

MEN OF

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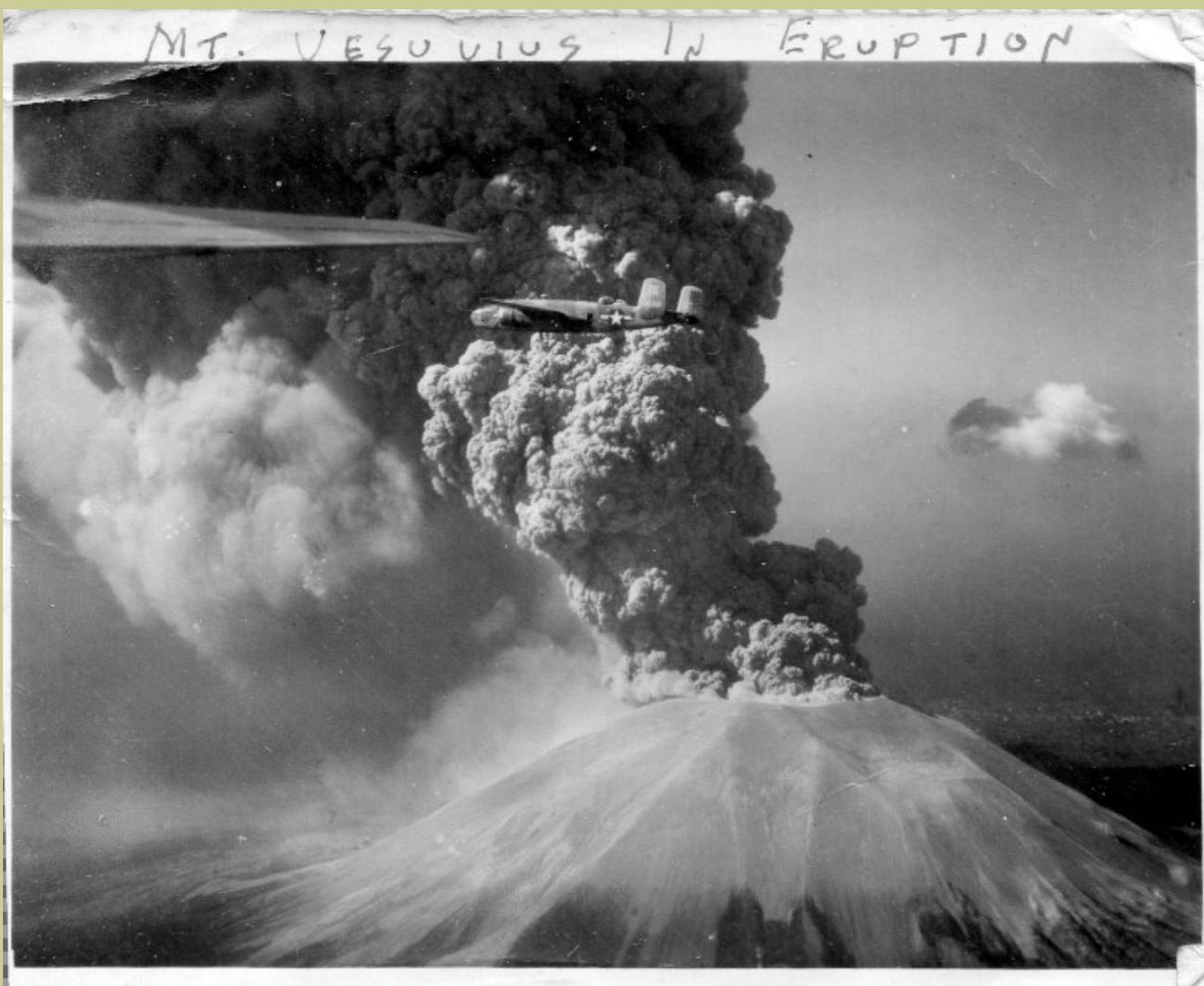


THE 57TH

*Women of the 57th Bomb Wing,
Army Air Force in World War II*

Spring 2024

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The German Army wasn't the only enemy the men of the 57th had to contend with.

They also had to battle the elements of nature: Searing heat in the desert, brutal cold at high altitudes, sandstorms, flood waters, storms at sea and...A Volcano!

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - DICK REED 340TH/486TH

We asked our President about non-combat challenges he faced while he was in the service.

This was his response:

The German war is over and we're headin' home. Got in with a mixed crew and took off to Dakar, French West Africa. And here we sat for more than three days waiting for the weather to clear.

The fourth day we were allowed to go, but into somewhat iffy weather. All hands were ready, and off we went into the blue sky heading south along the African coast.

About one hour later we blasted in to the worst storm I ever encountered. The wind was so severe and with the torrential rain, the plane appeared uncontrollable. Our whole crew was notably silent with bated breath, and our pilot (I've forgotten his name), now on instruments, was flying less than 100 feet over the ocean.

It wasn't fair, after flying all those damn missions, we had to fly into something like this.

Me, in the nose. was absolutely soaking wet with the rainwater leaking right through the Plexiglass.

After almost an hour we carried on with our B-25 bucking up and down and swerving right and left, when suddenly we broke into the clear, the most beautiful sight I ever remember, and off to the left was the city of Sierra-Leone, something more like a shining jewel.

Our pilot was loudly cheered and applauded and at that moment was the most wonderful guy in the world. The rest of the trip back to the "Good ole USA" was a piece of cake, but every time I saw clouds up ahead, I got nervous up until we safely landed in Savannah, Georgia. ★



Chris Gilley Photo



Getting There - The 319th Bomb Group

on the Northern Route

The first challenge was getting to the war. The B-25 Mitchel and B-26 Marauder medium bombers were not designed to cross the Atlantic. To do so they operated at the limit of their designs.

The 310th BG and the 319th BG were the first to deploy. They followed the Northern Route: Maine, Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, Scotland. The weather was treacherous and unpredictable. The Martin B-26 aircraft were more difficult to fly and were less forgiving than the North American B-25, but both groups had similar experiences trying to make it across the North Atlantic.

One ship of the 439th Squadron crashed while enroute from Baer Field (Indiana) to Presque Isle, Maine. A replacement ship and crew arrived to complete our complement of airplanes.

Westover Field, Maine, was an intermediate stop enroute to Presque Isle, Maine. One ship was left at Westover to follow on later because of wrinkled wings. The remainder of the ships flew on to Presque Isle where the Concentration Command relinquished command and we now came under the control of the North Atlantic Ferry Command.

The 438th and 439th Squadrons preceded the 440th along this route. The arrival of the 440th at Presque Isle, found two of our ships there in need of new wing tips. One ship had jumped the chocks during pre-flight, and damaged both ships. The Ferry Command decided upon two new replacement airplanes. These were flown to Presque Isle by the Ferry Command. The remainder of the Group, approximately 10 ships, flew on to Goose Bay, Labrador, leaving these two crews behind to await the new airplanes.

At Goose Bay, five more ships were found waiting for flying weather, for the next leg of the journey to BW 1, Greenland. One other

ship was here which had miraculously survived a spin in instrument flying and icy weather on this leg. A warped fuselage and tail surface made another replacement necessary.

Weather along this northern route had now become very bad. Winter conditions had begun, and one or two flying days per month was the order of the day. Because of the loads carried, 36,500 pounds, our ships could not top the cloud layer. Nor could we go through or under. Below, visibility was hampered by snow and rain, with the icing level varying from 300 to 500 feet across the water. The previous squadrons had made the trip. The 438th because of their early departure, the 437th and 439th because the Ferry Command had decided there was too much weight on board and had removed many articles to be shipped by Air Transport. The last squadron carried all its equipment and attempted to make the trip during the latter part of October and the first part of November. Finally, the day arrived. B-17's, who have sufficient power and gas to go over or around, preceded the B-26's and relayed word as to the weather conditions. The weather was perfect for the flight. The top of the clouds was 12,000 feet, and both ends were clear. This procedure of getting help from the

preceding B-17's and transports was adopted because several of the preceding squadrons had made three attempts and returned each time because of weather, with barely enough gas to taxi back to the ramp in the dark.

Five ships remained at Goose Bay because of minor troubles developing on take-off. One of the five arrived at BW 1 several days later and landed with wings coated with ice. BW 1 was quite an airdrome, located 50 miles up a narrow fjord, with difficult

weather conditions required by local operations for take-offs and landings. One runway with a 119-foot difference in elevation was the only runway. Weather conditions had become worse but finally after one week of waiting, two perfect days occurred, and everyone "chomped at the bit" to take off. But No 1 Iceland relayed word that they could accommodate no more airplanes until some of theirs had left, so, with flying days at a high premium, we settled down to outwait the weather.

Meanwhile in England things were happening. Some of our ships had caught up with the ground and flight echelons, but this was not destined to last long. The 319th was to help in the African Campaign. [...] The planes who already arrived in England, were briefed, and made ready for departure to the staging area, to arrive in North Africa at a definite date.

"D" day arrived, and the Commanding Officer departed with nine ships for the staging area. Through some fault, misleading weather condi-



tions were relayed to the Commanding Officer. The 319th had the only ships in the air in England on that day. A severe front was encountered, and the flight separated. One ship crash-

ing into a hill, and others landed at scattered airdromes, while two others were shot down over Cherbourg, France, including the Group Commanding Officer, and the Commanding Officer of the 439th Squadron.

Now, after a wait of over three months, some of the ships from Greenland had arrived. After much insistence on the part of the Group, the Northern Route was closed and the ships along it were ordered to proceed in whichever direction the weather broke first. Four ships of the remaining 25 came through this Northern Route – three from Greenland and one from Iceland which was awaiting a new tail assembly after a spin. These ships were dispatched to the fighting front as soon as parts and engines became available. Three months of Greenland weather had produced necessary repairs. Ice, snow, sand, and 120-mile-per-hour gale were not the weather to keep airplanes in repair.



The Monsoon Season 21 - 24 April 1943

By Frank B. Dean, 380th Bomb Squadron

We normally think of North Africa in terms of desert heat and sandstorms, but they do have a rainy season. It is short and violent.

During the war infantry men would set up their tents in gullies to protect themselves from the wind. The Arabs called the gullies, "wadis," what we in the western US would call "arroyos." When the rains came, the waters would surge through the wadis as a flash flood, washing their campsites away, and some men drowned.

The winter rains were known to us as the "Monsoon" season. Although the word "Monsoon? Was Asian in origin it aptly described the Algerian weather.

Our "Home," that sheltered Ray Conrad, Leon George, and me were four thin canvas shelter halves that were buttoned together to form a double pup tent. It was fastened to the ground, over the hole that we slept in, with short wooden tent pegs. We had dug a small ditch around the base of the tent but the flat, level, wheat field gave little slope for drainage. The tent had survived the rainstorm of the night.

As the cold, gray, dawn tried to fight its way through the opaque rain, the three of us lay in our blankets on a couple of mattress covers that had been stuffed with wheat straw back in December 1942. The straw, now beaten flat had little of the cushion it had originally provided.

Lee was on guard duty, so we lay in the tent listening to the rain beat down and an occasional lightning flash illuminated the interior of our darkened pup tent. We listened as sheets of water beat on the thin canvas above our heads and rolled down the sides of the tent. We wondered if the dirt we had flung over the tent pegs would remain dry enough for a secure grip in the ground.

