

THE STORY OF A
Squadron



Agnes C. Schwab, Jr.

THE

STORY OF A

Squadron

BY

FREDERICK W. GILLIES

*An Illustrated
Overseas War Diary-Album*



154th

*(Observation, Reconnaissance)
Weather Reconnaissance Squadron*

Copyright 1946 by Frederick W. Gillies

Dedication

*Dedication of this volume is made to the following named Squadron
Members killed in the service of their country:*

Lt. James K. Parker

Cpl. Nick Picras

S/Sgt. James Smith

Capt. Clyde A. Knapp

Lt. John H. Gravestock

S/Sgt. William F. Pozzi

Pfc. Edward H. Reynolds

Lt. John D. McClosky

Lt. Mack E. Laxson

Lt. William C. Nutzel

Lt. Elwyn J. Marquette

Lt. Lewis F. Utesch

Lt. Ralph E. Billups

Capt. Francis M. Killian

Lt. John F. Osborne

Lt. Arthur F. Noel

Lt. Carroll W. Feather

Lt. Paul E. Fox

Lt. Edward F. Touby

Lt. Fred A. Walker

Lt. Floyd E. Bishop

Lt. Howard Kenner

Lt. William Thomas

Lt. John K. Evans

Lt. James B. Keltner

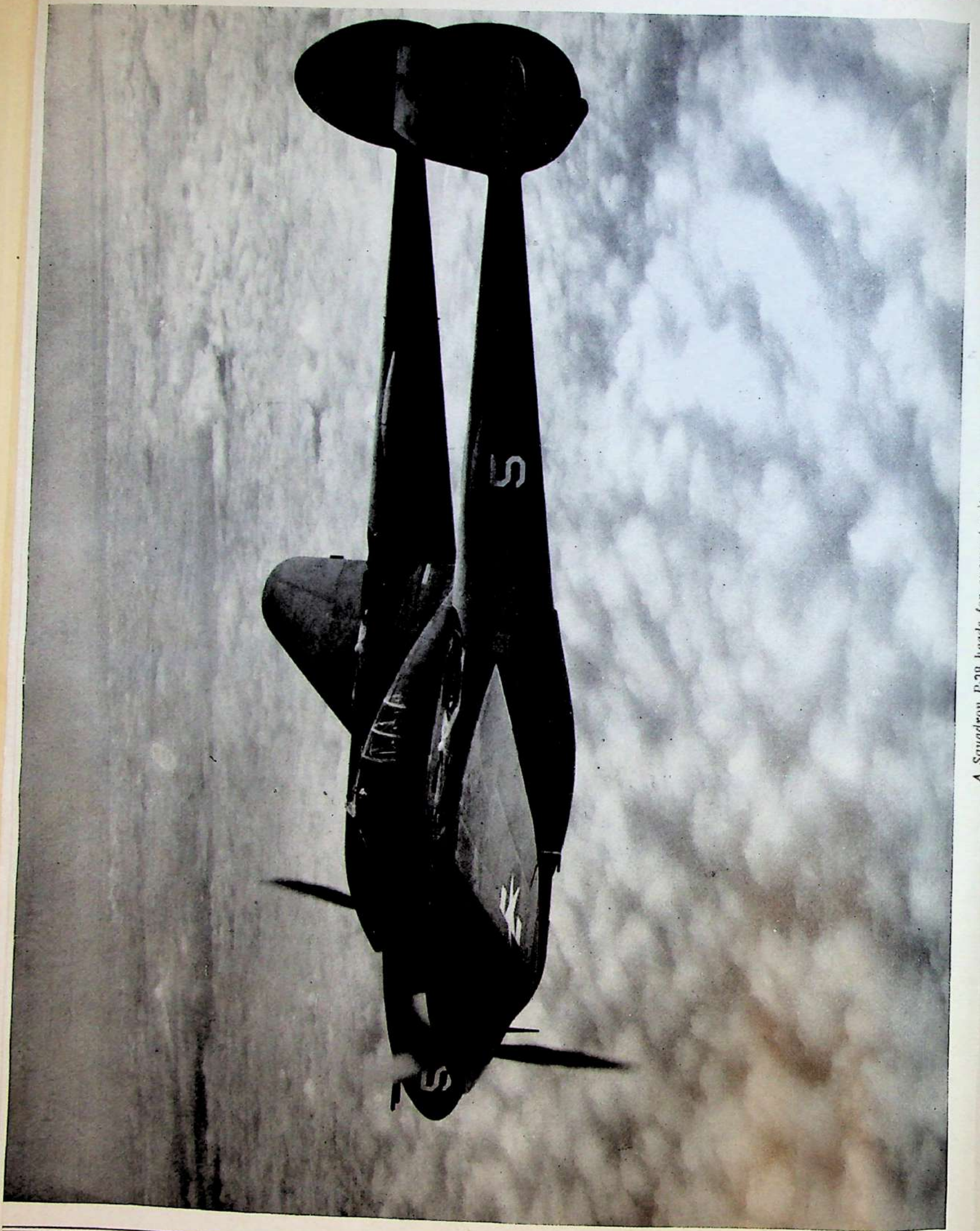
F. O. Carl L. Martin

Lt. Everett Harris

Killed In Action

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the many Squadron members whose work is reflected in this volume, and especially to William R. Dinker, the author is deeply indebted. It is only through a combination of talents that this book has become a reality.



A Squadron P-38 heads for enemy territory.

Preface

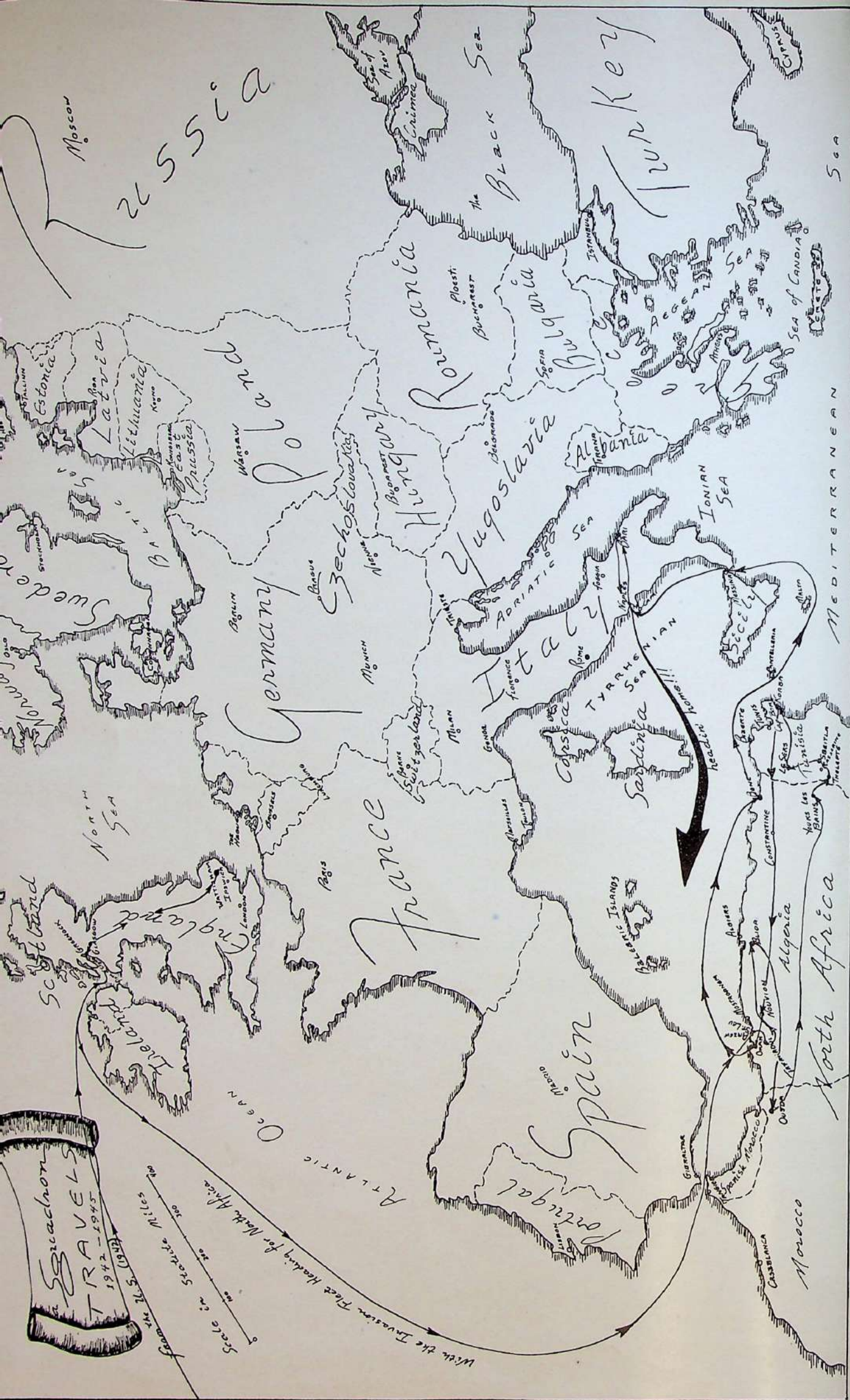
Perhaps "The Story of A Squadron" can be classified as merely a factual record of our overseas days. Yet, if this story be truly recorded, there should emerge from these pages something fuller than a record, something which deeply etches not only the rare excitement and close comradeship, but also the unending routine, the boredom and the commonplaceness of war as our unit—"not front line; not rear echelon"—knew it. There is no glamor here. No heavy heroics. Fortunately or unfortunately, a war cannot be "edited" and its drabness slashed out and still mirror a true conception. The facts are here and it is up to each man to set his own interpretation and emphasis.

Medford, Massachusetts
May, 1946

Frederick W. Gillies

Editor's Note: (The first half of this volume is predominantly a reconstruction from memory and sketchy records. Thus the impersonal and all-embracing style.)

Threefold source of photographs in this volume: Squadron Photographic Section, Squadron pilots (operational aerial photos), and individual Squadron members.



CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Preface</i>	VII
<i>Prologue</i>	XI

"THE STORY OF A SQUADRON"

<i>Episode One: Fort Dix, New Jersey, U. S. A.</i>	1
<i>Episode Two: Aboard H.M.S. "Queen Mary"; Enroute to Scotland</i>	2
<i>Episode Three: Wattisham Airbase, Southeast England</i>	4
<i>Episode Four: Aboard H.M.S. "Letitia"; Enroute to North Africa</i>	6
<i>Episode Five: Arzew-St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa</i>	7
<i>Episode Six: Tafaraoui Airdrome, Algeria, North Africa</i>	9
<i>Episode Seven: Blida Airdrome, Algeria, North Africa</i>	9
<i>Episode Eight: Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, North Africa</i>	10
<i>Episode Nine: Youks Les Bains Airfield, Algeria, North Africa</i>	15
<i>Episode Ten: Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, North Africa</i>	19
<i>Episode Eleven: Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, North Africa</i>	22
<i>Episode Twelve: Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, North Africa</i>	23
<i>Episode Thirteen: Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, North Africa</i>	28
<i>Episode Fourteen: Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, North Africa</i>	29
<i>Episode Fifteen: Canestel (Oran) Staging Area, Algeria, North Africa</i>	42
<i>Episode Sixteen: Aboard U.S.S. "George G. Meade"; Enroute to Italy</i>	43
<i>Episode Seventeen: Naples, Italy (Nesida Staging Area)</i>	47
<i>Episode Eighteen: Bari and Bari Airdrome, Italy</i>	48
<i>Epilogue</i>	116

APPENDIX

<i>Overseas Roster of Squadron Officers and Enlisted Men</i>	119
<i>Killed in the Service of Their Country</i>	124
<i>Wounded In Action</i>	124
<i>Squadron Awards (Battle Participation Stars and Distinguished Unit Citation)</i>	125
<i>Operational Awards</i>	125
<i>Further Awards to Personnel</i>	127
<i>Squadron Commanding Officers (Overseas)</i>	128
<i>Squadron First Sergeants (Overseas)</i>	128
<i>Squadron Section-Heads; Non-Commissioned</i>	128
<i>Commendations (Selected) Received by Squadron</i>	129
<i>Overseas Combat Operational Record</i>	133
<i>Claims and Losses During Overseas Air Operations</i>	134
<i>"Closing Out the Records"</i>	135
<i>"Personal Album"</i>	137

Prologue

"The 154," as it was briefly known to its members, had been an Observation, Reconnaissance and Weather-Reconnaissance unit in its long and varied days of overseas service.

First a peacetime National Guard unit (the 154th Observation Squadron), this organization became a part of the Army Air Forces on September 16, 1940. From then on, training became more intensive. In the summer following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, this unit engaged in its last full scale maneuvers near Winston Salem, North Carolina. Shortly thereafter, the word was given—"get ready for overseas shipment." On the afternoon of September 21st, 1942, Squadron members left their Morris Field, North Carolina base, loaded aboard a train and headed northward.

All important to the activities and functions of this Squadron was a group of eager young men—their cold Army classification: "personnel." Of these men and how they met conditions and events in the three war-frenzied years from 1942 to 1945, this book now attempts to tell . . .

Episode One

SEPTEMBER, 1942

Fort Dix, New Jersey—Sept. 22

"This is the beginning" is our thought this morning as we step from a crowded troop train and march as a body into the barren reaches of massive Fort Dix, New Jersey. Row upon row of green, weather-worn pyramidal tents stretch out as far as the eye can see and it is to two such glum company streets that our Squadron personnel is assigned. Once in one of these five-man tents, we smooth out our blankets on a cot and note with satisfaction the rickety coal-burning stove in the center of the floor.

All day long, formations are held one after the other and work details are gleaned from those men caught in the happy art of doing nothing. Most of our time, however, is spent speculating on "when do we go?" and "where are we going?" In the long silences which follow all discussions, we experience the first of many periods of uninterrupted waiting which we will know with such intimacy for many months to come.

Early in the afternoon, we pack our "B" bags and stack them at the head of the company street. Before long, these bags are loaded on trucks and shunted away we know not where.

Thus this day of almost uninterrupted whistle-blowing comes to an end, but not before we race out once again into the night's chill darkness and stand another formation which ends on the vague note, "something is brewing."

Fort Dix, New Jersey—Sept. 23

Our first firearm is issued this afternoon and with cosmo-lene jelly coating our arms and clothing, we swab and rub down these new Springfield rifles until they pass an eagle-eyed inspection. We cannot but wonder, "how long before we have to use them?"

Our Supply section works night and day and we turn in all of our OD clothing for greasy impregnates; gas masks are also checked and new ones issued for those found defective. . . . Restricted to the confines of the tent area, some men sullenly complain, "only one hour from home and I can't even get a pass!" . . . Our thoughts are somewhat dulled by the very abundance of impressions; we are apprehensive and yet have that insatiable desire to see for ourselves what war is like. . . . When not on detail, drilling, on KP, or standing unending formations, we sneak off to the PX and guzzle our "last" beer and ice cream or just wander around this maze of a camp through which new recruits pass in clomping bunches. We have that rookie feeling of knowing nothing, not belonging to anything but a great, uncertain mass.

We march up to the further end of the camp this afternoon and pass before an efficient Army clerk who fills in a small brown folder; another clerk slaps our fingers down upon a black ink pad then onto the same card; we then stand before a lined height scale and have a picture taken. Thus our Army passports are made up. Again comes the thought, "it won't be long."

Fort Dix, New Jersey—Sept. 24

Today, as on each morning here, we rise before dawn, jump into clammy gas-impregnated clothes and clomp off to a period of calisthenics in the rear of our tent area. With our breath steaming white upon the air and a great orange full moon staring down on our separate platoons, we kick our legs, stretch sideways, backwards and forward and jump up and down "to the numbers." Only sour looks greet a beaming soldier who, at the end of this ordeal, claims brightly, "it's good for you; wakes you up!!"

Even before the sun is up, we sign the paybook and a

card which reads, "I ARRIVED SAFELY AT A NEW DESTINATION."

Formation after formation continue to be called during the day and our Commanding Officer, Capt. Theodore Mayer, warns us again of the absolute necessity for secrecy. The tone here is both humorous and undeniably grim and these two moods tumble one right after the other unceasingly. It is a good thing that we have little time to think, but rather lay our exhausted bodies down at the end of a day and let our minds slide into the crasing fluidity of sleep.

Fort Dix, New Jersey—Sept. 25

Another day passes and some men evidence a fatalistic mood and positive break with everything as they shear each other's hair right down to the bone! . . . Tonight we are called out again and under a slash of yellow slanting light thrown down from a tent opening, Lt. "Doc" Snyder gives us our last quick medical exam.

Fort Dix, New Jersey—Sept. 26

We are to leave today for our Port of Embarkation. All day long, we wait. Barracks bags, helmet, overcoat, field pack and rifle—all are ready to be snatched at a moment's notice. Orders come in bewildering contradiction: "we will wear overcoats for the move . . . raincoats will be worn . . . wear overcoats." And so throughout the day! Finally, about six o'clock tonight, we are told to fall out with full pack, ready to go. Within a few minutes, we stand formation under a light fizzling rain and, at the order to march, slog clumsily over the muddled roads on our way to the train.

Arriving at the railroad yards, we begin a search for barracks bags, trucked earlier to a shed nearby. After locating our own in the massive piles and subsequently lugging and pulling them across the sprawling, track-rutted train yard, we finally hoist their leaden weight onto the car assigned. Exhausted and beaded with sweat, we then make gratefully for an empty coach chair and flop down.

Two wailing toots of the train's whistle fall heavily on the damp air and echo far away. The train begins to move, slowly at first and then gradually gaining speed until the trees and land flashing by become a dark, undefined, rain-sodden blur.

Three hours have passed when the clash and grind of iron and wood cease in an unknown station and we step from the train into a sheet of pelting silver rain. ("The 154 never goes anywhere but it rains!") Hoisting our barracks bag again on our shoulder, we stagger toward an adjacent pier and an awaiting ferry boat. Slowly we are pushed and shoved up to the front of this craft by the river of helmeted men which keeps coming steadily from behind. Once settled, we wait without speaking, our bodies and minds tense and alert, our eyes staring out at the dark waters of the harbor, at the flat, misted silhouette which is the famed city of New York (seen thus by many for the first time), and at the tugs, ferries and barges plying silently back and forth and calling out warnings in a sad, throaty whistle.

Casualty, the ferry begins to push a seething ring of foam from its fat sides and surges out into the harbor. An hour strokes by as we stand on deck and ride over the wind-ruffled waters. A steady rain falls stingingly on our faces and a breeze blows cool and fresh against our warm sweaty bodies.

The ferry now begins to turn slowly and sharply into a harbor-side pier, cautiously edges up to the great hulk of the ship which is to take us "over there." More lugging of barracks bags, another formation in the high-vaulted, voice-echoing dock warehouse, then onto the boat with its maze of halls and compartments and finally to our assigned cabins—triple decker bunks, twelve to eighteen in a small room. "Not bad; better than I expected." . . . Thus at two o'clock in the morning, we wearily undress (most of us just

unsling our pack and rifle) and flop exhausted and still sweating on our bunk. Somewhere in the room a voice claims, "say, this is the 'Queen Mary'!" But even this fact gains no impression upon our hazed mind and within a matter of minutes we are well launched into a drugged sleep.

Episode Two

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Sept. 27

Early this morning, the ship's machinery begins to turn over, slowly at first and then in a constant, deep thudding. We are already setting out to sea. As we are not allowed on deck, we cram the portholes for a last glimpse of the U. S. A Sunday morning quietude seems to pervade the land on this slate-grey day. Pier after pier slide silently by and we watch with strange feelings the small human figures and moving cars on the shore. Now and then a small fishing craft or tug passes by and we wave to tiny figures which wave back. While conversation is at first boisterous, it now becomes limited and hushed. Some men dash over to the right side of the ship, crane to get a last look at the "old lady," the Statue of Liberty. Soon, nothing but water can be seen and only the clanging of the channel buoys tells us that we are yet in sight of land. Before long, we note that this sound too has ceased and we realize that we are putting out to sea. . . . "Well, who wants to play a game of rummy?" asks one man expectantly. In a second, the silent spell is broken and we fall into a more spirited picture.

Once well out to sea, we are permitted outside. Up on the wide decks of this mammoth ship, we roam around and look things over or take up a permanent spot and seize onto the latest facts and rumors—"there's 15,000 on board, they say—hope they feed good; this morning wasn't so hot, though!—we're making the trip all alone; no convoy, no nothing; she's a fast ship, though."

With a violent suddenness, the ship's air raid alarm rings sharply into the early morning air. As ordered, we all mill quickly and excitedly down into the bowels of the ship. But just as we get half way belowdecks, another alarm rings out, this one signifying "get to the boats quickly." And so we wheel around and before long are herded on deck and some even into swaying lifeboats, far below the lace-churned waters. Of this practice drill, some complain, "no action yet!"

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Sept. 28

Another day passes by at sea. We sprawl on deck, stand with taxed but resigned patience in the PX line which reaches almost the full length of the ship, then return to the open deck and munch a meal of chocolate bars, cookies, sardines, oranges and apples. "If it weren't for these chocolate bars, I'd starve!" . . . The ship itself is marked "a floating hotel" and we spend many hours wandering around the spacious decks and through the richly veneered interiors. . . . Come mealtime, we are given numbered badges and thus form lines deep within the ship. Shuffling along, we finally come to the high-ceilinged, table-crammed dining hall and are brusquely herded inside. Within a matter of seconds, hands are interlaced up and down the table and in words of the wise, "you either grab or starve!" After what seems but a few minutes, a bell timidly pings out into the air and KP's and Mess Sergeants feverishly begin to funnel us to the opposite side from which we came in. On the way out, hustled soldiers indignantly protest, "you don't call that food do you?!" Such is the routine each and every meal.

Posted on the ship's bulletin board is an interesting report from German sources: "the 'Queen Mary' has been sunk in the North Atlantic!"

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Sept. 29

A calm atmosphere and a warm bathing sun flow over those on deck this morning when sudden, quick, staccato bursts of gunfire violently shatter the silence and rend the air with ear-ringing power. Within a few seconds, this "test firing" ceases and as before comes the complaint born of boredom, "only practice! I wish something would happen for a change!" Others, visibly shaken by the blast, groan, "I almost jumped out of my skin!"

Although unescorted on this trip, we have an inner sense of safety and security and continually assure the dubious, "well, she's the fastest ship on the seas, isn't she?"

As on the previous two nights, the rear decks are again packed as the great orange ball of the sun slides blazingly down to the western horizon. Youthful gunners sit unmoving in their grey steel arsenals and look out over the crowds of sprawling men. The ship rolls heavily from side to side and cuts out a trail of sun-shot, blue-white foam. For hundreds of men just watching on deck tonight, this is not "just another night."

At sunset, the decks are cleared and the ship blacked out. We mill belowdecks, sprawl out on the floor near the ship's library, fill the corridors with our stretched-out forms, play cards, or talk of girls, the world series and of food—in that order.

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Sept. 30

An air raid drill this morning, but we are no longer rookies and take it all in our stride. Meanwhile, the ship's wake curves and wends crazily to ward off the U-boats; gunners intently scan the skies. Another day of the sea and the sun passes into darkness.

OCTOBER, 1942

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Oct. 1

Waking this morning, we immediately sense a severe climatic change; cold weather has come upon us. "We must have swung up north during the night."

In a choppy sea, the ship heaves and rolls and many of us, cooped up belowdecks, know the sapping exhaustion of seasickness. Poker games, however, gain in popularity and go on with renewed vigor!

With an eye-twinkling and broad smile we listen to the English loud speaker vibrate with—"all kitchen porters report to the dining hall." "Kitchen porters is it?" queries one of our men imitating a pained Englishman. "What'll it be next, old chap?"

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; at sea—Oct. 2

As we stand on deck this afternoon and gladly note the capricious forms of two British cruisers around us, a never-to-be-forgotten scene cuts into our dulled consciousness. One of the cruisers to our starboard suddenly appears in the forward path of our prow. There is a dull thud and then we see the shredded fore half of the cruiser slide swiftly through the waters on our port side. Our eyes follow the sinking craft with a strange intensity. An empty, futile feeling fills our being as we stare at her small human figures racing wildly to the high parts to be clear of the rising waters, only to be helplessly engulfed as the ship issues forth a last protesting cloud of black smoke, then slides under the swirling waters. . . . "God, what a horrible sight to see . . . in less than a minute she went down . . . those poor devils on board!" . . . (According to a newspaper story issued two and one half years later, the "Queen Mary" wheeled to starboard to escape a suspected U-boat; at the same time, the cruiser turned sharply to port to deal with the sub. At that time, the collision took place.)

