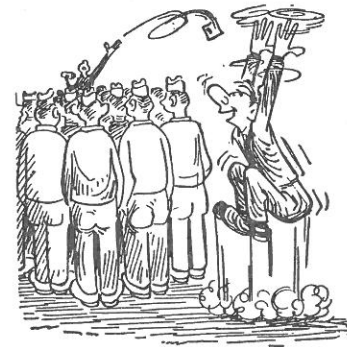


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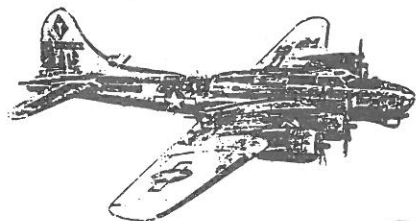
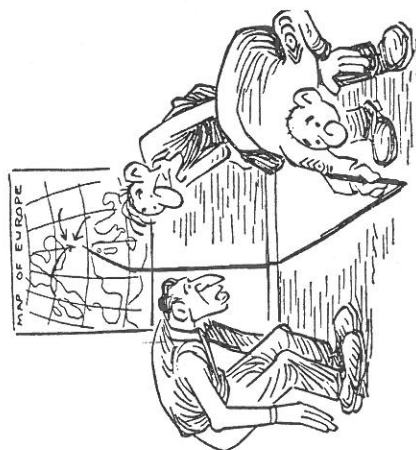
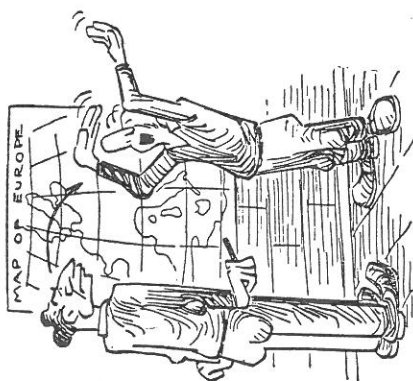
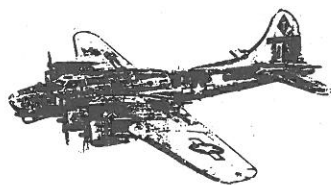
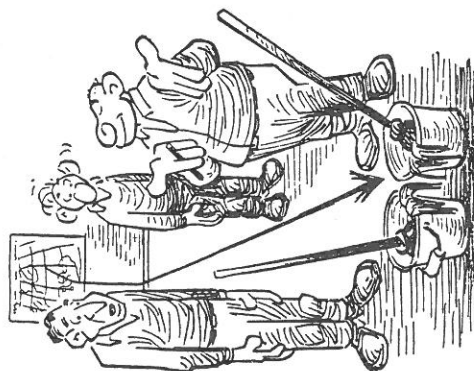
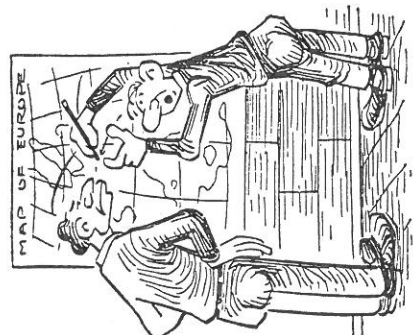
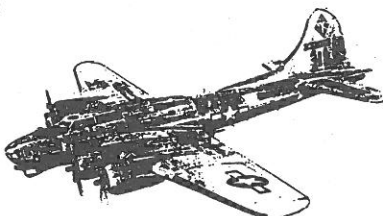
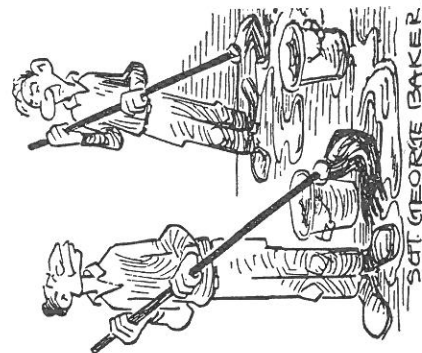
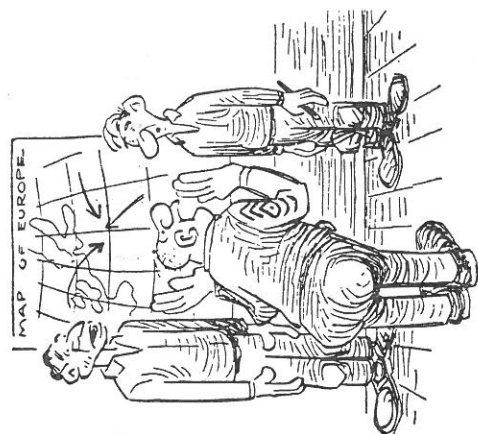
SGT. GEORGE BAKER

V MAIL

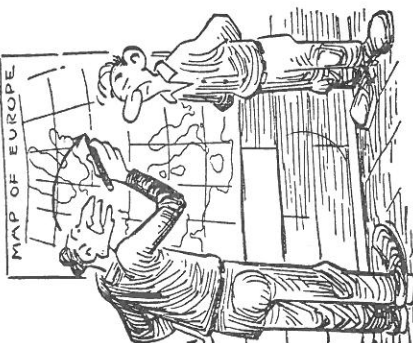


SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# 99TH BOMB GROUP



STRATEGY



DISASTER AT BARI, DEC. 2, 1943 . . . Milton Stout mentioned this incident in his last newsletter. I (Jim Flex) was there.

I had completed my 50th Mission with Harry Burrell on Nov. 27th. I was expecting to go home. I was called into the 12th Bomber Command Headquarters and was interviewed by Gen. Born and Gen. Doolittle. They conned me into becoming the 15th Air Force Navigator. It would become effective on Dec. 1, 1943 in Bari, Italy. I was promised the moon. That I could get a leave for Xmas and a ride to the States for two weeks. That never happened, of course. I was too important to leave for two weeks. . . . HA HA!

On Dec. 2, 1943 at about 7:30 p. m. we began seeing German planes on reconnaissance flights. We went to the roof of the hotel we were staying at about 8 p.m. as all hell broke loose. We could see the bombs going off in the harbor and soon an ammo ship was hit. We could see the explosion and did not have time enough to hit the deck. We were blown over. Three ammo ships were sunk plus about 35 other cargo ships. I found out latter that a mustard gas supply was on one of the destroyed ships. Fortunately the wind and rain were blowing out to sea or we would all have probably been killed.