By mid-morning, the intense violence of the storm had moderated somewhat but not the rain

that continued to pour more water into the already soaked soil. A trickle of water found its way through the buttoned-up front of our tent. We dam builders rushed to stem the flow. The construction company of Conrad, George, and Dean, Inc. grabbed their excavating and building equipment of hunting knives and canteen cups and rushed to the scene of impending disaster.

George, as chief engineer, knelt on our dirt entrance steps and began the fabrication of a higher dam across the tent opening.

Conrad and I dug at the damp dirt with knives to furnish material for the land fill.

George dipped mud with a canteen cup for the protective levee that eroded away before he could add the next load. Heavier loads of dirt were needed.



Frank Dean

I went for my mess kit. As I stepped on our bed my foot went underwater. While we had been battling the river in the front, we had been infiltrated from the rear. Our straw mattresses were

floating on about five inches of water and our blankets were soaking up moisture like a lamp wick. The water poured into the tent like a small river as the hole filled.

We conceded defeat in the battle for the pup tent. The elements had won. We grabbed our dampened blankets and rifles and fled through

crowded when we hauled and stored our wet barracks bags in the aircraft.

With the coming of daylight Emerson Lee joined us, another bedraggled refugee from the flood and soaking wet from his stint of guard duty. Lee was part of our crew but resided in another pup tent.



Flooded Mess Tent

the downpour to the airplane that stood about a hundred feet away. Wet to the skin with water dripping from Conrad's mustache, we climbed into the plane for protection. Static electricity tingled our hands as we climbed up the entrance ladder.

B-25 bombers were never designed as sleeping quarters. It's mission is to carry bombs to the target. In order to complete this task, machine guns, ammunition cans, radios, gun turrets, and other functional equipment crowded the aircraft leaving little spare room. This was the only shelter in the storm. It became even more

The rain hammered on the aluminum skin until we could hardly carry on a normal conversation. Two of us sat in the relative comfort of the pilots and co-pilots seat. George had unfolded the wooden navigator's table to form a flat space of approximately thirty inches wide and about four feet long. He and Lee sat on the table.

We sat blindly in the semi-darkness because of the canvas nose cover that protected the airplanes from leaks and also covered the windshield and windows. We sat with our arms tucked close to our sides in order not to touch

the lightning conducting metal of the plane. It was not a pleasant feeling to be soaking wet in a metal cocoon with a thousand gallons of volatile gasoline in the wings and hundreds of pounds of explosives hanging in a bomb bay that was not more than ten feet away as thousands of volts of electricity streaked through the gloom. We waited for the rain to slacken, it didn't.

Night fell, it was time to retire. Coins were flipped for the only decent sleeping area in the aircraft, which was the bombardier's crawl way that ran along the left side of the airplane under the pilot's floor. Lee won. He dragged his wet blankets to the royal suite while the three of us worked out other arrangements. It was decided that Conrad would sleep on the navigator's table and George and I would go elsewhere.

We slid on our bellies through the low crawl way that extended across the top of the bomb bay. Here would have been a good place to bed down except for the large, round emergency access hole to the bomb bay. We emerged into the radio compartment where the square box of the lower turret and the vertical post of the upper turret left no room for comfort. Here we stored our barracks bags.

We continued through the armor plate door of the gunner's compartment to the rear of the fuselage and around the upright, aluminum cylinder that housed the toilet. We looked at the metal crawl way that angled upward to the Plexiglas tail cone that was designed for an observation window. The strip of flooring was a scant thirty inches wide and angled sharply upward. The higher it went, the steeper the angle.

The crawl way had not been constructed as sleeping quarters for two men who weighed around one hundred and seventy pounds each. It was going to be a tight fit but we had no other choice. We figured that it would work if one

of us would lay on their side and the other sledged himself in. Wrapped in our damp blankets we gave it a try. Wedged in, with certain parts of the anatomy hanging over the edge and resting on uncomfortable narrow edges of aluminum stringers we ignored the threat of [enemy] paratroopers and the normal requirements for guard duty as we tried to sleep in the damp and the cold.

The rain hammered on the aluminum skin as the tail of the aircraft lurched in the buffeting wind. Even two blankets doubled offered little cushion between the aluminum and the hip bone and brought no warmth from the cold metal. Lying there crowded, chilled, wet, uncomfortable, and uneasy on the hard swaying metal, for the first time, I began to look upon our sleeping hole in the ground with a bit more appreciation.

I did not sleep but dozed in and out of a half-sleep and being half-awake. I was aware that my side was numb. It was necessary to stand up in order to turn over but the ceiling was too low to stand erect. I wedged myself back in as George did. I dozed, turned, and lay awake wishing for daylight to come.

At daylight, I peered through a rain clouded window at the flooded landscape with small hillocks and a few pup tents sticking up from a tin sheet of water that filled all the low spots. Our stomachs reminded us that we had missed supper. We partly appeased them with the last of our dried figs, from our emergency hoard, but they were not adequate to kill the hunger pain. The few figs that we ate would be both supper and breakfast.

Around noon, we held council to determine if we would stay relatively dry or fight our way through the file or more to chow, through the torrential downpour. We elected to remain in the aircraft. We told our stomachs that it would

probably quit raining by supper time, it didn't. Our empty stomachs reminded us that we had lied.

We sat in the rain with little conversation except to curse the rain and discuss how hungry we were becoming. Leon George departed in the tempest looking for other sleeping quarters rather than spend another night in the tail of the aircraft. He must have succeeded as he did not return.

The night of the second day I had the crawl way to myself but only one of my two blankets for a mattress. I had more room but less cushion. My body heat tried to dry my clothing but the high moisture content in the air prevented total success. I slept semi-dry. It was cold but not freezing. I dozed fitfully with my hip bones reminding me of the hardness of the metal and my stomach reminding me that I had not fed it for two days and nights. I tried to ignore it, but it was difficult.

The morning of the third day the noise of the weather pounding on the skin of the aircraft increased as mother nature threw a few hailstones into the downpour. My hunger reminded me that even powdered eggs or British oxtail stew would be an acceptable repast but our desire to stay reasonably dry and out the wind and the hail was too strong for us to venture out. We stayed in the aircraft. There was little conversation. There was only the sound of the rain and our stomachs growling in protest.



Figures in green raincoats could be seen slogging or high stepping toward our mess tent.

Dinner time passed to the dismay of our empty bellies. The rain had slackened, and the hail had stopped, and the visibility distance increased through our Plexiglas window. Now, it was only a light rain.

We decided to go to chow in the evening. Protected by my raincoat and steel helmet, I climbed to the ground. Sinking into the mud bast my shoe top changed my mind. I crawled back into the plane, cleaned my shoe, and wrung the water from my wet muddy sock. My cold, wet, foot preached patience to my disappointed stomach.

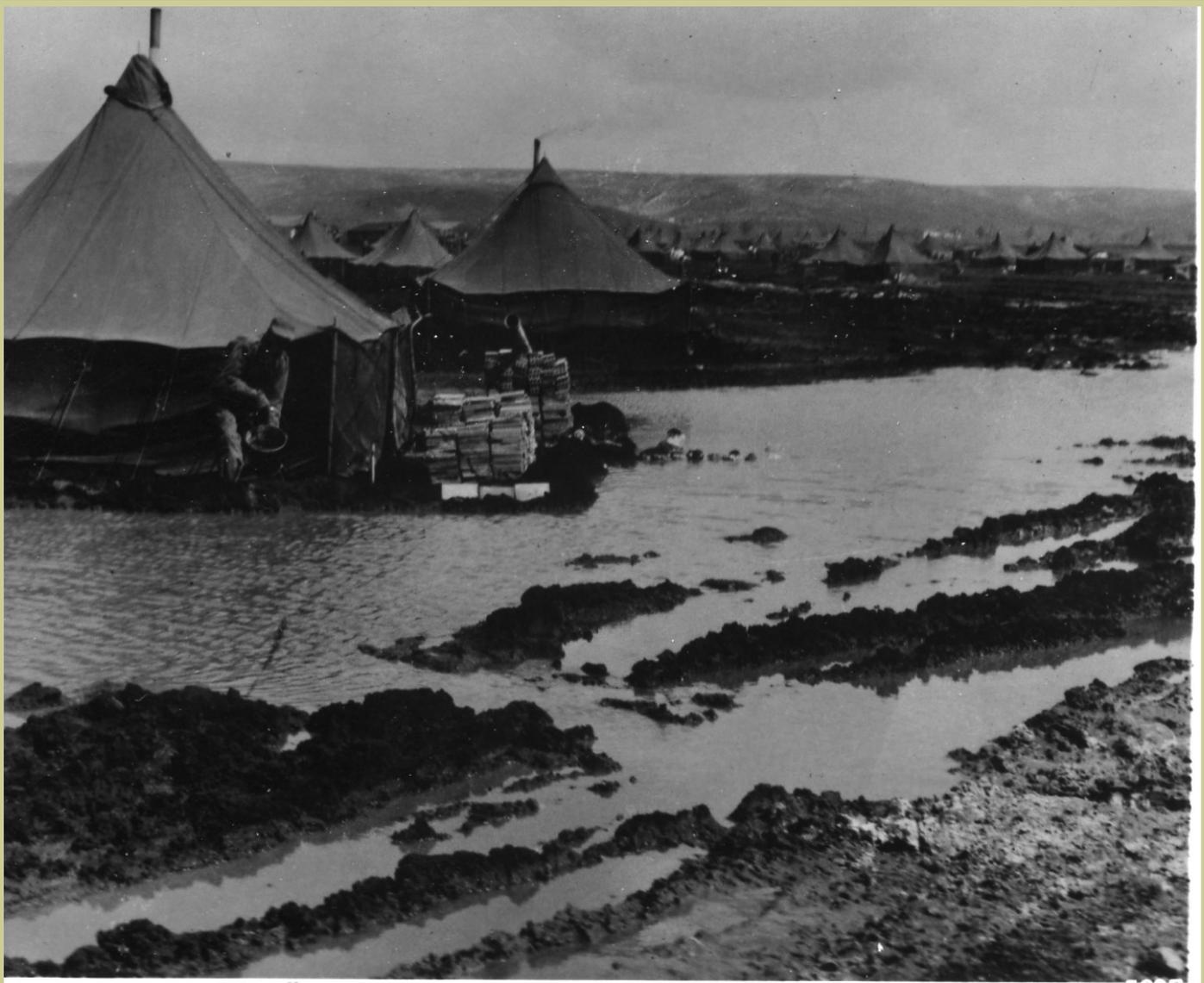
The third night was spent dozing and listening to intermittent flurries of rain. My stomach thought that my throat had been cut. Hunger allowed little sleep. It was obvious that I must brave the rain and the mud on the morrow. The persistent rain had slackened. I was grateful.

Gray daylight crawled into the plane bringing a new day and a new hope to a starving trio. The

rain tapered off as the weather wrung the last drops of moisture from the clouds. The sun tried to peek through fleeting cracks in the overcast. Figures in green raincoats could be seen slogging or high stepping toward headquarters and our mess tent.

I heard the sound of a truck approaching. An olive-drab ten wheeled truck moved down the flooded taxi strip, cutting ruts almost to the axles, with G.I.'s in the back. Salvation!; our rescuers had arrived. Our gray mood turned to gladness.





57th IN ITALY

It wasn't only the rain in North Africa that the men had to endure, they also got flooded out in Italy.

...and Corsica.



Corsica

“REAR ECHELON FINALLY MAKES IT”

By Capt. John E. Adams, Squadron Historian S-2 Section

380th Bombardment Squadron March 1944

For the 380th BS, North Africa was a land of heat, sandstorms, floods and mud. They were glad to be on their way elsewhere, but had to battle an angry sea and a blizzard to get there.