Our ship now makes only half its original speed and creeps along almost sullenly. By mid-afternoon, we see the unbelievably good sight of a friendly plane. This craft circles around us, tags us for a while and then is gone.

As we leave deck tonight, the ship's gunners, on a spe-

cial alert, scan the sea and the sky with unceasing vigilance. This is our last night on board and some say "the most dangerous one."

Aboard HMS "Queen Mary"; Firth of Clyde, Greenock, Scotland—Oct. 3

The ship's engines are stilled when we wake this morning and long before dawn we are on deck and gaze fixedly at the ring of grey might around us—battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, corvettes, cargo ships, troop transports—and then stare even more intently to the east, for there is the land again! The land of Scotland!

Even in the grey, foggy haze which hangs over everything, we can make out nearby hills which cradle cozy villages on their slopes. Two slender church spires loom loftily out of the mist. The rich green of the hills comes and goes as the fog sifts across the land. A slight stream of smoke from a train in a far-off valley edges ever closer. This is the land once more and bright are the eyes of all who drink in its comforting sights!

As a cold drizzle sifts over the harbor early this afternoon, we leave the "Queen Mary" and transfer to a small boat which heads out over the pallid waters of the Firth of Clyde. From our positions on the open air decks of this boat, we get a good view of the great bite in the prow of the "Queen Mary." "You mean to say we were out on the ocean with a hole as big as that in the ship?" asks one of our men as he stares and shivers apprehensively.

Nearing the wharf of the little seaport town of Greenock, Scotland, our numbers become silent as a deep-echoing loud speaker blares forth a welcome to this land. Soon we are on the wharf itself and hustle onto an awaiting train in the adjacent sheds. Even as we settle in our seats, a corn-haired Scotch girl comes down the aisle and passes out freshly made cookies and cups of steaming tea. These we gulp down quickly in order to get a refill and a beaming smile in the bargain. Within a short time, however, the small continental train cars bump together, a shrill whistle shrieks comically into the air, and we slide out of the station while a colorfully-kilted Scotch bagpipe band of red-checked youths fills the air with its tenor screechings.

As we move southward, both sides of the tracks are spotted with men, women and children waving flags, handkerchiefs and aprons, smiling and gesturing wildly and creating in every one of us a warmth of feeling for the plucky Scotch people. In burry Scotch tones, the youngsters shout out for "sou—venir, American sou—venir!" ("They make you feel really welcome," exclaims more than one man overcome and deeply pleased by this reception.)

The country which slides before our earth-hungry gaze is overwhelmingly beautiful: fields of grain which rise as if neatly combed by the wind and rain; lush green meadows on which brightly-sweatered youths are playing a Saturday afternoon game of soccer; small homes with neatly clipped hedges, color-splashed gardens and the warmth of orange lights from within.

Now the train pulls into a station high above a main city street. This is the city of Glasgow. People on the rain-mirrored streets below stop their shopping and gaze up at us. Young and old alike scan us quizzically, smile at the loud, boyish antics of some, laugh at our inveigling chatter addressed at two hefty Scotch lassies perched on the window ledge of a commercial building nearby. But all too soon, the weak, high-pitched train whistle shrieks forth once more and we are slipping again through the lands of Scotland.

Just before dusk, we are told, "there will be a strict blackout tonight." Thus, a few hours later, we ride on, curtained against the night and with only sharp stabs of yellow light glaring down upon us from narrow slits overhead.

Shortly before midnight, the train halts for a few minutes at a station where we are given hot tea. Eager to stretch

cramped limbs, we pour forth into this dark vault-like building and mill toward smiling men and women who pour tea from steaming pots. Within a short time, however, we are again herded onto the train and go careening off into the night. Fruitlessly we try to find a comfortable sleeping position in the high-backed train chairs and rest comes only in painful, muscle-aching snatches. Half awake and half asleep we are carried farther and farther southward.

Episode Three

Needham, England; Wattisham, England—Oct. 4

As we raise the train window curtain this morning, the land of England flashes before our eyes—a frosty, fog-shrouded land to our first sight. We are then told to get our equipment together for we will soon be "there." A few minutes later, our train comes sliding to a stop and we set foot on the soil of England itself.

Awaiting us by the sides of GI trucks at this village station of Needham are negro drivers who pronounce this England "OK!" and speak of "tuppence" and "ha-penny" with a chuckling southern drawl. We climb aboard their

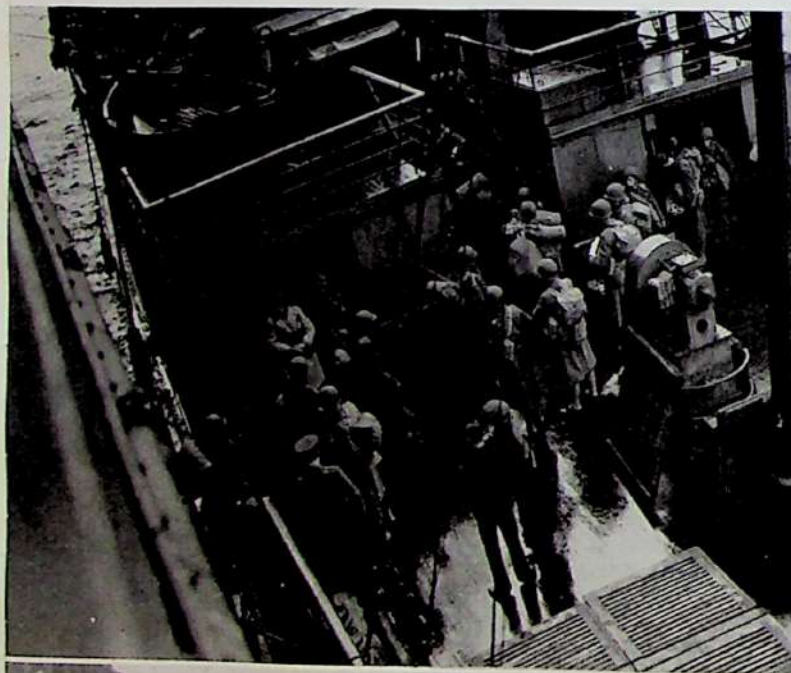
trucks and ask all sorts of questions while the drivers just smile and nod knowingly.

As the trucks skirt through the small village, we note signs reading "The Wagon and Horses"—"Tolly (Drinks) Served"—"Chemist"—and "Apothecary." After a short ride along narrow winding roads, bordered by fog-shrouded fields and huge mounds of hay, past typical cozy English homes still slung in Sunday morning sleep, we turn in to our new base, Wattisham.

At once, a formation is called on the parade grounds of the airdrome and we listen half-heartedly to routine instructions while more intently taking in the scenes around us: the number of large, two-story stone barracks, one with a gaping bomb hole opening to view the remains of its left side; precise drill groups of arm-swinging RAF personnel; buildings marked NAFFI and YMCA; the shattered, skeleton remains of former hangars—this is our new base.

Our entire Squadron is billeted in two large barracks buildings along the same road and not far distant from each other. Once inside, we note with pleasure the double decker metal bunks with mattresses and blankets, the separate washroom, latrine and shower (which we find out is always cold, but for sanitary reasons is frequently used). Not too heartily noted are the small tubular, underground air raid shelters behind each barracks. "Looks as though they're expecting trouble!"

(All photo pages, unless otherwise designated, are described from left to right, horizontally). . . . Leaving the "Queen Mary," we load aboard a harbor boat. . . . Capt. Baugh, Capt. Hinkel (Squadron Adjutant), an English Officer, and Squadron Commander, Capt. Theodore Mayer, on our troop train which heads for England. . . . "And this was the ancient city of Glasgow." . . . "From houses on both sides of the tracks appeared the forms of men, women, and children—all waving flags and handkerchiefs in welcome."



Wattisham, England—Oct. 5

Our American money is today changed into pounds and shillings and some of us find it a little hard to get used to the rate of exchange. A card game, however, ends any and all confusion!

Most agreeable is the English custom of three meals and two "teas" a day here on the base. These are welcome if only for the relaxation which they offer from our "up and down" drilling.

Wattisham, England—Oct. 6

Already some of us have come in contact with English girls working on planes here at the base and the impressions and opinions are something to hear: one of our men finally and decisively pronounces sentence upon them—"just plain ugly!" Another: "when I say something funny, they sit and stare; when I'm serious they laugh their heads off!" . . . "You should hear them sing 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' with an English accent!"

An English Sergeant, in the Army three years and now on a base gun crew, tells us about the war: "you boys will get used to it after seven years or so!" Just before we leave this gun crew, we watch a dry run of their battle routine. The seriousness and speed which these troops display in this mock attack bring the recurring thought, "this is the real thing."

Wattisham, England—Oct. 8

The English people impress us by their very unimpressiveness. Their clothes are somber, plain and dull. Their actions restrained but quietly determined. In one small tea room where a few elderly matrons sit around in wicker chairs and the slightest cough brings the focus of all eyes, a thin-lipped woman receives her order of tea, quietly slips the accompanying portions of cream and sugar into separate receptacles in her shopping bag, drinks the tea and trots out. For the first time, we see the larger effects of war on peoples' living and appearances, and in the meagerly stocked stores and half-filled market baskets . . . "over here, we're all in it together, soldiers, civilians, women and children."

Today we spend our first leave in the small seaport town of Ipswich and one and all pronounce it "ok." Here we make our first acquaintance with the intimacy of the English "pub" and its warm, bitter, molasses-brown beer; with the "cinema" and "queuing up"; with English scales by which you weigh so many "stones" (one stone equals 14 pounds); with the "Co-op," the honky-tonk dance hall "up one flight"; and finally with the rigid blackout—"Gawd damn! Can't see a thing!"

Wattisham, England—Oct. 9

Once again this morning, we line up in platoon formation before our barracks, wheel to the left and begin another day of drilling. Before we have taken many steps, however, the growling roar of a plane motor breaks through the puffy, low-lying clouds. In another minute a dark machine with black crosses on its wings streaks out of the overcast and from its fat underbelly looses three black bombs which seem to be headed right for us. At once, the street and grounds around us become one mass of running forms. We race in every direction and expect at any minute to hear the fatal explosions. Streaking down into the small fat tube of an air raid shelter, we sit waiting tensely, but nothing happens. The bombs, lucky for us, are duds. Aftermath: no more close order drill!

Wattisham, England—Oct. 11

Weighted down with blankets, overcoat, helmet, gun belt and other paraphernalia, six of our number wend out from camp each day and head for the metal guard huts near the entrances to the airdrome. Between shifts, we pull wooden boxes around the small center stove inside the hut and read or talk. In a glum mood one man puts forth, "all a

soldier's good for in this Army is women, drinkin' and sleepin'. Yes, sir, that's all he's good for." A southern voice answers, "you ain't a bird turdin'!" . . . Almost daily, the high spot of this otherwise lonely 24-hour vigil is the appearance of "Mary," the coy-smiling NAFFI girl who drives up in her creaky wagon and passes out tea and cakes. "She's the nearest thing to an American girl I've seen yet!"

Wattisham, England—Oct. 14

A young English Sergeant visiting in one of the barracks tells us of the war. "Yes, the Jerry, 'e'll be over again. This is just the kind of weather he likes. Ever gone through a blitz? Well, I 'av. Three times. And I don't want any more. We're giving it back, though. Jerry's beginning to feel it. The worst part is to see how he treats the women and kids. I saw one little girl killed. All alone she was. You don't believe things like that till you see them. It's dirty, that's what it is! I'm going in for gunner. Then I'll have a chance to pay 'em back. Last Christmas Eve he comes over. 500 of 'em, just when we thought we might have a quiet holiday. All night long and the next day—bombs dropping all over. Just flying in waves and dropping their eggs and more always coming. One time, I'd come home from work and go right into the shelter and stay all night. It's quiet now, but this is his weather—those heavy clouds. After a while you boys will pay no attention to it. Just run when you hear them and wait."

Wattisham, England—Oct. 17

Here on this base we have done little else but drill, half-heartedly attend section classes, and enjoy a hard-to-get pass to the nearby towns of Stowmarket, Needham, or Ipswich. Now and again, some men have managed chicken dinners with fresh milk at an inn "just down the road from the base." . . . Our Commanding Officer, Capt. Mayer has returned from a trip to London and rumors grow in wild abundance. . . . Daily we bemoan the fact that we are so near London and yet can't even get a pass to go there for a short visit. . . . News of the war comes to us through the daily tabloids (much like the Hearst papers back home), from English soldiers, airmen and civilians. . . . There are many things about the English soldier which we have not come to understand: his coldness of speech and manner; his severe class consciousness (separate Sergeants' and Corporals' Messes); the tasteless, soggy food which he marks "comparatively good." On the other hand, we have come to know many of our own characteristics as annoying to the English soldier: our brash manner with their girls; our flaunting and loose spending of money (their pay is pitifully small beside ours); our inability to get really serious about the war ("I do believe you Yanks are fighting for the fun of it!"); our distaste and loud verbal contempt for any type of regimentation. But in the very fact that we are sitting down together in a smoky "pub" around a glass of dark mahogany beer and telling one another his weaknesses and irritations is the healthy aspect of the situation. We both have much to learn.

Wattisham, England—Oct. 19

Three times today the base air raid siren shrieks forth and we streak for the shelters. Sitting in these underground tubes, we listen to the drone of a plane high in the sky and then someone loosens the tension by saying, "it's one of our own."

Our truck drivers bring back tales of the death of a small blonde girl when "jerry" bombed and strafed the nearby town of Needham today. "They must feel proud of a raid like that," bitterly exclaims one of our men at the dinner table.

Wattisham, England—Oct. 20

Mail!!! The first since we left the States! ("What a wonderful sight is a letter from home!")

Wattisham, England—Oct. 21

As a torrential rain falls tonight, rumors take on actuality

and we are instructed to pack up for a move tomorrow morning. Our barracks bags are marked crudely with three painted code lines topped by the designation "4026-E." We slide off into sleep with one question foremost in our minds: "what comes next?"

Wattisham, England—Oct. 22

On this crisp autumn-like morning, we return to Needham station, climb aboard a continental train and head northward. Once again we pass through the daylight-flooded lands of England—the land of a scant three weeks' knowing; a compact, cozy, reticent country from which, commonplace as we may, we carry many pleasant memories.

Sometime during the night, we pass once again into the lands of Scotland.

Episode Four

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; Firth of Clyde,
Greenock, Scotland—Oct. 23

Early this morning, we again set foot on the fog-shrouded station-pier of Greenock, Scotland. Before long, we are loaded into every available corner aboard a small harbor boat which quickly carries us to a medium size transport in the outer harbor. Once again, we lumber into the gaping entrance of a grey troop ship and are assigned to "quarters" on the second level belowdecks. While we sit at tables crammed together in this hold, we are told that during the day our quarters will serve as a mess hall, at night as a sleeping place, with hammocks and the tables themselves as beds. "Now I know what they went through in the last war," puts forth one of our men as he surveys this jam-packed room.

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; Firth of Clyde,
Greenock, Scotland—Oct. 24

Our ship continues to take on more troops of all types and, along with the unusually large number of other boats in the harbor, still remains at anchor. With hundreds of men forced to sleep in the holds and the resulting stench, many choose a sleeping spot on the moon-washed deck. . . . We sing all the old songs as we lie on deck tonight and wait for sleep to come.

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; Firth of Clyde,
Greenock, Scotland—Oct. 27

Late this night, the "Letitia" slips quietly out of the Firth of Clyde. Thus we begin our second sea journey. "Where now?"

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Oct. 31

The North Atlantic has been surging and swelling for three days and staggering, white-faced soldiers gazing dejectedly over the rail were not uncommon. But today, the sun shines forth again, a cool breeze blows stiffly and the decks are strewn with sleeping, sprawling soldiers soaking up the sun and guzzling PX supplies. . . . Of our food, one man says, "look at these peas!" He bounces these leaden-heavy green pellets on the table, listens disgustedly to their brittle pop, then recalls the lot of spoiled chicken served us a few days ago. . . . "what slop! It wouldn't be so bad, but they're getting paid for every meal!" And so our mainstay continues to be tightly-rationed slices of bread and fresh New Zealand butter—"Bread and butter, that's all I live on!" complains one man sullenly.

The huge convoy stretches far behind, ahead, and on either side of us and we sail on relentlessly.

NOVEMBER, 1942

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 2

Come mealtime each day, the routine is the same. Those of us on KP struggle up from the hold with empty pots and

pans, gratefully suck in a breath of air, then duck below again amidships and take our place in a long food-issue line. As the line begins to move forward, we pass down a flight of metal stairs and wind through steamy kitchens. Here, sweaty English cooks, in food-stained uniforms, ladle out the meal, slop and pour the food into our buckets and cast a cold glance at anyone who dares to question the usually skimpy serving. After a few tours of KP, we pass through the routine without a word, just stretch out our pans and pails, wait until they are filled, then climb upstairs again. . . . "The 'meal' over, the rush begins once more. But this time, it is in the direction of the washrooms where scores of men all try at once to clean their food dripping pans. . . . Up on deck afterwards, one man confides to another, "I got so God damned hungry, I spoke to one of the cooks and got this beef sandwich for \$2.50!" Other men, not willing to strive and beg for food, take what is dished out, eat sparingly and quickly, then dash up on deck to resume their day long "prone position."

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 3

This afternoon, a British Army Officer speaks authoritatively to our Squadron gathered in the hold of the ship and tells us that we will not be good soldiers until we have become "blooded," seen men die and killed men ourselves. "All good soldiers are blooded!" He then goes on to maintain, "our position now is comparable to that of the 120 days before the end of the last war!" We all listen attentively and the feeling is one of unbeatable optimism mixed with wondering doubt.

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 4

Issued to each man today are head nets, mosquito cream, and a small blue-covered book entitled "North Africa." ("So that's where we're going! Well, I'll be damned!") We pour over this book and our first images of North Africa (in our mind a land peopled with black, big-lipped, breech-clouted natives; vibrating with tom-toms; closed in by jungle growths etc.) are shaped by its contents. Some excerpts from the "blue book":

"Your present journey will be taking you to new parts of the world where the people, their customs and manner of living and the geography of the country will be for the majority of us completely strange and foreign. Furthermore, our welcome by the inhabitants of Morocco, Algeria and Tunis is not known at this time.

"On many occasions this question will be asked of you by the inhabitants: 'why have you come?' The answer is straightforward and simple—we have come to drive out the common enemy; we seek no territory or material gains.

"British troops, ships and planes are backing us up. We are working and fighting together in a United Nations Offensive. It was the wish of the President that the first blow of this assault should be primarily American. The name of the United States will stand for freedom to millions of Frenchmen as it does to all the peoples of Europe.

"The climate found in these countries varies greatly depending on your location. Little rainfall is experienced along the coast. During the summer and winter a strong north wind called the Sirocco may sweep the country.

"You must not talk to Moslem women; the most innocent word addressed to her is considered an insult. If you are stationed in the country, it is a good idea to take sweets and cigarettes with you when you visit an Arab house. In North Africa you will be meeting the descendants of races and empires; they are not a backward and uneducated people."

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 5

As on yesterday and the days before, we put on full pack and practice climbing up and down rope nets stretched

against the iron structure between decks. With full pack, this is no easy task and those on the weighty side find the process a slow, tortuous pull.

Formed into six separate platoons, we gather around our Officers in the ship's hold this afternoon and are told that we are part of the invasion armies heading for North Africa; our objective—the beach in the Gulf of Arzew. "Infantry troops will precede you; when you get to the beach, dig your foxhole and dig it deep. The natives may be friendly but don't take anything to eat or go anywhere with them." Scouts are chosen from each platoon and told what their duties will be; maps are rolled out and diligently poured over. The very fact that we are part of an invasion force, the first in this part of the world, does not yet fully pierce our consciousness and we have not come to the point where we can accurately define our feelings.

As another day passes into dusk and we are still on the high seas, a yawning soldier exclaims, "I guess all we're doing is going around in circles!"

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 6

Those of us who wait up late tonight are rewarded by a misty glimpse of the famed Rock of Gibraltar . . . "it's not as big as I thought." At this same time, our attention is drawn to a brilliantly lighted city on the African side . . . "seems strange to see a bright city again."

Aboard HMS "Letitia"; at sea—Nov. 7

As dawn breaks forth in a pale red sky, the fog-shrouded coasts of Spain become visible . . . "we are going in."

At dinner time, the shrill air raid siren sounds over the ship and one man grumbles, "they would have to come just when we're eating!" We sit at the tables belowdecks and wait somewhat tensely. Within a few minutes, the all-clear comes and the hold is again its voice-dinned, metal-banging self.

Aboard HMS "Letitia", Gulf of Arzew; N. Africa—Nov. 8

Even before dawn this morning, the "Letitia" vibrates to the heavy rumblings of gun fire. We now know that we are off the coast of our invasion point, the Gulf of Arzew. Before long, every deck and railing on the starboard side of the ship are lined with men who peer in toward the African coast. So powerful is the in-shore bombardment of the African mainland that it whips our clothes tightly against our bodies. Strangely quiet again, the scene is ominously grey. Many ships are anchored around us and all seems outwardly calm and peaceful. Despite this, we fully expect all hell to break loose any minute. Soon, we note speck-sized, snout-faced invasion barges bob up and down on the slate-grey waters and move ever nearer to the shore. Still aboard ship, we stare intently at the smoke-shrouded beach, watch men run, fall, then get up and run forward for a few more yards.

About noon today the British Captain of the "Letitia" puts his megaphone to his lips and proudly announces, "these territories have been overcome and are now in Allied hands!"

Over the static-snapping ship's radio tonight comes the announcement that the French Army and Navy in Oran have surrendered. As this news is given, many gather in the cramped corners belowdecks, talk of the great battles to come, the quick rout of Rommel and the total defeat of the Germans in the not too distant future. "Wonder if any enemy planes will show up?" asks one soldier apprehensively. For those in our Squadron assigned to man the ship's guns in case of attack, this question has a burning significance. "We'd be duck soup out here for them if they did come over. I'll certainly be glad to get off this tub!"

Aboard HMS "Letitia", in the Gulf of Arzew; N. Africa—Nov. 9

As darkness comes on tonight and the seas wildly slap the sides of our ship, a small advance group of our Squadron dons full pack and climbs down crazily swaying rope

ladders leading to a lurching barge below. After the slow, tortuous job of loading is completed, the barge is freed from our ship and sputters away into an enveloping blackness. Those who remain on board the "Letitia" peer in toward the unseen shoreline, listen intently until the sound of the small boat is mixed with the wind and water noises of the night.

Episode Five

Arzew-St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 10

Climbing down a rope ladder which sways violently from the ship's side, we jump this morning into an awaiting motor launch. After a long wait on the tantalizing swells of the choppy sea and just under the nauseating vent from the ship's kitchen, we leave the "Letitia" and proceed to shore in the lee of a blunt-nosed invasion barge.

As we pull up to the jetty at Arzew, the sharp ping of spasmodic rifle firing cuts through the air and the thought comes, "now it really begins." Leaping from the boat, we meet the small, weary group of our men who landed here last night—"what a night . . . slept in a shed . . . brutal!" Grimy and be-draggled dock workers look over their shoulder at our group, then go on working, stopping every now and then to dart behind a barrel and take a shot at snipers in the hills and craggy cliffs above the port.

Soon, we are passing through the streets of the town of Arzew and before long marching in two single files on both sides of the open coast road leading eastward. Our field pack, never before so heavy, begins to cut into our shoulders and grows in weight with every step. Not helping things any are the overcoat, rifle, raincoat and pouches of weighty ammunition with which we are burdened. Suddenly, the guttural whirring of a plane stabs our hearing and someone hollers, "disperse!" We all scatter wildly into the thorny bushes to the side of the road and lay face downward. The plane sails unconcernedly above, then heads out to sea. No one seems to know for sure whether it is an enemy or friendly machine. "Let's go," shouts our officer with a flicker of an embarrassed smile on his face. We form into two lines and begin marching again along either side of the road.

About halfway along in our journey (we have already come three miles), we stop by the roadside, dig into "36 bags" and bring forth cans of C-rations. With appetites sharply edged by the excitement of landing and the long hike behind and ahead of us, we eat heartily but quickly and then resume our march—"am I going to be glad to set this pack down!"