Gen. Doolittle was working late at 15th A.F. Headquarters about 5 blocks from the docks. He was on the first floor and very lucky. Must have had a charmed life. He lost about 1000 men in this incident. Poor information not passed on to us.

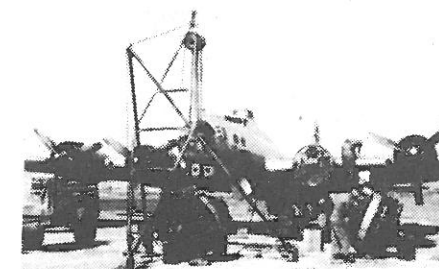
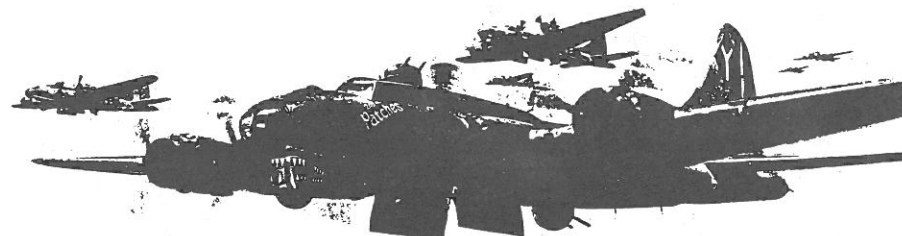
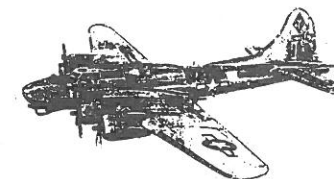
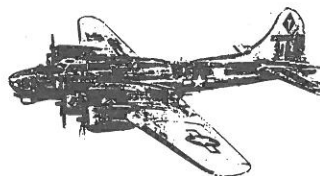
As far as I know I was the only person present from the original 99th B.G. at that party. It was quite an experience!

Another comment. . . Your story and picture did not mention who the navigator was on the Yankee Doodle. It was moi. I joined crew 12 at Boise, Idaho in Sept., 1942 and was with them until July, 1943. I had been hospitalized six weeks and they used other navigators for make up in my place. I once flew a mission with Bud Kaufmann. It is real interesting to be telling you this story. It brought back a lot of good memories. The bad ones I've forgotten . . .

Bernie, I would appreciate it very much if you could include this in a future newsletter. Mary & I will be in San Diego. We will stop off in Las Vegas on the way back. Keep well and may you have a VERY BLESSED day!

Sincerely,

*Jim Flex*  
Sincerely,





NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS

Dear Bernie,

Enclosed you will find my story of one of 30 missions I flew with the 348th Bomb Squadron.

By way of explanation, I'm in retirement but still hold down the job of editor of the community newspaper in which I live here in Mesa, Arizona. I had written about the B-17 in peace and war in two parts. I've sent you part II, the B-17 in war. In the preceding issue I related the story of the restoration of the B-17 "Sentimental Journey". The Arizona Wing of the Confederate Air Force, to which it belongs, made a unique story of its Flying Fortress in its wings for peace.

Perhaps you can use what I've written in your next newsletter. PMT's of the photos used in the article might also be available. Please advise on this.

I think by placing the reader in my shoes as a flight engineer is a novel approach to story telling. I've commanded him to be my ghost rider and to fly a combat mission. I live in a retirement community and these people who get the paper were alive and well then and you can bet they were either in the military or engaged in civilian work promoting the war effort. So the story of the B-17 is relevant and needs to be told whenever possible as often as possible.

The episode I wrote about is from a chapter in my book "My War". The manuscript is finished. It contains much of the more daring exploits of members of the 99th. Whether it gets published or not is another matter.

SHINE

Regards,  
Bill Somers  
Engineer/gunner 348th Sqdn.



SGT. GEORGE BAKER

NEWS, NOTES AND LETTERS

November 30, 1995

Dear Bernie:

A group of us went to the town of Tunis. We went to a good meal. Then we walked around Tunis to pass some time. When we arrived at the base we got some news that our crew was scheduled for R & R on the Isle of Capri, leaving the next day. We packed for the trip and went to bed. We were awoken early in the morning by someone yelling "FIRE. . .FIRE". Our stove was on fire from an overflow of gas. I told Lt. Schweke to shut off the supply. I had a clothes rack built of bomb crates. Before I followed every one outside I grabbed an arm full of clothes off the rack. I went inside for another arm full of clothes. The heat was so intense I couldn't get out the entrance so I tried to push my way out through the tent side with my arms still full of clothes. A gang of fellows coming across the field saw the fire and bulge in the tent side. They pulled on tent ropes and pulled the tent over. Doing so saved my life and everything in the tent.

Thank God for the fellows who pulled over the tent. God bless them for saving my life.

This happened on Sat., Dec. 18, 1943. Maybe some members will remember this fire.

The crew was Lt. Willard Kietzer, Bruce Borman, Fenton Schweke, and myself (Lt. Philip Capobianco (Cappy))

I went to the dispensary to have my arms and face checked. They were a little red but otherwise OK. When I returned I bunked in Lt. Herman Bauer's tent. Returning from Capri I used Lt.(s) Scott and Cardwell's tent.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR to you and all the 99ers.

Yours truly,

Philip Capobianco, Sr.  
262 Hallock Avenue  
Mingo Jct., Ohio 43938

#####

Dear Bernie:

November 7, 1995

I received the enclosed letter from the nephew of our Bombardier NICK LYKOS. Nick was K.I.A. December 26, 1944 over Blechhammer. I am typing his letter since it was hand written.

P.S. I sent Nick information to become an associate member and information from our November issue of the newsletter on our San Diego reunion.

Yours in comradeship,

Victor "Fab" Fabiniak

Victor 'Fab' Fabiniak

Nicholas J. Lykos  
1306 River View Court  
Houston, Texas 77077

November 2, 1995

Dear Victor:

I am a WW II baby and the namesake of my Uncle Nick. Although I never met him, I've always felt a special closeness to him. My son is N.J.L., III.



