



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Newsletter



Vol. 7 No. 3

May 1 1987

SOCIETY OFFICERS 1986-87

PRESIDENT - LEW BOATWRIGHT
TREASURER - WALTER BUTLER
CHAPLAIN - HARVEY JENNINGS

VICE-PRESIDENT, JOE KENNEY
HISTORIAN - GEORGE F. COEN
SECRETARY - DICK DEMPSEY

EDITOR - GEORGE F. COEN

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is an update on activities at the 15th Air Force Reunion in Colorado Springs. Bernie Barr has been advised that three groups are dedicating memorial plaques at the Air Force Academy. It was suggested that a combined ceremony be scheduled on 16 October 1987. We will have a 99BGHS hospitality room at the Antlers Hotel - identification required for entry. Reservations can be made on the Antlers toll-free number: 1-800-232-2323. Please notify Chairman Bernie if you plan to be there.

I have described some of the 99th's activities from the time it was organized at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho and the arrival at Marrakech, French Morocco, about six months later. The airfield received considerable damage during the American invasion of North Africa. The hangers looked like inverted colanders, having been well perforated by fragmentation bombs. It was my impression the French were highly incensed because of all the destruction.

My log shows arrival at Marrakech on 20 February and departure on 3 March, 1943. Destination was Lasenia Airdrome near Oran, Algeria on the Mediterranean coast. Since our airfield at Navarn would not be ready for a couple of weeks, we were able to schedule additional training flights. These included procedures for assembling a formation of thirty plus aircraft, climb-out, maneuvers, descent and landing sequence. A formation of this size was unwieldy and all maneuvers had to be gradual and deliberate. The basic unit of the formation was a flight of three aircraft arranged in a "V." If a fourth aircraft was necessary, it was positioned behind the flight leader and below his wake turbulence. A squadron consisted of a lead flight and a flight on each side, again forming a "V." Thus a Squadron could accommodate up to twelve aircraft. The group was made up of Squadrons following a similar pattern.

It was well established the 99th incurred fewer combat losses than other comparable units in the North African Theater and that our bombing was highly accurate. For example, the 347th Squadron did not lose a B-17 in combat until after completion of my fifty missions in mid-September, 1943. As of 3 May 1943, the total combat losses for the group were less than the seven aircraft lost on that date due to weather.

Most of our missions were without fighter escort. When enemy fighters were encountered, we tried to uncover as many guns as possible. If an attack was coming in from 2 o'clock high, the pilot of the aircraft on the right wing of the flight leader would position his aircraft slightly lower and the one on the left slightly higher relative to the flight leader. This minor change within each flight from a "flat V" to a "stepped V" allowed about thirty percent more guns to be aimed at enemy aircraft and for a longer period of time. Each crew member was connected to the aircraft intercom and would alert pilots and other crew members on the position of enemy aircraft. The 99th always flew a tight, well-disciplined formation. This, combined with the professionalism of the ground and flight personnel, was the secret of our success.

Yes, I was on the mission over Gerbini Airdrome 6 July 1943 (see Ben Warmer's account elsewhere in this newsletter). This was my 34th mission out of a total low forties for the group. My position was Squadron leader of the 347th located above and to the right of the Group lead Squadron commanded by General Upthegrove. The fighters made more frontal attacks on our formation than I had seen in my previous thirty-three missions. It appeared they were trying to break up the formation using tactics developed over Germany where they continued straight through the very loose bomber formations. Our formation was too tight for that exercise and we sat up there at thirty thousand feet playing "chicken." Neither the B-17s nor the fighters made a good target profile headon, but when they "peeled-off" our gunners got a few. According to news clippings, the final tally was 41 enemy fighters shot down and 25 aircraft destroyed on the ground vs three B-17s downed. It is interesting to note that the 99th returned four days later and bombed Gerbini airfields Nos. 4 and 5. (to be continued)

LW LTB

Dear Lew;

I well remember the results of that stepped-down formation. On one mission, probably 25 Aug 43 to Foggia without fighter escort (unless one counts the 100 Germans alongside) when we were under attack from the rear by Me-109s in waves of five. Two FW-190s came in at 9 o'clock, one behind the other, boring in on our wingtip. Since all of our rear-firing guns were occupied, I feared that these two Krauts were unobserved, and I tried to bend my navigator gun to get at them. By the time that the first Kraut had reached the 1000-yard mark I was a wee bit worried. At that moment the plane on our right, piloted by "Zork" was rose about twenty feet, the left plane lowered about the same amount, all three planes of the element dipped their left wings so that the fire-control cutoff freed the top turrets, and the element gave a warm welcome to the first Focke-Wulfe. As stove lids and stuff shredded off him, his partner found business elsewhere, so Suxton in the ball got a free shot at said partner. The last-second deployment of those three turrets was as smooth as if the three pilots had one mind.

In regard to Gerbini, I had the very satisfying privilege of being lead navigator when the BTO, Dub Henderson piloting, lead the Group back to Gerbini on 6 July 43. We expected a real battle, so we went over to Gozo and picked up an escort of Spitfires. A couple of Me-109s came up and as promptly went down with several Spitfires on their ass. When I later found out that my buddy from cadet days, Sam Levine, had been killed at Gerbini, it was some comfort to recall that we had had the last word.

george

FROM THE VEEP

Dear George;

March 9, 1987

Last fall there was an inquiry in the November Bulletin I believe, from a fellow who wanted information on the Linz, Austria Bombing Mission on July 25, 1944. I happened to fly that one and have thought about what information I might pass on that would be informative. In looking over my Diary I find a good lot of information there but it needs to be written in a manner which is more understandable. Referring to my Diary I submit the following information on that particular combat mission.

TARGET: Linz, Austria. Hermann Goering Tank Wurks, July 25, 1944. Aircraft was Radar, tail number 232733. Pilot was Captain Karnes.

We were quite deep into Austria, (enemy territory) when fighters began to show up and their attacks were very persistent on a B-24 Group flying below and behind us, with really quite devastating results on that B-24 Group, they were hit heavily. As more and more fighters came on the scene, more and more of us became involved and we soon were involved in a full blown areal battle, the whole war seemed to engulf us. On the bomb run the flak became intense and very accurate and this too, began to take it's toll in battle damage and further loss of airplanes as we progressed on into the target. In one instance one whole wing was blown off a B-17 with no survivors. Several other planes exploded with the same "no survivor" results. Any place you looked in the sky you could see a trail of smoke and a ball of flame. There were many, many parachutes from planes going down. Some simply falling from formation, losing altitude and dropping behind, others in very visible trouble with the crews bailing out, parachutes appeared all over the sky. Any place you looked you could see a trail of smoke and a ball of flame.

At bombs away, I had just checked the bomb bay clear, Captain Karnes took sharp evasive action to avoid wreckage and blast from a B-17 that exploded ahead and above us. This was most frightening to me since I saw the ground disappear and nothing by sky in sight through that bomb bay until Captain Karnes told us what was happening. Incidentally, I flew quite a few missions with Captain Karnes and I liked his crew and had the greatest confidence you can have in him. He was one of the best. The gunners on our crew counted 34 heavy bombers in trouble. Not all went down, we know some of those that left formation did make it back so I really don't have any idea how many bombers we actually lost on that day, nearly all from other Bomb Groups. In spite of all the tremendous opposition our target coverage was reported to have been good. This was my 38th combat mission.

George, I sure hope this is sufficient for your needs. We're looking forward to seeing you and Martha later this month.

Sincerely,

Joe C. Kenney
Joe C. Kenney

War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest thing; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war is worse. . . . A man who has nothing which he cares about more than his personal safety is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.

John Stuart Mills

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 US Army

5 January 1945
Ref: USA/SKP/370

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Jordan, Joseph A., Sgt. 13100602, 99th B Gp, 416 B. Sq.
Born - 11 Oct 1921
Home Address - 645 N. Main St., [sic]
Peacetime Profession - School
MIA - 13 Dec 1944
Enlisted - 13 Aug 1942
RTD - 3 Jan 1945
Missions - 1
Casley, John, Sgt., 36896064, 99th B. Gp., 416 B. Sq.
Born - 13 Sep 1925
Home Address - 329 Louise Ave., Highland Park, Mich
Peacetime Profession - Draftsman, A.C.
MIA - 18 Dec 1944
Enlisted - 30 Dec 1943
RTD - 3 Jan 1945
Missions - 1
2. Source 1, Sgt Jordan; Source 2 Sgt Casley. On 18 Dec 1944, Sources were on a mission to Odertol. The plane was a B-17 and the pilot, Lt John B. Clark.
Trouble was experienced on the way to the target. No. 2 and 3 engines were only pulling 15 mis. The spare amplifier was tried, but made no difference. Tubes were also changed but to no avail.
After the ship had returned to the area of Budapest, intending to make a crash landing, it was attacked by "Yak" a/c and bullets cut through the plane.
As the plane was flying at a low altitude in a spiral with only two engines and no guns, the pilot gave orders to bale out. 2500 ft.
When Sources baled out there were only the pilot, Co-Pilot and Sgt Capen on board.
3. Never in enemy hands.
4. Sgt Jordan landed in a tree in the area (46-44N 19-32E), and was met on landing by two Hungarian peasants who took him into a nearby house where he was given some "Vuio." While there the Navigator F/O Bouchard and Bdr. Lt Drew, arrived with some Russian soldiers.
Sgt Casley landed in a ploughed field about 4-5 miles distant from Jordan. thinking he might be in German territory he hid his chute and mae west, and walked for about a mile in a river to put possible watch dogs off his scent.
After hiding under a bridge he was met by some Hungarian peasants who took him to join Sgt Carnes, Capen and Dabney in a nearby house.
Sources have nothing further to add to Exhibit A on the interrogation of other members of their crew. See this report (2nd Lt F.M. Drew and Crew USA/SKP/369) for story of evacuation.

K.K. Kennedy
Capt, AIS

3 Incls

- Incl 1 - Ltrs 303.6 (2)
- Incl 2 - Appendix C
- Incl 3 - Appendix D

APPENDIX C

Razors, tooth brush and tooth paste should be included in escape kits which are otherwise excellent. The chocolate bar is better than the dextrose bar.

In Sources Squadron, it is the practice to have scissor and morphine with co-pilot. At altitude it is impossible to disconnect oxygen and go forward to fetch these.

Because of this, crew members were unable to cut the clothing and get at wounds of Sgt Austin, who was bleeding badly.

APPENDIX D

Russian officers and enlisted men told Sources that after this war, they are going to "knock hell out of Japan."

In Belgrade, Tito is not very popular with the civilians (Yugoslavs) Bulgarian soldiers contacted, are now very pro-Allied.