A half hour later, we labor up a steep, graded incline overlooking the blue-green Mediterranean and turn into the small French-Arab town of St. Leu. Here small groups of swarthy Arabs and stone-faced Frenchmen stand together, talk in low tones and watch us furtively as we march through the Square. A rutted vineyard outside of the town is to be our camp and it is here that we head, set up pup tents, dig foxholes in ground which soon turns to hard limestone, eat a C-ration supper ("God, but they taste good after the chow on the boat!"), then crawl exhausted into our pup tents and launch into a drugged sleep. In the middle of the night, many of us waken slowly to the shrill cry of roosters, the weird howling of dogs and the beat of heavy, intermittent rain on the canvas above . . . "I wish to hell they'd shut up so I can get some sleep!"

St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 11

Freshened up by an invigorating swim and much-needed bath in the crystal clear but cold waters of the Mediterranean, we walk back through the town Square today and pass a small crowd gathered before an imposing statue. A

French Officer stands in the center of the group and holds a wreath in his hand. Arabs look on passively. Suddenly comes the ironic thought, "today is Armistice Day!"

St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 12

The digging of a deep garbage and refuse pit is the main activity around camp and the Privates and Pfc's caught on this detail swear and curse as they strike the pick into stubborn limestone rock.

Already tautly stretched, the temper in camp is not improved any when a Squadron order comes through to the effect that "all first three graders will form first at meals and other ranks will follow respectively!" After one meal, this order is tactfully ignored and we fall back into the chow line as before—"first come, first served."

St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 13

"Today," booms "Doc" Snyder, "is my birthday and here I am in this God damned hole!" He laughs and then goes on treating those on sick call; his dispensary two medical cases set down on the open field.

St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 14

Beginning at four o'clock this morning, the "sirocco" howls dementedly and hurls stinging, gritty red-brown dirt

across the plains with unceasing fury. Our flimsy tents flap saucily; equipment clatters and blows around crazily; camp-area guards bend their goggled eyes down to the ground and wearily tread their shift. On such a night do we really feel naked and open to nature's whims.

In the morning, the tent area is one great scene of disorder. Those men whose tents are not uprooted stand and gloat unmercifully and hurl the word "rookie!" at the dispossessed.

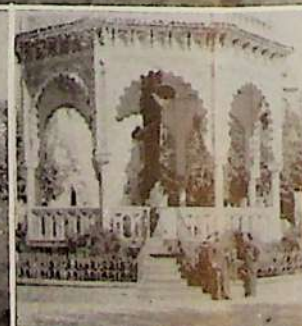
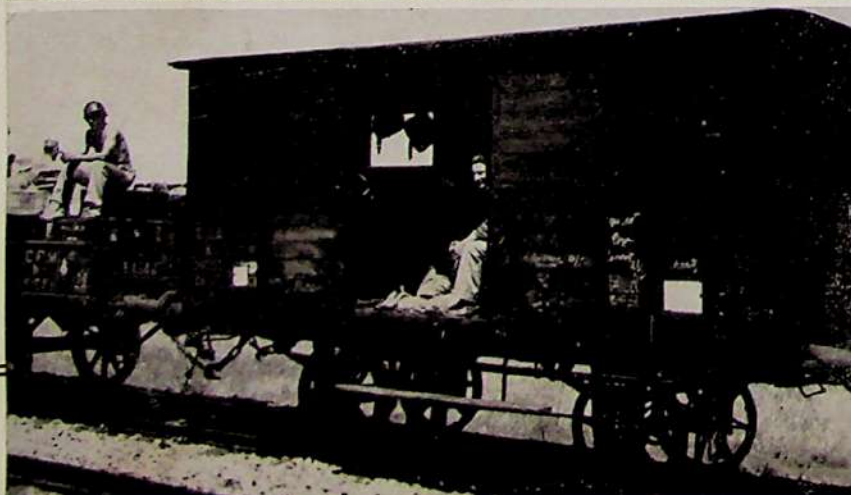
St. Leu, Algeria, North Africa—Nov. 15

(Our Commanding Officer, Capt. Mayer, managed to "requisition" a barrel of "real French wine" last night. As a result, morale shot sky high. With the coming of darkness and the issue of one canteen of wine per man, a deep rumble of voices grew louder and louder. Small groups spread out on the ground before many a pup tent and canteens were still being passed round and round as midnight came and went.)

This morning, heavy-headed soldiers wearily shake their heads when offered more of this wine. "No thanks! You can keep the stuff! It's green wine . . . not even ripe!"

Ragged and dirt-caked Arab men and kids of all ages continue to throng around our open-air kitchen and stare

"Chow time" in the hold of HMS "Letitia". . . We are on land again! A vineyard just outside the N. African town of St. Leu is our camp. . . (Below, inset) Our invasion point, the Gulf of Arzew, N. Africa. . . "The beaches are in Allied hands." . . . Our second North African campground, Tafaraoui Airdrome. . . "In those torture boxes of the last war, the '40 and 8's', we ride eastward to Blida, Algeria." . . . Our barracks at Blida Airdrome. . . Banastand in the town of Blida. . . Squadron mess hall on our base at Blida.



hungrily while we eat. With a demon frenzy, they fight and grab for a cast-aside biscuit, a piece of candy or a small tin of powdered coffee. Not only at meal time, but all day long do these Arabs continue to sit, stand, or walk around the camp area. Small groups of them forage through the fields, turn over and examine each discarded tin, wrapping, or piece of paper and salvage any leavings.

Episode Six

Tafaraoui Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 16

Late this afternoon, our tents are torn down and barracks bags hastily packed and made ready for a move. Noticeable all over camp is the boisterous gaiety which comes whenever we head out to another spot. Just about dusk, we strike camp, pack closely into GI trucks and speed through the cool, moon-flooded African night.

Arriving at the bleak Tafaraoui airdrome, just south of Oran, we drive across the barren field on which we exuberantly note American planes, seen for the first time since leaving England. . . . Our pup tent camp is quickly pitched to the side of the dispersal area and with a few blankets between us and the stone-riddled ground, we push off into sleep.

Tafaraoui Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 17

Most of the morning here is taken up in arranging our pup tents in rigidly straight lines and at measured intervals. After this is done to the satisfaction of all, the order comes to "pull 'em down; we're going to move!" In less than twenty hours here, we repeat this process three times!

Tafaraoui Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 18

After two uncertain days here, spent mostly in just waiting, eating British compositions and sleeping on the ground, we head cross-country toward Algiers; this time, we ride those torture boxes of the last war, the old French freight cars, "the 40 and 8's!" (Forty men and eight horses!)

Episode Seven

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 21

For two nights, we have ridden eastward in railroad box cars and are crammed so close together that we cannot fully stretch out at night and not overlap another body. This morning, however, we take grateful leave of these "crates" and later hike it from Blida station to the airdrome just outside of town. On our arrival at this field just at dusk, we can look out to the northeast and watch the yellow rain-curtain of ack-ack flung up at enemy raiders over the nearby city of Algiers.

After the inevitable period of waiting around here on the field, we are finally marched to a large metal hangar which is ironically dubbed "home." On its concrete floor we throw down our blankets and shelter-half and, after a supper of British compositions, lay down to sleep in our clothes.

A small detachment of our men, having stayed behind at the railroad station on an unloading detail, comes into camp later tonight and tells of a strange air alert in town: "no foxholes, no shelters; nothing at all to get behind; good thing it wasn't a raid."

During this, our first night here, the air raid siren shrieks forth again and again and we run between sleep and the protecting ditches on the field. "A harried night."

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 22

Our clothes so dirty they "could stand up by themselves," we spend the day washing and cleaning up—"where'd we ever collect so much dirt?" we ask looking at the murky wash water!

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 23

Of a trip to Blida, the first sizeable North African town which we have had a chance to visit, we have many different impressions. Dickering for French-English dictionaries. The French girls all dressed up on Sunday morning. The overflowing church collection plates due to suddenly generous GI's. Hunting a latrine ("Pisserie") and being directed to a bakery ("Patisserie")! A young French soldier made talkative by too much cafe wine; his staring at each one of us and every few minutes shouting hoarsely "Les Allemands!" (the Germans!), drawing his finger cuttingly across his throat, waving a half-filled glass around and shouting "Vive La France!" The excitement of the open markets with French and Arabs noisily selling mandarines, huge oranges, strange-looking greens, almonds and dates—all in the weight measurements of "kilos." The patrolling "Gendarmes." The crowded Arab district with its hole-in-the-wall homes and weird contraptions for cooking and heating. The sight of oranges growing on trees. The sharp contrast of ragged Arabs and well dressed French people. The broad "accent" of the British Tommies. Arab and French kids tagging behind and coaxing, "mademoiselle?" Madame Felice's place; Madame herself behind a small bar and selling tickets for 30 francs apiece; the long lines of Americans and British before her building. Red wine and cheap muscatel at 20 francs a canteen; "champagne" at 50 francs per bottle. Walking all the way back to camp after dark and strictly alert in every bristle.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 24

Our days here pass in a series of as yet undefined impressions. Each morning, we stand formation near the hangars and hear First Sergeant ("Woo-Woo") Richard shout out the day's announcements, then grimly listen to the work-detail list. During our few spare hours, we wander around this "barren" base, watch the British at work on their "Beaufighter" planes and feel somewhat awed because "they are actually doing something in the war." Between periods of boiling clothes beside the hangar, we try out our so-called French on the native soldiers here on the base, somberly handle each other's money and souvenirs, and continually nod to one another to convey a sense of deep understanding. At chow time, we watch the English line up before their mess hall for a hot meal, then resignedly eat our own cold supper of "not-so-hot" English compositions ("too much tea and steak-and-kidney pudding!") . . . With varied attention marking their efforts, Officers tell us what to do in the event of any crisis; we later and privately conclude, "they don't have any more notion of what to expect than we do!" Our nights are spent in talking vaguely about the war ("we don't even know what's going on!"), enjoying to the full the heavy French pastries brought back from town, watching or playing in the midst of a spirited poker session. Come time to sleep, we remain in our clothes, stretch out on the blanketed floor. Some men manage to obtain bundles of camouflage netting and use these for padding against the damp and cold. Those of us on guard circle around the hangar, strain our ears at every night-bourne sound issuing from the pitch darkness. So ends another day.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 25

The silence of men-sleeping is ruptured late tonight as one of our men, experiencing a vivid dream, hollers out, "AIR RAID! AIR RAID!" Immediately, the hangar becomes alive with moving figures and we scramble wildly for the man-made ravines near the hangars, fruitlessly listen for planes which do not come.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 26

At the daily formation this morning, our First Sergeant petulantly warns us that the next one who has a nightmare and screams "Air raid!" will be court martialled and "have the book thrown at him!!"

Enjoying a hot dinner of chicken gleaned from the countryside around the base, we mark Thanksgiving one day late . . . "the best meal in a long time!"

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 30

Today we begin the job of cleaning up our future barracks and mess hall buildings and the dirty work is offset by the thought that "we will have a decent place to sleep and eat in for a change!"

DECEMBER, 1942**Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 2**

After three days of scouring and scrubbing and de-lousing, we move into our barracks building today and eat at tables in our own separate mess hall.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 3

Night passes its mid-point. A restless soldier glances sleepily at his watch. It is one o'clock. He pulls the covers up closer and re-sets his body over the metal bed springs and launches again into sleep. And then, into the stillness of the night cuts the air raid siren. The whole barracks becomes electrically alive. We pour through the doors of the building and streak for the shelters. But before all can leave the building, the piercing, wailing drone of a diving plane bears steadily downward and then comes the ear-shattering burst of bombs. We crouch in rain-filled fox-holes, lay sprawled out on the gummy fields to the side of the airdrome. All night long, enemy planes, and sometimes it seems just one lone plane, press the attack, coming over the field at forty minute intervals. At daybreak, more than one of us exclaim, "I was never so glad to see the sun in all my life!" Thus passes our most intensive bombing to date.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 4

"Hotcakes and real American coffee" is the news brought back by early risers this morning and, before long, a winding line snakes around the mess hall and we get as much pleasure from anticipating as eating the "first real American breakfast in many a month."

Flying their A-20 from Oujda, Morocco, 1st Lt. Robert Downie and S/Sgt. "Ollie" O'Quin land here at Blida and receive a rousing welcome. They bring news that our Flight Echelon of A-20 pilots, gunners, radiomen and planes is now at Oujda. "On the trip across the Atlantic, we lost Major Johnson, Sgt. Williams, Cpl. Picras, Lt. Parker and Sgt. Smith."

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 5

About one o'clock this morning, we are crudely awakened by a high pitched voice shouting "paratroop alert; get up and get your helmet and gun!" We scramble around for clothes and equipment and feverishly begin cleaning our guns. Then comes the order, "alert's off! Go back to bed!"

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 6

Drilling, "just like in England," is resumed today and we clomp around the base, but "never become entirely serious about the whole thing—what are we, anyway? Infantry?"

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 7

"Not a surprise," but foretold by a series of brief, general "interviews" by Capts. Mayer and Hinkel, our first overseas promotions are announced this day: Cpls. Kester, Russell, Shehans, Shields, Stolnack, Tunnell, Rice, Sandoval, Sheffield, Snoddy, Tole and R. White to SERGEANT; Pfc's Ambeault, Beke, Brennan, F. Clark, Harris, Leopold,

McIlvaine, Ondovchik, Reid, Sims, Travers, Wright, Austin, Bell, Burke, Galick, Gruenig, Janson, Lodge, Miller, Quist, Smith, Zynda, Goin, Roark, and Villanueva to CORPORAL; Pvts. Akers, Carlisle, Gerig, Golba, Grimes, Gunter, Hennessy, Brossman, Geckie, Gillies, Goodner, Grochowski, Hood, Hoffmeyer, Horwich, Lean, McCullough, Raddatz, D. Reed, Sandbeck, Schmidling, Serda, Whitehead, Libby, May, Overton, Raming, Rountree, Scales, Shank, Turner, and Woodard to PRIVATES FIRST CLASS.

Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 8

Using three sources — the daily British news bulletin published here on the base, the radio "found" in an abandoned aircraft and installed by Sgt. Leonard and his radiomen in the "hen coop" atop the mess hall, and a French language paper specially brought to the gate each morning by a grinning Arab—Pfc. Fred Gillies puts out the first Squadron newspaper today. Reading one of its two (!) copies posted on the barracks' walls, a soldier comments, "it's good to know what goes on for a change."

Blida Airdrome, Algeria—Oujda Airport, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 11

After a false start yesterday afternoon, we rise this morning and in a heavy, all-blanketing mist march down to the airfield and file into grey-hulking transports. Before long, plane motors stir the air powerfully and we are sliding westward over the Mediterranean while the sun breaks forth and obligingly leads the way. Soon the harbor of Arzew passes below us and we think once more of the morning of November 8th when we were down there on the "Letitia." Turning inland, the shadow of our plane passes over great, multi-colored patches of brown-furrowed lands and over cities of glaring whiteness, appearing and receding like something out of the "Arabian Nights." Before long, the barren plain of our new base lies spread below us. The planes bank sharply to the left and confidently settle down on the runway. "This is Oujda," we are told.

Episode Eight

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 11

Here at Oujda, we are enthusiastically greeted by members of the Flight Echelon* and with the Squadron complete once more, the yarns begin to fly.

Of their flight over here, our pilots, engineers, and radiomen have varied tales to tell. Many of these men are cornered and forced to re-live this flight:

"When the news broke on November 8th that Allied troops had landed in North Africa, we were in West Palm Beach, Florida. Those of us in the Flight Echelon were assembled together that very day and told to get a good night's sleep for on the following morning many of us would receive our final briefing. We were to be members of the first combat team to fly the long southern route of the Ferry Command to the Near East.

"At dawn the next morning, the first two flights, of ten ships each, were down on the line. The thrill of that first take-off was beyond description for we had no idea what the future held for us. Our first flight got off o. k. and headed south to Puerto Rico. We were glad to be finally on our way.

"Once out over the water, all of our ships began to feel the effects of a hurricane which was coming in from the sea and raging more intensely as we went on. An hour short of our mark, we were instructed to turn back. Within a short time, we were again back on the airfield in Florida. Here we had our first taste of the sacrifices of war. Two ships had gone down with their

crews. Major Johnson, S/Sgt. Williams, Lt. Parker, Cpl. Picras, and S/Sgt. Smith — all were lost. A third plane with "Daddy" Dallas riding as crew chief barely escaped the same fate. The hurricane caught this plane, raised it up hundreds of feet, then as suddenly dropped it down again. Twice this happened until all the baggage, ammunition boxes and water cans were jammed solid up against the control wires. With both engines cut, all the radio equipment thrown out, and the plane spinning at 350 miles an hour for the solid wall of the Caribbean, "Daddy" pulled and tugged and finally pushed away the equipment massed against the controls. Little over 50 feet above the water and with gas pouring out of the left engine, the ship was pulled out of its dive and brought limping in to Puerto Rico. I guess none of the crew on this ship thought they'd ever see land again!

"The next day, the initial flight completed the first leg of the trip and arrived safely at Puerto Rico. It took three days in all for the entire Flight Echelon to leave Florida. By the 11th, we were all on our way.

"The days and weeks that followed were full of varied and sometimes costly flights: over the smooth, deep green of the luxurious South American jungle to Georgetown . . . along the Amazon to Belem, Brazil . . . above the monotonous and endless jungle growth to Natal . . . through a solid overcast to the 35-mile-square Ascension Island in the South Atlantic . . . over calm, tropical waters to Accra, South Africa . . . through a dust storm to Kano on the Gold Coast of Nigeria . . . northward over the Sahara Desert . . . and finally, after crossing the rugged Atlas mountains, to our combat base, Tafaraoui, Algeria. Out of 36

aircraft which began with us, 23 arrived in Africa.

"There are a lot of happenings and incidents on this trip that we'll not soon forget: at Belem, Brazil, Lt. Sheehan's cool landing with one of the ship's tires blown out and Percy Moon's and William Brown's evident relief to be on the ground again . . . the quiet thrill of beginning to see new peoples, new places and dealing in different money . . . the nervous, expectant feeling before each take-off and then the calm feeling when you're in the air again . . . flying over water for long hours at a stretch and how easy it is to go to sleep then . . . the really outstanding job of navigation by all crews along the 1800 miles of water which separate Brazil and the Ascension Islands . . . the skillful forced landing of two of our ships on the Sahara Desert and the final rescue of their crews (1st Lt. Downie, 2nd Lt. Brownell, Pvt. Kahanic, 1st Lt. Modral, S/Sgt. Carpenter) after seven days with Arabs and French Foreign Legion soldiers just recently converted to the Allies. I guess each one of us has memories of this trip which will stay with him for years to come."

* * *

Our camp here at Oujda is pointed out as the high, rocky ground just above storage dumps of bombs and gasoline . . . "if anything happens, we'll go quick; no doubt about it!" Here we set up our pup tents, then begin digging foxholes in the limestone earth. Tonight, we eat with the 111th Squadron, here on the base along with the other Squadrons of our Group, and after a diet of "sea-going slop," soggy English food and C-rations, we are happily overwhelmed by a mess kit piled high with weiners, canned tomatoes, bread and jam, and steaming cupfuls of real American coffee. "Never did a meal taste so good!" Some



FLIGHT ECHELON SNAPS. . . . George Casey on his way to an A-20 which (below) is soon heading south for Brazil. . . . (Top center) Native policeman in Accra, South Africa. . . . (Bottom center) Natives scramble for coins in Accra. . . . Percy Moon before A-20, "Thumbs Up."

*Members of Flight Echelon: 2nd Lt. Roy H. Sheehan, Pfc. William H. Bowen, M/Sgt. Percy E. Moon, 2nd Lt. Rush R. Spradley, Sgt. Joseph J. Noel, S/Sgt. Albert C. Raper, 2nd Lt. Fred A. Monthei, Cpl. Frank R. Owens, S/Sgt. Gerrel E. O'Quin, 1st Lt. Robert C. Downie, 2nd Lt. Gerald S. Brownell, Pvt. Paul Kahanic, 1st Lt. Hugh H. Vetter, Sgt. Carl J. Stankewicz, S/Sgt. Lawrence J. Wewer, 1st Lt. Felix H. Foreman, Sgt. Alonzo C. Perkins, T/Sgt. Dick Red, 2nd Lt. Albert S. Lawson, Pfc. John Ferrara, S/Sgt. Thomas E. Harness, 2nd Lt. William M. Dowling, Cpl. Henry M. Scurlock, T/Sgt. Silas S. Wilson,

1st Lt. James C. Hamilton, Sgt. William F. Pozzi, S/Sgt. Charles H. Brown, 2nd Lt. James K. Parker (KIA), Cpl. Nick G. Picras (KIA), S/Sgt. James A. Smith (KIA), 1st Lt. Robert R. Smith, S/Sgt. Henry D. Old Coyote, Cpl. Harold L. Steed, 1st Lt. Thompson W. Armstrong, Sgt. Emmett F. Zeller, S/Sgt. George A. Casey, 1st Lt. George N. Evans, S/Sgt. Barney Old Coyote, S/Sgt. Lloyd F. Dallas, 2nd Lt. John W. Morris, Sgt. John P. Biggs, T/Sgt. Otis E. Taylor, 2nd Lt. John R. Delapp, Sgt. Charles M. Mohr, S/Sgt. William J. Lewis, 2nd Lt. Don B. Chandler, Pfc. Richard F. Wadzok, Pfc. Charles J. Hill.

of us, ravenous just at the sight of American food and plenty of it, eat first with the 111th Squadron, then pass over to a mess hall further down the road, here blandly line up for another meal!

In addition to American personnel of our parent 68th Observation Group, there are French Air Force and Arab ground troops (rugged looking "Ghoums") stationed here on the base.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 15

As darkness comes on and coolness slides in over our field, we gather around campfires to boil eggs bought from enterprising Arabs, test out the soluble coffee found in C-ration cans ("not so hot") or just sit around and talk. To the oft-repeated question, "when's the war going to end?" (the favorite topic next to women and mail), one man answers knowingly, "another year or so, but not much sooner; it won't take long to clean up Africa."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 16

At 0755 hours this morning, we at last become an operational unit. At this time, 1st Lt. Fred Monthei, accompanied by Gunner-Sergeant Gerrel O'Quin, pilots the first Squadron A-20 on combat sub-patrol over the waters in the Oran area. Along one leg of the course, our pilot spots a twin-engine plane down 18 miles west of Habibas Island. After returning to La Senia airbase, Lt. Monthei leads a flying boat to the wrecked plane's position. "No sub sightings as yet." . . . (In general, such sub-patrols will be within a 50-mile radius of Oran. Along with other 68th Observation Group aircraft, we will fly a close-knit, overlapping course, thus minimizing the chance of overlooking any enemy sea craft in the area. Four 250 pound depth charges will be the main offensive weapon carried by each A-20.)

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 17

The five-day guard here on the base continues to be our main sore point. Spread out on the far, bleak corners of the field, we stand shivering through the cold watches of the night, ride or hike back to the guard house for a few hours of sleep on a hay-covered cement floor, then stagger out again for another four hours.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 18

A cattle stampede could have been no more thunderous than the rush of men to section buildings tonight. Here we have the first mail call in almost two months!

As we lay in our tents tonight, a chorus of weird Arab-chanting shatters the night silence. With a chilled feeling we listen to this long-continued wailing, perk up apprehensively as it reaches an almost screaming pitch, then relax as it returns to a monotonous sing-song chant. Later on, we learn that the Arabs are having a religious meeting and are sacrificing a young lamb. "Gives you the willies," says one man as he turns over and tries to sleep with the sound of the Arab-chanting still tearing at the night air.

Promoted to Corporal this day: Harry Gallone and Joseph Abernethy.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 20

Taking over command of our unit from Capt. Theodore Mayer (injured in a motorcycle accident in Blida) is Capt. John R. Dyas. "You co-operate with me, and I'll co-operate with you," puts forth our new dynamic C. O. at a meeting of all Squadron personnel in the hangar this afternoon.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 21

In "Good-bye, Mr. Chips" we see our first American movie since leaving England. Despite the poor sound and bitter cold, we crowd the wind-wailing hangar to capacity tonight and stare eagerly at the flickering screen.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 23

Promoted to CAPTAIN this day: Edwin O. Waters (Intelligence).

In many a pup tent each night, men sprawl out on blankets and silently watch the sun disappear in a great banner of orange — "I don't think I've ever seen such beautiful sunsets; night after night they're the same; it gets so that they become a part of the day—something to look forward to." Not talking, just laying there and listening, we hear the far-away barking of a dog, the screeching wail of a rooster, and then the air-wafted garble of Arab voices far out on the field. Over everything there spreads an infinite peace and calm which, in this strange land, sends our thoughts to many other days and places.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 24

Every inch of the American hangar is crowded tonight as we wait impatiently for the Christmas Eve show to begin. Soon, a Chaplain steps upon the the improvised stage, quiets his GI audience, perched on everything from gas cans to the wings of A-20's, and starts the show along. A husky Captain is in the midst of telling what he deems a humorous story, our stony faces deciding otherwise, when a youthful, bareheaded Officer leaps dramatically onto the platform and with heavy breathing gasps out — "men . . . I want you . . . to leave this hangar . . . at once. Return to your areas. Pack your 'A' bags. Be ready to leave this airdrome in fifteen minutes!!"