The rear echelon of this squadron, after several attempts trying to leave the continent of Africa, arrived in Corsica on Monday, March 4, 1944, and joined the squadron on the following day.

After spending several weeks in the transit camp at Bizerte notice was given for our departure to Corsica, and we learned the trip was to be made aboard an L.T.C. [*He could mean TLC, the British term for “Tank Landing Craft,” or LCT, the American term for “Landing Craft, Tank.” Another source suggests LST for “Landing Ship, Tank.”*] We

proceed to Tunis Harbor for protection from the storm. The trip from Bizerte to Tunis was an overnight run, and the farther we got in to the open sea the worse the storm got. In the morning we arrived in the outer harbor of Tunis, the storm still raging and no sign of it abating.

In the afternoon we lost our other anchor and all the pilot could do was to keep the ship going around in circles so that it would not be washed against the rocks. About four o'clock that afternoon orders were given for the convoy to go to Sousse and dock.

LST Ship



boarded the ship in the morning, and with an English crew manning it we sailed out of Lake Bizerte into the harbor and then to the open sea to await the rest of the convoy.

Late in the evening a fierce storm hit the convoy; the high waves, terrific wind, rain and lightning beat and tossed the ships unmercifully, and while our ship was bobbing around like an apple in a tub one of the anchors was lost. Later, the convoy was given orders to

That night on the sea was a night of horror; waves were higher than the ship and it rocked until we thought every minute was our last. During the rain, thunder and lightning most of the fellows stayed on deck holding onto whatever they could. The storm continued throughout the night, and it was not until early morning that it began to lessen. We were later told that three of our engines went out during the storm.

On January 2, 1944, we boarded a Liberty ship, which was very badly crowded, and again sailed for what we thought was Corsica, but instead we were taken to Algiers and again told that we were to leave the ship. We hopped on trucks and were driven to Maison Blanc staging area. After spending nearly six weeks in Algiers we boarded another Liberty ship on March 2, 1944, and sailed for Corsica, arriving on March 4, 1944. We continued to the new base in trucks, and were greeted

with our first glimpse of winter with a blizzard. The snow was five and six feet deep in some places and travel through the mountains was very dangerous and slow. The snow storm got so bad that we had to stop overnight in a small mountain village, finding shelter in small hotels and barracks. After a night's shelter from the snow and cold, we again continued our journey early the next morning, and arrived at Ghisonaccia, our new base, about noon. ★



Liberty Ship

*Army tent in the snow
on Corsica*



Vesuvius Blows Her Top

By James Cooper 340th BG Chaplain

This article is reprinted from "The B-25 Over the Mediterranean." This and more stories can be found on our website where we have posted the book in its entirety.

[57th Bomb Wing Books and References Webpage](#)

On August 24, 1979, exactly 1900 years had passed since Vesuvius blew up, with what is now known as the most destructive eruption in recorded history. The city of Pompeii, Italy near the bay of Naples disappeared completely. It remained entombed for almost 1700 years. Only within the last 200 years have we pieced together the tragedy! The excavation is not yet complete. It isn't that the people of Pompeii and surrounding countryside were not warned before the tragic day. There had been tremendous damage from an earthquake just 17 years before. But the city and the seaside homes were reconstructed with even more splended luxury. People settled back unheeding of a possible recurrence.

Shortly before August 24, 79 A.D., there were strange rumblings in the ground, huge build up of tides in the bay and ominous cracks developing in the surrounding land. Many people fled from the city by ship, or horse drawn carriage .. with a few possessions, family and animals. Those less frightened but perhaps thinking it would be safer in the house, stayed on. For whatever reason, those remaining were completely unprepared for the deafening 'explosion' which shook their world and doomed 2,000 of them that morning.

Archaeological explorations within the last 200 years, plus a graphic description of the event written by the "young Pliny" have now given us a picture of that fateful day. The ferocity of that explosion tore the whole top of the volcano, pushing a dark cloud into the sky that can

only be compared to the mushroom effect of the exploding atomic bomb. The sky rained debris from the heaving crater; red hot lava poured down the mountain-side burning vineyards, trees, farms, and villages, and then poured into the sea.

For the estimated 2,000 people who perished that morning, some made a last desperate effort to escape, while the rest huddled together in their homes hoping that the walls and roofs would protect them. The relentless accumulation of lava, cinders and ash, in places 30 feet in depth, however sealed their fate.

Sulfurous gases mercifully put them to sleep. The grotesque life-shapes of those caught in their death-throes have been recast from molds formed when the lava and mud cooled around their bodies. Many of these figures can now be seen in the excavation portion of Pompeii and the museum in Naples. It is almost impossible for us to imagine the horror and panic of such a catastrophe. Yet there are many Air Force Service men from World War II who have a very good idea of the lethal power of Vesuvius!

It all began quietly enough in March 1944. Our Bomb Group, the 340th, (and other Air Force Groups) were stationed around the base of Vesuvius, engaging in bombing Italy. Our airfield, near Pompeii, was bulldozed out of the lava and ash deposited 19 centuries before.

Pilots returning from missions day or night could easily find our airstrip by locating Vesuvius! In daylight the white whisps of smoke

rising from its cone, and a red glow at night from the crater made an easy landmark.

Two other officers and I drove a jeep up the mountain as far as the road went. We then walked to the top. The terrain was rough and quite ugly. We were amazed at the raw, jagged and awesome appearance of the volcano's cone. From fissures, a slow bubbling red flow of lava, while not threatening, persisted slowly toward the outer rim.

A few enterprising native children were dipping out small globs of lava on sticks, pressing small Italian coins into the soft but quickly hardening liquid stone, and charging a dollar. This was our first trip to the top.

Two days later there appeared to be more smoke than usual coming out of Vesuvius, and at night there was a obvious red glow at the top that had not been evident before. The next morning we returned to the top. This time we had to pick our way around and over swollen streams of molten stone. You could walk on the spongy, black surface of the fast cooling lava but underneath was a deep red glow. As these streams struck trees or bushes, there was a match-like spurt of flame, then the tree, or twig simply disappeared with a little puff of smoke.

We were still not alarmed, for the slowly advancing streams seemed to pose no serious problem for the farms and villages further down the mountain.

The next night, however, we were awakened by a severe shaking of the ground, a deep rumbling and roar and explosion! Rushing outside the stable in which we were sleeping, two officers and I discovered that the sky was filled with shooting red flashes, a great glare of light, and huge streams of lava coursing down the mountain.

The falling debris .. Ashes, cinders of great size, and acrid smoking clinker, made the wearing of helmets mandatory. Natives living on the higher elevations of the mountain in villages and farms streamed down the volcano's side taking refuge in churches where there was much wailing and praying. There were some small villages. Farms and vineyards destroyed.

In the dark before dawn we could not access our damage, but it became quite clear when morning arrived! Every airplane was riddled with gapping jagged holes in wing and fuselages. Ashes were built up to the top of the landing gear. For those sleeping in tents, it had been a frightful night. In their tattered and sieve-like condition, tents were no protection.

Our planes were thus ruined, and with a volcano of indeterminate length raging above, a quick decision to evacuate was ordered. As quickly as possible we fled as the Pompeians had done 19 centuries before. Only in our case we fled in trucks and jeeps going down the coast for many miles to an area that had once been a Greek colony, and where still stood a Greek Temple.. Paestum.

The irony of it all, despite our loses in material and usefulness (for four days) was that the Axis Powers had been trying to put us out of business for a long time. But what they had not been able to do in many months, Vesuvius accomplished in one night! 

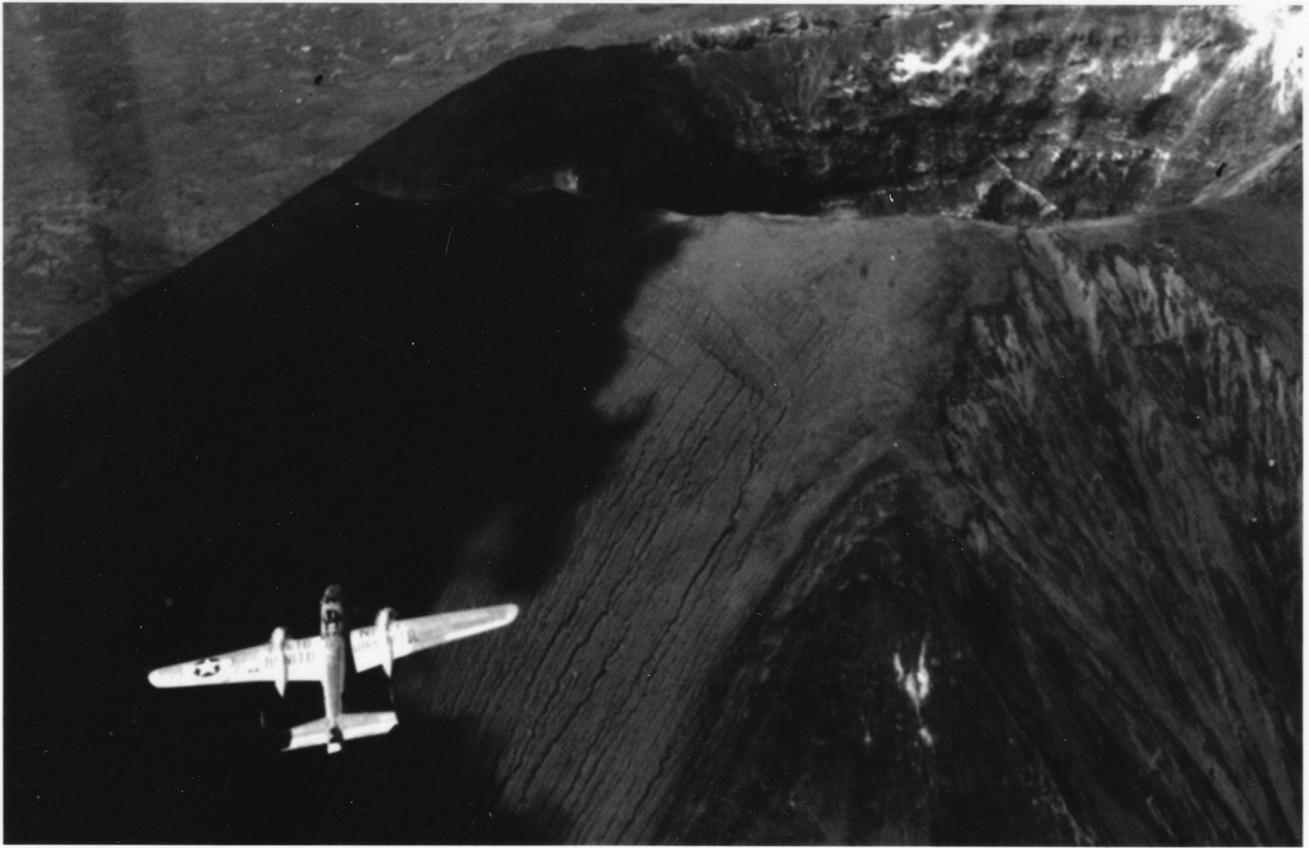
Photos of Vesuvius

We thank Joan (DeBoer) Heath for sharing with us this group of photos which were found in a photo album she purchased on the Internet.





Installations of the 340th Bomb Group located at the Mt. Vesuvius, Italy, may be caught in the path of hot pouring forth from the volcano, barely visible in the ground. 23 March 1944.



