



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Newsletter

Vol. 5, No.1

Jan. 1, 1985

SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT, Bernice Barr
TREASURER, Walter Butler
CHAPLAIN, Harvey Jennings

VICE-PRESIDENT, Lew Boatwright
HISTORIAN, George F. Coen
NEWSLETTER EDITOR, George F. Coen

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I HAVE GREAT NEWS..DELTA AIRLINES WILL OFFER A SPECIAL GROUP DISCOUNT AIRFARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC WHEN YOU ATTEND THE 99th BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY REUNION IN SEATTLE, WA. JULY 25-28, 1985.

Delta's special fare, NCF30, will afford a 30% discount off Delta's round trip, undiscounted day coach fares for attendees traveling on Delta to the meeting in SEATTLE. Departures to Seattle, WA must be between July 19-27, 1985.

Maximum stay of 15 days. Reservations must be made and tickets purchased at least seven days before departure. CALL TOLL FREE-1-800-241-6760...call 8:30AM-8:00PM Eastern Time. Calls may be made in continental US and Puerto Rico. GIVE THE 99th Bomb Gp account number-E0095. If you use your credit card to pay the fare your tickets will be mailed to you. You may use your travel agent but be sure they place your reservations through the toll free number and use the 99th account number to receive the special rate. In some cases the overall 30% discount may not be the most economical fare, depending on the routing and special Delta promotional fares available. Delta will confirm you at the lowest Delta fare available. Fares are guaranteed at time of ticket purchase- Seats may be Limited....WHY NOT CALL TODAY! YOUR RESERVATIONS WILL BE MADE THROUGH DELTA'S CONVENTION DESKS-1-800-241-6760.

With this inuocement of reduced air fares LETS MEET IN SEATTLE JULY 25-28, 1985.

Joe Chance has been in contact with HYATT SEATTLE, our Reunion hotel at Seattle-Tacoma Int'l Airport, he has a block of rooms reserved, hospitality room, meeting room, and Banquet for Saturday night. We are printing a reservation form to mail to the Hyatt or you may call the nation^{al} reservation phone number 1-800-228-9000 for instant confirmation of your reservation. I have made mine-Please make yours! Joe will have a detailed report to make to you at a latter date which will include registration info and activities he is planning.

I have been in contact by phone and correspondence with ALWYN T. LLOYD, 17465 NE 11th Street, Bellevue, WA 98008. AL is one of the coordinators for the BOEING CELEBRATION. I quote from Al's letter.

"The Boeing Management Association is working on a 50th Anniversary Celebration for the B-17 to be held at the Museum of Flight on Boeing Field on 26-28 July 1985. The date was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the first flight of the prototype Model 299, and will ensure the possibility for the best weather conditions. We expect the bomb groups to do whatever they normally would do at a reunion on their own. However, on Friday, 26 July we are planning a one-day event to be dedicated to the bomb groups -- 20 of whom have stated that they will be here either for full or mini-reunions. The 27th and 28th will be open to the public and Boeing employees. On bomb group day there will be bands, speeches, current inventory USAF aircraft, and WW II vintage aircraft, including several B-17s. There will be static aircraft displays and fly-bys. Within the Museum will be displays dedicated to the B-17. I personally am building a collection of 1/72-scale models to represent every bomb group in their particular markings. Boeing artists have been tasked to develop original artwork depicting the B-17 in most aspects of its operational life. This art will be available in the form of a display at the Museum and in a calendar. More definitive details will be released as the program develops.

I am still looking for photographs (black and white and color) for B-17s in operational markings. I am working on four volumes of books on the aircraft. There will be a brief narrative on the history of the individual groups showing the component squadrons, time frame of operation, bases of assignment, significant operational summary, etc. The narrative will be followed by a number of pages of photographs of airplanes assigned to that group. I am looking for serial number/name lash ups for the various units. Any assistance by members of the 99th BG association would be most appreciated. I wish to borrow, copy and return the photographs. All loaned material will be returned. Any copied material will be accompanied by an extra copy print. All published material will be properly credited. My turn around time is 3-4 weeks. These 128-144 page books will be published in time for release prior to the summer. They will contain 8 pages of color. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

George and I have sent Al the few pictures that we had. If you can send him yours he will return them ASAP (right away).

From Al's comments July 26th will be a very special date for all of us who had anything to do with the B-17 whether Air Crews or the great support Ground Crews and Administrative Personnel. This may a time for us to remember that as individuals we did not win the WW II. But with the concerted ^{effort} of all of us we were successful. Perhaps had it not been for the B-17, Flying Fortress, we might not have been so successful. Hope to see each of you there and relive this great day in history!

Charley Miller called to say that he received the French Croix de Guerre on 23 April 1944. Anyone else? Let me know.

In our Nov 1, 1983 newsletter Ray Schwanbeck recalled his memories of the March 22 and 23, 1944 attacks against the Ruhland Oil Refinery at Berlin, Germany. I have just received a letter, which I'll quote in part, from Al Schroeder, who led the 99th Bomb Gp on the 24 March, 1944 raid against Daimler-Benz Tank Works in Berlin. "Dear Bernie,Confirming my fuzzy recollections, it shows only one mission to the Daimler-Benz Tank Works in Berlin.

"I'm sorry that my own memories in this case are so limited to the fact that it was a long haul (9 hours according to my combat mission log in my form 5) that required the best possible combination of enroute weather for a slow climb and favorable winds aloft. I have some recollection of more than usual fighter response for this late date in the campaign, including several B-26's in the action, and sure enough That was Berlin down there! Oh yes, as I mentioned to George in my letter to him, I did get a kiss from Bea (Red Cross coffee and doughnuts) before debriefing.

"I sent him the photo of that along with one of the Fifth Bomb Wing mission board that shows my group lead bombardier was Maj. Henry Howell. Has he been located, I wonder? The board shows we had 28 planes scheduled and take-offs, 2 early returns, dropped bombs visually on the primary target at 1231, and returned 26 planes to base at 1700. Also that the 463rd led the wing and had a combination of 11 planes lost and MIA....."

He also included the weekly I & E publication dated the 25 March, 1944.

LONGEST HEAVY BOMBER RAID EVER MADE FROM ITALY

The 99th made the trip from Italy to Berlin in one not easy lessons yesterday. Encountering flak a plenty and fighters of various descriptions, mostly jet-propelled jobs like the 262's, the 99, led by Lt. Col. Schroeder proved to the sceptics that the 775 mile journey to bomb Germany's capital city could be done...done successfully. The bombs were dropped midst constant attack by the German fighters while under the protective covering of our own P-38's and P-51's.

The Kraut jobs attacked at the IP and stayed with the formation through the flak and over the target run. Dogfights took place in and out of the formation... with at least one enemy aircraft seen to blow up in the air. First Lt. Herbert Holsenbeck of the 347th flying co-pilot for Col Schroeder saw the plane blow up and said. "It looked mighty pretty"

Major Henry Howell, Group Bombardier, reported, "We put a swell concentration of bombs on the target. Preceding planes had scored hits and the smoke from the fires they started made it easy to identify."