The hanger suddenly becomes one mass of confusion, deep voices, moving feet and pushing bodies. We stumble over the rocks and soggy mudded ruts back to our tent area. Thoughts of bloody battle, death and destruction are betrayed by excited voices and hurrying footfalls. Back in our tents, we ready the things we will grab "just in case." It is amazing how, in such a short time, we have become accustomed to grab and run, pushing a few things in a bag, stuffing our pockets with cigarettes, matches and any available food or candy. A whistle shrieks out sharply. On the high ground of our tent area, our Commanding Officer, Capt. John Dyas, stands in the center of an ever-growing ring of Squadron members. With a flashlight playing warily on his face, Capt. Dyas tells us that the rumor is that "Spanish troops are massing for invasion on the border just 10 miles away . . . if anything happens and you get lost, head northeast toward Oran." . . . Guards are soon posted all around the base. Crew chiefs ordered to fire their planes should this invasion materialize. Those not needed for other duties return to the darkness of their tents and wait. Hours pass. From all parts of the camp area come air-dulled voices — "leave your tents up . . . take 'em down . . . load your rifles . . . go to bed!" Before dawn, guards come straggling back to the camp area and report "the alert was all a mistake!" Only then do many fall off into sleep, this time untroubled by the fears and imaginations of the mind. "What a Christmas Eve! Never again, I hope!"

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 25

After four days of rain, mud and gritty wind, today, Christmas 1942, dawns blue and gold. Greetings of "Merry Christmas, Jack!" "The same to you, Bill!" seem strange and out of place in this passive land.

At noon time, we gather over by the drab brown mess hall and settle down to sweat out the long chow line. Somehow, there is a false, brittle gaiety in all our talk of home and Christmases past. Before long, we begin the usual mock-insulting and kidding of one another — "why you old s. o. b.; who said you could eat with the white men?" —and this and all of the like that follows manage in some way to fill up the emptiness.

By this time, the mess hall door opens and we file in for a "real Christmas dinner" of chicken (rounded up from farms nearby) gravy, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, pudding and egg nog—all served by our volunteer Officer-KP's.

After this dinner, we head back to the "hill" and a quiet afternoon of just puttering around, boiling clothes, or talking together in small groups. Late in the day, we hear the relayed call "MAIL'S IN!" Dropping everything, we go

streaking for the section buildings and wait patiently while the large batch of letters is handed out. Once back in the privacy of our pup tents, we read and re-read these letters again and again. "You'll rub the print off of it if you don't put it away!"

In the hangar tonight we are treated to an Abbott and Costello film ("Hold That Ghost") and as the reel spins on and the building echoes with deep laughter, it is as if the flickering shadows on the screen had poured canned life into our body. . . . "Not a bad Christmas after all!"

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 26

Each morning we shiver to the sound of the shrill six o'clock reveille whistle, lurch out from the damp confines of our pup tents, and stagger into ragged formation. Here the cry of "ready—exercise!" breaks harshly on our ears and we begin the tortuous girations called calisthenics. These over with, we wheel to the right, puff and stumble over the boulders and ruts on the way down to the mess hall. After storing away a hearty breakfast of oatmeal, bread, and coffee, we head for our sections. For linemen it means another day of slow, painstaking work on the ailing parts of Squadron planes—cleaning guns, checking radios, packing parachutes and then into bull sessions and prolonged waiting for something to happen. For Administrative personnel, the paper work still persists. In Operations-Intelligence, systems and procedures are revised, checked over and originated. In most sections, there is an attempt made to chop everything down to its essentials. . . . "things are a whole lot different now than they were on maneuvers."

In the air this mid-morning on a mission to reconnoiter the Spanish Moroccan border for possible troop concentrations, Capt. Knapp, Lts. Lewis, Keith and Caraway, Cpl. Wempe and Sgt. Weiner bring back a negative report.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 28

Major Adams, Capts. Dyas, Armstrong and McKinney, Sgts. Pozzi and Gottfredson today complete uneventful sub patrols.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 29

An hour-long search mission for an Allied merchant ship reported torpedoed in the Western Mediterranean reveals nothing and our planes and crews (Lts. Lewis, Caraway, Sharp, Kreslov, Deering, Cpl. Janson, Sgts. Stankiewicz, Gherki and S/Sgt. Newton) return to base.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Dec. 30

Pvt. Paul Kahanic is today assigned to our Communications Section; promoted to FIRST Lieutenant—George K. Vapaa (Armament).

Lts. Sheehan and Sharp and Sgt. Rice take off early this morning on an IFF radio check over the Mediterranean, but are forced to turn back shortly after leaving base—"ceiling O; visibility O."

JANUARY, 1943

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 1

A cold shiver runs through our body this morning as we wake up to the jarring notes of the six o'clock whistle. Opening the tent flap, we see before us in weird incongruity a thin blanket of SNOW! "Africa, the dark, steaming continent," bites out one man shaking the snow from his tent!

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 2

Lts. Dowling, Sheehan, Able, Monthei, Capt. Waters, Cpls. Scurlock, Sheppard, Sgts. Rice and Weiner—all up today on sub patrols and radio checks—report: "no incidents; no sightings."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 3

Two sub patrols and one radio check are flown by Lt. Vetter, Capt. Harness, Lt. Sheehan, Lt. Downie, Capts. Waters and Keith, Sgts. Pozzi, Gherki, McArthur and Newton. . . . "nothing to report."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 4

With instructions to "sink all subs not identified as friendly," two missions (Lts. Lawson, Lewis, Capts. Harness, Knapp, Sgts. Richard, Villaneuva, Walling and Gherki) are airborne this morning. At day's end all planes are down at base and crews report, "routine flight."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 5

Sighting only Allied convoys, Lts. Spradley, Kreslov, Caraway, Capt. Waters, Sgts. Kish, Shehans, Cpls. Galick and Janson return to base without incident.

The always welcome promotion list is posted today and tells of the following advances: to PRIVATES FIRST CLASS: Arnold Christenson, Thomas Crudden, George Flynn, Robert Halboth, William Hall, Glen Hefner, John Hubay, Robert Jennings, Paul Kahanic, Eugene McKenna, James Reynolds, Harold Rich, Ernest Tyree, Paul Wojcik.

Sgt. Charles Richard is today relieved of his duties as First Sergeant of this Squadron.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 6

After five days of uneventful flying, our crews (Lts. Sheehan, Foreman, Capt. Kieth and McKinney, Cpls. Wempe and Noel) at last report, "sighted a sub!" Depth charges are dropped on the suspected enemy sea craft but no definite claims can be made as a result of this attack. All planes return to base.

M/Sgt. Bernard Holstegge today assumes the duties of Acting First Sergeant of our Squadron.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 7

From a dawn sub patrol this morning, one Squadron A-20 fails to return and the crew, Capt. Knapp, Lt. Gravestock, Sgt. Pozzi, and Pfc. Reynolds, are listed as "missing in action." Later this day, our planes are up on a search for the missing aircraft, but in their coverage of the area fail to find any traces of this ship.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 8

Our A-20's continue on their search for the Squadron aircraft believed to have gone down in the sea yesterday; nothing is sighted in the wide area covered.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 9

Promotions announced this day: S/Sgts. Casey, O'Quin, Finn and Tanner to TECH/SERGEANT; Sgts. Pozzi, Richard, Gherki, Gottfredson, McArthur, Sloan, Stathakis, O. C. Weeks, Whitaker, Diemer, Gibbons, Rodriguez, Pullin, Walaitis, Weiner, and Hunt to STAFF/SERGEANT; Cpls. Ruck, Crowell, Drewke, Gallone, Raiford, Still, Toscano, Sheppard, Abernethy, Goin, Roark, Stone, C. Ross, and Trier to SERGEANT; Pfc's Chiles, Girola, Hill, Kish, Librenz, Replyuk, Sander, Simetkosky, Steinborn, Waters, Fichtner, Heater, Kij, G. Lewis, J. Lynch, Sanders, Shirutis, Stefano, Sweet, Bower, W. Russell to CORPORAL; Pvt. Lipka to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS.

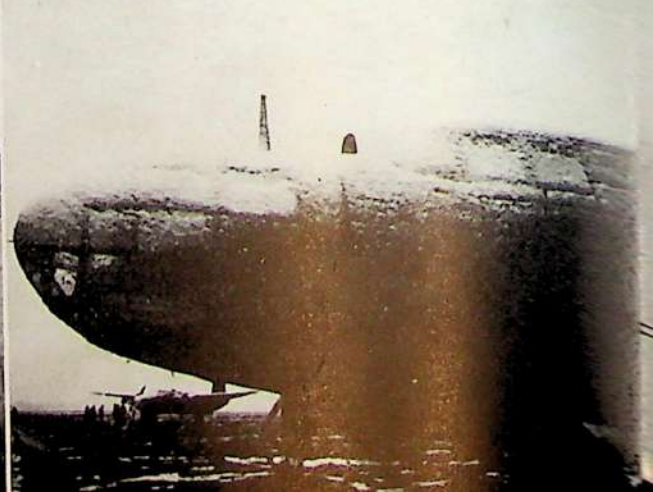
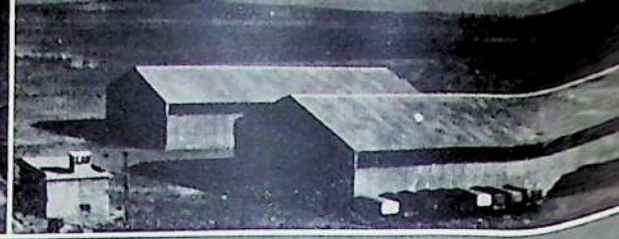
2nd Lt. William R. Yost is today assigned to our Squadron.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 14

For the second day running, we rush out of our section buildings and watch with fascinated helplessness as another P-39, being put through its paces by pilots here on the field, spirals earthward and crashes far out on the field. . . . "that's three in the last two days; that ship is becoming a jinx."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 15

Many of our pilots and observers (Capts. Harness, Kieth, Kreslov, Verdel, 1st Lts. Able, Armstrong, Caraway, Downie, Lewis, Vetter, 2nd Lts. Dowling, Lawson, Sheehan, Spradley), our A-20 planes, and gunners (S/Sgts. Carmichael, Richard, Walaitis, Noel, Stankiewicz, Cpls. Scurlock, Sheppard, Villaneuva, Reovelle, Walling, Galick, Keyees, Pfc's Rich, Rountree, Crudden) are today transferred to the 16th Observation Squadron, while we receive



a new group of P-39 pilots and armorers (1st Lts. Killian, Whitwell, 2nd Lts. Howard, Kelsey, Laxson, Mayse, McClosky, Schwab, and Slagle . . . Pfc's White, Martinek, Gradoville, Fillingim, Smith, Booth, Sgt. Winstead, Pvs. Delaney, West and Haffey.)

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 16

After flying down from England, 2nd Lts. Anstine, Pitts and Powell return to active duty with our Squadron.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 19

2nd Lts. Theodore Dubois and Horace Finch become part of our flying personnel this day. Lt. Hilliker, until recently on detached service in England, also reports for duty.

Each day, many of us visit the French-Arab town of Oujda, a place of many sights and experiences: private baths where you can loll in a steaming tub-full of soapy water; crowded photo shops offering "gud" portraits; Arab kids pouncing on American soldiers with "shoo-shine? . . . vav—rec gud . . . shoo-in gum? . . . bon bon?"; sidewalk cafes peopled with leisurely sprawling soldiers and civilians; white-legged Fifth Army MP's; cheap novelty stores crammed with gaudy merchandise; the narrow, winding Arab sector with its hundreds of cubby-hole shops and throngs of pock-marked, deformed, narrow-eyed merchants and loungers—this is Oujda.

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Jan. 21

After many days of feverish preparation, our first air and ground detachments prepare to leave for an advanced base, Youks Les Bains, Algeria. While most of our Officers and Enlisted Men are to head for this distant spot by air (in A-20's, C-47's and Squadron P-39's), some of those going up to "the front" will make the journey by jeep or GI truck. Among those who are eastward bound are: Capt. Dyas and McKinney, 1st Lts. Killian, Snyder, Whitwell, and Vapaa, 2nd Lts. Kelsey, Schwab, Anstine, Howard, Mayse, Hilliker, Laxson, Sherman, McClosky, Yost, Pitts, T/Sgts. Casey, Finn, Tanner, O'Quin, and Taylor, S/Sgts. Brown, Harness, L. D. Owens, Gottfredson, Gherki, Barham, W. Lewis, Wewer, Appler, Newton, Weiner, McArthur, Sgts. Roark, Sheffield, Snoddy, Shehans, R. White, Raiford, Cpls. Janson, Wempe, Kish, F. B. Clark, Steinborn, Leopold, Pfc's White, Hood, Halboth and Pvt. Carpenter.

Early this morning and many hours ahead of the actual departure time, those of us leaving for Youks are assembled at the hangar just below the camp area. Here we sweat out the hours until the arrival of a group of C-47 transport planes which come in at noon. Loading is quickly accomplished, but ("as usual in the Army!") we wait around until 1400 hours before take-off. Anticipation and speculation as to "what we will find" is rabid as our planes point eastward and skim over mountain ranges (!) in order not to be spotted. All eyes fan the skies for silhouettes of enemy planes and after a long seige of watching, many a man complains of "seeing spots and hearing whines!" "Our pilots" (in the 13 newly assigned P-39's) "may even now be there," puts forth one man ominously as the planes roar onward.

OUJDA, FRENCH MOROCCO. . . . An Arab woman in the streets of Oujda. . . . Panorama of Oujda Airbase (section buildings to left; hangars to right). . . . One of the many Arabs and donkeys which pass by our camp area daily. . . . Christmas 1942 is celebrated as our Officers (at right, Lts. Armstrong, Tyler and Able) take over the duties of KP's. . . . (Jan. 20, 1943) Memorial services for Capt. Clyde Knapp, Lt. John Gravestock, Sgt. William Pozzi and Pfc. Edward Reynolds are held on the base. . . . Our pup-tent camp area. . . . On New Year's morning, a blanket of snow covers our tents! . . . Chow line on Christmas Day 1942. . . . Officer-KP's on Christmas Day: Lts. Sheehan, Capt. Knapp, Hinkel, Harness, Lt. Tyler, M/Sgts. Harris, Holstegge, Lt. Armstrong, M/Sgt. P. Moon, W. O. Kalinowski, 1st Sgt. Richard, Pfc. J. Smith. . . . Posed with their "Free French" Air Force friend "Andre" (center) are Robert Scales, Joseph Rice, Joseph Schmidling, and Jefferson Ruck. . . . (Feb. 6, 1943) Screen-Star Martha Raye comes to Oujda. . . . The responsive audience at the Martha Raye show. . . . An Arab "druggist" draws a large and assorted crowd in Oujda. . . . A part of the Communications Section: Robbie Barham, Stanislaw Kij, Clarence Leonard, James Lodge, Forrest Clark. . . . Our A-20 aircraft stand passively under a blanket of snow (New Year's Day, 1943).

Episode Nine

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 21

By late afternoon, most of our planes and personnel, led by Col. Fordyce and Major Adams in an A-20, have arrived here at Youks Les Bains. Both are quickly dispersed around the main field, a large plateau area banked on one side by the well-named peak, "the Frenchman's Hat."

About a quarter of a mile from the dispersal area and in the gullies and on the flatlands around a creek bed, our camp area is mapped out and set up. (Any depression in the earth's surface seems the best shelter spot here where "we might be raided any minute of the day or night!") As we dig in the heavy sucking ground and pitch shelter halves over our earthen bed, we note the cooks putting up the kitchen tent and moving in their portable stoves. After we eat a supper of now unpopular C-rations, a rotating guard (one man—one hour patrol tour) is detailed and on this, our first night here, most of us are in bed and asleep by sunset.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 22

Held up a day at Algiers, 1st Lt. Pitts, 2nd Lts. Hilliker, Yost, and McClosky join our small group this day.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 23

An additional group of Enlisted Men arrives today by air, quickly dig their homes, and settle down approximately 48 miles from enemy lines.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 25

From morning until dusk, the past few days have been taken up with the "digging in" of our "homes" and the setting up of our section tents down on the mud-rutted line. All is work and yet we are spread out so in all directions that to the casual observer all would seem calm and unhurried. Night comes on quickly up here and even as the sun goes down and fills the western sky with an orange-red glow, it is not uncommon to hear "good-night; see you tomorrow" echo throughout camp and then almost unbroken silence. "To bed with the chickens and up with the roosters! . . . this must be total war," says one man noting that it is only six-thirty PM, then pulling up the blankets and launching into sleep!

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 26

At 1400 hours this afternoon, Lts. Pitts and Anstine are up on our first Squadron reconnaissance mission over enemy territory. The areas to be covered, Tebessa and Sened (Tunisia), reveal nothing of tactical importance and all planes return to base. "Sure did sweat that first one out," say our pilots and ground crewmen. . . . In general, our present function here is to fill any immediate request of our own ground or air forces for information on enemy movements or concentrations in Tunisia. Along with this, our sprite-like P-39's are armed with cannon and Squadron pilots instructed to attack enemy targets of opportunity.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 30

After two days of uneventful activity, we experience our first loss. During an attack-reconnaissance of the Central Tunisia area, Lt. McClosky is hit by ground fire and crashes in the enemy-held Sbeitla sector.

The greater part of our Squadron equipment having been lost somewhere between here and Casablanca, our mechanics are now forced to meet and solve daily challenges to their ingenuity and patience. If tools cannot be requisitioned, they are made on the spot. Oil cans, barrels, pieces of wood crating, plexiglass—anything handy is utilized. But regardless of the shortage of much-needed equipment (Engineering with its far from complete tool kits; Communications with three extra radio sets and a few screwdrivers; Armament with its scanty supply of rods, patches and brushes) operations go on with a high rate of efficiency. That this efficiency is maintained is in no small measure due to the efforts of our "live wire" Commanding Officer, Capt. John R. Dyas. "He gets things done, and no guff about it!"

FEBRUARY, 1943

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 1

The food which we get here is "the best yet" and almost daily breakfasts of steaming pancakes, jam, fried eggs, great slices of white (!) bread, and hot coffee are eaten on the cold-hardened mounds of earth around our mess hall tent or, in bad weather, under the flapping canvas of the food storage tent. Officers and Enlisted Men sweat out the chow line regardless of rank or duty and the spirit here is uncommonly close. . . . Even our "daily habits" take on an open casualness and the slit-trench latrine area in the open field across from camp is a popular mecca for those who combine talking, reading, or just contemplating the landscape with the performance of their daily "necessities." ("Pass the 'hockey tickets' will ya please?") . . . In our "spare time," many of us are handed pick and shovel and directed to the land around the mess tent, here to dig shoulder high slit-trenches as protection against meal-time raiders. . . . We just about live in our clothes, but come a warm, sunny day and the hardy ones strip down to "long Johns" or less, get a can full of water, and begin the disagreeable but necessary task of washing clothes. . . . Small but eagerly awaited batches of mail are ferried up from Oujda and, at the cry of "mail call!", we spread a blanket on the ground, drop the letters upon it and it's every man for himself! . . . At dusk, we head back for our tent before darkness closes in with its pitch blackness (one man wanders almost half a mile away from camp and is directed in by shouting!), check the cardboard or newspaper padding on the earth floor of our shelter, "dress up" (put on sweaters, gloves, flying pants, overcoats etc.) and climb in under the blankets. As camp guards have been instructed to "shoot out any lights" they see, we give up night reading for the most part and just settle down to talk or smoke in the dark. Except for the "wonging" of an occasional "Jerry" plane, our sleep is deep and unbroken and the land around us ("just like Texas!") offers no evidence of the living below its very earth. All during the night, a single guard patrols the camp area for two long hours, stumbles around over night-concealed ruts, holes and risings, then gladly gives over to his relief.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 2

Up on a dawn mission over the Kairouan area, Lts. Hilliker and Yost are attacked by four FW-190's which swoop directly out of the sun. Lt. Yost, presumed to be hit and heading southeast of Kairouan, has not, at day's end, returned to base.

Lt. Frank Snyder adds another silver bar to his collection and the salutation is now "CAPTAIN."

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 4

Back in the damp closeness of our pup tents tonight, the story of the day's surprise air raid is re-told. . . . "We were working on the ships as usual and some of us were in the engineering tent. An American Captain had just taxied his 'Spitfire' to within a short distance of the tent and dropped in to look up some radio information. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion. Those three weeks when we had expected and never seen an enemy plane and those days of not paying attention to red flares went swiftly by the board! Three or four 'Jerry' planes came out of the sun, dove down on the field with a terrifying whine, dropped three or four small bombs and then passed over to the east. Dirt rained down upon the tent. Those of us out on the field spread-eagled on the ground and pressed into the sides of nearby pits and felt the ground shake and tremble. The American Captain burst out, 'if the S.O.B. gets that Spit, I'll murder him!' A small quantity of gas and oil was hit and sent up fat black smoke clouds into the stilled air. We picked ourselves up and looked around, expecting to see all in a mass of flames. Sockets and tools were gathered together from all four corners of the tent and we looked at each other and burst out, 'scared the hell out of me!'"

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 5

There are broad smiles and hearty back-slappings late today as Squadron Commander John Dyas, now a MAJOR, returns to the "muddy hole of Youks."

Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa—Feb. 6

"In a very short time," the rear echelon here at Oujda is told, "you will be going up to the front." Many men comment, "what a relief; it will be good to be doing something for a change."

This afternoon, screen star Martha Raye steps from the nose of an A-20, grins widely at the group of grimy soldiers who have heard of her coming and have raced out on the field and surrounded her plane. Later in the day, we stream into the lofty French hangar here on the base, roar and stomp as she sings and clowns unreservedly. After the show, this raucous voiced star takes supper in our mess hall and many a man dallies deliberately at his meal until she walks through the room, stops and kids them in her own brash, wide-mouthed style. "A good sport," is how we later speak of Martha.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 8

Lts. Kelsey, Mayse, Deering and Rafanelli, up over Gafsa and Sened this morning, destroy two enemy vehicles and inflict severe damage on ten others. . . . Our pilots as well as ground crewmen are now getting the hang of things and although excited accounts mark the completion of every mission, there is a more professional touch in the approach to each assignment than there was two weeks ago—"after all, they just smacked us down here and told us to go at it; it takes time alright." For the first time since coming overseas, we experience a feeling of worth and accomplishment at this barren spot dubbed "the front." Rank is all but forgotten in the common cause.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 11

A powerful-throated A-20 alights on the runway here this morning and is followed by two bird-like P-39's. Thus Lts. Powell, Morgan, Finch and Downie, S/Sgt. Doynce Townsend, and Pfc's Grimes and Gillies arrive here at Youks, look around apprehensively, fully expect an air raid any minute!

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 14

Two extremely successful attack-reconnaissance missions (Lts. Killian, Pitts, and Kelsey) today result in severe damage to eight trucks and one half track.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 15

In our one mission of the day (Lts. Schwab, Mayse, Kelsey), an attack in the vicinity of Sbeitla, Lt. Kelsey is slightly injured by the flak from an enemy gun post which our planes effectively strafe and silence.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 17

Major Dyas, Lts. Killian, Anstine, Pitts, Hilliker, Mayse, Kelsey, Schwab, Howard and Finch amass an impressive claim total this day: destroyed—2 tanks, 8 trucks, 25 personnel; damaged—1 medium tank, 2 half tracks and 8 trucks. All of our planes return to base and two ships are marked as "slightly damaged."

Pfc. Clifton Akers is today promoted to CORPORAL.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 18

Just after dawn this morning, our alert crews watch four Squadron P-39's (Lts. Pitts, Slagle, Powell, and Whitwell) head for the Sbeitla area. No troop concentrations are sighted by our airmen and all planes return to base.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 20

"Looks as though they're building up for something," is the terse news which Major Dyas and Lt. Pitts bring back from a mission over the Kasserine-Tebessa area.

Conversation becomes low and forced as the news comes in that Rommel continues his thrust through the Kasserine Pass and is rapidly spearheading toward nearby Thala and Tebessa. The low-lying clouds and persistent bad weather lead our pilots to fervently wish, "if we could only hit at those bastards, and NOW!"

