

12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 57<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing  
321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group  
Saturday, 1 August 1942 thru Sunday, 31 January 1943



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*For my dad,  
Colonel John "Jack" Fitzgerald, U.S. Army (retired)*

*"Lil Butch"  
John J. Fitzgerald, SMSgt, U.S. Air Force (retired)*

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**12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 57<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing**  
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The following is a compilation of the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group's individual Squadron War Diaries. They have been transcribed word for word, from the Squadron Histories provided by the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), Maxwell Air Force Base Alabama. At the end of each Squadron's daily entry, the individuals cited in the entry are identified by *full name, rank and duty*, in alphabetical order. The day's entry begins with the Tactical Operations Statement, from the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) Chronology, for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). Available mission reports, personal mission logs, journals, and diaries have also been included.

***Invitation***

*Anyone who has documentation pertaining to the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group or its members, and would like to have it included in this history, is welcome to participate. Copies of: photos (official or personal); orders (promotion, decoration, travel, etc.); Mission Reports; Missing Air Crew Reports; personal diaries, logs, journals, etc; other documentation; or information that will help identify hi-lited individuals will be greatly appreciated, as one of my goals is correctly identify every man and plane assigned to the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group.*

*My only interest in this project is to honor those who served by perpetuating their story, and making it available for future generations, particularly the families and friends of our Great Heroes. If you are interested in helping, or if I may be of assistance in finding information about your 321<sup>st</sup> BG Hero, please contact me at: [Lil-Butch@nc.rr.com](mailto:Lil-Butch@nc.rr.com)*

***Contributors***

*Agostino Alberti: Professor - historian (Soncino, Italy)*

*Michele Becchi: aviation history - archaeologist (Reggio Emilia, Italy)*

*Jack Brellenthin, great nephew of: Harold Ray Brellenthin, 2Lt, pilot, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Cecile Burandt, daughter of: Charles Lawson "Chuck" Burandt, Capt, pilot, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Sally Brown, daughter of: Barnard H. Seegmiller, Sgt, armament, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Dave Charville, grandson of: Leighton Daniel "Danny" Charville, 1Lt, pilot, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Barbara Connolly, daughter of: Edward Charles "Salvo" Ennis, T/Sgt, radar-radio-gunner, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Ralph "Monguse" Gimenez: Software Architect, IL2-FB Skinner*

*Bob Haney, son of: Vincent M. Haney, M/Sgt, flight engineer, 341<sup>st</sup> BG*

*Ed Haney, cousin of: Gale Monroe Dickson, Capt, pilot, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

## **Contributors (continued)**

- John Hughes, son of: *John Jerome "Jack" Hughes, 1Lt, bombardier, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Patti Johnson: *genealogist, proofreader, and family friend of: James Raymond Orechia, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Don Kaiser, son of: *Quentin C. Kaiser, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 489<sup>th</sup> BS*  
John Lanza, nephew of: *William A. Lanza, Sgt, gunner, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Stephanie Lile, daughter of: *Keith B. Lile, S/Sgt, gunner, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Joseph A. Malec: *bombardier, 448<sup>th</sup> BS and friend of: Vernon Curtis Dossey, Capt, pilot, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Vince Mango, son of: *Vincent A. "Vince" Mango, S/Sgt, aerial gunner, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
John J. McCarthy: *Sgt, engineer-gunner, bombardier, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Lorraine McRae, daughter of: *James Arrington McRae, 1Lt, bombardier, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
T/Sgt Rocco F. "Rocky" Milano & daughter Peggy Chatham: *Crew Chief of Peg O' My Heart, Lil Butch, and Haulin' Ass, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Bob Ritger, nephew of: *Frederic Charles Ritger, 1Lt, pilot, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Irving J. Schaffer: *T/Sgt, radio-gunner, photographer, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Frederick H. Smith: *pilot, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Marsha Gurnee Suszan, daughter of: *Clarence E. "Shine" Gurnee, S/Sgt, gunner, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*  
Dominique Taddei: *author, U.S.S. Corsica (Corsica)*  
Vinny White, son of: *Joseph P. White, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 381<sup>st</sup> BS*

## **Crew lists**

- Aircraft information - serial #, name, etc*
- |           |                                 |   |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>P</b>  | <i>Pilot</i>                    |   |
| <b>CP</b> | <i>Co-pilot</i>                 | <i>Sometimes used</i>                       |
| <b>N</b>  | <i>Navigator</i>                | <b>Bomb/Nav</b> <i>Bombardier-Navigator</i> |
| <b>B</b>  | <i>Bombardier</i>               | <b>BN</b> <i>Bombardier-Navigator</i>       |
| <b>E</b>  | <i>Engineer-gunner</i>          | <b>EG</b> <i>Engineer-gunner</i>            |
| <b>R</b>  | <i>Radio-gunner</i>             | <b>RG</b> <i>Radio-gunner</i>               |
| <b>G</b>  | <i>Gunner</i>                   |   |
| <b>F</b>  | <i>Photographer</i>             | <b>PH</b> <i>Photographer</i>               |
| <b>CL</b> | <i>Cannon Loader (on B-25G)</i> |   |

## *Acronyms & Abbreviations*

<b>A/C:</b> Aircraft	<b>MIA:</b> Missing In Action
<b>A/D:</b> Aerodrome	<b>M/T:</b> Motor Transport (Truck)
<b>A/F:</b> Air Field, also Anti-Flak	<b>MTB:</b> Motor Torpedo Boat
<b>AA or AAA:</b> Anti-Aircraft (Artillery)	<b>M/V:</b> Military Vessel
<b>abs:</b> absent	<b>M/Y:</b> Marshalling Yards
<b>ALO:</b> Allied Liaison Officer	<b>MC:</b> Maintenance Crew
<b>ALW:</b> Alive and Well	<b>NARA:</b> National Archives and Records Administration
<b>AMGOT:</b> Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories	<b>NASAF:</b> Northwest African Strategic Air Force
<b>Assg:</b> Assigned	<b>NATOUSA:</b> North Atlantic Theater of Operations USA
<b>ASN:</b> Army Serial Number (personnel)	<b>Nav:</b> Navigator
<b>A.R.C.:</b> American Red Cross	<b>N.B.S.:</b> National Bureau of Standards
<b>ASV:</b> Anti-Surface Vessel (radar)	<b>NC:</b> Nurse Corps.
<b>ATC:</b> Air Transportation Command	<b>NCO:</b> Non-Commissioned Officer
<b>ATS:</b> Air Transport Service	<b>Nickels:</b> propaganda Leaflets
<b>Azon:</b> Azimuth only (guided bomb)	<b>(NMI):</b> No Middle Initial
<b>BC:</b> Bomber Command	<b>NOK:</b> Next Of Kin
<b>Bmb:</b> Bombardier	<b>NRO:</b> National Reconnaissance Office
<b>Bn:</b> Battalion	<b>OAF:</b> Occupation Air Forces
<b>B.R.L.:</b> Ballistic Research Laboratory	<b>OD:</b> Officer of the day, also Olive Drab
<b>BSM:</b> Bomb System Maintenance	<b>OLC:</b> Oak Leaf Cluster
<b>CA:</b> Heavy Cruiser	<b>OTU:</b> Operational Training Unit
<b>CAVU:</b> Ceiling and Visibility Unlimited	<b>PAX:</b> Passengers
<b>C.B.I.:</b> China-Burma-India Theater	<b>PBS:</b> 447 <sup>th</sup> 2 June 44?
<b>C/D:</b> 446 <sup>th</sup> 5 Apr 45?	<b>PDI:</b> Pilot Direction Indicator
<b>CE:</b> Circular Error	<b>POE:</b> Point of Embarkation
<b>CEP:</b> Circular Error Probable	<b>POW:</b> Prisoner of War
<b>Chaff</b> (US term): Radar countermeasure: tiny strips of aluminum, metalized glass fiber, or plastic. See <b>Window</b>	<b>PRO-Kit:</b> Individual Chemical Prophylactic packet
<b>CL:</b> Cannon Loader	<b>PX:</b> Post Exchange
<b>CO:</b> Commanding Officer	<b>QM:</b> Quarter Master
<b>CG:</b> Commanding General	<b>R/B:</b> Road Bridge
<b>CP:</b> Command Post	<b>RC:</b> Red Cross
<b>CQ:</b> Charge of Quarters	<b>R/J:</b> Road Junction
<b>CWS:</b> Chemical Warfare Service	<b>R/Y:</b> Railroad Yards
<b>D/H:</b> Direct Hit	<b>Repl:</b> Replacement
<b>DD:</b> Destroyer	<b>RMC:</b> Returned to Military Control
<b>DED:</b> Declared Dead - no body or remains found	<b>RON:</b> Remain OverNight
<b>Demo:</b> Demolition	<b>RR/B:</b> Railroad Bridge
<b>DL:</b> Dead List	<b>RR/J:</b> Railroad Junction