Lightings In the Sky

Oh, Heddy Lamarr is a beautiful gal
And Madeline Carol is too.
But you'll find, if you query, a different Theory
Amongst any bomber crew.
For the loveliest thing of which one could sing
(This side of the Heavenly Gates)
Is no blondes or brunettes of the Hollywood set;
But an escort of P-38's

Yes, in days that have passed, when the tables were massed
With glasses of scotch or Champagne.
It's quite true that the sight was a thing of delight
Us, intent upon feeling no pain.
But, no longer the same, nowadays in this game,
When we head north from Messinas Straits
Take the sparkling wines everytime, just make mine
An escort of P-38's

Bryon, Shelley and Keats ran a dozen dead heats
Describing the view from the hills
Of the valleys in May when the winds gently sway,
An army of bright daffodils.
Take the daffodils, Bryon; the wild flowers, Shelly;
Yours is the myrtle friend, Keats.
Just reserve me those cuties, American Beauties,
An escort of P-38's

Sure we're braver than hell; on the ground all is swell
In the air it's a diferent story.
We sweat out our track thru fighters and flak
We're willing to split up the glory.
Well they wouldn't reject us so heaven protect us,
And until all this shooting abates,
Give us courage to fight 'em and one other small item--
An escort of P-38's

Courtesy of Jesse N. Hobbs



ANCIENT RUINS AND ARCHAEOLOGY, DeCamp
. . . in the winter of 1922-1923 . . . a ship reported that Easter Island itself had sunk beneath the sea. But time proved that Easter Island was all right; it was the ship's navigator that was wrong. p. 239

From July 24, 1943 issue "Stars and Stripes" (N. African Edition)

**CAPTURED B-17 GUNNERS FORM
CHEERING SECTION FOR YANKS**

By Sgt Jack Foisie
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Advanced Allied Headquarters--The Yanks advancing on the Sicilian town of Ragusa didn't know it, but they had friends inside the town cheering them on.

The coming of the Yanks meant liberation for two American Flying Fortress gunners who had parachuted to safety from a dying queen of the sky only to be taken prisoner.

Upon their rescue, the two men, TSgt David O. Fleming, of Jackson, Mich.; and 1st Sgt. Allen B. Huckabee, of Temple, Tex., were able to reveal the story of one of the greatest air fights of all times--the battle of a single Flying Fortress against a swarm of at least 35 kill-thirsty Messerschmitt 109s and Macchi 202s. The story begins July 5.

The "D---", that's the name of the B-17, was 10 minutes from Comiso, its target, when the first enemy fighters came around but they were just a nuisance until flak knocked out the number four engine. That cut down speed but the formation cut its speed to match and sheltered the D--- as it climbed after the bomb run. Then the number one engine went out and the Fortress was hardly making more than stalling speed. There was nothing else then for the formation to do but abandon the D---.

READY FOR THE KILL

Immediately the Axis fighters swarmed in for the kill. "It sounded like rice on a tin roof," said Fleming, "when the bullets began to hit us." The radio went out, then the oxygen, then the men.

Fleming was talking in a low, tense voice as he described the picture of doom. The 43-year-old Huckabee, believed to be the oldest Air Corps enlisted man in combat service, mumbled an occasional addition.

The first man to go was the tail gunner. wounded, he crawled back into the waist and helped load another gun until he died. The ball turret gunner was next, crumpling from a 20mm explosive shell. The number two gunner was killed almost instantly by the raking cross-fire of two fighters. But the Fortress continued to fly and fly, though there were no holes big enough in the wings and fuselage to crawl through. The pilot was struggling to save the plane. The co-pilot was slumped over against the pilot.

Fleming went forward to help him. He found the co-pilot dead. One more was to die--the belly turret gunner. One shell struck his gun, curling the barrel up like a withered flower; another bullet struck him in the stomach.

ABANDON SHIP

Fleming bit his lip; he seemed to be re-living that nightmare. "Things were getting black" he said. "We were fast losing altitude. The pilot gave the order to abandon ship. We struggled into our chutes--there was a rip in mine from shrapnel, but I had no time to fear that it might not open."

The engineer was the first to jump. He went through the shot-out window. About then a shell exploded the ammunition box and lead began to pop all over the place. an Army photographer went next. The bombardier and the navigator jumped. The pilot thought he was the last to clear the ship, but the bomb bay door through which Fleming and Huckabee intended to jump slammed shut just as they stood on the edge. The ship lurched and flung them to the floor. The two recovered and fell out the other bomb bay opening.

As they floated down, they watched the D---. "It didn't want to die," said Fleming. "The grand old ship didn't stop. It seemed to pilot itself, first going into a spin, then coming out of it, then going into another spin, finally catching fire."

PRISONERS OF WAR

Fleming and Huckabee came down, they found out later, about 12 miles from Ragusa. They never saw the other five again, although they later were told that all had been captured and sent to Italy. A farmer helped the two to reach the shade of a tree and soon the civilian police came up and took them to Ragusa. They were treated decently, Fleming said, getting better food than the Italian soldiers, but even so, it wasn't very good. The most uncomfortable thing was the Allied air raids--they had 14 alarms in one day and night.

Huckabee received 11 bullet wounds and Fleming was wounded five times and received a cracked ankle in landing. Both men are on their way to recovery at a base hospital in North Africa.

Word received Sept 1 states that Fleming has been permanently grounded from combat service and ordered returned to the United States as an instructor. Fleming has fully recovered from his bullet wounds although still experiencing some difficulty with his ankle.

David is presently residing in Flat Rock, MI.

I last saw Huckabee in a Cheyenne thirst parlor about Jan. 1, 1944.
We have failed to locate him with our postcard search. geo.



Theodore Haid of Albuquerque has given us the following account of gunnery training and shooting at live targets.

HERE'S HOW I HELPED WIN THE WAR DURING WORLD WAR II

I spent a whole month at Gunner School in Harlingen, Texas near Brownsville. the last week I flew in AT-6s with a 30 caliber machine gun mounted in the rear cockpit to fire at a sock pulled by another AT-6. The gunnery range was Padre Island. We had 100 rounds of ammunition marked red, white or blue. After three of us took turns shooting at the sock, we would return and count the holes each one had made. We flew eight times out to the target unless a gun malfunctioned; then we were known as a knuckle head and given another flight.

I remember one time the pilot, who was a S/Sgt. put the AT-6 into a vertical dive. I glanced at the air speed indicator, and it read 250 mph. He then pulled up into a steep climb, and I blacked out for a second. Then dizzy as I was, I swung my gun around and fired all 100 rounds at the sock and gave the pilot the signal to leave. Before I could sit down and fasten my seat belt, he put the plane in a barrel roll. All I could see was sky and sea going around and around. I found out later that I had made two hits on the sock.

During graduation I jumped from Private to Sergeant and a month later I was promoted to S/Sgt.

We put our group together at Gowan Field in Boise, Idaho. Then we went to Walla Walla, Washington, but the weather was too bad, so we moved to Sioux City, Iowa. There we trained as the 346 Bomb Squad in the 99th Bomb Group with nine crew members. One night it was snowing hard and we were coming in for a blind landing. One plane crashed and burned. They figured snow had stopped up his Pitot tube and gave him a false reading. After all the crews were trained, we moved to Salina, Kansas to pick up our plane number 229512.

This was in January 1943, and they gave us a week leave. That meant two days each way by bus at 35 miles an hour and two days at home. I lived in Hernandez, New Mexico then. Col. Rainey told us that any man who reported in late would be absent without leave. I reported in on time, and they told me Col. Rainey's train was late, to go meet him at 9:00 p.m. They had a car and driver ready, and both of us went to the railroad station and parked. I found Col. Rainey as he was getting off of the train. He said, "Take my bag,"

and went off to the parking lot, with me following. He gave me a fifty cent tip, and I turned it over to the driver.

I might as well introduce our crew now. Cap. Bliss, Pilot; Lt. Larkin, Copilot; Lt. Banasiak, Navigator; Lt. Belven, Bombadier; T/Sgt. De Lano, Engineer; T/Sgt. Cannellas, Radio Operator; S/Sgt. Arter, Ball Turret Gunner; S/Sgt. Hamilton, Waist Gunner; and me, S/Sgt. Haid, Tail Gunner.

From Salina, Kansas we spent a week in De Ridder, Louisiana and another week in Palm Beach, Florida. They put us up at the Breakers Hotel, which made me feel very important. After about a week, a mail truck pulled up to the plane and loaded on two sacks of mail marked for Casablanca, Africa. Now we knew where we were going. Good-by U.S.A. We were off!

Our first stop was Puerto Rico. A truck pulled up and the driver said, "Load your stuff aboard for the barracks." I had a musette bag with all my shaving equipment, a mirror, a clock, and a carton of cigarettes. Then the engineer said, "Haid, you're the first on the list to stand guard tonight." And so with a .45 caliber Tommy Gun on my shoulder, I stood guard. It was the last time that I ever saw my musette bag.

A couple of days later, with the airplane serviced, we took off for the jungles of South America. We landed on a runway cut through the jungle about 20 miles from Georgetown in British Guyana. A bus took us to the mess hall which stood on stilts about 10 feet high. I looked around and saw that all of the buildings were on stilts. At a long table, we ate biscuits, oranges, and bananas, with cocoa to drink.

The next morning, we gassed up and took off for Natal, Brazil. We stayed long enough for each plane to install two bombay tanks of 500 gallons for the trip to Africa. At one side of the field was a shower -- an outdoor shower with canvas sides and no top. I decided to take a shower. I hadn't taken one, other than natural rain showers, for a few days. I took a bar of soap and lathered all over; then the water stopped. So, I wiped myself dry and put my clothes back on and that was that. It seemed there was a water shortage.

When we left, one of the crew had checked out a vacuum cleaner. He said, "It's too late now to take it back," as we went down the runway with nothing but the Atlantic Ocean ahead.

We flew all night and at break of day, we landed at Bathurst, Africa on a steel-mat runway. English soldiers were busy overseeing about 100 Blacks who were working on the steel-mat runway. They were working in various forms of garb, like women's silk nightgowns, but barefooted on the hot steel.

I was eating a sandwich when a couple of black kids came out of the jungle to watch me. I took part of my sandwich and held it out to them but they ran. I laid it down, and they came back, picked it up, and disappeared into the jungle.

In the morning, we took off again for a desert crossing. We were supposed to land in Casablanca, but the Germans had bombed the airstrip. We landed at Merrakech instead. I remember all of the officers got rooms in town, so our ball turret gunner said, "Okay, you guys follow me if you want a bed at a hotel in town." We followed and found out that every other door was a whore house. We slept in the plane that night.

The next day we flew to Oran, Africa where we stayed a whole month waiting for the weather to clear and our ground crew to show up. I heard that they were on a boat which was sunk, and they they went on a mission and all got shot down. It rained night and day all the time we were in Oran. After wading in mud for a month, I noticed my shoes were completely rotted out. There was no supply where I could get a pair. Then Hamilton, who was the waist gunner, said, "I

have a box of rights size 9½, just your size." I found another guy with a box of lefts size 10½. I said, "I'll take them." So I had one 9½ and the other 10½ as a pair.

When our ground crew didn't show up, we decided to move up to the front. The Sea Bees came with bulldozers and bulldozed a strip through a grain field, and we moved in. The nearest town was called Setif, about 20 miles west. The airstrip was east and west, and the summer winds blew from the south. One good thing about it, when we took off on a mission, one right after the other, the dust would clear immediately.

We flew 22 missions without a ground crew. We serviced the planes ourselves, loaded bombs, pumped gasoline from 55 gallon barrels, etc.

Our first mission was a milk run. We flew to Villacidro, Sicily, a place where they were building a barracks. We went through our usual evasive action before bombs away. The bursts of flack burst well below us.

We flew tail-end Charley a few times, then turned back, waiting for a plane to have engine trouble. If none turned back, then we turned back before we were halfway there. Of course, we couldn't call it a mission.