Lead Navigator, First Lt. Bernard Obrentz, said, "Enroute we had a chance to see the damage we have done on previous missions. The Alumium factory at Laute, near Ruhland, was done for. Amstettin was finito and the railroad yards at Wels

continued on page 21

NEWS, DUES & VIEWS *by George*

It gives us great pleasure to print letters from members just as we receive them. The rules are:

- 1) Single-space the lines. There aren't any other rules. geo

We are always pleased when we can print your letters directly without any re-typing. It helps greatly if the letters are in our format, which is 8½ inches wide with half-inch margins, and the lines single-spaced for economy. It breaks our heart to re-do a lovely letter because it is double-spaced. gfc

We note that one of our adversaries was General the Baron von Richthofen. Perhaps we should use our titles more here in the U.S.A.
Pfc. the Aforesaid Coen

Who else remembers that time in Alexandria when our fellows were unable to find in the souk any watches with second hands? Next day, however there were plenty of watches with red second hands just as we wanted.

Only later, 800 miles to the west at the base was it discovered that the second hands were painted onto the inside of the watch crystals. gfc

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Back in 19 Ought 80 we had 500 membership cards printed. All 500 have now been used, and in the interests of economy, efficiency and common sense we propose to eliminate membership cards for the future.

Any person who would dare to impersonate a 99er deserves a vote!

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Those who wish to read of the Plan Of Action of the Campaigns can find all of those details in the publications of the big Museums.

We remain dedicated to human interest stories. That means stories about jeep-stealing, plane larceny (as well as fancy larceny), theft of machine guns and ammunition, and other business deals.

Does anybody remember when Lionel Chase of the 416th traded some of our rations at Bizerte to the Navy for those which the Navy would otherwise have fed the Afrika Corps during their voyage to North America? We heard that the German prisoners protested to the Swiss; that they did not believe we were that poorly fed. I remember one time when a Navy Officer accompanied five of us from a thirst parlor to the local mess for a meal. Corned beef hash was being served that day. The sailor took one look at his plate and said disbelievingly "Do you fellows eat this?" Without a word one of us divided the hash into five equal portions, and at a nod from the officer we each took a portion. We sort of sensed that the Navy ate well. All this, kiddies, was in the summer of 1943 when the submarines were subtracting from our supplies.

DUES

Dues for 1985 are still \$10.00. Our thanks to the individuals who have already sent them in. We will acknowledge receipt by writing the year in the upper right corner of the label on your newsletter, so if your copy reads 1983 or 1984 it is time to send some wallet ivy to Walter Butler at 8608 Bellehaven Place NE, Albuquerque NM 87112. Make payable to 99BGHS.

PRESS RELEASE

FROM: 99th Bomb Gp.

THRU: 5th Wing (US)

Nov. 4, 1943

ATTENTION: Lufkin, Tex., Daily News
Lufkin, Tex., Big Inch Bugle

By S/Sgt. William Brink Jr.

AN ADVANCED NORTH AFRICAN AIR BASE -- On his way home from North Africa is Capt. William W. Henderson, Jr., 25, of P.O. Box 256, 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 Savannah, Ga., until enlisting as a cadet Aug. 15, 1941.

Nov. 21, 1943

ATTENTION: Indianapolis, Ind., Times, Star, News

AN ADVANCED NORTH AFRICAN AIR BASE -- Credited with destroying an enemy pursuit plane in aerial combat, Technical Sergeant Joseph C. Freeland, 27-year old Flying Fortress ball turret gunner of 1851 W. Wilkins St., Indianapolis, Ind., is on his way home from North Africa after completing his allotted 50 bombing missions with the U.S. 15th Air Force.

Freeland bagged the fighter--and also get credit for a probable--on the Fortress raid of July 5 on Gerbini Airdrome, Sicily. That day the North African Forts ran into their biggest aerial battle of the Mediterranean war when more than 100 enemy fighters swarmed on a handful of the big bombers.

Freeland began combat flying April 11, 1943, with a mission to Marsala, Sicily, and finished up November 18 with a raid on Eleusis Airdrome at Athens, Greece. He has been awarded the Air Medal and 10 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Born in Summer County, Tenn., Freeland was graduated from Technical High School in Indianapolis in 1954, and was employed as a meat packer for Kingan and Co. of that city until entering the army Jan. 30, 1942. He is unmarried.

Dec. 2, 1943

FROM A 15th AIR FORCE BOMBER BASE -- The 15th Air Force took time out today to honor the unseen, unsung line mechanic, the grease-covered soldier who keeps the USAF Flying Fortresses in the air for their deadly bombing missions.

Notified that he has been awarded the Legion of Merit was Master Sergeant Donald R. Ross, 22-year-old line chief of a Fortress bombardment squadron who hails from Seattle, Wash. (7529 First Ave. N.E.). His wife, Lora Ross, lives in Watertown, S.D.

Ross was cited for meritorious achievement in maintaining his airplanes under conditions complicated by lack of equipment and spare parts and the wear and tear of war. Often by working day and night, it was his responsibility to see that battle-torn planes were ready for the next mission.

"You can't work on these B-17's without getting to love them," Ross said. When they come back shot up or disabled, you get mad as the devil because you hate to see something so beautiful and perfect banged up.

"We keep them in top shape, work as long as we have to -- but when those planes take off we know they will be all right. Some of them have seen a lot of service, have taken a great deal, but they can still fly and they can still take it. Anything short of a total wreck we can fix and make airworthy."

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

PRESS RELEASE
FROM: 99th Bomb Gp.
THRU: 5th Wing (US)
Dec. 2, 1943

By S/Sgt. William Brink Jr.

FROM A 15th AIR FORCE BOMBER BASE -- Busy honoring the exploits of its airmen, the 15th Air Force took time out today to recognize the hard-pressed, over-worked, unglamorous army cook.

Notified that he has been awarded the highly-coveted Legion of Merit was Sgt. Daniel G. (Pop) Bailey, 45-year-old first cook with a USAF Flying Fortress bombardment squadron. Bailey resides at 305 E. Main St., Berne, Ind.

The cook was cited for meritorious achievement in providing food under the rigors of field conditions--the cranky gasoline stoves, dust and flies, sparse rations and the inevitable sameness of the overseas diet unless it is varied by ingenuity.

"Cooking is always a tough job when there are so many to please and so little to do it with," said Bailey. No matter how bad things may be, I always manage to have something and make it taste as good as possible, under the circumstances."

Before the war, Bailey gained valuable experience cooking for lumber camps where men, like in the army, are eternally hungry. With a bomber squadron, he also faces the problem of weary airmen demanding food at unorthodox hours.

"When the fliers land," said Bailey, "The first question is "What do we eat?" "And I try not to disappoint."

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

PRESS RELEASE: Cutlines
FROM: 99th Bomb Gp.
THRU: 5th Wing (US)
Dec. 22, 1943

Official Army Air Force's photo
By S/Sgt. A. D. Cox

Burstin with pride, "Bugs Bunny," who adorns the side of an oil-splattered 15th Air Force Flying Fortress, wears the Purple Heart over the spot where he got shot by a German fighter plane. Fond crew members conferred the "decoration" on him, plus the Purple Heart and Air Medal ribbons on his chest. The impish Bugs, namesake of the movie cartoon zany, has seen this Fortress safely through 80 missions.

PRESS RELEASE
FROM: 99th Bomb Op.
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 H. Dahl, 25, 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 Conza, 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 reach 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 on 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 cell, 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 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 dependable."