I appreciate your attempts to locate the family. In the mid 60's I wrote to the Dept. of the Army in an attempt to locate surviving crew members, but to no avail.

I have some memorabilia from my Uncle Nick - - His wings, Gold Bars, Insignias from his uniform and a sewing kit from his cadet days in Navigator/Bombardier School. There are also a few letters from girl friends.

I remember as a child, my Mother relating to a dream she had on 3 successive nights of his plane being shot down. This was just prior to the War Dept. notifying the family of his death.

I would be pleased to be included in your reunion plans. Hopefully you and the other crew members can come to Hruston and visit his grave. . . . Please stay in touch. Sincerely,

Signed NICK

#####

Included below is the preface from a history written by Robert A. Duffy, 99th BG Ordnance Officer from November 1943 thru October 1945. Bob sent me a copy of his efforts in early December '95 with a note calling his WW II experiences 'tame stuff' compared to flight crew life. That may be, but we couldn't have been effective without capable ground crew support. I personally found his story most interesting and I believe others (flight and ground) will find it worthwhile. I have received Bob's permission to offer copies of his 60 page story to any of our members interested. I can furnish non-profit copies bound like out newsletters for \$5 to \$6 each depending on the number made. Interested members can send a post card to: Roy Worthington, 16786 Thomas White Drive, Air Force Village West, CA 92518-2918 and I'll bring your copy to San Diego in May. If you're unable to attend the reunion and are interested in a copy send me \$7 ( includes postage) for a mailed copy.

It is interesting to note, I believe, that Bob served 32 years in the Army Air Corps and Air Force and retired as a Brigadier General.

**BRUTA FOGGIA**  
**99TH BOMB GROUP**  
**1943 - 1945**  
**PREFACE**  
**August 1995**

As in my Memoir of the year September '42 to November '43 with the 92nd Fighter Squadron, this discourse on the period November '43 through October '45, covering my time in the 99th Bombardment Group, has been largely based on my memory. These events occurred more than fifty years ago, and I have no personal record covering the period because we were forbidden to keep diaries. Most of my chronology comes from the notes published by the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society and from a few letters which were saved by my parents, now deceased. The reminiscences come from the flyers who had the adventures and suffered the risks, wounds and great discomforts attendant to the air operations with which we were associated. This history is meant to memorialize the support work devoted to keeping the Group ready for the combat missions flown. It is also meant to leave my children with a record of that period of my life. Since my memory is imperfect, apologies should be made if this is not as precise as a historian would have it. Also, like most of us, I am apt to remember in a favorable light my own activities, and the vertical "I" may be more pronounced in the telling.

Robert A. Duffy

IN OUR LAST NEWSLETTER JOSEPH SHOLTIS PROMISED US A STORY -HERE IT IS AS IT WAS PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF "FLYING MODELS" OF 1973

## The Story of "Second Patches" by Walter Moody

When Walter Moody saw photos of Tom Cook's R/C model of a B17G in Flying Models, he was surprised to see it carried the name and details of the plane he flew.

Seeing the first photos of Tom Cook's very fine rendition of "2nd Patches," my memory went back to the spring of 1944; to an early morning when I—and the best B17 crew ever put together—assumed command of a B17G, Army serial number 238201. She was a spanking new aircraft, having arrived the previous evening. The replacement crew which had ferried it out from the U.S. without doubt had petted it and babied it all the way to Italy, expecting that it was their airplane and that no one else could have it. We had done the same thing earlier when we had flown a new one from the States. I must add, the one we flew over was shot down on its first mission. We were quite happy not to have been flying it.

Our first mission in 201 was a railroad repair depot at Vicenza in North Italy, the beginning of a long and close partnership. We were positioned at right wing of the third element of the 346th Squadron of the 99th "High Altitude Bombing Club," out of Tortorella, Italy.

All I remember of the mission is that we missed the target, and the aircraft later to be named "2nd Patches" returned to base somewhat resembling a sieve and establishing, it seemed, a pattern. Thereafter, if there was any scrap iron in the vicinity, either we ran into it or it ran into us. The reason for "2nd" was that one of the Squadron's original 17F's carried the name "Patches" until it was retired.

Came the day when by unanimous decision the name "2nd Patches" was bestowed upon 201. We were assigned lead of the 346th, positioned on the right of the Group Lead, first wave. Our IP (Initial Point) was Soproni, twenty minutes from the drop zone. Our target was an aircraft factory at Weiner Neustadt. Now a twenty minute bomb run is out of this world, unheard of. The entire group must maintain a nice, even, straight and level course from the IP to the drop. The opposing team had more than ample time to figure out what our plans were, and they expressed their disapproval with enthusiasm.

When an 88mm shell breaks closely underneath the '17, the sound resembles that made by a flat board slapped against a flat tin roof with an echo chamber attached—especially when the bomb bay doors are open. It is clearly heard despite cotton wads in the ears, headphones over the ears and the whole cake covered up by a steel helmet pulled as low as possible and surrounded by the growl of four big engines grinding out horsepower. Further, when the shell breaks in front of the aircraft, if it is close you can see the red flash—even in the daytime—and you can see little black hornets headed your way. We were always assured that as long as you could see the

break or hear it you could forget about that one. The assurance didn't do a thing toward helping digestion.

Our first damage of the day occurred when a burst cut the aileron cables. We didn't consider this very serious—the '17 was very responsive to rudder. We didn't know that the best was yet to come. That bomb run came to an end, as all good things must. After what must have been at least a year, the little amber light next to the PDI blinked six times in rapid succession. The aircraft became lighter and more responsive as three tons of eggs were laid. Frank Spindler, our bombardier shouted "Bombs away," over the intercom, "bay doors closing, let's get the hell outta here!" You can bet that every guy in the plane had the same idea. We eased into a shallow diving left turn off the target and gradually the flak faded.

Out ahead I spotted two Me109's diving in formation at the lead squadron and about the same time our chin turret started blasting followed immediately by the upper local. I never did see what they were shooting at—I felt it though! 201 commenced shuddering and buffeting and the rudder pedals started pounding my feet. Looking cross cockpit at the right outboard wing, I could see tin can blossoms in the wing skin commencing at the leading edge and stitching a pattern all the way to the trailing edge. I thought to myself, "20mm cannon, this might be a tedious day."