We flew six missions, two in one day at 12,000 feet, on an island called Pantelleria, off the coast of Africa. One of these missions we were attacked by Goering's crack Falk Wolfyellow nose Squadron. They flew in from the tail with a Me. 109 on each wing. I saw tracers glancing off its nose, as it went under us. The Me. 109 didn't fare so well as it went into a spiral with black smoke trailing after. The tail gunner on our left wing, Chuck Ward of Albuquerque, was given credit for it.

On our sixth mission on Pantelleria at 12,000 feet, I felt a bump, and there on my right was a hole where an 88 went through and exploded up above us. It had gone through the fabric-covered elevator. Then on the way back, we hit tornado-like winds. My ammunition broke the box lids and all 1200 rounds came down on me. When we landed, the plane looked like a windstorm had hit it.

One mission was on Gerbini, Sicily, where we lost three planes due to enemy fighters. We were expecting some P-38s, but they didn't show up. About 200 or more Me. 109s consolidated on the rear of the formation. They swarmed around the 348 Squadron like mad bees. Finally, the lead plane lost power, and all three planes were lagging back. One plane caught fire. It looked like it was coming out of the radio room. The plane stalled and went into a dive. At the same time, a parachute came out and opened. I looked down at the plane about 10,000 feet below us, and it suddenly blew up into little pieces. Then the remaining two were all by themselves; the fighters were still all around them. The second one caught fire in the radio room. It ended up like the first plane.

We dropped our bombs and headed for home. Pretty soon a Me. 109 came from the front and made a barrel roll over the top of us with a spitfire right on his tail. From there on out, the spitfires took over.

I looked and looked to see if I could see the third B-17, and there he was down below us with two Me. 109s following. My guns went down until they hit the stops. It looked like the second Me. 109 was right in my sight, so I pulled both triggers. I saw two tracers go down side by side. They were heading right for a bulls eye, when the Me. 109 suddenly flipped over and was gone from sight.

I remember Gen. Doolittle when he came to the base. He had us load three 1,600 pound amor piercing bombs aboard the night before. The bomb had sharp points with fuses in the tail.

The next morning we flew on the right wing of Gen. Doolittle, as we headed for La Spezia Harbor off northern Italy where the Italian Navy was bottled up. Three of us dropped our bombs at the same time as we made a run on a battleship from 25,000 feet. All nine bombs hit their target. The battleship began to sink.

About a month later, somebody got a newspaper from home with big headlines on the front page that read, "B-17s from the 99th Bomb Group sink the Italian Navy."

We replaced our elevator that had been hit (used one) and a left wing (it was a used one also); a fighter had shot our wing full of 20 mm shells. Over the target, we couldn't feather number 4 engine, as all the oil was gone, and it had to windmill for three hours on the way back.

Number 229512 was on the last of 37 missions. We were bombing the railroad yards across the straits of Messina when flack hit us. Our waist gunners were knocked down. One had a leg chewed up, and I got hit behind the ear. The control cables were all cut. The inside was a mess. I don't know how Lt. Larkin brought us down, but he sure did.

We belly landed in about three feet of water in a lake. It was about five miles behind the English lines in southern Sicily. Capt. Bliss was flying another plane, so Lt. Larkin was pilot and Lt. Jones was copilot on this mission.

We were all covered with mud; the plane scraped the bottom as it came in and stopped about 300 yards from shore.

An English MP came out in a jeep. He brought a stretcher so he could put the injured man on it. Then two of us, who could walk, carried the stretcher and put the injured man aboard the jeep. There was a small field hospital about three miles away. An English doctor took a look at the two waist gunners and said, "We'll keep them here." He examined me and said, "You're okay to leave."

I received a purple heart as there was a piece of flack burried behind my ear and it's still there. We soon moved to Tunis with a new plane and two new waist gunners. We finished the 12 remaining missions to make 50.

Thank you, Ted. Your account sure brings back a lot of old memories.
george



ANY "ACES" AMONG BOMBARDIERS?

FRANCIS L. "Frank" BALL, class 43-4 at Midland poses an interesting question as to whether or not any 'bombardiers' or 'bambigators' can claim being an "Ace" by having downed five enemy aircraft?

Frank reports he has two confirmed kills while flying with the 731st Sqdn of the 452nd Bomb Group out of Deopham Green, England. It is interesting to note that he flew from Jan-Apr 1944 as Lead Bombardier, then went detached service to the 96th Bm Gp (413 Sq) as a radar operator during May & June, then returned to the 452nd as Lead Navigator! In between times, he was shooting down aircraft!

How about some reports of bombardier enemy aircraft "kills"?

BOMBARDIERS, INC. is looking for Bombardiers, even if they are not yet aces. See our Reunions column for the address.

Lewis Franke of the 416th Bomb Squadron, (also known as "Ace") is remembered as having downed five Krauts on the 20 Oct 43 mission to Augsburg. Your editor stopped in Scotland Neck, North Carolina in 1950 in search of Lew but was unable to trace him. A recent postcard search was also fruitless.

AVIATION CADET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Harry C. Bradshaw
RFD #1
Newmarket, N.H.
03857

Robert C. White
54 Seton Trail
Ormond Beach,
Florida, 32074

The Aviation Cadet Alumni Association was initiated by the late Ralph E. Parker (43-E Napier) to provide ex-cadets the current addresses of former classmates. Harry Bradshaw (44-E Blytheville) and Bob White (44-I Brooks) are continuing this no-dues, non-profit endeavor, steadily adding names into their personal computers. Some 2000 names are now available by Flight Class to participants who send a stamped envelope to either of the above, each of whom maintains identical information as a safeguard against loss. Former pilot cadets are asked to send in their Flight Class, preflight, primary, basic and advanced locations. Time is no longer on our side and your active participation will be welcomed, especially by your classmates. Under no circumstances will commercial use be made of this information.

Mr. Ernest Gentit
Box 398
Bryan, Ohio 43506

3/26/86

I saw the notice of your reunion in the American Legion magazine. We would be grateful if you would bring the above to the attention of your WWII pilots through your newsletter or other communications. Many thanks and good luck on the reunion of the 99th Bomb Group.



NEWS, DUES & VIEWS



483RD MEMORIAL AT THE AIR FORCE MUSEUM

At St. Paul during the business meeting it was suggested that we should investigate the possibility of putting names of our deceased on the monument. Jake Grimm, our Archivist, says we can now verify all of those who were killed.

After some discussion the membership voted to make an inquiry to see if the project was feasible.

I asked Charles "O'Bie" O'Brien (815), who lives in Fairborn, OH to investigate and let me know.

Charlie writes, "The Museum rejects our idea because they do not like lists of names of those killed in action on the Memorials. They want the Memorial Park to remain a park and not take on the atmosphere of a cemetery."

In addition he says there is not enough room to put our 200+ names on the monument so they can be read.

Incidentally, our Memorial now sets amongst 39 other memorials and trees. Looks like we really started something.

Your Board of Directors has engaged as consultant a journeyman Juju-man from Yundum. Should you be so ill-advised as not to join the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society, you may be transported back to Yundum in The Gambia, back in the Fourth World.

QUOTES

From MAIL CALL in the 461st LIBERAIDER NEWSLETTER.
by Hugh Hanley - 765th Bomb Squadron
... we went to the briefing room. As we entered, and saw that grim black line due almost direct northeast into Eastern Germany, someone muttered, "Oh ----, Blechammer again!" Bill McClain, our navigator replied, "No, it's east of that area."

S-2 began the briefing by telling us that the target today was Odertal, a small refinery near the Polish border. . . .

There is more to Hanley's excellent account, for he was shot down, fired at while in the silk, and generally had a hard day at the office.
Thanks, Hugh by George

So now you know where Odertal is (or was).

REACHING JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG

When the Fuhrer suggested that Germany denounce the Geneva Convention (by this time German popular resentment against Allied bombing had put public opinion on his side regarding harsh measures for Allied fliers), Doenitz recommended that it would be better to take "the measures considered necessary" but not to denounce the Convention publicly. p. 258

"I want young people to grow up so that they will frighten the world, a violent, dominant, cruel youth. . . . I do not want intellectual education."
A. Hitler, from p. 10, A BACKWARD LOOK, by Daniel Lang

In spite of the devastating effects of the terror bombing, the Allies did not succeed in setting the German people against their leaders.
quoting a German, p. 7, A BACKWARD LOOK

COURIER FROM WARSAW by Jan Nowak

It was wrong to see the Warsaw Rising solely as demonstration to the outside world inspired by false hopes. The underground leaders were also deeply concerned for the morale of the population, which had to be maintained to confront whatever the future had instore. For years millions of people who were active in daily clandestine operations had been long-ing for the day when they would come out into the open and strike at the enemy. Regardless of the immediate premises and calculations of the Polish leadership, the real effects of the Warsaw Rising only became apparent in the years after the war, when Stalin succeeded in making Poland his satellite.

The forcible imposition on Poland of Stalin's political system and puppet government signaled the beginning of still another attempted conquest: the subjugation of the minds of the Polish people. Though Poland had no means to defend her independence, she successfully resisted all attempts at Sovietization. After a third of a century, Poland remains an island in the Soviet sea.
p. 451

We resume the 99BG War Diary with the oldest unpublished accounts in our files. The account should run chronologically henceforth, although the fact that the microfilms run in no real order has caused us problems and may again. Sometimes the material was microfilmed in reverse order; sometimes it was microfilmed several times, and so on. geo

HEADQUARTERS 99th BOMB GP. (H)
APO 520 US ARMY

5 April 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Records

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

1. Unit history of the 99th Bombardment Group (H) Headquarters, for the period 1 March 1944, to 31 March 1944.

- a. The present designation of the unit is Fifteenth Air Force through 5th Wing (US)
- b. changes in organization
 - (1) No change in unit designation
 - (2) No transfer of units
 - (3) No change in commanding officer
 - (4) On 10 March, Lt Col Wayne E. Thurman left the Group under orders from 15th Air Force and was succeeded as deputy Group commander by Lt Col William J. Hendrick, Jr., former CO of the 346th Squadron. On 16 March, Lt Col James A. Barnett was assigned as acting executive officer (SO #59 par 9 5th Wing) in the absence of Lt Col; William Hampton, who was confined to the hospital. On 15 March, 1st Lt Kenneth V. Weidner was appointed Group ordnance officer. On 2 March, Major Jack Hitt, Group S-4 officer, was transferred to 15th Air Force, and was succeeded on 3 March by Capt Gerald E. Van Bergen. On 17 March, Capt Van Bergen was transferred to the 305th Wing (S #66 par 7 5th Wing) and was succeeded as S-4 officer on 28 March by Major Ellis H. Gray.
- c. Strength, commissioned and enlisted
 - (1) Month of March
 - (a) 29 officers and 48 enlisted men at beginning
 - (b) Increase of 4 enlisted men
 - (c) 29 officers and 52 enlisted men at end
- d. Station: Tortorella, Italy (Foggia #2 airdrome)
- e. No movements.
- f. Campaigns
 - (1) Italian
 - (2) Begun 8 September 1943, and still in progress.
- g. Operations

Bad weather hampered our operations during March, and although our planes started out on a lot of missions, they only accomplished 12. These included sweeps into Austria to strike at Klagenfurt and Fischamond Market, an attack on Toulon in France, a blow at Sofia in Bulgaria, and our usual pounding of enemy targets in Italy. Probably our most significant mission was on 15 March when our planes joined virtually every other ship in the MAAF lineup to blast Cassino with 2,500 tons of bombs in an attempt to knock out this German stronghold once and for all. Our planes made one successful trip to Cassino and were on their way a second time when weather closed in and forced them to return with their bombs. Early in the month--3 March--we revisited Rome to blast the Littorio marshalling yards. From an accuracy standpoint, we achieved our best results in pinpoint bombing the Verona rail yards 28 March and the Turin rail yards 29 March.