As a heavy rain falls on our muddled camp tonight, we gather in the Intelligence-Operations tent and Major Dyas calmly explains the working of "Plan B," an evacuation procedure. Later, we grope back to our tents, fully expecting to be rooted out of bed at any hour of the night with the words, "let's go; we're evacuating."

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 21

Heavy rain this afternoon prevents the completion of our one and only mission scheduled for the day. The ground situation has not improved and yet there is no more talk of "Plan B." . . . It is rumored that, with the exception of the few control personnel, we are the only ones left on the field! "They say we couldn't get out even if the Germans overran the field! No trucks!!"

A guttural-voiced "Captain Crawford" calls up on our field telephone today, asks about the fire power of and number of guns on our planes. After he is questioned as to who he is and why he wants this information, there is a click on the other end of the wire and then no further voice. "Our wires have been tapped," is the general conclusion of Intelligence.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 22

A jeep crosses the steel-matted runway, then heads for our Intelligence-Operations tent. Capt. McKinney steps gingerly over the muddled-earth stairs leading down to the Intelligence tent. All this while, calls for those on the alert echo through camp and soon a group of pilots stands before the briefing map. Capt. McKinney begins the briefing—"an all-out drive has been started to drive Rommel from his positions in the Kasserine Pass; here are our missions." (The details of the areas to be covered, and the enemy concentrations to be reported on are given and these points checked by pilots on their individual maps). Within a few minutes, the briefing is over and our pilots (Major Dyas, Lts. Killian, Pitts, Howard, Kelsey, Mayse, Whitwell, Hilliker, Morgan, Slagle, Anstine, Schwab, Finch and Powell) streak up the earth-stairs to the high ground outside of the revetted Intelligence tent, jump into a mud-spattered jeep and are driven off toward their planes. . . . Almost an hour later, these planes return. One is missing. Lt. Hilliker,

"too eager," is shot down as he presses a second attack over an Axis motor convoy. . . . During this day of operations, our pilots fly a total of 17 sorties over the critical Kasserine area and, despite the difficulty of strafing enemy targets in the narrow valleys of this sector, claim three tanks destroyed, ten trucks and two trailers damaged. That these operations are all completed as requested is a tribute not only to our airmen (1 Officer per plane; 14 planes), but also to our ground personnel (1 crew chief, 1 armorer per plane; plus 1 Intelligence Officer, 3 cooks and 2 radio-men). This is a "record day" in many respects.

Late this afternoon, the sky begins to clear and far off from the west comes the steady drone of heavy planes. Soon, wave after wave of bombers pass over our upturned faces and a spine-tingling thrill ices our whole being. Even now, the information which our pilots garnered in this morning's missions might well be dictating the targets for the bombers above. We are on the offensive at last!

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 23

Lt. Schwab will not soon forget this day. Making a crash landing at Thelepte, he "claims" one P-39 and a herd of sheep!

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 24

Late this morning, the sky is filled with the deep droning of transports which slowly and casually circle the field, then softly settle down on the runway and disgorge their loads of equipment-burdened soldiers. The 154th is a complete Squadron once more.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—Feb. 28

The Axis, being constantly hammered from the air and on land, is now paying for the slaughter of Kasserine. Meanwhile, the 8th Army (British) approaches near the Mareth Line and overnight Rommel must divide his forces between two threats—the British in the south, and the Americans, British and French in the west.

MARCH, 1943**Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 1**

Promotions to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS are announced today for Max Goldberg and Robert Huey.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 3

Major William Adams is today officially attached to our Squadron as head of the already operating Photo Wing; Pvts. Alter and Anderberg are assigned to our Communications Section; promoted to FIRST LIEUTENANT: Warren A. Beason, Supply Officer.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 7

Rain and mud of a sticky gumminess continue to keep our planes grounded; walking around the ditches and gullies in camp and keeping clean are the main problems of the day. Towards this last end, our truck deposits a group of us each day at the ancient Roman baths in the nearby town of Youks. And with seven men in a five-foot-square pool, the fun begins!

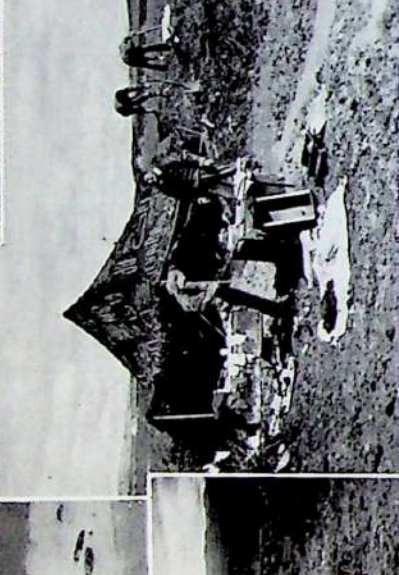
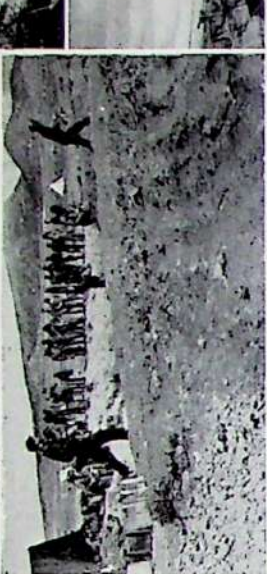
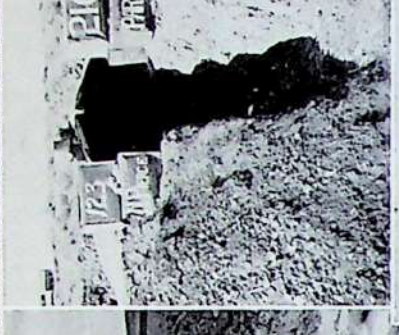
Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 8

More promotions are announced this day: Lts. Anderson, Adell, Traylor, Tyler, and Dubois to FIRST LIEUTENANT; 1st Lts. Whitwell, Killian, and Pitts to CAPTAIN.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 9

The following pilots are attached to our Squadron: Capt. Routh, 1st Lts. Peck, Gentzler, Hearrel, Osborne, Gates, Nutz, Wilder, and 2nd Lt. Randerson.

The rains come again early tonight and make of our camp a brown, gooey pudding of mud. In the far reaches of the night, hands fall languidly from the sides of sleeping bodies and plop into the ever-rising water. And then the shouting starts—"quick! Get up! We're flooded!" Thus,



in the pitch blackness, many are rooted out of bed, quickly gather up their sodden belongings and drag them to higher ground. Several tents, pitched in the gullies, have deep streams running right through them! Down in the Engineering tent on the line and in the Mess tent in camp, the "homeless" congregate and try to dry off. Cook stoves are lighted up and the dispossessed, wrapped in blankets and shifting from one wet foot to another, wait miserably for morning to come.

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 10

This morning, bright, brilliant and blue, would deny any such deluge which we experienced but a few hours ago. Many men spend the day drying out almost everything they own. Even Personnel records and payroll money are victims of the rain!

Youks Les Bains, Algeria, N. Africa—March 12

We begin to make ready for a move.

Episode Ten

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 13

After a bumpy GI truck ride over winding mountain roads and across vast, barren plains, we arrive at the recently German-occupied airfield of Thelepte. As dusk is already coming on, we hurriedly pitch our pup tents in any available spot and eat a C-ration supper. By this time, darkness has driven in over the field and we seek refuge in the only things possible—our tent and sleep.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 14

In the light of another day, we take a good look at our new base, and find it to be a flat, scrub-covered area set below a three-quarter ring of far away mountains. On the alert for booby traps, we search around for souvenirs among the pits and holes on the field and greatly prize the German and Italian photographs, letters and books left behind in the recent battle for the field.

As we are surveying the deep pits of our sections-to-be, a strange "wong—wong—wong" rends the air. Suddenly, someone cries, "duck! It's 'Jerry'!" At once, we hit the ground, press into the walls of a nearby pit and stare up at the underbellies of the black-crossed machines which swoop low over the field. The air thunders and is torn by screechings. A deep, dull thud shakes the earth. Machine guns drum dully, constantly. But within a few minutes, the raiders pass over and only the sound of two delayed action bombs disturbs the peace which flows in again over the field. . . . Three times more they come during the day. Late this afternoon, we watch grimly as a JU-88 crashes into a mountain in the west.

Bad news is relayed back to camp early today. Laying wire outside of camp this morning, our Communications

jeep has run over a German land mine. In the resulting explosion, T/Sgt. Clarence Leonard is most seriously wounded in the leg, while Sgt. Toscano, Cpls. Russell and Golba receive minor cuts and bruises and a severe shaking up. Sgt. Leonard is at once removed to a nearby field hospital where his condition is said to be "none too good." Pieces of metal and ball bearings from the inside of the mine are later brought back to camp and examined closely and we arrive at a new idea of the German destructive mind.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 15

By now, most of our sections are set up underground. Medics, Intelligence-Operations, Mess, Headquarters-Personnel, and the Engineering Office all function from pits already found here on the field. Over these pits, we stretch lumber, tin or canvas, then a camouflage coating of earth.

Lts. Howard, Hearrel, Slagle, and Nutzel are airborne today on general reconnaissance over the Gafsa-El Guettar area; mission accomplished without incident.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 16

The awakening of our camp each morning is a strange sight. One by one, like moles, we come out of our underground dugouts, stretch, and then urinate . . . misted, sun-glazed figures sending up steam-flowers wherever man-streams strike the cold caked earth.

Between missions which cover the well-defended Gafsa sector, we continue work on the digging of our homes-to-be. Out of the earth itself, we fashion the basis for beds, tables, and shelves, cover the top over with planks, metal and dirt, then move in.

Undergoing a successful amputation operation, Sgt. Clarence Leonard is now pronounced "well out of danger." To the news that he will be going home soon, soldiers answer definitely, "he'll get along!"

"Tomorrow is the big day." . . . Around the map in the Intelligence pit tonight, under the bright glare of an unshaded light bulb, Major Adams reveals the details of the coming Allied drive on Gafsa, Maknassy and Sened. Colonel Biden, of the British 8th Army and now Liaison Officer with our Squadron, speaks assuredly and with cold-faced calm to our pilots, tells them that "at this very moment, troops of the 8th Army are infiltrating slowly behind the defenses of the Mareth Line."

A light rain falls tonight, but how different is our outlook from that when the rain pounded down on us at Youks and we were on the point of evacuating. Our own heavy tanks and armored vehicles grind over the road all day long, and the noise of their treads still fills our hearing as we slip off into sleep.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 17

Although the weather seems to have greily conspired to thwart our all-out offensive, six missions are airborne today (Major Dyas, Capt. Pitts, Lts. Billups, Randerson, Marquette, Friedman, Routh, Gates, Osborne, Mayse and Kenner). "Activity in the Gafsa-Maknassy area grows more intense with the passing of time," report our pilots.

YOUKS LES BAINS, ALGERIA. . . . Our cooks set up shop. . . . Work detail (Harold Zynda, Swayne Whitehead, Eugene Gerig, John Waters, Charles Girola, Walter Lee, Edward Lipka, Andrew Orsini, Harold Austin) digs chin-high foxholes as a protection against enemy raiders. . . . A "scab-headed" Buddy Diemer at chow. . . . Intelligence Officer, Capt. Don McKinney, Commanding Officer, Major John Dyas, and Operations Officer, Lt. Joseph Whitwell stand before highly-prized status board. . . . Fred Burke and Bernard Holstegge shake out money sodden by the night's deluge (note mud on shoes and pants); Norman Geekie and Jerry LaBanchi to rear. . . . Percy Moon digs a foxhole. . . . Camp on the morning after the "big flood." . . . (Below) John Russell salvages his belongings from his now water-filled "home." . . . Personnel cleans up after the heavy rain. . . . Entrance to a dugout. . . . Walter Lee before Squadron Photo trailer. . . . (Below) Squadron Pilots, Lts. Alfred Schwab, Verne Kelsey, Francis Killian, and Jack Howard "plan a major operation!" . . . John Sigler plies his trade under sunny skies; Fred Higdon is the "patient." . . . Panorama at chow time. . . . Squadron Pilots: Lts. Anstine, Mayse, Finch, Pitts, Howard, Killian, Monthei, Whitwell, Dubose, Slagle, Morgan, Major Dyas (Squadron Commanding Officer), Lts. Schwab, Kelsey, McMath (Photo) and Snyder (Medical). . . . Eugene McKenna surveys the "wide open spaces" of Youks. . . . Crew chief John Newton pre-flights a Squadron P-39. . . . (Bottom, 2nd from left) Albert Raper dourly surveys the flooded scene. . . . "Woody" McArthur does some housecleaning. . . . Stanislaw Kij poses after a day of KP! . . . At dusk a solitary camp guard is silhouetted against the setting sun.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 19

After a one-day lay-off due to weather, we resume operations today and Lts. Finch, Powell, Morgan, Monthei, Routh, Gates, Osborne, Mayse, Gentzler, Kenner, Peck and Wilder complete all missions without incident. "A noticeable enemy concentration still in the Gafsa-Maknassy area."

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 20

A total of seven missions (Lts. Mayse, Osborne, Routh, Gentzler, Randerson, Friedman, Maj. Adams, Capt. Pitts, Lts. Monthei, Powell, Anstine, Morgan and S/Sgt. Myers) have been run at day's end and our pilots are becoming well acquainted with the area around El Guettar, ironically dubbed "Happy Valley."

Out of the hospital and back to our Squadron comes S/Sgt. William Roseberry, almost fatally wounded during a recent enemy air raid on the town of Youks les Bains.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 21

Allied bombers and fighters continue to roar over all day long and fill the air with their menacing thunder and powerful promise. Small and black against the blue sky, the escorting "Spits" weave and swoop like coy, young brood around the onward-pressing formations of the eastbound heavies. We watch and wait. . . .

Three photo-recon. and two attack missions comprise the day's operational activity and Major Dyas, Capt. Whitwell, S/Sgt. McFarland, Lts. Billups, Utesch, Wilder, Howard, Nutzel, Slagle, Kelsey, Hearrel, and Randerson pile up a record score: 10 trucks destroyed; a 75mm field piece, 6 trucks and a supply dump damaged.

Promotions announced this day: to STAFF SERGEANT—Jefferson Ruck, Donald Still, Orville Stalnack, Leo Tunnell; to SERGEANT—Harold Austin, Harry Chiles, Selmer Clark, Charles Hill, Gunnar Janson, Richard Fichtner, Edward Harris, Joseph Lynch, James Lodge, Herman Steinborn, Mahlon Sweet, Elwood Travers; to CORPORAL—Bill Goodner, Frederick Gillies, Briney Golba, Ross Grimes, William Hall, Robert Halboth, John Hood, Paul Kahanic, Norbert Raddatz, Edward Sutton, Robert Scales, Eugene Gerig, Erwin Bell.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 22

A total of seven missions (Lts. Schwab, Hearrel, Kelsey, Nutzel, Howard, Slagle, Friedman, Randerson, Marquette, Billups, S/Sgt. Myers, Lt. Utesch, Major Dyas, Capt. Whitwell) wing out over enemy territory and find Axis troops well entrenched and protected in the ridges around El Guettar. Photos of the major German airdrome at Kairouan are obtained without incident.

Our first rations in many a week are brought into camp today and we gratefully receive five packs of American cigarettes and some candy fruit drops.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 23

Capt. Don W. McKinney leaves our Squadron this day for duties with the XII Air Support Command; in his place as Intelligence Officer comes brisk Capt. Edwin O. Waters.

Our planes complete a total of twelve missions during the day and Lts. Morgan, Monthei, Friedman, Routh, Gates, Peck, Gentzler, Osborne, Randerson, Schwab, Kenner and

S/Sgt. McFarland observe heavy blankets of smoke rising from the town of Maknassy, a sector over which our bombers have been unusually active.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 24

Three photo and two attack-recon. missions (Lts. Friedman, Howard, Slagle, Kelsey, S/Sgt. Myers, Lts. Schwab, Kenner, Marquette, Utesch, Billups and S/Sgt. McFarland) comprise the day's activities. From the last mission, Lt. Marquette does not return . . . "he was turning south from Mezzouna the last time we saw him. . . ."

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 25

Capt. Delapp and Lt. Anstine are up on the only mission of the day, this in the heavily defended Dj. Chems-Mez-zouna area.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 26

Three attack and two photo missions are completed without incident by Lts. Finch, Powell, Capts. Whitwell, Pitts, Lts. Kenner, Morgan, Wilder, Friedman, and S/Sgt. Myers.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 27

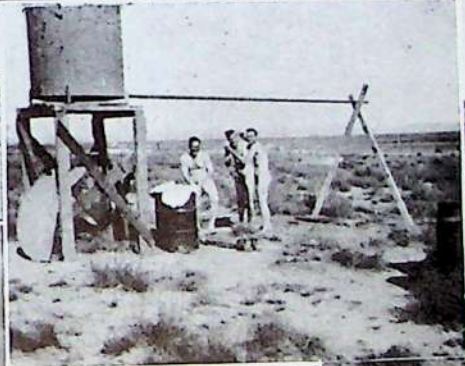
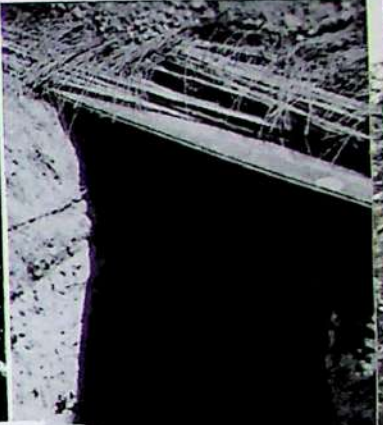
The areas of Sbeitla, Kairouan, Faïd Pass, Mezzouna and Gafsa are given good coverage this day by Major Dyas, Lts. Slagle, Kelsey, Wilder, Friedman, Kenner and Capt. Killian.

From dawn until dusk here at Thelepte, our planes, pilots and crewmen are on the alert for any missions which the XII Air Support Command in Feriana may request. Teletype operators sit in the Operations-Intelligence pit 24 hours a day. With the clicking of the keys, our Operations Officer, Capt. Whitwell, impatiently scans the names on the alert board and awaits the completed mission request. From the full message, Capt. Waters, our Intelligence Officer, briefs the pilots, has them take a last look at the flak map. All within a short time, our pilots are in a jeep, then in the air. With their going, the tension of preparation loosens and crewmen and pilots not on the alert scatter over the field and relax, some starting a game of volley ball before the Operations-Intelligence pit. . . . Only with the drone of the returning planes does everything once more take on a somewhat strained tone. We search the skies and carefully count the planes. Some days a ship or ships do not return and on the faces in Operations, on the line, and in camp appears that strange mixture of resignation and hope. Never was there a sweeter sound than that of a plane which straggles back long after the mission has been completed and all hope abandoned. On their return to base, our pilots are interrogated and the mission report immediately teletyped to the XII Air Support Command Headquarters. Here the information is evaluated, then fingered out to various key points. And as night comes on in camp, a more casual spirit takes over. Pilots gather together in their underground quarters and talk over the day's missions. Crewmen bemoan the troubles on the line and the lack of mail. The days pass and are without identity. We do whatever is requested and have a strange sense of passive timelessness.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 28

From our first attack-recon. mission this morning, Lt.

THELEPTE AIRFIELD, TUNISIA. . . . Aftermath of an enemy raid on our field: one A-20 is hit and burns fiercely. (April 5, 1943). . . . Interior of underground Dispensary. . . . Typical two-man "home" dug down in the earth. . . . Squadron Officers (Lt. Schwab, Capt. Pitts, Lt. Osborne, Major Dyas, ———, (seated) Lt. Finch, Capt. Waters, Capt. Snyder) arrive at Thelepte. . . . Moses Ross performs an open air job on Joseph Abernethy. . . . Lt. Randerson "caught in the act!" . . . Allied bombers circle over our field prior to heading out for Axis targets in the east. . . . Our Medical Officer, Capt. Frank Snyder, pens a letter at the entrance to his underground Dispensary. . . . Entry to one man's living quarters. . . . The Photo Section jeep with special camera rack. . . . In the path of sweeping winds, hardy Squadron members take a cold shower! . . . "One aircraft is damaged" (Capt. Eugene Pitts is the "lucky" pilot). . . . Squadron Commander, Major John Dyas, runs up a newly assigned P-38. . . . More damage inflicted by Axis air raiders on April 5, 1943. . . . (Below) An A-20 of the neighboring 47th Bomb Group takes off from our field. . . . "Birdlike" English "Spitfires" circle above our Engineering and line area before escorting the heavy bombers over enemy lines.



Utesch does not return and is last heard from in the Mezzouna area. . . . One further recon. and two photo missions are airbourne at later periods and Lt. Wilder is missing in an attempt to photograph the heavily defended Mezzouna airdrome.

Our Photo Men are kept constantly busy these days and nights. At all hours, pictures, taken by our pilots over enemy occupied territory, are processed in the photo trailer and rushed by jeep to the gutted town of Feriana, there used by General Patton's Headquarters in the planning of future operations.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 29

Heavy concentrations of trucks south of Dj. Chemsî are noted by Major Dyas, Lts. Monthei, Mayse, Osborne, Powell and Capt. Delapp on three successful missions this day.

Capt. John Delapp, Lts. Melvin Weil and Tillman Kingsbury are officially assigned to our Squadron.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 30

S/Sgts. McFarland and Myers, Lts. Weil, Monthei, Kingsbury, Mayse, Slagle, Osborne, Powell, Billups, Cpts. Delapp, and Killian today account for a total of 4 trucks, and 1 recon. car destroyed; 3 half-tracks and 1 truck damaged; 1 machine-gun nest silenced.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—March 31

In the second of two missions run by S/Sgts. Myers and McFarland, Lts. Monthei, Friedman, Cpts. Delapp and Killian, Lts. Osborne, Slagle, Weil, and Kingsbury, one plane (Capt. Killian) crashes and takes fire in the vicinity of Dj. Chemsî. All other missions are completed without incident. Claims for the day are set at 1 tank, 4 trucks, 1 personnel carrier and 1 gun post destroyed; 20 enemy personnel killed; 1 tank damaged.

The pilot losses which we have experienced during the past few months of operation have bound us in ever closer comradeship and co-operation. When a pilot goes down over enemy territory, there comes to all of us a feeling of inward emptiness and questioning . . . "how can a war be 'just' when they kill such good guys?" The combat flyer realizes to the full the preciousness of time and human relationships and little things take on a new importance . . . "it's a fast life and a short one!"

APRIL, 1943

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 1

Of four P-39's up today (Lts. Billups, Powell, Friedman and Mayse), one plane, piloted by Lt. Billups, crashes in the Gafsa-Maknassy area. . . . "I saw him dive, shoot at the truck, then skid wildly. He hit the ground and burst into flames." The pilot who reports this is grim-faced and as he talks, his voice cracks and his eyes avoid all others. The questioning is reluctantly resumed. After the formal report is completed and Intelligence has started setting up the coded teletype for higher headquarters, the pilots stand around awkwardly. One of them puts forth unashamed . . . "when I saw him go in, I cried all the way back. . . ."

Gunner-Sergeants Roark and Leal today join the 47th Bomb Group, stationed nearby.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 2

Talk is rampant of our moving up nearer to the front and we are ready and impatient to be on the go again.

Cpl. Wempe joins the 47th Bomb Group this day and is assigned as an aerial gunner.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 3

The "milk run" (Capt. Pitts, Lts. Anstine, Powell and Finch) is up at dawn this morning and less than an hour later all planes are down once again on the field. . . . While

test hopping a P-51 late this afternoon, our recently attached photo pilot, Lt. Kenner, crashes into a nearby hill and is instantly killed.

Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 5

Come midday, we gather as usual on the mounds of earth and flatlands around our mess hall pit. As one man is cursing the sand and grit which blows into his food, a deep, whining roar suddenly tears apart the comparative quiet. All at once, mess kits are dropped, cups hurled into the air, and dirt sent flying as we streak for a foxhole or just flop flat on the ground. The rat-tat-tat of dull machine-gun firing peppers our hearing and the impact of bombs hitting on the field sets our hearts to thudding wildly. And then, as quickly as the raid had begun, the firing ceases and all becomes stillness again. Peering up over foxholes, we can see great black clouds of smoke rising from a crippled A-20. Our cooks gravely pass around a large piece of shrapnel which ripped through the top of their tent and lodged in the dirt wall below. All over camp and on the airfield itself, men pick up varying sized pieces of jagged metal, shake their heads as they think of what such a fragment might have done, then head back to work.

