

308th SIGNAL WING

(Company)

ACTIVATED

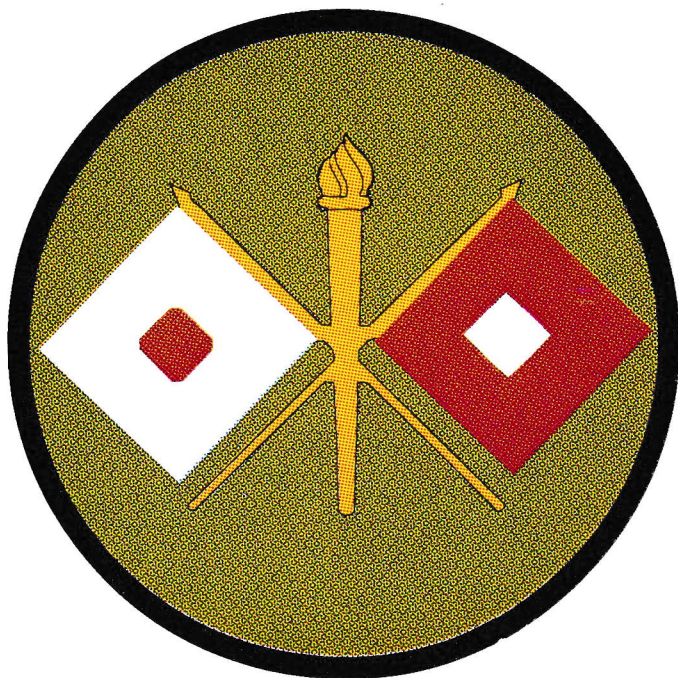
28 Julyt, 1942

ENTERED COMBAT

15 February, 1943

DEACTIVATED

August, 1945



THE ODYSSEY OF THE 308TH

from material furnished by

EDWARD BRITT and KENNETH TORGESDN

NOTE:

AFTER CONSIDERABLE SEARCHING BY ED BRITT, AND OTHERS, WE FIND THAT THE 308TH SIGNAL COMPANY, WING, WHILE IT FURNISHED COMMUNICATIONS TO THE VARIOUS COMBAT UNITS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, IT OPERATED AS A SEPARATE ENTITY AND WAS NEVER ASSIGNED OR ATTACHED TO THE 57TH BOMBARDMENT WING. THEY HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE 313TH SIGNAL COMPANY THAT HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN SOME OF THE 57TH BOMB WING'S PERIODICALS. THE 308TH HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED ON VARIOUS PLAQUES AND MONUMENTS FOR THE 57TH. THE 308TH GIVES MANY THANKS FOR OUR ADOPTING THEM.

First, this is a synopsis of the 380th's activities over three years of war.. The Company was activated at Drew Field, Florida on 28 July 1942, where they spent about four months in training for their mission and -were very briefly assigned to the 63rd Fighter Wing.

The 308th Signal Company (Wing), strictly a communications company, was sent to Egypt to assist the British 8th Army in beating the Krauts in North Africa. It was here that they made contact with the 340th Bomb Group and the 57th Fighter Group. While in Algiers they provided communications for the 22nd Air Defense Wing.

After about six weeks of being seasick, jammed into hold of a ship among other unmentionable tortures, we disembarked from the ship onto crude barges that had been sent out from shore. We were at the north end of the Red Sea.

The docks at the place amounted to no more than a few wooden loading platforms. The barracks bags were loaded on to trucks . . but not us! We hit the road with full equipment. There was no singing, and very little conversation. It was the old lift 'em up and

put 'em down. After a couple of hours of this we all agreed to hunt down and eliminate the maker, or designer, of our pack harnesses, which took a bite out of our shoulders with each step.

At a place called Heliopolis, Egypt, about ten miles from Cairo, we spent six weeks studying the British radio procedures. Then it was off to the war for the 308th.

We didn't know where we were going . . . when we would get there . . or why . . and we probably cared less as long as we were going. We finally arrived! after a torturous trip from San Francisco, California to Tripoli via Australia, India, Egypt across Libya. It had been a ---(censored)--joyride- until at last we were here in Tripoli, a city which war had stripped of its beauty. For all the publicity this old city had had, it was disproportionate. It is small, the buildings are quite small, in fact it was disappointing to us. We were glad to leave.

We had traveled by (censored) Luxury Liner, Toonerville Trolley, Six-by-Six, and the oldest means of transportation known as putting one foot in front of the other, finally by "Gooney Bird".

We had been as seasick as possible aboard the "West Point", had dysentery in Egypt, tried to pick the worms out of the stew and bread fed to us by some "Tommies" in Lybia. But at least we had survived.

From Tripoli we moved to a small village called Zavia, Libya, about ten miles from Tripoli which would be our first base of operations. Zavia was a small village of white walls and date palms. Near the center of the town, behind a large wall, were the public buildings which the Army had occupied. We bunked down in a large concrete building, while the mess hall was being set up in a former church. Transmitters and receivers were checked out. Telephone switchboard,

cryptograph machines, and a message center were organized. We were in operation at last! We were in operations for the 9th Air Force, being in contact with Benghasi, Castel Benito, Tripoli and Sfax.

As hot day after hot day went by we began to feel somewhat at home. We even adopted a puppy which the boys called "Blackout", as he was black from flea to flea. Italian prisoners were doing our KP, which was tre's bon, as far as we were concerned.

But then new orders came in. Every one was in a criss-cross of activity, . . . packing . . . loading last minute conferences and instructions. Trucks line up, assignments are given, and an arm was raised . . . good-bye to our home of only a few days.

Six of us settled down into the seats of a weapons carrier, equipment piled in a heap on the floor. Top down, shirts off, dark glasses, the cool morning breeze and the warmth of the rising sun on tan bodies, we were on our way to Tunis. Overhead we heard the approach of planes. They're ours . . . B-25s and P-40s. What a beautiful sight. They're headed for the Krauts with a few gifts.

The main road, through Gabes, Sfax and Sousse, was covered with an endless stream of trucks going in both directions. After miles of dust, cacti, palms, donkeys, camels, Arabs, vineyards, and Eucalyptus trees, we reached Tunis. It is impossible, now, to describe the smells, the filth, the sick and the hungry, the dust storms, the vast Sahara desert, the booby traps and the carnage of war.

In Tunis we were to be the inter-locking link between the different airfields and the front line troops. A huge garage, which the Germans used extensively as a repair and supply house, became our headquarters. A field with British desert tents became our barracks; it was located near Ben Arous.

The radio station went on the top of a nearby hill where three of us radio technicians had an excellent view of the countryside. Around our radio tent we found hundreds of caves blasted out of solid rock. Those Nazi nests had contained thousands of soldiers just two weeks earlier. We went exploring very,

very, carefully, avoiding stepping on or touching anything until we respectfully gave it a long distance test. Rifles, helmets, ammunition, gas masks lay abandoned. Some of it was brought back as souvenirs. There were no booby traps set in those caves, probably because of the quick surrender in this area.

While there were no German booby traps, we did learn very quickly that you never, never lay your mosquito net flat over you, as some of us did at first. Some ten million, or more, mosquitos punctured us on the face and exposed parts. We looked like a sixth grade case of chicken pox.

We finally got into operation and began those "lovely" shifts. Daytime it was hot, windy, and flies everywhere, straw in the mess kit, Atabrine, but you didn't mind all that, just the monotony. At night was the lonely darkness, sand fleas, scorpions, mosquitos and and more mosquitos. Explosions occurred at all hours and in every direction. Bullets whizzed by the tent, from where? You didn't know. Planes roar overhead constantly. Arabs slink about in the dirty hills or sit about in the dirty shacks in hunched circles.

The fourth of July 1943 came and went with just sweet memories of home. The Sirocco blew from the Sahara with heat beyond description, 100 to 140 degrees in the shadows. Any piece of metal, even in the shade became so hot that you could not handle it.

On 11 July 1943 we packed up, said good-bye to the French, and spent the next two days touring through the Atlas mountains in a convoy of British lorries, to Algiers. Late in the afternoon of the second day the lorries bounced and scratched to a stop amongst a sparse grove of dwarf cork trees and briar bushes. The Mediterranean is only a half mile away. We were at our new home in Algiers.

Because of the cork trees we called our tent village "Cork Hill." Our new camp consisted of about 25 tents pitched in a grove of cork trees. There was some scrub timber and brush. We hacked brush for about three days, set up a company street, the supply, chow, and administration tents and got organized in a short time. Oh yeah!, We set up a shower from



left l-r

RICE, BACHMAN, WHITE

below: l-r

Capt. TYLER, Lt. JACOBS,
Lt. BRITT

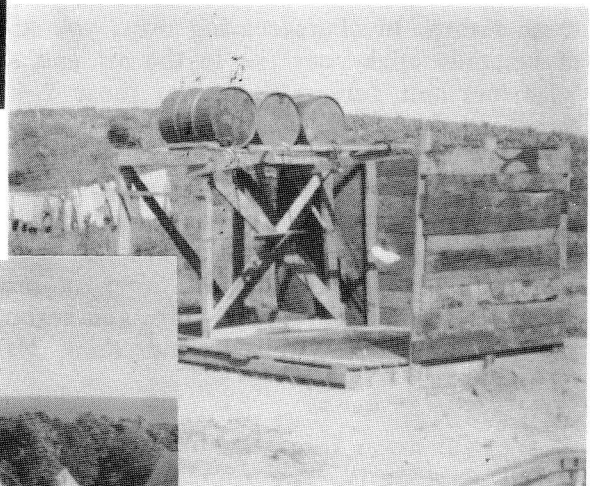
below

LAURENCE MILTON
on the switchboard at Cork Hill



below

BIVOUAC at CORK HILL, ALGERIA



above:

MODERN SHOWERS
in N. Africa

two barrels. All was a very pleasant "set-up" which if you didn't think about it was almost like home.

Then we strung the light wires for the tents, put a radio in the mess tent. A message center was put into operation with Jeep couriers to other units and airfields. Telephone switchboards were installed and the teletype and radio sections awaited further orders. From the base a few miles from the Maison Blanc airfield outside Algiers, the 308th served the 12th Air Force from July to 23 October 1943.

The 308th was then attached to the 12th Air Force and became a part of the 62nd Defense Wing guarding the coastline and the shipping in the Mediterranean. It seems funny that during a war what a small cog you are, or your company is, in the great machine that is the Army or the Air Force. Here we were, a Signal Company, so small yet so vital to the Air Group you are attached to. It was our job to keep the telephones, teletypes, message center, radio receivers and transmitters in operation at all times. We knew, that despite the small part that we were playing in the big picture, we were keeping the fly boys in the air. We had heard of the squadrons of the 57th Fighter Group, called various things . . like "Black Scorpions", "Fighting Cocks" and "Exterminators". When you see a bunch of these fighter bombers roaring over, you kind of mentally stick your fist in the air and say "give 'em hell, fellows"!! Besides those P-40s, there are the C-47s, which were such a great support for everybody, flying everything everywhere. It was fly out the wounded and fly back with a new bunch of men and supplies. There were the bigger boys, B-17s and B-25s, and the speedy P-38s giving them support. They were raising havoc with ships and harbors and bases of the Italians and their Nazi friends.

We will never forget the day our fly boys raided Pantelleria. For four days the skies were filled with our fighters and bombers. From 8 June until 11 June they flew in an endless stream roaring overhead. They kept coming and going relentlessly with no let up. Then as suddenly as they started, it ended. We heard that Pantelleria had fallen.

The invasion of Sicily began on 10 July. We heard how the Air Force had pounded the bases at Catania, Reggio Calabria, Palermo, Messina, Gerbini, and many many others.

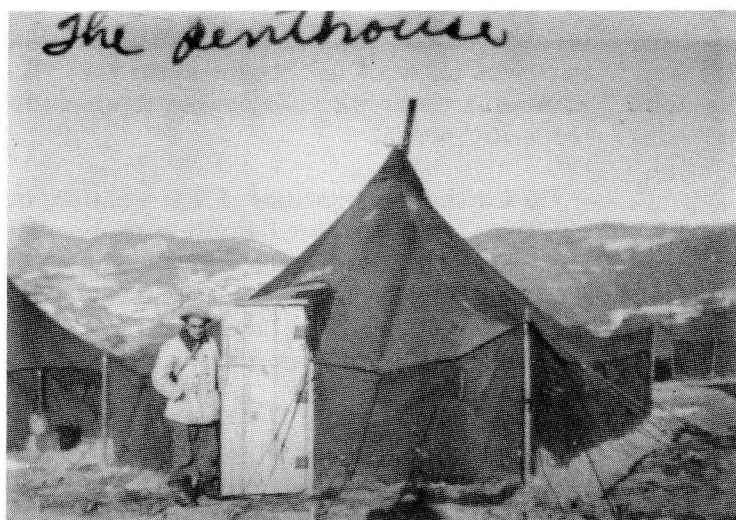
On October 21st we began our move to Bastia, Corsica. This was made possible with the fall of Sardinia on 18 September and then Corsica fell to the Rangers on 5 October. The hills of Corsica would make a better point to communicate from since the Allies were beginning to move northward.

Many of us in the 308th Signal Company, Wing, flew to Bastia on the 21st. Some of the Company went by boat through some very dangerous waters even in the harbor of Bastia. There were dozens of German mines still guarding the approaches. It was here one of the ships hit a mine which blew the ship apart with a great loss of life. War had come to the 308th!

Fifteen C-47s, with British Spitfires as cover, had taken off from Algiers, and they skimmed along close to the water. Landing at Bastia airfield was hazardous because of the many bomb craters.

We settled down to the routine of a signal company. Headquarters had moved into a stone building up from the harbor area. Here the technicians set up the teletypes, telephones, a message center, secret code division, and radio receiving areas. The cooks moved in supplies and set up their kitchens and dining area for 200 men. The telephone technicians strung cables up the mountain for about a half mile for the radio transmitters. We used a stone building, vacated by the Germans, for the high frequency transmitters. Antennas are set up high above. We are in business.

When we first made Corsica our home, the Krauts decided we needed a shakeup, so they bombed some buildings on the waterfront, then they began an attack on the 13 PT boats in the harbor. Every evening the PT boats would take off in a roar toward Italy to attack the German shipping along the coast. In the morning they would return to our harbor to rest up, refuel and get the boats in good order for the next night. One day the



left:

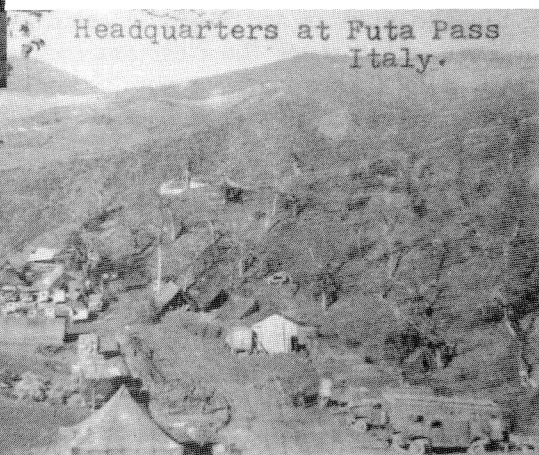
SNUG AS A BUG
Futa Pass, Italy

right:

HQ 308th SIGNAL WING
in the Apennines north of Florence, Italy

below;

1944-45 WINTER BIVOUAC
Futa Pass, Italy

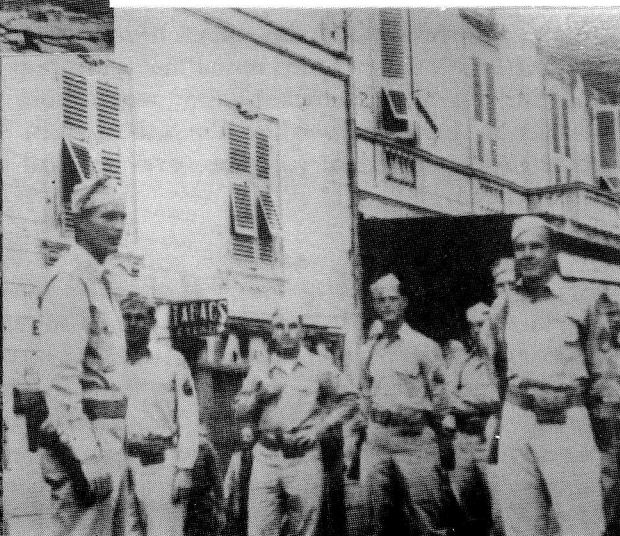


lower left:

CHOW TIME for 308th
Futa Pass, Italy

below

A LITTLE FREE TIME
On the streets of Bastia, Corsica



German dive bombers came over and tried to knock out the boats, who scurried out to sea and zig-zagged speedily as the bombs fell among them. As far as we could see nobody was hit. Like swatting a fly with your hand, somebody said.

Next door are the British signal operators, and some of the French. The British and the French are very friendly, but the "Limey" tea is syrupy with too much sugar, but we say "OK".

The guys in the radio transmitting group move into a shack the Germans had occupied. The fleas were bad, but our "sick - call" boys came to the rescue with "Kill - 'em - powder"

The diesel engineers set up a huge engine for our electrical power for our transmitters. We found that the power was also adequate for boiling eggs in a hurry.

The 308th Signal men working steady shifts "round the clock" needed time to relax and keep in shape, so basketball teams were organized and many "hot" games were played. Some chose to swim in the clear water of the Tyrrhenian, or go for long walks around Bastia, or in the countryside.

If we went swimming we had to be very cautious because of the Black Sea Urchins hidden in the grass in the shallows. They had spines about three inches long, which had to be removed by the doctor.

Stationed on Corsica with us were the French reserves called "Goumiers Marocaines". Dressed in striped army uniforms they are quite colorful. One day, next to our transmitter station, on the mountain they were playing a game of "chicken". One would hold a dollar in his fingers while the others shot it out. You guessed it! . . . one "bravado" got it in the hand.

The Red Cross was there and put on an afternoon dance for us plus the local populace. Each girl brought her family along. Music sounded Italian. Doughnuts, sandwiches coffee and cake were served. The lunch is the great part of the party for the Corsicans. Everyone seemed to smile and have a good time. White bread, especially the cake, are

luxuries there. While we were enjoying ourselves many of us thought about the "GI's" across the water who are bogged down during the "static" period.

On Corsica the activities of war went on, but not like in Italy. The fighters and bombers from Corsica roared off to defy death, drop their bomb loads, destroy planes in the air or on the ground, to blast important targets. . to do their job, and then try to get back to Corsica all in one piece.

The radio operators clicked off their coded messages twenty-four hours a day to unknown G.I. receivers where translation took place and the messages were delivered. The signal corps technicians of the company kept all phases of their work in continual night and day operation. Other troops helped in the many phases of supporting the whole effort.

The infantry, in Italy, was moving north and there were rumors in the Bomber Wing that we may be next to change our home. We had made friends with many of the Corsicans. They had treated us well. The old lady and her daughter, Rosie, who washed our clothes in the icy spring water . . the old man who, on New Years eve, took us to his basement and shared his bottles of good wine. It was with reluctance that we left this friendly island, but the fighter and bombers would be moving up to new bases. We had to be prepared to leave also.

As the fall and winter of 1944 began in the high Appenines the armies came to a halt. It was time for the 308th to move. On 3 October, 1944 the Company flew to Livorno, Italy on the west coast of Italy. From there we convoyed to Pisa along the Arno river. Here was the famous "Leaning Tower of Pisa", which we promptly climbed, and like Galileo, dropped objects to recall history of 1589.

The convoy moved on to Firenze (Florence) and then north on highway 65 into the Appenines. This is where the great armies were head to head. We went past the Gothic Line where the heavy defenses had been blasted from the air and the ground. We knew that indirectly we had had a hand in that.

Some of the transmitter group set up tents along the busy highway. To the northwest a great artillery battle was taking place. Our mess kits hanging on a rope jumped up and down with each concussion. At night the sky lit up like day, good enough so that you could read the Stars and Stripes!

In a few days, the battles subsided and we were convoyed to a high knoll where the transmitters were set up. We could look down into the valley below for at least ten miles. Small farms dotted the landscape and pines covered the mountains above us.

The 308th Company settled in a few miles back along highway 65. A small tent city began to appear. Each pyramidal held from four to six GI's. Larger tents became the "mess" and Headquarters, motor pool, supply, message center, radio room, etc. We were set for the winter, perhaps.

The rains came and trucks chewed the slippery earth into deep soupy ruts that stalled everything, at least until gravel could be brought in.

German planes came over with leaflets telling us to go home, you've lost, etc. Along the highway the Krauts flew over and dropped bombs trying to knock out the convoys. Near our transmitters, some outfit with .50 cal machine guns tried to knock down the low flying bombers. We could see the red tracers miss their targets, and the Germans got away. But our planes got mad like bumble bees, and we didn't see another Kraut overhead for a long time.

At Futa Pass, our home near highway 65, our transmitters are now in several trucks for fast movement. Our electrical supply is by motor generators on trailers. Down at the main company a large contingent of headquarters personnel, including a General had been installed not far from the 308th tent city. We heard through the grapevine that our communications would be involved also with the 22nd Tactical Air Force which would blast the Krauts with P-38s, Mustangs and others.

The GI's of the company got busy building stoves out of any available material. Grapefruit and other juice cans, and used

150mm shell casings served as chimneys. Five gallon cans became stoves. Gasoline from barrels is led into each tent by one quarter inch copper pipe.

As the rain and snow fell and the Appenine winter descended upon the 308th, men checked every nook and cranny of their tent to keep out the cold. Some built doors, doorways, wooden floors, or partial floors.

We, the transmitter crew, were next to a company of engineers at Futa Pass. They told us the heavy snow got to be a menace. Sometimes during the night the whole tent would come down from the weight of the snow, with a great "whomp", and they would have to dig their way out. They looked at our paper quonset hut with jealousy and said, "You guys got it made. How did you pull that off?"

The 308th was kept busy with the vital communications tapping out coded messages to airfields and other strategic areas. Our transmitters transferred messages through the air. The radio operators at the tent city received the coded messages which were delivered to the code room for interpretation then to the recipients at headquarters. Night and day the information flowed all over the area for hundreds of miles.

The snow began to melt in March. The wind and the rain increased, but finally spring came to the Appenines. The great armies, a few miles to the north rustled to life with a steady roar of heavy artillery. The big push began on the night of 14 April, 1945. In five days Bologna fell . . . and on 23 April the 5th Army moved into the Po valley

The 308th Signal Company prepared to move all its personnel and equipment, by convoy, to the Po valley. The trucks moved slowly at night with only slits of light emanating from the covered headlights. A large radio van missed a turn. In the morning they found Frank, the driver, sitting by his overturned truck frying Italian eggs over a bonfire. As we moved down the last foothills to the valley of the Po, we could see the great bridge span hanging useless in the water. Trucks were crossing on the pontoon bridge built by our forward engineers.

In convoy, the 308th passed through Bologna and other cities until it reached Verona, where we bivouacked. We waited and watched as the war developed around us. Thousands upon thousands of prisoners were marched by. So this was the end for Hitler's Elite?

The WAR IS OVER! . . . THE WAR IS OVER!! Some of us were moved to a rest camp west of Verona to Lake Garda where we spent a luxurious summer at a hotel. We

were in HEAVEN! Beds with white sheets . . . Meals brought by servants in white coats . . . Go sailing on Lake Garda. We drove northward toward the Brenner Pass and visit some relatives of Sergeant Gianniville of our Company. Some of the Company moved back to Florence to await orders. Finally the 308th is bivouacked in a park in the city of Florence. Orders came through --

"Prepare to convoy to Naples to board ship for the U.S. A."



THE 308th WAS NO MORE !