Our engineer, looking back through the upper local, reported our second element lead in trouble; number two engine shot out of its mounts, number four feathered and, of course, unable to keep up with the group. We got through to Group Lead with the news and he dropped enough knots to allow our crippled birds to stay with us. Having left the opposition behind us to the point where we could relax enough to assess the situation, I asked the engineer to back out of his turret and let me have a look around. I saw at once why 201 had become such a lousy flying machine. We had taken 20mm shells in the leading edge of the vertical fin and they had blown a hole big enough to park a jeep inside.

As we approached and set up for a landing, we discovered that we had some more fun coming. The visible wounds were not enough, lowering the gear we could see the left main tire resembling a limp rag, and the flaps wouldn't work. Anyway, we got our sick bird on the ground and at the roll-out ran her off the side of the strip.

Later, after the lady had a new wheel and shoe, she was towed to our hard stand. The crew chief counted over 1100 holes, in-

cluding a machine gun slug imbedded in a blade of number two prop. Considering all the scrap iron that went through 201 that day, we thought it was a minor miracle that not one scratch was suffered by anyone in the crew.

The 99th B.G. received a Presidential Citation, and my second element lead and I were both awarded DFC's for our part. While I remained in the ETO, we never had to go back to that target.

While 201 was recuperating from her heating, she had her name painted on each side of the nose and a shark mouth sketched over her chin turret. She had her outer right wing panel, flaps, rear entry door, rudder and fin changed. These were all left in natural aluminum since, at that stage of the war, it had become evident that the olive drab coloring didn't help in concealment. All it did for us was accumulate dirt and add drag and weight—none of which we needed very much.

2nd Patches was the fifth aircraft on the ground at Poltava in the Ukraine on June 2, 1944. This was the first leg of the first

shuttle mission—taking off from Tortorella, dropping on a railroad repair installation at Debreczen, Hungary, and continuing, east to Poltava. I remember that when we were ready to return to Tortorella, much rain had fallen at Poltava and the parking areas were a little soft. We had been furnished huge pieces of yellow pine logs cut into quarters—as one would cut them up for a fireplace—to use as chocks. The aircraft had been run up the day before, pushing those wood chocks into the ground. Fuel and ordinance had been added. There just wasn't any way we were going to remove those chunks of firewood from in front of the wheels. No tugs were available to tow us back off them, and I don't believe there was enough manpower at that base to push our overgrossed aircraft back either. Our group was already taxiing and since none of us spoke any Russian, we didn't want to be left behind. I opened the throttles full and as the manifold pressure reached 47 inches HG, we dropped full flap. Patches went up and over those chunks of wood like a startled cat.

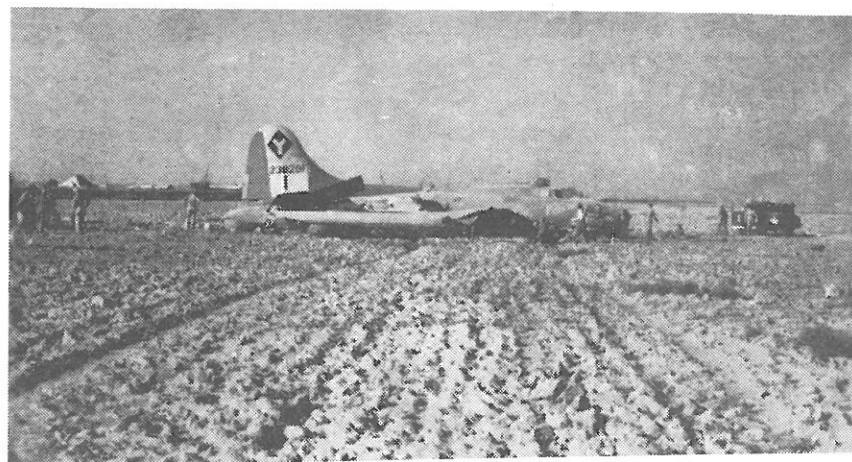
Upon our return to Tortorella, the crew and I said farewell to 2nd Patches. It continued to fly with another crew while we took command of a new '17G which was a bit different. In place of the ball turret, it had a radar dome. From then until I left the ETO, we flew 733 as a Deputy Group Lead or as a Group Lead. 2nd Patches was always along further back in the Group. Back while we still had her, however, on at



least one occasion 2nd Patches lead the entire 15th Air Force over the target.

She protected her crew well. While four or five Purple Hearts were awarded to various members of the crew, only one member was seriously hurt.

Referring to Tom Cook's story of Flying Models, January 1973, describing how the model will float on landing; I can testify that the full sized one, if flared a trifle fast, would float in ground effect to the point that out of sheer disgust or fear of running out of road, one would push the nose down in an attempt to glue it onto the runway. This usually resulted in a series of rabbit hops—the kind of landing which brings a sarcastic request from the tower wishing to know which one of those miserable efforts you wanted logged as a landing. We always wanted to, and tried to three point the machine. Once in a while I'd have a little luck, my plans would work out and I would get it down on all three at once—though usually it worked out one wheel at a time.



PATCHES II  
'Final Resting Place'

### MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

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**B-17 FLYING FORTRESS ASSOCIATION** is an organization publishing a quarterly, 8 page newsletter titled "Splendor in the Skies". Headed by retired USAF Major Don R. Hayes of 1640 Cambridge Drive, Walla Walla, WA 99362, the Association asks \$10.00 for annual dues.

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December 26, 1995

Walter H. Butler, Treasurer  
99th BG Historical Society  
8608 Bellehaven Place  
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Dear Mr. Butler:

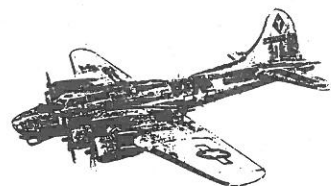
I'm writing to inform you of the death of my husband on November 12, 1995. He was Alvin J. Dupre, a Staff Sergeant who served with the 348th unit of the 99th BG. He was an Armorer/Gunner on B-17's and was stationed in Foggia, Italy during his overseas duty.

He treasured his copies of the Historical Society Newsletters and has kept every copy since he first enrolled. Unfortunately he was too sick to read the last copy he received.