Officially attached to our Squadron this day are Lts. Friedman, Osborne, S/Sgts. McFarland and Myers.

The word is passed through camp tonight . . . "we will move tomorrow."

Episode Eleven

Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 6

Shortly after dawn this morning, we are ordered to strike camp. As a result of experience on many such moves, this process has become surprisingly efficient and speedy. Sectional equipment has been weeded down to essential needs and, as we "practically live out of our barracks bags," our personal equipment takes but a few minutes' attention. By the time the trucks arrive, are loaded, and we are on our way, it is almost midday. . . . After passing through country torn and ravaged by bombs and littered with Allied and Axis tanks and in our journey taking the wrong road and almost landing up in enemy territory (!), we arrive at Sbeitla Landing Ground late this afternoon. Here we find not an anti-aircraft gun on or near the field—a situation which Major Dyas soon and decisively remedies! . . . Pyramidal tents for personnel and equipment are scattered around in the cactus patch and olive grove to the side of the field and after a half-hearted strafing by a roving Jerry plane at dusk, we turn in with Faid Pass and the Germans within "milk run" distance.

Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 7

Our Operations-Intelligence is set up in ready-made pits to the side of the landing ground but all is quiet and uneventful. No missions are scheduled and our planes are checked over by their crews and then left in brooding silence on one side of the newly made take-off strip.

S/Sgts. Burke, Ruck, Gruenig, McArthur, Jeffries, Newton and Gherki all leave today for what they deem a "seventh heaven"—Co-pilot berths on a C-47!

Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 8

"On the deck," white smoke belching forth, a group of American A-20's come weaving wildly over camp on the way back from a raid this morning and send us scrambling into the thorn-riddled cactus for cover. Later we learn that Jimmy Roark, formerly of our Squadron, lost his life in the plane which we could see go down west of Faid Pass.

Eighth Army and American motor convoys stream past our airfield and turn north as the New Zealanders break

through at El Hamma and Montgomery's troops swarm across the Mareth Line and head for the plains of Kairouan. "Now the rout begins."

2nd Lts. Robert Black, Irwin Potts and Leonard Riemer add to the number of our Flying Officers this day.

Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 9

Cpl. Harold L. Steed is today assigned to our Squadron Engineering Section.

Lt. Alfred Schwab, up on the first P-51 combat mission flown by any pilot in the Mediterranean Theatre, successfully photographs the enemy-held Kairouan airdrome and returns to base without incident.

At an impressive ceremony this afternoon and before a backdrop of traditional African cactus, Brig. Gen. Paul H. Williams presents the award of the Oak Leaf Cluster to Maj. Adams, Capt. Pitts, Lts. Howard, Kelsey, Mayse and Schwab.

Sbeitla Landing Ground, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 10

We are on the move again. Once more we pack up, pile into trucks and go bumping northward.

Episode Twelve

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 10

As we wind higher and higher over snaky mountain roads, our eyes, staring out from behind glare-protecting goggles, take in the expansive stretches of verdant country which roll below us. From powder-ground roads, great billowing clouds of dust swirl around us so that much of the time the scene is totally obscured. Our faces are caked with this white powder and cracked and burned by the sun and the wind. Thus, with our whole body yielding easily and accustomedly to the jostling and bumping of the trucks, we begin to go down into the valleys again. By mid-afternoon, we turn into a far-reaching piece of flat ground just outside of the small village of Le Sers. This plain, once evidently a farmland and owned by a heavily-bearded Frenchman who drives around in a horse-drawn carriage and critically watches us unload, is to be our current base of operations. . . . As we climb down from our trucks, a

friendly plane whisks overhead and sends the cluster of welcoming Arab kids into the high grass and under the nearby cactus. For a short while, they crouch there and look up fearfully, then sheepishly begin to shift back to our group. . . . By the time all Squadron personnel and equipment have arrived, it is well into the afternoon. A supper of cold C-rations and then we begin setting up our pyramidal section tents and homes, roll out our blankets and straw-filled mattresses and, on the high grass and poppy covered plateau slightly higher than the main field, are fully "at home."

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 14

French soldiers of the anti-aircraft unit stationed here on the field prove a friendly lot and pay us nightly visits during which they have some weird and brutal tales to tell and many war souvenirs to show. Most of these men have not heard from their families since France was Nazi-fied and they are grimly serious as they put their hand on the map of Germany, then forcefully close their fist.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 18

Operations are resumed today, but on a definitely reduced scale. It is a job for the heavy bombers now that the Axis is penned up in the Bizerte-Medjez El Bab-Zaghuan triangle.

A single plane-motor throbs gutterally in the darkness late tonight and as we lay in our tents, we mark it "friendly" in our mind. And then comes the rapid, sharp pelting of machine gun fire and we realize that death is flying solo above us. The sound of the motor grows louder and hovers directly over our area, then grows fainter and fainter. The raider has passed.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 19

Two P-51's (Lts. Potts and Anstine) are up late this afternoon on a reconnaissance of the Pont du Fahs, Medjez El Bab sector. Here there is much dust, indicative of impending enemy activity.

With the thought of last night's raider still fresh in mind, many men enlarge their foxholes and those who formerly disdained a jumping spot, grab a shovel and begin to dig!

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 20

Lts. Mayse, Osborne, Black and Morgan are airborne at 1635 hours to reconnoiter the roads around Mateur—"nothing to report."

SBEITLA LANDING GROUND, TUNISIA. . . . (April 9, 1943) The Oak Leaf Cluster is awarded by Brig. General Paul H. Williams (right) to Major William Adams, Capt. Eugene Pitts, and Lt. Jack Howard. . . . "Combien?" Capt. Snyder asks some "interested" Arabs! . . . (April 9, 1943) The Oak Leaf Cluster is presented to Lts. Verne Kelsey, Norman Mayse and Alfred Schwab. . . . Our camp is pitched to one side of the landing strip. . . . Nearby our field stands an ancient, though sturdy, triumphal arch built thousands of years ago.



Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 22

Doyne Townsend, formerly of the Communications Section, today takes over the hair-raising duties of First Sergeant of our Squadron.

One recon. mission is up before noon (Capts. Pitts, Whitwell, Delapp and Lt. Riemer); nothing to report in the area assigned.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 23

From a dawn mission, Lt. Osborne fails to return to base and is last seen by our other pilots (Lts. Mayse, Morgan, and Monthei) in the vicinity of Medjez El Bab. A mid-afternoon mission over Mateur is flown by Lts. Weil and Howard . . . "very little traffic in the area."

Promotions announced: to CAPTAIN—Joseph McMath (Photo Officer); to TECH/SERGEANT—Robbie Barham; to STAFF/SERGEANT—Edwin Tole, Orlando Sheffield; to SERGEANT—Harold Steed; to CORPORAL—John Grochowski, Selmer Clark, John Lensis, Havis Overton; to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS—Michael Halick.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 24

"For exceptional valor and service during the Tunisian campaign," our Squadron Commander, Major John R. Dyas, is today awarded the Silver Star.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 25

Outdoor church services in camp and in nearby Le Sers mark this Easter Sunday here in Africa.

Lts. Finch, Powell, Kingsbury and Slagle complete early morning and mid-afternoon missions today and report, "no incidents."

The French Major stationed here on the base stops by the Intelligence tent for his daily visit and asks, "are zere anyee shoonges?" He gazes fixedly at the map and then says slowly, "cen a ye—ar, cen a ye—ar and a half, he will make term—Hitler."

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 26

S/Sgt. Appler, Sgts. Harris and Travers leave today on detached service with a British Fighter Group in Algiers.

Cpl. Frederick Gillies is today promoted to SERGEANT. Covering the strategic Mateur area, Lt. Friedman and Capt. Fite report, "no heavy traffic or tank concentrations."

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—April 29

Pvt. Edward Sutton leaves today for new duties with the XII Air Support Command, now in Le Sers.

"Not so hot," is the comment of the first group of men that returns from a trip to North Africa's port city of Bone.

MAY, 1943

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 1

While making the usual "milk run" mission over the Pont du Fahs area, Lt. Anstine is hit by enemy fire and is seen by S/Sgt. Myers to bail out over enemy territory.

Our days here at Le Sers settle down to a casual pace; the "quiet life" slowly begins to take hold. The fields around us are splashed with masses of red poppies; large black "doodle bugs" are everywhere. We listen regularly to "Axis Sally" and get a big kick out of the music which she plays—"better than the English programs"—if not from her sticky, sarcastic hints about unfaithfulness of girls back home ("now, boys; just what do you think that girl of yours is doing tonight? Pining away for you? I know you hope so, but do you really think she is?"), and her repeated jibes that the war is being fought for the pres-

ervation of the Jews and Franklin D. "Rosenfelt." Poker games take over the nighttime hours, while "white lightning" reaps its violent effects on many. . . . Work progresses on the P-38, the nose part of which is being converted to make room for an observer, and its designer, Major Dyas, and its greatest booster, Capt. Waters, step back and are pleased by the work so far completed. Thus the days pass in this summer-heralding atmosphere and we begin to sense monotony setting in for the first time.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 5

As during the past few days, our operational activity is light: one mission flown by Capt. Delapp, Lt. Mayse, S/Sgts. Myers and McFarland covers the Tebourba area.

Our Commander, Major John R. Dyas, gathers the Squadron together this day and bids us farewell. His small, five-foot-plus figure loaded with verbal as well as physical TNT sways as he talks; his hands are placed characteristically on his hips. It is not untrue to say that with the coming of the Major to the 154th, our whole outlook changed. If such a thing can be done, he made war livable and highly exciting to pilots and enlisted men alike. In his demand for complete and full performance from every man, including himself, he has welded us into a hard-working group and made each man feel that his work is all-important to the whole effort. Not without deep regret do we see him relinquish command. Pointedly put is the comment, "there goes a damn good Joe!"

Captain Joseph E. Whitwell Jr. today takes over the duties of Squadron Commander.

Sgt. Hopkins and Cpl. Carlisle join the ever-swelling ranks of the XII Air Support Command.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 6

Lts. Potts, Finch, Powell, Riemer, Kingsbury, Slagle, Kelsey, Howard, Morgan and Black complete four recon. missions in the areas of Northern and Eastern Tunisia and significantly report heavy enemy traffic from Depienne north to Tunis.

The official order reads, "Captain Frank L. Snyder to report to Randolph Field, Texas." Over by the mess tent this noon, our officers nail "Doc," slap him violently on the back and cry, "old 'Doc' going back to the States! Why you old b——d!"

The front lines push ever nearer to Tunis and the crowd around the map in Intelligence grows proportionately. Except for the roaring of the sirocco and the crunch of sand in your teeth, everything is quiet. "TOO quiet," some complain. . . . As we stand in the chow line tonight, a group of Allied bombers and fighters roars overhead, even now headed in the direction of beleaguered Tunis.

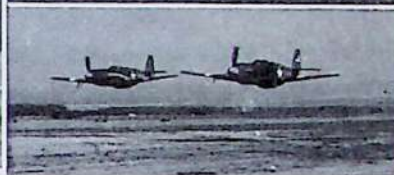
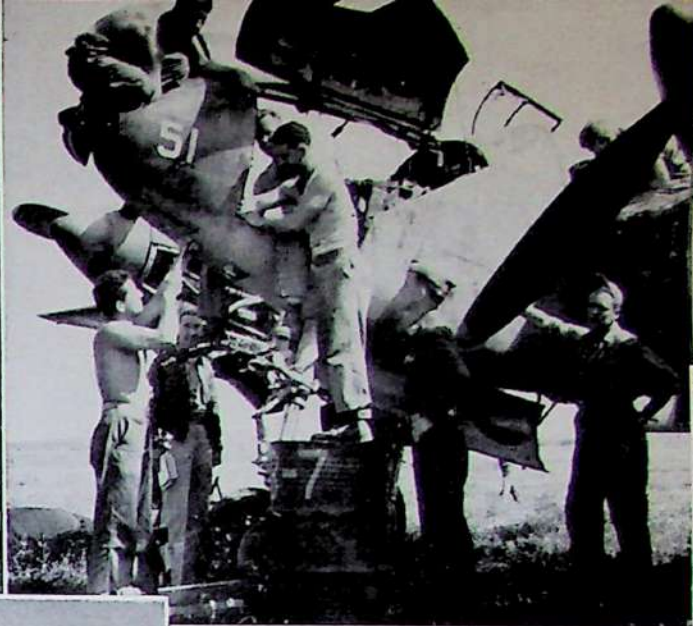
Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 7

S/Sgts. Myers and McFarland, up on one of three missions during the day, fly over the city of Tunis. . . . Flying westward on a "personal mission" is "Doc" Snyder from whom we will no longer hear the gusty demand, "give me a short resume of the situation, Horwich!"

New additions to our Squadron are 2nd Lts. Robert Flynt, James Keltner, Benjamin Emmert, Philip Crookham and Leo Gordon.

Late this afternoon, the cry goes up, "get your candy and cigars over at the truck near Operations!" In a few minutes a small mob converges on the weapons carrier from which Lts. Traylor and Ammerman pass out the booty. Later in the day, each tent issues forth great clouds of heavy smoke and prosperous minded soldiers puff away

LE SERS AIRFIELD, TUNISIA. . . Barber John Sigler (right) sets up shop for Andy Orsini (left) just outside the camouflaged photo trailer. . . Squadron Commander, Major John Dyas (second from right) watches members of a nearby Air Depot Group carry out his plans to provide space for an observer in the nose of a converted P-38. Lt. George Vapaa (second from left, standing) and T/Sgt. Elmer Gibbons (extreme right) watch the progress of this plan. . . Chow is eaten on the ground to the side of our Mess tent. . . Squadron Dispensary tent and ambulance. . . (Below) Two P-51 aircraft "budge" the field! . . . Squadron Commander Major John Dyas. . . "Ah, that's good!" (George



"Judge" Shirutis). . . . Returned from a mission over enemy lines, Lt. Irwin Potts (left) gives the details to Intelligence Officer, Capt. Edwin Waters (center) while Ralph ("Judge") Horwich (right) notes down the salient observations. . . . First American pilot to fly the P-51 in combat operations in the Mediterranean Theatre, Lt. Alfred Schwab poses in his plane; Major William Adams sits tucked in behind the pilot's seat! . . . (April 25, 1943) Easter Sunday Services are held outdoors on the red-poppy-strewn fields near our runway. . . . Major Dyas, Capt. Burke and Michael Halick before a newly assigned P-51. . . . One of our Squadron P-38's takes off on a mission. . . . Squadron pilots, in jeep, appraise "buzz job." . . . Another mission is successfully completed as a P-39 returns to base.



leisurely and nonchalantly flick ashes on the ground. "I see you stocked up with enough El Ropos to last through the next invasion," is the remark hurled at the Squadron's prime cigar smoker, "Judge" Horwich.

At 1520 hours today, the news comes in that the city of Tunis has been captured by Allied troops. The rain, falling since early morning, has stopped and a brilliant rainbow stretches across the eastern sky. . . .

As the announcement of the fall of two more major Tunisian cities, Bizerte and Ferryville, comes crackling over the radio tonight, dozens of us gather around the radio in the Intelligence tent and listen silently and intently and with one feeling—exultation. There is a sky-high rise in spirit and each tent has its round table strategists. We are already becoming "Europe minded."

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 8

Two planes (Lts. Finch and Potts) which take to the skies of dawn bring back the information that a large number of enemy trucks is moving north from Pont du Fahs; the German retreat continues.

Capt. Arthur J. Hadler today joins our Squadron as Medical Officer.

American bombers continue to pass over the field, their full-motored formations filling the air with a terrific roaring.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 9

Up on general reconnaissance, Lts. Friedman, Riemer, Morgan, Monthei, Capts. Delapp and Whitwell note heavy concentrations of enemy vehicles and congested movement in the Tunis-Cap Bon sector.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 10

Just as the sky begins to lighten in the east this morning, the roar of two planes breaks the silence of our camp. Those men not on the alert stir in their tents, then turn over and continue snoring. Zooming high above camp are Lt. Black and S/Sgt. McFarland. On their return from this mission, these two pilots are in hearty agreement as to their reception over enemy-held Zaghouan—"pretty hot!"

The news of the day is that Lt. Anstine, lost on a mission

over Northern Tunisia a few weeks ago, has since been found in a hospital in Tunis. His condition is not yet known, but Medics' Capt. Hadler leaves this day for Tunis.

Our Liaison Officer, Lt. Schwab, brings back some interesting highlights from his flying visit to the First Army's advanced Headquarters. "The war is all over as far as these boys are concerned. I saw four German Generals, now prisoners of the First Army, and right along side of them were their 'batmen,' standing at rigid and unflinching attention."

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 11

Another dawn mission this morning with Lts. Slagle, Schwab, Riemer, and Powell at the controls is followed by a mid-morning flight by Lt. Black and S/Sgt. McFarland. From the way the situation here seems to be drawing to a close, these might well be the last missions we will run against the Axis on North African soil.

As each man steps up to sign the payroll this morning, he is handed a small envelope inside of which is the African Campaign ribbon.

The following teletype message is quickly rushed over to the Intelligence tent late this afternoon:

TO—ALL UNITS COMMANDERS AND ALL PERSONNEL OF THE XII A. S. C.

FROM: XII A. S. C.

M—A. THE GERMANS HAVE SURRENDERED ON THE CAP BON PENINSULA CMA THIS ENDS THE TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN PD OFFICERS AND MEN ACCEPT MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESS IN WHICH EACH ONE OF YOU PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART CMA MY PROFOUNDEST APPRECIATION FOR YOUR CHEERFUL AND WILLING COOPERATION WITH ME DURING THIS CAMPAIGN CMA THANK YOU.

PAUL C. WILLIAMS
COMMANDING GENERAL
XII AIR SUPPORT COMMAND

SQUADRON SECTIONS. . . . Intelligence: (front) Frederick Gillies, Jerry LaBanchi, Ralph Horwich, (rear) Louis Stathakis, Capt. Edwin Waters (Section Officer), Lt. Joseph Stanley, D. Ross Grimes. . . Headquarters: (front) Norman Geekie, George Flynn, George Schmidt, Angelo Roonzani, (rear) William Hunt, Lt. William Tyler (Adjutant) and 1st Sgt. Doyne Townsend. . . Photo: (front) William Turner, James Wetzel, Harry Schellingburger, William Roseberry, Hubert Siemer, Walter Lee, (rear) Douglas Quist, Harold Haley, George Moon, Capt. Joseph McMath (Section Officer), Lt. Schuyler Harris, Andrew Orsini. . . Personnel: (front) James Brennan, Havis Overton, (rear) Lt. Reese Anderson (Section Officer), Bill Goodner. . . Medical: (front) Moses Ross, George Replyuk, James Rodgers, Clarence Ouderkerk, (rear) Max Goldberg, Capt. Arthur Hadler (Section Officer), Joseph Abernethy, Michael Fleisher. . . Transportation: (front) William Reid, Merle McCullough, George Stanley, John Traffenstedt, William Morene, Dempsey Reed, Boffie Sims, (rear) Lt. Edward Ammerman (Section Officer), Ted Ferguson, Charles Ross, Stanley Butrymowicz, Frank Stanley, William Sawyer, Willie Russell. . . Mess: (front) Harry Sandbeck, John Goin, Everett Hull, Quentin Miller, John Lensis, Glen Hefner, (rear) Virgil Snoddy, Ernest Tyree, Roy White, Robert Huey, John Grochowski, John Hood, Evans Libby. . . Communications: (front) Herman Smith, Briney Golba, Robert Scales, Joseph Rice, Robbie Barham, Ray Serda, Kenneth Gunter, Lt. Albert Adell (Section Officer); (2nd row) Michael Skuba, Mike Simetkosky, Stanislaw Kij, Paul Kahanic, Joseph Schmidling; (rear) Herman Raming, Russell Brossman, Forrest Clark, James Lodge, James Hennessy, Carl Anderberg, Jacob Stadler, Julian Sandoval. . . Ordnance: (front) Guy Lamkin, Frederick Ambeault, Lt. Lucius Traylor (Section Officer), Erwin Bell, James Shank, (rear) Harold Austin, Herbert Yopp, John Russell, Theodore Beke, Lowell Black, Edward Lipka, Harold Zynda. . . Engineering: (1st row) L. D. Owens, Thomas Harness, Percy Cooper, Charles Hill, Lt. Francis Kalinowski (Section Officer), Percy Moon, Richard Fichtner, Francis Sanders, Elmer Gibbons, Otis Taylor, Robert Lynch; (2nd row) Fred Stefano, Donald Still, Edwin Tole, Orville Stolnack, Joseph Lynch, Harold Sander, Arnold Christenson, Lawrence Wever, Charles Brown, James Pullin; (3rd row) Leo Tunnell, Harold Steed, Harry Chiles, Selmer Clark, Robert Halboth, Herman Steinborn, Mahlon Sweet, John Waters, Calvin Hauf, Swayne Whitehead, Jack Trier, Sam Owens, Clair Gibbons; (4th row) Francis Stevens, Thomas Stone, Julian Stires, Jack Finn, George Crowell, Lloyd Dallas, Willie Wright, Thomas Schaffner, Walter Woodard, John Hubay, Edgar Duff, Robert Heater, Lewis Leopold; (5th row) Albert Drewke, James Tanner, George Casey, Paul Wojcik, O. C. Weeks, Gerrel O'Quin, Eulon Weeks, Albert Raper, Dick Red, Warren Weeks, William Lewis, Michael Halick, Wesley Whitaker. . . Operations: (front) Dalton Raiford (with "Miss Tex"), William Hall, George Lewis, (rear) Silas Wilson, Lt. Harold Slagle (Section Officer), John Librenz. . . Headquarters (Nouvion): Norman Geekie, 1st Sgt. Doyne Townsend, Sgt. Major William Hunt, Commanding Officer Capt. Joseph Whitwell, Jr., Adjutant Lt. William Tyler, Personnel Officer Lt. Reese Anderson, Havis Overton, James Brennan. . . Armament: (1st row) Vincent Martinek, Lt. Bernard Holstegge, John Patrick, Lt. George Vapaa (Section Officer), Charles Girola, Andrew Ondovchik, Bernard Bower; (2nd row) Alexander Winstead, Charles White, Sam Shields, James Shehans, Orlando Sheffield, Manuel Lean, Alvin Hasley, William Hamling; (3rd row) William Smith, Jack Booth, Brady Fillingim, Ladislaus Kish, Gunnar Janson, Joseph Delaney. . . Utilities: James Kester, Chester Lemaster, Eugene Gerig, Norbert Raddatz. . . Supply: (front) Charles McIlvaine, Lonnie Pearson, Forrest Diemer, John Fischer; (rear) William Salter, Howard Martin, John Sigler, Lt. Warren Beason (Section Officer).

Reading this message, one man remarks, "it will be damn good to go to bed tonight and not have to worry about an enemy plane!"

Cpl. Raming today transfers to the 13th Communications Command.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 12

Except for the excitement of watching our new Officers check out on the P-51 this morning, all is sultry and quiet. As the last pocket of enemy resistance above Zaghouan is cleaned up, our "bomblines" is no more. All in all, we are in a period of lull, to some welcome, but to most of us not to be desired.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 13

"Well, it's all over." This, says the BBC, is the tone of all correspondents who file their last dispatches from the North African Theatre of Operations. The "Tunisian Bridgehead," which the diaries of German soldiers said "must be held at all costs," is only a memory. Axis propaganda becomes ever wilder and more incoherent and warns us of the "hot reception" which awaits us on the continent. Where now, we wonder? . . .

Those men who return from a trip to Tunis have much to tell. "The city itself is hardly touched, but the docks and airports are one mass of twisted wreckage. . . . The Italians are not friendly at all and say that 'Mussolini will return and re-take the city!' . . . An American woman stopped us on the street, excused herself saying that she had just wanted to talk to some one from her own country. 'It's been a long time,' she added wistfully. . . . We were about the only Americans there, and what a welcome they gave us! . . . The roads leading out of Tunis are glutted with Axis prisoners. Some are even driving their own trucks! . . . The best time I've had since I left the States! . . . Flynn had his hair cut by an Italian barber, but on hearing that the 'sons of Mussolini' were none too friendly, decided against a shave!"

"Strictly GI" is the title of the stage show which is given for our Squadron tonight here on the field and, oddly enough, it is an Arab who is the hit of the night. Egged on by our encouragement, a swarthy-faced Arab steps from the sidelines, ties his robe around his waist, and then swings into a dance which is a combination of jitterbug, can-can, and hula! We howl for more, but "Abdul," breathless and grinning, had given his all for the Allied cause!