MEMORIES

Stories, Anecdotes and

Memories From

**Members of the 57th Bomb Wing
Association**

Editor's Note:

This section of the anniversary book consist entirely of contributions from members of the association. I have had to do some editing, but in most cases the stories are in the words of the member who went through the experience.

Some of the best stories were much too lengthy to use in this publication. It was our intention to include as many stories as possible in the allocated space. In most cases I have had to restrict stories to about two pages. It would not be fair to print a few stories of five or six pages. Too many would have been eliminated.

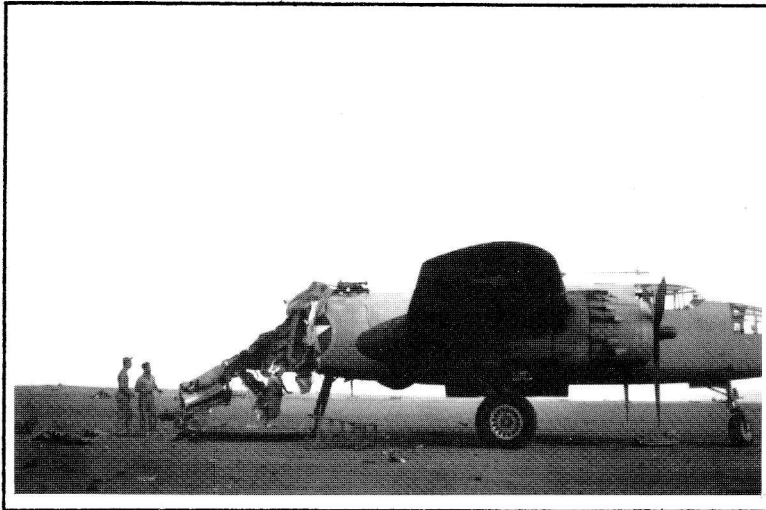
As we promised at the inception the stories that are not included in this book will be used in the quarterly "Journal". Since space is somewhat limited in that publication it may be some time before your particular story is printed. So please be patient.

OH! OH!

by
SANDFORD N. ARONECK

These are the recollections of Sanford Aroneck, pilot of "The other plane" involved in the amputation of the tail of the B-25 pictured below. The man named "Bob" mentioned is not identified.

"You may well remember it, Bob, Monday



April 26, 1943. We left Sfax at 1230 hours and were coming back from the mission where two 18 ship formations did a job on Soliman airdrome, near Tunis. A 340th ship, being badly shot up, landed cross runway (at right angles) to the active (primary) runway. I was following traffic, and saw him just a couple of seconds before crossing the intersection. I had just enough flying speed to pull up, my wheels having already touched down. My landing gear caught the 340th ship just aft of the top gun turret and tore off the entire tail.

"There I was . . . 50 to 75 feet off the ground, hanging by my earphones . . . we stalled in and completely washed out #49."

"Fortunately the only casualty was one crew member with an injured foot."

·
·
·



L.-R: Howard "Bid" Egbert, pilot; Robert J. "Moose" Sather, bomb/nav.; Harley Anderson, pilot; Nate Crane, turret gunner; kneeling: "Mickey Swartz, radio.

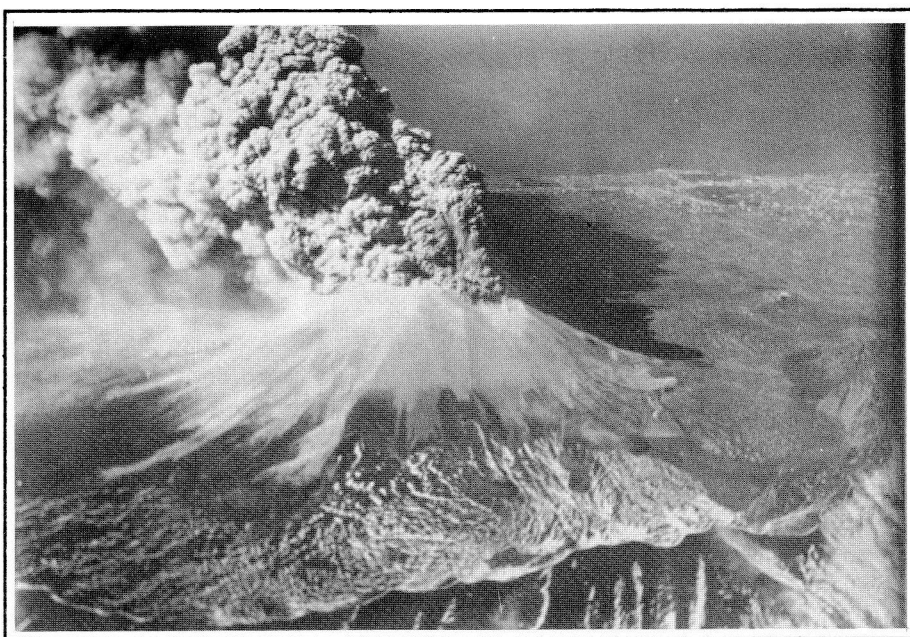
(note: This photo was take the night before a mission on which they were shot down. Harley Anderson was killed and they buried him on the island of Lampedusa.

VESUVIUS BLOWS HER TOP

by
James Cooper 340th Chaplain

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 splendor and 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 horsedrawn carriage . . . with 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 wisps 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 an 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 assess 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 a volcano of indeterminate length raging above us, 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 losses in material and usefulness (for 4 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!





OPERATION DRY BEEF

by

Dino A. Brugione 446th

When one thinks about how battleships were sunk during World War II, tremendous endeavours and heroic feats come to mind, such as . . . the maximum effort put forth by the British in tracking and destroying the BISMARK . . . the audacious attack by the Japanese on Battleship Row at Pearl Harbor . . . The death of the Yamomoto from the merciless attack by U.S. Navy aircraft off Okinawa in April 1945.

Yet, virtually unnoticed in history, equal skill and daring of a B-25 Group resulted in the loss to the Axis, of a battleship, a cruiser, and a submarine in the south of France on 18 August 1944.

I was assigned to the 321st Bomb Group, (M), 57th Bomb Wing, 12th Air Force stationed at Solenzara, Corsica. at the time, and took part in that raid.

It was no accident that the 321st was called upon to perform that mission. The Group had the best bombing accuracy in the Mediterranean theater, placing more than 90% of all its bombs within the designated target area. Bombing precision in those days was computed on the basis of an imaginary circle that covered an area 600 feet in radius drawn from the ends of the target objective.

The group had flown more than 500 missions and was highly regarded for its excellent formation flying. The 321st frequently was chosen to demonstrate these skills for visiting dignitaries. But it was the accuracy of our pin-point bombing, the bridge-busting, the command post hits, the runways cratered, rail yards leveled, and the close support of the ground troops in Italy that won the praise of those who inspected the aerial photos of our raids.

Preparations for the invasion of Southern France were well underway following the

invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944. There was one unknown, however. In the harbor of Toulon, protected by eighty-two heavy anti-aircraft guns, were the remnants of the old French Navy that constituted a considerable threat to the Allied fleet and invasion forces. French seamanship was well regarded by Allied naval commanders. During the invasion of North Africa, the battleship Jean Bart, with just one of her turrets operational, still sought to challenge the Allied forces. She fought with great gallantry against overwhelming odds.

On 17 August, the third day of the invasion of Southern France, aerial reconnaissance revealed the French warships: "STRASBOURG", a battleship; a cruiser, "LA GALISSONNIERE"; a LaHarve Class destroyer; and a submarine had been repositioned in the harbor. Their firepower was a threat to the Allied forces nearby.

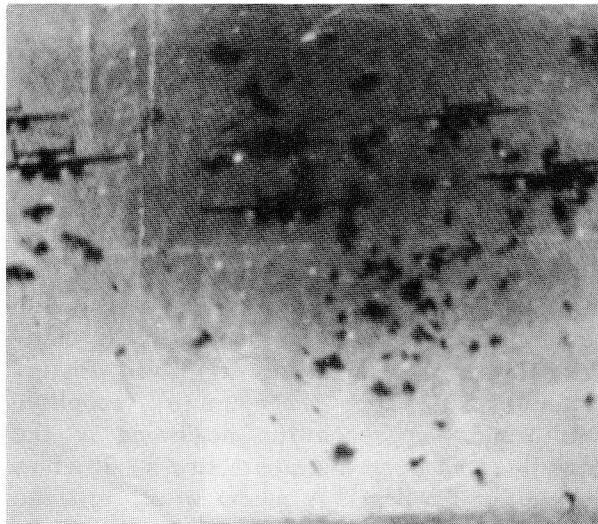
In the evening we often gathered along the road leading from the bomb depot to see what type of bombs were being dollied to the airfield. This gave us a good idea as to the mission we would be flying the next day. On the evening of 17 August we saw 1,000 general purpose bombs being trundled to the airfield. We knew that the next day's mission would be an interesting one.

The following morning we were briefed on Mission No. 489, code named "DRYBEEF". The order was to "neutralize the firepower of the heavy naval units at Toulon at all costs." We were briefed on the threat posed by those naval units; about the anti-aircraft defenses; and informed that the weather would be CAVU, but there was bad weather all around Corsica.

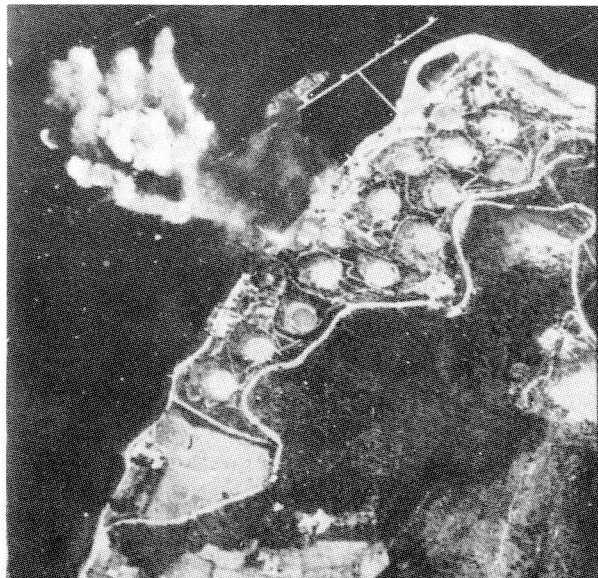
We took off at 1300 hours, assembled at 1326, and began our flight to the target at 13,000 feet. At that altitude our formation of thirty-six B-25's was extremely

vulnerable to the heavy AA guns defending the harbor.

Although "window" was used on the bomb run to mislead defensive radar, the flak was



extremely intense, both barrage and tracking, on the bomb run and the break away. By the time we had cleared, eleven men had been wounded, and twenty-seven of the B-25's had at least some damage.



"Bombs away" came at 1246 hours, and the pattern was an excellent one. There were eight direct hits on the STRASBOURGH'S, deck igniting fires. A near miss opened a large hole below the waterline, and she listed to port with her decks awash. The submarine was sunk, keeling over on its side causing the ship to list to starboard and settle to the bottom. The cruiser was also hit

The destroyer had departed prior to the arrival of the B-25's.

On our return from the target, we were required to pass over the invasion fleet. Heavy squalls forced us to descend below 1,000 feet, with the risk of being fired on by mistake. So we used our flare guns, and emergency radio channels to inform the fleet of our predicament. Because of the wounded airmen, and aircraft damage the Group dispersed to land at three separate fields.

The mission was later rated as one of the most destructive ever carried out by a group of medium bombers. The 321st Group was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for



what was described as extraordinary heroism and proficiency that was demonstrated during the attack."

The next day, we were back out "bridge-busting" for the Seventh Army who was moving inland from the beaches, and on up into the Rhone valley of Southern France.

THE 310th GOES ON THE PILL

by

Frank B. Dean 380

Those of us who were in the 310th Bomb group during the early part of the North African Campaign, had been graced with a chronic shortage of the "good things" and a shortage of the "bad".

Lack of creature comforts, pup tents shelters, food shortages, rain, mud, ice, snow, freezing weather, lack of heat, inadequate fuel trucks, enemy dominated skies, air raid scares, paratrooper alerts, nightly guard duty, acute homesickness, lack of bathing facilities were just some of the "bad".

By the end of February, 1943, more of our B-25s arrived at Berteaux, Algeria, from England and increased our mission capability, work load, minor injuries and body odors.

By March, increased mission quantity and effectiveness had hurt the enemy but the price had been heavy. We had flown 52 mission and lost 13 aircraft to enemy action. This was the "bad, sad, part."

While most of our discomforts, during this period, were due to poor planning, inadequate transportation, and enemy action. None until now had been deliberately induced by our own people, "for your own good".

In March, 1943, the 310th "went on the pill". It was a small, round, yellow pill that was difficult to swallow. It was atabrin, 310th pronunciation "atta-brine".

The medical department had warned us that the spring would bring mosquitos and malaria, and that preventative measures would be taken. Having spent my childhood in the low delta lands of Arkansas, I was acutely aware of malaria and the resultant fevers and chills that sent one to bed freezing to death one minute and burning up the next. I had taken quinine capsules by the hundred. It was nothing new to me.

We were informed that the normal supply of the cinchona tree bark that produced the bitter quinine was now under the control of the Japanese, and in short supply. This new chemical derivative was to be its replacement. Most of us had never heard of it.

The pills had been handed out at the evening meal. Because of the bitterness, many had thrown them away. The doctors countered with the "open mouth" reception. One would approach the beginning of the chow line and open his mouth like a baby bird waiting for a worm. A medic would toss the pill to the back of the throat so it would be swallowed. I feared the malaria more than the atabrin so I downed it, as required.

Though the pill was designed to prevent malaria, its side effects was a delayed cathartic action. It started in the early morning with a cramping in the stomach that dragged me from the relative warmth of my blankets, into the cold night. It rushed me to our primitive slit trench latrine. There I would join Conrad, or George, or would meet them coming, or going on our pilgrimages from tent to slit trench and return. This same narrative was being played between other holes at other airplanes.

In the morning we would join practically the entire camp waiting at the door of the medical dispensary, seeking relief. Those waiting would stand "cross legged" in a long line whose occupants disappeared into the dispensary or gave up their place to make required, high speed, runs to the nearest slit trench.

Inside, harassed and busy medics dispensed spoonfulls of liquids or large white pills to soldiers who wanted instant medical miracles. It was not to be.

Effects of the disastrous "Atibrin Trots" was evidenced during the day by men in various

The "hard-to-remove" coverall gave way to wool or khaki pants that offered quicker access in cases of emergency situations. Poor planning or fumbling fingers at fly buttons caused cold bath water to be carried from distant headquarters for a bath that had not been pre-planned.

Even more to be pitied were those who made long sea sweeps over the Mediterranean or flew to some Tunisian target. They were confined to an aircraft that required the removal of a parachute harness and a long crawl over the top of the bomb bay to reach the chemical toilet that was located in the rear of the fuselage.

NOTE: Below is a translation of the message on the pamphlet, shown at right. Thousands were dropped among the Italian soldiers during the latter part of the North African campaign

" The last hour of battle has sounded . . . It is now necessary to choose between life or death. The British Eighth Army has broken Rommel's line in the south of Tunisia. The British forces have joined with the Americans. Now they are advancing together. Other powerful allied forces are progressing in the southern and central sectors of the front. Each day more than 1,000 allied planes darken the skies of Tunisia. Each day you and the Germans are being machined gunned. Night and day, the troops and armored cars of the Axis are stricken with fatigue. Night and day, the streets that lead to the north are being bombarded. The Germans are in full retreat. They are trying desperately to arrive at the southern ports. As usual they are abandoning the Italian soldiers, to cover their retreat. Once more you have been betrayed! You know better than we do. Do you want to escape from this hell? There is only one way out. Come to us, and the war for you will be finished. Take this pamphlet to the American and English lines. It will not be considered surrendering on your part, but just as an indication that good sense and wisdom are instinctive qualities of the Italian people. The pamphlet will insure safe conduct. If by any chance it is not possible to bring it with you, come anyway. You will be welcomed as a brother."

On some occasions "call to surrender leaflets" were dropped along with the bombs. We always suspected that the Germans and Italians used the leaflets more for toilet paper than to wave as a surrender flag.

Though history has been silent on this subject, it is not unreasonable to guess that, under these circumstances, the enemy did find a few second-hand leaflets in his paper supply.

However, I am not aware that they ever lodged an official complaint.

L'ULTIMA ORA DELLA BATTAGLIA È SUONATA ... Bisogna scegliere ormai tra **LA VITA** **o** **LA MORTE**

L'ottava armata britannica ha spezzato le linee di Rommel, nel Sud della Tunisia.

Le forze britanniche si sono congiunte con quelle americane. — Adesso, avanzano insieme. Altre potenti forze alleate progrediscono nei settori settentrionali e centrali del fronte.

Ogni giorno, più di 1,000 aeroplani alleati oscurano il cielo di Tunisia.

Ogni giorno, voi ed i Tedeschi siete mitragliati.

Notte e giorno, le truppe, i carri armati, le autoblindate dell'Asse sono senza tregua colpite.

Notte e giorno, le strade che portano al Nord sono bersagliate. I Tedeschi sono in piena ritirata. Essi si sforzano disperatamente di raggiungere i porti settentrionali.

Come al solito, abbandonano i soldati italiani, per coprire la loro ritirata.

**ANCORA UNA VOLTA SIETE STATI TRADITI !
LO SAPETE MEGLIO DI NOI.
VOLETE SFUGGIRE A QUESTO INFERNO ?
VI È UNA SOLA VIA DI SCAMPO.**

Venite da noi, e la guerra per voi sarà finita.

Portate questo manifestino nelle linee americane ed inglesi : ciò sarà considerato non come la resa da parte vostra, ma come il frutto che il buon senso e la saggezza sono le qualità istintive del popolo italiano.

Questo manifestino è un salvacondotto. Se, per caso, non vi sarà possibile portarlo con voi, venite egualmente : sarete accolti lo stesso in modo fraterno.

How About a Tune?

from material furnished by
Robert Zulauff, 381, Edward Bugbee 487
Paul Peck 447

The urge to have fun . . . dancing . . . good old American music fills the soul of every red blooded soldier. The Special Services Officers in each group was well aware of that urge. So it was only a matter of time, at least in Corsica, before all of the Groups organized a band. In fact some were even organized at the squadron level.

But the presence of an organized musical organization was not necessary for some of the guys to make a little music, harmonizing was very popular too. Sometimes this took place in the shower . . . sometimes in the EM Club or O' Club. All it took was one guy to start humming a tune, and presto, other voices began joining in.. I will have to admit that sometimes it sounded more like a bunch of kids and less like Barber Shoppers, but it was fun.

Bob Zulauff (381) tells about some of the trouble that was encountered in locating instruments and people to play them. Here is his story, . . .

"About a month after I arrived in Ghisonaccia Captain Fisher. 310th Special Services Officer announced that a dance band would be organized. The plan was to locate musicians from among the flying and ground personnel to make up a band that could play for dances, and to entertain the Group.

"From its inception, I was very involved in getting this band organized. I worked with Captain Fisher in locating the necessary instruments, music, music stands and sound equipment. I recall that I searched for instruments in Naples, Rome and Bastia. In a letter to my wife I told her about finding a trumpet in Bastia. That story is worth telling here. . .

"I stopped in at the Red Cross Club to inquire about a trumpet. I really didn't expect to find one, but I did locate an old relic in a kitchen cabinet at the enlisted men's club. This horn had an enormous bell, a real monstrosity made in Italy. I had fun playing a few melodies on that horn while all of the kitchen help (old women and children gathered around. They especially like the "Beer Barrel Polka". I was allowed to check out the horn for an indefinite time. There was no case for

it so I carried it in an old sugar sack.

"About 4 pm I left Bastia to return to Ghisonaccia. I rode part way with a Lieutenant that I had met in town. There was very little traffic on the road and I thought that I would never get back to the base. Soon it became dark and there I was stranded alongside of the road with two other guys. It was cold, so we built a fire and waited for a ride. Moral was low . . . we all felt that we were stuck on this lonely road all night. I pulled the trumpet out of the bag and began playing 'Tuxedo Junction', 'I'll get by' and 'Stardust'. That seemed to cheer us all up.

"Well, after riding in all kinds of trucks and Jeeps I finally managed to reach a point about two miles from base, so I walked the rest of the way."

That story gives us an idea how much trouble that some endured to give a little music to the guys.

Ed Bugbee wrote and told about the start of the 487th Squadron Band

"The 487th Squadron Band started in August 1944 at the urging of Special Services S/Sgt. Francis Bains and Major Edwin Bugbee (who had a band prior to his entering service). Seven members with old instruments started practicing without much quality at first, but with lots of enthusiasm. By early October we had some better instruments and additional talent from other squadrons. We finally had the "Big Band 16 pieces."

"We opened at the Enlisted Men's Club in mid-October, followed by opening, the next night, at the 487th Officers Club. It was a very busy schedule from then on with performances at many of the clubs of the 340th Group, and then in the clubs of other 57th Wing groups and Wing headquarters.

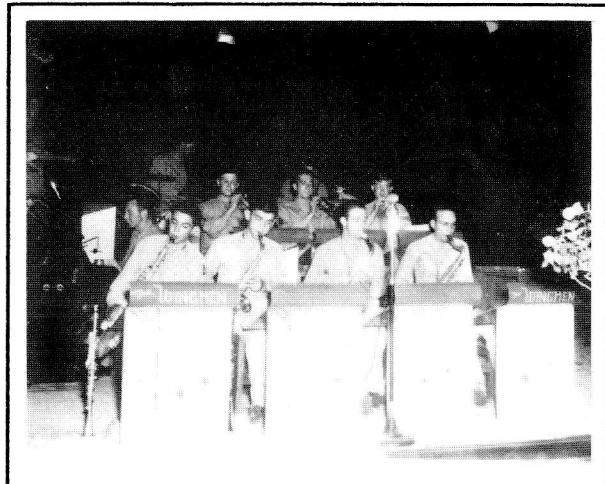
"A couple of memorable performance were at the luxury hotel at I'lle Rouse. We had more engagements than we could handle up and down the eastern Corsican coast. The band belted out, with gusto, 'In The Mood'. . 'Strings of Pearls' . . 'One O'Clock Jump' and the all out favorite when we put down the instruments and sang? - shouted? - or yelled? 'Pennsylvania 6-5000'. That always was good for three or four requests on any given night.

"The Skyliners, as we were known, had a short and successful career finishing at Radio

Rome to play and record. Every member of the band did a great job. As we left Corsica early in the spring of 1945 the band members dispersed, and the Band phased out."

The 321st Band was organized by Captain "Doc" Smith, 445th Flight Surgeon. This band

entertained under the name "Mitchellaires". As with the other bands the Mitchellaires were made up of members of the various squadrons in the 321st Group. Without a doubt they probable scrounged instruments and equipment with the same enthusiasm as did the others.



Above:

**THE
"WINGMEN"**
The 57th Bomb Wing
Band



above

**THE
"MITCHELLAIRES"**
321st Bomb Group
Band

below:

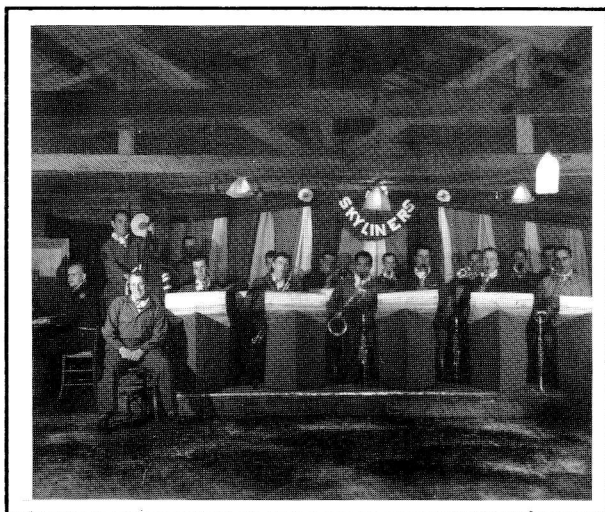
**"THE
SKYLINERS"**
The 487th Squadron
Band

left:

487th EM Club dance
floor (Riccione, Italy)

below:

A bit of harmonizing
447th Sqn. Officers Club
Faconera, Italy



DURING EARLY OPERATIONS

submitted by

ESTHER OYSTER Historian 319th Bomb Group

Incredible as it may seem the following statement appeared on the 319th Bomb Group. Mission Report #1 "For future missions the bombardiers would like to have altimeter settings and the altitude of the target."