Vesuvius Eruption

nie by Francis Hudlow

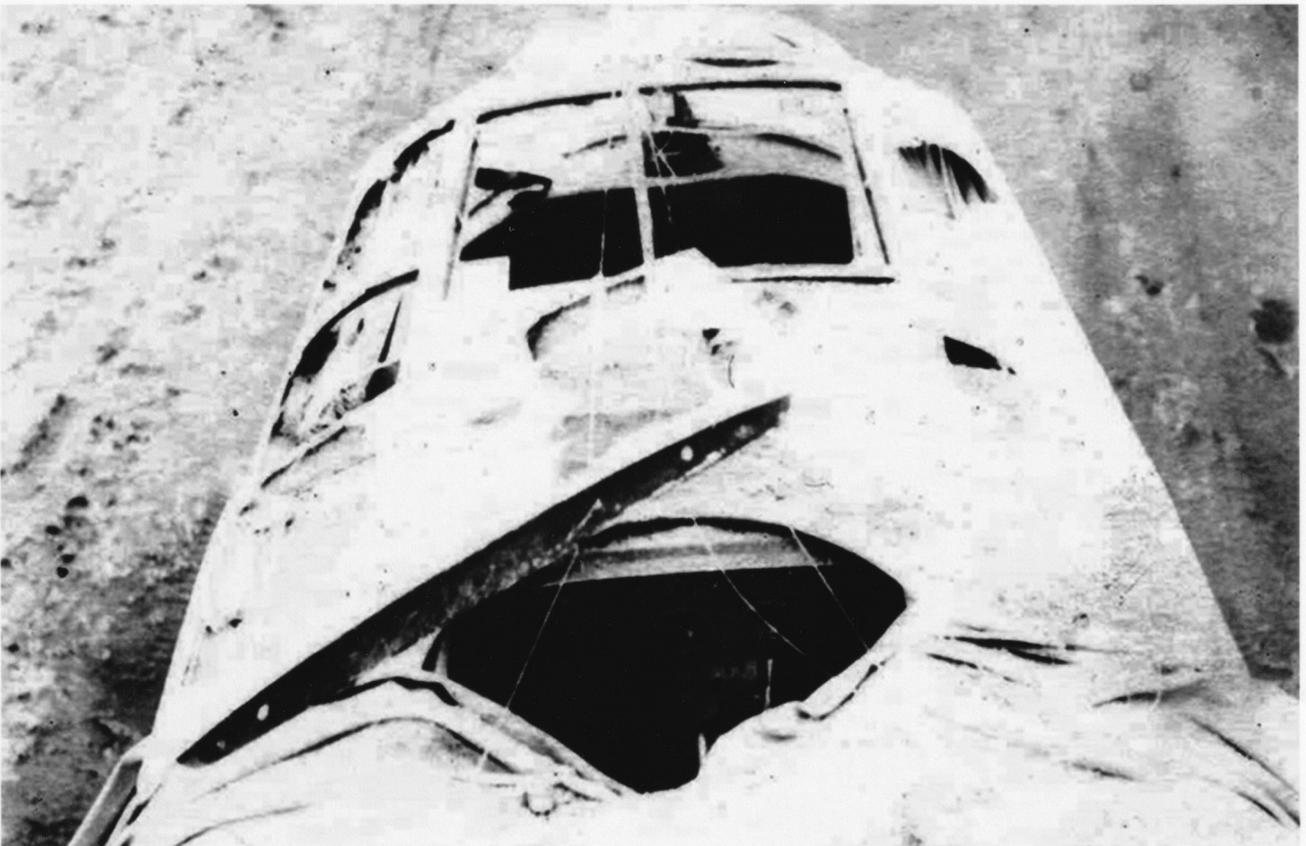


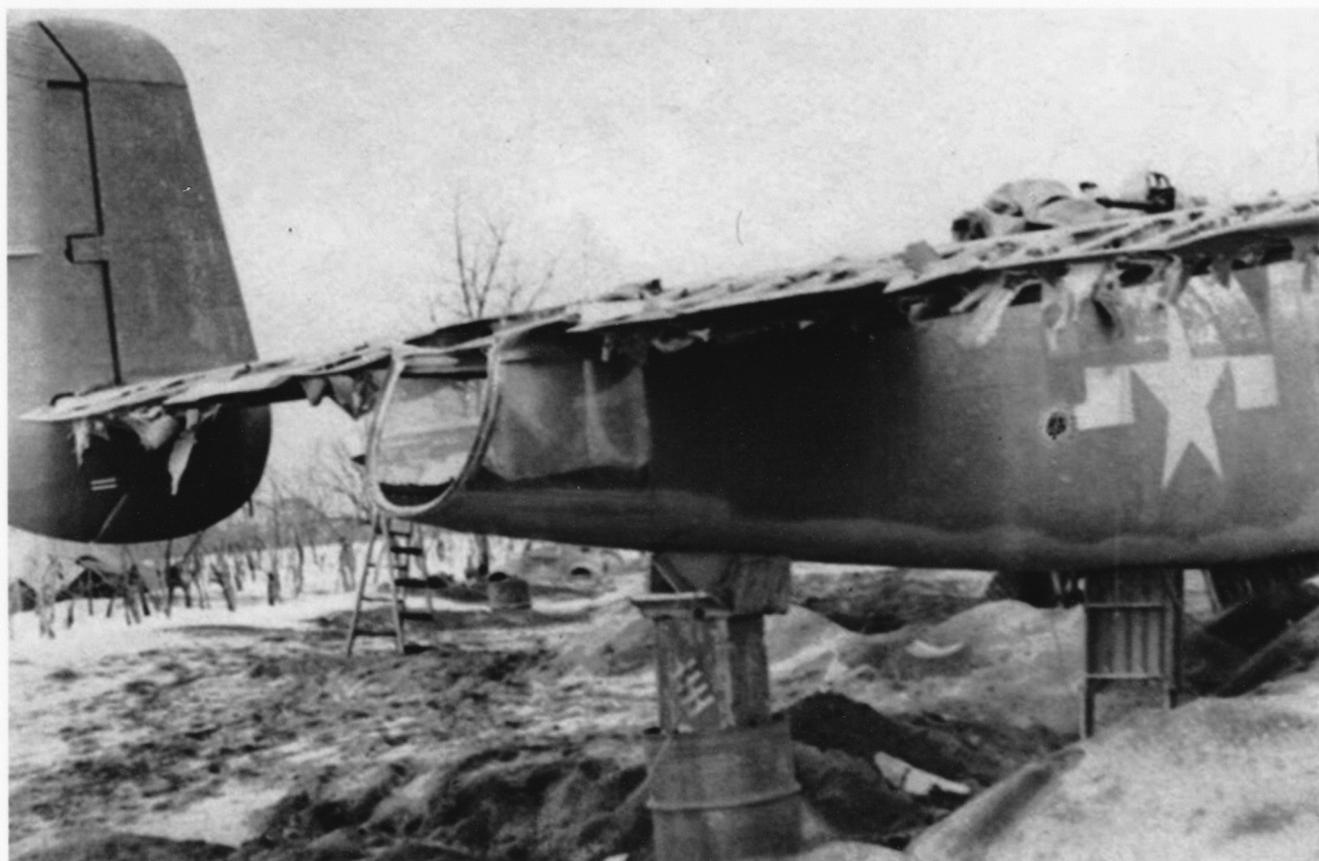
This tent was badly damaged by ashes and cinders which were blown down on the 340th Bomb Group





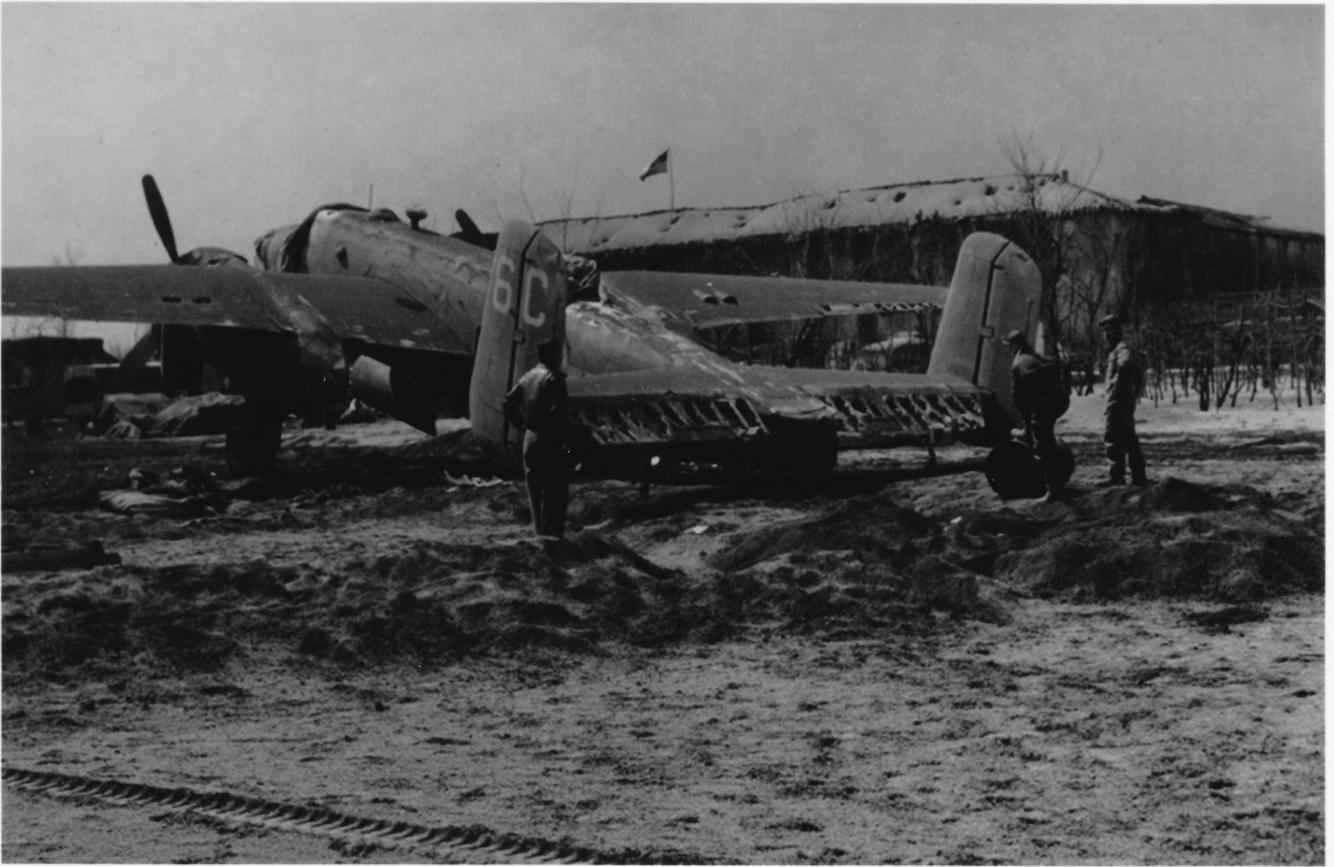
North American B-25 which was damaged during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on 23 March 1944.