- h. Most of our missions during the month were led by Lt Col Lauer and Lt Col Headrick, our CO and deputy CO, respectively.
- i. No headquarters losses in action.
- j. Headquarters members decorated during the month included: Lt Col William Headrick, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross 15 March (GO #144 15th AF) for outstanding achievement in leading the 346th squadron on the highly successful mission to the Fiume, Italy, oil refinery February 24, 1944. For meritorious achievement in sustained sorties against the enemy, 1st Lt Robert L. McCain received the Air Medal with eight Oak Leaf Cluster (GO #99 15th AF, 5 March); Major Vernon E. Fairbanks received the second OLC to the Air Medal (GO 87 15th AF, 1 March); Capt Benjamin W. Jones received the fourth, fifth and sixth OLC to the Air Medal (GO #87 15th AF, 1 March); Russel T. Jacobs received the first and second OLC to the Air Medal (GO #87 15th AF, 1 March); 1st Lt Ernest D. Bryant received the first OLC to the Air Medal (GO #85 15th AF, 1 March); Lt Col Lawrence S. Seamans received the first OLC to the Air Medal (GO #87 15th AF, 1 March); and Capt Philip M. Philips received the Air Medal (GO #99 15th, 5 March).
2. Enclosed is the war diary of the unit for the period 1 March 1944, to 31 March 1944, and historical photographs of the Group.

2 Incls.
War Diary
Photographs

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

CRITIQUE OF UNIT HISTORIES-5th Wing-30 April 1944

99th Bombardment Group

History Satisfactory
War Diary Satisfactory

346th Bombardment Squadron

History Satisfactory
War Diary Satisfactory

An informational sketch of the squadron area might be of considerable interest at a later date.

347th Bombardment Squadron

History Satisfactory
War Diary Contains excellent detail

348th Bombardment Squadron

History Satisfactory
War Diary Devoted too largely to missions. More details of everyday life of the men, their morale, sanitary problems, etc., would be of value.

Photographs

Excellent quality, well selected, adequately captioned, make up an extremely valuable addition.

416th Bombardment Squadron

History Has information but does not follow Memorandum 45-10
War Diary More emphasis on important things, morale, etc.

The 416th Squadron Diary, if memory serves me properly, was in my time a scatological obscenity. One wonders if it got chivalrous later. In early 1943 it was written by Zork who was at the time doing a slow burn from Orance's having pirated his crew. Zork may have suffered from writers' cramp after the Kraut bullet drove a piece of a throttle into his arm. I do not recall that any of ^{us} suffered from an excess of chivalry.
geo

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 3 April, 1944 - BUDAPEST

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: For five minutes before the target, and continuing for 10 minutes after the target, a total of 25 Me 109s and FW 190s were observed at altitude ranging from 19,000 - 21,000'.

5 Me 109s made individual attacks, low, at 5, 8, and 10 o'clock, but did not press in very closely. These Me 109s seemed to be the old Me 109s with square wing type. They were observed to be gray colored with the bottom wing painted silver.

The enemy fighters appeared to fear the P-38s and retired quickly. The escort did a fine job of protecting the B-17s.

B. Flak: Over the target this group experienced moderate, inaccurate and heavy flak of tracking type, which inflicted minor damage on 5 A/C

En route intense, accurate and heavy flak was experienced by the 99th Bomb Group at Imotski L/G, 43° 24'N - 17° 30'E, as well as at Kisoljak 43° 59'N - 18° 11'E.

C. Escort forced fighters to stay out of range.

D. Assigned building and three others in same cluster hit. Some bombs southeast edge runway Tokol A/D. Estimates of 60 to more than 100 S/S and T/S fighters on Tokol A/D.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 15 April, 1944 - PLOESTI (town)

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: This group encountered 8-10 Me 109s, FW 190s, a JU88, and an Ma 210 for about 5 minutes immediately after coming off the target, for a total of six attacks.

The attacks were mainly from 1 to 5 o'clock level. The Me109s were seen to have belly tanks and were silver in color with yellow spinners, yellow wing tips and a yellow band around the fuselage.

The Me109s and the JU88 were seen to fire rockets and were first seen from below and to the right of the bomber formation, leading to the belief their base was at the target area.

B. Flak: From a mean altitude of 22,800' the 99th bomb Group experienced moderate, heavy and inaccurate flak over the target. This was of the barrage type and 5 aircraft were holed.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1250 - 22,000', 1 B-17 down in flames at 46°40'N, 28°20'E. 4 to 6 chutes seen to open, 1 on fire. Our #000.

1255 - 20,000', 1 B-17 of Group ahead went down on fire and crashed--no chutes seen.

1510 - B-17 ditched at 42°35'N, 17°00'E, 2 _____ boats seen heading toward plane.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Total Losses: From Flak - 0
From Fighters - 1
Other Reasons - 0

B. Damage: From Flak - 5 (minor)
From Fighters - 0
Other Reasons - 0

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

1. 7-10 E/A encountered, Tactics, LTC. One formation of 5 Me109s made attacks in line abreast from 1 to 5 o'clock level. Other encounters from 2 o'clock and 12 o'clock level.

2. 1 Claim: One Me109 destroyed by S/Sgt H.J. Wilkins, 18191799, top turret, RFD #2, Yukon, Oklahoma.

3. Results were not observed since bombs were dropped thru 10/10 undercast. Smoke was seen coming up thru the clouds as formation left the target. Bombs believed to have dropped in SW parts of the city near or on the M/Y. Escort was not observed.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 4 April, 1944 - BUCHAREST M/Y, ROMANIA

ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: While approaching the target, just after leaving the IP, this group observed EAC which started attacking unaggressively out of the sun. Attacks continued for approximately 30 minutes. As the group went over the target, attacks became more aggressive and severe frontal attacks were pressed thru the formation, the EAC then turning and attacking from the rear. Some single attacks were made from all clock positions and rockets were fired by one formation of six Me 109s making a frontal attack. Approximately 35 Me 109s, FW 190s, Ma 202s, JU 88s, Me 111s and Me 210s attacked.

This group's _____ 6 EAC destroyed and two damaged, with no losses.

B. Flak: Over the target, this group experienced heavy, moderate, inaccurate flak of the barrage type. No aircraft were lost to flak from this group; however, a B24 was seen to go down over the target with its wing on fire, one parachute being observed to open. This group passed over _____ 43° 24'N - 21° 47'E both going to and from the target and encountered heavy, intense, accurate flak at this location. Seven AC received minor damage from flak received here.

CONCLUSIONA. Total Losses: From Flak - 0

From Fighters - 0

Other Reasons - 0

B. Damage: From Flak - 8 (minor)

1 a/c flak holed (major) - S/Sgt R.N. Cameron, minor, face wounds

From Fighters - 0

Other Reasons - 0

C. Victories: None.

D. Corrections on Telephone Mission Report: Line 6 should read - Jettisoned all bombs - 3 tons - 5 minutes before target, mechanical trouble.

PHILIP M. PHILIPS,
Captain, Air Corps,
S-2, 99t6h Bomb Gp (H)

MISSION REPORT

25 E/A ENCOUNTERED, TACTICS, LTC. Me 109s - FW 190s, Me 210s and few JU 88s. Some head-on rocket attacks coordinated with rear attacks by fighters.. Some out of sun. Not too aggressive. 109s yellow noses and tails with yellow strips around wings.

Illegible

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 5 April 1944 - PLOESTI M/Y, RUMANIA

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: As this group approached the IP, 8 to 10 miscellaneous types EAC, consisting of FW 190, Me 109, Me 210, and JU 88, were seen. Most of these AC did not attack at once, but some single attacks were made during the bomb run and for 10 minutes after leaving the target. Single passes were made from 6 o'clock low and 12 o'clock level. This Group's gunners are claiming two EAC destroyed.

B. Flak: Over the target, this Group experienced heavy and slight, intense, accurate flak which holed several aircraft, caused one casualty and the loss of one airplane. Barrage-type flak was that principally encountered, although some tracking flak was observed. En route to the target, heavy, slight and inaccurate flak was observed from the vicinity of Mis, Yugoslavia.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1502 an unidentified twin- or 4-engined A/C followed the formation for about 15 minutes before the target. Stayed 5,000' below the formation, out of gunners' range and left when flak started. 1526, 2 chutes going down at 45° 41'N - 25° 42' E, source not known.

III. CONCLUSIONA. Total Losses:

From Flak 1

From Fighters 0

Other Reasons 0

B. Damage:

From Flak 25 (minor)

From Fighters 0

Other Reasons 0

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

MISSION REPORT

5-6 E/A ENCOUNTERED, TACTICS, ETC. Mostly unaggressive attacks at target area.

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Target area well covered. Smoke rising up to 15,000'. On target chart #1-101 B-MA, hits at _____ 17-18-19-20. 6 large oil fires at K-20. Tremendous fire at _____

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION: 7 April 1944 - TREVISO M/Y, ITALY

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE:A. Fighters: None.

B. Flak: Slight from Chiaggio and Mestri. 6 batteries 5 miles SW of Treviso, also E of M/Y and W side of town. N and NW of M/Y heavy, slight, inaccurate from Padua. Light, slight, inaccurate at 44° 56' N - 12° 25' E. Light from Campana - 45° 22'N - 12° E.

III. CONCLUSIONDamage:

From Flak 25 (minor)

From Fighters 0

Other Reasons 0

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 12 April 1944 - FISCHAMEND MARKET - AUSTRIA

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: This group was not attacked by any except one of the E/AC seen. This one Me 109 made an unaggressive pass at eight o'clock level and did not return to the encounter. Eight to 10 Me 109s and FW 190s were observed just before and after the target but did not attack. One E/AC was seen attacking a B24 at 25,000 feet just after leaving the target and three others attacking a B-24 group at about 15,000 feet shortly after leaving the target.

B. Flak: The first wave of AC of this group experience moderate, accurate heavy flak of the tracking type over the target. Practically all AC of this wave received hits and one went down in flames as the result of a hit while leaving the target. Seven chutes were seen to open from this airplane. The second wave of this group over the target experienced slight inaccurate flak which did no damage.

II. CONCLUSIONA. Total Losses:

From Flak 1

From Fighters 0

Other Reasons 0

B. Damage: 18
From Flak 16
From Fighters 0
Other Reasons 0

MISSION REPORT

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Assigned bldg #13 3(e) 102/4 hit. Area to east covered. Few bombs to west and northwest. Fires and explosions observed.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 13 April 1944 - GYOR A/C FCTY

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: This group observed 15-20 enemy fighters in the target area, immediately before bombs were dropped and for about five minutes thereafter.

One squadron reports two encounters immediately after the target with e/a coming in high from 7 o'clock

A considerable number of fighters was seen attacking the 2nd Bomb Group ahead of us when they were over the target. There were many of these attacks, quite aggressive with bandits diving down through their formations, out of the sun.