Rushed into combat with a new aircraft straight from the drawing board, the combat crews had to evolve their own bombing techniques. True, the B-26 had seen service in the Pacific and Alaska, but for some reason bombing procedures did not filter through from one theater to another.

Things were rough in those early days as is revealed in Mission Report #3: "In case of a damaged hydraulic system while the bomb bay doors were open, a manual device is needed to close the bomb bay doors."

As to repeat performances, Mission Report #4 suggests: "Crew members feel the time over targets in the future should be varied from 1100 hours, as the enemy seems to anticipate this timing. Altitude should be varied also."

Crews received very little information about the target during briefing. Comments on the subject are revealed on Mission Report #7:

1. Pilots would like to have photographs of targets, as this would greatly facilitate identification and make for a proper bomb run.

2. Only two target charts of Sousse Harbor are available for this mission; crews are anxious to have charts for each plane.

3. The change in bombing altitude (900 to 1200 feet) provided a surprise and believed to be generally effective. Flak was late in being sent up.

Efforts to put more aircraft over target by combining B-26 with the B-25s in the area prompted this comment in Report #9: "The

crews of both the B-25s and B-26s feel strongly that neither a/c can operate to the best advantage jointly with the other...The B-25 crews prefer to bomb at altitudes ranging from 6000-8000 feet."

Whereas this bombing was done at 800-1200 feet. Although altitude had been varied, apparently timing had not been: "There was no surprise element in the raid. Flak was intense even before the bombing runs were made. Crew members believe that the practice of scheduling missions for approximately the same time each day have contributed to the lack of surprise. The accuracy and intensity of the flak is indicated by the fact that four of our bombers which returned to this base (six were sent out) were hit from three to ten times each."

Without supplies the ground crews became quite ingenious at patching holes.

After the 14 January 1943 mission this comment appears:

1. "At 7000 feet it was difficult to distinguish the difference between a road and a railroad Mahares, cameras would be useful for observation.

- 2: "The D-8 sight at 7,000 is not accurate." and is not suitable for precision bombing."

On 13 February, bombing the El Aouina airdrome from 10,000 feet, the Norden was used. There were five B-26s on the mission, and they were attacked by 20-30 enemy fighters which shot down two. It was at this point when the 319th was pulled out of combat for regrouping.

When the Group went back into combat on 5 June, after reorganization, Aircraft were being equipped with the K-20 camera seven photographs were taken by two cameras., On 11 June the first photo analysis was made.



it is not difficult to understand the problem that crews of the 319th Bomb Group and 12th Bomb Group had in identification of their targets. The above photo is graphic in detail but shows very little contrast between the sand of the desert and the road way. A road bridge would be very difficult to pin-point especially from a higher altitude. At low level reaction time would be limited.

A DEEPLY ETCHED MEMORY

by

GLENN BLACK 381

February 8, 1944 may not have been a memorable date for the world generally, but it was the last day on earth for the crew containing my good friend, Bill Callery.

Naviagtors didn't fare well on my crew. The first one assigned to me at Greenville, South Carolina was a prince of a fellow, but he got air sick in turbulence and was transfered to B-17s. Taking his place was Robert Butler (who liked to be called "Rhett Butler") who flew with us until shortly before we went overseas in the fall of '43. On the day he got married, (the second time to the same woman), he was injured seriously in an auto accident. The last I saw of him was in the base hospital. Bill Callery had been serving as a navigator instructor. He volunteered to be our navigator and left the States with us.

In North Africa we spent some time in Telergma, then in Phillipville practicing for low altitude missions. Bill had quite a bit of stick time in B-25's in the States. Several times he flew as my co-pilot while we were flying out of those two places. We hunted wild boar and did a number of things together. I was 19, I think that he was 26 or 27 but the age difference didn't seem to matter. I was a Protestant, and he was a faithful Roman Catholic, and our moral standards were rather similar. In short, we got along very well together, and I considered him to be my best friend in the outfit.

Late in January 1944 we moved to Corsica. On my first mission I flew one of the two B-25H's our group had at that time (serial# 42-4231). These two had no co-pilot's seats or controls. I led the second element of two in our flight of four. Since only the flight leader had a navigator Bill did not fly with me. On my second mission I flew as a wingman on a medium altitude mission, so again Bill didn't fly with me. On my third mission Bill was to fly his first mission, a

navigator for the flight leader, 1st Lt. Dorman, who was flying the other "H" (serial # 42-4223). Again I was to lead the second element of the flight of four. A second flight of four was led by Flight Officer James L. Peplinski. With Dorman was a fighter pilot, Gen. Graves, who went along to see what our missions were like. Our target was shipping in San Stefano Harbor.

We attacked in our two ship elements, Dorman and his wingman leading, and I with my wingman some distance behind them. Soon I was concious of Dorman's turning to the left with his plane blazing fiercely, the fire apparently originating in the navigator's compartment. I would hold my plane steady to aim and fire the 75mm cannon, then do evasive action while my engineer, Pete Cardimino, would reload the cannon. While doing evasive action I would watch Dorman's progress. He completed a 180 degree turn and headed away from the target, evidently under good control. One time as I looked at him, before firing the cannon, he appeared to be about 50 feet in the air flying straight and level. Next when I looked back he had just hit the water, evidently at very high speed. All I saw was black specks of the broken up airplane in white foam. That was the last that I saw of the plane and the crew.

When I got out of our plane back at Ghisonaccia, I was met by both our group and squadron C.O.'s, if I remember correctly. I told them that I didn't believe that anyone on that airplane had survived. Did they have to answer to higher authorities for allowing General Graves to go on that mission? I don't know.

Later our C.O. asked my opinion. Rumor had it that shortly before Dorman crashed his wingman had seen the General attempting to pull Dorman's body up and back from the controls, over which he had just slumped. It was theorized that a more

successful ditching might have been accomplished if there had been a co-pilot's seat and controls. I was asked if I thought that the remaining "H" should be removed from combat flying. I liked the "H". It had a cannon weighing only a little more than half as much as those in the "G's". It was much better balanced than the "G". There was power boost on the controls which made it more responsive. It was a pleasure to fly it. I expressed the opinion, however, that it would be better to take it off combat flying, and it was done.

We flew a few more low altitude missions, attacking ships that were not in

harbors where shore based anti-aircraft could join the guns on the ships seeking to ward us off. Not long after 8, February we ceased the low altitude sea sweep missions and hit all of our targets from medium altitudes. The cannon carrying "G's" flew on the wings of the "C's" and "D's", releasing their bombs as they saw the bombs drop from the element of flight leader's plane. I expect that ultimately they were all replaced by "J's".

One mission.... One crew...

One deeply etched memory.



FIRST TIME OUT

by

R.M. JOHNSON 488

The intercom blurted out loud in my ears. Almost screaming, the voice, running all the words together, yelled, "FLACK LEVEL NINE O'CLOCK!" Before I could jerk my head around to look past the pilot and out his window, to see my first burst of enemy fire, we were in a verticle bank to the left and going downhill. The lead ship was pulling away when I heard a sharp crack of flak on my right. In that blurred instant the pilot yelled something that was lost in the din of roaring engines.....But, I'm ahead of my story!

That day I was a lowly Flight Officer, having been forced to take the promotion to F/O, or continue as Sgt./Pilot and go fly gliders with the foot sloggers. Back in Walterboro, S.C., when they gave us Flying Sergeants the choice, the 488th Bomb Squadron was poised to launch for an unknown destination outside CONUS. Departure date was just a few days away. There had been no time to find and tranfer to a single engine outfit. It had to be now! As a qualified 1st pilot, IP, with an instrument card and high time in type, there was no way I wanted to keep those three stripes and rocker, and haul a bunch of dough-feet through endless nights, shooting nothing by engine out landings, for the duration plus six. I gave up my hard earned stripes and took the non-rank of F/O.

So now there I was in the right seat ten thousand above Wadi Acarit, with Rommel's Afrika Corps down below and a hard bitten old Captain as my pilot, who probably had forty-five missions, and was as "flak happy" as they come.

I had arrived the day before at this sand strip twenty-five miles west of Tripoli. I had been one of the first two pilots sent up to fly with the 12th Bomb Group to get some combat experience. Not having the faintest idea of what it was all about, I was an original of the innocents abroad.

The strip was at a place called El Assa. The name was a perfect description of where to give the western desert an enema. It was endless sand, sand dunes, sand runway, sand storms and blowing dust with a constant temperature of one hundred twenty degrees.

At the briefing that morning we had been given a nodding introduction to the squadron, as if we were expendable 88mm fodder that wouldn't be around long. With a casual finger point during briefing, the pilot that I was to fly with was pointed out. He looked indifferent. At the Hack time. I walked to my pilot to introduce myself. As I remember, all he said was "Humph!" That translated out to "Look what th' hell they're givin' me...Christ!...A damn junior birdman with home made bars ... Th' bottom o' th' barrell!" In those days no one was sure what F/O bars were supposed to look like. You couldn't buy them, so you made your own.

The dusty, truck ride out to the aircraft was hot and very quiet. It seemed unusual that everyone was so quiet and deep in thought. This I would understand months later. As each crew jumped off the truck at it's aircraft the shouted comments were subdued. Not like the spirit we had in the 488th.

At our plane the pilot did a casual walk around which consisted of urinating on the nose wheel. I heard later that that was for luck. I did a more thorough walk around, and was not too certain that this old, scarred and patched bird was up to snuff for we were about to go into harm's way. From what was said at briefing, harm's was consisted of the 15th Panzer's flak.

When the double green flare shot up from the operations tent and was lost in the waving mirage across the runway, we saddled up and quietly got on board Without a word to me the Captain started the engines. In a cloud of pink dust blowing away from the runway, we

silently sat, sweltered and waiting for something of which I wasn't aware. When the pilot kicked the brakes off, I saw another green flare arching down into the mirage. We were quickly turning to taxi parallel to the wind toward some stacked barrels that, I was to learn later, marked the end of the runway.

"Wheels!" It was the pilots's order for "wheels up" as we broke ground. His last comment had been a talkative "Humph!"

We leveled off at two hundred feet and slid into the number two slot as the lead made a slow 360 degree turn to the left. With the first box in tight formation, low to hide our own shadows, we buzzed across the strip. Minutes later we were slanting up into a maximum climb, clawing for altitude.

At ten thousand feet the Captain pushed over, holding tight formation on the lead, as he throttled back slightly. Feeling like unnecessary baggage, I was trying to watch what was going on with our aircraft, and the tank battle on the ground below. Next we were diving and breaking right when the lead jerked violently level at ninety five hundred feet. I thought, "This must be what they call evasive action!" It turned out to be mild by comparison!

The intercom startled me out of my confusion,

"FIGHTER! FOUR O'CLOCK..."

The voice added, "High!" It was almost whispered as if the fighters would hear.

Another voice assured, "P-40's!" and was blotted out by a voice running it all together in one word,

"FLAK LEVEL NINE O'CLOCK!"

The lead ship whipped into a verticle left bank and started downhill. The Captain slammed us over and jammed the throttles to the firewall. I watched the lead ship pull ahead. Instantly there was a sharp crack of

what I thought was flak. With it came the sound of pebbles splattering across the right side of the ship.

In that racing, mad mayhem, the pilot yelled something that was lost in the din of the screaming engines,

"WHAT?", I yelled back.

"HIGHBLOWER!!" he bellowed.

His eyes glued to the lead. I grabbed a handful of throttles and started pulling back power to 1000 rpm, just like the "Dash One" says. Instantly he damn near broke both my wrists as he karate-chopped my hands off the throttles. In the same sweep he banged both the throttles forward against the stops, and slammed both engines into high blower!

The engines chocked, gasped for a second, then, with a massive, explosive belch, burst into a banshee wail that I had never heard before. Before I could realize what was going on, the lead ship had snapped out of the turn level at nine-thousand feet as his bomb bay doors popped open. My pilot frantically jerked both engines out of high blower and chopped his throttles as he fish tailed into position on the lead ship for a fifteen second bomb run.

As the lead dumped his bombs, the intercom whooped,

"BOMBS AWAY",

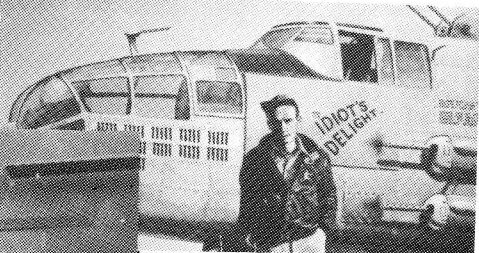
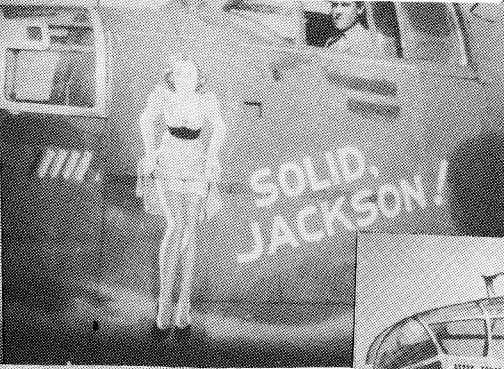
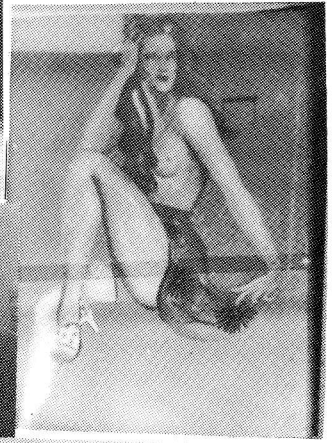
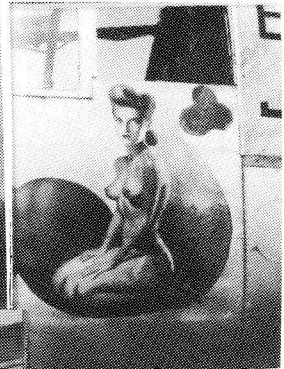
and we were again in a vertical bank to the left when the bomb bay doors banged shut. Like scared rabbits, we were diving at top speed back across the bomb line.

The return and landing was in silence. The pilot didn't say another word. My first combat mission had taken only twenty hair-raising minutes. I had sat there, useless, but I did make a resolution.....

**NEVER WOULD I DO THAT TO MY
ENGINES!**

Just a few of the GIRLS





THE "MOUSE" AND ME

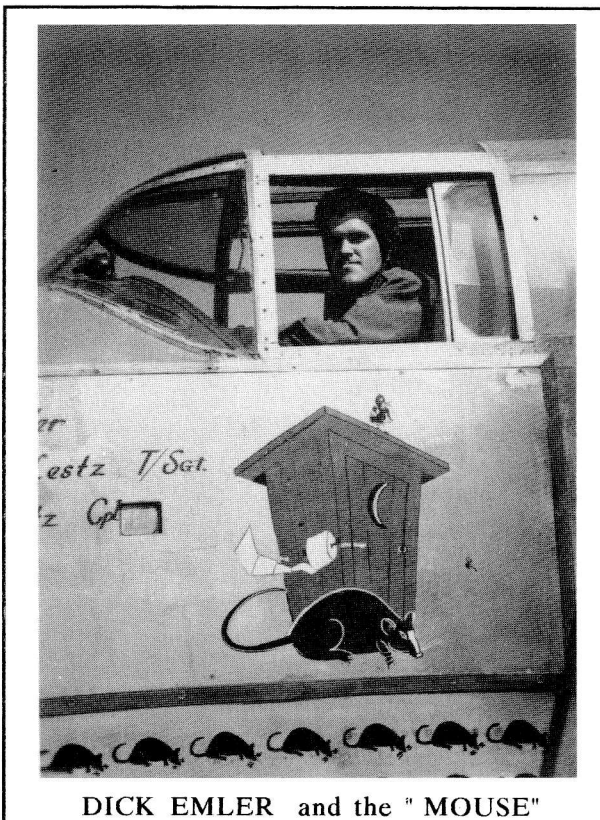
by

Richard Emler 445

Little did I know what the fates had in store for me when I arrived at the 445th in August 1944, as co-pilot for Max Poteete on our flight from the States.

My first mission was on 4 September 1944, flying as co-pilot for E. P. McLaughlin. The target was a bridge at Pavia, an easy one. My introduction to flak was on 10 September . . the target a bridge at Naizzano, and I was flying co-pilot for John Richardson.

On 3 October, again flying with E.P. McLaughlin, we went to Galliati. This turned out to be "flak city" for the day. I believe this is where the lead plane was disabled and the 445th temporarily lost Danny Gahindo and L. Russell. Our engineer sustained a bad leg wound. While he was under going emergency treatment I was petrified at the sight of blood.



DICK EMLER and the "MOUSE"

On and on, through other missions as co-pilot for Kendall, Poteete, McKay, Placve, Monger, Weld and so on. In mid-November, 1944 I was assigned to the left seat and the "Out House Mouse". This, for me, was a time for rejoicing . . my own airplane !! To the best of my knowledge I was the third pilot to fly the "Mouse" in combat. I felt that if the other two who preceded me were fortunate to survive, perhaps I could too!

So, up and away to places like Padua (where it was reported that 5 FW-190's made one pass), Crema, Torroborreti, Faenza, and of course the Brenner Pass. During these missions Lady Luck seemed to be smiling on the "Mouse", and crew. Despite the repeated exposure to flak the "Mouse" sustained no hits. Then came Rovereto on December 29, and the rail bridge there.

We had safely negotiated the final run and "bombs away", despite the very intense fire from the German 88's and 105's. As we were peeling off the target the "Mouse" was caught in a very near-miss, apparently from one flak battery. She lost part of the windshield (egads, mine!!) and sustained other hits, fortunately none of which were crippling. After our safe landing, back on Corsica, Sid Lestz and I counted the holes, 37 in all; the "Mouse" had come through once again. None of the crew sustained a wound. I still have a piece of the flak.

We returned to Rovereto again on about 4 January; the rail bridge again. On this trip the "Mouse" was in number two slot of a flight aimed at hitting the flak batteries. Hopefully we could eliminate them and reduce the flak on the flight headed for the bridge. On our final run the flak took out the lead plane. I immediately intercommed my bomb dropper/gunner, Sgt. Robert D. Knapp, to salvo! I felt the load go and we vacated the premises quickly, sort of like "got the hell out of there."



L-R: Sidney Lestz, crew chief
Warren T. Kurtz, engineer

We spotted six 'chutes come out of the stricken aircraft, and we all felt that the crew had a fighting chance. We later learned that the pilot, Hughes, and the co-pilot, Crutchfield were shot by the Germans after they landed. Crutchfield had worn his Texas boots, and broke his ankles on touch-down. Hughs was seen to assist him and both were shot. This was reported by the Partisans. I can verify the wearing of the boots by Crutchfield, because he "tented" with me, along with Donald McKay and Lee Hutchingson.

The Partisans also reported there had been a great deal of damage inflicted on the Flak Batteries. This led me to believe that my timing of "Salvo", and the ready thumb of Sgt. Knapp was a blessing again. Once more the "Mouse" served us well; despite the intense flak we sustained no holes.

The "Mouse" and crew flew on to targets, such as Caliano where we collected a few holes; Crema, which was a "Milk Run", and

back to the Brenner many times visiting Bolzano, Campo, Lavis, San Michelle, La Cave. The "Mouse" even went as far as Muhlburg, Austria.

Following the move to the eastern side of Italy the "Mouse" continued taking care of the crew despite the defenses at places like Longastrone, Lake Commancio, San Ambrogio and Bologna.

The "Mouse" and our crew were extremely fortunate that she was never damaged to a point where it required more than a week to repair. The "Mouse" and I flew together for the last time on my final mission number 70, on 19 April 1945. Even though I had some regrets about no longer being physically associated with the "Mouse", crew chief, Sid Lestz and his assistant William Kurtz, I sure as hell did not volunteer to stay in the left seat.

If I remember correctly, and I don't always due to "old-timer's disease", the "Mouse" was taken over by Rudy Rice, who had flown with me as co-pilot on a number of missions.

My original feelings about this grand old airplane were realized; the "Mouse" had been a very lucky airplane, and "took care" of those who took her into battle.



"MOUSE CELEBRATES HER 100th MISSION
Dick Emler, standing 2nd from left, and Sid Listz on his left are the only crewmen identified

Good-by "Mouse"

MISSION TO CIVITAVECCIA

81st BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

2 January, 1944

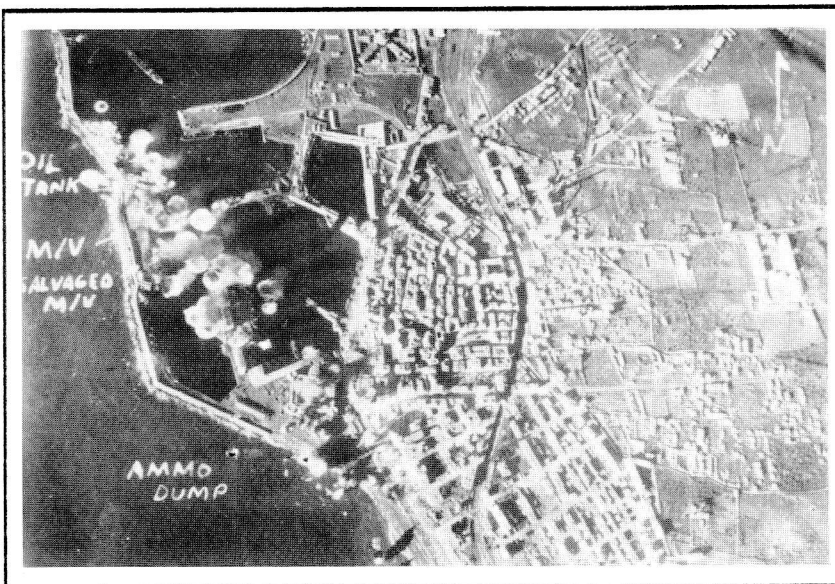
TO :GROUP S-2
SUBJECT:SPECIAL ARTICLE WRITTEN
DURING DECEMBER 1943

STORY ON MISSION OF DECEMBER
7th ON CIVITAVECCIA, ITALY

On December 7, 1943, the 12th Bombardment Group (M) was briefed for a mission on the harbor of Civitaveccia, on the west coast of Italy, about 45 miles northwest of Rome. This port is a principal point of entry for supplies from the depots in the northwest of Italy. From here the railroad goes not only north to Leghorn and south to Rome, but also goes inland to such important towns as Terni, Spoleto and Arezzo. As our strategic bombers had been making transportation of supplies by land more difficult and dangerous, the Germans had been taking to shipping their supplies by water more and more. Reconnaissance had shown that there were two large ships along the loading quay and it was extremely important that they be destroyed. One was unloading and the other was a formerly disabled ship which was being put back into operating condition. With boats so difficult for the Germans to replace throughout the Mediterranean the loss of two, or even one, would be a great blow.