Sincerely,

*Jeannette Dupre*

Jeannette Dupre  
P. O. Box 121  
Thibodaux, LA. 70302



## BEHIND THE MEN WHO FLY.....

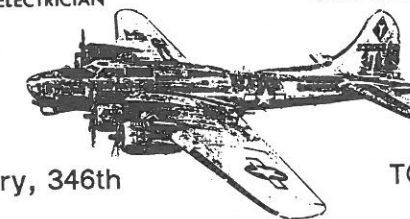


ORDNANCE REPAIRMAN

ELECTRICIAN

SHEET METAL WORKER

BOMBSIGHT SPECIALIST



Sheet No. 63

War Diary, 346th

TORTORELLA, FOGGIA, ITALY

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

Prepared by W.H. Johnson, Capt. A.C. Intell OFF.

DAY

EVENTS

- 1 Today was a scheduled operational day but due to weather it was called off after briefing. The rest of the day we experienced our first windy and dusty day in Italy. It was a reminder of the days gone by when we were in Africa and the dust was in our food, eyes, and an experience we did not want to have again. A new man came into the squadron and the name is Pvt Frances F. Brace. He has not been assigned to any department as yet. A very fortunate individual is by name Lt A. Di Pasquale who left this morning for the good old United States. He has been called back to do a bit of instructing. Our new asst S-2 is 1st Lt D.W. Woodard who has been assigned and is taking over in great shape.
- 2 A rough mission today with the target, Steyr Ball Bearing Factory, Austria. Our squadron came out without a loss and the score stands three claimed and no losses for our squadron. Three men finished fifty missions today, they are as follows; T/Sgt Harvey, S/Sgt Carr, and S/Sgt Lucca. The meals continue to be good and we all hope that the fresh meat continues to come in. There just isn't anything better for morale than good food.
- 3 They continued to smack the Hun again today and again it was an A/C factory located in Budapest, Hungary. It was a long mission and the men were tired and hungry upon returning. Three more men finished today; they are Lt Kline, S/Sgt Delicata, and S/Sgt Cobb. Lt Hopkins was the only casualty and suffered a slight wound in the right thigh, caused by flak. As a diversion from the routine army life, a large number of men attended the show over at the group theater, "Dr. Gillespie's New Assistant."
- 4 Operational today with the fortunes of war turning on the [sic] our squadron. Lt Theodore (NMI) Janicki was killed when his ship crashed on take off. Lt Janicki was bombardier on ship number 047 and while taking off the right landing gear collapsed. The ship swerved to the left and crashed into ship number 115 which was taxiing to take off. Two more men finished their fifty missions today, they are: Lt Calhoun and S/Sgt Johnson. The weather continues to be nice and that means plenty of flying.



5 Again fate hit our squadron. On today's mission to Ploesti Oil Fields at Rumania our squadron lost ship number 207 and its crew. They are as follows: 2nd Lts Julia E. Currie-Pilot, John E. Botkins-Co-Pilot, Giles, William E.-Navigator, Arthur T. Hall-Bombardier, S/Sgts Robert D. Phillips-Engineer, Darlin G. Brewer-Radio Operator, John L. McTiernan-Waist Gunner, a Sgt, Edward E. Flaherty-Waist Gunner, a Sgt, and Sgts Martin (NMI) Vauman[?]-Ball Turret, Charles L. Snyder-Tail Gunner, and Cpl Frankelstein-Photo man, not attached to our squadron. Thirty-three promotions came through or the enlisted men, most of them being combat promotions. In the way of entertainment the group had a double header. In the afternoon the USO showed up with a trio of entertainers and those who went were well pleased with the show and the women. On the screen over at the group theater we had \_\_\_\_\_, with Wallace Beary.

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

Sheet No. 64

DAY

EVENTS

6 After four days of long and dangerous raids the combat men enjoyed a day of rest. When they scheduled the day as non-op they must have known it was going to be a warm, beautiful spring day. Everyone either left the camp or slept all day. It was just a natural non-op day with a sleepy atmosphere. The squadron expanded today with the following men coming into the squadron. Pilots and 2nd Lts Alvah M. Bowman, 0-686216, Harry W. Martin 0-812528, Richard C. Morrisey, Jr. 0-804390, Richard C. Hanna 0-681074, Frederick T. Livermore 0-690124; Navigators and 2nd Lts Roland H. Speith 0-811781, George (NMI) Saleebey [?] 0-811754, and F/O Harold J. Lareson T-122778, also a navigator.

7 It was operational again today and the weather held good. The squadron was pleasantly surprised today with the return of the men who were missing in action on the Piraeus, Greece raid. \_\_\_\_\_ ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_ told us that Sgt Sherris is down in Bari recovering from a skin ailment. They came back to the squadron to see us and are taking life easy waiting for their orders home. As a result of today's mission, the squadron lost a gunner, \_\_\_\_\_ Beese, who was killed instantly while on the raid over Treviso, Italy. Several other gunners were injured but not seriously. S/Sgt Richard O. May was injured in the left hand and T/Sgt Fred E. Nichols suffered a minor scratch \_\_\_\_\_ THE REST ILLEGIBLE \_\_\_\_\_.

8 A scheduled operational day but due to weather the group was recalled at about eleven o'clock. The attached group flew a practice mission and are now ready for combat flying. As they came in over the field to land after flying for several hours, they drew comments from our veteran flyers on the tight formation they were flying. We had plenty of entertainment today with a USO show this afternoon and a show at group this evening, "Jack London" was billed and showed.

9 Easter Sunday without the home trimmings. A scheduled operational day with the mission being called off at briefing. The GIs made a special effort to attend church and a good turnout was made. The men did not have new Easter clothes or shiny new automobiles to ride in, but the ODs were clean and pressed for the occasion. The spirit is still there and even in war-torn Foggia with warbirds circling over head, the spirit was aroma's and heads were bowed in prayer. "May next year bring peace." Five new men were assigned to the squadron, they are: S/Sgt Breau, Kenneth G. 31074317; Sgt William G. Kogan 11055338; Sgt Harold C. Martz 36415893; Dale M. Phillips 3-5563346; Pvt Vernon F. Akin 19145019.

10 A non-op day and everyone carried the Easter over into Monday. In way of entertainment, the show "Battle of Britain" was cast upon the group movie house screen.

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

Sheet No. 65

DAY

EVENTS

11 An operational day with the mission being called off at briefing. At one o'clock nine ships took a practice mission and flew for several hours. The weather around camp held to a typical spring day. Not much to report, just another day.