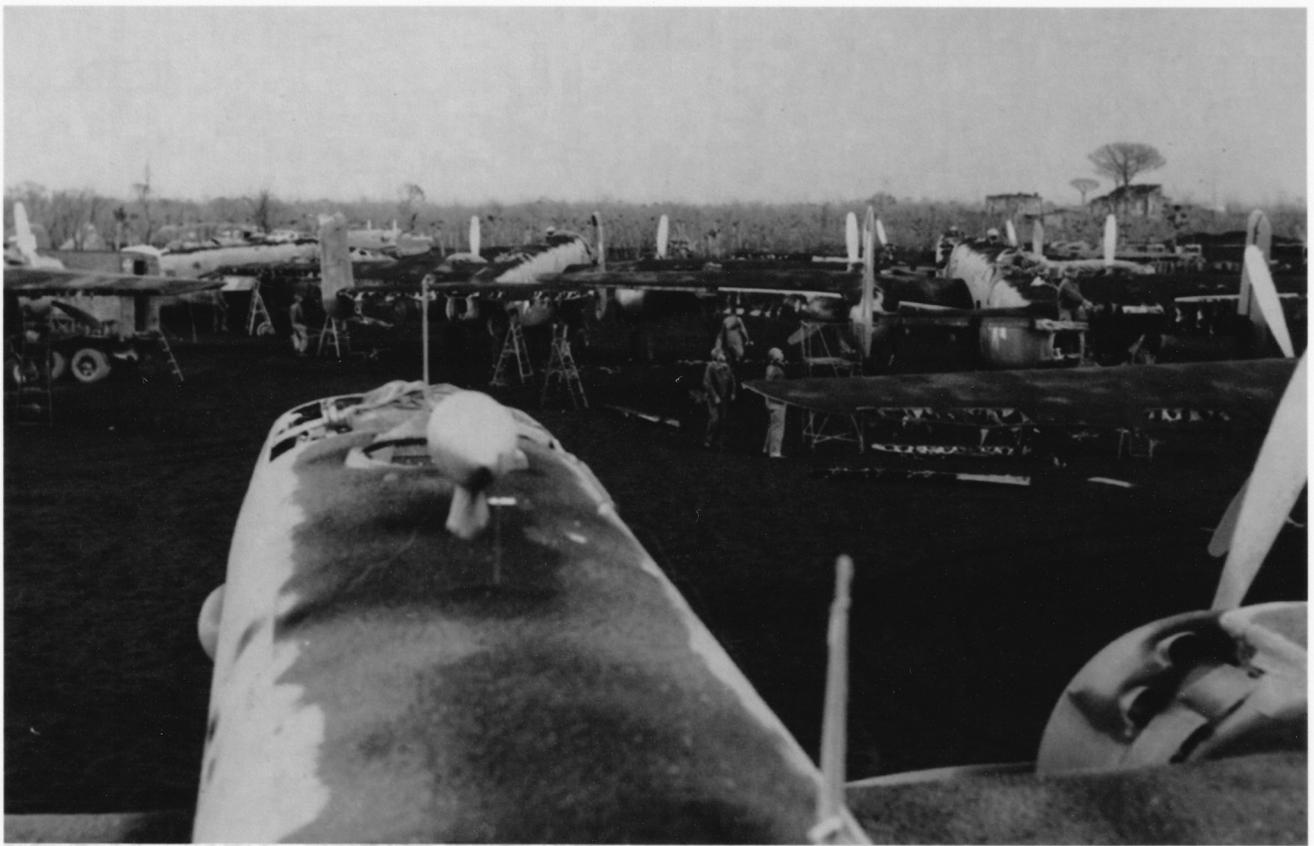
These North American B-25s were bogged down in dunes of lava cinders, from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on 23 March 1944. The weight of cinders and ashes on the tail of the planes was so heavy that the nose was lifted off the ground.







A tractor is hooked to this North American B-25 of the 340th Bomb Group and it is towed to the salvage area for repairs after being damaged by ashes and cinders which were blown down during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on 23 March 1944.







Men of the 340th Bomb Group jack up the tail of a North American B-25 which was damaged during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on 23 March 1944. Note fragmentation bombs uncovered and cleaned off.



THE GROUND CREW

Words and Music by
LEO RUSSOTTO
LOUIS MARTIN
HARRY S. MILLER

Alla marcía

There are lots of sol-diers in the Air Corps— Pi-lots, na-vi-ga-tors, bom-bar-diers, — There are man-y oth-ers too You will find them quite a few here's a gang of whom one seld-om hears.

Refrain
The Ground Crew, the Ground Crew, Oh, no one ev-er sings a-bout the cel-lars if it was-n't for the grease guns of the Ground Crew. The Crew.

Used by permission of composer, Harry S. Miller.
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From the "Air Force Airs Songbook" published 1943. [Joan DeBoer Heath Collection]





U. S. ARMY OFFICIAL POSTER

"Hey, Joe -
Our Planes!"



Audy Pat

KEEP 'EM COMING!

The 321st Bombardment Group and Vesuvius

We all know the story of how the 340th Bombardment Group lost all of its aircraft to the fury of Vesuvius. But did you know that the 340th was not the only group to lose out to the volcano?

TABOO

By M/Sgt. John E. McGary

Airplanes, like things, are generally referred to impersonally, as big hunks of junk, or secret weapons, or kites, or craft, or just airplanes, whichever the case may be, and grammatically they are strictly neuter, but in this case I am going to give them personality. At least this particular one, just as the boys of the Northern ferry passage bestow personality on the migrating kites that pass their way. Just as they call the Fortress the old woman, who was always accompanied by her pea shooters, the kids, so did they call the grisly old battle wagon, B-Two-Four, the old man, who generally traveled alone, or at least stag, with the rest of his kind.

So do I think of the B-Two-Five as a fickle minded real live girl, filled with whims and fancies, intuitions and intrigues, and all the temperaments that go to make up the characters of sugar and spice. Could be she even has a soul, as she soars above where mortals fear to tread. Be that as it may, let's be on with the gal involved.

I can't speak for her early life, as we didn't meet until she was 20 hours old, but from that day onward we became very intimate, and I came to know her and understand her even better than the flesh and blood variety.

It was on a windy ramp I first met her, a dejected looking hangar queen, if I am any judge of hanger queens, with internal ailments of all sorts. However, after a change of engine, and three carburetors, plus plenty of sweet talk and patience, during which time I

had to hold her hand both night and day, she was again sky worthy. After showering her with kindness and attention for several weeks, she became one of the most attractive gals I know.

The orders came, the social obligations cut short, and northward through the clouds along the course of the Gulf Stream, to see our home land again we knew not when. Seven of us there were, Van, Hank, and Pee Wee, Willie, Ray, Trigger and myself, sharing our fate with her and trusting her implicitly. Not that I am a brave man when defying the laws of gravitation, but I had confidence in her ability to fall gracefully.

Goose Bay, in the barren, gal-less wastes of Labrador, was the first stop, and the first taste of bitter cold, where an oath would freeze on your lips, and the aurora turned the nights into weird pictures of fantastic things. But she lived up to the greatest expectations, and after breathing down her neck, and many starts, we finally winged our way toward Greenland's icy mountains, which were reached and crossed on that proverbial prayer. But the snag came at B-West-One, where the snow was cold, the wind was cold, and most of the time the engines were cold. We were snowed in for days, thru no fault of hers, for early each morning she was as impatient as we to be off in a cloud of snow flakes. She was always obedient to answer the command, except once, the important once when she was stubborn, and I beat her, and the snow melted like tears from her wings. But as I look back

now, maybe it was better that way. We're still alive today, at least some of us, God rest their courageous souls.

It was a 4:00 a.m. preflight, and ice was everywhere. We had to thaw her out with heaters before she'd give her consent. But she finally cooperated beautifully to our mutual satisfaction, and as dawn broke over the ice cap, the flight prepared to go. Perhaps it was premonition, who can tell? But she refused to move. We coaxed her, we whispered sweet nothings to her in the places where we thought it would do the most good. We sweated and swore, but she was stubborn. With sadness we watched our flight move out without us. As they circled above us, and dipped their wings in farewell, something inside her clicked (for any layman, who in the future years may read this touching tale, it was the starter dog inside

ing elements which gloated all about us.

We taxied like mad to take off position, and thanked our God we had not been left behind to pine away in this arctic paradise. Then it happened and she blew, the left main tire, and we headed for the rhubarb. Naturally, there was no rhubarb, but that is what is always said on such an occasion.

She groaned to a stop just inches from a head on collision, and her engines gave up the ghost. She was sad, as if to say "I'm sorry boys, to let you down like this."

We sweated a little blood changing that wheel in swirling snow on the icy slant. Had to borrow one from a salvaged -26 who had squatted to earth with her wheels up. We were ready to leave the next morning, but the soup



Taboo with unidentified crew at El Adem Airfield, N. Africa

her barking, which meshed the engine, which ultimately makes all engines go) and one by one her engines roared defiance to the glisten-

was so thick that you couldn't eat it with a spoon, and it stayed that way for days and days, and I beat her daily with a broom as a

reminder of her failure. Each morning as we swept the ice and snow from her, I cursed her and one morning I struck a broom handle clear through her elevators as the ice clung to her. She was humble and not a whimper did she make, except for an occasional groan from the weight of the ice and snow encased about her.

But when our next chance came she was ready and in the darkness of Thanksgiving dawn she roared down the metal strip and out across the fjord with a smoothness that was beautiful. With a nose that seemed to smell the earth she dived down thru the soup hours later to the welcome landing field in Iceland, which was our next place of refuge. We patted her, and kissed her and loved the very ground she taxied on, as we looked up that the closing mist 500 feet above us. It was bitterly cold here too, but we didn't scold her now, as we melted the ice from her dripping body. It was all forgiven now.

As she skimmed gracefully across the wave tops on her way to Scotland a few days later, we had not a fault to find with her. She was perfect.

From Prestwick's bonny lassies to Hardwick's knee deep mud, she took it all in stride, and there was welcome on the matting when we met our flight again. We gave her a new set of spark plugs, and administered to her growing pains, and she was proud. On down to Hethel and she gave us not a worry.

Then on the day before Christmas Eve they shipped us off to Cornwall, and she was sad like the rest of us to leave the Norwich hospitality.

She got a through working over here, and we gave her fresh alcohol for Christmas, and she was happy as we were, with the love and kind treatment. She too was filled with anticipation as we filled her belly full of petrol, for this

was Land's End, and this was it. But there wasn't long to wait. Her brood of P-Three-Eights came, like streaks of Lightning across the dull sky, we were briefed, and off at last on the end of our three month trek toward war.

Her engines sang out in expectancy as she soared high over Biscay Bay, and down around the Rock, with her kids playing tag around her. It was Africa to the right of us and it was raining hard, but she nosed her way on thru, unafraid. Just before dark we saw the lake bed, and the town off to the left, and the railroad tracks, all right where they were supposed to be. She slipped into her approach and splashed her way on down, slipping skidding on the wet pavement, but stopping where she was supposed to stop, instead of in the mud ahead, like some of them had done. Again we kissed her and caressed her, as the rain streamed down our faces and hers, and we knew that there was nothing that she couldn't do. It was New Year's Eve in Africa.

On January 2 she entered the war zone, and what was to be her home for months to come. It was here she met Archie and Al, Louie and Moe, her best boy friends from that day on. The rest is operational history, which she saw and helped to make. Already recorded many times over, we will not detail her many exploits here.