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 marshalling 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 I 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. Her 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, had 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 Op.

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES
Office of the Operations Officer

APO, 520,
28 May 1943.

SUBJECT: Group History.

TO: Commanding General, Northwest African Air Forces, Advanced Headquarters.
Attention: Lt. Hart, A-2.

1. The following information is forwarded upon request of Lt. ROBERT HART.

463 Sorties	35 Planes Originally Assigned
20 Missions	14 Replacements
2330 Combat Hours	0 Lost Enroute to Theatre
16 Victories Over E/A	0 Lost to Enemy Action
8 Probable Destroyed	3 Transferred
16 Damaged	4 Lost thru Accidents
6049 Bombs Dropped	42 Planes on Hand Now
871.15 Tons	1,742,300 lbs.

Personnel Losses:

1. Enemy Action: S/Sgt. WILLIAM F. BOWEN, 31093831, Tail Gunner
2. Staffing: None.
3. Accident: 1st Lt. PRESTON E. RICHARDSON, O-728923, Pilot
2nd Lt. JOSEPH R. COLLINS, O-728458, Bombardier
2nd Lt. ALFRED E. GREIG, O-791585, Navigator
T/Sgt. ALEXIS F. ROHAN, 33069280, Engineer
T/Sgt. LEIF J. SOLEM, 32246009, Radio Operator
S/Sgt. CALVIN F. BONALDI, 32140579, Gunner
Sgt. NORMAN K. DANIELS, 31077915, Gunner

List of Commendations and Awards (Group and Individual)

1. From General DOOLITTLE, April 6, 1943.

"The success of this operation will have an immediate and important effect upon the Tunisian Campaign. I have seen the photographs and am particularly impressed by the perfect bombing of the 99th Group. Well done." Above refers to the bombing of this Group of Trapani/Milo A/D on April 5, 1943.

1. From General SPAATZ, May 12, 1943.

"Following message received from SPAATZ to DOOLITTLE "I have studied the reports and photographs of the bombing of Palermo Nine May. The Nine Nine Group particularly is to be commended on its excellent work."

Individual Awards have been as follows:

265 Air Medals have so far been awarded to personnel in this Group for the completion of 5 operational missions.

1 Oak Leaf Cluster for the Air Medal has been awarded. However many more have been recommended for additional missions.

4 Purple Hearts have been awarded for injuries due to enemy action, namely:

Lt. Colonel LEROY A. RAINEY, O-21610, Pilot
T/Sgt. LOWELL C. HALL, 685966, Aerial Photographer
S/Sgt. JAMES D. MURRAY, 31136281, Asst. Aerial Engineer
Sgt. EDWARD F. MAY, 17086848, Asst. Radio Operator

NOTE: Photographs will be forwarded at the earliest possible date.
the Operations Officer:

RUSSELL T. JACOBS,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Ass't Operations Officer.

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY-NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCE
Office of the Intelligence Officer

13 September, 1943.

Up to this date the 99th Bombardment Group has been awarded the following:

One Distinguished Service Cross
Three Silver Stars
Nineteen Distinguished Flying Crosses
Twenty-Two Soldier's Medals
Sixty-three Purple Hearts
Five hundred ninety-eight Air Medals
One-thousand two hundred forty-four O.I.C. to Air Medal.

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

On Sept. 3, 1943, the crew of Flying Fortress No. 494 was on its 50th and final mission. "Old 494" was on its 50th mission, too, and that without an engine change or major repair. So the crew and the plane ended together, for keeps. Here's how it happened.

With Major (now Lt. Col.) Warren B. Whitmore at the controls, 494 led a formation of 36 Fortresses in a raid on an Italian target. The veteran ship went into the bomb run, just as she had done the last 49 raids. But the heaviest flak barrage in a long time was breaking all around the Fortresses, and two score enemy fighter planes were attacking. 494 was stabbed painfully in the side. But she finished out the bombing run, mindful of the fate of 35 Forts behind her if she faltered.

Major Whitmore nursed his ship. The ailarons were gone, one wing hung down like a crippled bird. The pilot brought her back over her North African base safely but the plane was too unmanageable to land. So, on their last mission, Major Whitmore and seven of the original crew bailed out. A cameraman and two others not on their 50th mission also hit the silk. And old 494 -- she was allowed to bury himself into a mountainside.

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

On July 5, 1943, the 99th set out to raid the main airdrome at Gerbini, Sicily. It was a memorable day, chiefly because more than 100 enemy fighters attacked the group in 30 minutes of hell in the air. Three of our planes went down; 38 of the enemy were destroyed, with many more probables and damaged. But the honors of the day belonged to S/Sgt. Benjamin J. Warmer, of San Francisco, who, on his seventh wedding anniversary, shot down seven enemy fighters.

Later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his feat, Warmer pumped better than 1,200 rounds of ammunition in less than 15 minutes as he was knocked off the seven pursuit.

"They came at me and I bagged them as fast as they came," Warmer said in explaining the day's activities. One by one he knocked them off until after his fifth prize his ammunition box ran out. Looping extra rounds over his shoulder to feed the gun, he got two more.

With two other earlier victories to his credit, Warmer qualified as North Africa's ace aerial gunner. He is also Uncle Sam's largest gunner -- six-foot-six, 275-pound former University of California boxing and football star.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 22 February, 1944 - REGENSBURG, GERMANY

I. ENEMY RESISTANCEA. Fighters

As the group was approaching the vicinity of Augsburg after leaving Regensburg, 15 to 20 ME-210's attacked. A few minutes later, about the same number of ME-109's joined the attack, which lasted for a total of approximately 35 minutes. The twin engined fighters appeared to fire rockets at the formation from 10 and 2 o'clock high after flying parallel to get into that position. They came in singly and broke away to either side of the formation after pressing the attack aggressively. The ME-109's attacked from all directions except first frontal. The big percentage of attacks of all fighters pressed the attack through the formation and all appeared to be following a coordinated plan with aggressiveness. Some of the ME-109's had belly tanks, a few of which were jettisoned. The attacks took place approximately 22,000 feet altitude. One of our planes was lost while another was last seen losing altitude while being heavily attacked and is listed as missing. Two suffered some damage from fighter attacks.

Our preliminary claims, not yet verified, are as follows:

5 ME-109's and 4 ME 210's destroyed;
2 ME-210's probably destroyed and one ME 109 damaged.

Markings:

ME-210's, silver colored with yellow strip along leading edge of wings, some dark colored.

ME-109's, grey colored, some with yellow spinners and a yellow band around the fuselage.

B. Flak

This group encountered moderate fairly accurate flak over the vicinity of Regensburg, Augsburg, Munich and Innsbruck, all of it reaching altitude. One of our aircraft was slightly damaged. Both red and black flak bursts were observed in all areas where flak was present.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONSA. Communications

The M/T at Landshut, 40°30'N, 11°50'E, was filled with rolling stock.

B. Flak positions

Flak was observed from the following general locations:

Regensburg, Augsburg, Munich, and Innsbruck.

C. Land

The A/D at Landshut had 15 TE and SE/AC present. Approximately 10 miles due south of Regensburg, a wooded area had several small openings out in which were located a number of sheds or buildings which appeared to be factory buildings.