12 Operational day with the mission completed. The squadron lost another ship and crew due to flak. Number one engine caught fire burning the left wing. Five chutes were seen. The men lost were: 1st Lt Adam J. Hrostowsky, 0-795056; 2nd Lt Edward T. Callmeyer Jr., 0-759351; 2nd Lt Joseph P. Lawinski, 0-581309; 2nd Lt Stanley (NMI) Perlman, 0-809285; T/Sgt Dominic G. Coline, 35515493; T/Sgt William E. Robison, Jr., 13031256; S/Sgt Jesse (NMI) Cabrera, 18106391; S/Sgt Raymond A. Flint, 35394656; S/Sgt Robert J. Ceraghty, 32625716; S/Sgt Jack A. Reynolds, 39276253; T/Sgt Howard B. Thompson, 6381977. Three more men finished their fifty today and are waiting for their orders: T/Sgt Bauman, T/Sgt Sikkenga, S/Sgt May. In the way of entertainment, the show "Jane Eyre" was shown at group.

13 An operational day with good results in bombing and no loss to the squadron. It has been just another day and the same routine of army lie in Italy. Technical Sergeant Nickols finished his fifty today and joins those now waiting to go home.

14 A non-op day with a little variety. A practice mission was flown this afternoon with the stress on formation flying. Three squadron officers were presented awards at group for outstanding work. They are, DFCs to Lt Gregoire, Lt Zuckerman and an OLC to Lt Kline's previously awarded DFC.

15 Now after near five months at our base here in Foggia, one looking over the squadron area sees a great deal of accomplishment done through the efforts of its personnel. The officers and enlisted men have very fine mess halls and clubs. The area is clean and kept very tidy. It all adds up to the fact that the morale is high and the men have a great deal of pride.

16 An operational day, the target being Belgrade, Rogozarkski. The bombing was very poor due to the disorganized bomb run. or the first time in the history of the group, a lead ship was lost. While on the bomb run and a minute before bombs away, the lead ship was hit by flak. About a fourth of the left wing was knocked off and the ship started down, then another portion of the wing fell off and the plane went into a spin. The men lost are: Lt Col William J. Headrick, 0-396476 (Group Deputy Commander); 1st Lt Clarence L. Korth, 0-436232, Navigator; 1st Lt Charles A. Neri, 0-673872, Bombardier; 2nd Lt Merlyn M. Corley, 0-804304, Co-Pilot; T/Sgt Robert W. Hildebrandt, 16071653; S/Sgt Francis G. Cresser, 31162404; S/Sgt Edward O. Ergle, 34478232; Marshall I. Koehler, Sgt, 6566376; Sgt John L. Scott, 31131571; S/Sgt Charles E. Swanson, 16087581. Lt Korth, Lt Neri, Lt Corley were squadron navigator, squadron bombardier, and squadron assistant operations officer, respectively.

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

Sheet No. 66

DAY

EVENTS

17 Operational today with the target again, Belgrade, Rogozarkski. Yesterdays results were so poor and undamaging that the high ups said it must be hit again. The men were not to \_\_\_\_\_ about the mission and as a result another man was hit, Lt Borenstein. He received flak wounds in his thigh. Lt Borenstein however, along with Lt Duncan finished their 50 missions. Speaking of the "50 mission," Lt Kirby left for Bari today to hasten the orders for the men who are waiting to go home.



- 18 A scheduled operational day, but due to weather the mission was canceled. A practice mission was then scheduled and the men got as far as the planes when it was called off. The squadron had a shake up of personnel when two men went out and seven men came in. Those transferred out were: Cpl H.S. Lancellotti and C.L. Wixson and Pfc. Incoming combat men are S/Sgt R.N. Romesburg, 39167991; Sgt C.E. Mayyenley, 3723370; Sgt W.D. Kuykendall, 18182374; Sgt C.J. McGinnis, 31254397; Sgt F.J. Demers, 39039975; S/Sgt L.I. Dorr Jr., 34475446; S/Sgt L.J. Kwiatkowski, 32574204.
- 19 Non-op today with the mission being called off. A formation was called for the enlisted men, dealing with caution against malaria and proper dress while on pass. A new crew came into the squadron and are: 2nd Lt Gerald B. Elliott, 0-86529, Pilot; 2nd Lt Malcolm (NMI) Marquith, 0-462279, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt William H. Jolley, Jr., 0-698721, Navigator; 2nd Lt Herbert J. Clanton, 0-743358, Bombardier; S/Sgt Robert E. Latten, 33433375; S/Sgt Robert L. Montague, 34604201; Sgt Maurice R. French, 11083607; Sgt Harold D. Fulton, 37521338; Sgt Berry D. Hendedson, 3476755; Sgt Edward F. Martin, 32590096.
- 20 An operational day with the target Vincenza, Italy. Due to weather the primary target was covered over and a large transport in the harbor of Venice unfortunately escaped the downfall of bombs from the entire group. Our CO is now Major Schroeder after receiving a promotion. He has been our leader now for several months and has proven to be a worthy leader. The squadron congratulates him and hopes to see him through his 50 missions. The malaria campaign is now on in the squadron, after lectures and attending training films on the prevention of malaria it is the duty of each man within the squadron to do all he possibly can to keep from getting the sickness. A new crew came into the squadron and are as follows: 2nd Lts Horace G. Erdoesy, 0-1548402, Pilot; Edgar E. Causey, 0-819024, Co-Pilot; Harris A. Warmer, 0-805224, Nav.; Metrah W. Williams, 0-749630, Bomb.; Charles (NMI) Margo, 13025735, S/Sgt; S/Sgt Paul E. Ray, 35724443; Sgt Caroll B. Cully, 31327676; Virgil (NMI) Deardorff, 37522097, Sgt; Sgt Alfred C. Deering, 20724249; and Victor (NMI) Hernandez, 38866737.