B. Flak: Slight, inaccurate and heavy flak was encountered over the target. This was of the tracking variety and did no damage to our aircraft.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1108 hrs - 1 B-17 losing altitude, 2 to 4 chutes open, then A/C straightened out and continued on course.

1139 - B-17 going down at 47°00'N, 18°20'E, 8 chutes.

1150 - B-17 going down over target, 4-10 chutes.

1205 - B-17 seen going down in spin, 30 miles south of target, no chutes.

1223 - at 45°36'N, 17°02'E, 10 or 11 chutes were seen to open from a B-17 which continued to fly in a wide circle after chutes were observed.

1150 - A P-47 was seen going down in flames over the target.

1152 - Two Me 109s were seen going down in flames after encounters with F-38s.

MISSION REPORT

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Bombs 22-11, P-0. Explosion of _____ vari-colored smoke, brown, yellow, gray, green (as if chemical plant hit). Many fires left burning. North end bridge at 5-0 hit. Oil tanks at 10-0 on fire. Some bombs on hangars at 18 - Q&R - hangars smoking. Escort as briefed: Axis of attack 370 degrees T instead of 306 degrees T, because 2nd overran I.P.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 16 April 1944 - BELGRADE, RUMANIA

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No fighter resistance was encountered on today's mission. En route to the target, an Me 109, Me 110, and JU 88 were observed at various times. These a/c stayed well out.

At the target area, one Me 109 was seen at an altitude of 19,000' but this plane also stayed well out of range.

B. Flak: Over the target area, from a mean average of 21,000', the 99th Bomb Group experienced heavy, intense and accurate flak. This was of the tracking variety and was described by one veteran pilot as the worst he had ever been through. 23 aircraft were damaged by this flak.

One pilot stated that even though he dropped 500 feet a minute off the target, the flak seemed to follow his a/c down and lead him all the way.

The first flak noted was in a series of double bursts, which was repeated four times, before all of the batteries opened up and joined in.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

19

Air: 1222 - 23,500', a/c #32,065 hit by flak over target, wing shot off, spun down at 44°50'N, 20°26'E, 2 chutes. 1322 hrs - 13,000', B-17 seen going down and exploded on ground at 42°42'N, 19°00'E, no chutes.

III. CONCLUSION

Total Losses:

From Flak 1
From Fighters 0
Other Reasons 0

Damage:

From Flak 25 (3 severe, 20 minor)
From Fighters 0
Other Reasons 0

Corrections on Telephone Mission Report: Line 12 should read 5 mine slightly wounded, by flak, instead of 6.

VERNON E. FAIRBANKS
Major, Air Corps
S-2, 99th bomb Gp (H)

MISSION REPORT

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Bombing was scattered. some hits on center of A/D and among buildings on west side. Other hits on the city and adjacent to the A/D.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 17 April 1944 - BELGRADE

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No enemy aircraft were seen at any time by this group.

B. Flak: This group encountered moderate, accurate, heavy flak of tracking and barrage types over the target which holed a number of aircraft and wounded one man. It was reported that most of the bursts of the tracking type came in a series of four. Two of these bursts appeared consistently to be of a slightly lighter color than the regular flak bursts and emitted a shower of silver-colored, thin square pieces of light metal or paper objects approximately 3 or 4 inches square. These floated slowly down. These bursts, together with the regular ones followed the A/C in spite of window and some evasive action. It is believed this might be used as a countermeasure against our efforts or as a basis for aiming other batteries.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1145 - a single-engine plane was seen to crash in flames at 44°45'E - 19° 13'E.

III. CONCLUSION

Damage:

From Flak - 11 planes, 1 man wounded.

MISSION REPORT

33 DROPPED ON TGT 98.75 TONS 500 LB RDX BOMBS .1/.01 FUSES

1 CASUALTIES 1 man wounded in thigh by flak.

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Escort as briefed. Assigned target believed hit but 9/10 coverage and much smoke rendered accurate observation impossible. Smoke rising to 10,000' could be seen from 20 miles away after turning off the target.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 20 April 1944 - VENICE (SHIPPING)

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Three Me 109s were observed at 1335 near Viconsas at an altitude of 25,000'. These stayed out at a distance.

B. Flak: No flak was encountered over the target.

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Escort as briefed. Near misses on shipping in Harbor at Venice. Weather completely closed in at original target.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 28 April 1944 - PIOMBINO

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Eight to 12 Me 109s and FW 190s were seen first at approximately 43°45'N, 13°15'E. Three of the Me 109s formed up and started an attack on one element of this Group's formation from 7:30 o'clock high. Two of the attacking a/c peeled off just after starting the attack. The third a/c pressed the attack and is claimed shot down by one of the defending gunners. No other attacks were made on this group. One E/AC was seen shot down by an escort a/c at 43°40'N, 13°00'E.

B. Flak: This Group encountered slight, heavy, inaccurate flak at the target. Only about 15-20 bursts were observed. En route to and from the target, intense, heavy, accurate flak was encountered at 43°25'N, 11°50'E and at 43°32'N, 11°34'E. Slight, heavy inaccurate flak was encountered at 42°58'N, 12°45'E. One of the Group's a/c received minor flak damage.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1500 hrs - 20,000', 2 chutes observed at 44°32'N, 11°35'E, but a/c continued in formation. 1615-15,000', B-17 in trouble at 42°05'N, 15°01'E, believed to have been hit by flak. ZYYB (call letters), speed 150, course 147 degrees.

MISSION REPORT

8-12 E/A SEEN Me 109s and FW 190s were seen some distance away at 43°45'N, 13°15'E.

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: The target area was well covered with hits starting just off shore and carrying through the entire area. Smoke, fires, and explosions seen.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 29 April 1944 - TOULON

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Five miles after coming off the target, the 99th Bomb Group observed 2 Me 109s at 1151 hours.

These stayed way out and were seen to make a pass at 4 P-51s. One of the Me 109s was shot down.

B. Flak: Over the target, from a mean altitude of 22,100', this group experienced moderate, heavy and inaccurate flak. This was both barrage and tracking type. No a/c were holed.

MISSION REPORT

3 x 1000 lb. bombs hung up on 1 A/C and were jettisoned in water on way back.

2 E/A SEEN Me 109s, 5 miles off the target. These made a pass at 4 P-51s and 1 Me 109 was shot down.

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: An effective smoke screen covered the target area but some darker smoke was observed coming from our particular section of the target. Escort was as briefed.

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT:

MISSION: 30 April 1944 - VARESE A/C FCTY., ITALY

I. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Starting at 1110 hours and continuing until 1202, just before the target, the 99th Bomb Group was attacked by some 30 Me 109s, FW 190s, and Ma 202s, at altitudes ranging from 20,000 to 23,000'.

The a/c appeared to come from the Bologna-Ferrara-Padua area and were first seen by vapor trails ahead of the formation.

Attacks were from all around the clock, high, low, and level. Some attacks were coordinated with 3 to 4 e/a coming in at a time, eschelloned right or left. They would then break away, downward at several hundred yards, circle, reform, and attack once again. Other attacks had e/a first firing 20mm cannon, then lining up in groups of 5 and coming in singly, level at 6 o'clock. Some rocket firing planes were also observed.

The enemy fighters were dark with black crosses, some had silver bellies, while others had yellow stripes on their wings. A few of the enemy fighters were seen to peel off and land at Ossalengo A/D, 45°08'N, 10°02'E.

B. Flak: There was no flak at the target.

II. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Air: 1130 hrs - A/C #014 went down from fighter attack - 8 chutes, 44°35'N, 11°20'E. 1116 hrs - 5 s/e a/c just leaving Ferrara A/D. 1130 hrs - 7 e/a came up from Verona A/D and attacked from 1 to 11 o'clock.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Total Losses:	From Flak	0
	From Fighters	1 (a/c #014 of 347th Squadron)
	Other Reasons	0
B. Damage:	From Flak	12 (minor damage)
	From Fighters	3 (minor damage)
	Other Reasons	0

C. Victories:

	Destroyed	Probably Destroyed	Damaged
	7 Me 109s	1 Me 109	1 Me 109
	1 FW 190		

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

MISSION REPORT

30-30 E/A ENCOUNTERED, TACTICS, ETC. Attacked principally from 4 to 8 o'clock in 3 and 4 abreast. Some head-on attacks and some from all angles. Some rockets fired.

10 CLAIMS 8 destroyed (7 Me 109s and 1 FW 190) 1 probable, 3 damaged (109s).

1 LOST, REASONS: Shot down by fighters - 8 chutes seen.

1 MISSION: Reported crash-landed near Termoli.

0 AT FRIENDLY FIELDS

RESULTS. ESCORT GIVE TIME AND PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS AND DEPARTURE FROM BOMBERS: Target was heavily hit and all buildings believed destroyed or badly damaged except possibly small portion at extreme NW corner.

Escort joined at 1039 at 43°62'N, 13°36'E and was lost sight of shortly afterward. Rejoined at 1222 at 45°00'N, 08°27'E and returned close to base.

On the following pages we reprint by permission of the 8th AFHS an account of a mission by an 8AF crew. The German government, in the person of Reichsmarschall Himmler, had encouraged the killing of Allied soldiers by German civilians. This is not surprising when one considers that many of the elected officials of Germany had criminal records. This tendency toward selecting felons for office perhaps accounts for the present success of His Excellency, the former General Secretary of the United Nations, The Honorable Kurt Waldheim. We dedicate this piece to him. george



8th AF NEWS

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4 — Serving as the 8AFHS Official Journal since June 1975 — OCTOBER 1984

THE TENTH PUBLICATION YEAR OF THE 8th AF NEWS

THE RUSSELSHEIM ORDEAL

MISSION TO HANNOVER

On 24 August 1944, five minutes after hitting the assigned target, an airdrome north of Hannover, one B-24 from the 491st BG was crippled by flak. The nine-man crew was forced to bail out of their plane, nicknamed, "Wham-Bam, Thank You Mam."

The nose gunner, William M. Adams, landed in the backyard of a farmhouse. A farmer fed Adams and bandaged his right arm, which was wounded by flak. A short time later, an older man (about seventy years old) came into the house and objected to the presence of Adams. Soon afterward the gun-toting farmer, on a bicycle, guided his captive to the town hall of a nearby village. There Adams joined Haigus Tufenkjian, Elmer Austin and Sidney Brown (navigator, waist gunner and tail gunner).

They were interrogated by a German in uniform who could speak only a few words in English. When Adams would only give his name, rank and serial number, the German became very angry and called over a man in civilian clothes who struck him across the face five or six times. During the beating, the man in uniform said, "That is what you get for bombing our women and children." These were the only English words he seemed to know. Later in the morning, about 1100 hours, they were locked in a small room.

At about 1300 hours, the last members of the crew were brought to the cell. The new additions included pilot



491BG Rogers Crew at Langley Field in June 1944: l. to r. standing — Rogers, Sekul, Cassidy and Robinson; kneeling — Adams, Austin, Williams, Dumont, Brown and Brininstool. Cassidy and Robinson were attending school and missed the fateful mission.