As running mate with Little Joe, winging thru the roughest days of Tunisia behind the Green Eyes, they were the crack flight of the red squadron, the original flight A. She was christened Taboo with the Ace of Spades and beaucoup vino rouge, and reigned supreme as the queen of Kemp colony. Being a frequent visitor to the colony myself, I saw that she was cared for with the greatest of patience. Even during her freshman days, when she tangled with a flock of birds, and had her nose skinned, she was given the best that could be had. And she grew wise and wicked

as an enemy of the Reich. The Krauts were afraid of her and threw all manner of objects her way, but they never dared to challenge her too close, for she was Taboo. Her only scars were the marks of birds and the fabric patch on her elevator.

She saw them go down, the best of them, in the desert, in the sea, or disintegrate in the sky, but she always returned like the faithful pigeon that she was. Tho her mates of the northern passage were being replaced, she roared her wrath the louder and carried on in vengeance. Her original crew was relieved, and again she was very sad, as she bore them off to the city to embark for home, but she accepted her new one with all her energies and was off again to roam the sky.

From Berteaux to the Cross, where came her first real battle scar, but she was never stopped for long. With patches here and there and Archie to come home to, she carried on the ravaging from the skies. When Pantalleria fell she was there to see the flag, and on to Sicily and the Toe. She earned her battle stars, that girl. But never did she fail because her engines couldn't take it. She got new ones, yes, lots of them, but she deserved them, because she gave to the last ounce when called upon to do so. And the boys were good to her, Archie and Al, Louie and Moe.

From the Cross on to the Cape, and her missions increased. But she could take it, and dish it out, plenty.

But the sad day came when she was to be replaced. Preceded by rumors, her new sisters came, the cannon packin' mammas that the critics raved about. She was given a back seat, like an old horse going to pasture. She was missed, this one, who had been faithful for so long. But she knew, somehow, that these wrong G's were not here to stay. So at Philippeville she rested and waited for her day to come again. And then her new owners

put on the war harness, and she was off to Corsica. Thumbing her nose at the clumsy G's, and carrying her belly full of death. She was still fast and could outrun them any day, so she flew the yellow colors, and waited.

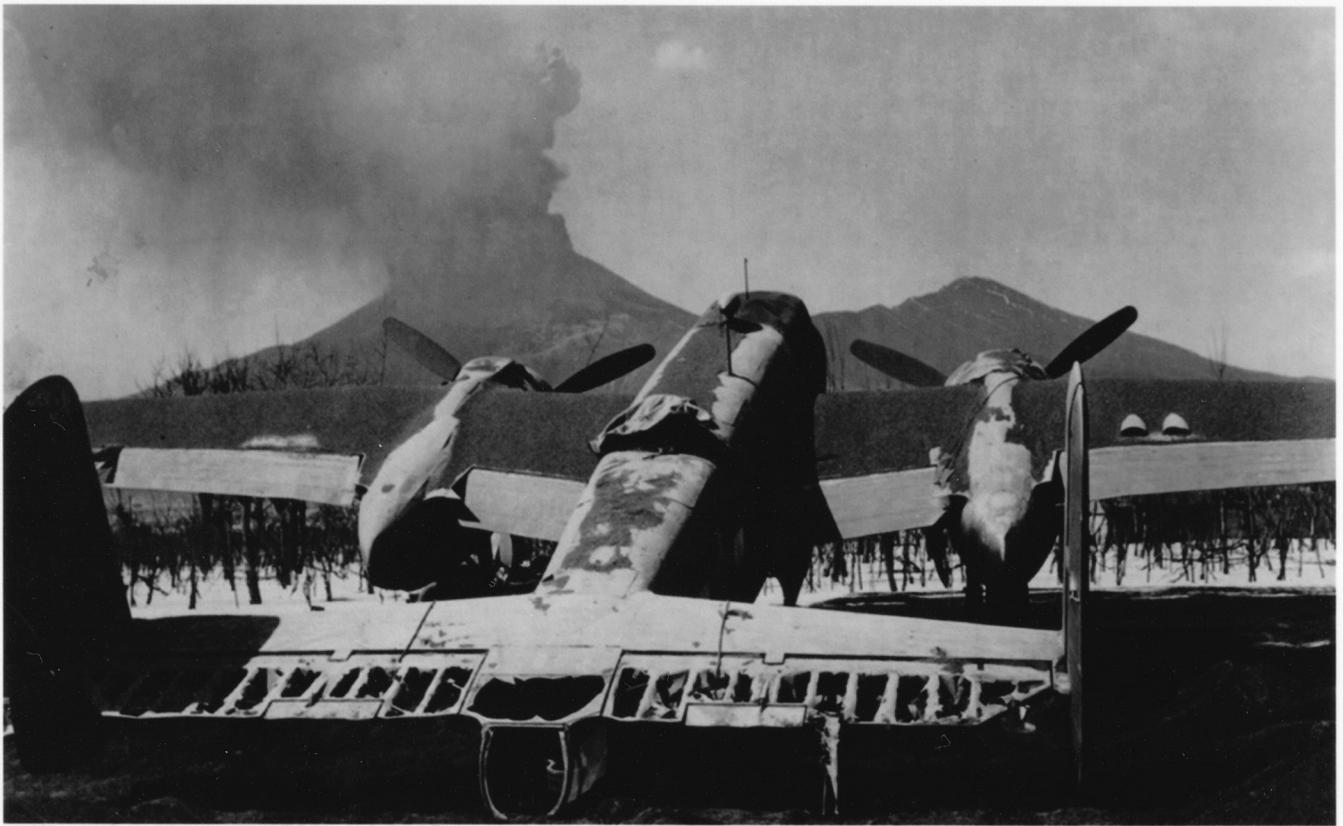
One day, with a flurry of papers and a flush on her face, she was returned to those who knew and understood her. Again our leader in the sky. New faces cast their lot with her, the girl who had gone out 97 times to drop her load, and returned safely home. Maybe her paint was scratched and her body scarred, but she had been around.

Archie gave her a new set of engines now, to prepare her to start on her new adventures. Good engines they were, and skillfully installed, but before they would load her up again, they gave her a vacation run. A war horse doing transport...But was not hers to reason why, merely to do and die...

Under the shadow of a fuming Vesuvius she was staked out for the night, a night that would never end. A night that spelled her finish, for she will never roam the skies again.

As the wrath of an angry earth, long abused by war, was unleashed, its very bowels were flung to Heaven, only to fall again as molten rock, dust and ashes. The heavy chunks of destruction rained about her, and she was broken and torn. Gaping, jagged holes were made in her wings, heavy ashes weighted her to the ground, and the stifling dust filled her every pore. She was abandoned, here to die, and as the earth seemed to close in around her she was sent to a living grave, from which she will never fly again, unless in spirit of the glorious gal she was. But she had outlived and out flown a score of more of her red nosed partners, and she had done a heroic job. And tho her dust has again become dust, in our heart her glory will never die. 

Taboo



A battered North American B-25 of the 310th Bomb Group rests useless on the dispersal strip

Vermin

There was yet another challenge the men of the 57th had to overcome. In the desert they had to check their boots in the morning for scorpions, and Ghisonaccia was known to the locals as a hot-spot for malaria, forcing the GI's there and elsewhere on Corsica to take Atabrine. It was effective, but also caused nausea, headaches, and diarrhea.

The influx of troops on Corsica occupying 17 airfields had an additional effect on the island. The garbage dumps and food stores engendered an explosion in the rat population...

From the February 1944 War Diary of the 381st Bomb Squadron

February 16, 1944

Believe it or not, there is a lovely young lady in Chicago who is supplying the rats of Ghisonaccia Station, Corsica, with chocolate candy. Inconceivable as this may appear to be at first glance, it is a statement of pure and simple truth. One Corporal Nels Johnson, Squadron chowhound and runner up for Champion Squadron letter writer, is the emissary of the beautiful young lady from Chicago, whose name is Ruth. Ruth, of course, is completely ignorant of the rat situation, and if informed of the goings-on in Corsica, would undoubtedly cease sending candy to said Corporal. This is what is taking place: Nels resides in the attic of one of the Hotel de la Gare's buildings and, in his capacity of Squadron chowhound, is always supplied with large stores of edibles: Candy from Chicago, knickknacks picked up at the mess hall for midnight snacks, and anything else in the line of food which he can lay his hands on. Nels and his roommates, however, are not the only occupants of this attic, for there is a large colony of rats who also occupy quarters in the same building. Needless to say, the arrival of Nels and his commissary was heralded in the rat colony, who turned out one and all to give him proper welcome, and incidentally, to give his stores a tremendous pounding. Not only that, but in the process, they kept Nels and all of his friends awake all night for several nights. This was a profound mistake on their part, for Nels enjoys his sleep with the same quiet enthusiasm with which he goes for food.

Although usually very slow to become angry, this intrusion into his sleep and thieving of his food goaded Nels into a violent display of temper, which precipitated a determination to completely exterminate the rats. Not having a rat trap, Nels had to depend on ingenuity. That's where Ruth's candy comes in. After a period of deep thought, subsequent preparations resulted in the following contrivance: A ten gallon can half full of water, over which will be suspended on a long piece of string, a sizable chunk of Ruth's chocolate candy, from Chicago. Leading up to the brim of the can from the floor is a board. Over the top of the can is a thin sheet of paper, intended to conceal the water below. Mr. Rat, and members of his family, are expected to run up the board searching for the chocolate and fall through the paper cover of the can into a watery grave.

Nels is going to set the trap just before retiring tonight.

February 17, 1944

Cpl. Johnson awoke early this morning, and without waiting to open the windows to admit light, grabbed his flashlight and hurried to the rat trap to see if anything had happened. Something had, but not what Nels had expected. The bait --- ¼ ounce of chocolate candy --- was gone, and there were no dead rats. In addition, the rats had chewed a hole in Sgt. M P. Damiano's A-3 bag and escaped with an entire peanut bar. Nels is undaunted and expresses an intention of re-baiting the trap tonight.

February 18, 1944

Nels Johnson's ingenuity in designing rat traps has not yet been rewarded with success, though the rats enjoyed the chocolate candy from Chicago enough to come back for more last night.

February 19, 1944

Private Dick Wong, having heard of Cpl. Johnson's rat trouble, decided that some oriental ingenuity might be of some assistance. Therefore, the honorable "Dickum" presented Nels with an electric rat trap, complete with fuses and designed and constructed entirely by himself. The only thing not taken into consideration was the fact that the electric power goes off at midnight, while the rats do not venture out until 04:00 hours.

February 20, 1944

The rat situation is now well in hand. Two of them drowned in Nels' trap last night. They were large specimens, measuring fifteen and eighteen inches from nose to tail. It is the contention of all of Nels' friends that if there were a taxidermist in Ghisonaccia, Nels would have had the rats there before he opened shop this morning.

Insects

March 26, 1944 entry in the War Diary of the 428th Bomb Squadron

The "order of the day" featured the return of atebriane and all its miseries. The Ghisonaccia area is more heavily malaria-infested than any other area in the Mediterranean. We have seen mosquitoes here already, and they really are a Superfortress of the mosquito family. Already the tall stories about their size and stingers have started. The latest one is about a group of soldiers living in a tent which had a corrugated metal door on it. One fairly warm night recently a loud buzzing noise was heard outside the tent, and then a drilling began on the metal door. After a few seconds a long black, needle-sharp point showed through the metal. The men were terrified, but one courageous one grabbed up a twelve-pound maul which was lying on the floor and bent the protruding point over, like a large spike, firmly riveting the mosquito to the door. This protected, he ducked under the side of the tent and went around to the door, where a few blows of the same sledgehammer finally did the mosquito in.