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

Sheet No. 67

- | DAY | EVENTS   |
|-----|--|
| 21  | Another false alarm today, with the planes starting out for the Ploesti Marshaling Yards and due to weather they were recalled. Twenty "50 mission men," left for Naples today and are now out of the squadron and assigned to the FBY base where they will await their orders to go back to the States. Another inspection was held today and everyone who does not have their Mosquito bars up were warned and must have them up soon.                           |
| 22  | The squadron is back to its normal size after the attached 815th squadron packed and pulled out this afternoon. There were 66 officers and 142 EMs. The day was a scheduled non-op, but the combat men were down on the line this morning cleaning their guns and ships. The afternoon was spent playing ball on the squadron diamond and a number of men went to town.  |
| 23  | Another operational day with the mission being completed and the target, Weiner Neustadt A/C factory hit with good results. Today marked the first time our new squadron bombardier, Lt Collins flew in the lead ship. He was given a great deal of responsibility since the 99th lead the wing. The big attraction on the ball field this evening was a game between the cooks and squadron clerks. The game wound up with the cooks on top by a score of 5 to 4. |

- 24 An operational day and the old target, Ploesti, was hit again. The results were good and the squadron hung up its 181s mission. It will not be long before we will hit the two hundred mark and another celebration. Another crew left for England today and are as follows: 2nd Lt Walter K. Higgins; 2nd Lt Herbert W. Burns, Jr., 0-755276; Orlan D. Carmichael, 2nd Lt, 0-683114; 2nd Lt James A. Beck, 0-753126; T/Sgt John JS. Baird, 15330438; T/Sgt Eddie (NMI) Delgado, 39266153; Robert R. Blair, S/Sgt, 15338283; S/Sgt Franklin R. Collister, 12208378; Sgt Robert H. Thomson, Jr., 13042031; and Sgt Joyce N. Worley, 39555522. The weather is closing in this evening and perhaps it will not be op tomorrow.
- 25 Another attempted mission today. Due to weather they were called back while several hours out. The squadron got all hepped up over a squadron Bingo game to be put on by the Red Cross women. The trouble why we didn't have it is good. "No Women." Other squadron functions were a rifle inspection and a sex lecture.
- 26 A scheduled operational day, but due to weather it was called off at briefing. The sky was completely covered over all day and it rained steadily all day. Seven officers and six enlisted men left for the Isle of Capri. It is believed they are the last men to be sent to Capri. The 15th AF is building a rest camp at Bari and as soon as it is completed the men will go there. There was a show at group this evening, Margo in "Behind the Rising Sun."

Sheet No. 68

MONTH OF APRIL, 1944

- | DAY | EVENTS  |
|-----|---|
| 27  | A scheduled non-op day due to weather. Eight men who have finished their fifty missions let today. According to the new Air Force ruling, they are placed on DS from the squadron and sent home for a month's furlough. Upon completion of the furlough, they are to report back to the squadron for another tour. The men who left are: 1st Lts F.P. Hopkins, 0-805281; M.C. Duncan, 0-749428; T/Sgts F.E. Nichols, 37215498; N.A. Sikkenga, 36402424; S/Sgts R.O. Knight, 3839788; F.R. Bass, 14045506; C.C. Bauman, 15084208; and R.C. Vaughn, 15114650. The squadron had a treat in the way of entertainment this evening. The Red Cross brought an Italian troupe to the enlisted men's mess hall where they gave a very fine show. To top the evening off in fine style, the Red Cross women brought donuts and served them with coffee after the show. There was very little activity around camp today due to rain which came down all day. |
| 28  | An operational day. The target was steel factories at Piombino, Italy. The results are believed to have been good, but due to a heavy smoke screen visual observations were impossible. Another 50 mission man left the squadron today and is on the way home. He is S/Sgt Richard O. May. Sgt May came to Africa with the ground crew from the States a year ago. He was a medical man in the squadron and after several months over seas he went on combat.   |
| 29  | Another successful operational day. Sgt Gil J. Miret 12041231 was transferred out of the squadron today and had orders to report [to] 5th wing. There was a show at group this evening, "Moonlight In Vermont."   |
| 30  | An operational day with the target Varese Aircraft Factory, Italy. The results were very good and the men say even better than the Weiner Neustadt results. Two very fortunate men left the squadron today and are to report to the Lincoln AAB the first week in June. The two M/Sgts are Jansen R. Davenport, 20423388 and John R. Showalter, 7022654. They will be assigned to a B-29 outfit and will train the new personnel. Sgt Davenport was department head of the squadron communications and Sgt Showalter a crew chief in our engineering department.  |



#### BATTLES OF 346th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)

2-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 047, 055, 054, 210, 068, 028, 115, 201, 065, 021 took off at 0725 with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the A/C factory at Steyr, Austria. Results were very poor due to weather at the target. Some 50 E/A--Me 109s, Me 110s, Me 210s and FW190s attacked the Group and three claims--by Lt Booth, S/Sgt Foulke claiming Dest. Me 110s and Sgt Benson claims one probable dest. Me 110. The attacks were not very aggressive on the squadron and as a result no losses were sustained. Flak was heavy but inaccurate and all ships returned about 1450.

3-4-33. Eleven of our A/C, #s 584, 210, 055, 201, 064, 021, 115, 068, 028, 065, and 032 took off with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the Messerschmidt A/C factory at Budapest, Hungary. Take off was at 0630 and ship no. 032 returned early due to oxygen trouble. Results were very good with the area northwest in the target area covered well. Flak was heavy, moderate but inaccurate as to altitude. Lt Hopkins received a slight wound in the right thigh, this being the only mishap. All returned safely at about 1315.

4-4-44. Eleven of our ships were scheduled to take off, but due to a crash accident, ship numbers 047 and 115 did not take off. Those that were remaining took off at 1025; ships being nos. 201, 055, 065, 028, 210, 570, 064, 021, 068. The target was Bucharest, Rumania, M/Y. There was an estimated 40 fighters, Fw 190s, Me 109s, and Ju88s. Flak was heavy, moderate but inaccurate. All ships returned safely around 1816. Results on the bombing were very good with many explosions and fires started.

5-4-44. Ten of our A/C, nos. 021, 023, 032, 055, 064, 065, 207, 210, 570, 584, took off with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the oil fields at Ploesti, Rumania. Results appeared to be very good but exact observation was impossible due to smoke over the target area. There was an estimated ten fighters, those being FW 190s and Me 109s along with one Ju 88. They were not aggressive and no damage was done. flak, however, was very heavy and accurate. One ship, no. 207, is missing and the cause is flak. The rest of the ships returned safely. Take off was at 1105 and landing time was 1839.