Norman J. Rogers, Jr., co-pilot John N. Sekul, engineer Forrest W. Brininstool, radio operator Thomas D. Williams, Jr. and ball turret gunner William A. Dumont. Though Dumont had broken his ankle in the jump, he was compelled to walk on it. Brininstool had been hit in the stomach by flak, but appeared not to be suffering much pain.

At 1400 hours they were taken to a railroad station, placed in a 3rd Class coach and taken to an air base, a three hour train ride away. They were questioned individually by two Luftwaffe officers, who treated them decently. That evening Brininstool

and Adams were taken to a small hospital. Brininstool was operated on by a doctor wearing swimming trunks, while Adams was compelled to look on. After the flak was removed from Brininstool's stomach, they moved him to another airfield and Adams was returned to his cell with the rest of the crew. They were given hard bread and cold coffee for the evening meal.

The next morning, at about 0900 hours, the crew was given a fairly good meal, consisting of potatoes and several other items, including soup. After this meal, the men were taken

(continued on next page)

(continued from 1st page)

to a small village, in the back of a wagon, and placed aboard a train there about noon. At about 0300 on the 26th of August, the train was stopped on a siding. The prisoners were moved from the train during an air raid. After the raid the trip was resumed.

They arrived in the outskirts of Russelsheim (15 miles S.W. of Frankfurt) at about 0800 hours. The RAF had bombed the city during the night. An Opel Works plant is located in Russelsheim. Accompanied by three Luftwaffe guards, the crew left the train at this point because the tracks were bombed out ahead. The eight men were marched through the town to reach good tracks on the other side. As they entered the town, bombed-out people were leaving. Both sides of the street were lined with these unhappy people. The crew estimated that there were about four or five thousand of them.

The following account of events was given by the mayor of Russelsheim as reported later by U.S. Army Major Luke P. Rogers.

"As the prisoners approached the Parc Hotel, three women who ran a tobacco shop next door, Kathe Reinhardt, her sister, Margarete Witzler, and the latter's daughter, Lilo, began to shout at them, crying, 'These are the terror flyers, beat them to death.' A crowd started to gather. The crowd was in an ugly mood as a result of the raid the night before. The three women then began to throw stones at the flyers. The crowd began to increase in size.

"At this point, Philip Gutlich, a tavern keeper, struck one of the flyers with a club. The two German soldiers guarding them did nothing to protect their prisoners.

"The flyers now started to run. One of the prisoners had an injured leg and two of the others were carrying him on their backs.

"Here the local Nazi Party leader, Joseph Hartgen, came on the scene. In true Nazi fashion, he soon made his presence felt. He shouted to the crowd to beat the flyers to death and fired a pistol in the air several times to further incite them.

"As the hard-pressed flyers ran along the main street, they came to a side street. They turned into this in an attempt to get away from their attackers. The crowd, now like

beasts, followed them. A short way down this street, a farmer, Johannes Seipel, beat the prisoners with a club. A factory worker, George Daum, beat them with a shovel. All the while they were being pelted by bricks and stones. A little further along, a railroad worker, Johann Opper, beat them so hard with a broom that it broke in his hands.

"A crowd started to gather in an ugly mood as a result of the raid the night before. The three women began to throw stones at the flyers."

"At the end of the street was a railroad, along which ran a stone wall about six feet high. The unfortunate prisoners, tired and badly beaten, turned to the right at this point and crowded against this wall to protect themselves from the mob. The really brutal phase of the murder took place here. Three factory workers, August Wolf, Karl Fugmann and Freidrich Wust, came across from the other side of the railroad tracks. As the flyers crouched together against the wall for protection, Wust leaned over the wall and struck them on the head with a hammer. Wolf and Fugmann threw large stones and railroad ties on the prisoners. Hartger, the local Party leader . . . now took an active part in the beating and struck several of the prisoners on the head with the hammer as they lay on the ground. There were also three or four men in German Army uniform who participated in the brutal beating here . . . Finally when there were no more signs of life from the victims, Hartgen shot several of them in the head.

"The bodies were then piled onto a farm wagon and the wagon pushed to the town cemetery. The bodies were left there on the wagon."

Adams and Brown reported that the guards made no attempt to protect the Americans, they just disappeared. Dumont, the one with the broken ankle, was the first to fall. Adams was the next man to be

beaten to the ground. Shortly afterwards, Brown fell to the ground and played possum. He was covered with blood from the blows to his head.

When the mob decided that all were dead, they threw the men into a small hay wagon. Dumont was thrown in first, then Adams and then Brown. As the wagon moved down the street they picked up and threw the others on top. Brown knew that Sekul was still alive as he asked him to move over a little to give him some breathing room. He did.

They pulled the wagon for 15 or 20 minutes before stopping. Things were much quieter now. Only two or three voices could be heard. Brown attempted to peep out, being careful not to move. He saw a person, with a club in his hand, come over to the wagon — apparently to finish them off. Sekul's hand was on Brown's shoulder. Brown could feel him wince as this person beat him over the head. Brown felt Sekul's hand slide from his shoulder as he died. Williams was heard to make a sound as he was finished off.

An air raid siren sounded and the attackers ran for cover. After waiting 10 or 15 minutes after everyone had left, when it was completely quiet, Brown and Adams got out of the wagon. It appeared that most of the crew had been killed by this time. They could see that Tufenkjian had his head split open. Rogers' head was caved in on one side by what must have been a 2 x 4.

They saw that there was a chapel in the middle of the graveyard. The two survivors, Adams and Brown, ran for this chapel, staying there for a few minutes while Brown removed his heated flying suit. Then they proceeded in a westerly direction, living on apples, hiding in the woods in the daytime and traveling at night.

The mayor of Russelsheim reported, "In the evening, Hartgen went to the cemetery and some more shots were heard. The next morning, the murdered flyers were buried in a common grave."

Adams and Brown were captured four days later, 1 September 1944, by a policeman. He said that they had reached the Rhine River.

They were then sent to nearby Oberusel, the Luftwaffe interrogation center near Frankfurt. They remained there for two days. The interrogators never questioned the

bandages on Brown's head. Nor did they mention the mob action. Adams and Brown were sent to Stalag Luft IV (N.E. of Berlin, near the Baltic) by train. On 6 February 1945, the Germans started marching the prisoners, crossing the Elbe River several times. Sidney Brown became sick in March and was moved to Stalag 357 (he thinks). William M. Adams and the other prisoners were liberated by the British on 2 May 1945. Brown and Adams were reunited at LeHavre later in May. The two of them located Brininstool and informed him, for the first time, of the fate of the rest of the crew.

This story of the atrocities at Russelsheim has been pieced together by combining the deposition statements made by William M. Adams (4 October 1945 and 7 July 1945) and Sidney E. Brown (26 July 1947) along with a report of the Burgermeister's account of that terrible 26 August 1944 day. Our thanks go to Sidney Brown (now a resident of Gainesville, Florida) for sending a complete set of files on this tragic case.

Adams died in 1980, Brininstool is a retired machinist, and Brown is a member of the 8AFHS.

The story of the war crimes trial in 1945 follows.

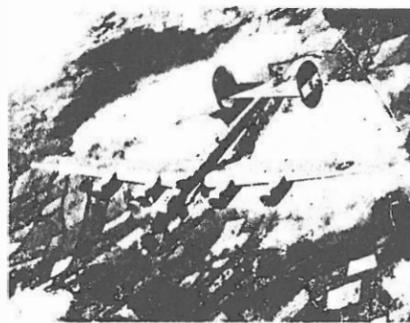
THE RUSSELSHEIM CASE

by Luke P. Rogers, Major, MP

(Editor's note: Most of the details of the assault have been deleted from this account as they have been reported in the story above.)

The shocking murders first became known to the American authorities when the Third Army took Russelsheim at the end of March 1945. The story was then told by the French and Polish slave laborers there. Nothing was done at that time to investigate this crime, because the combat troops had to keep pushing on and, as yet, the U.S. Army War Crimes Branch was not fully organized. A report of the murders was sent to Third Army Headquarters, which in turn forwarded it to Twelfth Army Group Headquarters.

So the matter rested until the early part of June. In the meantime, the Army War Crimes Branch, whose principal function was to investigate crimes against prisoners of war, was being organized. I was assigned as a war crimes investigator to the



491BG B-24 Liberator like the one the Norman J. Rogers crew was flying on 24 August 1944.

Twelfth Army Group at Wiesbaden at the end of May. In looking through the files, I picked out the Russelsheim case for early action. The file consisted of a report by a Third Army Officer suggesting that the case be investigated and a story sent by a reporter to the London Daily Express at the time the American Army took Russelsheim. Neither report contained any names of perpetrators or details of the crime.

Early in June, (accompanied by an assistant and an interpreter) I set out for Russelsheim. Our first stop was the German police station. The chief had not lived in Russelsheim at the time that the flyers were murdered, but he knew about the case and had prepared a list of twenty-one perpetrators, gathered from town gossip. (To our surprise, most of them still lived in town.)

... We questioned (the mayor, Burgermeister Dorfler, a reluctant witness) for several hours and for the first time got the full story. And a brutal and shocking story it was. The burgermeister claimed that he was not an eyewitness to the murder but had heard all about it on the day it happened. ...

Early the next morning [14 of the persons named] were placed in the Darmstadt jail [18 miles south of Frankfurt and 13 miles S.E. of Russelsheim] ... We could now go to work to gather evidence for the trial. [We] went looking for eyewitnesses ... Many of these people were not very willing to talk ... As we questioned these people, more and more of the tragic details of this case were revealed. When the mob first formed around the flyers and the cry was taken up — "Beat them to death!" — one of the prisoners, who could speak German, cried out, "We didn't bomb Russelsheim." Further along, this

same prisoner had cried out, "Don't kill me — I have a wife and two children."

It became increasingly clear that the two sisters, Kathe Reinhardt and Margarete Witzler, were the first ones to shout at the prisoners and to incite the crowd. They were also the first ones to use violence by throwing stones and in the case of Kathe Reinhardt, by striking one of the flyers on the head with a large piece of slate and knocking him down. One witness told us that these women had boasted for days after the murder that if it hadn't been for them, the flyers would have proceeded unharmed.

It also became clear that Hartgen took command after he came on the scene. He immediately became the mob leader. One witness told us that in the brutal finish at the railroad wall, Hartgen went along examining the bodies and would tell the others, "Beat this one — he's still alive."

[Wust was arrested in Oppenheim.] We now had all of the perpetrators except Hartgen and the three German soldiers. ...

... We began our interrogation of the perpetrators in the Darmstadt jail. What a poor collection they were — all typical small-town louts. A few of them admitted playing a small part in the murder. ...

The next job was the unpleasant one of disinterring the bodies for evidence ... When the grave was opened, we found for the first time that the flyers were Americans. The people of Russelsheim had thought they were Canadians. We were surprised to find only six bodies whereas almost everybody had testified that there were eight flyers in the group. We dug in every direction around the grave but could find no more bodies.

... While they were badly decomposed, there was still evidence of horrible skull and body injuries. In addition, most of them had been shot in the head one or more times. [After examination] the bodies were buried in the American cemetery [at Bensheim].

It was now the end of June and the case was rounding into shape for trial. Colonel Leon Jaworski of Houston, Texas, one of the ace trial lawyers of the Army [in 1984 we know him from the Watergate trials], was assigned to prosecute the

(Continued on page 17)

THE RUSSELSHEIM CASE

(Continued from page 3)

case.