Movie Critic

From the September 1944 War Diary of the 381st Bomb Squadron

A movie audience at this 310th Bombardment Group base is a motley assembly, consisting of Americans, Arabs, Italians, Frenchmen and even dogs, cats, and donkeys. Recently a new species of animal has joined the throng, and he is just as avid a movie fan as the others. He is a large, brown rat.

He, unlike the rest of the crowd, is very unconcerned about the difficulties of procuring a seat, for his perch is high above the audience on a telephone wire, and he views the ground sitters with a cool contempt.

When the "tin-can amphitheater" has filled and dusk has made it possible to project the play upon the screen, Mr. Rat slowly ambles to his place on the wire, just as the Colonels are taking their seats and the show is about to begin.

Time was when the audience, marveling to see a rat at the Cinema, gave him more attention than was paid to the movie. Pebbles were tossed at him, and dozens of flashlights sought him in the darkness. But Mr. Rat, resigned to human foibles, sat unperturbed through the ordeal. An adept tightrope walker, he was not to be dislodged from his perch. Now he is taken for granted and is unmolested.

He has a preference for musicals; heavy drama leaves him untouched. Between reels he takes a "break" to search the Red Cross for crumbs and to attend other matters. He becomes as agitated as the most vociferous G.I. at the breakdown of the projector and restlessly paces his wire in protest. On a night a Class B picture is shown, after the first reel, Mr. Rodent can be seen ambling disgustedly across the wire, away to his bed, which is probably made in some unsuspecting soldier's barracks bag.



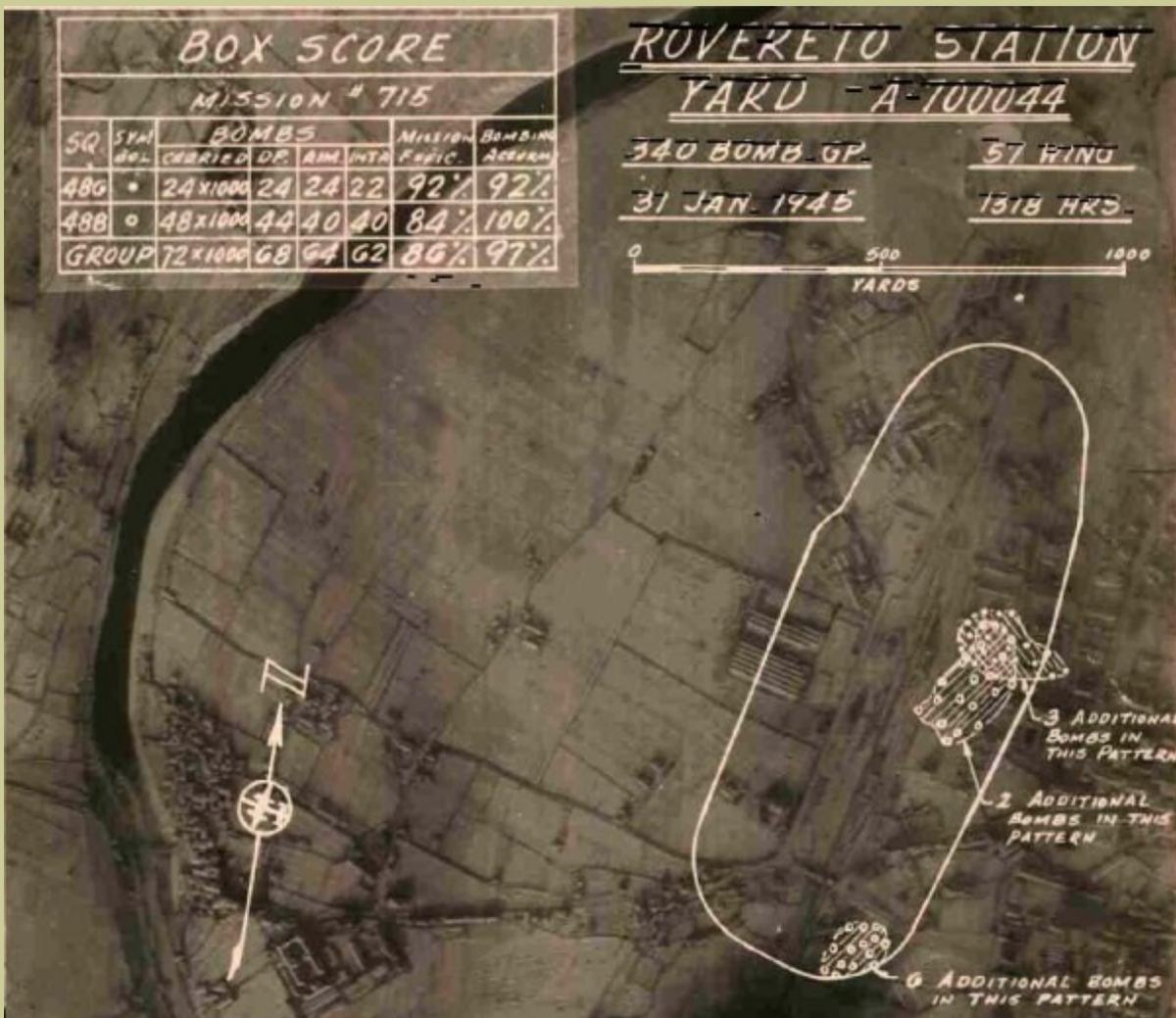
Movie screen at 310th BG HQ. Note the telephone wire at upper right.

SWITCH ON! CONTACTS!

We received some interesting contacts recently.

For instance, we were contacted by a civil engineer working out of Trento, Italy. He is involved in a project to attempt to locate unexploded bombs in the Trento area. His name is Stefano Merz.

To help him in that effort he asked to see some of our 'Box Score' photographs which plotted the bomb falls in the aftermath of a bombing raid. We directed him to our "Target Photos" page in the 340th BG area of our website where we have over 300 bombing missions documented. Here is an example of a "Box Score" photo:



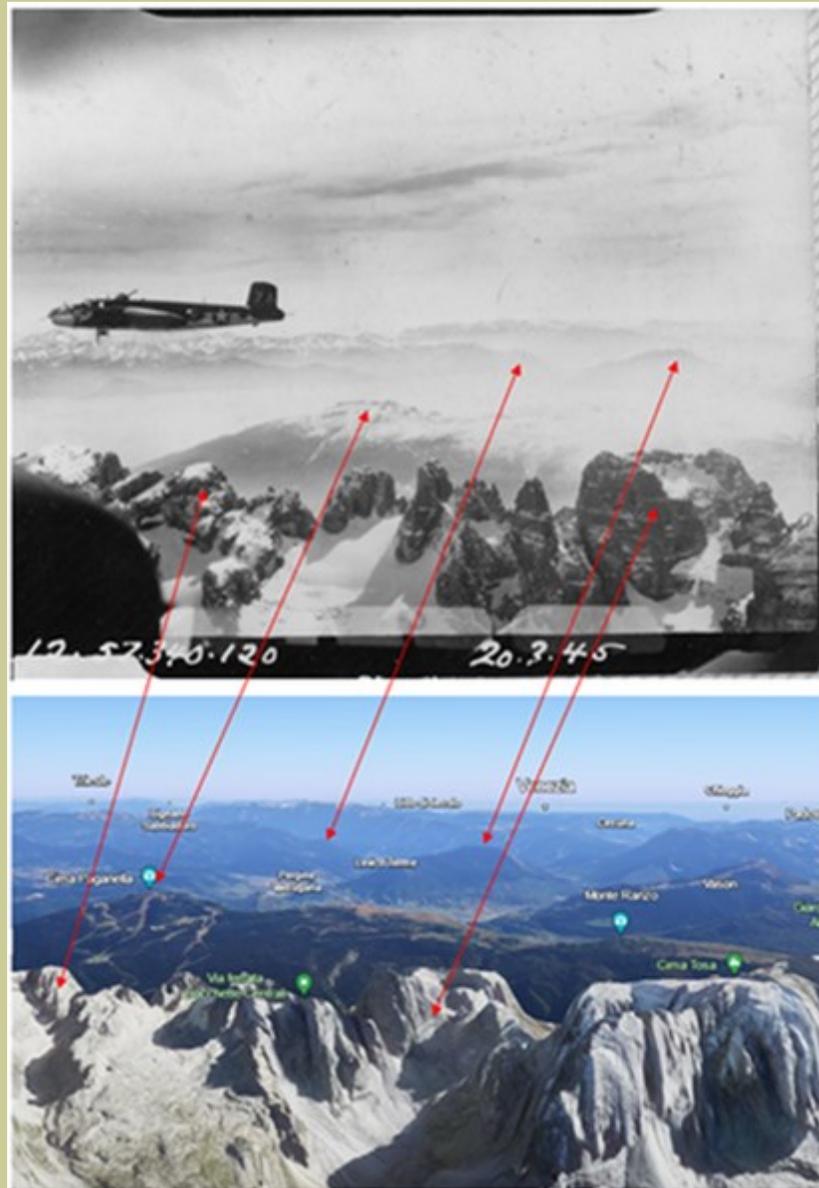
If you have not seen our Target Photos page, you will find it here:

[340th BG Target Photos](#)

CONTACTS! (cont'd)

There was an unexpected benefit of our contact with Stefano. As Stefano looked through our online photos he focused on one that my father (Hymie Setzer, 340th BG, HQ) brought home. It showed ship 7A flying over the Alps.

Using his engineering savvy and his intimate knowledge of the area, Stefano was able to identify the exact location of the photo!



Extract from Google Earth. B-25 7A

Approximant position:

46° 11' 02" N 10° 51' 32" E

CONTACTS! (cont'd)

That was very cool, but he also identified the location of another photo, which had been something of a mystery.

You may recall that in our last issue we carried a photo sent to us by the Italian historian, Claudio Mischi showing a B-25 with a massive hole in the wing. We initially identified the aircraft as belonging to the 319th BG because the tail marking "76" was the format used by the 319th. Our records on the 319th are not very exhaustive and we were unable to find reference to this incident.



Stefano identified it as: "B25 76 approx. position 46.113226, 11.105866 (the town at the bottom right is Gardolo, top left is the Lavis railway bridge)"

That was all the hint Claudio Mischi needed to identify the ship as "The Big Swing." On February 7, 1945 the ship was hit by flak. The pilot managed to get to Switzerland where the crew bailed out and the ship crashed.

The confusion about the tail numbers was cleared up when we remembered that the 319th left for the States in January '45. Some of their new planes fell to the 448th BS.

CONTACTS! (cont'd)

We were delighted to hear from John Wong, son of Suey C. Wong, 310th BG, 380th BS.

Suey Cheung Wong flew a full tour of combat duty, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross for keeping his heavily damaged aircraft in formation during a bombing run, and getting his ship and crew home safely.

He remained in the service finally retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1963. He was one of the very few Chinese-Americans in the 57th Bomb Wing.

His daughter wrote:

“On a dare, he became a pilot. Being told Chinese weren’t smart enough to be capable of learning to fly, he broke the barrier.”

The Chinese-American community was very proud of him.

Note this news article from when he was still in flight school.

Everyone was very aware of the atrocities the Japanese were carrying out against the Chinese.

His son said he was somewhat disappointed to be assigned to fight in the MTO instead of the Pacific Theatre.



Suey Wong (on right) with “Sleepy Time Gal.”