D. Naval

No shipping was visible in Fiume harbor at 12:08 hours.

E. Air

At 12:05 hours, a B-17 was seen to spin downward thru the clouds at 43°40'N, 15°19'E. Four chutes were seen to open. No reason was observed for this plane to go down, it being located in a formation ahead of this group.

At 12:45 hours, over Regensburg, a B-17 from another formation, bearing what appeared to be the number 41650, was seen to go down in flames. Eight chutes were observed before the plane exploded.

A plane from this group, No. 439, was seen on fire in the left tokyo tank and subsequently exploded while north of Augsburg at 12:50 hours. Three were seen to bail out and one chute opened.

A plane from this group had one feathered propeller and was falling behind while being attacked by E/AC. It turned off in the direction of Switzerland from a position near Innsbruck, Austria at 13:05 hours. This plane is listed as missing.

All of these planes, except for the one listed first above, were damaged as a result of fighter attacks.

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

On July 15, 1943, the 99th Bombardment Group celebrated an anniversary -- of its first 50 missions completed against the enemy. The sign of the first 50 was one of individual and collective courage and skill in times of stress, but it was also an impressive collection of statistics.

The 99th combat men looked at the records as of July 16 and discovered:

1. Of 518 enemy fighters encountered, they shot down, probably destroyed or damaged 162 or 31.27 percent. 114 of these were destroyed, 28 probably destroyed and 20 damaged. They have destroyed or damaged 433 enemy planes in the air and on the ground.

2. Their bombs had destroyed 271 enemy aircraft on the ground.

3. They had dropped 3,069,740 pounds of bombs on enemy objectives, shot 704,995 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition.

In 50 missions the combat crews traveled 44,886 miles to and from the target--nearly twice around the world. It took them 292 hours or more than 12 days and nights of combat flying to pile up this mileage.

Naturally the Fortresses didn't always come out with whole skins. Flak damaged 107 airplanes and enemy fighters managed to put holes in 31 of them. Up to July 8 only one plane had been lost in actual combat. On that three more were lost when more than 100 enemy fighters ganged up on the group. But many of these crews were seen to bail out and one ship was observed to crash land on the beach. And for revenge the gunners blasted down 36 enemy planes, with 145 more probables and one damaged.

Throughout the 50 missions the group had the inspired leadership of Col. Fay R. Upthegrove, commander, and Lt. Col. Leroy A. Hainey, deputy commander.

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

The nights of May 3, 1943, was one to live long in the memory of the 99th. The target was Bizerte, the weather terrible. Nobody could find the target. Reluctantly the ships turned back with their bombs, crews hoping they'd be able to find their home field. Only three ships did, others landed at alternate fields; but from four ships came tales of heroism, courage and death.

Two whole crews -- 20 men -- "cracked silk" after they were unable to find a place to set down. The pilot of one, 1st Lt. Edward P. McLaughlin, Richmond, Cal., caught a brief glimpse of a North African town, made a perfect bombing run and dropped most of his men down the main street. The pilot of the other ship, Capt. Max E. Davis, of Pasadena, Cal., scattered his men over the North African countryside. But by truck, mile, donkey or foot all 20 men made it back to their base. One suffered a broken leg, another five broken ribs from the parachute jumps.

A third ship had a tougher time. The pilot, 1st Lt. Sidney E. Buck, of Kensington, MD., and his crew decided not to bail out, but to ride down their ship laden with 12 500-pound demolition bombs. They flew around until the gas was almost gone. Once they touched a mountain slope and part of the horizontal stabilizer was clipped off. Then a lightning flash brightened up the only safe landing place in miles around. Lt. Buck started to let down. His landing lights wouldn't work. Vaguely he saw a mountain in his

Membership directory has been removed for privacy.

Cont. from page 3 - President's Corner -

were blasted beyond further use. My wish was to see a pathway of wreckage from Italy to Berlin. Today I saw it." He also reported seeing American P-51s strafing trains at Klagenfurt, adding that several entire trains were in flames as a result of the fighter action there.

Consensus from the combat personnel seems to be that all of them were glad now to say that they had been to Berlin...But....most of the boys were not too eager to go there many more times...Good work boys, you did a swell job....take a five week vacation!

Thanks Al for this info and for your support.

In our last newsletter George mentioned my watercolor efforts. My art teacher, Liz Von Slawik Gilbert, invited me to join her in a two person featured artist show. Our month hanging and the Sunday afternoon reception was quite a success. Liz is also the person who translated the German writings to English in our last paper. Thanks Liz!

Jim Sopp, who will host our 1986 reunion in Dayton, Ohio, and I have been in touch with each other regarding that meeting. Jim plans to come through Albuquerque early in February. Plans for that meeting will be given to you as they develop. Jim is a go-getter - so expect great things.

All of the response regarding adding a parliamentarian and a Sgt. at Arms have been negative - don't do it. I have one from Richard Dempsey I'll quote from to give you some feeling of the group's response"....As far as I'm concerned the Association Leaders are doing a terrific job and run the meetings off in good shape. Installing a Parliamentarian and Sergeant at Arms will add to the confusion and catastrophic conditions. In my opinion the present group (officers of Assoc.) have been doing a terrific job and I find them all cooperative and friendly in every way. No vote needed to add to the present Board. Present set-up should remain the same - except for Bernie's dog - who ate pretty well at Houston....Keep up the Good Work..." Thanks Dick for your kind words; we appreciate your thoughts...I'll tell you this; if it were not for GEORGE COEN we would have trouble keeping our heads above water. THANKS GEORGE!

BYE FOR NOW and have a great 1985 - LET'S MEET IN SEATTLE!
(with two fingers by bab) As ever - your friend
Bernie

P.S. My thanks to Julius Horowitz for his idea of securing airline fare discounts. bab

The following article appeared in a Swiss newspaper shortly after Christmas, 1943. Sr. Josy sent Sgt Pratt the original from the paper and this is a translation of it:

THE FLYERS 'GRAVE

The gardener had received orders to decorate the graves of the fourteen flyers shot down at Ragaz, with green fir branches and twigs.

I found my way to this place of peace on Christmas morning, and noticed at once that all was in order. Something else suddenly caught my eye. In front of the two rows of seven crosses, unknown had had erected a miniature monument. On a meter high base covered with green branches, was suspended an artfully constructed model of a four engined bomber. On the wing there were fourteen half-burned candles, which had been lighted on Christmas Eve. Under the airplane hung two, hand-made parachutes, in remembrance of those who had been saved by parachute.

The whole thing was so thoughtfully and cleverly arranged I should have been thoroughly please, if it were not for remembering that dreadful day that cost fourteen young lives, that had fallen in our midst - daily hundreds of them go down, and every day large districts have to be cleared of corpses.

Thousands and thousands kill each other or are killed by air attacks, shot down as partisans or hostages. A mad murdering for the last five years, and as yet, no end in sight. That is progress of mankind - as far as civilization has brought us. Nevertheless, a single individual is good. Unknown and unmentioned hands have been working for days and days to offer Christmas Greetings to those victims swept by fate of war away from home to a far off country.