The 81st Squadron was to lead the mission and upon them rested the responsibility of the success or failure of the entire effort. In the event that the ships were gone by the time the formation reached the harbor, the men were briefed to drop on the very important marshalling yards southeast of the

docks. Despite the fact that the weather had not been good around the airdrome, the ships took off at 12:30 and set course for Casserta at which place they were to rendezvous with Spitfire escort. The cloud coverage was very heavy and ground observation was practically nil, but the rendezvous was made and the formation started out over the Tyrrhenian Sea. The clouds were heavy even over the sea, and although the course was only 15 miles off shore, most of the time the coast could not be seen, so navigating was extremely important. Fortunately, as they neared the target the clouds thinned out. The navigator and bombardier, after agreeing on the general target area, pointed it out to the pilot

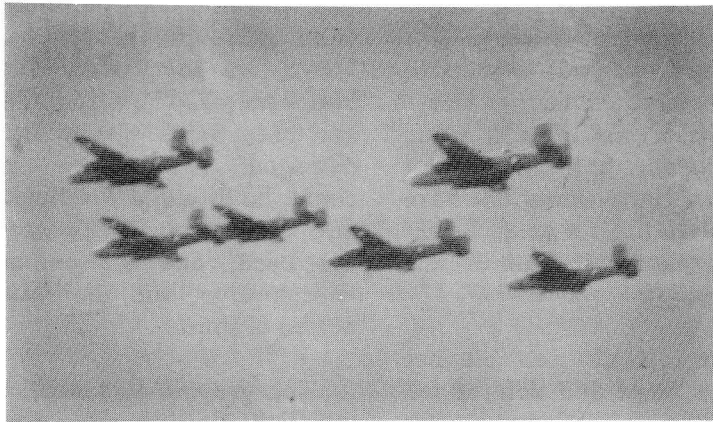


and from then on the bombardier took over. He led the formation to a point slightly past the target so that if there were enemy fighters sent out they would be thrown off the trail. Also by doing this he had a look at the target and could make his plans for the run.

Suddenly a right turn was made, then a dive, and another sharp right turn and they leveled off for the bomb run. With almost unerring precision the 500 and 250 pound

bombs dropped and made their pattern. The accuracy and timing were such that the pattern started just short of the two ships, ran through both of them scoring direct hits on each and continued on to the other objective, the marshalling yards. In between the harbor and the marshalling yards was an old fort, as the bombs ran through it an explosion was seen. It was found out later that the fort was being used as an ammunition dump. The entire mission was a perfect example of the cooperation and coordination which exists between the pilot, bombardier and navigator.

Not only this particular pilot, bombardier and navigator, but all pilots, bombardiers and navigators in the U.S.A.A.F.. In this particular case the pilot was **Lt. William Gause**, 23 years of age, of Anson, Texas; The Bombardier, **Lt. Marvin J. Sherman**, 21 years of age, of Sacramento, California. These men, and many other, flying with them, and last but not least, the ground crews of this unit are responsible for the excellent results which the picture of this mission shows. This and many similar mission they go on almost daily from their base in Italy.



THOSE AIR CORPS "SOLDIERS"

by

Sgt. J.D. Cook 81st

It was a beautiful spring day in 1943 at Castel Benito Airdrome, near Tripoli, when our morning was rudely interrupted with an announcement, that directed us boys to dress in Class "A's" and stand inspection from some General.

Thirty minutes later we assembled at the Orderly Room dressed as good as our limited wardrobes would permit, with our rifles all ready to stand parade. The Captain in charge

brushed us up on our "Manual of Arms", which we hadn't had for a year or so, and then marched us to the orchard where the presentations were to be made.

Then began the unusual ceremony. General Bereton arrived with Colonel Backus ready to make awards. The first set back was that none of the flyers, due to receive the awards, were present. We troops were given the order to present arms, and right then and there was a sight to behold! Some came to "Right Shoulder Arms", some to "Left Shoulder Arms", and some to "Order Arms" with even a few to "Present Arms". General Bereton immediately burst into laughter, and Colonel Backus' face became very red, only to change to a sly smile when he noticed the General's laughter. So ended the perfect ? presentation with the General probably thinking, "These Damned Air Corp Soldiers."

THE LUFTWAFFE CLOBBERS THE 340TH

by
GEORGE WELLS 488

The evening of 12 May, 1944 started off like all of the evenings in the past few days with an air raid alert, about which we had become a little complacent. This night, around 1100 hours, was different because there was a lot of fireworks up towards Bastia. Then in the early morning hours of 13 May, another raid took place on the British Spitfire base at Poretta Airfield, near Borgo, Corsica, about 18 miles north of our field at Alesan. At around 0300 hours everyone was awakened when, with no warning, three chandelier flares burst right over the base, just after a plane thought to be a Beaufighter, had passed over our heads. The German flares could not have been more perfectly placed. It was as bright as day. At the same time our anti-aircraft unit put up a curtain barrage.

We found ourselves under an all out bombing raid by very capable and determined German airmen. Their effectiveness was enhanced by one of their first hits being the radar and gun control section of the anti-aircraft unit, knocking out the communication lines to the gun firing positions. The gunners were then firing on their previous barrage settings instead of having updated tracking information. The Germans were home free, as far as our defenses were concerned. They kept making bombing and strafing passes and dropping more flares. They had no trouble seeing what they wanted to hit as the fires that they started added to the light from the flares. They took their time and did it up right. The length of the attack was over 46 minutes, but to the men in our aircraft dispersal areas it seemed forever.

A minimum of 15 Jerry planes, (FW 190's He-111's and Ju-88's led by a previously captured flare dropping British Beaufighter), took part in the raid. Later reports included Me 109's and Do 217's as well. And with a higher total number. They dropped demolition bombs, anti-personnel bombs, and butterfly bombs, then they strafed at their

leisure. They hit the bomb dumps, the fuel storage drums and fully loaded aircraft ready for an early morning mission. Our bombs blew up from being hit, as did some of the aircraft. One ship 8T of the 488th simply disappeared leaving only a blackened hole and a few parts. They even destroyed the group operations building, which was about a half mile from the air strip. Flat tires on both planes and vehicles were common throughout with those not blown up being riddled with shrapnel and bullet holes. The Group had about 90 aircraft at that time, nearly all of which were damaged. There were only about 18 that could be brought to flying condition by the next afternoon. Twelve were completely destroyed, and a number of others were unreparable, and the rest repairable over a period of time.

The ground personnel, especially those on the flight line, sleeping near their planes took the brunt of the attack. Many were caught with slit trenches not deep enough. The length of the attack made it a terrifying situation for them. Things were blowing up, or on fire, near them. They knew that fuel and ammunition was all around. Many were wounded needing medical help, and those not wounded could hear people calling for help. What a horrible experience it was for them. All squadrons were involved. The Group had 22 killed and 70 hospitalized, and a total of 219 casualties.

The situation at the hospital about 5 miles north of Alesan was a mad house due to the earlier bombing of the British Spitfire outfit 18 miles up the coast. Their injured had arrived just ahead of the 340th's, and they didn't have enough doctors and nurses to handle all of the injured at one time.

Two of the 488th ground personnel, Burns Day and Dewey Fox, recall some of their experiences during that dreadful night in May 1944.

BURNS DAY RECALLS 3 MAY, 1944

"About 3 A.M. for about 1 1/2 hours we had regular bombs and anti-personnel bombs dropped on the airfield. That's beside the strafing runs between the bomb runs. It was "pucker time !!!"

"Into the slit trenches we went with whatever clothing we could grab in a hurry. I had a trench all to myself, since my tent mate, Lee Hanlon (who had helped dig it), had been killed a week before in a crash in the mountains. I, like a dummy, laid down full length and tried to make myself invisible. By doing that I was being pounded in the belly by every shock to the ground anywhere close to me. I felt every shot from the ack-ack gun across the taxi strip from me, and every bomb close by gave me a shot to the stomach. When 8T got a direct hit and disappeared, the concussion sucked me up and slammed me down in the hole again. Just after that I heard running and looked up to see Dewey Fox. I yelled at him and he said he was hit, but I couldn't find a scratch on him. After the raid was over we found an American bomb laying on the edge of his slit trench that was to be used on the next mission. When his plane, 8T blew up, the bomb had hit him in the middle of the back. No wonder he thought he was hit! I'm surprised it didn't break his back.

"During a short lull in the bombing, Fensterman, also my tent mate for a short time, dashed into the tent and got his camera. he got some good pictures of planes burning, etc. Then came some more bombers and it was back into the hole with Dewey Fox and me this time.

" After the raid was over, we climbed out of our holes and looked around. By now it was daylight and our field was a hell of a mess! Airplanes burning, blown up, tents riddled, wounded men and some dead. Line Chief Len Hanten (488) went by with his jeep loaded with wounded. The jeep making more noise than usual because of the flat tires.

"We went into our tent very carefully. Maybe some of the anti-personnel bomb had not exploded - but, fortunately everything was O.K., including 2- 1/2 bottles of whiskey I had in the pocket of my bed-roll. We helped ourselves to a drink. Then I looked over at the ack-ack crew. They had their guns leveled at the beach and were still at their guns. Some of them were injured and had been bandaged up, but they were still at their guns. So to show my appreciation for their efforts I took over a full bottle of American whiskey, to help settle their nerves. They really appreciated that for they hadn't seen any for several months. Believe it or not, one of them had a shot glass and measured out a drink for everyone.



"The casualties were taken to the squadron area for immediate attention, before being transferred to the hospital. The rest of us tried to eat breakfast, but not many could eat much. My stomach was so sore from all the pounding it took by my laying flat on my back that coffee was all I could manage.

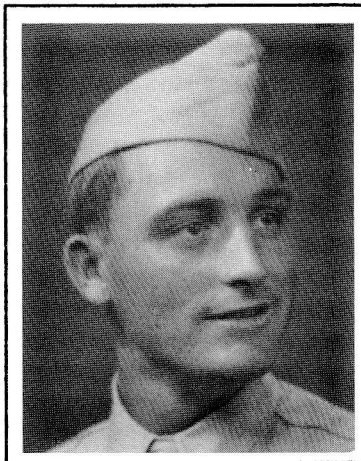
"So it was back to the flight line to see what we had left to work with. Not much!! As I remember, the whole group put up 12 planes that day. The debris on the hard stands, taxi strips and runway had to be cleaned up first. What a mess! Whole planes were gone, other partly gone, others with lots of holes and flat tires. Some new planes, which had arrived the day before, were ruined before they were completely unloaded."

DEWEY FOX'S EXPERIENCE.

"The raid was most horribly frightening experience of my life. On the evening of 12 May, 1944, when the Jerries hit the British nightfighter unit a few miles north of the 340th, it came over me, and I couldn't shake it off the thought that they were destroying the night fighters and they will hit us next.

"I couldn't find my helmet, so I got my

overcoat out. I just couldn't sleep, listening and waiting, for the droning sound of German planes. Then after four or so hours, I heard a plane coming. There was no mistaking the sound. I yelled at Earl Anderson and Jim Welling, my tent-mates, and who had help dig our fox hole. None of us had undressed. I grabbed my overcoat and they grabbed their helmets. As we ran out of the tent the first flare lit up the sky. I jumped into the slit trench and yelled at them to get into the hole. They were just standing there looking up. I got as low as I could with my knees under my stomach, and my head against the end of the hole with my face in the dirt. I had my overcoat on top of me.



"We didn't have long to wait. The first plane over dropped large bombs. When they were released they made a whistling sound which increased in pitch, as it fell, until it was ear shattering. Then, as the bombs hit the ground, there would be a tremendous blast that would make the ground shake. Then all hell broke loose, with planes strafing and bombing with both demolition bombs and frags. They would come in one, two or three at a time.

"I remember Earl and Jim raised up for a quick look after a pass was made. I looked up and told them to keep down. I remember noticing how close to our fox hole the wing tip of 8T seemed to be, and that worried me if it should blow up. Their passes didn't seem more than a few seconds apart.

"Then 8T got hit and blew up with a full load of bombs and fuel tanks. The blast was devastating . . . the ground shook violently . . . the concussion hit with such force that I felt that my ribs were broken. I knew that my friends were being wounded or killed, but I couldn't do anything but lay there and beg God to have mercy on me. The Jerries kept right on bombing and strafing us. The fear took complete control of me. I have never felt

so totally helpless before, and have not since. I tried to force myself to lay still. Because I couldn't do anything but wait, fear seemed to consume my whole body and came over me in waves. I remember asking God to let the next bomb or bullet find its mark so I could escape the fear. Then my mother's tear stained face, my dad's face and my wife's face came before my eyes. I knew then that their fear for my safety, which they lived with every day, was greater than mine. I was then filled with shame for my weakness. I knew I couldn't ask for myself, I said "Oh God, I'm so unworthy, I can't ask for myself, but I beg of you that their hopes might be fulfilled." It was then that revealed to me that those German pilots also had loved ones at home with the same

hopes as me. I said, "Oh God, I beg of you that the hopes of their loved ones might be fulfilled." This took place in a few minutes of time. I was filled with peace, fear was gone.

"The bombing and strafing continued. When it finally seemed to stop, I hear Earl and Jim saying, "Dewey there is a bomb ready to fall on your head." I looked up and there was one of our bombs laying right on the edge of the hole. We got out of the fox hole. Our tent was completely gone! We started for the road and all at once we heard a plane coming toward the field, and we took off for the nearest cover available. When it was finally over it was just breaking daylight. I don't remember how I got to the squadron area that morning, and I don't remember eating breakfast. I knew I was shell-shocked, and was unwinding from that long period of hell on earth. I was really in a state of confusion (others confirmed this). I lost everything I had except the clothes on my back. But I found my wife's picture which had been in a wooden box. It had a small hole through the left breast made by a small piece of shrapnel. My overcoat was ruined by hot objects landing on my back and burning holes in the coat

100 MISSIONS OR ELSE

by

Bill Chapman 340

The 340th had two outstanding pilots, Major George L. Wells, and Fred W. Dyer, both were Assistant Group Operations Officers. Both were determined to have the honor of flying the most bombardment missions as pilot, in WWII. Each was trying to outfly the other and thier mission rate was increasing too fast. At about the 80th mission point, I got the two together and told them that while I admired their objective, from here on out I did not want either of them to get more than one mission ahead of the other.

After a mission briefing several weeks later, I noted George and Fred, both in flying gear, walking out together. This struck me as very unusual since both were used as Group Command pilots, and I did not expect them to be flying the same mission. I asked Joe Ruebel, our Group Operations Officer about this. He said, "Oh, haven't you heard? They have arranged to fly their 100th mission together with other crew members flying their 100th mission in a B-25 flying its 100th mission." I refused to be quoted on exactly



The 100th MISSION CREW and the 100th MISSION B-25

The "Crew" grouped together are: back row, l. to r. **Major George L. Wells, Major Fred W. Dyer**
Major Richard Nash; front row; **Capt. Vincent M Myers, 1st Lt. Vernon L. Lyle**
T/Sgt. Robert L. Helferich and T/Sgt. John S. Wisanowski were not included in the photo

what I said at this point, but told Joe to jump into the Jeep and we headed for their hardstand. We caught the crew just as they were about to board, and I told them to forget it! I also told them that I liked their idea, but no way were they going to take this special mission into the mess of flak that was briefed earlier, and if they wanted to set it up on the next milkrun, it would be ok with me. I could just visualize the headlines in STARS AND STRIPES, "Group Commander court-

martialed for allowing 100th mission crew members to be lost to flak over target in a war weary bomber."

NOTE. You ssee that sometimes a Group Commander has to look after himself.

Majors Wells and Dyer both flew 102 missions before being sent back to the U.S. for 30 days Rest and Recreation. It is believed that this is a record for bombardment pilots in WWII

I AM 7-K

The early Bird

by

Ward Laiten 487

I was a B-25-C S/C 42-32278, assigned to the 340th Bomb Group, 487th Squadron, on a cold, snowy, icy field at Battle Creek, Michigan (Kelly Field) on February 12, 1943. Seven men came up to me and walked around looking me over. They looked inside my wheel-wells and bomb-bay, then opened up

the hatches and got in, looking me all over inside. I found out the names of these men a few days later. They were to be my crew. The crew included: Marshall E. Lambert, pilot; Harley H. Anderson, co-pilot; Robert Sather, navigator-bombardier; Theodore Handzel, engineer; Maurice M. Schwartz, radio-gunner



l-r: Paul Spencer, Me (Early Bird III), Ward Laiten

Woodrow W. Peterson, armourer-gunner; and Ward Laiten, would be my crew chief.

The next few days found the men all over me, cleaning guns and loading supplies. The crew-chief's inspection found that my right outer wheel bearing was missing. This had to be installed.

As the wheel bearing was being replaced one of the men noticed that I was painted "pink", which meant that we were all headed for the Desert War Zone.

It was below zero the morning that we were

to leave Michigan. I hadn't been test hopped. My crew climbed aboard and tried to start my engines. From 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. the men took turns cranking my engines until they finally turned over. We were off for West Palm Beach, Florida (Morrison Field); temperature, 65 degrees. My pilot set me down on the ground and while some of the others loaded me (even replacing my guns), the crew chief changed my gaskets in order to repair my oil leaks. On a sunny morning we took off for Puerto Rico, but the weather turned bad and we flew through, over and under thunder storms before we made the island.

I few more oil leaks were discovered, and when my crew chief removed my bottom rocker box covers he found the rocker arms had been so hot they turned blue. While we waited for parts, Andy had the crew's names painted on me and I was named "The Early Bird." The new gaskets finally arrived and the crew chief worked all night to install them.

The next morning the crew headed me for South America, landing in Trinidad for fuel and changing one of my voltage regulators. Then on to Atkinson Field, Georgetown, British Guiana. When we were getting ready for take off the next morning, I blew my right starter. The crew had to change a new one.

Finally, on 1 March, 1943 we left for Belem, Brazil. Heavy rains kept us from landing until late in the afternoon. After a couple of days rest we took off for Natal, Brazil. About an hour out my left engine began to backfire, so we turned back to Belem. The crew changed my spark plugs and discovered some one had put a lot of water in my tanks. They drained my sump was wondered who had done this to me. We finally made it to Natal where I had a fifty hour inspection.

On 8 March we took off to cross the BIG pond, leaving a lot of my equipment behind, as well as my crew chief and one gunner. We had to cut down on the weight for it was a long trip to the Gold Coast of Africa. I waited there until my wing racks were installed. The gunner installed .30 cal guns in my tail cone, hooked to the top turret. It watched my tail.

On 20 March I took off for my first flight over Africa, flying over sand storms and landing at Maiduquria, Nigeria. We gassed up and left for Kartoum, landing there with one of my engines running very rough. The crew changed #5 cylinders plugs in my right engine and it smoothed out. The day after the crew did a twenty-five hour inspection.

We landed at Wadi Halfi on the Nile River, gassed up and installed new plugs in the #5 cylinder. A few miles after taking off again, the engine began acting up forcing us to return to Wadi Halfi. After a few days wait, the crew got a set of rings and gaskets to replace the old ones.

The next day we headed for Heliopolis, Egypt, but before we reached our destination the engines got rough again. The crew found that I was burning oil very badly; all my plugs needed to be changed again. The crew unloaded all the weight possible and off I went to join my sister ships at Al Kabrit on the Red Sea. I smoked like a steam engine and the flying got rough again. The right engine and the oil in the left engine was changed between sand storms, and then I flew on to Costal Bisito (Tripoly) near the war zone. That night the crew chief and engineer began sleeping under my wings at night in the sand and the heat. They could not touch me during the day as I would get so hot from the sun. On 2 May, I took the crew from the hell-hole to Sfax and rejoined the squadron and prepared to do my duty.

10 May, 1943! I, 7-K, the "Early Bird, flew my first mission carrying eight 250 pound bombs. I carried these English bombs over the island of Pantillaria. My second didn't come until 30 May. I had become known as old stand-by, having my bomb load changed many times a day.

I moved to Hergla on 3 June, making two trips to haul equipment. Some "Brass" spotted my tail guns and because he hadn't approved them, had them removed. It had worked great in the past to keep the enemy off my tail.

I began to fly missions over Sicily on 4 July and took my first flak hit on 29 August. On the 29th the crew and I moved to Catania, Sicily and the next day I flew over Italy for the first time. We continued to fly missions as assigned to us. We learned, on 9 September, that Andy Anderson, who had named me, "The Early Bird", was found dead in the water after a mission over Naples. My crew felt very badly about this news.

We endured the mud, rain and all of the other ills of a combat operation, moving from base to base as required. So, on 3 January I moved the crew and all of the equipment again. Everything had to be moved, when I moved. The crew even loaded some of the equipment on my wing racks. What a load! I was to land at Pompeii, Italy, but first we circled Mt. Vesuvius. Our airfield was just east

THE EARLY BIRD III

7-K 43-4011-B-25-J

INSERT PAGE 187

On April 19, 1944 I landed at Aleason Airfield, Corsica. There I was met by three ground crewmen that were going to take care of me. They worked to correct my problems and to get me ready for combat. I was to be the lead ship into combat.

I flew my first mission on April 25, 1944.

At 0200 on May 13, 1944 all "hell" broke loose! The Germans were bombing our airfield. The raid continued for forty-five minutes. Many of my sister ships were destroyed; three of the ground crew were killed. I was very lucky to survive with only a gouge in my windshield. That noon the group put up only seven airplanes to go on missions. I was put on stand-by and then turned back. After landing, a pilot and my Crew Chief boarded and flew me to Salerno, Italy. We picked up a flight crew plus three other men and all their flight bags, parachutes, etc. What a load I had! I also had a full bay of 1000 pound bombs. The new flight crew had doubts that I could get them off the ground, but I did with a Crew Chief as a co-pilot. After that I flew nearly everyday--either missions or practice bombing with new bombardiers.

There were exciting and dangerous times. On June 10, 1944 a piece of flack hit the top of the right wing and came through the side of the fuselage and hit the top turret gunner in the leg. One mission I came back with the leading edge of my right stabilizer smashed where a cluster bomb rack from another ship moved over me and hit me. Another day I came back with every stringer in my green-house (bombardier compartment) cut in two and half the glass broken. My crew removed the damaged green-house and replaced it with one they salvaged from a plane that had been damaged during the air field bombing. I was back flying the next afternoon.

On November 29, 1944 the ground crew changed both my engines as they had flown 444 hours and 40 minutes.

In December, 1944 I flew the weather run every day at 0400 hours over Northern Italy as well as my regular missions. I was hit with a piece of flack between the fuselage and the right engine nacelle, fraying the propeller cable. My Crew Chief worked all New Year's Day (January 1, 1945) to change the cable.

On April 7, 1945 we moved to Rimini, Italy. We continued to fly daily missions; sometimes two flights a day.

The flight crew came out on April 25, 1945 and said that it would be their last mission as the war was about over. The engineer gunner wanted to run up the engine as he hadn't started an engine since he had come overseas. He started the engine, ran the right engine up to its maximum RPM, threw the high blower in and blew the engine. It had less than 200 hours on it. The ground crew changed the engine and did a 100 hour inspection to make me ready to be transferred back to the states. I left May 24, 1945, having flown 748 hours and 152 combat missions.

**THIS IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE MEN OF THE 340th BOMB GROUP,
487th BOMB SQUADRON WHO WENT WEST DURING THIS WAR AND SINCE.**

**INSERT AT PAGE 187 IN YOUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK
"THE B-25 OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN"**

THIS IS THE COMPLETION OF THE STORY:

**I AM 7-K
THE EARLY BIRD**

BY

WARD LAITEN 487

(Inadvertently deleted from the original publication)

of the mountain. Up to this date I had dropped 223,260 pounds of bombs on our enemy. I saw many of my sister ships go down as I flew over the Anzio Beachhead.