... We were notified one day that Hartgen had been located in one of the Seventh Army enclosures. We requested that he be transferred immediately to the Wiesbaden jail. Colonel Jaworski interrogated Hartgen after he arrived. Hartgen refused to admit anything. He was the toughest one of the accused. Colonel Jaworski questioned him all morning and told him some of the evidence we had against him.

The Colonel left some paper and a pencil with him and told him to write the truth about his part in the murder. We then went to lunch.

When we came back to the jail about an hour later, we found that Hartgen had slashed his wrists on the side of the bed. He had written on the paper, I will not be a traitor. Heil Germany!" He signed this with his thumb print in blood. [He recovered in about a week.]

The trial was held on July 25th in the old German Courthouse in Darmstadt before a six-man military commission headed by Brigadier General Garrison Davison. The defendants were represented by Lt. Col. Roger Titus of Boston and by German lawyers of their own choosing. The courtroom was open to everyone because the Army wanted to show the Germans that the defendants were receiving a fair trial. The courtroom was packed every day of the trial, many of the spectators being residents of Russelsheim.

The trial lasted six days. Colonel Jaworski presented about forty eyewitnesses for the prosecution. The defense consisted of claiming extenuating circumstances for the accused inasmuch as the murder took place a few hours after the town was

badly bombed. In some cases the accused also produced character witnesses. Hartgen had the gall to ask the local priest to testify as to his good character, but the priest refused saying that Hartgen was the biggest Nazi in Russelsheim.

In their summations, the German lawyers resorted to the defense that is now the usual thing at German war crimes trials, that of blaming the crime on someone higher up. They put the blame variously on Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler and several others. ...

After the prosecution and the defense rested, the commission, having deliberated for about eight hours, announced its verdict. Joseph Hartgen, Friedrich Wust, Kathe Reinhardt, Margarete Witzler, Philip Gutlich, Johann Opper and Johannes Seipel were sentenced to death by hanging. George Daum was sentenced for twenty-five years at hard labor and Heinrich Barthel and August Wulf to fifteen years at hard labor. Karl Fugmann was acquitted.

About three weeks after the trial a startling fact came to light. We discovered that there were two survivors of the murder. General Davison received a letter from two soldiers ... stating that they had read about the trial in the newspaper. They revealed that they had been members of the crew and had escaped during the night from the farm wagon in the Russelsheim cemetery ... Neither of the two could give any names or believed that they could identify anybody. After all, it was then a year and a half after the crime ... I couldn't help thinking what an advantage it would have been if we had had these two survivors with us when we began our investigation of the case.

The record of the trial was reviewed by the Seventh Army authorities, and General Keyes, command-



And Nazi propaganda was not merely a war of words. It was a strategy of terror. The blood purges, the pogroms, the Black Mass in worship of force at Nuremberg, the concentration camps, the fifth columns operating openly behind the frontiers of Germany's next victims were demonstrations of Nazi boasts and threats leading to action. Civilians were driven to hysterical flight in one country after another; but there was cause for their panic, and force backed up the propaganda. Stukas dive-bombed the women and children who choked the roads. Nazi propaganda was as good as its word. The Germans really were supermen and it was folly to resist. p.152

from A Man Called Intrepid

ing general, commuted the death sentence of the two women to thirty years in prison. We couldn't see the basis for this decision inasmuch as the two women were key instigators of the murder and were more guilty than some of the men condemned to death.

On November 10th, the five men were hanged in the Army prison at Bruchsal, near Heidelberg. [Later the missing soldiers who had participated in the atrocity were named, Franz Umstatter was tried at Dachau and sentenced to death. The article was written before the other soldiers were found.]

This story, found in the July 1947 issue of *True Detective Magazine*, was sent to us by Sidney E. Brown — 491BG. He also sent a xerox copy of pages 96 through 105 of "Crossroads," by Leon Jaworski, with Dick Schneider. Jaworski gives his account of that trial. He says that it was the first war crimes trial of World War Two.

Brown remembers that the story of the trial was first reported by a New York Times reporter in July 1945. To our knowledge, this event has not been recently reported. Our interest in this case was first raised when queried, by a TV researcher, Irena Von Zahn, on the location of survivors of "The Russelsheim Massacre." It appears that Sudwest Funk ARD (a German TV company), Erich Bottlinger — Producer, will be broadcasting a part of this story in Germany early in 1985, on or near the 40th anniversary of the end of the War.

Your editor was stationed in Darmstadt, South of Frankfurt and S.E. of Russelsheim for two years, 1950-1952, and never heard one word about this tragic case. It is time it is brought to light once more, forty years later.

Your editor had cynically suggested to Ken Sparks that the rumored change of the 416th insignia might have been to change it to something more nearly resembling a Peace Insignia. No such desecration has occurred; the change was from a skeleton with red bones to one with white bones, as ye shall see at the Dallas orgy. Ken has sent us a lovely set of the Real McCoy.

Note that Ken would like information about our support troops. We here at HQ would also like to get such information. geo.

1813 Sereno Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

4 November 1986

Dear George:

Your letter almost brought tears of nostalgia to my eyes. During several tours of duty in Germany I had the privilege of hunting the European red deer - akin to our elk--and in Scandinavia hunting what they called an elk, but is actually European moose. Smaller cousins of our own species, but I digress.

The comment about peace symbols struck a responsive note. Way back before WWII the 2nd Bombardment Group's insignia was not all that war-like except for the motto: Death and Destruction in Latin. They were scheduled for a goodwill tour of Latin America and the striped pants boys in Foggy Bottom -- the State Department -- got all up tight. The motto was hurriedly changed to Liberty we defend.

In answer to your question: We have on hand approximately seventy insignia for each of the squadron insignia, to include both types of the 346th and 416th Squadrons. We also anticipate receipt of the group insignia shortly (see enclosed).

In general, cost of the insignia depends on the size of the order. Anything less than 100 of each sell for \$3.50 each to include postage and insurance. One hundred or more insignia will reduce the total price, say to \$3.00 each, plus postage and insurance, if desired. Other groups have sold the insignia for a bit more using the proceeds to defray cost of postage, for the no host bar at reunions, or similar purposes.

What we really need is a list of the non-combat elements comprising the ground elements of the group. That is the Station Complement, Chemical, Engineer, Ordnance, Medical, Military Police and, of course, the maintenance detachment, etc. If you are not able to furnish this information could you refer this request to the proper individual

With heartfelt thanks for your past courtesies, I remain,

In comradship,


Ken Sparks
M/Sgt, USA (ret)

The following is to be recited to the tune of THE COPILOT'S LAMENT.

Dear George,


In one of my recent rummaging around some ancient memorabilia I encountered the enclosed bit of pseudo-scientific fluff that I composed during one of my more lucid moments during WW II. If you wish to publish it in one of your newsletters, it might serve to tickle the memories of some of the guys, and also it has a content a bit different from the usual reminiscence. I attempted to adhere to the standard medical protocol of that day, hence there is abundant use of terms appropriate to the situation at hand.

We continue to learn about new diseases, syndromes, and conditions in both the lay and medical press, for example Herpes, and A.I.D.S. The disease I originally described was never published and so did not reach the consciousness of the scientific community. If it had, maybe I would have received the Nobel prize. Anyway, here it is, and you have my permission to toss it in the circular file if you like.

ditorially yours,

Ted

Ted Capemaster
Ex-flight surgeon
347th Squadron.

3815 Joppa
St. Louis Park, Minn. 55416



CO-PILOT'S DISEASE

A New Clinical Entity

Definition: Co-pilot's disease is an acute infectious, endemic, occupational, specific disorder characterized by irritability, fluent episodes of profanity, and a considerable number of psychic manifestations, mental aberrations, emotional disturbances and personality complexes. It is seen in co-pilots who think they should be pilots.

History: Inasmuch as this malady has not been described previously in the medical literature, no reports on its history are as yet available. It may be said that with the birth of the four engine bomber, a new branch of the human race has of necessity been produced. These people are referred to as co-pilots, and therefore are peculiarly susceptible to that horrible malignancy described in this paper.

Etiology and **Pathogenesis:** No definite cause has yet been found. It has been well established that it is highly infectious and when once it attacks a susceptible co-pilot it will quickly invade selectively the similar member of other crews. Many precipitating and aggravating factors are well known. One theory explains that the onset of the disease occurs when a tiny Gremlin implants the thought that it is about time that the individual in question should be a pilot. This infinitesimal spark is luminatingly brought to a raging, consuming, conflagration by various exigencies of the local situation, such as lack of other co-pilots, or certain commanding officers who may feel that this subordinate shall remain a co-pilot, come hell or high water.

Diagnosis: This disease occurs only in co-pilots; after an incubation period of 3 to 4 weeks (Phase I), prodromal symptoms can be elicited by the astute observer. These consist of slight irritability, and many pathognomonic expressions of desire for A-20, P-38, or P-39. As Phase II is approached, many of the precipitating factors play an important role in the subsequent course of the disease. These consist of auxiliary influences such as waiters in the mess hall getting the wrong order; frying the eggs wrong side up; paying ten bucks a ~~month~~ week at the officers' mess; or being required to wear a blouse at the officers' club. At this point, the man is described by his fellows as having the red ass. (R.A.). By the time Phase III is reached the case has become critical. This patient can frequently be observed to repeat to himself: "superchargers off!" or "tailwheel unlocked!" or "booster pumps on 1" or also repeat numbers which apparently ~~are~~ of some meaning to him but of no significance to others, such as "1850 and 27 inches!". Another favorite is "right hand bottle". He may exhibit delusions of persecution and paranoid tendencies ("the C.O. is pissed off at me!") The course of the disease is featured by chronicity with acute exacerbations set off by some new irritant such as the latest "poop from the Group".

Prognosis: The outlook here is generally favorable, but is profoundly influenced by the management.

Treatment: Obviously, a simple form of therapy would be to transform the patient into a pilot, which would confer an immediate and complete immunity. However, this procedure, although desirable, is frequently not feasible, for it at once creates the vacancy which must be filled by some neophyte co-pilot, another potential victim. Symptomatic care should be employed, with special attention taken to bring to bear all known morale building factors. These include the elimination of irritating mechanisms, with emphasis on the overcoming of personality conflicts with his associates.



Refrain (from Bill Getz WILD BLUE YONDER)
 I'm a copilot, I sit on the right
 I'm quick and courageous, I'm wonderfully bright
 My job is remembering what the Captain forgets
 I never talk back, so I have no regrets.
 I'm just a copilot and a long way from home.



ALBUQUERQUE TRIBUNE, Friday, November 21, 1986

VILLAGE ERECTS MONUMENT TO B17 CREW

No By line

Lomianki, Poland--Villagers who witnessed the crash of an American B17 bomber shot down by German artillery during World War II have fulfilled what they felt was an obligation and erected a monument to honor the crew. The 9-foot-tall stone memorial, believed to be the first in Poland for American Soldiers, was erected after a five-year campaign.

The B17, nicknamed "'Til We Meet Again," was shot down Sep 18, 1944, with 10 US airmen aboard. Two of them survived. The plane was one of 107 American aircraft dropping supplies that day for Polish partisans fighting the Nazis in the Warsaw uprising. About 220,000 Poles were killed during the unsuccessful 63-day attempt to liberate Warsaw before the arrival of the Russians.

from DOOR KNOB FIVE TWO, by Frederic Arnold S.E. Maxwell, Publisher.