7-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 068, 064, 210, 021, 028, 055, 032, 570, 201, and 014 took off at 1004 with a bomb load of 5x500 to bomb the marshaling yards at Treviso, Italy. Results were fair to good with a good concentration of bombs falling in the yards. Flak was very accurate and one man was killed as a result. Gordon B. Beese 36809366, Sgt, and waist gunner in ship no. 014. S/Sgt Richard O. May 45313698 received a minor wound in left forearm, T/Sgt Fred E. Nichols 37215498 suffered a slight scratch in the back of his neck. There were no fighters seen and all the ships returned to the base. Landed at 1517.

12-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 068, 021, 028, 201, 987, 210, 648, 055, 032, and 570 [?] took off at 0830 with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the A/C factory at Fischamend Markt, Austria. Results were very good and the assigned target was well hit. all ships except 021 dropped their bombs, this ship returned early. There were no fighters but flak was very accurate and ship 210 was lost due to flak. Five chutes were observed. Landing time was 1456.

13-4-44. nine of our B-17Gs took off at 0835 to bomb the Gyor A/C factory at Gyor, Hungary. The a/c are 065, 055, 028, 032, 021, 201, 570, 995, 041. Ship number 570 returned early. The target was well hit with 500 lb bombs. Flak was slight with no damage to our ships. As for fighters, about 8 were observed without any encounters.

15-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 065, 021, 028, 055, 069, 209, 032, 570, 201, 648 took off at 0824 with a bomb load of 500 pounders to bomb Ploesti M/Y. The target was covered over with an undercast and observation of the results was impossible. Flak was heavy but inaccurate and about five fighters were observed with the attacks. Two ships, 648 and 032 returned early, with the remaining ships landing safely at 12625.

16-4-44. Nine of our B-17Gs took off at 0730 with 12x500 to bomb Brasvo, Rumania but due to weather the last resort target, Belgrade, Rogozarski was hit with very poor results. Flak was very heavy and accurate, hitting ship 065 which was lost over the target. The ships taking off were 065, 021, 028, 055, 570, 032, 991, 201, and 995. There were no fighters and landing time was 1417.

18-4-44. eight of our B-17Gs, 032, 570, 097, 201, 055, 028, 021, and 068 took off at 0915 with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the A/D at Belgrade rogozarski. The bombing was again very poor due to an overcast. Flak was heavy and accurate. No enemy fighters were seen. Ship 068 returned early and the rest landed safely at 1500.

20-4-44. Nine of our B-17Gs took off at 0900 with 12x500 to bomb Vincenza M/Y, Italy. Due to closed-in weather the primary target was not hit. The target for the group was a single stack cargo or troop ship in the harbor at Venice. There were no direct hits with several near misses. Flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate. All planes landed safely at 1530. Ships off were, 088, 991, 033, 064, 028, 021, 032, 570, 055.

23-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 650, 028, 021, 032, 570, 055, 068, 201, 097, and 064 took off at 1048 with 12x500 to bomb the A/C factory at Weimer Neustadt, Austria. The bombing was excellent and the primary target along with adjacent buildings, were well covered with good patterns of bombs. The group lead the wing. Flak was heavy, intense and very accurate. Three ships were made unserviceable due to flak damage. All ships returned safely at 1427.

24-4-44. Six of our B-17Gs, 021, 028, 032, 064, 201, and 570 took off at 0736 to bomb Ploesti M/Y with 12x500. The results were good with good patterns of bombs falling across the tracks. There were 25 to 30 E/A observed, but only several attacks were made. Flak was heavy, accurate and intense. Ship no. 201 returned early due to engine trouble. They did however on the way back drop their bombs on the M/Y at Dragasani, Rumania. Several tracks and a bridge were believed to have been hit but no photo's were taken. The other ships returned safely at 1524.

28-4-44. Nine of our B-17Gs, 066, 028, 021, 032, 570, 068, 201, 054, and 435 took off at 1135 to bomb Piombino Steel Factory, Italy. The bomb load was 12x500. The target was covered over with a smoke screen and it made observation impossible. The target was believed to have been hit however. There were about 15 fighters and they made several attacks. One claim made. The flak was heavy, moderate but inaccurate. All ships returned safely at 1650.

29-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs took off at 0738 with 12x500 bombs to bomb Toulon Harbor. The ships are, 201, 064, 570, 055, 068, 987, 032, 995, 436, and 021. The results are uncertain due to visual obstruction. The target was covered over with a smoke screen, however it is believed the bombs hit a little short but most of them are believed to have hit in the target area. There were no fighters but flak was heavy and accurate.

30-4-44. Ten of our B-17Gs, 650, 550, 201, 032, 068, 064, 055, 028, 436, and 021 took off at 0815 with a bomb load of 12x500 to bomb the A/c factory at Varese, Italy. The results were very good and the target received a heavy concentration of bombs. All factory buildings are destroyed or severely damaged. There were from 30 to 40 fighters that attacked the group. There were no losses in the squadron. There also was no flak at the target. All ships returned safely at 1500.



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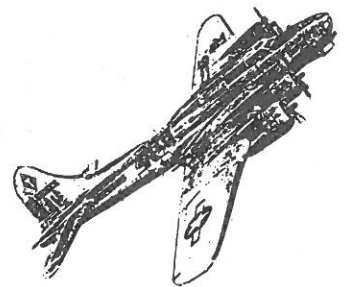
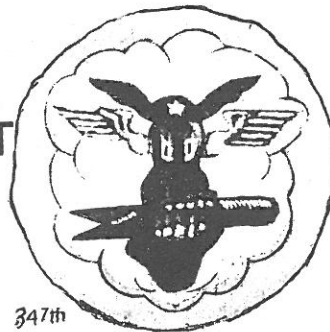


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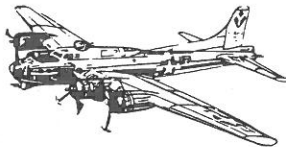
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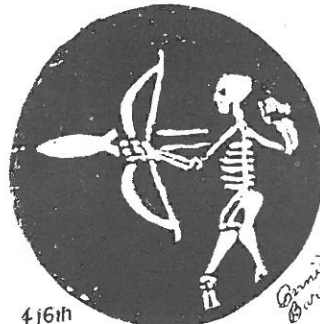
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