HE WILL KILL JAPS—Aviation Cadet, Suey C. Wong, who is finishing his primary training at the 55th AAFTD at Bennettsville, S. C., is one of the few people in America to know the fear of unprotected bombing. He was born at the end of World War I, in Canton, China, and went to school in an American missionary-founded school. Cadet Wong was in Canton during the Jap bombing raids, but moved to the interior before the city was captured. He went to Hong Kong from the interior to finish the last year of high school. Soon after finishing he came to the United States, and has been here about four years. Before entering the Army he was a student at San Francisco Junior College. He transferred from the Army to the Air Corps because he wants to become a bomber pilot and bomb hell out of the Japs.

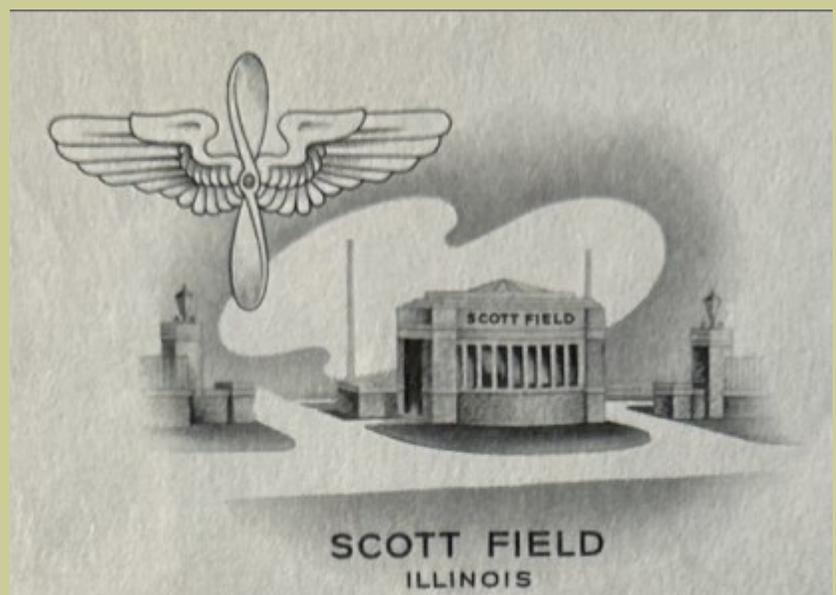
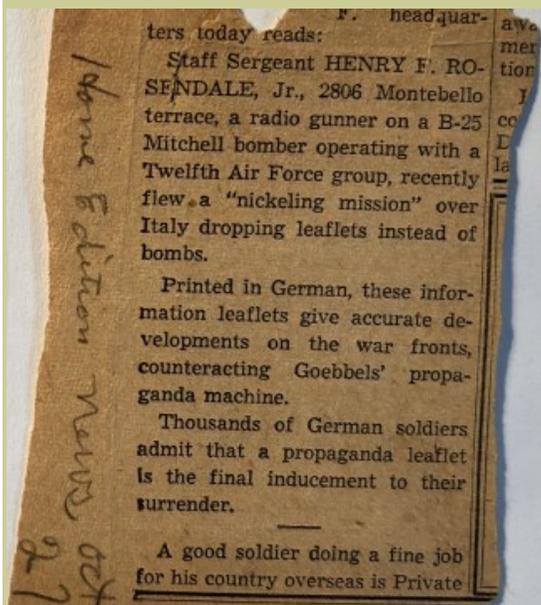
CONTACTS! (cont'd)

Another contact came from the son of Henry F. Rosendale, a radio-gunner assigned to the 310th BG, 428th BS. He sent us some nice photos.



Henry Rosendale is standing on the right. Others are unidentified.

He also sent us a newspaper clipping typical of the notices published in hometown newspapers of the time, as well as letters sent from Scott Field, Illinois where he went for training.



CONTACTS! (cont'd)

As Henry (the son) continued researching his Father's wartime experience, he recalled that his Father remained in phone contact periodically with a buddy from the 428th, and managed to establish contact with his daughter who provided us with a photo and more information.

Henry Rosendale and Richard H. Rauschkolb often flew on missions together.

Richard Rauschkolb distinguished himself with an act of courage which earned him the award of the Soldier's Medal.

100
P. Schovanec, L. 2nd Lt.
CP. Stanford, W.E. 2nd Lt
B. Stroyke, E.D. sgt.
RG. Rosendale, H.F. S/Sgt
G. Rauschkolb, R.H. Sgt.
TG. Silverman, H.L. Cpl.

RICHARD H. RAUSCHKOLB, 32890093, Sergeant, 428th Bomb Sq, 310th Bomb Gp. For heroism. On 1 October 1944, upon the completion of the bomb run over Mantua, Italy, it was discovered that one 500 pound bomb in Sgt, Rauschkolb's airplane had failed to release over the target. Realizing the danger of explosion, Sgt. Rauschkolb immediately removed his parachute and lowered himself into the bomb bay. With the aid of his bombardier, Sgt. Rauschkolb succeeded in lifting the bomb to its station and manually tripping it harmlessly from the aircraft. His selfless devotion to duty in the face of great hazard reflects highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rauschkolb remained in the Army after WW2 and served in Korea and Vietnam, retiring as a colonel. He died at only age 59 from cancer, probably related to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam.



WHAT'S NEW ONLINE

The Library of Congress interviewed some of the veterans of the 57th Bomb Wing and posted the videos online.

We provide you with links to the videos on the “Stories” page of our website.

The men interviewed are:

Library of Congress Interviews with 57th BW Veterans

321st Bomb Group	340th Bomb Group
<u>Jack Valenti, 448th BS</u>	<u>Ferrell L. Holley, 487th BS</u>
<u>Richard C. Hughes, 445th BS</u>	<u>John R. Lange, 487th BS</u>
<u>Carl W. Cahoon, 447th BS</u>	<u>Wendell H. Beverly, 489th BS</u>
<u>Stewart B. Gilbert 448th BS</u>	<u>Perry C. Chapman, 489th BS</u>
<u>John A. Montoro, 448th BS</u>	<u>Russell L. Scott, 489th BS</u>
	<u>Newman Sanders, 489th BS</u>
310th Bomb Group	<u>Harry H. Spear, 489th BS</u>
	<u>John D. Rovick, 489th BS</u>
<u>Bernie Peters, 379th BS</u>	<u>John D. Rovick (2nd interview)</u>
	<u>Frank Pehrson, 489th BS</u>
57th Bomb Wing HQ	<u>Forrest Wells, 488th BS</u>
<u>Thomas R. Cook</u>	

We have posted links to the interviews on our “Stories” page on the 57th Bomb Wing website here:

[57th Bomb Wing - Stories](#)

WHAT'S NEW ONLINE (cont'd)

Transcriptions of the War Diaries of some of the Squadrons in the 310th Bombardment Group have been posted.

Posted so far are the 379th BS, 380th BS and the 381st BS. The 428th is coming soon.

In addition to being transcribed in order to make them computer searchable, the Diaries have been lavishly illustrated using photos from our extensive Digital Archives and other sources.

You will find them here:

[War Diaries of the 310th Bombardment Group](#)

On the “57th Works of Fiction” page we added a link to the excellent, 6-part Hulu streaming TV series “*Catch-22*” produced by George Cluny.



The 57th Bomb Wing Facebook page currently has 836 members!

Join us: [57th Bomb Wing on Facebook](#)

The Wing’s website is also a very busy place.

April 2024:

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits
Jan 2024	1,012	1,611
Feb 2024	1,698	2,451
Mar 2024	1,553	4,904
Apr 2024	1,559	2,467
May 2024	131	169
Jun 2024	0	0
Jul 2024	0	0
Aug 2024	0	0
Sep 2024	0	0
Oct 2024	0	0
Nov 2024	0	0
Dec 2024	0	0
Total	5,953	11,602

Downloads (Top 10) - Full list		Hits
Downloads: 710		
 /448th_History/WarDiary_19420801_19430930.pdf		137
 /321stHistory/321_BG_1944-02.pdf		97
 /340th_History/340th_Diary/15_March1944.pdf		84
 /340th_History/487th_History/14_Hist_Jun_1944.pdf		82
 /321stHistory/321_BG_1944-12.pdf		66
 /links_files/Over%20the%20Med%20Part3.pdf		46
 /321stHistory/321_BG_1944-09.pdf		46
 /Journals/2024_Winter.pdf		44
 /321stHistory/321_BG_1943-12.pdf		41
 /379th_History/History20.pdf		40



This gem comes to us from Patti Morrison, George (Russ) Morrison's daughter. Patti writes, "Nice to see these guys enjoying some time off. This is from my father's photo collection of the 321st, 447th. Sorry, but I don't have any names." Can anyone identify these men?

January 29, 2024

From Linda Hutson Johnston, Daughter of Earnest Hutson (*see following page*)

The issue I grabbed was on the top of his pile but I see now that it is a couple of years old. VOL XXXII #2. I think he left it on the top trying to identify the men on the back cover. I am including the names I see on a small note paper I found within. I'm amazed because his eyesight has been extremely poor and he probably just had to set the task aside. I have no idea if he ever sent the names on to the journal. 1. Gies ? 2. Dave Brice 3. Ed Gates 4. unknown 5. Fred Smith 6. Elmore Cammack 7. George Fairchild 8. Vince Garqiulo 9. unknown.

Patti Morrison, George's daughter, was interested in their identification.

T A P S



Ernest G. (Hod) Hutson

321st Bombardment Group, 447th Bomb Squadron

Ernest G. (Hod) Hutson, 101, died at home on January 25 with family at his side. Hod was born at home July 12, 1922, the son of Ernest G. and Julia (Anderson) Hutson. He grew up on the family farm near Hayward, WI where he graduated from high school. During his freshman year in college WW2 started. Hod joined the US Army Air Corp becoming a bomber pilot. Serving 4 years and 2 months he flew 58 combat missions over occupied Italy. Captain Hutson received two Presidential unit citations with his squadron and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters. He finished his military career as a multi-engine flight instructor in 1948. After separation from active duty Hod moved to Devils Lake, ND as a flight instructor for Dan Wakefield becoming a pioneer in the aerial spray business. Hod married Delphine C. (Del) Kiedrowski and in 1951 they moved to Grafton, ND where they purchased and lived at the Grafton Municipal Airport. Together they raised 7 children, Don, Linda, Nancy, Bob, Deb, Dot, and Margie. Hod established a GI flight school, a charter service, and an aerial application business until 1970. He served 2 terms as President of the North Dakota Aviation Operators Association. In 2000 he was inducted into the ND Aviation Hall of Fame. Soon after Grafton Mayor Fred Stark and the Airport Authority renamed the airfield, Hutson Field. In 2018 he received the Wilber Wright Safety Award. Hod also worked in sales for Investors Diversified Service (IDS) and ND Farm Bureau. An active member of the Grafton Community Hod served on many boards and committees including building Grafton's first indoor ice arena, merging St. Josephs and Deaconess Hospitals and the Walsh County Bank Board. He loved sports enjoying those participated in by family, the Twins, Vikings, and Timberwolves. He was also an avid follower of the stock market until his death.

Hod is survived by his wife, Del; son, Don (Paddy); daughters, Linda Johnston (Jim), Nancy Tatum (Ken), Deb Hutson, Dot Martinson (John), and Margie Evers (Mike), grandchildren: Jason, Kevin, Brian, and Julie Johnston, Kim Tatum, Bobby Martinson, Emily and Jimmy Evers. 11 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his son, Bob; Granddaughter, Kate Tatum; infant brother, Elmer; sister, Elizabeth Hutson Drabek and nephew, Bob Drabek.

Memorials can be made to the Hospice of the Red River Valley or a community charity of your choice.

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