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 14

"War is ninety per cent waiting." Our camp, at present, is a living proof of this statement. A tour from one section to another finds small groups of men arguing some world problem or just practicing the fine art of sitting, waiting and observing. On the whole, we have the equivalent of spring fever and like the nomadic Arabs will be glad to be on the move again.

Promotions posted this day: to CORPORAL—Alvin Hafley, Robert Gradoville; to PRIVATES FIRST CLASS—Jack Booth and Joseph Delancy.

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 17

More impressions of a two-day visit to Tunis: the colorful French band playing in the city promenade . . . British and more British. . . . The crowds of people begging for food around our truck. The furious scramble for any discarded bit of food or candy. One wrinkle-faced woman fighting and kicking to drive young kids away from a fallen piece of candy. . . . Visiting the shops and listening to the clerks whisper to one another—"Americain ou Anglais? Americain—ah!" . . . Well-dressed young girls and women turning the eyes of all who pass! . . . The loud jabbering and rooster-crowing of a morning in the city. . . . Long lines waiting before the banks to exchange German manufactured money. . . . A breezy trip to the docks, one shambles

of ruin; a large Arab mosque laid low and its round dome cracked open like a huge egg shell. . . . On the way to Carthage, piles of twisted, swastika-marked planes. . . . Carthage itself with its leveled yellowing ruins, ancient amphitheatre and lions' den. "It was a swell visit, but it's good to get 'home' again!"

Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May 19

Early this morning, the greater part of the Squadron breaks camp here in Le Sers and, in trucks piled high with personnel and equipment, rolls northeastward to our new base at Korba, on the Cap Bon Peninsula. . . . A number of pilots and several ground crews remain behind here at Le Sers.

Episode Thirteen

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 19

As we ride in trucks over the road to Korba, great white and brown dust clouds swirl around the vehicles and grind right into our skin. All along the way, we pass British prison lorries loaded down with glum looking Germans and Italians. To the east of Tunis, we gape at a huge prison camp—two large fields circled around with barbed wire and clotted with Axis prisoners as far as the eye can see. Not far from here, we gain our first glimpse of the Mediterranean, truly a sea of blue.

Reaching Korba after five hours on the road, we find those who have come up on the advance echelon all sporting Axis guns, motorcycles, rifles, iron crosses and cameras! "Souvenir, Joe?!"

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 20

Early this morning, a good part of the camp piles out in jeeps, weapons carriers, trailers—anything that moves—and heads along the roads of the Cap Bon Peninsula on an all-out souvenir hunt. Lugars, motorcycles, Italian and German rifles, diaries and iron crosses are but a part of the day's loot. After an invigorating swim in the jade-green waters of the Mediterranean, we head back to camp.

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 21

More souvenir hunting, more rifle practice, more swimming and more sunburns!

Indecision as to what part we will play in future operations keeps the other half of our Squadron at Le Sers and Capt. Whitwell, acting as Liaison Officer for the scattered halves of the 154th, pays us a brief flying visit.

Lt. Irwin Potts is declared the winner in the long-delayed opening of the "Tunisian Sweepstakes" entries. His date—May 15; his wallet—full!

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 24

All is sultry and quiet this morning and then the air is filled with the black silhouettes of our planes from Le Sers. A few minutes later, our pilots come swarming upon us, this time to stay.

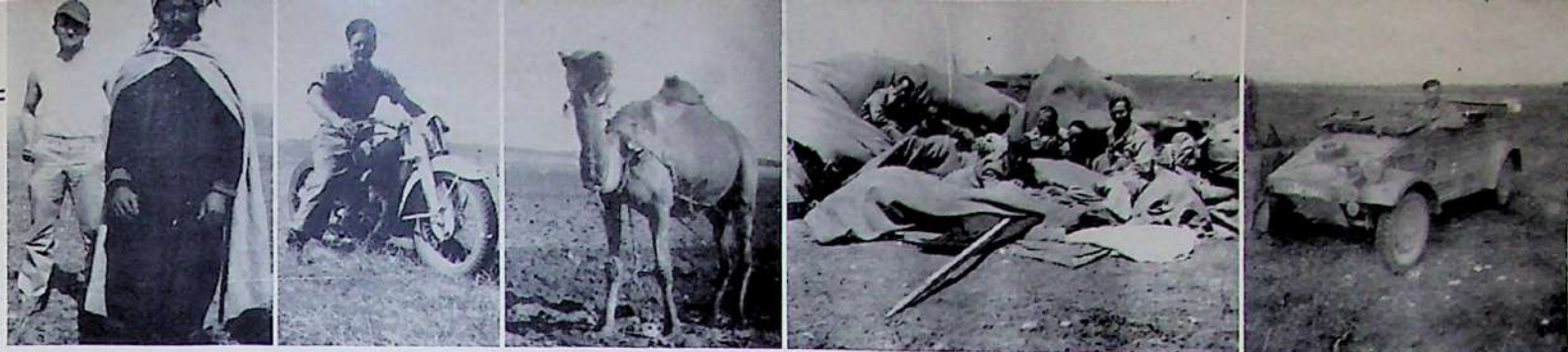
The other half of our Squadron is now wending its way toward this base by truck, only to be greeted on its arrival by the old familiar phrase, "we're moving again!"

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 25

News of the untimely death of Lt. Col. Fordyce shocks the whole camp. As former Commanding Officer of the 68th Group, he was well known to most of us and his loss is keenly felt by many in the Squadron.

Lt. Robert Morgan joins those rare beings who are United States-bound.

The sirocco stirs up the whole camp and threatens to make us "airbourne" any minute.



CAP BON is a spot where roving Arabs (with non-Arab Thomas Schaffner), men on motorcycles ("Ollie" O'Quin), haughty camels, tents flattened by the "sirocco" (African wind) and various souvenirs (Francis Stevens in a German "jeep") are the order of the day.

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 26

We awake this morning to the flapping of canvas and the weird wailing of a driving wind. And so it has been all day long. Our camp is a billowing mass of tentage and dust. Everywhere are groups bending against the wind and trying to anchor a stubborn tent.

Word has been received that Lt. Wilder, lost on a mission over Central Tunisia, is now a "guest" in Germany.

LIEUTENANT McFarland well realizes his new Officer status as "Judge" Horwich corners him, thrusts a pile of letters into his hand, and cries jubilantly, "will you censor these NOW, LIEUTENANT?!"

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 27

Tales of last night's sirocco and the pounding rain are rampant this morning and within the past twenty-four hours many of us have gazed with sad eyes at the collapsing form of a tent or, stretched out on the "sack," have felt the tantalizing drip-drip-drip of last night's deluge.

The other half of our Squadron arrives here just before supper and our camp is complete once more.

Korba Landing Ground, Cap Bon, N. Africa—May 30

A small convoy of five jeeps, headed by Lt. Vapaa, leaves Korba early this morning, heads toward the city of Tunis, then west to our new base, Nouvion. . . . Later in the day, more members of our Squadron pile into a limited number of C-47 transports which also head westward. A small rear echelon still remains here at Korba.

Episode Fourteen

JUNE, 1943

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 1

After three full days on the road, wending westward around tortuous mountain curves and across heat-simmering flatlands (on one such turn, a jeep and trailer overturn; Pfc. Jacob Stadler is injured on the arms and face and is later left at the hospital in Constantine), our jeep convoy arrives at the Squadron's new base, Nouvion. . . . The field itself is set down in a spacious valley while on the "hill," less than half a mile away, is a rambling stone-barracks area. Already occupying a section of this living area are men of our former sister Squadron, the 111th Observation Squadron; also here is a small group of Troop Carrier Command pilots and ground personnel. Assigned to a barracks on the extreme south of the hill area, our small group beds down for the night on unyielding cement floors.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 2

For the most part, this day is spent in cleaning out the surrounding barracks, then ourselves, in that order.

S/Sgt. Appler, Sgts. Harris and Travers arrive here today after a lengthy period spent crewing planes in Algiers.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 3, 4

The various parts of our Squadron begin to come trickling in by jeep, trailer, truck, air transport and even in those hulks of the last war, the "40 and 8" boxcars. As we sleep once more in barracks, eat at a table, stand long and dreamily under hot showers, and smile at the thought of PX supplies and movies, we cannot help but think, "back in civilization again!"

Everywhere present is the spirit of enterprise. Our lugars, baretas, bayonets, and iron crosses are hauled out and offered at "reasonable" (!) prices to highly gullible members of the 111th Squadron!

A big event of the day—ICE COLD lemonade.

The nights here are evidently built for endurance and it is 9:30 or 10 o'clock before the sun finally sinks into the west.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 6

Most of our Officers fly in today from Algiers. Those of our unit who were held up at Telerghma chug nearer via the "40 and 8's."

A wide grin and new gold bars tell the tale: promotion to SECOND LIEUTENANT for George E. Myers.

Sectional equipment is today set up under tents in and between the mud-caked revetments down on the airfield. "We're now ready to operate." . . . "Operate what?!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 8

Our "40 and 8" echelon arrives here this afternoon and, worn and haggard, tells dismal tales of "three days of hell in a boxcar." "What a trip! C-rations and cold food all the time. Half of us with the GI's!"

Trips to the town of nearby Mostaganem are eagerly taken by almost all in the Squadron and for many, "wine, women and song" is not an empty phrase! ("This is the first time we've been near a place that was half civilized!")

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 10

Our sections begin to function on a reconnaissance training program and we pause now and then to listen to the heavy "practice firing" which floats in from the coast. The radio continues to tell of the bombing of Italy and the unending Allied raids on the Isle of Pantelleria.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 11

In French, German, English, and Arabic, the news comes crackling over the radio: "Italy's 'little Malta,' Pantelleria, has fallen to Allied troops!"

The "sweating out" period today ends for the now LIEUTENANTS Stanley, Holstegge and Harris. Asked how it feels to become an Officer, Joe Stanley makes the homely reply, "still got the GI's though!"

Our pilot roster grows ever fuller as Lts. Lawrence Dubois, Marshall Gille, John Evans, Donald McDonald, James Parr, John Steman, and William Dinker join our Squadron.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 12

The tail end of the Squadron comes sliding in by truck and plane today and brings tales of the bombing of Korba. "Early in the morning they came. Dive bombers streaking

out of the sun and peppering the ground with their machine guns and then letting fall their eggs." One of the men caught in this raid comments slowly, "had two fried eggs in my mess kit . . . saw the planes acoming . . . my mess kit went one way and I went the other . . . you know, when that raid were over, I warn't hungry at all!" . . . From another man: "no one was hurt, but it sure was a helpless feeling; just laying there flat on the ground; no foxhole, no nothing!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 13

As of this date, we are to be known as the 154TH RECONNAISSANCE Squadron.

While we sit on the rocky incline above the airfield tonight and watch the movie, "Tortilla Flat," the sky is filled with the red and green marker-lights of Allied transport planes which take off and land here on our field. There is a sense of powerful promise in the heat-charged air. . . .

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 15

2nd Lts. George Clark and James Glanville join our Squadron Flying Officers today.

A heavy heat and an oppressive torpor put a filmy glue on the physical as well as the mental outlook here and the past week has gone by in a series of risings into warm, lifeless mornings, spending the day dispatching practice missions, and always sweating profusely under the hot lid of canvas. At dusk, many of us just sit and watch the ribboned sunset, remain motionless until darkness creeps in again, then slowly head for our bunk. . . .

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 16

(Salamandre) . . . In the doorway of the "Bar de Crique," a small cafe set on the seashore of the nearby town of Salamandre, the proprietors "Mama" and "Papa" wave their hands inclusively and cry the French equivalent of "it's all yours!" . . . No little credit for the successful Officers' dance which follows is due to Lts. Weil, Anderson, Ammerman and Keltner; to our cooks, John Goin, Virgil Snoddy, Robert Huey and John Grochowski; and to our impromptu bartender, "Pop" Ross and his helper, "Willie" Hall. Midnight comes and goes and the Bar de Crique slowly empties. "Papa," barefooted and sleepy-eyed, sidles up and asks, "tous contents?" (Is everyone happy?) And the answer comes, "oui, tres contents!" (Yes, very happy!)

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 17

Promotions announced: to STAFF/SERGEANT—Forrest B. Clark; to CORPORAL—Kenneth Gunter and Michael Skuba.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 18

Even before the sun rises this morning, pilots and crewmen eagerly await the first mission of our one day "invasion maneuver," to be run in co-operation with Fifth Army land activities. The high-pitched "dit-da-da" coming from the radio trailer vibrates busily into the warm air of early morning and finally, about 0930 hours, the first mission request comes through. All morning long, and during the early afternoon, the requests of ground commanders for reconnaissance of certain areas near Arzew come in. Here on the beaches where we landed last November, our pilots can see Allied troops streaming in to attack mock villages and then advance inland. About 1600 hours, we receive a radioed message—"the war's over; everyone off the alert!" . . . Final reports say that our pilots came through "loud and clear" and were right on the dot for almost every mission.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 21

Every afternoon, a heavy GI truck sputters before Headquarters, then roars out powerfully toward the magic day-off goal, "town." Sometimes it is Mostaganem—a comparatively clean city with its watery ice cream, few restaur-

ants, chic mademoiselles, sidewalk cafes and bars where you can sit, drink and talk in the slow boulevard style, and the Red Cross with its reading rooms and coffee and doughnuts. . . . Other days, it is Relizane, a predominantly Arab town with its small cafes and stores which close for the greater part of the afternoon, thus forcing the visitor to walk the streets or head for the Red Cross. Leaving this town, the truck stops nightly before a large white-stone building, takes on a few more joyous passengers then heads back to base.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 23

Climbing aboard a B-25 this afternoon, Cpl. Roonzani, Pts. West and Fleischer head for their new duties with the North African Training Command Headquarters.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 24

Early this evening, three trucks loaded down with shined and sleek Squadron members grind up to a stop before the Mostaganem Red Cross and the rush is on! For two rhythm-packed hours, we waltz, conga, and jitterbug with dark-haired, coy-smiling French girls. Not since England have many of us been to a dance, and we stand around grinning from ear to ear, tapping our feet in rhythm to the tantalizing music, and clapping enthusiastically as the more energetic jitterbugs swing around the floor. All kinds and styles of dancing are to be seen: Toscano's "co-op glide," "Pop" Ross' solid jitterbugging; Tom Harness' merry-go-round jump; Boffie Sims' torrid swing and sway; and Ross Grimes' floating waltz. . . . Amid a bubbling warmth which rides with us on the way back to camp, all agree that "of such things morale is made!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 25

S/Sgt. Sheffield and Sgt. Rice leave our Squadron this day to join the Bomber Training Command, now stationed near Casablanca.

Capt. Clifton B. Hinkel is today transferred to the Mediterranean Air Transport Command.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—June 30

After three days during which threatening weather prevents all operations, we enjoy a Squadron holiday, this time in compact and metropolitan Oran. At about 1230 hours, four truck loads of us are loosed upon the city and we head in any and all directions. Many visit the huge theatre wherein the Red Cross is spaciouly housed; stand on the cliff-like hills above the harbor and gaze down at the busy, ship-laden port protected by a ring of silver barrage balloons; drink "not so bad" beer in sidewalk cafes; joyously eye the "well-dressed," "well-stacked" French girls who pass by; walk the streets and are pestered (sometimes successfully) by grimy kids repeating, "wanna cat? . . . wanna girl?" . . . Only with dusk coming on over the city and our arms loaded down with melons, vegetables and souvenirs, do we climb into awaiting trucks and go speeding back to camp.

On our return tonight, the BBC newscaster reports with clear, confident and also menacing promise . . . "before the leaves of autumn fall, there will be great battles raging in the Mediterranean." (Winston Churchill).

JULY, 1943

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 1

We lose an old Squadron member to the 68th Reconnaissance Group as 2nd Lt. Joseph Stanley, with a vision of a liaison ship still in his eyes, leaves our Squadron for duties thus far undefined.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 4

Long-time Master Sergeant and First Sergeant of our unit, 2nd Lt. "Bernie" Holstegge departs this morning for points and duties not as yet known.



TUNIS—CAP BON. . . . Street in Arab Section of Tunis. . . . Many Axis graves along the roads leading to Tunis. . . . A street in downtown Tunis. . . . An Arab mosque is shattered by the bombings. . . . The gaunt skeleton of a German hangar on the outskirts of Tunis. . . . Even the young give the sign of the times, "V" for "Victory". . . . A frequently-seen poster of Roosevelt proclaims, "our victory is the victory of liberty." . . . The Cross of Christ before the ruins of a former church. . . . Squadron members examine a German "Tiger-type" tank. . . . Our men are received joyously by the people of Tunis. . . . First Squadron Group to see Tunis: (front) George Flynn, Sidney Weiner, Lt. William Tyler, Andrew Orsini, Ted Ferguson, (rear) Lonnie Pearson, Dalton Raiford, Roy White, Louis Stat-hakis, James Tanner, Fred Higdon. . . . Many buildings near the dock area are gutted by the bombings. . . . Ancient amphitheatre and underground lions' dens near Carthage. . . . The symbolic defeat of the Axis: a wrecked German "jeep" and burned-out German aircraft on the outskirts of Tunis.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 7

We note many changes this day: Cpl. Jerry LaBanchi transfers to the Headquarters of the North African Training Command; the following promotions are announced: Dick Red to MASTER/SERGEANT; Fred Higdon to TECH/SERGEANT; George Crowell, Herman Steinborn, Mahlon Sweet, Thomas Stone to STAFF/SERGEANT; Selmer Clark, Percy Cooper, Robert Halboth, Norman Geckie, Stanislaw Kij, Mike Simetkosky, Francis Stevens and Warren Weeks to SERGEANT; John Hubay, Robert Jennings, Paul Wojcik, Walter Woodard to CORPORAL; Carl Anderberg, Michael Halick, Calvin Hauf, and Albert Drewke to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 9

Now using the stone building and tower to house our sections and equipment, we dispatch a total of ten reconnaissance training missions during the morning.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 11

"SICILY IS INVADED BY ALLIED TROOPS." . . . Even as we slept last night, paratroopers, black-faced gliderborne infantry, and a brooding armada of troop carriers and warships edged up to Sicily, the jewel of Italy's palsied eye. Heavy bombers and fat transport planes pushed their grim silhouettes over the land, silently let fall their airborne invaders. Another phase of the war has opened, deliberate and menacing. We watch with renewed interest this small isle which is but a stepping stone to further continental operations and wonder what part we may play in the future.

Between quick looks at the map, intense speculation and mass-listening to every news flash, we continue our reconnaissance-training program.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 15

Stepping from his plane with a gold leaf on his hat, MAJOR Whitwell brings the news that it's MAJOR Waters as well.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 17

We lose a fine Officer and friend in our long-time Photo Officer, Capt. Joseph McMath, who leaves us today for duties with the 68th Reconnaissance Group.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 18

A promotion notice on the bulletin board is eagerly scanned and tells of the following: John Patrick to

MASTER/SERGEANT; James Shehans to STAFF/SERGEANT; Havis Overton to SERGEANT; Vincent Martinck, Herbert Yopp and Bill Goodner to CORPORAL.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 20

Lt. Robert Anstine returns to our Squadron this day and is plagued by all for the account of his capture by the Germans last May. . . . "They treated me well enough while I was there in the hospital. But if Tunis hadn't fallen when it did, I would surely be on a boat bound for Germany!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—July 26

Each day passes here and all, somehow, manage to slip into one another. The line functions: bug-like planes stir up clouds of amber dust and then slip into the cradling cushion of the air; mechanics lay down in the shade and drowsily await their return. Cows, sheep and Arabs wander over the field and runway and have to be chased off by a wildly weaving jeep or a few effective shots from a flare gun. The sun glares down with a yellow blazing eye and sends all but the necessary alert crews up on the hill to an afternoon of siesta. In the nearby fields, the grapes droop from vines in purple heaviness and a jeep stops now and then, soldiers fan out into the fields, and soon return with arms full of the green and purple clusters. Once again, we experience the strange feeling of wanderlust. . . . The news from Sicily becomes increasingly good and the Axis is getting ready to do another Cap Bon in the northeast part of this first pre-continental bastion. Startling, yet wholly understandable, is the news that "Il Duce" (Mussolini) has resigned his position as head of the Fascist Regime and also that King Victor Emmanuel "will carry on the war against the Allies." . . . Such is the news and we look with an anticipating eye toward the lands of Italy.

AUGUST, 1943

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 4

Early this morning, Major Waters, Lts. Monthei, Finch, Schwab, and Kelsey leave on the first leg of their flight to Palestine. Here they will receive flight and educational training and, "of course, do a little sightseeing on the side."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 5

At dawn this morning, not more than 15 hours after they learn of their orders, Lts. Friedman, Mayse and Powell leave the Squadron on the first lap of their homeward journey.



Squadron Commander, Capt. Joseph Whitwell, Jr., before his P-39, "Josephine." . . . (June 16, 1943) Group at Squadron Officers' party at the "Bar de Crique," Salamandre.



NOUVION. . . . "Willie" Hall, Capt. John Delapp and "Si" Wilson schedule the day's training flights in Operations. . . . Enlisted Men's Day Room. . . . "Play Ball!" . . . (Sept. 27, 1943) Officers take over routine duties down on the line and Enlisted Men are off to town. . . . A P-39 against a summertime African sky. . . . Our bug-like planes fly through the day on reconnaissance training missions. . . . Youthful Arabs stand around camp and tirelessly take in the scene. . . . Before Operations: (front) Lt. Emmert, Capt. Monthei, Silas Wilson, Lts. Myers, Gille, Flynt, Cpl. Horwich (standing), Lt. Kalinowski, (2nd row) Lts. Kingsbury, Powell, Major Delapp, (3rd row) Lts. Steman (standing), McFarland, Dubois, Black, Friedman, Mayse, Slagle, Major Whitwell, Lt. Crookham. . . . "No flying today." Our planes stand undisturbed to the side of the runway. . . . (July 7, 1943) Distinguished visitors, Capt. Butcher, Sir Arthur Tedder (RAF), Generals Dwight Eisenhower and Mark Clark, land at Nouvion. . . . "Grand strategy" is mapped out by the Intelligence staff: (kneeling) D. Ross Grimes, Louis Stathakis, Capt. Edwin Waters, Lt. Alfred Schwab, Ralph Horwich and Frederick Gillies. . . . "What'll you have?" Douglas Quist behind the counter of the Enlisted Men's Day Room Bar.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 17

Highlighting the past few weeks during which we have run interminable formation and gunnery flights, the dramatic news of the complete Allied victory in Sicily flashes over the radio at 5:30 PM tonight. Anxious eyes already look toward the coasts of Europe.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 25

2nd Lts. William Thomas and Bruce Cobb augment our growing pilots' roster and no time is lost in acquainting them with our training program.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 28

Long before dawn this morning, our camp suddenly comes to life. Orange blisters of light begin to glow from every barracks. The faint light of day has not yet appeared as we stand on the field and around the Operations tower and wait for the first reconnaissance mission which Fifth Army Maneuver commanders might wish to schedule. At morning's end, four missions (20 sorties) have been completed and then comes the brief message, "maneuver completed."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Aug. 31

Sgt. Charlie Hill of our Engineering Section comes sauntering in late this afternoon on his return from a four-day trip to the recently conquered island of Sicily. Plagued with questions, Charlie tells of the spacious city of Palermo, the impressive ruggedness of the northern country, and finally of the rubble which was once Messina. . . . "You could see the Italian mainland just across the way," states Charlie enthusiastically.

SEPTEMBER, 1943

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 1

Reconnaissance missions continue to fill the morning hours and the photos taken beforehand over the target are proving a spur to more detailed and accurate observation.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 3

At 6:30 PM this night, the BBC interrupts its regular program to announce—"ITALY HAS SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY!" At the time this news comes over the radio, the line is almost deserted, but from those few men working on the field comes the wind-borne shouting . . . "have you heard? Italy's surrendered! Yes, God-dammit; it's true!" . . . Opinion in camp runs wild and "weak" resistance and a "quick" occupation of the Italian mainland are predicted by many. In the "Bar de Coin" tonight, many a toast is raised to the event of the day and to a quick end to the war.

The radio flash that "Allied troops have gained a foothold at Salerno," on the main southwestern coast of Italy, comes over the BBC late tonight and our optimism is sobered by the grim tales of the bloody see-saw struggle which our troops are putting up for this first Italian bridgehead.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 9

Reconnaissance and photo-strip missions occupy the morning hours and then the heat calls a halt to all but the daily "milk run" for mail.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 11

It is announced by Major Whitwell that on the dates of September 13th and 14th this Squadron will participate in a "mock air-ground war." One part of the Squadron will be based at 80 miles distant Orleansville airfield; the second part will remain at Nouvion. From these two points, we will run counter-reconnaissance and simulated strafing and photo missions, thus putting to practical use all the training flights of the past three months.