. . . Captain Crawford led me into a small smoky room where three enlisted men hunched over typewriters. . .

Several minutes passed. It was a word or a phrase that caught my attention, like a shift in the steady sound of an engine that brings a new awareness.

"Either of you guys working on general orders number 155?"

"Yeah." said another, "I have two that go with the others."

"Have you used 'zeal and courage' yet?"

"No. I've used 'courage and resourcefulness' and 'outstanding skill and gallantry' and, let me see, 'his skill as a fighter pilot and his eager and faithful performance of duty.' Get on it right away. They have to be dated today and mimed before 1800."

"Hey, Sarg," said the third man. "I got a problem with this one, a bomber copilot. Nothing in his file. Finished fifty and his C.O. wants him to get the medal. I'm drawing a blank."

The sergeant thumbed through some papers. "Here's a perfect one for a copilot. Listen . . . a great opening. 'Lieutenant So-and-So has displayed outstanding endurance, fortitude, and professional skill on many high-altitude missions which resulted in great destruction to enemy personnel, shipping and military installations.' Then wind up with 'his calm judgment in combat and his consistent alert efficiency in assisting his first pilot frequently have insured the completion of his plane's mission. His unflinching devotion to duty, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. . . .' and let me have a copy. It's the kind of piece I need for a chicken colonel. Went on three missions and the General promised him the D.F.C.

"A full colonel? Be sure to include 'coolness under fire' or they'll send it back for re-write."

Bastards, sitting on their asses. What do they know? What would they write about Cominski and Smith?

The sergeant turned to me. "That pouch for us?"

"No, for Major Crowley." I replied. His face went grey. The three men looked up.

"Sorry, Lieutenant, thought when you came in with Captain Crawford you were with Intelligence. Crowley, huh? You a pilot?"

I nodded.

"I'm sorry, Lieutenant. We kid around but we don't mean any disrespect. Major Crowley, huh? Geez, I'm sorry." All three went to pounding on their typewriters, no more talking. p. 249



. . . even before planes carrying (German) paratroops could reach the Swiss frontier, the great tunnels of the Saint Gotthard, Lotschberg and Simplon would be blown up by the Swiss themselves. Switzerland would then no longer provide the invaluable passage through the Alps so coveted by the Wehrmacht, but would become a fortress deprived of strategic importance. Nor would it offer any economic advantage: more than a thousand of the country's factories could be demolished at once on orders from Berne. In each of these factories, the machine parts had already been painted different colors, according to whether they were to be blown up, smashed or simply detached and taken to a redoubt.

from A Man Called Lucy

p. 152

US HEAVY BOMBERS POUND THREE ROME RAILWAY YARDS

MAAF, March 3 - Flying Forts of the 15th AAF today blasted the Littorio and Tiburtina freight yards in Rome, the first heavy bomber blows at targets in the Italian capital since Aug 13 when the Lorenzo marshalling yards were attacked.

B-26 Marauders also blasted the Ostiense rail yards on the opposite side of the city.

Early reports indicated that the railway yards were well covered. Liberators which bombed the Viterbo airdrome 35 miles north of Rome also reported good results. Both the Forts and Liberators were escorted by fighters.

Today's raid was the third on Rome since the opening of the Mediterranean campaign. Fighter bombers have been attacking targets in the Rome area during the past few days, but these raids have been on a small scale.

The bombing announced today, directed at the main rail lines out of Rome to Florence, is believed to have been on a large scale. It is part of the general Allied campaign to cripple the railroad system supplying the German armies south of Rome. Previous attacks were directed against the Rome and Genoa coastal lines, the other large arterial rail routes through the Italian peninsula.

The Littorio yards were hit by Forts once before in the first great raid on Rome's rail network.

Lighter Italian-based Allied aircraft also attacked military objectives in the Rome area during the day and flew a number of missions against German positions facing the Anzio beachhead. A-36 Invaders dive-bombed rail installations at Monterotondo, 15 miles north of Rome on the main line to Florence, hit a 40-car train and left it a smoking, flaming wreck. On their way home, the Invaders shot up road traffic around Rome and a bivouac area and supply dump near the mouth of the Tiber River.

Warhawks flew three missions over the Anzio beachhead, bombing enemy gun emplacements, but a heavy overcast prevented accurate observation of results.

REUNIONS

- Apr. 1987 99TH BOMB GROUP * DALLAS TX
Wilbur Dixon, 7831 Fallmeadow Lane, Dallas TX 75248 Ph. 214/744-1005
- May, 1987 Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society - San Antonio TX
H.C.Spinks, P.O.Box 444, Beaufort SC 29901
- 23 Sep. 1987 97th Bomb Group, Dayton OH
Clarence Hammes, 15 Avilla Heights South, Alexander AR 72002
- 26 Mar. 1987 Bombardiers, Inc., San Antonio TX
E.C.Humphreys, Star Rt. 1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor MI 49951,
Phone 906/289-4440
- 22 May 1987 Alumni of Stalag Luft III, Seattle WA
David C. Conner, 7050 W. Hoodview Place, Beaverton OR 97005
- 9 Sep. 1987 98th Bomb Group, Colorado Springs CO
- 1 Oct. 1987 461st Bomb Group, Suffern NY
137 Via la Soledad, Redondo Beach CA 90277
- 14 Oct. 1987 99TH BOMB GROUP at FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION REUNION
Colorado Springs CO
15AFA, P.O.Box 6325, March Air Force Base CA 92518
- Oct. 1987 8AFHS, Pittsburgh PA
- Spring 1988 99th BOMB GROUP, FORT LAUDERDALE FL
Jules Horowitz, 3507 Oaks Lane,
- 11 May 1989 Bombardiers, Inc., Dayton OH
E.C.Humphreys, Star Rt. 1, Box 254, Eagle Harbor MI, Ph.906/289-4440
- 11 Sep. 1987 Swedish Internees, Hasslo Airfield, Sweden
Torbjorn Olausson, Toresjovagen 33, 135 47 TYRESO, SWEDEN
- 9 Sep. 1987 483rd Bomb Group, Boston MA
John Vechiola Ph. 617/773-5703

TAPS

TRENTADUE, JOSEPH March 14, 1987: Informing you of Joseph Trentadue's death which occurred on Feb. 16, 1987. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

Joe was a member of the 416th Bomb Squadron and was Pilot of "Sweater Girl"
sincerely Joe Kellerman

WILLIAM R. Davis Passed away over a year ago at Benton Harbor, MI.
Irwin Isaakson

KOSHAREK, MRS. IRWIN Passed away Jan 12, 1987, only six months after Irwin's death.
- Norman Kaufman

GONZALEZ, JOE This is to let you know of my husband's passing.
His name: Joe Gonzalez - 1930 W. Magnolia Ave. - San Antonio, TX 78201
He was a former prisoner of war - Stalag 17-B - 99th Bomb Group - 416th Bomb Squadron. He died December 4, 1986 in San Antonio Texas of "massive cardiac arrest." He had his first heart attack in Feb. 1966 - another one in Aug. 1977, when he had to retire on physical disability - with circulatory and other related conditions - for 9 years until December 4, 1986, - when he was freed of all physical problems and went on to a new dimension. . . Please let the 99th Bomb Group know.

Mary Elma Gonzalez
1930 W. Magnolia Ave.
San Antonio TX 78201



Change of Address

Paul L. Spears	P.O.Box 187	Big Oak Flat-	CA 95305
Charles J. Bickner	1114 22nd St. West	Bradenton	FL 33505
H.B.Bankhead	103 Nob Hill	Peachtree City	GA 30269
Walter F. O'Neill	4219 Hickory	Omaha	NE 68105-2908
Bartholomew J. Caserta	845 Mary St.	Amelia Island	FL 32034-2020
John P. Trapuzanno	4001 Thomas St.	Hollywood	FL 33021
William J. Aspengren	6997 NE Bluff Dr.	Bondurant	IA 50035-1105
Conrad A. Marvel	5357 E. Zion Pl.	Tulsa	OK 74115-3361
Robert C. Moser	Box 865, #18	Russell's Point	OH 43348-0865
Walter A. Satterwhite	1498 S. Ventura St.	Aurora	CO 80017-5357
Joe Kurcaba	5904 Tierra Antiqua, #B,	Albuquerque	NM 87111-6117
Bob Merchant	Box 6463	March AFB	CA 92518
John W. Hinds	20016 8th Ave, NW	Seattle	WA 98177-2103
Fred Sanger	Box 6463	March AFB	CA 92518
R.G.Mack	8834 St. Andrews Dr.	Destin	FL 32541
Nick Rajkovich	340 Palmetto Dr.	Lake Park	FL 33403
Robert G. Imrie	HCR 93, Box 69	Roosevelt	WA 99356
G. Kaschinska	6720 Sauk Trail Rd.	Cedar Grove	WI 53013
Joseph H. Chance	P.O.Box 59,	Old Mission	MI 19673
Theodore J. Heller	11741 Rainbow	Anchorage	AK 99516
Harold E. Oyster	415 Buena Vista	Ashland	OH 44805-3833
J.O.Grizzell	Rt. 4, Box 270 A	Paris	TN 38242

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

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 388
 Albuquerque, N.M.

FORWARDING AND RETURN
 POSTAGE GUARANTEED
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

J.O.Grizzell
 Rt.4 Box 270 A
 Paris, TN

1987

38242

May. 1987

FOUND

769	Walter E. Ericksen	2531 Wright St.	The Dalles	OR 97058	347
770	Louis J. Pettit	Rt. 2, Box 205 C	Custer	SD 57730	348
771	Archie I. Flowers	Rt. 5, Box 1265	College Station	YX 77840	346
772	J. Irvin Davis	Box 562	Spearman	TX 79081	347
773	Buford Wayne Lippolt	1318 W. 21st St.,	Hastings	MN 55033	416
774	Irving Lerner	16 Richmond Ave.	Worcester	MA 01602	346
775	Joseph Brennan	1806 Gentian SE	Kentwood	MI 49508	346
776	Riley E. Morton	5423 Elizabeth Rd.	Charlotte	NC 28213	416
777	James O. Buchanan	2605 Wells Ave.	Raleigh	NC 27608	348
778	Marion Alvin Alley	77-900 Michigan Dr., Condo #2,	Palm Desert,	CA 92260	
779	Joseph L. Warneck	574 Fairway Terr.	Philadelphia	PA 19128	347
780	Clarence A. Cooper	1705 Bloomington St.	Greencastle	IN 46135	348
781	Fred Livermore	Rt. 2, Box 356	Pryor	OK 74361	346?
782	Bruce Cook	15541 Regina St.	Allen Park	MI 48101	416
783	John D. Brown	3000 Aztec NE #255	Albuquerque	NM 87107	416
784	Nowlin D. Collier	4510 Cliffstone Cove	Austin	TX 78735	348
785	Raymond J. Kane	5031 St. Michael Ave.	Orlando	FL 32812	346
786	Donald K. Hackenberry,	8 Brookhollow Dr.	Wimberley	TX 78676	348
787	John D. McWethy	5194 Rahlves Dr.	Castro Valley	CA 94546	416
788	Wilbur E. Martin	11710 E. 40th St.	Independence	MO 64052	416