Because my Crew Chief didn't like oil on my engines, cowlings or landing gear, the ground crew always changed my gaskets every time I returned from a mission. One of them was always cleaning my guns keeping them oiled. I learned that my Crew Chief was a farm boy from Omro, Wisconsin. One day I learned that my Assistant Crew Chief left to become a Crew Chief on one of my sisters. I'll miss Ted Handsel, he was a good assistant.

The installed a Norden bomb sight on March 1944 and I became a lead airplane. This meant flying many times a day as a practice ship getting the bombardiers used to the new bombsight. I also flew my share of missions.

Then came disaster! On 22 March, 1944 at 2:30 a.m. Mt. Vesuvius blew up. Ashes drop-

ped on me, putting small holes in my fabric controls. At 4:30 a.m. another eruption occurred. More ashes put bigger holes in the fabric. About 6:30 a.m. red hot cinders about the size of a crewman's fist dropped on me.

Orders were given to remove all my controls, but before the crew could get all of the cotter pins out of my bolts, the mountain thundered and red hot ashes as big as a man's head flew through the air. Everything was covered with two feet of ash. It was the end of all the my sisters on the field. We had holes in our wings; windows and windshields were all broken.

I, 7-K "Early Bird" had flown 90 missions, some 444 hours, with only one flak hole. This day was a sad day for the ground crew who had taken care of me. The ground crew moved off to the 321st field near Paestum. My Crew Chief and five other men stayed behind to dig equipment out of the ashes. My Crew Chief cleaned the ashes off my wings and took my clock out of the panel. Then, he left me for others to take care of.

SEE INSERT
It was the end for me

#14 "SNAFU"

She came back

by

S/Sgt HENRY MASON 81st

If there's anything left flyable, they'll always bring them back. Take the case of number 14, "Snafu", in North Africa. She was a jinx ship from the word go. If there was one burst of flak anywhere in the sky, Snafu came back with two or three holes in her. At that time the 81st was stationed at Canrobert, in Algeria, March and April 1943. I was crew chief on 14, and had my share of trouble. To illustrate, in four missions, 14 came back all shot to pieces three times.

The third was the worst. A brand new prop with 20mm holes in the trailing edge of one blade. One punched a hole in the leading

edge of the right wing and severed several engine control cables, one being the throttle cable. The entire hydraulic system from the nose to the bomb bay was a mass of bent and holed tubing. There were flak holes over the entire ship . . . the tail had to be replaced, the horizontal stabilizer on the right side had several holes in it, one of which you could stick your head through. All of the right elevator that remained was the twisted ribs and a couple of pieces of fabric. We patched several hundred of the worst holes, the other being too small to bother with.

It took Sgt. Dietz and myself nearly two weeks to get the ship back in commission again. At that time we had one crew chief to a ship, and an engineering force of four men.

Lt. Orrin Jensen, of Fresno, California was the pilot on this particular mission, which happened to be his second as first pilot. He brought the ship back with his right engine drawing 12 inches of mercury. He made a beautiful landing and only cut the engines because he wasn't able to taxi.

SORRY OLD CHAP

by

Sherrel Powell

This is a belated writing of an action over the African Desert, but better late than never, here is how I remember it.

I do remember attending a brief hearing in a tent somewhere in the desert with two or three 8th Army, or RAF brass. I believe the only one representing us was Colonel Low. It took a matter of a few minutes to relate my story...

We were returning from a night bombing mission in the Marsa Matruh area, where we had successfully bombed the target and were descending from 10,000 feet so as to be below a certain altitude, which was specified as maximum, upon reaching Wadi Natrun.

It was a clear full moon in the desert, and we had the night beacon at Wadi Natrun in sight, about 30 minutes away. At this point we were intercepted and shot down without warning. During the brief interview (briefing) there was no mention about IFF emissions. So far as I and my crew were concerned, we were within the altitude limit upon reaching the Wadi Matruh beacon. The glitch is that we never got there; a fact which is easily evidenced by the big round black mark on the desert made by our Billy Mitchell, and the two graves of our crew members, Reed and Shannon. We stood silently as they were interred the next day.

As for the eternal two minutes, or so, when our quietude and relaxation was rudely interrupted by the fire power of four 20mm cannons and 6 .303 machine guns of a Beaufighter. From this point on the details are more vivid, and I can give you a more accurate account.

"Dub" Hatton called out on the inter-phone reporting an intruder below and behind us. His call was interrupted by the blast of what sounded like all of the guns in the desert. The B-25 shook and gyrated, and started down.

The flight instruments were spinning, and there was only a slight action of the elevator. I flipped the alarm switch and ordered the crew to bail out.

As soon as the crew was gone, I didn't entertain much hope of getting out. The altimeter was spinning downward. There was nothing to lose by trying. As I left my seat, the plane went into a spin, and I remember my head being shoved up into the astrodome. By placing my hand on the roof of the plane and holding the inner hatch open with my foot, I shoved off. I felt myself whooshing out the hatch, thinking that old terra-firma must be close at hand, so I jerked the rip-cord. Maybe just a second too soon. I saw the silk blossom out in the moon light.

It seemed almost simultaneously, but may be a few seconds later, the B-25 crashed directly below me and exploded. I pulled on the risers on one side to slide away from it, and made a nice two point landing with a head roll.

I remember thinking as I was coming down, the best I could expect would be a couple of broken legs. When I recovered my senses, a second or two later, I had a hard time convincing myself that I had gotten out of all of this with only a minor cut on top of my head.

A British lorry arrived within what seemed like just minutes. You can imagine their surprise, and disappointment, when they rounded up the crew to find, not a prize of Rommel's Afrika Korps, but a bunch of scroungy Yanks.

These Desert Rats were jolly good hosts. Most of the night they plyed us with Carew's booze, song and jokes in the warmth of their tent. Needless to say, when we were rounded up, and could see that at least four of us had escaped the debacle unharmed, this sort of

entertainment was just what we needed. At this time we could hold out hope the Shannon and Reed, for, yet they had not been found.

About two days after the incident, I was in Cairo with the crew for a couple of days R&R. We were staying at the Shepard Hotel. Soon after we landed there I was greeted by a young (22 -23, same as me) RAF Pilot Officer White. He was there to apologize for shooting me down. Quite decent of the chap, don't you think? He confirmed that he reported shooting down a Heinkle 111. The only similarity to a B-25 being that they both have two engines. I remembered that in that full moonlight you could literally read a newspaper.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The crew of A/C #41-12886, Lt. L.P. Redburn's crew reported. "This crew mentions that the beacon at Wadi Natrun was working on the route out, but positive it was not working on the way back . . ." The General Berenton Diaries state, "Cairo, Egypt, 23 August 1942. Word has been received that a B-25 was shot down by the RAF. The planes commander, instead of following the sea corridor from Tobruk area turned south over the Alexandria Delta Defense area. He gave no identification signal, did not show lights, did not fly at the prescribed altitude for friendly aircraft in distress. AVM McCoughry came in to offer his apologies.

Just A Day's Work

by

S/Sgt. DON BUCK 81

I suppose that the most renowned spot of the 12th group's past is a place called Gambut, I was there. Gambut was a desolate spot on the edge of an escarpment. One couldn't possible dig a slit trench (Fox Hole), for the top soil was only about one and a half feet

deep, then you hit solid rock. Our slit trenches were built up, not down. This was alright for we never had to use them anyway.

It was during our first few days at Gambut that Colonel (Then Major) Wilcox decided we should have at least one latrine in our dispersal area. The task of digging it was assigned to Dale Burnet, Ralph Gross and myself, all husky men and all fairly clever with a pick and shovel. Col. Wilcox himself supervised the job, with Captain Lavery and Captain Keany as assistants. They watched, and we worked

We worked a whole day in fact, and then stepped back to survey our day's work. We had a hole about three feet long and one foot deep. This would never do! At that rate it would take us three days to dig our latrine and maybe more, because the further we went the harder it got. Besides, the day's work had been about too much for all of us, especially me.

Colonel Wilcox finally solved the question by calling on the British Engineers to dynamite the whole which took about one hour. I know you may not believe this story, but honest,

Gambut was Hell!

THE SEA SEARCH

by

John Conway 448

Probably the most dangerous missions scheduled during my tour of 50 missions in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations were the sea sweeps. I was scheduled on three of these on 25th, 26th and 31 st of March, 1943 during the final phase of driving Marshall Rommel out of North Africa.

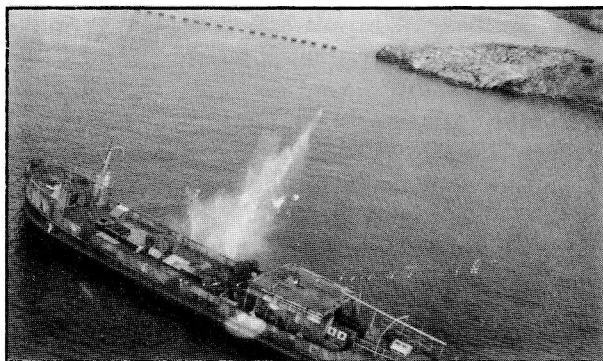
The purpose of conducting "Sea Sweeps" was to locate and destroy the convoys leaving Tunis for Sicily carrying troops and equipment during his retreat.

No convoys were located on the first two of the sweeps we flew, but on the third we got lucky ?? We sighted several ships flanked by flak barges. Our attacking force was split into two elements. The high element was to come in around 10,000 feet and drop their bomb load. The lower element was to skip bomb 500 pound bombs into the sides of the ships. I was flying co-pilot for our Operations Officer in the lower element on this day.

We stayed out of gun range until the upper element dropped their bombs, which hit near the ships but caused little damage. As we made our run, all of the guns on the ships and flak barges were fired in our direction. We were flying the lead plane of the lower element, with Lt. Charley Ford on the left wing, and Lt. Robert Hess on the right wing. I'm not sure who were flying the other planes. We paired off, two planes attacking each of

the three ships. Just after releasing our bombs we pulled up to clear the ships masts and antennas. I looked to the right to see how Hess was doing. At that moment he must have received a direct hit in his right wing. . he just rolled over and crashed into the water. We fire-walled it to clear the area as soon as possible. About two or three miles away from the ships, our gunner reported another plane had landed in the water and blown up. The tail gunners of the other ships reported that two ships were sinking and a third appeared to be heavily damaged.

Of the six crews on this mission we lost 2 crews and three aircraft. Our crew was lucky,



no one was hurt and the plane had only minor damage. Lt Ford made a wheels up landing at the first friendly field he came to. Those were the only aircraft and crew losses suffered by the 448th during my tour of fifty missions from March through November 1943.

A Day (or Night) in The Life of AN ARMORER

by

ROBERT SILLIMAN 380

Our crew leader came through the tent area yelling: "Come on you guys! We've got to go out and drop the 1,000 pounders we loaded

last night, and replace them with 500's." We boarded our weapons carrier and headed for the line.

This was just another day in the life of the 380th armament crew! This one turned out with a little different twist, at least as far as I was concerned. This would be my last day as an armorer. Four 1,000 pound general purpose demolition bombs had been loaded in the aircraft the night before. Fuses had been screwed into the front and rear of each bomb, and arming wires affixed to the bomb shackles after all four bombs had been cranked up and hung in place. In order to fit this bomb load into the bomb bay the bombs had to be hung alternately; first one side then the other starting at the top and working down to the bottom one. This left no space, vertically, in the center of the bomb bay as the bombs actually overlapped each other from top to bottom.

A textbook change of bombs required that hoist cables be strung, and each bomb lowered to the ground, in a sling, then rolled out from under the bomb bay for ordinance to pick up. We learned, early on, in North Africa that this was a lengthy, time consuming method, and that there was a quicker way your get the job done so could get back to bed. Armorers, especially when targets changed and different bomb loads were required, did a lot of their work at night. The fastest way to empty the bomb bay of general purpose demolition bombs, from 250 pound up to the 1,000 pounders, was simply to remove the two fuses, then manually trigger each fuse loose from it's shackle. They would strike the ground with a dull thud, and then were easily rolled away from the aircraft. Four 1,000 pounders could be dropped and rolled away in 20 minutes. Using cable, and going by the "book", would take close to an hour. While armorers felt comfortable using this method of accomplishing a bomb change, the crew chiefs and engineers would always find an excuse to leave their aircraft, and return when they though all of the bombs had been safely dropped!

Getting back to our 22 September, 1944 bomb change. . . This one turned out to be anything

but routine! We arrived at the aircraft finding that Ordinance had been there and gone, leaving the new bomb load of eight 500 pounders piled neatly just outside the bomb bay area. One of our armament crew members went up into the cockpit and opened the bomb bay doors. I bent over and entered the area directly under the four 1,000 GP's that were hung within the aircraft. My job to start removing the arming wires from the shackles, then remove the two fuses so that the bombs could be dropped safely to the ground, one at a time. After removing the fuses from the lowest bomb, I checked to see if it was all clear, triggered the manual release and the bomb dropped to the ground.

The next thing that I remember was coming to, lying on my back about six feet outside the bomb bay area. I learned later that the top bomb had apparently accidentally been released, and had forced its way between the other two bombs still in place. We had always believed that there was no way the top bomb could drop past the other overlapping bombs. How wrong we were!

Although I have no recollection of the instant that the accident occurred. I apparently heard the bomb release and dove to get out of the way from whatever had happened. I almost made it! The tail fin of that 1,000 GP caught me between the shoulder blades, knocking me out, and sending me sprawling. The nose fuse to the falling bomb struck the first bomb that had been dropped. I was later told by Charlie Brust that the nose fuse had been cut in half, like it had been severed with a sharp ax, exposing the firing pin. Charlie was awarded the Soldier's Medal for removing that damaged fuse.

I was shipped off to a field hospital, and was unable to walk for three days, but returned to Ghisonaccia after ten days. But because of the injury I was transferred out of the armament section, and spent my final 11 1/2 months overseas in the 380th personnel section. I left Fano, Italy, in early September 1945

ONE ENGINE

And a Prayer

by
GEORGE MERCEA 447
and
ERNEST "Hod" HUTSON 447

November 1944 gave us our first indication of what to expect from Mother nature during the coming winter months. One morning we were assigned a weather recon mission to determine if the conditions would allow the main combat mission to reach its target.

With Hod Hutson as Pilot, John Dickson as co-pilot and me, George Mercea as flight engineer, and several unidentified weather observers on board, we took off toward Genoa, Italy. Our fighter escort never did meet us.

Staying under the overcast we could easily see that the cloud ceiling was continuing to lower. This would make it nearly impossible to penetrate with a larger formation. We continued to climb, heading northeast into enemy territory. At about 11,000 feet the flight became interesting. There was a loud CLANG in our right engine, followed by a oil slick streaming out of the nacelle. We had blown a cylinder head. Feathering the prop, Hod made a 180 degree turn and headed for home.

Even the B-25 couldn't maintain this altitude on one engine, so we descended gradually into the undercast, flying on instruments most of the way back to Corsica. Not wanting to find one of those stoney clouds we let down over the water, breaking out a little north of Cape Corse. With clear going the Cape looked great as we paralleled the coast to our field near Solenzara.

Everything for the landing was in our favor . . . about a 15 MPH wind from the south . . . so Hod decided to make a straight in approach. The tower cleared us and we started in. When we lowered the landing gear the nose wheel and the left main came down and locked. The right main did not lock! The sylsyn indicator indicated that it was not locked, and visual

examination by me also indicated that it was not locked. I'll let Hod continue . . .

"As pilot I had to make the decision whether to retract the gear, that was down, and belly her in, or to GO AROUND ON ONE ENGINE, and save the ship. We had full power in the good engine, and most of all God pulling for us, we cruised by the tower lower than fifty feet and disappeared behind the scrub trees at the end of the runway. That is the way it was described to me by my friend Bill Ingram who was tower operator that day.

"Well, with the good left engine we continued to make a shallow left turn out over the water. Meanwhile George was busy in the navigator's compartment, pulling handles on the emergency system, and pumping the gear into the down and locked position. From then on it was all go and we had a routine landing."

Later when I (George) was asked what I thought was wrong with the hydraulic system, I said, "I don't believe that there was a great enough time lag between lowering the flaps and the landing gear. I don't believe that the single hydraulic pump was up to what was asked of it. We did have flying speed to get us up to a good altitude for another approach. I don't think that the weather observer, who shared my compartment during that crucial period of time, took kindly to my pushing him around a bit. Especially when I was taking off my parachute harness and told him that I didn't want anything to hold me back if we had to ditch."





HIGH HONORS

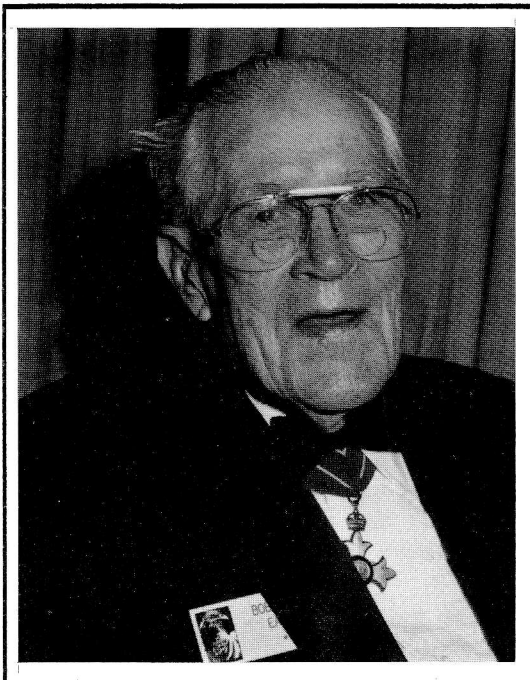
CENTRAL CHANCERY OF
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.
ST. JAMES PALACE, S.W.1

The Secretary has the honour to transmit a Warrant of Appointment, under the King's Sign Manual, to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, and to request that the receipt of the Warrant may be acknowledged on the attached form.

The Secretary would be glad to receive notification of any change of permanent address, and in the event of the decease of persons holding such Warrants Executors are earnestly requested to notify the Secretary.

C.B.E.

Brigadier General Robert Duane Knapp (0-10707)



General Knapp displayed a fine spirit of co-operation and untiring efforts during the vital period January - April 1945, when the Desert Air Force was hard pressed. Under this officer's guidance very valuable support was given to the 8th Army in the final stages of operations. General Knapp's determination to attack the enemy at every possible opportunity was an inspiration to all.

Note: The award was made in the name of the King of England by Lord Iverchapel, British Ambassador to the United States, at the British Embassy Washington D.C., on 11 July, 1946. General Knapp's wife Frances accompanied him for the presentation. In the photo he is wearing the medal on the ribbon around his neck.

THE UNLUCKY 13th

by

BILL KAILER 448

At the time of this "unlucky 13th" mission, the 321st was based in the desert of Libya at a place called Souk-el-Arba. The date was 10 July, 1943 and was invasion day in Sicily. We had an early morning mission and didn't encounter any opposition of any consequence.

In the afternoon we made a second mission over Trippani Milo airdrome. We had just dropped our bombs when all hell broke loose! We took a hit in the engine and tail on the right side. The burst took all of the plexiglas out of the nose, and blasted it back on Eddy Klunk, our bombardier, hitting him in the chest. He was a bloody mess. I don't know if it was the same burst that got the guys in the after section or another one at the same time. Quintin, and Fehr were the turret and waist gunners, while Kenny Krause was the tail gunner. Quintin received a minor wound as did Fehr, but Kenny Krause was hit in the leg just above the knee.

We were flying at about 10,000 when we took the hit. The rest of the group went off and left us when we lost ground. We could only make about 150 mph going down hill. When we got down to about 5,000 ft I decided to go back and check the crew in the rear. I crawled over the open bomb bay to the radio compartment. As I said Quintin and Fehr were hit but too badly. When I got back to Kenny he was bleeding profusely. I put a tourniquet on his leg as tightly as I could and gave him a shot of morphine from the first-aid kit.

Raymond Rudolph was flying the plane while I was in the rear and had done a fine job. In order to keep the plane on a fairly close heading we had made a couple of 270 degree turns and had lost a little more headway. The seas were with about eleven

foot swells so we decided to put her down parallel to the swells.

With the nose out, wheels down and bomb bay doors open we stopped with a bang! The life raft inflated ok except one section had been hit by flak. After the boat inflated we counted noses and found that Kenny was missing. So I went back in and dragged him out of the waist window. He weighed 190-200 pounds and I was only about 160 but I got him out and then the plane went under.

We floated around out there all night and finally about 5 am we were picked up by an LCI which was bringing wounded back from the beach. They were headed for the hospital at Bizerti. They just added six more to their wounded list. Kenny was badly wounded, but the rest of the crew just needed a few patches and were as good as new. We started to walk back to Souk-el-Arba from Bizerti as soon as we were released from the hospital. We got a ride with a weapons carrier which took us all the way. Everyone was glad to see us, they all thought that we had had it. That's the way it went on my 13th mission with the 321st 445th.

HERE'S A SOLUTION

by

FRANK J. FLOWERS 447

One morning, in early November, we were sitting around the tent discussing our health problems. We came to the conclusion that most of the problems was; CRAB LICE were abundant. It also seemed that we had obtained them from the nearest latrine. That latrine had no running water, hence no showers or shaving facilities. What the h__ this is war! The latrines was constructed with very rough sawed lumber, was unpainted. It's a wonder that no one received the Purple Shaft, or did they? Only the Medics know.

Some one volunteered to go to the Medics with our problem and request some magical ointment. The reply was, "No shave, no salve!

We all declined as it would be very uncomfortable flying with all of our winter and flying gear.

The idea was presented to bathe in strong booze, hoping that the crabs would get drunk and fall off. That idea was great but we didn't know where there was enough available, besides it was a shame to waste all of that good liquor.

It was decided to try to drown our little friends. So we took clean clothes, soap and towel and headed for the swimming hole about five miles away. With our dog "8-Ball", we hitched a ride on a G.I. truck hauling gas in 55 gallon drums. There was a little gas on the top of the one that 8-Ball sat on. When we got off the truck she scooted & scooted all

the way to the swimming hole, where she was immediately thrown into the water.