**DNB:** Died Non-Battle / Died Not-Battle

**DOW:** Died Of Wounds.

**DOWRIA:** Died of Wounds Receive in Action

**DS:** Detached Service

**E/A:** Enemy Aircraft

**E/F:** Enemy Fighter

**EFM:** 447<sup>th</sup> 16 Sep 44?

**EUS:** Evacuated to the United States

**E/M:** Enlisted Men

**E/V:** Enemy Vessel

**F Boat:** Flying Boat

**F/L:** Formation Leader - also Flight Leader

**FO or F/O:** Flying Officer

**FOD:** Finding Of Death

**Frag:** Fragmentation

**GLO:** Ground Liaison Officer (UK)

**GO:** General Order

**GP:** General Purpose/Gun Position

**GTC:** 445<sup>th</sup> 1 Mar 43?

**HE:** High Explosive

**IAS:** Indicated Air Speed

**I & E:** Information & Education

**(i. o.):** Initials Only (initial is the name)

**IP:** Initial Point

**KNB:** Killed Not Battle

**KIA:** Killed In Action

**LC:** Landing Craft

**L/G:** Landing Ground

**Lox:** Liquid Oxygen

**L/S:** Landing Strip

**L/V:** Large Vehicle

**LOT:** 447<sup>th</sup> 2 May 44?

**LST:** Landing Ship Tank

**Ltr:** Letter

**LWA:** Lightly Wounded in Action

**MACR:** Missing Air Crew Report

**MATS:** Military Air Transport Service

**M/G:** Machine Gun

**RR:** Railroad

**RTD:** Returned To Duty

**R/V:** Rendezvous

**SAP:** Semi-Armor Piercing

**SD:** Special Duty

**S/E:** Single Engine (plane)

**S.E.:** Special Equipment (Shoran)

**S/F:** Siebel Ferry

**sk:** sick

**S/M:** Submarine

**SO:** Special Order

**SOI:** Standard Operating Instructions?

**Sq:** Squadron

**Sqdn:** Squadron

**SWA:** Seriously Wounded in Action

**T/A:** Target Area

**T/C:** Troop Concentration

**T/E:** Twin Engine (plane)

**TAC:** Theater Allied Command

**TBF:** Tactical Bomber Force

**TD:** Temporary Duty

**TDY:** Temporary Duty

**TLC:** Tactical Landing Craft

**TO:** Take-Off (time), also Technical Order, and Transportation Officer

**T/O:** Table of Organization

**TOT:** Time Over Target/Time On Target

**Trfd:** Transferred

**TWX:** Teletypewriter Message

**u/i:** Unidentified, also unit of issue

**UNRRA:** United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

**VOCO:** Verbal Order of the Commanding Officer

**W.O.:** Warrant Officer

**WIA:** Wounded In Action

**Window** (British): Radar countermeasure: tiny strips of aluminum, metalized glass fiber, or plastic. See **Chaff**

**WP:** White Phosphorus (bombs)

**WT Station:** 445<sup>th</sup> 20 Jul 43?

**XC:** Cross Country

**ZI:** Zone of Interior (U.S.A.)

**Friday, 26 June 1942**

**Barksdale Field, Louisiana:**

**HQ, 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group:** The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) was constituted and made active, but without personnel, at Barksdale Field, Louisiana on June 26, 1942 pursuant to a letter from the War Department. The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) has no other history. By the authority delegated to the Quartermaster General by the Adjutant General's Office, the coat-of-arms, described below, has been approved for the 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium).

Blazonry:

SHIELD: Azure, six drop bombs, three, two and one.

MOTTO: Perseverance, Vision and Duty.

SIGNIFICANCE: In the ultra-marine blue and gold of the Air Forces, the bombardment functions of the group are symbolized by the falling bombs arranged three, two and one; the numerical designation of the group. The Motto: Perseverance, Vision and Duty, is expressive of the tasks performed by the group.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina:**

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) consisting of a Command Section and the 445<sup>th</sup>, 446<sup>th</sup>, 447<sup>th</sup>, and 448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons, was activated with personnel at Columbia, Army Air Base at Columbia, South Carolina, on August 1, 1942. The original cadre of Command Section consisted of Major Charles T. Olmstead, Lieut. Albert R. Bell, Lieut. Posey T. Harris, Lieut. Walter Lund, Warrant Officer Edgar F. Ulmer and seven enlisted men with Technical Sgt. Leo W. McCann as Sergeant Major. Colonel William C. Mills assumed command of the group on August 3, 1942.

*Bell, Albert R., 2Lt, pilot*

*Harris, Posey T., 2Lt, bombardier, navigator*

*Lund, Walter, 2Lt, engineering*

*McCann, Leo W., T/Sgt, Sergeant Major*

*Mills, William C., Col, Commander*

*Olmsted, Charles T., Maj, pilot*

*Ulmer, Edgar F. "Tiger", CWO, Adjutant*

The original cadre of the 445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron consisted of one officer and thirty-two enlisted men, with 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. William V. MacFarlane, Squadron commander and Staff Sgt. Charles R. Pool as Acting First Sergeant.

*MacFarlane, William V., 1Lt, pilot, Commander, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Pool, Charles R., S/Sgt, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

A like number of enlisted men and one officer constituted the original cadre of the 446<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Charles T. Ceronsky as Squadron Commander and Billy Dykes as First Sergeant.

*Ceronsky, Charles T., 1Lt, Commander, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Dykes, Billy (NMI), S/Sgt, gunner, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Clayton H. Heinlen, Squadron Commander; Staff Sgt. Glenn L. Ratliff, First Sergeant; and thirty-one enlisted men constituted the 447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron.

*Heinlen, Clayton H., 1Lt, pilot, Commander, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Ratliff, Glenn L., S/Sgt, 1st Sgt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. James P. Bates assumed command of the 448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron with Staff Sgt. Murray Asch as First Sergeant. Thirty-two enlisted men were in the original cadre.

*Asch, Murray, S/Sgt, 1st Sgt, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Bates, James P., 1Lt, pilot, Commander, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) was first located in a mess-hall, with Group Headquarters at one end and the four squadrons in the other end. The former boasted a Frigidaire stocked with cokes by optimists who later found them missing and the latter place was as congested as Times Square at five o'clock, busy with interviews, T/Os, Morning Reports, OCS aspirants, would-be non-coms, a little idle chatter and rumors. The congestion, at least, was taken care of when Group Headquarters moved up to its offices on the line and the squadrons moved into Tent City vacated by the 310<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina:**

The Columbia Army Air Base at Columbia, S. C., was still under construction when the Group was activated on August 1, 1942. The Post Theatre was completed but was not ready for use during our stay.



Barracks were being built, but the majority of personnel at the base slept in pyramidal tents reinforced with wooden side-walls. The scene was taken outside of the 447<sup>th</sup> Squadron's Orderly Room.



**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

Immense portable hangars were used for servicing and repairing planes away from the hot sun.



On August 9<sup>th</sup>, thirty-six second lieutenants fresh from OCS and proud of their shiny gold-bars breezed into Headquarters and received their assignments; four to Command Section and eight to each of the four squadrons. Second Lieut. Ernest M. Gutman was appointed Adjutant of the 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron, and Second Lieut. John Javornisky, Second Lieut. Myron Gale and Second Lieut. Arthur Knievel, were the Adjutants of the 446<sup>th</sup>, 447<sup>th</sup> and 448<sup>th</sup> Squadrons, respectively.

*Gale, Myron, 2Lt, Adjutant, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Gutman, Ernest M, 2Lt, Adjutant, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Javornisky, John, Jr., 2Lt, Adjutant, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Knievel, Arthur W., 2Lt, Adjutant, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

Officers and enlisted men continued to arrive in large numbers from OCS, flying schools, bombardier schools, Air Corps Technical schools and Replacement Centers. Lieut. Gaffney was assigned duties of Athletic Officer in the 447<sup>th</sup> Squadron and Lieut. Huchingson was appointed Personnel Officer of the same squadron. Lieut. Neprash, Lieut. Holloway and Lieut. "Two-Gun" Evans, were appointed Intelligence Officer, Transportation Officer and Communications Officer, respectively. Lieuts. Farrens, Gaffney, Greiff, Zakar, Lichtward, Marrich, Meiners, Wallnau and Hayes, were assigned duties of a similar nature in the 448<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

*Gaffney, Charles, H., 2Lt, Athletic Officer, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Huchingson, Lee F., 2Lt, Personnel Officer, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Neprash, Sergius P. 2Lt, Intelligence Officer, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Holloway, McGlou T., 2Lt, Transportation Officer, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

*Evans, James H. "Two-Guns", 2Lt, Intelligence Officer, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Farrens, Kenneth L., 2Lt, intelligence, 448<sup>th</sup> BS (went to 380<sup>th</sup> BS?)*

*Greiff, Stanley (NMI), 2Lt, intelligence? 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Zakar, 2Lt, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*                      *Lichtward, Frederick W., 2Lt, intelligence? 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Marrich, Martin K., 2Lt, adjutant? 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Meiners, 2Lt, Supply/mess, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*                      *Wallnau, Carl N., Jr., 2Lt, engineering? 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Hayes, Elzie N., Jr., 2Lt, armament?, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

As new men reported in, they were interviewed as to past training in Air Corps Technical Schools, past experience in civilian life and classified in such a way that their talents would be put to the best use. The best-qualified men were sent to OTU Schools at the Columbia Army Air Base and were shortly thereafter promoted.

On August 12, 1942, Major Francis R. Pemberton arrived from Headquarters Air Intelligence School, Harrisburg, Pa., and was appointed Group Adjutant and Warrant Officer E.F. Ulmer, was made Assistant Adjutant in addition to his duties as Personnel Officer. First Lieut. Charles R. McMechen, dental corps, arrived the same day to perform duties of Group Dental Officer. Earlier in the month, Second Lt. Arnold H. Schwab was appointed Group Statistical Officer. Capt. Robert R. Pinger, Medical Corps, was appointed Group Surgeon on August 16, 1942.

*McMechen, Charles R., 1Lt, Group Dental Officer*

*Pemberton, Francis R., Maj, intelligence, Group Adjutant*

*Pinger, Robert R., Capt, Group Surgeon*

*Schwab, Arnold H., 2Lt, Group Statistical Officer*

*Ulmer, Edgar F. "Tiger", CWO, Personnel Officer, Group Asst Adjutant*

The 445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron came out first in the first formal inspection of the group on Saturday, August 22, 1942. Their squadron strength on September 1, 1942 was fifty-two officers and two hundred and seventy-one enlisted men. Second Lieut. Henry B. Garland and Priv. Bernard Burton of the 445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron were in a plane crash in which Priv. Burton rescued all of the members of the crew. No one sustained permanent injuries.

*Burton, Bernard A., Pvt, gunner, photographer, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Garland, Henry B., 2Lt, pilot, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

The 447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron spent a few anxious hours when they heard that Lieut. DeMoss' plane had crashed just outside of Greenville, South Carolina. The entire crew had parachuted to safety, however, and the extent of injuries sustained, were a sprained ankle of Lieut. Morganti and a head-bruise for Sgt. Whitaker. No sooner had this excitement died down, when Lieuts. Vangness and Urquhart were killed in an early morning flight in a plane of the 309<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, also of Columbia Army Air Base, Columbia, S.C. *(The incidents occurred on 13 Sep 42, according to Death Certificates)*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

**447<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. unknown**

**P** *DeMoss, Jack M., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**CP** *Morganti, Clyde J., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**N** *Colby, John W., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**E** *Galich, Michael M., S/Sgt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**E** *Whittaker, William H., Sgt, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

**309<sup>th</sup> BG A/C No. unknown**

**P** *Attridge, James F., Jr., 1Lt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**CP** *Urquhart, Donald V., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**CP** *Vangsness, Martin O., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**N** *Sparks, Francis W., 2Lt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**E** *Braun, Roland G., Pvt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**R** *Frame, Charles O., Sgt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**G** *Gallie, Leon O., Pvt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*

Things were getting pretty well organized and shaped up for the second phase of OTU training at the end of August. Second Lieut. Ilg, Assistant Group Materiel Officer, was at Middleton Air Depot, Middleton, Pa., for the purpose of assuring a satisfactory flow of supplies. On September 1, 1942, Chaplain (1<sup>st</sup> Lieut.) E.V. Johnson joined the group and assumed duties of Group Chaplain, relieving Chaplain William Williams. About the same time, Lieut. Moon, Group Communications Officer, was passing out the cigars (no, it wasn't a boy) on his recent promotion to first lieutenant. And there were rumors that we were going to leave Columbia Army Air Base soon.