SPECIAL NOTICE! United Airlines, as official carrier, is offering the 99th BGHS and the 7th Bomb Gp. special airfares when you attend the Convention in Seattle and travel between July 23 and July 30, 1985 inclusive. To obtain a 30% discount from the applicable standard coach (Y class) fare with no minimum stay restrictions, or (for those staying over a Saturday night) a 15% discount off United's already reduced Easy Saver (BE70) fare....simply follow these easy steps.

1. Call United toll-free at 800-521-4041(48 contiguous states) Monday-Friday 8:30 AM - 8:00PM E.S.T.
2. Give the special 99th BGHS and 7th Bomb Gp account number 546M.
3. United specialist will provide information and make reservations for all flight and fares, including the special fare. The special 99th/7th Bomb Gp fare is only available on United flights in the continental United States.
4. United will arrange to mail tickets to your home or office, or you may purchase them from your local travel agent. If you purchase from a local agent, be sure you or the agent call the United's Convention Desk to make your reservation. The special 99th/7th Bomb Group fare is only available through United's Convention Desk.

Seats are limited, so call early for best availability. Fares are guaranteed at time of ticket purchase. WHY NOT CALL TODAY!

path, managed to zoom over it. The landing was hard -- two engines caught fire and the plane began to burn. The crew scrambled out, started to run from the plane, had to return to help a man who was injured and couldn't walk. They reached the safety of a sand dune 300 yards away when the bombs let go.

A fourth ship, piloted by deputy commander Lt. Col. Leroy Rainey, crash landed in the Mediterranean. Col. Rainey let down about 15 miles offshore after first radioing Airsea rescue, which promised to send two boats. They never showed up. The crew survived the landing, then assembled in and hanging on a five-men life raft (the other raft could not be pried loose.)

Several hours later the raft capsized and could not be righted. The men hung on grimly. Drained of strength, the radio operator finally let go and went down. The assistant radio operator set out to swim to shore, he was never seen again. Then the co-pilot, supported by two others, died by the boat and slipped away.

In mid-afternoon of the next day the bombardier and engineer decided to swim for it when the life raft was about 300 yards offshore. There was a strong offshore current, they disappeared. At dark the raft swept by a reef. Col. Rainey and three others jumped and grabbed for the reef, managed to hang on. The navigator and tail gunner failed to reach the reef and were swept out to sea. Weak, sick, half-dead, the four survivors came back home to tell about it.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT HISTORY

In September 1942 a cadre of one medical officer, Captain Frederick D. Koehne and eight enlisted men were assigned to the 99th Bombardment Group (H) from the 29th Group at Gowen Field, Idaho. This medical cadre, along with the rest separated from the parent organization the last of September 1942, moving to Walla Walla, Washington, to organize a Bombardment Group destined for oversea combat duties.

To this cadre was shortly assigned the four Squadron Surgeons, Captains Raymond J. Real, Milton Layden, Lieutenants Edgar O. Hughes, Theodore C. Papermaster and Wayne W. Warren, D.C. as well as some thirty-five enlisted men, all of whom were army recruits but three. The task assigned this medical group was vested the jobs of both training recruits in both military and medical procedures and in the examination of all personnel assigned with the goal of retaining only those physically qualified for combat duty overseas. During the 6 weeks at Walla Walla, over 2,000 complete physical examinations were done. About 30% of those examined were found to have physical defects requiring a period greater than one month to correct and had to be transferred from the organization because too much training period would be lost.

In November following the assignment of our combat crews an intensive inoculation campaign was inaugurated so none would be lacking at the estimated time of debarcation. In November over 1200 inoculations were given and during the month of December over 9000 shots were administered in spite of the general complaining and beefing about the constantly appearing sessions for the needle parade. However by January 2, 1943, when the air and ground echelons split, the entire command was better than 95% immunized against the six world wide diseases of smallpox, typhoid, tetanus, cholera, typhus and yellow fever.

On May 25, the ground echelon finally caught up with the air echelon. This was a happy day. All went smoothly until about June 26, when at noon an explosion at the Ordinance dump routed everyone from his seat. In less than 5 minutes following this explosion all 8 of group ambulances were at the scene. What we saw in addition to the billow of dust was smoke rising several thousand feet into the air were burning truck loads of bombs, and unexploded bombs scattered throughout the grassy area being burned over.

We knew that casualties were present at this scene and immediately set to work to evacuate the injured. Each medical officer worked one section and all giving casualties first aid. To say that the medical personnel were not cognizant of the danger is false, but there was a job to be done by us. We were there only a short time and as in every tragedy there always appear bit of humor. About the time we were removing the last casualty from a truck there was a violent hissing nearby, and the Ordinance officer ordered everyone to clear the area. Capt. Warren also heard the hiss and dove about 6 feet toward a tire rut some 14 inches deep. He states although no one else was within 25 feet of the ditch he landed there third, beneath him were Major Frank Dunnington and Capt Raymond Beal. At that time the group surgeon was on a truck bed extricating a casualty. He was holding the sides of the truck bed up so the aid men could remove the bodies. When the hissing

occurred he couldn't drop the truck sides nor could he jump as it was too late then but no explosion occurred. The last casualty was evacuated and all left the area to enjoy the safety of distance. It was some eight hours later before we returned to evacuate the fatalities.

Several days later we received word that the medical personnel were to be cited for this act. To the personnel responsible for the training of the medical men this was a happy recognition for throughout the disaster the enlisted men never once hesitated to face danger, and all performed their duties in superb manner.

About eight days later--July 4 to be exact a second explosion occurred at this same dump. This time, however, there were no casualties, but once again all ambulances returned to the scene. While the fire works was still in progress our aircraft started to arrive from a mission so all but one vehicle was dispatched to the line. Not all arrived there for the wheat field in the 346th area was ablaze and rapidly being spread by one of the strongest sirroccos in Algeria. These diverted ambulances and personnel became potent fire fighters.

July 5 the medical men of 346th again distinguished themselves for action at a gasoline fire and explosion on the railroad siding. When a carload of bombs exploded small Staff Sergeant Cowart from Georgia was knocked flat. Incidentally Sgt. Cowart says "In case another explosion does occur I'll be way on the other side of the field."

When the group completed the 50th mission on July 9, 1943 the battle casualty rates were computed with the following findings for 11630 man sorties flown:

85 Battle & non-battle casualties or	.74%	casualty rate
67 Battle casualties or	.57%	" "
42 Missing in Action or	.36%	" "
21 Wounded in action or	.18%	" "
4 Killed in action or	.03%	" "
18 Non-Battle Casualties or	.17%	" "

In August 1943 one of the original Squadron Surgeons, Capt. Papermaster was transferred from the group and we welcomed the arrival of Lt. Irving C. Newman to the folds of the 99th Bomb Group.

Now at the celebration of the 1st. anniversary of the organization and activation of this group we have flown 85 combat missions missing a total of 23060 man sorties with the following casualty rates:

159 Battle and Non-battle casualties	or	.69%
126 Battle Casualties	or	.55%
61 Missing in Action	or	.29%
53 Wounded in Action	or	.23%
13 Killed in Action	or	.03%
32 Non-battle Casualty	or	.14%

The following incident rates show there is
 1 man missing for every 400 man sorties.
 1 man wounded for every 434 man sorties.
 1 man killed for every 1774 man sorties.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 24 February, 1944 - FIUME OIL REFINERY, ITALY

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters

Directly after coming off the target and continuing for five minutes, 4-6 ME-109's and FW-190's attacked the 99th Bomb Group singly and from the rear ranging from 5 to 7 o'clock. The attacks were high and level but not too aggressive. The enemy fighters were silver or silver and black and appeared to have come from an area NW of Fiume.