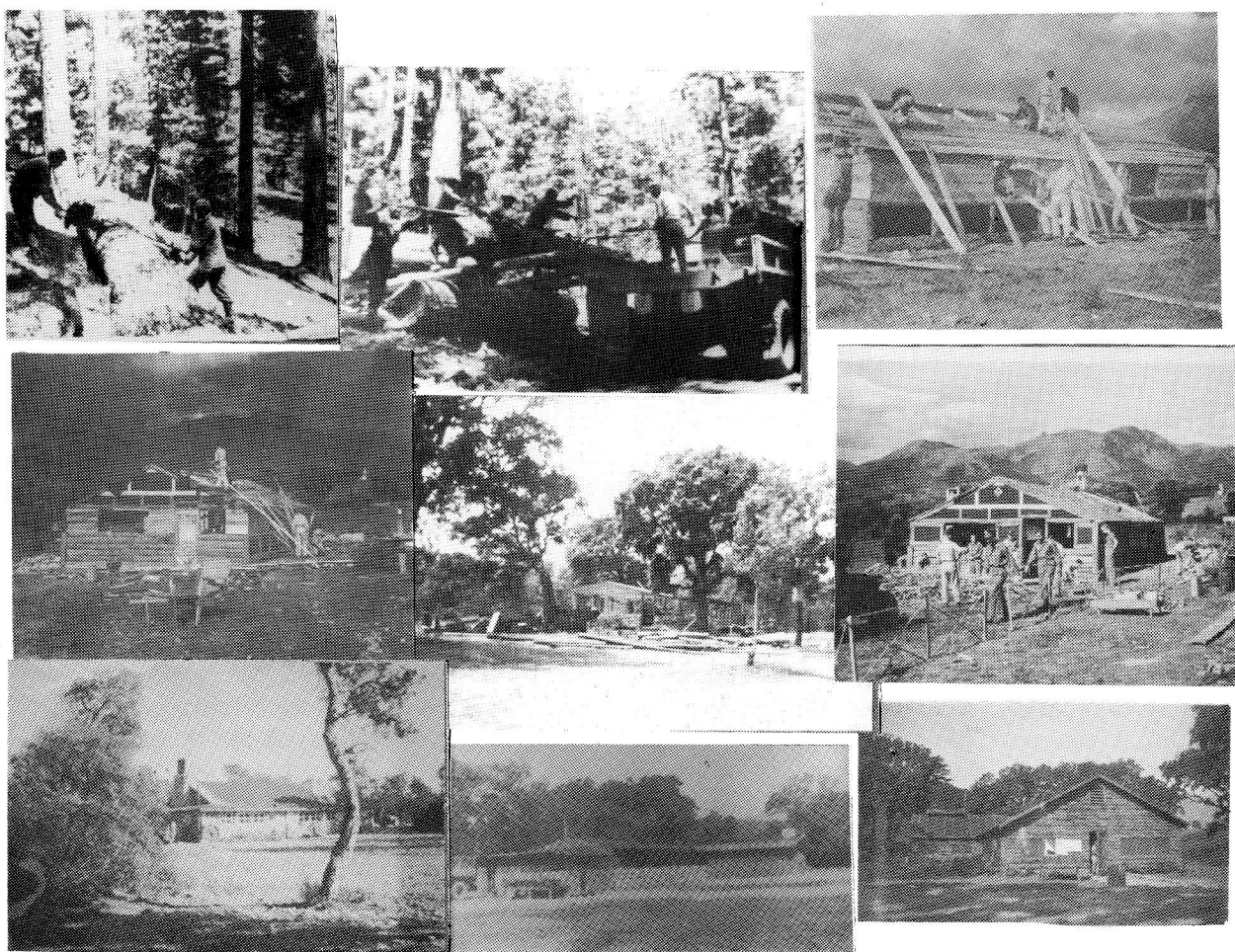
We jumped in clothes and all. That water came from the mountains and was ice cold, but we stripped, bathed and turned blue. Our little friends either drowned or committed suicide because of our blue skin.

After we dried off and put on the clean clothes and headed for our tent, with a happy 8-Ball, and proceeded to air and sun our bedding.

Just remember this remedy, you never know

Names are withheld because we didn't get a Battle Star for that campaign.

Y'all want it? . . . Do it Yourselfes



B-25 SPECIALISTS

by

JOHN BLUE 447

After a short Christmas visit I was on my way back to work at the Glenn Martin plant in Baltimore. I decided to stop at the Harrisburg Army Recruiting Office for a second opinion on information given me at the Baltimore Recruiting Office. I wanted to find out about my chances of getting into the Army Air Force. I was told that they were excellent, that nearly every recruit at this time was going into the Air Force. I got assurance in writing, and so never made it back to Baltimore. I spent my first night in the Army Depot at new Cumberland, Pennsylvania.

The next two weeks were spent getting a new wardrobe, taking various tests, attending lectures, and some Army courtesy and discipline training. Then we were moved out secretly.

After several days of huffing and puffing, blackened by smoke we arrived at Wichita Falls, Texas, and assigned to the newly built Sheppard Air Base. There we were immediately assigned to the new Condensed Army Aircraft Maintenance School. This was a several year Army maintenance course that had been shortened to eleven ten day phases.

It took a while to get used to the Texas weather, especially trying to keep from eating the sand that would often fly around in blinding storms. We were cautioned to be prompt and not miss a day of classes or we would be reassigned. I was getting along just fine in school and was not missing any time in class.

One morning we were rudely awakened earlier than usual. Everybody was ordered to get breakfast, pack his belongings, and be out on the drill field ready to ship out. Rumors flew around as fast as that Texas sand. It turned out to be our first encounter with military SNAFU.

The school had eleven phases with ten days to a phase. We were the eleventh class to start in the school, and were about mid-way through. North American had completed setting up a special school to take trained mechanics for special training on B-25 aircraft. It seems that Washington, D.C. had sent quick orders to pull the eleventh class. The intention was to pull the eleventh PHASE, and send them to California. Of course this was all kept secret from the soldiers, so rumors kept flying. We fell out ready to go at daybreak, and promptly got involved in the famous Army game of hurry up and wait. We stood all day in the sand on the drill field. Finally, in late afternoon, we boarded a train and started westward. We awoke the next morning to the fragrance of orange blossoms. We were now sure we were in California.

We were put up in the beautiful Santa Monica Hotel. Rumor had it that we would be going to school at the North American plant in Inglewood. Would it be possible to make a B-25 specialist out of half-trained mechanic?

We learned special things about the B-25, and about a month later we had finished. Not quite! During this time North American was working to expand the school. About ten percent of the class with the highest grades would get extra special training. This group was kept at Santa Monica, while the rest were secretly moved out. Since I was among the upper ten percent I wasn't disappointed.

Two weeks later these super B-25 Specialists filled two cars on a train along with two cars of Sailors and two cars of Marines, and started on a secret trip. The next morning we awoke in an unknown station where there was a half inch of snow on the ground. A rumor started that we were in Alaska. Well we might be . . if this Army could make B-25 specialists out of half-trained mechanics they probably could

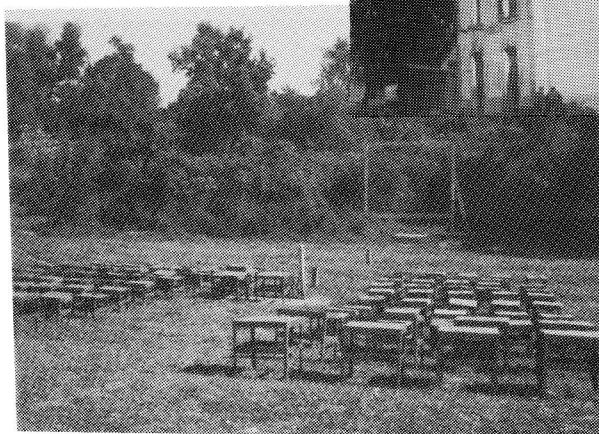
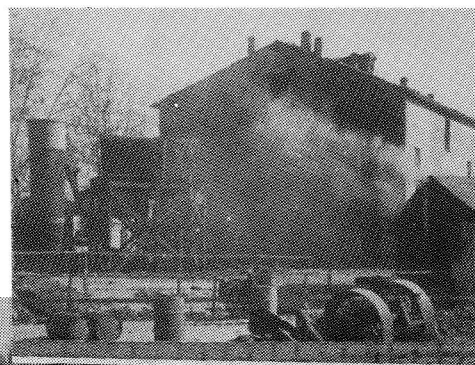
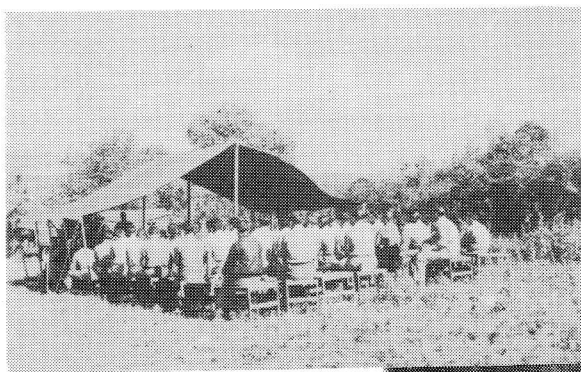
get us to Alaska on a train overnight. We found that we were in Las Vegas with no free time.

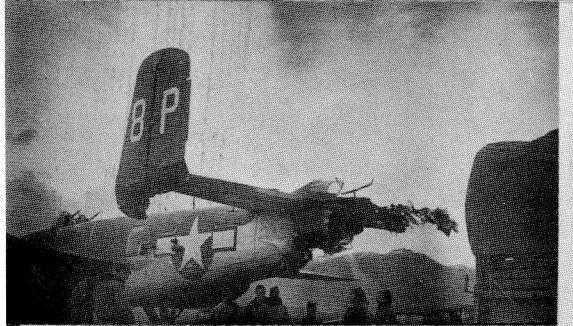
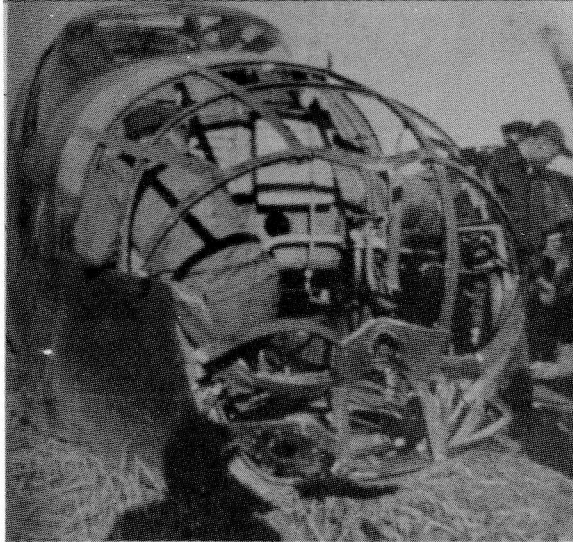
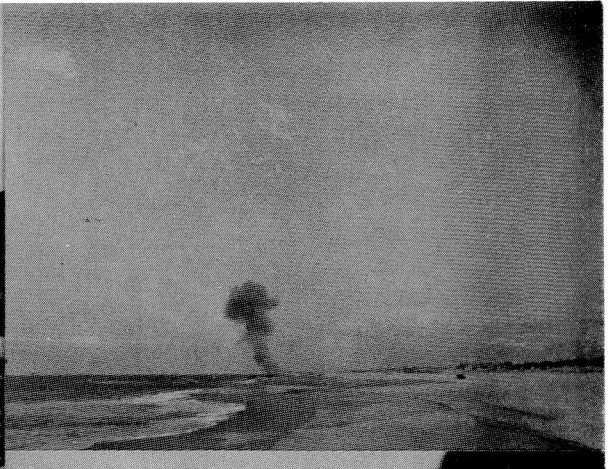
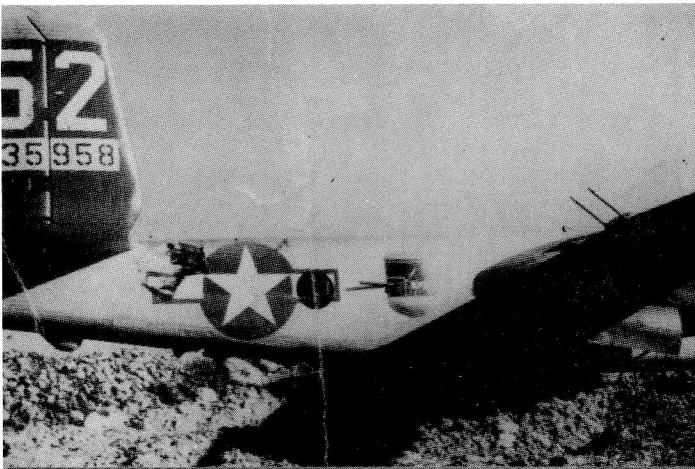
Another train ride and we arrived in St. Louis, Missouri where we had a short lay-over. A couple of days later we were in Pittsburg. Another train-ride and we arrived at our destination which turned out to be Columbia, South Carolina. Here we were told, "This is it, your ride is over." We were taken to a hillside where there were several large circus tents that were to be our home. That night it rained pitch-forks and hammer handles, and we spent most of the night trying to keep our worldly belongings from washing away.

After several aimless days two B-25 soldiers from the U.S.S. Hornet, which had completed the Tokyo raid, were assigned to the group of us B-25 Specialists, to organize the engineering section of the 321st Bomb Group. M/Sgt. W.C. Horn was made Line Chief and

M/Sgt. D.P. Smith was made Aircraft Inspector. Although we had no aircraft as yet, plans were started to form the 447th Bomb Squadron. It was to be organized as a standard strength of 16 aircraft. Each airplane would have a Crew Chief and several mechanics. The sixteen airplanes were to be divided into four flights of four, with each flight to be headed by a Flight Chief. In a squadron up to full strength management and control went from Line Chief to Asst. Line Chief, to Inspector, to Flight Chiefs and finally to the Crew Chief.

B-25 aircraft slowly began arriving in the squadron. I was among the first to be assigned a Crew Chief and this required a little more rank than Buck Private. So I became a wild and dangerous Corporal. As planes kept coming into the squadron I moved up to a Flight Chief. That boosted me to S/Sgt. In about three months the 447th was nearly full strength.





A FEW MEMORIES

FROM A LONG TIME PAST

by
RICHARD "DICK" BRIGGS 447

I remember spending my last night in Savannah, Georgia, with my wife of three months, leaving her and getting back to base to catch a train to Newport News, Virginia and getting aboard ATHOSIS III (a former French liner) at midnight, then sailing for fifteen days to Naples, Italy. I remember only two meals aboard ship, and hot sea water to shower in! I remember my first use of my helmet ... for my first "Cat-bath".

I remember a large fleet of ships with escort, then finally passing Gibraltar and the opening of the sub nets to let us into the Mediterranean Sea ... and the Navy patrol planes overhead, looking for subs! ... Docking at Naples where masts of ships were sticking out of the water all over the place, and not a reflection of light from buildings on the waterfront, ... not a single pane of glass to be seen! The Germans had blown the docks sky-high, with only a narrow strip about the width of the Jeep that backed up to the ship to take luggage back to the beach area, to be picked up by us. I remember piles of metal, parts of trucks, planes etc. all over the area. Welcome to the war zone!

We stayed in a roped-off area, in tents, for two days. Later we flew to Corsica in a B-25 to our home base, Solenzara. First I stayed at the 321st, 448th and remember seeing people on crutches and arms in slings, a result of combat flying? No, I found that it was a result of "touch" football and volleyball!

I was split up from my crew and sent over to the 447th Squadron, to Lt. Col. Strenger. It was windy and raining, and as I found no one around, I put my bags in this large tent, just as the wind blew it over. Lt. Bullion saw me and invited me to stay in his tent. Richard "Snag" Murray was a Captain and Flight Leader, and

the oldest one in the tent, and about to go home after a few more missions.

My first mission was with Kieth Murchland, and was a "milk-run". My third was co-pilot for Major Wigginton, and to Ostiglia. We were the first flight in and we lost several planes! We stopped counting the holes after ninety. The four 1,000 pound bombs crossed in the bomb bay, malfunctioned. Two were laying on the bomb bay doors and we couldn't dislodge them mechanically or manually. There were holes in both wing tanks and gas streamed down the wing into the bomb bay among those bombs! We were the only lead ship to get back to base. "Wig" dead stuck it in and with no radio contact. I thought that we had "bought the farm". I never saw six people emerge from a B-25 so fast, before or after.

I was just getting comfortable with combat flying when I encountered my twelfth, and worst, mission of the fifty-five I flew. It was to Lavis, a Brenner Pass target, and the one my friend Roland Bullion was killed in the left seat, right beside me. That is a whole separate story in its self.

I remember going back to Lavis, soon after that twelfth mission. This time "Herb" Barrett was my pilot, and it was "hot" again, lots of flak. He said to me, "you've got it", and after the bombs were away, I broke off the target and flew out of the flak with the formation. I never knew of a pilot doing that before, or since. Barrett knew that this was a return mission for me. I'll never forget that, and will always be grateful for the kind gesture.

Not long after that I checked out as first pilot and felt good about it, 'cause I had graduated from Fighter Advanced Flying School in Marianna, Florida. I had been

hoping for P-51's and somehow ended up in B-25s and was still in one piece! Finally I flew my fifty-fifth and last mission in combat.

I flew with the best crews a fellow could ask for, and I appreciated each one, and was honored to have served in combat with them.

In late June I took off for the U.S.A. in my old #56 ("Fearless Fosdick"), renamed "GW Special" for my wife Georgia. As I left, and said "good by", my old crew Chief came up to me and said, "I wish that I was flying home with you," That was the best compliment I ever got for flying.

We took the southern route, with Tokyo tank in the bomb bay. We hit the worst storm on

the last leg home. A hurricane had passed through three days before. We caught rain, thunder and lightening, rough winds. The sea was running 75 foot waves. We lost 500 to 1,000 feet, first up then down. My co-pilot, Havens with three missions, helped me hold that B-25 right side up! We got permission to go down to 2,000 feet from 8,000 and soon after we broke out into bright sunshine, with both engines running and both wings still attached.

Came into Savannah, Georgia, where I made the smoothest landing of my life. And in front of six C-47 troop carrier pilots at that! When they towed my B-25 away, I had a lump in my throat as big as an apple. Even to this day, I don't think it's all gone away! I was lucky, for God more than once rode as my co-pilot.

GOT 'EM BOTH

487th

(The story is written on the reverse side of the photograph in pencil. The author did not identify himself.)

"On the afternoon of April 28th, we ran a 2nd mission, with the same crew, Hank Schreiner, Birn, Luke and myself leading. The target was a small R.R. bridge over a stream at Orvieto Station. The bridge had been hit by the 321st a few days earlier, and was still down, so Luke aimed at the road bridge across the river. The first bombs hit the bridge, knocking out a whole span. The second squadron hit the primary target, scoring direct hits on the bridge and repair equipment. We also covered roads and road junctions. I was Lead Navigator for the whole Wing on this mission. The other units split off at the I.P. to go to different targets."

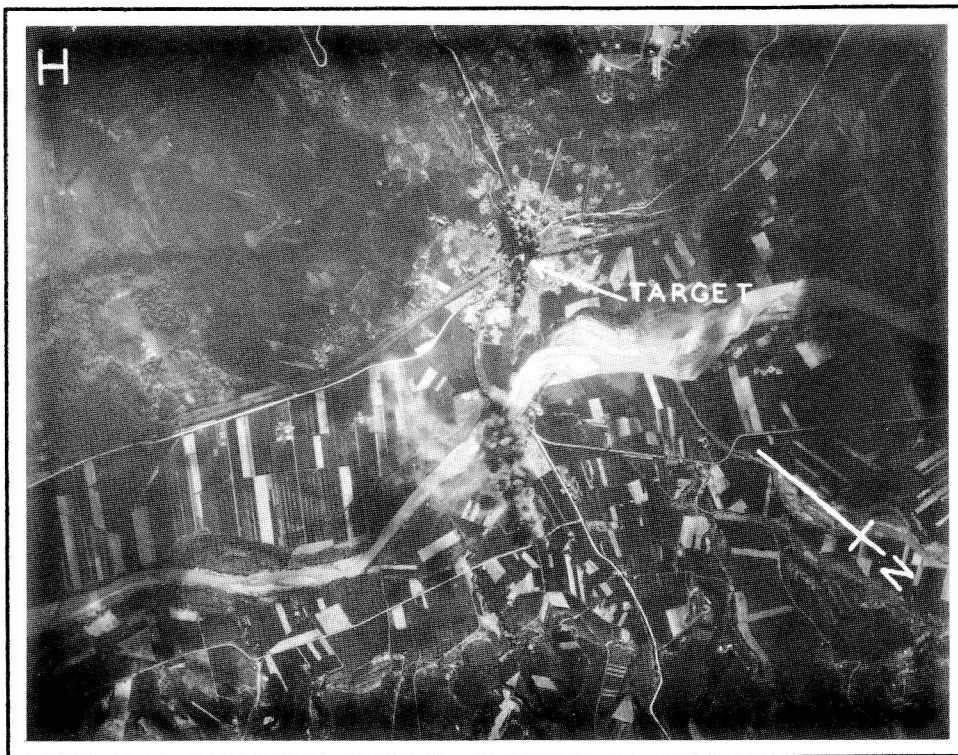


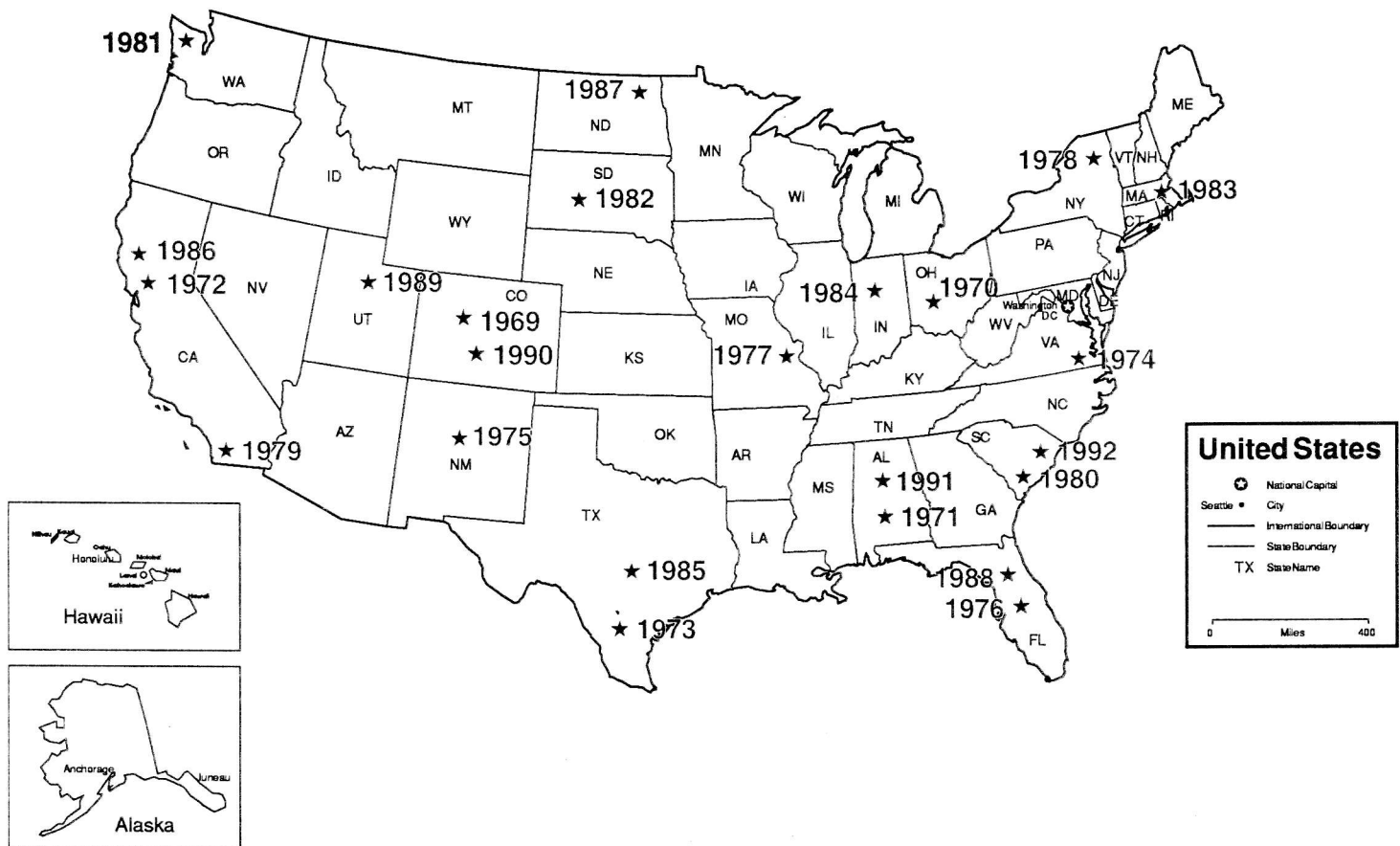
Photo from the collection of Paul Spencer 487

The 57th Bomb Wing



Association
1967 - 1992

57th WING REUNION SITES



1969 Denver, Colorado
 1970 Dayton, Ohio
 1971 Montgomery, Alabama
 1972 San Francisco, California
 1973 San Antonio, Texas
 1974 Williamsburg, Virginia
 1975 Albuquerque, New Mexico
 1976 Innisbrook, Florida
 1977 St. Louis, Missouri
 1978 Lake Placid, New York
 1979 San Diego, California
 1980 Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

1981 Seattle, Washington
 1982 Rapid City, South Dakota
 1983 Danvers, Massachusetts
 1984 South Bend, Indiana
 1985 Fort Worth, Texas
 1986 Sacramento, California
 1987 Grand Forks, North Dakota
 1988 Orlando, Florida
 1989 Salt Lake City
 1990 Colorado Springs, Colorado
 1991 Huntsville, Alabama
 1992 Columbia, South Carolina

Had A Humble Beginning

Over the years, starting in 1969 members of the 57th Wing have held gatherings, or reunions, mini-reunions, overseas trips, cruises, and bus trips to scenic places.