*Ilg, Joseph M., Jr., 2Lt, personal equipment Johnson, E. V. (i.o.), 1Lt, Chaplain*  
*Moon, Gerald T., 1Lt, communications Williams, William (NMI), 1Lt, Chaplain*

Sgt. Kenneth D. Terhune was promoted to grade of First Sergeant on September 13, 1942 and took over those duties common to a "topkick", in the 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron. First Lieut. William V. MacFarlane, Squadron Commander of the same organization, was promoted to rank of Captain on the next day. Second Lieut. Ernest L. Smith was appointed Squadron Ordnance Officer and Second Lieut. John E. Kelly took over the duties of Squadron Communications Officer.

*Kelly, John E., Capt, Communication Officer, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*MacFarlane, William V., Capt, pilot, Commander, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*Smith, Ernest L., 2Lt, Ordnance Officer, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*Terhune, Kenneth D., Sgt, operations, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, First Lieut. Ceronisky was assigned the duties of Squadron Operations Officer in the 446<sup>th</sup> Squadron, succeeding Lieut. Griffith. Capt. Henry H. Schwane assumed command of the squadron.

*Ceronisky, Charles T., 1Lt, Operations Officer, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*Griffith, Frank J. "Grif", Capt, pilot, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*Schwane, Henry H., Capt, pilot, Commander*

First Lieut. Heinlen was transferred to Group Operations and Capt. Raymond D. Sampson assumed command of the 447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron on September 8, 1942.

*Heinlen, Clayton H., 1Lt, pilot, operations*  
*Sampson, Raymond D., Capt, pilot, Commander*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, Major Bailey C. Cook joined the group and was assigned the duties of Group Operations Officer. Major Charles T. Olmsted was assigned primary duties of Group Executive Officer.

*Cook, Bailey C., Maj, pilot, Group Operations Officer*

*Olmsted, Charles T., Maj, pilot, Group Executive Officer*

**445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** The 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron was activated at the Columbia Army Air Base on August 1, 1942 as part of the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb. Group (M). However, the Squadron did not function as an independent organization until the Group moved to the Walterboro Air Base on September 20.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William V. MacFarlane was the first Commanding Officer. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard P. Tipton was appointed Operations Officer. At Columbia the personnel of the Squadron gradually reported from replacement centers or from the various training schools. The men coming together in this new Squadron represented a cross-section of America. They came from all walks of life. For example, one navigator reported who had been a theatre manager in Illinois. A pilot reported who had been a grocery clerk in New York. A radio operator reported who had been a miner in West Virginia. There was a pilot who had been a dress cutter in Georgia. One of the radio gunners had been a florist in Massachusetts. A pilot reported who had been a bank clerk in Mississippi. There was one bombardier who was formerly an insurance salesman in the state of New Jersey. There was a navigator who reported that he had been a school teacher in Kentucky; a radio operator who was a bartender in Ohio; an aerial engineer who was a truck driver in Texas; and a radio gunner who was a violinist in Ohio.

*MacFarlane, William V., 1Lt, pilot, Commander*

*Tipton, Richard P. "Tip", 2Lt, pilot, Operations Officer*

Such was the background of the men who were coming together to create one unit in the unfolding organization, later to be referred to as American Air Power.

As might have been expected, there were difficult and trying days in Columbia. The expansion of the Air Forces at this time was so rapid and the organization which was existing at the outset of the war was so small that well ordered efficiency could hardly be expected at once. In any event the men complained a great deal about the food, the living quarters, the sanitary facilities and the lack of orderly administration in general

At this stage the Squadron had only two aircraft, one of which was not in first rate condition. The 445<sup>th</sup> was attached to a base squadron for operational purposes. The pilots did a great deal of flying. Sometimes they flew in the morning, the afternoon and also the night. The inexperienced pilots were given instruction and were checked out.

There were some crashes with the crews being killed. These accidents had, of course, a bad effect on the morale of the men. However, for the main part, they took it with the philosophic attitude of "this is war". It was difficult if not impossible in most cases to determine the cause of the crash. Thus it often remained an unanswered question as to whether it was a defective plane or merely improper handling of the ship.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

The pilots worked hard and gave their best despite the difficulties encountered in these early days. The instructor-pilots were: Lt. Richard P. Tipton, Lt. Robert M. Bonus, Lt. William S. Cratin and Lt. Wayne C. Clinton. These men had a serious responsibility and worked hard at their job. This was the formative stage of future combat pilots and the job which was done by the instructor-pilots is indicated by the record which the men later attained in combat.

*Bonus, Robert M., 2Lt, pilot*  
*Cratin, William S., 2Lt, pilot*

*Clinton, Wayne C., 2Lt, pilot*  
*Tipton, Richard P. "Tip", 2Lt, pilot*

If a history of any military unit is to be of any value, it should provide information which will help make for improvement in the future. And so it should be recorded that a great deal of the difficulties in these early days was administrative and organizational. In civilian life great value is attached to an able administrator or organizer or in other words an able executive. There is no doubt that every possible emphasis in selection and training should be placed on the importance of administration and organization.

**445<sup>th</sup> BS:** *War Diary of: Seegmiller, Barnard H., Sgt, armament:*  
09/06/42: *Sunday*

*"It is difficult for me to realize today is Sunday, it has been so much like any other day. In fact I have almost failed to keep count of the days since I came to Colombia Army Air Base. September 1, I came from Daniel Field to this place (CAAB) and the following day was assigned to the 309th Bomb Group and two days later to the 377th Bomb Squadron. Our squadron is normally composed of sixteen B-25 airplanes, but at present there are only eight.*

*The week I have been here has been the most provoking of any since I came in the army. When I got to a squadron at last, and became assigned, I expected to begin being useful to the cause. I found, however, that we new men are almost entirely ignored. It is no concern of anyone's whether we do anything or not and we seem expected to fall quietly into the practice of going out on the line each day and doing nothing but sit there. That, I find, is very boring. I have tried to busy myself with whatever I could find, but it has not proven very satisfying and the result is that I have wondered a great deal whether I am as contented here as I have thought I was. I saw a piece of rope today and it reminded me of how Dad used to go uptown and come back with a clean shave, a new pair of overalls and a coil of new rope in his hand with which he was to tie up a bronco. Those were grand days and I miss Dad as much almost as I admire him.*

*I took my second airplane ride this afternoon, (my first one was a little more than a year ago over Provo, with Gladys). I went on a practice-bombing mission and we stayed up a little more than an hour. I was in the rear of the plane all to myself and tried out every position from tail gunner to upper turret and radio operator. It was a very interesting experience and greatly revived my desire to fly. What I wouldn't give for 20-20 vision! The South Carolina countryside is beautiful from the ground, but from above the patchwork of forest, fields, streams and lakes, criss-crossed by winding roads and stately highways, is one of the most pleasant and peaceful scenes I have ever beheld."*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

**446<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** On August 1, 1942 in one corner of a mess hall at the Columbia Army Air Base the 447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron officially came into existence. It was one of four squadrons making up the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb. Group which was activated on that date.

Thirty-one enlisted men under the command of Lt. Clayton H. Heinlen made up the cadre around which the squadron was to be built. There was no equipment other than the personal belongings of the men making up the first cadre and this small group of men started from scratch.

*Heinlen, Clayton H., 1Lt, pilot, Commander*

In about a week ground officers and flight officers began to arrive. Lt. Myron Gale was appointed adjutant. During the first month of its existence the squadron gradually began to take shape as it approached full strength in personnel. Supplies consigned to the squadron began to trickle in and we got a few airplanes.

*Gale, Myron, 2Lt, Adjutant*

As soon as the new men arrived they were assigned to jobs for which they had been previously trained or for which they were best suited. O.T.U. training got under way right away and classes were held for instruction in all types of work which the men would be required to do in the squadron.

Lack of experienced personnel was responsible for most of the confusion which occurred during those early days but as the men worked at their various jobs and became familiar with their work, most of the hitches were eliminated and the squadron began to function smoothly.

The O.T.U. training program was intensified during the latter part of August and throughout September. More planes were assigned to the squadron and the flight crews were given training in operating their planes under every possible condition. Night flights as well as day flights were made and these flights served to give additional training to the navigators and other crew members as well as the pilots and co-pilots. One by one the new pilots were checked out in the B-25.

Not all the new men who came into the squadron turned out to be satisfactory and from time to time some were transferred out. An effort was made by this process of elimination to retain in the squadron only the best men.

There were quite a few plane accidents while the squadron was at Columbia but this squadron did not lose any planes there. Two flight officers of the squadron were killed in a crash however during the early part of September. They were flying a 309<sup>th</sup> plane when the crash occurred.

At Columbia the enlisted men of the squadron were quartered in tents. These tents had wooden floors, electric lights, and did not make bad living quarters. The officers were quartered in wooden barracks – little better than the tents since they were not heated and had very crude windows.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

The city of Columbia was a nice southern city but its facilities were greatly overtaxed by the large number of soldiers stationed near it – the largest number being at Ft. Jackson. It was almost always necessary to stand in line for movies, although there were four or five theatres in town; and all the restaurants were overcrowded at meal time. The squadron was pretty much restricted during the early days of the O.T.U. program and the men didn't get into town very often.

On the base at Columbia there was an Officers Club which was nothing more than a glorified barracks building. There was a bar, however, and sandwiches and drinks were sold. A more elaborate club was opened later in the city of Columbia for the officers.

The group's first phase of O.T.U. training was completed about the middle of September. On September 8, 1942 Capt. Raymond D. Sampson took over command of the squadron replacing Lt. Clayton H. Heinlen who was made squadron operations officer. The squadron was ready to begin its second phase of training and was only waiting for the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb. Group to move out from the Walterboro Army Air Base so that it could be occupied by the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group.

*Heinlen, Clayton H., 1Lt, pilot, Operations Officer*  
*Sampson, Raymond D., Capt, pilot, Commander*

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: September 10, 1942:** Our Squadron's social life made an auspicious start with our first party which was held at the Elk's Club in Columbia. Men brought dates but those who didn't found ample company with the unescorted girls who had been invited. The main attractions were a large outdoor dance floor, 10-piece band and free refreshments. Our then Group Commanding Officer, Col. Mills, gave a short talk wishing us luck and Godspeed in what was to come. The affair broke up with good timing when the beer ran out at 11:30.