B. Flak and Aerial Bombs

Over the target, this group experienced slight, inaccurate and light flak of the barrage type.

After coming off the target area, our planes observed 10 to 12 bursts, smaller than flak but larger than 20mm and believe these to be aerial bombs as 2 FW-190's were above us at the time. These bursts had a red flash and emitted a grayish white smoke. They were evenly spaced in a straight line, accurate as to altitude but off 100 yds. to the side.

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

March 1, 1944

The weather has turned mild and warm and we all hope it stays that way. And speaking of weather, the enlisted men of our base weather station were notified today that some of them will be sent to Bari shortly. They are not happy about it, fearing a boat trip to parts east.

March 2, 1944

The scheduled movie of Abbot and Costello in "Keep 'Em Flying" failed to show tonight, and instead we saw an oldie, Irene Dunne in "The Joy of Living," vintage of at least 1937. It was announced that the movie schedule had been changed from Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, to Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

March 3, 1944

Our group insignia on the planes of a big yellow diamond on the rudder has been changed by official order. The new designation is a big blue Y on a square white background at the top of the rudder, which stands for the Wing, and a blue 3 on another square white background at the base of the rudder, we being the third group in the wing. This order came just a few weeks after we adopted the name "Diamondbacks" for the group, a nickname derived chiefly from the old diamond insignia.

March 4, 1944

Because of the change in movie schedule there was no show tonight, and instead the officer's club and NM club got a big play. Some men went into Foggia to see the GI stage show, "It's a Date," and pronounced it the best seen overseas yet.

March 5, 1944

Plenty of rain today, although it still isn't very cold. There was a buzz on interest today in the news that the Eighth Air Force in England had raided Berlin for the first time.

March 6, 1944

Stormy and getting colder, reminding us once again that the Italian winter isn't over yet. Most of the group went to the theater this afternoon to see a one-reel movie which turned out to be the actual briefing for the famed B-24 raid on the Ploesti oilfields of Rumania last summer. The film left no doubt that the preparation for this raid was exhaustive, although most of us were disappointed that it contained no actual scenes of the raid itself. Movie tonight was Errol Flynn in "Gentleman Jim."

March 7, 1944

The siren wailed three red alerts tonight, at 12:30, 1:30 and 4:30 in the morning, with the all clears coming a half to an hour later. Such is the complacency now that few men get out of their beds for the alerts. Two men of the headquarters mess staff slept through the last alert, woke up when the all clear sounded, mistook it for the alert and dashed for the slit trench where they spent several cold minutes before being wised up.

March 8, 1944

There was a red alert at about 11 p.m. tonight, but no enemy planes showed. Earlier we had fried chicken, lots of butter and apple pie for supper.

March 9, 1944

Fried chicken again for supper. A large crowd saw the movie, Ann Southern in "Lady Be Good."

March 10, 1944

The group theater resounded today with the music of the 99th orchestra and the skits by our men that make up "Caramelli Caravan," the group's own stage show. The play has been in rehearsal some time, but this was one of the final tryouts for timing and cues. The men will rehearse for the next few days and present their offering to the group next week.

March 11, 1944

Today's bright sunshine and warmth dried up a good deal of the mud. Movie tonight was Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake in "This Gun for Hire."

March 12, 1944

Change about in weather, with a steady rain all day, probably the most rain we've seen here yet.

March 13, 1944

Another change, and the sun again shines all day and dries up the mud. Large crowds sat tensely tonight through a surrealist movie thriller, "Flesh and Fantasy," with a line-up of stars including Charles Boyer and Barbara Stanwyck. At 3:30 in the morning a red alert sounded, but the all clear came in about an hour.

March 14, 1944

Group and the base buzzed all day with rumors that Foggia airdromes would be bombed tonight or tomorrow, on the Ides of March. The warning and threat were said to have emanated from Axis Salley on the Berlin radio. All the rumors, however, failed to keep a big crowd from turning out to see the 99th's own stage show, "Caramelli Caravan." While the show was in progress, 15th Air Force called up and asked for a strict blackout during the night. And at about 2:40 in the morning the air raid siren began to wail. More men rolled out of their bunks than ever before for an alert, but the all-clear came in a few minutes. It turned out that jittery Wing had mistakenly called a red alert, and so we had nothing to fear from the Ides of March, after all.

March 15, 1944

Most of us craned out necks all day watching the great fleets of bombers wheel across the sky as the entire theater strength of MAAF marshalled to blast Cassino off the map. The decision to wipe out this stumbling block to our heroic ground forces met with intense satisfaction here. Watching the waves of bombers, it struck us that this theater has come a long way since the early days in Africa when our four Fortress groups were the sum total of heavy bomber strength. Nowadays we're outnumbered three to one by the Liberators.

March 16, 1944

Large crowds turned out for the movie tonight, Red Skelton in "DuBarry Was a Lady." Headquarters enlisted men held a dance with the 99th orchestra furnishing the music. For this affair the EM took over the officer's club which opens on the EM mess hall to provide enough floor spaces.

March 17, 1944

A routine day.

March 18, 1944

A big crowd enjoyed an unusual movie tonight, Charles Laughton in the "Man From Down Under."

March 19, 1944

It definitely feels like spring now, with warm sunny weather. Headquarters came out of winter hibernation by raiding Special Service for gloves and balls for a little spring training.

March 20, 1944

Even warmer today, and it being non-op, a lot of men went on pass while the rest indulged in spring fever. Movie tonight was Joseph Cotten and Theresa Wright in "Shadow of Doubt."

March 21, 22, 1944

Routine days.

March 23, 1944

Movie tonight was an oldie, "Little Old New York," with Alice Faye and Richard Greene.

March 24, 1944

Unexpectedly tonight John Garfield and his troops showed up and put on one of the best stage shows we've seen in a long time. Garfield himself was good, with a lot of fresh material. He had with him Eddie Foy, Jr., two female vocalists and the molto buono Sheila Rogers, who knocked everyone out with her looks and impersonations. Foy also was good despite the fact that he had influenza and was rushed to a hospital immediately after the show.

March 25, 1944

One of the most enjoyable movies in a long time was "Lost Angel" tonight, featuring little Margaret O'Brien. Headquarters EM held a successful dance in the Red Cross in Foggia.

March 26, 1945

In the group theater tonight the 99th Group stage show, "Caramelli Caravan," played for the last time after a run of 17 performances at other outfits and in town.

March 27, 1945

Big crowds thronged the theater tonight for a new movie, "Princess O'Rourke," with Olivia DeHavilland and Robert Cummings.

March 28, 1945

Today our B-17G's were flown to the 2nd Bomb Op. in exchange for their old F's. This swap sent the rumor factories into high gear, while linemen bemoaned the sad state of repair of the old planes we get in exchange.

March 29, 1945

A bonus movie tonight was a double feature, including an opus called "Fired Wife."