We had promised each other we'd meet after the war, no matter where we were. These were friendships forged in battle and which would last until the end of our very lives.

Ask a 57th Bomb Wing veteran what he remembers most vividly and he'll get a far away look in his eyes and tell you about the times he and his friends were the closest, especially during danger. He will cover the times they tried to bring a little joy into each others lives, when they talked to each other of the girl they married, and then had to leave all too soon for war, it was common to confide our hopes and dreams to our tent-mates and friends.

These "gatherings" truly have served the same purpose helping us to remember those days, some "good" and some not so good. They help us remember those who did not return.

John W. Dillin, a staff officer assigned to the 57th Wing headquarters during WWII, is THE PERSON who deserves our ever lasting gratitude for the establishment of our Bomb Wing Association and for starting our annual reunions.



The birth of our getting together with former wartime comrades began in 1967, when John Dillin located John B. Fenner, a war time friend, also a former officer with the Wing headquarters. These two old friends thought it would be a good idea if they got more wartime buddies involved. Fenner produced a list of names and addresses he had from the war. This is when Dillin went to work and did us

all a great favor.

John wrote letters to everyone on the above mentioned list. Gradually he began to receive responses. One person led to another. To offset his personal expenses, such as postage and later a newsletter, he established a two dollar membership fee. After two years of corresponding, and with fingers crossed, he scheduled the first reunion for June 1969 in Denver, Colorado. The 57th Bomb Wing Association was off and flying, thanks to John's untiring efforts.

Holds Annual Reunions

DENVER COLORADO

2 - 4 June 1969

John Dillin and his wife Marie, did all of the work from planning to the end of this first reunion, twenty four years after the end of WWII. It was such a success that there has been one every year since. Marie, a pilot, flew John around the country to organize this first one, as well as the next two.

The Denver reunion was held at the Brown Palace Hotel, during graduation week of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Originally 42 persons made reservations. John and Marie sat at the registration desk and started to sign people in. By the time of the first dinner, they had 78 persons registered. What a tribute to John and Marie for their efforts.

The events arranged for the evening were a film provided by Martin Marietta showing old, as well as new, aircraft in flight, and an exciting Air Force Academy football film. The next day they all went to the Academy where General Knapp presented a copy of "The Battle of the Brenner" for the Academy Library. After attending the Cadet graduation parade, they drove to Fort Carson for a luncheon meeting. At the luncheon Colonel Raymond F. Johnson from the current 57th Air Division gave a presentation on the history of the "57th" since World War II. John had to leave, due to a death of a close family member, and Marie took over all of the responsibilities for the rest of the reunion.

The biggest event during this first reunion, and due to John's efforts in obtaining tickets, was the graduation ceremonies at the Academy which drew a record crowd partly due to President Nixon being the commencement speaker. The Thunderbirds flew a show at the graduation.

The delegates voted John Dillin to be Chairman of the 57th Bomb Wing Association, a tribute well earned. They also voted to have a reunion the following year at Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio.

DAYTON, OHIO

18 - 20 June, 1970

The second reunion was held in Dayton, Ohio, home of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The headquarters hotel was the Sheraton Dayton in the downtown area of the city. John Dillin, again, was the Reunion Chairman even though he lived in Florida. He was assisted by Colonel Richard Tipton, a former 57th man, stationed at Wright-Patterson AFB.

One hundred and forty-eight 57th men and women were in attendance for this occasion. Special activities included, a day at Wright-Patterson AFB complete with luncheon at the Officers's Club, and a visit to the Air Force Museum.

A Dayton newspaper, in announcing the arrival of the 57th Bomb Wing, referred to us as the "Zany World War II Wing" depicted so graphically by Joe Heller (488th) in his best seller book "Catch 22".

General Robert D. Knapp served as guest speaker at the Fellowship Banquet, with Ned Heilig (489th) as Master of Ceremonies. Ned Heilig was elected Chairman of the Association replacing John Dillin, with John Dillin (57th) being elected Secretary/Treasurer. Later the title "Chairman" was changed to "President".

General Willis F. Chapman (340th) also spoke at the banquet

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

8 - 10 July, 1971

The Governor's House Motel in Montgomery served as headquarters for our third reunion. A former 57th man, Colonel Walter Cook, of Maxwell AFB, and John Dillin were responsible for local arrangements for this reunion.

Many of the activities were held at Maxwell AFB. Our guest speakers were Brig. Gen. Richard N. Ellis, Commander of the Civil Air Patrol, and Colonel Jack Cassidy, Southeast Region Commander of the C.A.P. There was an informal golf match, at Maxwell AFB. Harry Logan (379th) was elected President and Hal Lynch (489th) was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

At the Fellowship banquet on July 9th, our guest speaker was Wayne C. Clinton his topic, "The 747". The banquet program closed with a special multi-media show, produced by Hal Lynch, entitled "The Sights and Sounds of Yesteryear." We had one hundred and sixty men and women in attendance.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

3 - 6 July 1972

The Oakland tribune devoted a full page of its regular edition, in mid-July, in tribute to the 1972 reunion of the 57th Bomb Wing. The article was entitled, "Flyingest Outfit Vets Relive World War II."

This was the first reunion planned, and directed, by Hal Lynch, Secretary/Treasurer, and his wife Dottie. 270 men and women attended the four-day event which was headquartered in the San Francisco Hilton. "The City by The Bay" was a great attraction for the 57th men and their families. Local chairman for the San Francisco Reunion was Ned Heilig, 489th.

Tours included Chinatown with a complete dinner, the Gold Coast, Fisherman's Wharf, Hamilton AFB, The Hamilton AFB visit was especially interesting since a B-25 was on display on the flight line. The highlight of the sight-seeing was the boat cruise around San Francisco Bay.

Wing President, Harry Logan (379th) presided over the business meeting.

Russ Ball, a 9th Air Force man, served as Toast-master at the Fellowship banquet. With his marvelous repartee, had his audience laughing from start to finish. President Logan presented General Robert D. Knapp with a

painting of the general, painted by a well known Massachusetts' artist. Guest speaker at the banquet was Colonel Norris Overly, a former P.O.W. in Vietnam. His talk was timely and informative.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

11 - 15 July, 1973

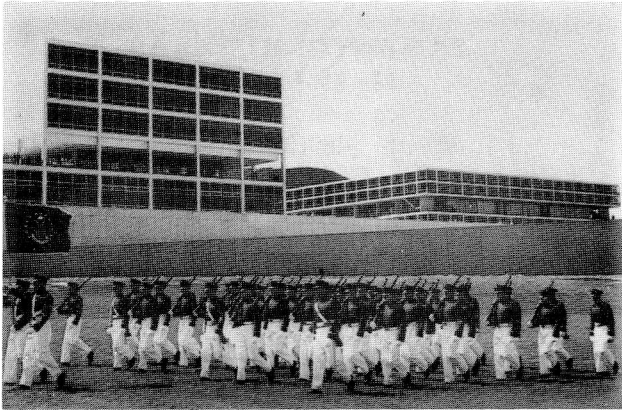
J.J. Walsh (489th) served as Reunion Chairman for fifth reunion held in San Antonio, Texas.

Over 300 men and women, and a few young people, were in attendance at the Alamo City Reunion. With the Hilton Palacio del Rio, located directly on the famous River Walk, as headquarters, the reunion was destined to be outstanding. Tours included a dinner-theater ("Born Yesterday"), and outdoor riverside show called "Fiesta Noche del Rio, The Alamo, the Mexican Market, the Japanese Tea Garden, Hemisfair Plaza and the Tower of the Americas, the Spanish Governor's Place, tour and lunch at Randolph Field ("The West Point of the Air"), all added up to an enjoyable time in San Antonio.

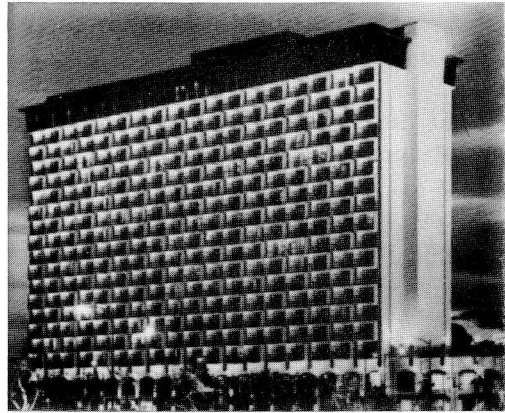
A special feature of the reunion was a huge reception in honor of former crew chiefs. At Randolph AFB 57th members saw, for the first time, a color slide show called "The Way We Were and Are." The show depicted 57th men in photos as they appeared in 1943-'44-'45 and as they appear today, with appropriate commentary. At the business meeting Byron Link (380th) was elected President.

The Fellowship banquet, always a highlight, is remembered largely because of the Toastmaster, Jack Casper (489th) was excellent. Another feature was the showing of a 16mm film entitled "The 57th Bomb Wing Remembered." This film, a 40 minute production, was edited, and narrated, by Bill Blume a 340th man. The program was compiled from official World War II films of the Wing in combat

We must apologise for not being able to present at least one photograph from each and every site where our annual reunions were held. Shown here are a few of the places where a grand time was had by all who were able to be present. We have not shown any of the sites where the "mini-reunions were held. Space simply was not available.



Air Force Academy Cadets
Denver, CO 1969



Hilton Palacio del Rio Hotel
San Antonio, CA 1973



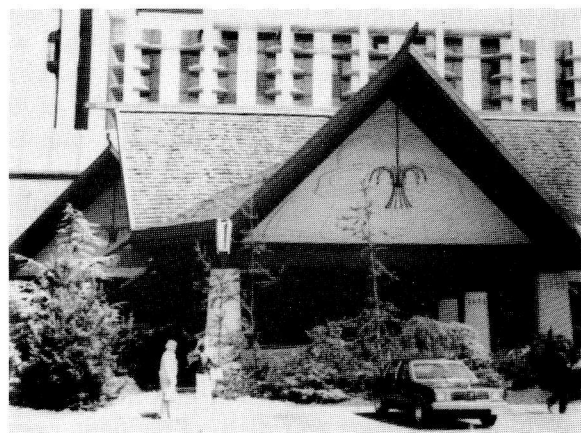
Chase-Park Plaza Hotel
St. Louis, MO 1977



Lake Placid Country Club
Lake Placid, NY 1978



Town and Country Hotel
San Diego, CA 1979



Red Lion Sea-Tac Motor Inn
Seattle, WA 1981

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

24 - 28 July, 1974

Headquarters for the Williamsburg Reunion was, the attractive Hilton 1776 Inn. Local chairmen for the reunion were A.A. "Bud" West (448th) and Harry Logan (379th). "Bud" also served as Toast-master at the Fellowship banquet.

The Williamsburg Reunion was highlighted with a couple of 57th Bomb Wing "firsts". For example, the first Robert D. Knapp Golf Tournament, now a tradition, was played at Langley AFB golf course. The winner, incidentally, was Harry Norris (487th) with a sparkling 77.

An outdoor barbecue was one of the outstanding features, and is remembered as one of the best in all of the 57th's reunions. There was a Dixie-Land Band concert, a Broadway stage show entitled, "An Evening With Cole Porter," a day was spent at Langley AFB.

In the absence of President Bud Link (380th) the business meeting was presided over by Vice-president Leonard Sansone (489th). Harold Oyster (439th) was elected to the Presidency.

Bud West served as Toastmaster for the Fellowship banquet which featured the first presentation of the "Men of the 57th", an 18 minute multi-media program featuring color slides, a 16mm color cinema production, background music, and a narrative written by Hal Lynch (489th). This program received a standing ovation from the gathering of 386 men and women of the Wing.

General Ira C. Eaker, former Commanding General of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force was the guest speaker, being introduced by General Willis F. Chapman. In retrospect, those who attended the Williamsburg reunion recall, with pleasure, the delicious Plantation dinner (Peanut soup).

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

16 - 20 July, 1975

Thanks to the tremendous turn-out by the 319th Bomb Group which was due to the diligent efforts of Harold and Esther Oyster, the Albuquerque Reunion attracted over 600 men, women and young people of the 57th. The local chairman was Jim Nichols (379th).

This reunion, headquartered at the Hilton Hotel, saw the introduction of the individual group dinner program on the reunion's opening night. Following these dinners all in attendance gathered together to see a new B-25 film entitled, "On Final Forever." John Neel (446th) was responsible for the 57th having the opportunity to see this beautiful film.

Special reunion programs included a cable car ride to the top of Sandia Mountain range for lunch, a bus trip to the "Barn" for dinner, and a Broadway comedy, a day at Kirkland AFB for a tour of the Atomic Museum and lunch, the R.D.Knapp golf Tournament, and a reception in tribute to former P.O.W's in attendance. At the business meeting, Harold Oyster (439th) was re-elected President for the coming year.

Guest speaker at the Fellowship Banquet was former 340th Flight Surgeon, Dr. Albert Brussell. Arthur Knievel served nobly as Toastmaster.

The 319th Bomb group, the best represented group at the Reunion, held a special business meeting at which time they appointed a committee to look at the suggestion of holding their own annual reunion, apart from the 57th Reunions, however. all 319th members were encouraged to attend both annual meetings.

NOTE-

The 319th conducted a survey of their members, and they decided prior to the 57th reunion in 1976, to hold their own separate reunions.

INNISBROOK, FLORIDA

14 - 18 July 1976

We were most fortunate to have the opportunity of holding our 1976 Reunion at the famous Innisbrook Resort, one of the nation's most spectacular resort areas. 450 Men and women, and their families were in attendance to live in the lap of luxury throughout the reunion.

Tours included visits to Busch Gardens, the Tom Sawyer dinner cruise on Tampa Bay, a Country Dinner Theater production, a visit to Weeki Wachee Springs, and Disney World. Also included was a pool party, a barbecue and Rock night for the many teenagers who were present. The Robert D. Knapp Golf Tournament was held on the outstanding Copperhead Course, one of Florida's most attractive golf courses.

At the 57th business meeting Arnold (Ben) Bodine (447th) and Charles Hartenstine (310th) were elected President and Vice-president respectively. Also the Secretary/Treasurer reported that the Wing was not only solvent, but in excellent financial condition.

Once more John Dillin was the local representative for the Reunion. George Ghetia (447th) served as Toastmaster for the fellowship Banquet. Astronaut Donald K. "Deke" Slayton was guest speaker at the Fellowship Banquet. This 340th and 319th man made his first space flight as Apollo docking module pilot on the well remembered Apollo-Soyuz mission in 1975.

Another feature of the Innisbrook Reunion was the distribution of a new 57th Bomb Wing publication called "Remembrances", edited by Hal Lynch. This book contained a collection of World War II memories written by 57th men, as well as a brief history of the Wing and each group within the Wing. .

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

14 - 18 July,, 1977

Perhaps one of the enduring memories of the St. Louis Reunion has to do with the heat. The 104 degrees took its toll of the golfers.

Thanks to the careful planning of Byron and Helen Cary (489th), this reunion was one of the Wing's best. Some 500 men, women and their families attended. The headquarters Chase-Park Plaza Hotel. Ben Bodine (447) was re-elected President.

Tours included visits to such places as Six Flags Amusement Park, The Gateway Arch, The Old Cathedral Church, the Jefferson Monument, the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, A Mississippi River Boat Cruise and dance, and a tour of Scott AFB. At Scott AFB we were entertained by the Air Force "Band of Mid America" and by a remarkable young singer, named Angelo Ponti. We also dined at Stan Musial's Restaurant, and "Stan the Man" himself stopped by to chat with our most dedicated baseball fans.

Chaplin Jim Cooper (340th) was Toastmaster at the banquet where the first 57th BombWing Service Award was presented to John Dillin, founder of the Wing Reunion Program in 1969. Four 57th members, Charles Lungren (447th), Anna Glasford (445th), Lynn Montgomery (son of John and Jenny (489th), and Dorothy Beagan (daughter of Dan and Dorothy (489th) captured the hearts of all in attendance at the banquet with stirring presentation entitled "Thank you, 57th Bomb Wing." Dancing followed the banquet program.

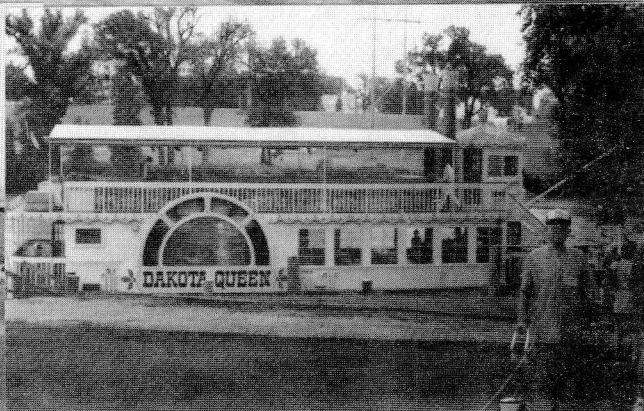
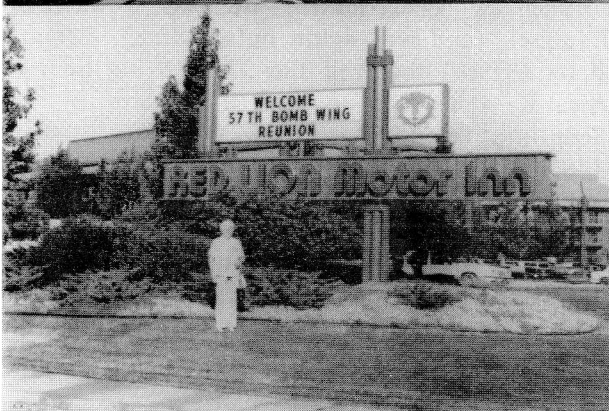
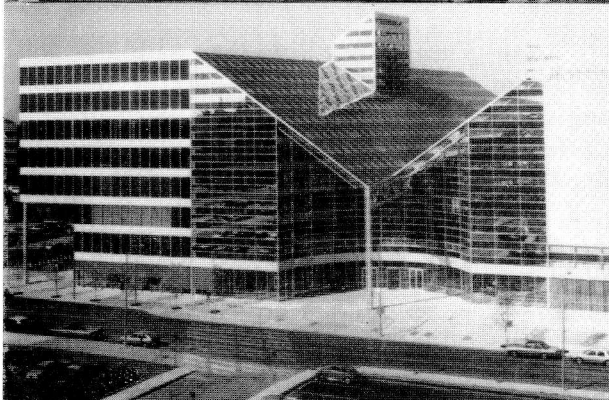
LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK

21 - 25 June,, 1978

Peter Remington (310th and 321st) served as host to the 509 men and women who arrived at Lake Placid. It was just a few months before the Winter Olympic Games, so we had a chance to see the Olympic Village and all of the preparation for the games.

The weather was ideal for the sight-seeing tours and all of the things planned for our pleasure. A 488th man, Bill Shealy, and his wife "Pinky, came all the way from Wiesbaden, Germany.

The city of Plattsburgh, New York proclaimed June 23rd as "57th Bomb Wing Day". and generously displayed signs and newspaper articles to emphasize it. While one



#1 A trip to Mount Rushmore
from Rapid City, SD 1982

#2 Sightseeing in
Danvers, MA 1983

#3 South Bend Marriott Hotel
South Bend, Indiana 1984

#4 The Green Oaks Inn,
Fort Worth, TX 1985

#5 Red Lion Motor Inn,
Sacramento, CA 1986

#6 Delta Queen River Boat
Grand Forks, ND 1987

#7 Red Lion Hotel
Salt Lake City, Utah 1989

of our busses was being refueled, before taking us to Plattsburg AFB for lunch, a local man was looking up at the big "57th Bomb Wing" sign on the side of the bus and said, "What is this 57th Bomb Wing?", we explained to him that we are the organization that flew B-25's in the Mediterranean during WWII. He said, "I flew a B-25 in the Mediterranean." Someone asked him, "What Group were you in?" "I don't know. All I remember is that I was in squadron. Bill Chapman asked him if he was married, he replied, "Yes", so Bill told him to go home and get his wife and join us at 12:00 o'clock at the Officers Club for lunch. When he and his wife arrived, Hal Lynch had arranged for them to be seated at the head table next to General Knapp. They were treated as the prodigal son returned.

Note:

The man identified himself as Paul Maicus 381st. (p.s.. He joined up and is still a member)

A. A. "Bud" West (448th) was elected President of the Wing at the Mens Business Meeting.

Forest Nettles (447th) served as Toast-master for the Banquet. The 57th Wing Service Award was presented to General Robert D. Knapp for his many contributions to the growth and development of the Wing.

A highlight included the Fellowship Banquet guest speaker Dr. John Nestor, (Flight Surgeon for the 489th). It was Dr. Nestor who blew the whistle on the drug Thalidomide which produced defects in new born children.

A few weeks after the reunion a letter was received from a college student who was a waitress at the Lake Placid Club, where we stayed. She wrote, *"Just a few words to extend my appreciation for your kindness during your stay at Lake Placid Inn. You were by far, the greatest people I've seen here yet. I only wish that you could have been with us a lot longer. The 57th Bomb Wing will always remain in my heart. Thanks again for making my job such a pleasure."* Suzy Mack, Waitress, Lake Placid Inn

There couldn't have been a nicer compliment to the 57th Wing.

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

10 - 15 July, 1979

Again we surpassed the 500 mark in attendance. Two Doolittle Raiders, Trav Hoover (379th) and Bill Bower (428th) added much to the event by their attendance. Over 40 states were represented on the roster at the Town and Country Hotel. This hotel had the largest jaccuzzi any of us had ever seen.

San Diego, one of the nation's most attractive cities, had much to offer the men and women of the 57th. Local Chairman, John Coffey, ably assisted by his wife Marjorie, lined up the Miramar Naval Air Station, and golf at the famous Torrey Pines Golf Course. At the men's business meeting, A.A. "Bud" West was re-elected president for the coming year.

Once again 9th Air Force man Russ Ball served as Toast-master at the Fellowship Banquet, (and was again outstanding). Edward Betts (379th) received the 57th Wing Service Award, which was presented to him by his longtime friend Art Barny. Alex Stewart (489th) led the entire group in a marvelous song fest.

On Sunday morning, at the farewell Brunch the eleventh reunion came to a dramatic finish as Charlie Brewton (437th) reminded all of us why we were at this reunion, and why our Nation was worth fighting for.

The first edition of the Wing Directory of Members, "Men of the 57th" was distributed at the San Diego reunion. This book lists each and every member alphabetically, geographically, and by unit. The book was subsidized through the Wing treasury.

MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

8 - 13 July 1980

560 men and women of the 57th attended the Myrtle Beach reunion, which was held in

the beautiful Hilton Hotel located right on the beach.