*Mills, William C., Col, Commander (Aug 42)*

*Note: According to the HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG war diary, the following two incidents both occurred on the same night. Lt DeMoss's ship crashed first, then shortly thereafter, the 309<sup>th</sup> BG ship crashed. According to Death Certificates, the incidents occurred on 13 September 1942, rather than as dated in 447<sup>th</sup> BS Special Accounts.*

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: September 3, 1942 (Actually occurred 13 Sep 42):** The O.D. was awakened at 2:30 A.M. with the news that one of our planes had crashed near a road just outside of Greenville, S. C. The news was phoned in by Lt. John Colby, navigator on the flight, who bailed out before the crash. He added that the other members of our Squadron in the plane had also successfully jumped. They were Lt. Jack DeMoss, pilot; Lt. Clyde J. Morganti, co-pilot; and S/Sgt. Michael Galich, engineer. It seems that they had run into some navigational difficulties and were forced to abandon ship due to lack of gas. Lt. Morganti sustained the only injury – a sprained ankle. The men who had jumped straggled in all morning with stories of how they landed in trees, marshes, and on farm houses. Their membership fee for the Caterpillar Club was expensive to Lts. DeMoss and Colby since they each had to pay \$112.50 in damages for the plane to the Government.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)**

**447<sup>th</sup> BS** A/C No. **unknown** - crashed 13 Sep 42 - no serious injuries

**P** *DeMoss, Jack M., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**CP** *Morganti, Clyde J., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**N** *Colby, John W., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**E** *Galich, Michael M., S/Sgt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**E** *Whittaker, William H., Sgt, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: August 28, 1942** (*Actually occurred on 13 Sep 42, according to the Death Certificates*): This date we had our first and only casualties of the training period. Going along as co-pilots with a 309<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group plane and pilot, Lts. Urquhart and Vangsness were killed instantly when their plane crashed one quarter mile from the runway at 5:30 in the morning. Fog had a great deal to do with the accident.

**309<sup>th</sup> BG** A/C No. **unknown** - crashed 13 Sep 42 - entire crew killed.

**P** *Attridge, James F., Jr., 1Lt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**CP** *Urquhart, Donald V., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**CP** *Vangsness, Martin O., 2Lt, 447<sup>th</sup> BS*  
**N** *Sparks, Francis W., 2Lt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**E** *Braun, Roland G., Pvt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**R** *Frame, Charles O., Sgt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*  
**G** *Gallie, Leon O., Pvt, 309<sup>th</sup> BG*

**448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant James P. Bates gazed across the sun baked field at Columbia Army Air Base to a small group of men who were awaiting his first orders. Thirty-two men and one Officer were the entire personnel of the 448<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron (M), on that hot August afternoon. By authority contained in General Order number 143 Headquarters, Third Air Force, Tampa, Florida, dated June 23, 1942, the Army Air Force had created the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group (M), and its member squadrons housed in a single Mess Hall with each squadron occupying a corner as a combination Orderly Room, Operations Office, Engineering Office, etc, the 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group had little to offer to strike terror into the hearts of the Axis partners. Even the few airplanes which it could call its own were borrowed from the 309<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Anyone entering his tar paper shack at any time during the first few days of the Squadron's existence would have been hard put to find the least semblance of order in that bedlam, yet the infant organization was making progress.

*Bates, James P., 1Lt, pilot, Commander*

The first week of its existence ended with the 448<sup>th</sup> remaining little more than a figment of the imagination of Lt. Bates. A typewriter, a small table and a wooden bench was the total worldly goods of the organization. Meanwhile one ground officer Lt.

## Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)

### Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina (continued)

Wallnau and several more men reported for duty. Immediately the Officer was given the job of Engineering Officer, Adjutant, Operations Officer, etc.

*Bates, James P., 1Lt, pilot, Commander*                      *Wallnau, Carl N., Jr., 2Lt, engineering*

This state of affairs ended on August 8 when 8 ground Officers fresh from O.C.S. Miami Beach, Florida reported for duty. They were given the job of administering the various sections of the squadron. Lt. Bates, aided by Lts: McCurry, Fisher, Veum and others soon had his hands full instructing, training and qualifying the new pilots who were at this time pouring into the new organization. Most of the latter had never seen a B-25.

*Bates, James P., 1Lt, pilot, Commander*                      *Fisher, James B., Jr., 2Lt, pilot*  
*McCurry, Milton L., 2Lt, pilot*                                      *Veum, Ole E., 2Lt, pilot*

Enlisted Men too were coming in and Lt. Kneivel, the Adjutant found his hands full straightening out Service Records and pay data. Lt. Greiff was endeavoring to put each man into the position he most wanted and still fill the squadron's table of organization. Lt. Marrich was chasing both men and Officers to O.T.U. school and Lt. Farrens was busy instilling basic rifle technique into all the interested men. Lts: Jantz and Meiners were setting up their supply and mess facilities and Lt. Lichtward, while investigating Enlisted Bombardiers, was setting up the Intelligence Section. Everyone was exceedingly busy and gallons of mid-night oil were burned in the effort of achieving a smooth running organization. The crowded conditions lasted a week while the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group moved its personnel and equipment to Walterboro, then the 448<sup>th</sup> moved in to quarters that had been recently occupied by the 426 Bomb Squadron. At the end of a long row of pyramidal tents were two reserved for the Orderly Room and one for the Supply. The men slept four in a tent, and with board flooring the warm weather of South Carolina and little rain everyone was fairly comfortable. The Officers slept in two-man tents and barracks across the ravine from the main camp.

*Farrens, Kenneth L., 2Lt, intelligence*                      *Greiff, Stanley (NMI), 2Lt, intelligence*  
*Jantz, Lawrence E., 2Lt, supply*                              *Knievel, Arthur W., 2Lt, Adjutant*  
*Lichtward, Frederick W., 2Lt, intelligence*              *Marrich, Martin K., 2Lt, adjutant*  
*Meiners, 2Lt, supply/mess*

The line was set up on the far side of the field and Lt. Wallnau was kept continually busy securing equipment and supplies as they came into the Columbia Railroad Yards. Much maintenance work was also necessary on the three airplanes then in the squadron's possession.

*Wallnau, Carl N., Jr., 2Lt, engineering*

Columbia Army Air Base was at this time a collection of sites where eventually very adequate buildings would be erected by at that time only temporary tar paper shacks greeted the eye.

The squadron was soon hard at work on a very active program. All new pilots had to be checked out, ground crews trained and bombardiers and navigators given experience in the B-25. Meanwhile everyone had to be in tip top physical condition. Every morning calisthenics for both officers and enlisted men were on the schedule of the seven day week. Yet all the time through those first months men kept pouring in.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina**

More and more equipment made its appearance and men who had not received pay for several months were brought up to date. Everyone settled down into the pattern of the squadron routine. Lt. Gaffney the squadron recreation officer outfitted a day room and arranged for many dances and parties in Columbia. Everyone believed that the 448<sup>th</sup> was well on the way to becoming the best squadron in the Group.

*Gaffney, Charles, H., 2Lt, Adjutant*

First phase O.T.U. training was nearing completion, most of the crews checked out in the B-25's and everyone was looking forward to the move to Walterboro, S.C., for the second phase of the training.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** The rumors that we were to leave Columbia finally did come true in our transfer to Army Air Base-Anderson Field, Walterboro, South Carolina, on September 17, 1942 by air and truck convoy. Contrary to the general conception that the next place to where one is going to move is always much better, the latrine specialists had really conjured some bad tales about Walterboro. So we went there expecting nothing less than the worst. But, we moved into stone barracks and quarters not in the least unpleasant. We also had plumbing that worked—sometimes. Walterboro is a pleasant little Southern village, not too far from Charleston, S.C. and many officers and enlisted men made pleasant acquaintances in our stay there of about ten weeks.

Upon transfer of the group to Walterboro, S.C., Colonel Robert D. Knapp, Director of the OTU Training Program at Columbia Army Air Base, Assumed command of the Group. Colonel William C. Mills transferred to the 340<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group at Columbia Army Air Base and assumed command of that newly activated group. Capt. William A. Lowell, adjutant of the 309<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group at Columbia Army Air Base, was relieved of his duties there and became Adjutant of our group. Lieut. Roger K. Lewis was appointed Assistant Adjutant and relieved of his duties as Group Adjutant.

*Knapp, Robert D., Col, pilot, 321st BG Commander*

*Lewis, Roger K., 2Lt, Group Asst. Adjutant*

*Lowell, William A., Capt, Group Adjutant*

*Mills, William C., Col, Commander*

Officers and enlisted men continued to arrive in ever-increasing numbers to fill out the Tables of Organization. Enlisted men were being promoted just about every two weeks and we never could tell for sure, what grade a man was. Several men left the various squadrons to attend Officer Candidate Schools and Aviation Cadet Schools. Promotions of officers were initiated in all of the squadrons.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

At Walterboro Army Air Base, Walterboro, S. C., Group Headquarters was situated in a long double-winged building. It was easily recognized by its sawdust lawn and white railing.



The officers were quartered in newly constructed wooden barracks (above), and the enlisted men lived in stone barracks (below).



**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

The later part of September and the first week or two in October, found the Flight Echelons of the various squadrons at Eglin Field, Florida, for Torpedo Bombing Training. While the air echelon was at Eglin Field, the ground echelon held the fort at Walterboro, doing KP, guard duty and administrative details.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Second Lieuts. Crites and Woodworth, Technical Sgt. Fortenberry, Staff Sgt. Calvo and Corporal StClair of the 448<sup>th</sup> Squadron, died as result of a fatal airplane accident while on detached service at Eglin Field, Fla.

**448<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. unknown**

**P** *Crites, Ardith E., 2Lt*  
**CP** *Woodworth, Leonard H., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B**  
**E** *Fortenberry, Floyd H., T/Sgt*  
**R** *Calvo, James W., S/Sgt*  
**G** *StClair, Allen A., Cpl*  
**F** *None*

October 9, 1942, was a tragic day for the 446<sup>th</sup> Squadron and the whole group. Two planes were lost in a routine flight within two hours of each other. The losses in one plane were Capt. Ceronsky, Second Lieut. McDonald and Staff Sgt. Poinson. In the other plane, we lost Second Lieut. Broyles, Second Lieut. Butler, Second Lieut. Bugra and Private 1<sup>st</sup> Class Young. Lieut. Bugra had just joined the squadron and, ironically, it was his first flight with the 446<sup>th</sup>. The causes for the crashes were not determined.

**446<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. unknown**

**P** *Ceronsky, Charles T., Capt*  
**CP** *McDonald, Roland A., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B**  
**E** *Poinson, Michael R., S/Sgt*  
**R**  
**G**  
**F** *None*

**446<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. unknown**

*Broyles, Albert E. R., 2Lt*  
*Butler, Don J., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Bugra, John (NMI), 2Lt*  
*Young, William L., PFC*  
  
*None*

Combat crews of the various squadrons made bombing missions at Myrtle Beach, S.C., at various intervals.