March 30, 1945

Some 30 brand new B-17G's, including many silver ones, were flown in today by members of a new Fortress group to be stationed in Italy. The new men will stay with us for training and then move on to their own field. The official word is that we will give them our old F's and take their new G's, which is fine with us but will probably make them very unhappy.

March 31, 1945

Group was saturated today with members of the new Fortress group, many of them high-ranking officers inspecting our headquarters setup. In our briefing room classes were held for their flight crews.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 2 March, 1944 - Troop Concentrations, Anzio Beachhead

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No enemy fighters observed. Crews believe this due to excellent cover furnished by escort.

B. Flak: Moderate, accurate, heavy flak was encountered as formation approached target area, about two miles west of target. Some flak observed at a group near Lake Albano. Ten A/C were holed, but damage described as "minor". One bombardier was saved from being wounded by his flak suit. A jagged two inch long fragment penetrated nose glass just after bombs away. The fragment tore a 5 inch gash in the glass, hit the bombardier over the heart and glanced off his left arm. Bombardier describes sensation as "if someone had hit him a blow with his fist." He is converted to idea all combat crew personnel should wear flak suits if possible. Additional flak was encountered in area about 3,000 yards north of target along river in woods at 83-1 x 58-A (T.C. Ref. Littoria Photomak Quad 158, Sheet IV).

Flak was mostly tracking type although some barrage type observed near Lake Albano, but not encountered. Flak, generally, was not as intense or as accurate as that encountered in previous flights over the beachhead.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 3 March, 1944 - Littorio Marshalling Yards

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: We fighters were encountered 3 March 1944 by 99th Bomb Op (B-17's) on way to or from target, the north half of Rome Littorio M/Y. One a/e reported 4 ME109's attacking formation of B-26's at 1135 hours off coast of Rome. Altitude or results of battle undetermined. No markings observed except e/a appeared dark colored.

B. Flak: No flak encountered at target or at any time by this group. Intense, heavy and accurate as to altitude observed at Civitavecchia (42°20'W, 12°15'E).

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 11 March, 1944 - Padua M/Y

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: from a period of 1135 to 1160 hours, just before the target and immediately after coming off, 20-25 a/a were observed. These were mainly ME109's and FW190's with a few ME110's.

There were 3-5 encounters at 28,000 feet by single planes mainly from 3, 6 and 9 o'clock both low and level, but these were not too aggressive, nor did the enemy pilots appear too experienced. The FW190 appeared to be firing rockets.

A formation of 8 e/a was seen flying below us at 15,000' near the target area. It is believed that they were lying in wait to pick off our stragglers.

B. Flak: No flak was experienced over the target area.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 15 March, 1944 - Cassino

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: Over target this group experienced slight, inaccurate and heavy flak of the tracking type, while flying at a mean altitude of 21,000'. Only a few bursts of flak were seen.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 17 March, 1944 - A/C Factory, Fischamend Market

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: While flying in the vicinity of Zagreb at 1250 hours, the formation was attacked by 15 to 20 enemy fighters, principally ME109's with a very few FW190's. One group of fighters pulled ahead of the formation and attacked singly from 1 o'clock, diving aggressively thru the formation. Some attacks from around 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock were started high land not pressed too aggressively. A few fighters approached from the rear in the vapor trails left by our A/C and then pulled out to open fire.

One ME 109, painted silver, was seen to break away in a wing over after attacking the formation. This A/C was clearly seen to have the American Air Force insignia on its left wing and fuselage. Another ME109 was clearly seen to have a painted circle insignia on its fuselage similar to the RAF plane insignia.

The encounters lasted until 1330 hours and our planes claim two ME109's destroyed.

B. Flak: No flak was encountered over the vicinity of the target. A few light bursts were observed by some of our A/C over Sibenik, Yugoslavia.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT
MISSION: 18 March, 1944 - Villaorba A/D

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Thirty B-17's of the 99th Bomb Group, flying in two waves, stepped up and echeloned left, were attacked by enemy fighters at 0938 hours near Fiume at 45°48'N, 14°14'E enroute to bomb Villaorba Airdrome on March 18, 1944. The battle lasted approximately one hour and carried on from the initial attack until after the target was successfully bombed. The group was flying from 21,300 to 24,300 feet.

Approximately 60 E/A were observed including FW190's, ME109, ME110, ME210. Attacks were carried on by formations of E/A ranging from 4 to 14.

All four squadrons reported that E/A carried markings similar to P-47's and at first were mistaken for escort. The FW190's in particular, carried a foot-wide white band on fuselage ahead of vertical stabilizer. This emblem, at a distance, resembled P47's insignia.

The attacking A/C approached from 6 o'clock high, weaving cross-wise similar to escort, which increased the belief that they were escort. Coming closer they peeled off in pairs, fours and sixes and attacked from 3,6 and 9 o'clock, firing rockets. All crews reported many rockets during the battle, as previously reported. The A/C pulled up nose and lobbed rockets from out of range of .50 caliber machine guns of friendly craft. Bursts were blank with red flashes. One crew reported a formation of 6 abreast attacking rear of a squadron from 6 o'clock. Some crews reported that FW190's were firing 2 rockets, while ME210's and ME110's were reported carrying four rockets each. The fighters appeared to be at 25,000 feet when first observed. They dived and came up to about level. The 110's flew in elements of four and peeled off right and left.

Crews reported that some of the attacking E/A came from A/D at 46°22'N, 14°30'E about five miles northeast of Fiume. ME210's were reported attacking in formations of 12 to 16. Frontal attacks were few and unaggressive.

The rocket fire was unusually accurate. Four B-17's were observed to have been hit by rockets. All were reported shot down, three of them from 2nd Bomb Group, ahead of 99th and one from the 99th. The FW190's usually stayed away from the formation at least 800 yards. Some of the ME100's in attacking, came in eight at a time in trail, breaking off at about 300 yards. Some of the E/A attacked the group ahead from 5 to 7 o'clock high, diving in and then breaking off and attacking the 99th group immediately behind at 10 and 2 o'clock high.

At one point in the battle, 30 E/A were sighted at 2 o'clock high, simulating a dog fight. This was shortly after the attacks started. Crew members were under the impression the escort had arrived and engaged the enemy. As the dog fight approached closer the fighters broke off as if by pre-arranged signal and all attacked the 2nd Bomb Group ahead.

During the attack, over the target, two crews reported what appeared to be about 300 incendiary discs dropped from above. They did not see the A/C dropping the discs, but reported they fluttered through the formation ahead (about 1600 yards) and seemed to burst with small light explosions about 400' below the formation. They were unable to give further information because of the distance. Crews were questioned as to explosions, size of discs, etc. They stated that the discs did not separate widely and appeared to be concentrated in a comparatively small area, probably within a circle of 150 feet radius. (These estimates should not be relied upon too much because crews were hazy on details.)

Some of the ME109's were painted black with light colored bellies, either grayish blue or silver. They had yellow spinners. This group, appeared to be experienced and simulated the escort formation, splitting above the group ahead.

Outstanding in the reports of today's battle was the unanimity of opinion on the increased use and accuracy rockets. Crews were also agreed that enemy tactics simulating our fighter escort maneuvers and markings fooled them for an appreciable time. In all, 99th Bomb Group gunners claimed 20 E/A destroyed. Those claims have not been scrutinized and this figure probably will be lower when final analysis is completed. Seven A/C were damaged by rockets, two severely and they will be out of commission for a day or two. Two ships were holed by flak.