While there were many enduring memories of this reunion, the most lasting had to be the appearance of a B-25 (9-D) flying over the hotel and along the beach on its way to the Myrtle Beach AFB. Thanks to F. Gene Fisher of Pennsylvania, owner and pilot of the plane. In the crew was Don Porter (489th) and his attractive daughter Tina

Special features of this reunion included an All Wing program featuring the showing of the Frank Capra film, "War Comes to America", luncheon at Myrtle Beach AFB, a dinner program with squadron friends, and a 57th Wing Luau.

The Fellowship Banquet was highlighted by the appearance of Colonel Travis Hoover (379th) as the guest speaker. Colonel Hoover was the second man off the carrier, USS Hornet, on the famous Doolittle Raid on Tokyo in April 1942. At the conclusion of his talk he was recognized with a standing ovation from the entire audience. Charles Brewton (319th) served as Toastmaster at the Banquet.

The 57th Service Award was presented to Ned Heilig (489th) by President A.A. "Bud" West. When former president Heilig received the award, he stated that this was the greatest honor he had ever received.

Local Chairman for the Reunion was Charles Hartenstein (310th). At the annual business meeting, Art Barny (379th) was elected president. A special award was given to Jack Goodhart (445th) for traveling from Kwajalein Island, part of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, to attend the Reunion. The Reunion closed on Sunday morning with the Farewell Brunch following a stirring talk by Ed Dombrowski of the 487th.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

13 - 19 July, 1981

Speaking at the Farewell brunch at the Red Lion Inn on Sunday, July 19, Sam Monger (445th) commented that "the warm friendship demonstrated by all 57th men and women

made our annual reunions more than worthwhile for everyone fortunate enough to attend these events".

It may well be that Sam's comments best describe the entire spirit of the Seattle Reunion. Well over 500 men and women were in attendance at this Reunion. Ken Jones (381st) local chairman lined up a series of tours and programs for those in attendance. Tours included visits to the Boeing Plant, Tillicum Indian Village Cruise and dinner, and a tour of the city of Seattle.

The Fellowship Banquet was especially memorable for three reasons, the third appearance of Russ Ball of the 9th Air Force as Toastmaster, the talk by General Robert D. Knapp on his experience on the Mexican Border with General Pershing. The Service Award was presented to James J. Walsh (489th). Art Barny was re-elected President at the Wing business meeting.

The Seattle Reunion will long be remembered for the feeling of friendliness which permeated the event from start to finish. Local chairman Ken and Betty Jones planned a marvelous 57th Reunion, up to the standard of all previous 57th Reunions.

The sudden death, during the reunion, of Al Solkovy (489th) came as a shock to everyone

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

7 - 11 JULY 1982

Over 500 57th men and women attended the 1982 Reunion, in South Dakota, with headquarters in the Howard Johnson Hotel. Reunion Chairman, Homer Swan (381st) was assisted by Jewell Parker (445th) in making the local arrangements. They planned a number of exciting tours in this dramatic area.

For example. . . An evening at the race track, . . . A tour of Mt. Rushmore (Where we were greeted by the Hill City Fife and Drum Corps), The Black Hills Passion Play (with John Dillin as a member of the cast),. . . the Black Hills, Deadwood City, . . . and the Flying T Chuck Wagon . . . all of these events were part of the overall Reunion program. A new event, the Squadron get-together, was introduced at

this reunion. Nick Loveless (486th) was the man who suggested this feature.

At the annual business meeting Edward Dombrowski (487th) was elected President of the Wing for the upcoming year, and Sam Monger (445th) as vice-president.

The Fellowship Banquet, with Ed Dombrowski as Toastmaster, featured two young Rapid City High School students, a lady soloist and a young male pianist, who dedicated a song to General Robert D. Knapp. The song was, "Mister Wonderful". The 57th Wing Service Award was presented to Byron Cary (489th), of Jerseyville, Illinois. Byron and Helen Cary have dedicated years of work and love to the 57th Bomb Wing. A surprise presentation was made by General Knapp of a plaque to Hal Lynch and wife Dottie for their years of work on behalf of the Wing.

DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS

19 - 24 July, 1983

The Danvers Reunion is remembered not only because of that delicious clam bake held at the Radisson-Ferncroft Hotel, but for a number of other reasons, including the fact that this was the best attended 57th Reunion to date. Over 700 men and women were registered at the annual Fellowship Banquet.

The most memorable event of the entire Reunion had to be the wonderful air show put on by the "Blue Angels" of the United States Navy. Etched against a back ground of white clouds, the demonstration by the Navy pilots was doubly dramatic.

Tours of picturesque Cape Ann and the historic Quincy Market Place in downtown Boston were part of the Reunion program, as well as a visit to the USS Constitution "Old Ironsides."

At the Fellowship Banquet, two 57th men were honored. General Robert D. Knapp was presented with a large photograph, properly engraved. It now hangs in the Daedalian Room of the Maxwell AFB Officers Club. And Charles Brewton (437th) was presented the annual 57th Bomb Wing Service Award.

Fred Harlan (488th) led us in song and comedy as the Fellowship Banquet Toastmaster. Following dinner we danced to the music of Ted Herbert's 16 piece orchestra. Band leader Herbert also introduced a new song, "Bomb Wing 57" written by James R. Centorino, son-in-law of Hank and Dorothy Fallone (447th). At the business meeting, presided over by Ed Dombrowski, John Sutay (446th), Wing Historian, introduced a plan to have a bronze plaque, in tribute to the 57th, installed at the Air Force Academy Cemetery. Approval was given for the purchase, through the 57th treasury, of the plaque. Sutay announced that the plaque would be installed at a ceremony at the Academy in the spring of 1984, with 57th members and Air Force Academy.

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

11 - 16 September 1984

Headquarters for the South Bend Reunion was the beautiful Mariott Hotel located in the heart of downtown South Bend. Joseph Semanak (487th) was the local chairman.

Perhaps the highlight of the Reunion was the presentation by a group of Notre Dame University Glee Club on Wednesday night. These young men entertained the 57th men and women present with a variety of choral type music, including the famous Notre Dame Fight song "Cheer, Cheer for Old Notre Dame", and the "Air Force Song". Notre Dame University was an important part of the Reunion with a tour of the campus, complete with guides, and the Robert D. Knapp Golf Tournament being played at the University golf course.

Other activities included tours of Grissom AFB, the University Mall, St. Mary's College, and a marvelous Air Show at the Municipal Air Port with four B-25's on display, three of which put on a flying demonstration.

Arthur Barny (379th) received the Annual Service Award at the Fellowship Banquet. A former Wing President, Art has been one of the Wing's strongest and most loyal workers. Art was also the Banquet Toastmaster. Dancing to the "Nostalgics" followed the dinner program which featured a showing of

"The Men of the 57th". At the business meeting Sam Monger (445th) was elected President for the coming year.

In his final appearance as Executive Director of the Wing after 14 years of service, the speaker at the Farewell Brunch was Hal Lynch (489th). His subject was "Enduring Memories of the 57th". Shortly after the South Bend Reunion the functions formerly handled by Hal Lynch were split with Robert Evans (487th) as Wing Coordinator, Dave Mershon (487th), as Membership chairman and Arthur Barney (389th) Wing Editor.

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

25 - 29 September, 1985

Ben Kanowsky (488th) was the original site chairman for the Fort Worth, but due to failing health, he resigned. Ben passed away on July 12, 1985. Due to Ben's untimely death, a group including Mary Marth Hackney, J.J. Walsh, Bob Schauffler, Bob Evans, Bill Chapman, Frank McGowan, and Millard Harper all pitched in and pulled off a very fine reunion at the Green Oaks Inn. That sort of cooperation is what the 57th Bomb Wing Association is all about.

Events at the reunion, for the 573 people who attended were: The R.D. Knapp Golf Tournament at Boaz, a municipal course; the Mexican Patio Dinner Party, visits to the Fort Worth Stockyards, and shuttle bus tours to many places of interest..

At the business meeting Vernon Schmoke (447th), displayed an architect's rendering of a 57th Bomb Wing Memorial to be installed at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio, with approval of the membership. Schmoke, who spearheaded this program, announced that the project would cost about \$10,000.00. Thanks largely to the efforts of Joseph Semenak (487th), over \$10,000.00 was collected from 57th members privately for this project. The memorial was installed and later dedicated in a special ceremony at Wright Patterson AFB in September 1986, with a number of 57th men and women present.

Brigadier General Joel McKean, USAF, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C.

was the guest speaker at the Wing Banquet. Sam Monger completed his term as President of the Association and turned the gavel over to George Mercea (447th). Bob Evans (487th) received the Wing Service Award.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

6 - 10 August, 1986

The Sacramento Reunion, handled by Bob O'Clock (486th) and Paul King (445th), was held at the Red Lion Motor Inn. Neither of them lived in the local area and had to travel many miles to put together a wonderful week of activities. What the two men packed into each day of activities is remembered by all who attended, as it had something for everyone. Some of the events included the Robert D. Knapp Golf Tournament, shuttle bus tours, and the Groups dinners followed by Wing presentation of "The Men of the 57th".

There was an all day tour to the wine country as well as the all day tour to lake Tahoe and the casinos. We also visited Mather AFB for a briefing and lunch at the NCO Club, followed by a static display of aircraft. A number of our members had trained there during World War II as pilots, navigators and maintenance personnel. One evening we had a grand time at a Hawaiian Luau Buffet, pool-side at the Sacramento Inn.

At the 57th Banquet, our own "Deke" Slayton, one of the original astronauts, was our guest speaker. Charles Brewton (437th) was elected President. There were three Wing Service Awards . . . Sam Monger (445th) . . . Ed Dombrowski (487th) . . . Joe Semenak (487th) (in memorium), were the deserved recipients.

Added excitement at departure time on Sunday had everyone running out to check their cars as Bob Evans had two tires ripped off, J.J. Walsh had a lock broken and Ed Dombrowski had his Alabama legislator license plate stolen.

GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

21 - 25 July 1987

The reunion was scheduled to coincide with

the dedication of the B-25 "FLO" for permanent display on the Grand Forks AFB, and with the arrival of the new B-1B bombers assigned to the 319th Bomb Wing. The Commander of the 321st Strategic Missile Wing also stationed there, conducted the B-25 dedication ceremonies, with Bill Chapman (340th) giving the invocation. The Base held an "open house" which gave us all a chance to see the B-1B bomber, as well as many other interesting pieces of military equipment. It was a real thrill for our members to visit a base where two of our war time Groups, now called Wings, were currently based, and to have a B-25 permanently displayed there.

Four motels closely located were used by 450 members with the Ramada as our headquarters. Everyone enjoyed the scenic River Boat Cruise on the Red River of the North which divides Minnesota and North Dakota. The ride included a fine dinner especially arranged by the co-chairmen John O'Keefe (445th) and Ernest "Hod" Hutson (447th). These two did a great job of furnishing all of us a really nostalgic time. The highlight of the Wing Banquet was the two songs, "The Lords Prayer" and "God Bless America" sung by Robert Hutson and Linda Johnson, son and daughter of "Hod" Hutson.

Burns Day was elected President for the coming year. A first occurred at this reunion . . . Loren and Annie Glasford were awarded the Wing Service Award, the first time it has been awarded to a couple.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

21 - 25 September, 1988

The Orlando reunion was the largest the Wing ever had. There were 688 advance registrations and 53 "walk-ins" for a grand total of 741 people signed in, for nearly a week in the sun while staying at the Holiday Inn. The number of 57th people actually making an appearance was even greater. Some of those living in the nearby area, but not registered, dropped into the hospitality room for a bit of camaraderie at the Holiday Inn.

There was plenty to do for everyone, such as the R.D. Knapp Golf Tournament. Seaworld,

Epcot and Disney World, the tour of the Kennedy Space Center was considered by many as outstanding.

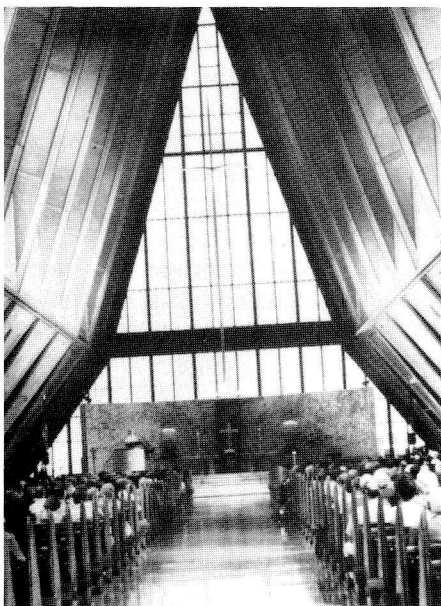
The Wing program following the group dinners provided a most unusual surprise for every one. Bill Chapman (340th) had arranged to have an unidentified person as the speaker for the evening. Bill introduced him as a Russian, employed by the Soviet government and working out of the United Nations and the Soviet Embassy to promote trade between the United States and Russia. The man spoke very good English with a Russian accent, and was very straight forward in his strong presentation. He had a question and answer session after the speech. A lot of questions were about the Berlin Wall which was still up at that time. In conclusion, he received a fair applause. Bill then call him back to the mike to add something he hadn't covered in the introduction. He said the speaker was born and educated in the U.S. and was not a Russian at all. Further he was Dr. Charles Vetter who had been used by various U.S. Agencies to present his controversial talk on the U.S. and Soviet relations, while assuming the position of being a Russian diplomat. The main point was "not to believe everything that you see and hear". The experience was very enlightening to all of us.

Charles Brewton (439th) was the local chairman for our biggest reunion. John Coffey (380th) was elected President of the Association replacing Burns Day (488th). Dave Mershon (487th) was awarded the Wing Service Award. It was announced that for health reasons Art Barny had resigned as Wing Editor, and Paul Peck (447th) had been appointed in his place.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

17 - 23 July, 1989

The Association met in Salt Lake City at the Red Lion Inn where LaVar Reese (487th) and Bob Hammar (445th) and their wives put forth a great deal of effort coordinating the Wing's activities with local events. The reunion coincided with the annual Utah Pioneer Days Celebration and especially the "Pioneer Days Parade" featuring many beautiful horses and riders as well as many Conestoga wagons.



Our memorial service
U.S. Air Force Academy Chapel
Colorado Springs, CO 1990

**BUT, HERE'S WHERE IT ALL
COMES TOGETHER.**

The Salt Palace, an arena, was filled with our people to see the rodeo where special mention was made that the 57th Bomb Wing from World War II was in attendance. This resulted in a loud applause. A bus trip was made to Wendover, Utah for games of chance. Also large numbers of people spent time researching their family trees at the famous Latter Day Saints Genealogy Library. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir in rehearsal was another event a large group attended. Here again the Wing was mentioned as being present. City tours were available to the Capital, the Mormon Temple Square and also to the great Salt Lake. The main downtown area is clean and neat with unusually wide streets. The city really did make us feel welcome in every way.

At the reunion, Nick Loveless (486th) was elected president of the Association replacing John Coffey (380th). Bill Chapman (340th) received the Wing Service Award.

A highlight of this reunion was the



The Von Braun Civic Center
Huntsville, AL 1991



investment of General Knapp, and John Dillin as "Fellows" in the General Jimmy Doolittle Educational Fellowship Program by Jack C. Price, President of the Air Force Association.

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 1 - 7 October, 1990

The reunion was held in the scenic splendor of the Rockies at the Sheraton Hotel. John Dillin (57Hq) was the chairman for the affair. This was no easy task when one considers that he lives 1,500 miles away in Florida. Howard Bettinger (445th) and his wife Lee, provided vital local assistance. Local tours were available plus a tour of Pikes Peak. One day was spent at the Air Force Academy with a welcome at Arnold Hall, a Remembrance Day service by Rev. Glenn Black (381st) in the beautiful and unique Cadet Chapel. The cadet formation, and parade at noon, was followed by lunch at the NCO Club, and a visit to the Academy Cemetery which contains our own 57th

cemetery was later than scheduled and had to be shortened due to the burial ceremony for General Curtis LeMay

Of the 634 members at the reunion, 275 spent Saturday afternoon at Falcon Stadium cheering the Air Force Cadets to a 21 - 7 victory over Navy. The weather was great that day, as it had been all week. Some people didn't leave until Monday and when they got up they found about 6 inches of snow had fallen.

All in all it was a very good reunion, enjoyed by everyone, Great events, great scenery and most of all, great fellowship!

Vada Westbrook (445th) was elected President of the Association for the ensuing year and A.A. "Bud" West awarded the 57th Wing Service Award.

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

7 - 12 October,, 1991

Once again we had a great reunion with close to 550 people in attendance. Old soldiers may pass away, but we airplane drivers just keep going, going, going, going, g o i n g, a n d g o i n g ..

How fortunaste we were to have Charlie Collins and his wife Jane handling the local arrangements. That was no easy task with them living in Birmingham.

The trip to the Space Center was enjoyed by a large number of people. The ladies enjoyed the shopping tour. The antebellum tour in Huntsville was a big attraction. While the Wing banquet was a success, the Barbecue and informal dance at the Jack Daniels Distillery was the highlight event.

At the Men's Business Meeting the body accepted the slate of officers headed by Ken Nelson (379) as President. . John Coffey (380) was presented the Wing Achievement Award.

IN ADDITION.

For the members who cannot attend the national reunions the 57th Wing Association holds annual "MINI" reunions. The country is divided into three areas (Eastern, Central and Western). Each year a site is selected in each area for a "MINI". In this manner members who are not able to spent the time or resources, or who are not able to travel greater distances, have a chance to renew their wartime friendships.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

22 - 27 September, 1992

PORTLAND, OREGON

6 - 13 September, 1993

OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

1994

Travel Together

Several times, after the reunion was over, a group of members went on a trip or tour. Four times it was back to the Mediterranean area. Other years it was simply a scenic tour of a place of beauty in the United States, and three times they traveled by ship on a cruise.

1973

A group of forty 57th Bomb Wing people

returned to the Mediterranean on a sentimental journey in October 1973. They returned to the places that had remained in their memory for almost thirty years. Four days on the island of Corsica, a side trip to the Isle of Capri, a lunch on the shore of Lake Garda, a drive through the Po Valley, a visit to Rome. How the memories flooded back! Some of them lunched in the village of Cervione where they found Corsicans who remembered them.

1976

Following the reunion the 57th Wing conducted "Operation Friendly Invasion", a return to the Mediterranean. They visited all of locations of the bases, on Corsica, used during the war. They then visited Nice, France, and continued on flying to Milan, Italy, then through the Po Valley as far as Verona. On to Venice the next day, and returning to Verona, Italy to travel northward through the Brenner Pass and on to Innsbruck and Salzburg, Austria, with a visit to Berchtesgaden (Hitler's Eagles Nest) and finally an evening at the Hoffbrauhaus in Munich before the flight back to the U.S.A.

1979

Following the reunion a group flew to Hawaii. The purpose of this post reunion trip was purely R & R. A visit was made to the hallowed ground of the Punchbowl National Cemetery.

1980

Following this reunion a group of 57th men and women flew to the island of Bermuda for a period of Rest and Recuperation.

1981

Following the Seattle reunion fifty men and women flew from Seattle to Victoria, B.C. They then boarded the Cunard Princess for a seven day cruise on the inland waterway to Alaska, and return. The scenery was unbelievably gorgeous.

1982

A post reunion trip following the Rapid City reunion was a trip to the Canadian Rockies. On this trip they visited the famous Lake Louise, the Canadian icefields, and took a raft trip on Toby creek. Then returned to Calgary and attended the famous Calgary Stampede, and Chuck Wagon races.

1983

Following the Danvers reunion a group flew to Ireland and England. They visited many of

the beautiful places in Ireland, including Blarney Castle with many kissing the "Blarney Stone". Some returned home after the first week, others stayed and visited England during the second week.

1984

Following the South Bend Reunion a group once more returned to the Mediterranean area visiting Corsica, Italy and North Africa. While in Tunisia they visited the National Cemetery at Carthage, where they placed a wreath by the "Wall of The Missing" paying homage to Colonel Mills and all of the others who did not return home.

1985

Following the Sacramento reunion a number of members and spouses returned to Alaska, via the inland passage aboard the Pacific Princess. While on the trip they had a chance to visit the Vancouver, B.C. and spent two days at EXPO 86.

1988

A Post reunion trip to the Panama Canal was in store for those who wished to go following the Orlando reunion. Eighty people who chose to make the trip. After a trip through the locks and a short tour of Lake Gatun, and they went to Cartenega, Columbia for some shopping before flying back to Orlando.

1991

In April 1991 a group of members returned once more to the Mediterranean. On this trip they visited the National cemeteries at Anzio and Florence to pay tribute to our fallen comrades. The trip included a short visit to the airfield locations on Corsica. During the visit to the airfield at Solenzara (formerly home to the 321st) where they were treated to a tour of the base (which is now a United Nations Base with French Mirage fighters). The trip continued on to Sicily for a short visit before the flight back.

AND COMMEMORATES THE PAST

In 1985 the 57th Bomb Wing Association installed a bronze plaque on the Commemorative Wall at the United States Air Force Academy cemetery. The plaque is dedicated to the bombardment groups which were assigned to the 57th Bombardment Wing serving in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations during World War II



Air Force Academy Chaplin
during dedication 1985 ceremony.

below and right

On 12 September 1986 the 57th Bomb Wing Association dedicated a black granite monument to the Men of the 57th in the Memorial Park at the Air Force Museum Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

left to right

Burns Day 488,

1987 Association President.

Leonard Kaufmann, 489

Master of ceremonies

General Robert D. Knapp 57th Hq.

57th Wing Honorary President

E.V. Johnson 321

Chaplin

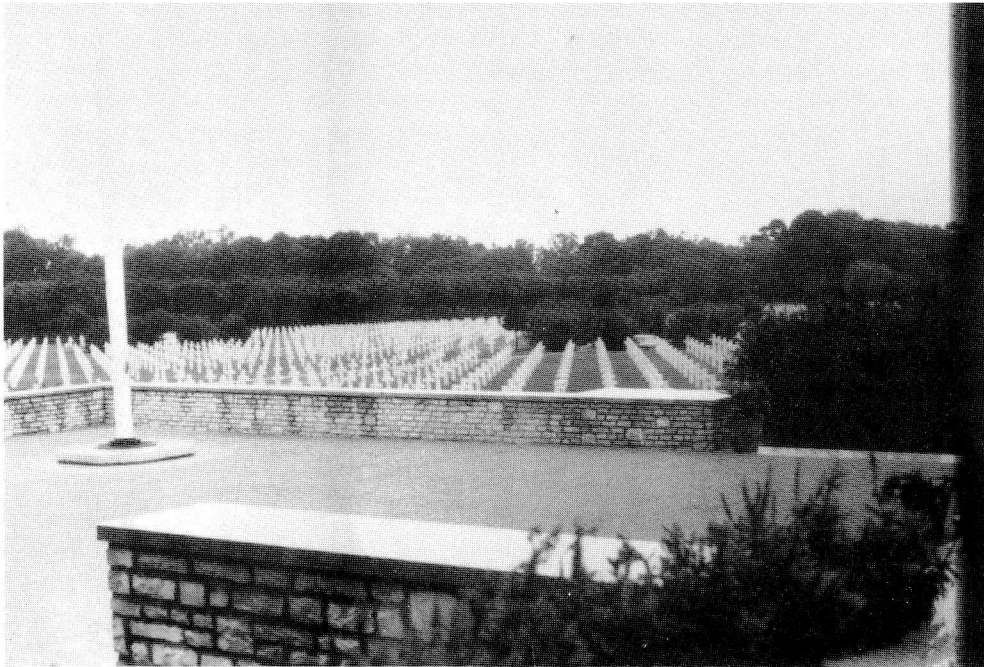
Mr. R. Baughman

Air Force Museum

Harold G. Lynch 489

Speaker







FRANCE

SPAIN

PORTUGAL

MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

NORTH ATLANTIC

MOROCCO

ALGERIA