Second Lieut. Robert O. Lord, Jr., was appointed Squadron Adjutant of the 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron on October 20, 1942.

*Lord, Robert O. Jr., 2Lt, Adjutant, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

The 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron suffered a loss in the deaths of Second Lieut. Douglas Cole, Second Lieut. Forrest Carter, Second Lieut. William C. Stewart and Sergeant Gene E. Lefler, in a routine flight on November 8, 1942.

**445<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. 41-12970**

**P** *Cole, Douglas W., 2Lt*  
**CP** *Carter, Forrest Edward, 2Lt*  
**N** *Stewart, William Craig, 2Lt*  
**B**  
**E** *Lefler, Gene E., Sgt*  
**R**  
**G**  
**F** *None*

Who said that Friday the Thirteenth is unlucky? Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, was “Cigar Day” in the 446<sup>th</sup> and 448<sup>th</sup> Squadrons. Lieuts. Javornisky and Knievel, adjutants of the 446<sup>th</sup> and 448<sup>th</sup> Squadrons, respectively, are proudly displaying their silver bars. Three days later, our popular Group Adjutant, Capt. Lowell, was wearing his gold leaf. Lieut. Schwab of Command Section in Statistical Control was passing out some fine coronas on his promotion to first lieutenant.

*Javornisky, John, Jr., 1Lt, Adjutant, 446<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Knievel, Arthur W., 1Lt, Adjutant, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Lowell, William A., Maj, Group Adjutant*

*Schwab, Arnold H., 1Lt, Group Statistical Officer*

Shortly after our transfer to Walterboro, S.C., Sergeant Vishy replaced Sergeant Ratliff as First Sergeant of the 447<sup>th</sup> Squadron. The 447<sup>th</sup> also got a new mess officer in Lieut. Gaffney.

*Gaffney, Charles, H., 2Lt, Mess Officer*

*Ratliff, Glenn L., S/Sgt, personnel*

*Vishy, Joseph J., Jr., Sgt, personnel, 1st Sgt*

**445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** Early in September word was received that the new air base under construction at Walterboro, South Carolina was ready for occupancy and that the 321<sup>st</sup> Group was to move there. The men looked forward to the change.

On September 20, the entire Squadron had arrived at its new base in Walterboro. At this time the Squadron had 9 B-25's with which to train. The field was exceptionally large for the accommodation of one Group and the dispersal of both aircraft and quarters was carried out at even greater distances than have been used in combat theatres. The distance between the orderly room (around which the enlisted men were quartered) and the Officer's barracks was about two miles and the distance from the orderly room to the Operations building on the line was nearly two miles further.

There was no Squadron Officers' mess, as the Officers' mess was operated on a Group basis. The enlisted men had their own mess.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

The nights and early mornings were damp and cold. Men who had lived in sub-zero weather said they had never felt the cold so much although the temperature seldom reached a freezing point.

A great deal of emphasis was placed on athletics and exercise. The various departments attempted to train their personnel. The pilots continued to do a large amount of flying. The S-2 Officer organized flights to simulate bombing missions and briefed and interrogated the crews going on such missions.

Reveille for the enlisted men was at 5:45. The practice flying started almost as soon as daylight permitted. There was an atmosphere of urgency greater than that which was later experienced in the combat zone.

The Squadron lost one plane and crew at Walterboro. Lt. Cole, the assistant Operations Officer took a plane up to swing the compass. He crashed in a swamp outside Charleston. One engine was seen to explode and break off the wing. It was found a considerable distance from the remainder of the wreckage. The S-2 Officer conducted an investigation and reported that the only reasonable explanation which was consistent with all the facts was that there might have been a leak in the oxygen tank which could have caused the kind of explosion which occurred, since if pure oxygen comes in contact with oil, an explosion will result.

*Cole, Douglas (NMI), 2Lt, pilot*

This explanation was supported by the fact that no fire accompanied the explosion.

In any event the oxygen was removed from all of the ships and there were no further accidents of this kind in the Group, although previously there had been several.

Odds and ends about Walterboro that will be recalled by the men are: the fire that burnt the Medical storage building to the ground; the delay in completing the water system; the welcome heat which was produced by the little belly stoves; the early morning fog that hung over the depressions on the way to the line in which a few men lost their way trying to find a particular place on the large field; the coca-cola bottles; the slot machines; the cross-country hikes which were promoted by Lt. Malek.

*Malek, Stanley J., 2Lt, intelligence*

Then there were the buses which, loaded to capacity, took the men into the town of Walterboro where a few restaurants, bars and girls held their lure. There were the meetings in which the men were "eaten out" for this and that. There were warnings about proper uniforms, proper saluting and proper military courtesy. There were classroom lectures and moving pictures on various subjects including aircraft identification, military security, buzz-bombing, evasive action, and camouflage. There were bombardiers protesting because they could not get more training on Norden sights and navigators who felt that they were not being given an opportunity to get enough experience in their particular field.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

There were the ever present rumors as to when the Group might be leaving for the combat zone and as to where it might go. There was the development of the new Army vocabulary, expanding the use of certain old words and improvising the use of new ones, not all of which could be used at the dinner table back home. There was a great deal of talk about sabotage and espionage – more than was afterward heard even in the combat zone.

Toward the end of November it was heard first through the usual latrine rumor that the Group was to move to the DeRidder Army Air Base in Louisiana and there participate in maneuvers. This temporarily put an end to the rumors that the unit was about to go overseas.

An advance party flew down to DeRidder to organize the layout. This base was more established than Walterboro. It had an attractive Officer's Club, a large hangar with a cement apron in front and a very desirable PX store with female clerks. There was a well established base organization. When the Squadron first moved into Walterboro, there was no base organization and it was operated as a sub base of Columbia.

**445<sup>th</sup> BS: *War Diary of: Seegmiller, Barnard H., Sgt, armament:***

*10/05/42: "Having worked a half shift this morning, we are resting this afternoon preparatory to going on an all night shift tonight. The weather is mild and pleasant and reminds me very much of October weather at home. Each morning as we fall out at five o'clock for roll call, I am reminded of the crisp, moonlight dawns of last fall's round-up and it reminds me very much of a desire I have and can't suppress to be there again this year and each successive year here after. I think I shall never get completely away from my longing for the range and to do the things Dad used to do (homesick perhaps).*

*This afternoon our Commanding Officer, Capt. MacFarlane, called us together to discuss a few topics relative to our leaving for Foreign Service. His remarks lent credence to the many rumors we have heard to the effect that we would soon be leaving the country, in a matter of two or three weeks. His admonitions were stated clearly and without affectation in a manner that marshaled considerable respect for the man on my part. They were; 1) to suppress rumors which might be true and consequently be disastrous, 2) refrain from any intentions of going "over the hill," as we are now on the alert, which makes such an offense "desertion," and 3) to join each with the other in making the squadron an efficient fighting unit. I was surprised that authentic statement of the fact that we are to leave very soon created so little comment among the men, but they all, like myself, have seen it coming for quite a long time. Really, it is what we are all anxious for.*

***MacFarlane, William V., Capt, pilot, Commander***

*Friday, October 2, we were not busy at the Armament tent so I decided to take a ride. Some of the pilots had to go to Colombia for their pay and so made that the object of their afternoon's flying. I rode in the upper gun turret, as I wanted to get some experience in operation of the guns. It was an excellent day for flying and there was scarcely a bump at all as we climbed to about a thousand feet elevation and headed northwest. An autumnal haze restricted vision for a very great distance, but I could see*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

*clearly everything that passed below us. The countryside in this state is very irregular. Fields are all sizes and shapes, skirted by woods of varying color and density, through which narrow dirt roads seem to meander unintentionally. About the only symmetry to be seen is where a highway parallels a railroad for a few hundred yards before leaving it again to cross a stream or avoid a swamp.*

*In all there were three planes going to Colombia, but as there was an ominous blue smoke emitting from an oil leak in our left engine as it was warmed up, we were detained a few minutes to investigate. We lost no time getting on our way after take off and soon we were passing high above the Army primary training station at Orangeburg, where I counted twenty-five small yellow-winged Stearman biplanes landing and taking off on the small dirt field below. The next landmark was the wandering, sluggish, red Savannah River, which passes through Colombia. In another minute we were over the city with its mottled pattern of homes and factories, with the municipal airport and racetrack to the south and the rock quarry to the left and by the river. We circled the field once and landed. I immediately set off for the PX where I found some of the boys who had flown on the first two ships. We had some refreshments and I bought a Life magazine before going back to the plane. In an hour we were ready to return, and our plane was first to take the air. The others followed soon and from my place in the upper turret I watched them slowly take their places on our wing tips in the regular combat formation. Alternately I trained the turret guns on one ship and then the other as they bobbed up and down so close that I could see the expressions change on the faces of the crews. I was surprised to note the ease with which the target can be kept in the sight of the new, improved turret. Suddenly the pilot banked sharply to the right and I looked down to realize we were approaching our home base. So absorbed had I been in observing the flight of the other ships that I was completely unaware of how long we had been flying. With breathtaking unexpectedness our left wing tipped sharply upward and back to level flight. I suspected this was a sign of some sort so I watched to see what happened. Suddenly and as easily as if I had willed it, the plane on our left dipped downward and swung as if suspended by a string to a new position on the right of the rear plane. In another second we banked away from the other two and came in for a landing. As I walked back to the barracks I thought of man's wonderful abilities and his utter foolishness in the application of his knowledge."*

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**



*Barnard Seegmiller*



*Me and Sam Abrams*



*Elbert Fucker and Joe Shiley*



B-25-J equipped for combat (*43-27572 "Babs"*)

**446<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** On September 18, 1942 the squadron moved by truck and plane to the base at Walterboro. It had been rumored that this base was in the middle of a swamp and that combat conditions would be simulated as nearly as possible during the second phase of training. One and all expected the worse. It was a pleasant surprise when it was found that heated stone barracks were available for the men and that in every respect the base was as good a location as Columbia. In many respects it was better.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

Walterboro was a charming little southern city – clean and immaculate. Its people were friendly and many of the men from the squadron enjoyed the hospitality of their homes. There was one movie in the town and every show played to a capacity house, mostly soldiers, even though the pictures were usually very old. There were several restaurants in the town which served fairly good meals. The local high school granted permission for the squadron to use their gym for basketball games and practice.

When the group moved from Columbia to Walterboro Col. Robert Knapp assumed command, replacing Col. W. Mills, the first group commander. Col. Knapp had been the O.T.U. director at Columbia before assuming command of the group. Col. Mills was given command of the newly activated 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb. Group at Columbia.