B. Flak: Over the target, the Diamondback Group encountered slight, heavy and accurate flak that damaged 7 of our aircraft. This flak was experienced from a mean altitude of 22,800' and was of the tracking type. Enroute heavy but inaccurate flak from the Fiume area.



Lester Hamann sends us this photo along with others which are being reproduced at the Photo Shop.

Thanks, Lester

228 Wilder Place
Shreveport, La. 71104
31 October 1983

Dear George;

Just answered the question of Cortesi's. Am enclosing copy for your information.

Question: What are Flak pictures? Anything to do with "Flack"?

In case you're interested, I still have all my negatives of pictures taken in Africa with the exception of the "strike" photos. I cannot identify some of the subjects but there should be someone still around who can.

Remember the first Rome raid. Just finished going thru my files and found this item:

JULY 18, 1943

Acft 42-133 (Nobody's Baby)

TARGET: Rome, Italy

T.O. 0759

Alt: 24,300

Target: 1137

Bombs: 500#

Landed: 1502

Slight flak. Two fighters attacked us. After our turn away from the target area, the left life raft blew loose and lodged on the horizontal stabilizer and jammed the controls. The plane immediately started a vertical climb. I forced it out of the climb when the controls locked again and we started a steep dive for the water. I immediately ordered the crew to prepare to bailout while still fighting for control. I got the plane level but a long way out of formation. General Atkinson and Was came back to cover me. We struggled home alright but had to fight the controls all the way. Some ride. Raymond Clapper was riding with Atkinson. Also Richard Tregaski of International News.

We were flying #133 because the Bad Penny was down for maintenance. I remember the crew ripping out some piping and Kowtowski tying his knife to some to reach out the waist window (wrong). They cut a hole in the fuselage near the tail and attempted to cut the raft loose.

Nobody talks much about the Pantalleria raids. The first time territory was conquered without an invading force.

The aircraft "Hell from Heaven" #091 was the first plane assigned to the 416th at Walla Walla and was named by the inmates of Walla Walla State Prison, who also made the first leathers Patches of the squadron insignia. They also named the second aircraft assigned. "Hunk of Hell" was received straight from the factory with only ten hours of flying time. After inspection and acceptance, Buck and I took it for a flight, it had a full fuel load plus two loaded bombay tanks. Buck and I got to talking about the ceiling height of a B-17 and decided to see how high it would go. We reached 41,000 ft and were still climbing about 200 fpm when the CHT hit the redline so we stopped climbing because we didn't want Carmen Reese to get on our tails for four engine changes on a brand-new plane.

By the way, the first crew for Hell from Heaven was designated the Model Crew for the 416th Sq and consisted of: Pilot- Mitchell; Co-pilot- Buck; Navigator- Kowtowski; Bombardier- Gutz; Enginer-Carter; Asst-Engineer- Spears; RO-Brinker; Asst-RO- Bloom; and tail-gunner- Peterson; and waist-gunner-Sohultz.

Regards
Mitch

THE NIGHT SICILY WAS INVADED , by P.G.Bulkeley, Bearded Bombardier.

I was called to a special briefing the morning prior to the invasion. There were three crews there, along with Colonel Uppie and other big-wigs. We were told we were to fly that night off the coast of Sicily with special radar scramblers to mess up German radio and radar. I recall the Colonel saying at the end of the briefing that it was a dangerous mission and anybody could back out if they wanted to. Imagine anyone telling Uppie that he was afraid to go!

We flew up to the coast, I know not where, but I remember it was close to the Mediterranean. There a crew put in bomb bay tanks, and flame dampeners on all exhausts. We had a bite to eat and waited until just before dark.

Swiftly MacDonald was my pilot; I can't remember who was co-pilot. John Kotowski was one navigator and Smitty was the other. Don't know why there were two navigators.

Took off in late dusk and assembled in formation. In the darkness all you could see was a little blue flame from the engines of the other planes, yet we flew in fairly close formation all right at 500'.

Underneath us we could see all the ships of the invasion when the moon peeped out every once in a while.

I guess the only real danger of the mission was worrying about some trigger-happy sailor down below taking us for the enemy.

Off in the distance on the East side of Sicily we could see all the bombardment. Looked like a super,super 4th of July. That was the night the Navy shot down so many Army gliders.

At daylight we took off for home. It was one of the days when the air was laden with dust. We couldn't see the ground until we were almost home. Gas was getting mighty scarce and it began to look as though that was the dangerous part of the mission when we finally found the field. We landed and started to taxi off the field when suddenly all engines stopped. We were out of gas. I guess we had been in the air about 16 hours.

So another mission same as hundreds of others that were flown. Most came home; many didn't; no one said I won't or can't go.

P.G.Bulkeley

Pivoli NY 12583

Dear Pete;

And then you came into the tent at dawn and said "The invasion of Sicily has started." And now at last I get the rest of the story. We are assembling these letters for you fellows first, then for authors, and for the Newsletter if we can squeeze it in. Thanks again, Pete. gfc

* * * * *

Does anybody else remember the easily forgettable invasion of Lam-pedusa? There were only twelve survivors of that affair, which was a combined operation. Only three British sailors and one B-17 crew survived, because that is all of the Combined Force. The three sailors came close enough in a motor launch to the tiny island to shout instructions to the inhabitants to start using British stamps on their mail. The B-17 crew just happened to be slow-timing an engine on the BTO at what we later figured out was the time of the operation. No medals have been awarded for this fearless, flakless, feckless feat of non-gallantry. gfc

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BULL-ETINS



At a public reception at the State House the general reassured a large group of mothers, troubled by rumors of their sons' conduct overseas. "Your boys," he told them, "were so pure and good I was afraid they wouldn't fight, but they proved the greatest of soldiers." from "A City In Terror" by Francis Russell, quoting M/Gen. Clarence Edwards in 1919

The big bombers went back, full time, to the business of igniting cities and burning up hapless civilians, a form of warfare Nimitz privately deplored. He had apparently expected the B-29 attacks to be restricted to the precision bombing of military and military-industrial targets in daylight, as was the American practice in the European war. (But the Germans, and later the British, did make night incendiary raids in Europe.)

from "Nimitz", by E.B.Potter.
so now you know. geo

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TAPS

KARKUT, STANLEY
Dear Sir;

I'm sorry to say that Stanley Karkut died about 4 years ago.
John C. Karkut

DUNOW, FLOYD

With reference to your card. Floyd Dunow was my younger brother.
He passed away about six years ago. . . . Floyd retired from Wells Fargo
Armored car division at San Francisco. . . . Sincerely yours
Frederick Dunow, 1800 S. 10th St., Council Bluffs, Iowa, 51501

NOACK, PAUL G.

I am most sorry to inform you that my brother, Paul G. Noack, died
as a result of a cerebral hemorrhage on April 24th, 1973 in Austin Texas.
His widow and children survive and would probably appreciate the
Newsletter. Mrs. Noack's current address is Mrs. Margaret Noack, 1413 Algono,
Austin TX 78157
sincerely, Norman W. Noack, 668 Birchwood, Port Neches TX

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