*Knapp, Robert D., Col, pilot, 321st BG Commander*

*Mills, William C., Col, Commander*

The second phase of O.T.U. training was started immediately at Walterboro and continued throughout October and November. The second phase consisted of more advanced combat training. Gunnery missions and practice bombing missions were run at Myrtle Beach daily to give the bombardiers and gunners training. Long range cross country flights were flown to give navigators and pilots practice in this type of flying. Practice missions were flown for which specific targets such as bridges, factories, etc. from two to three hundred miles away were selected giving the crews practice in finding a target and making a bombing run on it.

In October the flight echelon went to Eglin Field, Florida for special training in skip-bombing and torpedo-bombing tactics. They remained there two weeks for this training and then returned to Walterboro.

By the latter part of November the second phase of O.T.U. training had been completed and the squadron was technically ready for combat. The Group Commander, however, had been trying to persuade higher headquarters that the planes should be modified before going into combat and it was decided that these modifications would be made.

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: November 1, 1942:** Lt. DeMoss had another narrow escape when he brought his ship in on two wheels – his right and nose wheels; his left wheel being stuck half-way down. Lt. DeMoss made a beautiful controlled landing on the left side of the runway. He kept the plane on its right wheel until the ship lost some of its speed and then the left wing settled into the sand to the left of the runway. The other slightly scared but uninjured occupants of the plane were Lts. Charles Hoffman and Stanley Lieberman.

*DeMoss, Jack M., 2Lt, pilot*

*Hoffman, Charles W., 2Lt, pilot*

*Lieberman, Stanley (NMI), 2Lt, bombardier*

**448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** At 08:45 on September 20, 1942, the 448<sup>th</sup> made its first move with a slightly clumsy manner which spoke of inexperience. The personnel packed their equipment and by airplane and motor convoy moved to the new base 90

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

miles away. The move passed without incident of note and the motor convoy arrived at Anderson Field, Walterboro, S.C. at 20:30 September 20, 1942.

At the new camp the squadron found itself permanent barracks, cots and new stoves, but due to a faulty plumbing arrangement very little water was to be had and what there was smelled extremely bad. The Mess Hall was a welcome relief after the tar paper shack of Columbia and immediate improvement was noted in the Bill of Fare.

The squadron was barely settled in its new home when word was received that the Flight Echelon would depart for a two weeks training program in torpedo bombing at Eglin Field, Florida. With the flying crews gone the Ground Echelon continued to set up the Line and Bivouac Area and indulge in a strenuous physical and Chemical Warfare program.

At Eglin Field on September 29 the squadron suffered its first casualty when while on a routine training flight 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants: Crites and Woodworth T/Sgt. Fortenberry, S/Sgt. Calvo and Corporal StClair crashed into the water. Their deaths created much grief within the squadron.

**448<sup>th</sup> BS A/C No. unknown**

**P** *Crites, Ardith E., 2Lt*  
**CP** *Woodworth, Leonard H., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B**  
**E** *Fortenberry, Floyd H., T/Sgt*  
**R** *Calvo, James W., S/Sgt*  
**G** *StClair, Allen A., Cpl*  
**F** *None*

A week later the Flight Echelon returned from Florida and with the squadron once more whole Lt. Bates ordered an intensifying of the physical training which was then in progress. From six o'clock Reveille to supper at 17:30 everyone was kept either working at their job or engaging in some sport or exercise.

On October 14 everyone was happy to learn that Lt. Bates had been appointed Captain.

**Bates, James P., Capt, pilot, Commander**

As the squadron settled into its routine the personnel began to wander further a field and the town of Walterboro was a frequent rendezvous in which entertainment was sought but seldom found. With the exception of one small theater and a small Service Club there was little to attract the average soldier. On the field the plumbing improved and much larger PX was opened. One half of the squadron Mess Hall was converted to a Day Room and soon became a popular spot.

On October 16 the cry of fire was heard throughout the camp and piling into trucks with shovels and axes the men sped far back into the woods near the base to successfully combat a forest fire which threatened the entire region. Two days later a fire of unknown origin burned down one wing of the new hospital.

**Saturday, 1 August thru Monday, 30 November 1942 (continued)**  
**Anderson Army Air Field, Walterboro, South Carolina (continued)**

Operations continued to stress formation flying and bomb runs at Myrtle Beach. Cross country training flights soon became a common occurrence and 448<sup>th</sup> planes ranged far and wide over the country. By their skillful landings and takeoffs the pilots gave ample evidence that they were becoming well qualified to operate the B-25's in combat.

On October 31 the Line moved into its first permanent building. All Line Sections were housed in one building. As the weather grew cooler this was greatly appreciated. The squadron was also completely equipped and rumors flew to the effect that the Group was soon to move to its final staging area.

On November 12 Captain Clayton H. Heinlen was assigned and joined the squadron and assumed command. Captain Bates was transferred to headquarters 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group. Although everyone was sorry to see Captain Bates leave they all resolved to support the new Commander to the fullest extent.

*Heinlen, Clayton H., Capt, pilot, Commander*

As the month of November rolled along many men were given 5 and 7 day leaves for the purpose of completing any business preparatory to going overseas. Orders to move were expected almost any day.

**Tuesday, 1 December 1942 thru Sunday, 20 January 1943**  
**DeRidder Army Air Field, Louisiana:**

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** On November 29, 1942, the Ground Echelon left Walterboro, S.C., by rail for DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana, arriving on December 1, 1942. The Air Echelon joined the Ground Echelon on December 2, 1942. Just about everyone in DeRidder and the Air Base turned out to see the formations of Mitchell bombers come into the field. Maneuvers were held for all combat crews from December 4<sup>th</sup> to December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1942.

December 7, 1942, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, found the 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group in fighting trim and rapidly approaching the time when it should be ready to deal the enemy serious blows with a few secret weapons of its own.

In January, several of our officers were promoted to higher ranks; Major Olmsted was promoted to Lieut. Colonel, Lieuts. Gale and Lord, Adjutants of the 447<sup>th</sup> and 445<sup>th</sup> Squadrons, respectively, were displaying their new silver bars.

*Gale, Myron, 1Lt, Adjutant, 447<sup>th</sup> BS                      Lord, Robert O. Jr., 1Lt, Adjutant, 445<sup>th</sup> BS*  
*Olmsted, Charles T., Lt Col, pilot, Group Executive*

The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group was getting its full complement of officers and enlisted men and completing the final stages of overseas training. The group was well-equipped with both men and materials. Misfits and overages were taken care of and suitable replacements made. Radar men were being assigned to the group and on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, planes, combat crews and some ground maintenance members flew to Macon, Georgia for armament modifications and rejoined the group shortly before it left DeRidder. An instance which will long be remembered at DeRidder Army Air Base was the wearing of the gas-mask for four hours. Those who failed to wear them will remember it even longer, as tear gas was sprayed about the entire base.

**445<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** The entire Squadron moved into DeRidder on December 2, 1942. Except for those who left girls behind in Walterboro, there were many welcome changes in DeRidder. The food was good. There was a large moving picture theatre. There was a large gymnasium in which the men played basketball. There were the girls who worked in the Air Corps supply as well as those who worked behind the counter in the PX. The large trailer that conveyed men back and forth from the barracks to the line was an additional novelty.

The art of gas warfare was practiced with remarkable diligence. All the men at the base were required to wear their gas masks one day every week. From 15 minutes at first, the time was gradually increased until one full hour was reached. Some of the boys experienced a spell of bladder trouble during the middle of these tests and remained in the latrine for an unusual length of time. One week one of the gas warfare men, led by an exceptional zeal for his work, sprayed gas inside of barracks, and other buildings and even into men's faces who were not wearing gas masks. The results were so bad that the men were unable to sleep in their barracks at night time. The men heard with considerable satisfaction the enthusiastic gas man was courts-martialed or otherwise disciplined for his lack of discretion.

**Tuesday, 1 December 1942 thru Sunday, 20 January 1943 (continued)**  
**DeRidder Army Air Field, Louisiana (continued)**

Two barracks directly across from the Officer's Club were assigned to the 445<sup>th</sup>. These buildings were rapidly converted into active poker clubs, especially on payday and for a short time thereafter.

One day, Lt. McEnroe quite unintentionally tested the capabilities of the jeep to the uttermost. He drove into a ditch and it required a 2½ ton truck to extricate it.

*McEnroe, Henry A., 2Lt, bombardier*

There was the never-to-be-forgotten episode created by Lt. Rudolph. One evening he became a little careless by reason of some liquid refreshment. In his mood of abandonment, he reverted to his former pugilistic days and drove his fist through several places in the fabric that served as partitions in the Officer's barracks. The matter was reported by the base Officer in charge of the buildings and all the Officers were called together in the orderly room and reprimanded by Colonel Knapp. There was serious debate as to whether Lt. Rudolph should be relieved of his first pilot's rating. All of the Officers were ordered out of their barracks and into barracks in the enlisted men's area. They were required to carry their own belongings in their hands and were forcefully discouraged from using any kind of vehicle for the job. Captain Smith, the Squadron doctor, and the highest ranking officer in the barracks, took over the job of making the Officers at some very early hour before it was light. The officers felt pretty much as if they were a segregated bunch of undesirables. One night in these same barracks the ground Officers were given tests to see if they could make the grade of flying. They walked rapidly around a broom handle held against the ceiling with their eyes fixed on the end of the broomstick. After about 12 times around, the task was to walk straight ahead and pick up a cigarette lighter without falling over. The writer knows from experience that the floor seemed to come up in all directions and move around like big waves in a stormy sea.

*Knapp, Robert D., Col, pilot, 321st BG Commander*

*Rudolph, Raymond L. "Rudy", 2Lt, pilot*

*Smith, William C. "Doc", Capt, Flight Surgeon*

It should be observed at this point that Lt. Rudolph weathered the storm and later over in the combat theatre, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and left for the United States with the affection of all the men in the Squadron.

*Rudolph, Raymond L. "Rudy", 2Lt, pilot*

A short time after the arrival at DeRidder, the Group participated in maneuvers which had been planned. Its assignment was to give close-in support for the ground forces. So far as the 445<sup>th</sup> Squadron was concerned, more practice was received in getting the planes off the ground in a minimum time than anything else. The weather was unfavorable during the maneuvers and the number of missions flown were not as large as expected. Small bags of flour were used for bombs. The targets were assigned by the ground forces and came through by code template references. After the maneuvers were over, the ground forces sent congratulations to the Group for the part it played in the maneuvers.

**Tuesday, 1 December 1942 thru Sunday, 20 January 1943 (continued)**  
**DeRidder Army Air Field, Louisiana (continued)**

DeRidder went dry on December 31, at least it was supposed, according to the law, to go dry. The men disapproved.

**445<sup>th</sup> BS:** *War Diary of: Seegmiller, Barnard H., Sgt, armament:*

*01/17/43: "This evening I attended the Chaplain's service, which is held regularly each Sunday night. In the several months I have known him, I have grown to have a deep respect for Chaplain Johnson. Always I get something worthwhile from his talks, which he delivers in a very quiet, logical, informal, and direct manner. I am glad that I have learned that I can get something of a spiritual lift from our GI services, for at first, when to myself, I criticized Chaplain Johnson, I used it as an excuse to let Sunday pass without being distinguished from other days. The type of "old time religion" he believes and occasionally preaches seems in many ways, shallow, but it has done an unimpeachable job of saving him so far as a righteous life is concerned."*

*Johnson, E. V. (i.o.), 1Lt, Chaplain*

**446<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** While waiting for the modifications the Group was to go to DeRidder, Louisiana and participate in maneuvers with our group giving ground support. The ground echelon left Walterboro on November 29, 1942 by train. They arrived in DeRidder on December 1, 1942. The flight echelon followed and they arrived in DeRidder December 2, 1942.

Accommodations at DeRidder were about on a par with those at Walterboro. The flight line was nearer the squadron area, however, and the line sections were in buildings instead of tents. There was a movie on the base at DeRidder. There had been none on the two previous bases at which the squadron was located. A new Officers Club had just been opened on the base and it was a nice one. There was a bar, a large dance floor, a lounge, and a dining room.

The city of DeRidder was rather dirty compared with Walterboro. There were two movies in town but few restaurants where decent meals were served. Soldiers from nearby Camp Polk plus those from the Air Base heavily taxed the city's facilities.

The maneuvers got under way soon after the squadron's arrival at DeRidder. They lasted for about two weeks. After participating in these exercises there was little for the squadron to do except wait until the planes could be modified. These modifications were to be made in Mobile, Alabama and Macon, Georgia as soon as the facilities for making them were available at these places.

A few bombing and gunnery missions were run while the squadron waited and a few cross country flights flown. About January 1, 1943 the first squadron planes left for Mobile, Ala. Modifications in the radios were made there. Then the planes went to Macon, Ga. And there modification in armament were made. The lower turrets were removed and tail and waist guns put in. Also armor plating was put in to protect the positions of each crew member. These modifications made the B-25's a much safer and much more effective combat airplane.

**Tuesday, 1 December 1942 thru Sunday, 20 January 1943 (continued)**  
**DeRidder Army Air Field, Louisiana (continued)**

The Air Echelon of the Squadron was activated at DeRidder Army Air Base, Louisiana on January 21, 1943 when the Ground Echelon entrained for its Staging Area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The Air Echelon was composed of forty-five officers and fifty-one enlisted men with Captain Sampson Commanding, Lt. Manly, Adjutant, and Capt. Bell, Operations Officer. The period until its departure was spent in modifying the planes and preparing them for combat. The greater part of these modifications were made at the Mobile and Macon Air Depots. There was very little practice flying, bombing or gunnery.

*Bell, Albert R., Maj, pilot, Operations Officer    Manly, Robert W. "Horse", 2Lt, Adjutant  
Sampson, Raymond D., Capt, pilot, Commander*

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: December 19, 1942:** The enlisted men had a pre-Christmas party at the spacious U.S.O. Club at DeRidder, Louisiana. The dance was well attended and the U.S.O. hostesses took over to the strains of a local 4-piece orchestra which wasn't bad – for DeRidder. Refreshments were served.

**447<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron Special Account: December 31, 1942:** The officers took part in a gala New Year's party being held at the Officers Club, DeRidder Army Air Base. Noisemakers, confetti, streamers, and music by a 10-piece Camp Polk band filled the air until the wee small hours of the Morning. The female civilian employees of the Air Base Supply Depot were well represented, coming as dates of many of our officers who seemed to get the cream of the crop. Lt. Gale, our Adjutant, and former Russ Morgan bandster created a minor sensation with his renditions of the best in popular music on the saxophone, clarinet. That was the last party before leaving for overseas duty.

*Gale, Myron (NMI), 2Lt, Adjutant*

**448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron:** On November 29<sup>th</sup> the long awaited move took place, a few days prior while everyone was busily engaged in a gargantuan Thanksgiving Day feast the Orders were issued to prepare for the move. Immediately everything and everyone were concentrated on the effort of assembling and packing the equipment. The loading of the freight and motor vehicles on railroad cars consumed two days and on the above mentioned date at 13:30 the Ground Echelon left Anderson Field, Walterboro for DeRidder Army Air Base.

The accommodations for the squadron were very poor on this move. The men were entrained on old and dilapidated coaches without sleeping accommodations for their three day journey. The cooks did a very creditable job on this first trip in which field stoves were used. Captain Haven, the train Commander, complimented the men on their orderly conduct throughout the journey despite the hardships and discomfort of their accommodations. The Ground Echelon arrived at DeRidder Army Air Base at 08:30 December 1, 1942, and immediately detrained.

*Haven, Malcolm D., Capt, intelligence*

**Tuesday, 1 December 1942 thru Sunday, 20 January 1943 (continued)**  
**DeRidder Army Air Field, Louisiana (continued)**

The new base offered the most complete facilities in the way of Mess, Barracks and recreational facilities. The Ground Echelon began immediate work setting up the squadron area and the Line. As bad weather had prevented takeoff, the Flight Echelon did not arrive until two days later. They found the organization prepared to receive them.

The Squadron found itself in a happy situation. The Mess for the first time had real plates, fed Garrison Rations and did not discourage seconds. In the barracks gas heaters and double deck cots assured everyone of a comfortable rest. Hot showers were available at all hours. The base was well paved and had adequate PX's, a well equipped gymnasium and a new theater. Although the town of DeRidder had little to offer, the facilities on the base more than made up the deficiency.

The Officer's Quarters consisted of Barracks on the far side of the base and in conjunction with the Officer's Club were considered very adequate by all who lived there.

Immediately after arrival 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Asch and several other men were transferred to O.C.S., Miami Beach, Florida, everyone wished them good luck and wished them on their way. The squadron engaged in an intensive physical training program while carrying on maneuvers and simulated bombing in conjunction with "Louisiana Maneuvers". Each morning found combat crews on the alert awaiting orders that sent them hurrying to their planes for take off to bomb the mock enemy. A few cross-countries and much formation flying was the Order of the Day.

*Asch, Murray, S/Sgt, 1st Sgt, 448<sup>th</sup> BS*

In the Squadron Area Lt. Jantz and his supply sergeant made preparations for the contemplated move over seas, all sections were rendering reports to Lt. Jantz as to the bulk and weight of their equipment. Crating and marking boxes became a standard procedure during the early weeks in December.

*Jantz, Lawrence E., 2Lt, supply*

Meanwhile the squadron was enjoying dances, beer parties and basketball games as it awaited Orders to move. Christmas passes with little excitement except for a delicious meal served at the Mess Hall. Liquid refreshment was the keynote of the New Year's celebration.

1943 was ushered in with earnest efforts being made by everyone to prepare for the long heralded move overseas. New men and officers were brought into the squadron to fill vacancies and all equipment was put in first class condition for this event. While planes were shuttled between the modification centers and the air base the combat crews were given a critique of the maneuvers and more practice in combat flying. Everything was ready for the move over seas and the squadron morale was exceedingly high in anticipation of the move.

**Thursday, 21 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force): In Libya,** B-24s bomb Tripoli harbor while B-25s attack targets along the Surman-Az Zawiyah road. P-40s fly fighter-bomber missions against ground targets as the British Eighth Army overcomes resistance in the area. The enemy strengthens the Tarhunah area at the expense of the Homs front, causing General Montgomery to decide to make the main effort along the coast.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force): In the Mediterranean,** six B-26s of the 319th Bombardment Group (Medium) hit two freighters northeast of Cape Bon, sinking one and damaging the other. The escorting P-38s shoot down two Z 1007 bombers and then mix it up with six Bf 109s, claiming three shot down but losing two P-38s. **In Tunisia,** B-25s bomb the highway and railroad bridge just north of Pont-du-Fahs. Fighters fly bomber and C-47 escort and fly sweeps and reconnaissance, attacking and destroying a large number of trucks on the Gabes-Ben Gardane road. A-20s and fighter escort bomb and strafe a tank and truck concentration near Ousseltia in support of elements of the US 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division which begins the Allied assault in an effort to push the enemy back in the Ousseltia Valley into which a new enemy offensive under new German Commanding General, Colonel General von Arnim, has advanced in a four-day push. 24 P-38s find the Gabes-Medenine-Ben Gardane road crowded with traffic; they swept down and strafe, claiming 65 vehicles destroyed plus two Bf 109s destroyed in the air. A detachment of the 154<sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron, 68<sup>th</sup> Observation Group with P-39s begins operating from Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. The squadron will fly its first combat mission as a tactical reconnaissance unit on 26 Jan.

**Camp Kilmer, New Jersey**

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** On January 21, 1943, the Ground Echelon left DeRidder and entrained for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and arrived on January 24, 1943. The trip was pleasant, as they rode on Tourist Pullmans and Pullmans. The group was highly commended at Camp Kilmer for the splendid way in which we had been equipped. We were told that no other group had arrived at the staging area so completely equipped and ready for embarkation overseas.

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** From January 1, 1943 on, the main topic for rumors was the time for leaving for some combat zone overseas. Eventually the day arrived. On January 21 the ground echelon pulled out on a train headed for Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, New Jersey. However, it was not till February 12 that the air echelon left for Morrison Field, the port of embarkation. Shortly after takeoff we were advised that the formation would land at Homestead. However, when we arrived at Homestead we were then directed to proceed to Morrison Field.

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## Thursday, 21 January 1943 (continued)

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** The modifications having been made the group was now ready to go into combat. The ground echelon was the first to leave DeRidder. On January 21, 1943 they boarded a train for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Camp Kilmer was to be the final staging area.

The camp was covered with a blanket of snow when the ground echelon arrived. Some of the men in the squadron had never seen snow and this was a very interesting sight to them.

All the men were restricted to the base at Camp Kilmer. Telephone calls were not permitted. Letters could be written but from the day the squadron reached camp Kilmer all the mail was censored. The enlisted men's mail was censored by squadron censors, the officers' mail by base censors.

There were several movies on the base at Camp Kilmer. Most of the men in the squadron went to one of these almost every day. All the men stocked up on supplies at the Post Exchange. Inspections of equipment, records, and personnel were conducted during the time the squadron remained at Camp Kilmer. The final inspection was a physical examination by a medical officer and a dental officer.

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** At 18:45, January 21, 1943, the Ground Echelon under the command of Lt. Kneivel bid adieu to the Flight Echelon and boarded the train bound for their staging area. Neither echelon knew when, where, or how they would meet again. Many in fact were dubious about such a meeting ever taking place.

*Kneivel, Arthur W., 2Lt, executive*

First the narrative of the experiences of the Ground Echelon (4829E) will be told and then that of the Flight Echelon.

The train that departed the DeRidder Army Air Base was by far the most Luxurious accommodation the 448<sup>th</sup> had ever experienced. Two Pullmans for the Officers and seven for the Enlisted Men with a kitchen car between made up the train. After a slow start in which they went through numerous switch stops the train finally began its northerly trek. The Officers and Enlisted Men settled down to enjoy a much needed rest after the hectic days of packing and departure. All were quiet for a time. The realization had come to all that at long last after many false starts they were on their way over-seas. They thought wistfully of motion picture scenes of this event. But for them there were no cheering throngs, no loved ones waving their last good-bye. Just a few busy train-men waving a casual salute was the send off.

However this mood did not last, soon the sound of signing, card playing and the usual troop-train noises resounded throughout the cars. Major Lowell was later complimented on the good behavior of the troops while aboard.

*Lowell, William A., May, Adjutant, HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG*

In the kitchen car the cooks were busily preparing supper and soon after the departure "Chow Call" was sounded. An excellent meal was served which was the fore-runner of the many delicious repasts yet to come.

So past three monotonous but restful days as the train continued northward and then abruptly, at St. Louis, eastward. Rumors as to its destination ran rampant throughout the train but none knew for sure and the train had rations for seven days aboard.

## Thursday, 21 January 1943 (continued)

Finally after passing Harrisburg many men came to the agreement that a new camp at New Brunswick, N.J. was the destination. At 09:00 on January 23, 1943, the Ground Echelon arrived at Camp Kilmer, their staging area for over-seas movement. They were greeted by snow and freezing weather, the first ever experienced in their training.

Camp Kilmer meant rest and relaxation for most of the men but for Lt. Kneivel and his Orderly Room staff and Lt. Jantz and his Supply men it meant long hours checking records and exchanging clothing to insure everyone of being completely supplied for over-seas duty. The squadron Messed in consolidated Mess Hall and after standing in line for hours in the cold and then receiving the food that was served to everyone, all were willing to admit the superiority of their own cooks.

*Jantz, Lawrence E., 2Lt, supply*

*Knievel, Arthur W., 2Lt, executive*

The whole Group was restricted to the Post, due to error. Many men who had lived in the vicinity were sadly disappointed in that they were not allowed to visit their homes for the last time. No communications of any kind were allowed although it seemed a real hardship at the time; everyone realized that it was a necessary security measure. For the first time the Squadron's mail was censored. The usual comments were made concerning censors and censorship.

Steam heat, hot showers and fairly comfortable barracks were available and the added attraction of snow fights, post theaters and PX's not to mention the Post Library compensated to some extent for the restrictions.

## Friday, 22 January 1943

### **USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

#### **EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Libya,** B-25s bomb a road junction near Tripoli. P-40s fly cover and fighter-bomber missions as the British Eighth Army's 22 Armored Brigade passes through 51 Infantry Division at Homs and drives beyond Castelverde. Forces to the south advance to within 17 miles of Tripoli.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Another step is taken toward amalgamation of US and RAF air strength in the Allied Air Force. Air support for US and British ground forces in North Africa is coordinated by the formation of a new combined HQ, Allied Air Support Command, subordinate to the Allied Air Force and under the command of Major General Laurence S Kuter, USAAF. The new command consists of the USAAF XII Air Support Command, the RAF No. 242 Group, a photographic reconnaissance unit and any other units that might be assigned to it.

**In Tunisia,** B-17s, operating in two forces, bomb El Aouina Airfield in the morning; B-26s hit the airfield shortly after noon; and B-25s attack later in the afternoon. Two escorting P-38s are lost to enemy fighters. Fighters fly escort for bombers and for C-47s and carry out numerous reconnaissance and patrol missions. P-39s and P-40s support the Allied ground assault in the Ousseltia Valley which has been halted to by strong opposition; the fighters silence several machinegun positions. One P-40 is lost.

**In the Mediterranean,** other B-26s, on a shipping strike, severely damage a freighter in the Straits of Sicily. HQ 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group transfers from Mediouna, French Morocco to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## **Saturday, 23 January 1943**

### **USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

#### **EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Sicily**, B-24s bomb Palermo harbor during the night of 23/24 Jan.

**In Libya**, P-40s fly cover and fighter-bomber missions during the day as Tripoli falls to General Montgomery's Eighth Army.

#### **WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia**, B-17s, in two forces, hit the Bizerte naval base and shipping in the immediate area. Much damage is done to base facilities and one motor vessel is sunk; 75 to 100 enemy fighters attack the formations, and the B-17s and escorting P-38s claim 20 destroyed; two P-38s are lost and four more are missing. A-20s, and escorting P-40s, attack a heavy gun battery, machinegun nests, and two infantry companies while supporting ground forces in the battle area south of Ousseltia. Fighters of the XII Air Support Command destroy over 20 vehicles on the Gabes-Ben Gardane highway.

**In the Mediterranean**, B-26s hit shipping off northeastern Tunisia, attacking several vessels and claiming one destroyed; escorting fighters hit trucks and tanks near Enfidaville, Tunisia on the return flight. The 91<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron, 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group with P-39s transfers from Mediouna, French Morocco to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## **Sunday, 24 January 1943**

### **USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

#### **EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Tunisia,** B-24s strike Medenine Airfield while P-40s fly cover and fighter-bomber missions as Axis forces retreat westward from Tripoli. The 84<sup>th</sup>, 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons, 79<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40s transfers from Egypt to Libya.

#### **WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia,** B-25s and B-26s, operating in two forces, attack Medenine Airfield; B-17s hit shipping in Sousse harbor; fighters escort bombers and attack vehicles and troop concentrations along the battleline.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**Monday, 25 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Libya**, P-40s carry out fighter-bomber missions. The British 7 Armored Division, in pursuit of the enemy, reaches Az Zawiyah. HQ 79<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group transfers from Egypt to Libya. The 345<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-24s transfers from Fayid, Egypt to Tobruk, Libya.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia**, bad weather cancels heavy and medium bomber missions. Fighters fly reconnaissance, patrol and C-47 escort missions.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**Tuesday, 26 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Italy**, headwinds prevent B-24s from reaching Naples, the primary target, before dark, so they divert to Messina, bombing the town and the area around the train ferry terminal.

**In Libya**, P-40s fly fighter-bomber operations, refueling at Castel Benito. The 415<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-24s transfers from Fayid, Egypt to Tobruk, Libya.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In the Mediterranean**, B-26s on a shipping strike abort because of weather that limits air activity.

**In Tunisia**, fighters fly reconnaissance and local patrol missions.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## **Wednesday, 27 January 1943**

### **USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

#### **EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Italy**, B-24s bomb Naples and Messina during the night of 26/27 Jan.

**In Sicily**, B-24s hit Palermo during the afternoon, after weather causes a diversion from the primary target at Naples.

**In Libya**, the British 7 Armored Division meets stiffening resistance near Zuwarah.

#### **WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In the Mediterranean**, B-25s hit shipping off the north coast of Algeria, attacking two destroyers and leaving one on fire. B-26s on a shipping strike fail to attack sighted vessels because of weather.

**In Tunisia**, A-20s attack the town of Al Mazzunah while fighters escort bombers and fly reconnaissance and local patrols.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## **Thursday, 28 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** No Entry

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia**, 60 heavy and medium bombers (B-17s, B-25s and B-26s) in three waves attack the harbor, shipping and marshaling yards at Sfax; all missions are escorted by P-38s. P-40s of the XII Air Support Command attack infantry and artillery while supporting French and US ground forces in the Ousseltia Valley where the Allies gain control of the western exit and half of Kairouan Pass. HQ 320<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) and its 441<sup>st</sup>, 442<sup>nd</sup>, 443<sup>rd</sup> and 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Medium) with B-26s transfer from La Senia, Algeria to Tafaraoui, Algeria.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**Friday, 29 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** No Entry

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia,** three consecutive waves of B-17s attack the docks and shipping at Bizerte while B-26s hit El Aouina Airfield. Fighters escort the bombers and C-47s and carry out reconnaissance.

**In the Mediterranean,** B-26s on a shipping strike between Tunisia and Sicily severely damages a cargo liner.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**Saturday, 30 January 1943**

**USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):**

**In Italy**, B-24s bomb the train ferry terminal at Messina. Direct hits are scored on a ship and AA battery near the terminal.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia**, over 50 B-17s bomb the docks and shipping at Ferryville. B-25s hit railroad installations and warehouses at El Aouinet while B-26s bomb a railroad south of Reyville. Fighters and A-20s carry out numerous strafing and bombing operations against tanks, motor transport and along the battleline between El Guettar and Faid.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS:** *War Diary of: Seegmiller, Barnard H., Sgt, armament:*

01/30/43: "A few days ago I received a letter from Griffiths who is in North Africa. He included the following lines of verse by his father, which I requested of him:

*Let us quit the strife for the simple life*

*And pass quietly on to our fate.*

*For the ultimate goal is the peace of the soul*

*Not a stack of the pieces of eight.*

*Some day I am going to try to figure out why some personalities blend so easily and perfectly into lasting friendships."*

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## Sunday, 31 January 1943

### **USAAF Chronology: MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO):**

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** Lieutenant General Lewis H Brereton, Commanding General Ninth Air Force assumes command of US Army Forces in the Middle East.

**In Italy,** B-24s hit the railroad ferry installations at Messina harbor. The British 7 Armored Division finishes clearing Zuwarah. HQ IX Fighter Command arrives at Kabrit, Egypt from the US. The 343<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-24s transfers from Kabrit, Egypt to Gambut, Libya.

### **WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):**

**In Tunisia,** B-17s hit the harbor and shipping at Bizerte while B-26s bomb Gabes Airfield. Fighters escort bombers and attack ground targets and furnish cover for ground forces along the battleline between Gafsa and Faid. With the conclusion of the Casablanca Conference, the 308<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group, which has been operating its Spitfire Mk Vs from Casablanca, returns to its base at Tafaraoui, Algeria.

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

## **January 1943**

**HQ 321<sup>st</sup> BG War Diary: Additional Narrative for January 1943: None**

**445<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Narrative for January 1943: None**

**446<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Narrative for January 1943: None**

**447<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Narrative for January 1943: None**

**448<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Narrative for January 1943: None**