Orleansville Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 12

After a windy 80 mile ride through unusually verdant

country, punctuated now and then by the almost stamped-out quality of small French-Arab towns, a part of our Squadron arrives at the Orleansville Airfield maneuver grounds. Pyramid tents are soon pitched in a wooded glade several miles distant from the airfield and shortly after noon, we pull out cans of C-rations and reluctantly dig in. . . . In the oven-searing heat of the afternoon, we ride from our cool, tree-shaded campsite to the airfield, three miles distant. With a cactus patch as our cover, we set up Operations, Intelligence, Engineering, Armament and Radio Sections under its natural camouflage and chuckle all the while between repeated boasts of, "they'll never find us here; NEVER!" After all is set up ready for operation, we ride back to camp through nature's oven and hope that it will be "at least comfortably hot" by tomorrow. To bed beside an old wall-enclosed French cemetery. The heat still lingers, but is broken now and then by a leaf-shuffling whisper.

Orleansville Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 13

At 0515 hours this morning, the cry of "all out!" breaks sharply on our ears and a half hour later, we load onto trucks, jeeps, and weapons carriers and leave our camp area for the airfield. After turning up two wrong roads and bumping violently cross-country, we finally get on the right track. Just at dawn we arrive at the cactus-patch operations area. Less than an hour later, our first "war" mission is dispatched to the "enemy" airdrome at Nouvion. . . . At day's end, we have run a total of 18 missions and for the "loss" of five of our planes, claim the "destruction" of five "enemy" P-39's and one P-38.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 13

Our first reconnaissance mission up at 0650 hours this morning, we add yet another 19 before dusk closes in and claim 27 "enemy" P-39's "destroyed" for the "probable loss" of one of our own P-39's. A set of "Walkie Talkie's" spotted on the hills surrounding our field and warning our tower of any approaching aircraft proves to be our "secret weapon," as yet undiscovered by the "enemy."

Orleansville Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 14

From 0650 hours until 1840 hours, we send up a total of 14 reconnaissance, attack and photo missions into the threatening skies. During mid-morning operations, our "motorized commandos," led by Lt. Dinker and Sgt. Raiford, return from their night "ground attack" on Nouvion Airfield and hold in tow a petulant Lt. McFarland (the "enemy" Officer of the Day!) as Prisoner of War!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 14

During this last day of maneuvers, we run a total of 15 missions with claims of 28 "enemy" P-39's destroyed as contrasted with our own "losses" of 5 P-39's and 2 P-38's. A late afternoon landing of "enemy" planes at nearby Relizane Airfield is well received. A small group of our men, stationed there in anticipation of such a move, leap upon the wings of the "enemy" planes, and, tommy-gun pointed at the pilots, claim them as captured. That the two "enemy" pilots push forward on the throttle and force their captors to jump from the wing is hotly claimed as "not possible in actual warfare . . . p— poor sportsmanship!"

Nouvion-Orleansville, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 14

As storm clouds gather in the west and already splatter a heavy rain late this afternoon, the two parts of our "warring" Squadron are sent packing and our air-ground battle comes to an end. The victor? "We are," shout both sides!

Orleansville Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 15

This morning, we awake with the after effects of a heavy night's rain all about us. Inasmuch as our tentage is water-soaked and therefore too bulky to take down and pack, we settle down to a day of leisure and wait for the coming of



STATE-GROUP PICTURES. . . . TEXAS: (1st row) Ernest Tyree, Elias Toscano, George Crowell, Byrl Sloan (with "Miss Tex"), (2nd row) Lt. Robert Flynt, Lt. Jack McFarland, Capt. Joseph McMath, Lt. James Parr, Eulalio Rodriguez, (3rd row) Dalton Raiford, Wesley Whitaker, Swayne Whitehead, James Pullin, Moses Ross. . . . MINNESOTA: (1st row) Vincent Martinek, Mike Simetkosky, (2nd row) Lt. Alfred Schwab, Lt. John Steman, Lt. Marshall Gille, (3rd row) Carl Anderberg, Sam Shields, Harold Sander, Norbert Raddatz, Harry Sandbeck. . . . ILLINOIS: (1st row) Herman Steinborn, Ralph Horwich, Hubert Siemer, George Shirutis, Harry Schellingburger, Michael Skuba, (2nd row) Lt. Albert Adell, Lt. George Myers, Major John Delapp, Major Joseph Whitwell, Willie Russell, (3rd row) Robert Jennings, Mahlon Sweet, Orville Stalnack, Thomas Stone, Albert Drewke, Beecher Samples, Francis Sanders. . . . ALABAMA: (1st row) William Reid, George Stanley, John Sigler, Boffie Sims, Ray Serda, Willie Wright, (2nd row) Virgil Snoddy, Herman Smith, Frank Stanley, D. Ross Grimes, William Salter, (3rd row) Lt. Horace Finch, James Shehans, William Sawyer, Dempsey Reed, Brady Fillingim. . . . ARKANSAS: (1st row) James Al-Rodgers, William Hunt, Percy Moon, George Moon, Edgar Duff, Doyne Townsend, William Hamling, (2nd row) Albert Raper, Walter Lee, Robbie Barham, Edward Appler, Sam Owens, John Fischer, Dick Red, (3rd row) Silas Wilbertson, Forrest Diemer, Andrew Orsini, Chester Lemaster, Lloyd Dallas, Joseph Stanley, Clair Gibbons, Harold Haley, Julian Stires, O. C. Weeks, Bernard Holstegge, (4th row) Schuyler Harris, John Goin, Charles Brown, Louis Stat-hakis, L. D. Owens, Warren Weeks, Elmer Gibbons, Otis Taylor, John Traffenstedt, Lawrence Wewer (5th row) William Roseberry, Eulon Weeks, Howard Martin, George Casey, William Lewis, James Tanner, Ted Ferguson, Gerrel O'Quin. . . . NEW YORK: (1st row) William Turner, Joseph Delaney, Manuel Lean, Charles Girola, George Lewis, Jerry LaBanchi, Edward Harris, Norman Geekie, (2nd row) Max Goldberg, Edward Lipka, Harold Austin, Paul Kahanic, James Brennan, Eugene McKenna. . . . PENNSYLVANIA: (1st row) Bernard Bower, William Smith, Andrew Ondovchik, John Grochowski, (2nd row) Edwin Tole, Richard Fichtner, Capt. Edwin Waters, Lt. William Dinker, Thomas Schaffner, (3rd row) Kenneth Gunter, Russell Brossman, James Wetzel, Paul Wojcik, Arnold Christenson.

the sun which we were cursing but a few days ago. Early in the day, however, Major Whitwell leaves for Nouvion with the results of our activities. . . . Some of us spend the day in nearby Orleansville and find it to be a "typical" French-Arab town, with accent on the Arab.

Orleansville Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 16

More rain today and we are confined by nature's weepy whim to camp. . . . A few of our men return to Nouvion and are the object of an unrelenting but good-natured ribbing as to the "victor" in the two-day "war"!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 17

Excepting those men left behind to guard the planes mud-locked in Orleansville, all ground personnel returns by truck to Nouvion. "It's good to be back in civilization again! Never knew how much I liked this old place!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 18

The weather having cleared, a group of our pilots leaves for Orleansville Airfield in order to ferry our planes back to base. Later in the day, the news comes back of the fatal crash of Lt. William Thomas whose plane caught fire just after take-off from the field.

The entire Squadron is pleased to hear of the promotion of Gunnar Janson to STAFF/SERGEANT. Now in Mostaganem Hospital, Gunnar is scheduled to return to the U. S.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 19

Late this evening, our Palestine "expeditionary force" (Major Waters, Lts. Monthei, Finch, Kelsey and Schwab) returns to base. Leaving Cairo, Egypt, at 0100 hours this morning, they arrive here just nineteen and one half hours later!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 22

New assignments made known this day: Capt. John R. Delapp to Executive Officer; 1st Lt. Robert Anstine to Operations Officer; 1st Lts. Fred Monthei and Irwin Potts to Assistant Operations Officers; 1st Lt. Alfred Schwab to Liaison Officer.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 26

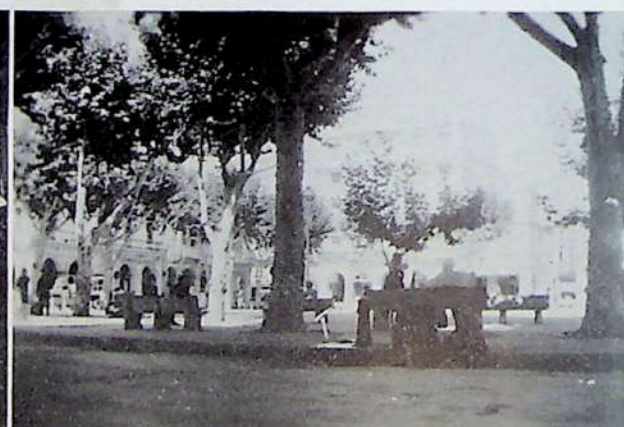
At a party in nearby Mostaganem tonight, our Officers celebrate the marker of one year overseas.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 27

Today, the one-year anniversary of our leaving the States, is declared a holiday for all Enlisted Men and our Officers, air and ground, voluntarily take over the duties of crew chiefs, armorers, and gas truck attendants. . . . Early in the day, trucks wheeze off in the treble directions of Relizane, Mostaganem and Oran. Those who remain in camp also celebrate in various ways!

Clothed in a pair of flimsy shorts, a jacket and a tam, an Italian soldier, just escaped from a nearby French prison camp, stands by the stove in the mess hall and bolts down the food placed before him. Dark, swarthy skin, beak-nosed, and with heavy Latin sideburns, he tells us of the brutal treatment of prisoners by the French and of the almost starvation rations he was forced to live on. . . . But at meal time, it is a far different Italian soldier who comes into the mess hall, passes before the servers, and makes his way to a table. Now clad in GI coveralls, his hair cut by one of our bowl-devoted barbers (Cpl. Quist), and his heavy mustache drastically trimmed, he can and does pass for a GI! "Macaroni" and "Bill" he is dubbed before the day is much older.

MOSTAGANEM. . . . In one of the side streets an Arab beggar stretches forth a feeble hand. . . . "La Rotunde" draws many Squadron members on their "day-off": Edward Harris, George Lewis, Robert Scales, Fred Higdon, Jack Lane (RAF), Forrest Clark. . . . A view of the Square as one sits at a sidewalk cafe. . . . An Arab coachman waits patiently for trade. . . . Interior of the city's central church. . . . The "Marie" (city hall). . . . (Below) an Arab makes a purchase in a French drug store. . . . Arab melon dealers pose proudly with their wares.



Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Sept. 29

Operations continue to concentrate on the running of "pinpoint" (exact-location) missions, and the brisk weather adds a new zest to activities.

After being successfully test-hopped following many hours of patient labor and now safely back on the ground and being taxied to a parking spot, one of our planes is nosed over by its pilot. Its tail up, the ship stands motionless like a broken bird. Dazed and uncomprehending, crewmen Whitaker and Stefano stand by unmoving. "Such is life!"

OCTOBER, 1943**Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 1**

With the roar of our planes up on training missions still audible, many men manage to head for the ball field in the rear of camp. Here our Officers and Enlisted Men tout strongly in the final play-off for the Squadron baseball championship. In an eleven inning game, with the final score—Officers 7; Enlisted Men 6—S/Sgt. Orville Stolnack and Lt. Lawrence Dubois star for their respective teams, as both have the distinction of bringing in a sorely needed run with bases loaded.

A number of CHRISTMAS PACKAGES arrives today!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 2

The spirit-dampening news is brought back by Lt. Kelsey: Lt. John Evans, up on a routine gunnery flight, was killed this morning when his plane plunged into the nearby salt lake, Sebokra de ben Ziane.

Craning necks around the operations tower this afternoon follow the smooth maneuvering of glider pilot, Calvin ("I want a pair of C-ration wings!") Hauf!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 5

Intent faces scan the notice on the bulletin board this morning and by the smiles and handshakings which follow, these promotions are apparent: to STAFF/SERGEANT—Edgar Duff, Richard Fichtner, Charles Hill, Everett Hull and Elwood Travers; to SERGEANTS—Robert Heater, Harold Sander, William Reid, John Waters, Willie Wright; to CORPORAL—Jack Booth, Robert Lynch, Harry Schellingburger, Albert Drewke, James Rodgers, and Hubert Siemer.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 6

Small groups listen intently around the few camp radios as a re-broadcast of the traditional World Series comes over the static-riddled wires.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 9

As on the past two days, rain puts a sudden halt to all operations and stirs up a mud reminiscent of the days at Youks. Jeeps slur and slide crazily on the field and most of us stay "up on the hill" and catch up on "bunk fatigue."

Pvt. Jesse Smith returns to our Squadron this day.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 12

Officer-promotions announced today: John R. Delapp to MAJOR; Albert L. Adell, Horace J. Finch, William L. Tyler to CAPTAIN; Robert M. Black, and Leonard O. Riemer to FIRST LIEUTENANT.

Marching up to chow late tonight, groups of newly arrived Italian prisoners of war, who will work on our base, are outlined against a brilliant orange sunset.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 15

Tonight a film about the underground resistance in Norway ("Edge of Darkness") and during the breaks in its showing, youthful Italian prisoners scrutinize editions of the "Stars and Stripes" and say, "la guerra, fini presto!" (the war, end soon!) To this, some of our men nod doubtfully. The Italians, nevertheless, continue to smile, point to the paper and repeat, "fini presto!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 16

Coming to our Squadron this day as Assistant Intelligence Officer is 1st Lt. Donald A. McCaslin.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 18

At odd moments between gunnery flights today, work progresses relentlessly on the Officers' Club-to-be. Standing off and viewing their handiwork and then pitching in again are Lts. Kalinowski and Glanville, working on voluptuous and novel character murals; Lts. Crookham and Cobb, rounding out their smooth, circular, modernistic bar; Capt. Adell and Lt. Keltner installing indirect lighting; Lt. Kelsey paternally arranging the club furniture (some of which came from the Mayor of Nouvion); Lt. Black test-hopping his spacious settee; Lt. Riemer gazing fondly and with an anticipating gleam at his poker table; Lt. Dubois taking mental stock of the wine to be required; Lt. Schwab and Capt. Finch wiping off the sweat and then going on manfully to uphold their title of "Latrine Officers"; Lt. Harris glowing with warmth as he installs his heating system; and Lt. Emmert testing the acoustics of the building for the best spot to place his radio. Much individual labor and originality are apparent everywhere and a feeling of comfortable expectation pervades even above the chorus of sawing and hammering.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 20

All during the day, we run artillery-adjustment missions in conjunction with the 91st and 68th Field Artillery Battalions. Up with the ground units are Lt. Schwab, our Liaison Officer, and Sgt. Lodge and Cpl. Schmidling, taking care of ground-to-air communications. In general, all of our pilots turn in quick and accurate target corrections.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 22

Down by the fence where the "hill" levels off to flat ground, we do most of our daily trading with the Arabs who hang around continually. For a bar of laundry soap, we get 15-20 eggs, the number depending on your ability to act with calm unconcern, then disdain at the low price offered . . . "all you have to do is play hard to get!" Among ourselves, we admit, "we sometimes drive a pretty hard bargain on them," but then a few shady deals on the part of the "A-rabs" place things on an even keel. A direct result of these tradings are nightly egg fries in almost every barracks. From sizzling mess kits on oil-barrel stoves, we gently lift out two of these "de-licious hen fruit" and place them on a warm piece of toast. In many a room, this goes on until everyone is sprawled on his cot, hands on stomach, and reluctantly waving away another sandwich—"this is one time when I've had enough eggs!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 25

A letter is today received from our former Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. John Dyas . . . "call all the men together and remember me to them; they did a wonderful job over there in Africa!"

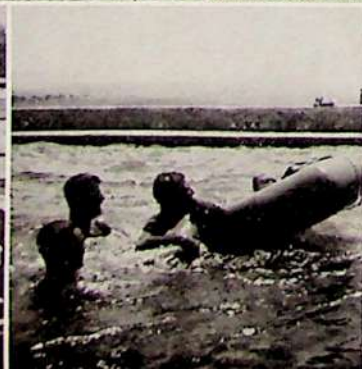
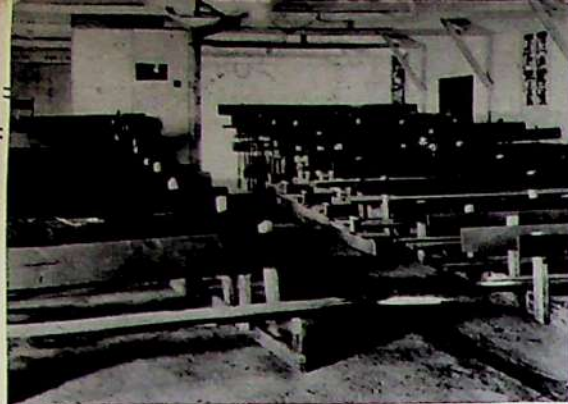
News comes of the promotion of now FIRST LIEUTENANT Kalinowski.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 26

As for the past few days, the air is filled with the growl of our planes all morning long and then activity settles down to an occasional mission and the daily run for mail. . . . As flying dies down, a small group of men spreads out on the field below camp and begins football practice in earnest.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 27

Our way to the field is barred this morning by a colored guard of the anti-aircraft unit here on the base for maneuvers. "You got de pass word?" he asks huskily. Bewildered, we answer, "no." He then replies, "well, can't let you go



through, den." We explain that we have been operating here for over five months. After a session of mental wrestling with himself, he waves us fatalistically onward, "well, go haid, den!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 28

During the early morning and extending throughout the day, we run artillery adjustment missions once again with the 61st and 68th Armored Field Artillery Battalions. Behind the earphones taking care of the essential communications are T/Sgt. Fred Higdon, S/Sgt. Forrest Clark and Cpl. Robert Scales. "Pretty smooth," is the opinion as to the co-ordination of ground and air units.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Oct. 30

Official papers received today confirm the fact that it's now CAPTAINS Monthei, Howard and Anstine.

NOVEMBER, 1943

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 1

With the departure of the 19th Service Group, we are left in sole control of the base. "More guards!" is our resulting wail!

At 1500 hours this afternoon, we gather in the theatre building where, after the announcement is made by Major Whitwell of trips to Algiers and Oran for the highest scoring men in the test program now beginning, we commence the first of a series of Army lectures and tests—"Organization of the Army, the Air Forces and the 154th."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 2

Supply is kept on the go today: our rifles are turned in for the more commodious carbine; overcoats are issued again and we are forced to think of the coming of our second winter in North Africa.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 5

Directly after another lecture and test, our Special Service Officer, Lt. Lucius Traylor, sounds us out on the building of a bigger and better Enlisted Men's day room. He is all smiles when told, "well, we've got to have a chairman and it might as well be you!" To a counter-suggestion by Percy Moon that the project be more suitably headed by an enlisted man, we all agree and much to his surprise, chose Percy as the man to head the planning committee! "Si" Wilson is then chosen his assistant.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 7

On a routine flight today, Lt. James Keltner is reported missing and is last seen by Lt. Flynt south of the mountains east of Orleansville. . . . "We were on a cross-country to Berteaux, but with bad weather closing in, decided to make for Algiers. We went down through a valley and here went into a solid overcast. When I came out of the valley, I could contact Lt. McFarland by radio, but received no answer from Lt. Keltner."

We wind up the final phase of our training program late this afternoon with lectures on Public Relations, Booby Traps, and "Why We Fight."

Again broad smiles tell of the following promotions: George Moon to MASTER/SERGEANT; D. Ross Grimes

to STAFF/SERGEANT; Joseph T. Schmidling to SERGEANT; Russell E. Brossman, Calvin J. Hauf and Jacob Stadler to CORPORAL; Joseph M. Lynch, Clyde O. Smith and Elias P. Toscano to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 8

For the second day, our planes go out on a search for Lt. Keltner. All efforts, however, are fruitless.

Early this afternoon, the results of our training program are announced and reveal the following men to be top scorers: (to Algiers)—Sgt. Abernethy, Cpl. Goldberg, T/Sgt. Tanner, S/Sgt. Stolnack, Cpl. Kahanic, Sgt. Hall, S/Sgt. Appler, S/Sgt. Lee, Cpl. Scales; (to Oran)—T/Sgt. O'Quin, T/Sgt. Stires, S/Sgt. Stone, S/Sgt. Still, S/Sgt. Tole, Sgt. Gillies, S/Sgt. Grimes, Cpl. Horwich, and Cpl. Rodgers.

At sometime during the day, most of us happen to think, "this marks a year for us here in North Africa!" When we ponder on all that has taken place in this year and of the distances we have covered, it seems unbelievable. And yet an Arab will pass by, a husky voice will ask for "bou bon?" and we KNOW that we are still in Africa!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 10

Under a low, threatening sky which prevents any operational activity, the two groups of trip winners head in the direction of Algiers and Oran . . . "four days away from Army life!"

News comes that a "totally destroyed plane" has been found in a valley east of Orleansville—"must be Lt. Keltner's . . . he evidently hit a tree with his wing and was thrown into the side of the hill."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 11

We spend our second Armistice Day in North Africa and military parades in the cities of Oran, Algiers, and Mostaganem find at least a few of our Squadron lining the way. At day's end one man brings back a mammoth French flag as a tangible memento!

Late this evening, a trio of silhouetted forms comes striding up to camp—Bob Stires, Fred Stefano and Fred Gillies vowing, "Oran—never again! Couldn't even find a place to stay!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 12

A day of no operations sends us to building stoves out of everything from "Spam" tins to oil barrels. Toward dusk, the smoke which curls up from many a barracks tells of a busy and successful day.

2nd Lt. Walter J. Mallett joins our Squadron Flying Officers.

A small but industrious group begins work on the Enlisted Men's day room and somewhere around the building or out scouting around the base for materials are S/Sgts. Roseberry, Raper, M/Sgts. Percy and George Moon, Sgt. Wetzel, M/Sgt. Dick Red, Cpl. Charles White, T/Sgt. Jack Finn, and Cpls. Gerig and Raddatz.

Late tonight, barracks doors slam all over camp and shadowy figures, mess cup in hand, can be seen running down the hill to the day room, here to get the first beer issue in a long time.

NOUVION. . . . Our movie theatre. . . . A corner of the Squadron "War Room". . . . Bar and Clubroom fashioned by Squadron Officers. . . . Ed Harris, Stanislaw Kij, Fred Higdon and Ray Serda pose with a captured Nazi flag. . . . "Arms and the men": Walter Lee, Robbie Barham and Ed Harris with captured Axis equipment. . . . Base Chapel. . . . We bargain for eggs with Arabs who hang around the outer camp fences. . . . Lts. Traylor, Ammerman (with "Blackout") and Adell before their barracks. . . . "Pots and pans!" (Michael Skuba, Harold Zynda and Willie Russell on KP). . . . On their way down to the line: James Lodge, Robert Scales, Fred Higdon, Paul Kahanic, Jack Lane (RAF), Robbie Barham and Forrest Clark. . . . Calvin Hauf and his popular glider. . . . At the pool. . . . Interior of the Chapel. . . . (Jan. 2, 1944) Formation a few days before we leave Nouvion. . . . Camp panorama. . . . Fred Stefano stands his guard shift at Post Number One. . . . A group of Italian prisoners who work and live on the base. . . . Carbine practice. . . . (Inset) Airfield tower. . . . "A night at home" (Edwin Tole, Orville Stolnack, Leo Tunnell, Harold Steed and Donald Still). . . . Officers' Mess Hall. . . . Fun in the pool. . . . (Jan. 5, 1944) We leave Nouvion. . . . Mid-summer sunset over camp.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 14

Sgt. Virgil Steele joins our Communications Section this day.

After almost five days in Algiers, the holiday group returns to camp tonight with physical and vocal evidence of a time well spent. . . . "Algiers is really THE city!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 16

Joining the Squadron and, more precisely, the Armament Section are Pfc's John White, James Welch, Edwin Robinson, Charles Sutliff, Thomas Taylor, James Thomas, and Zolton Varga.

A steady drizzle this afternoon fails to dampen the spirits of the Armament Section as it heads for Relizane and an intimate get-together. Thanks to Lt. Traylor, one and all come back to camp telling of a "bang-up time."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 21

More rain ("that's all we've had for the past week!") and rumors of a meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and a group of peace-minded German Generals in nearby Oran flood the camp and provide lively discussion for a day which forces all indoors.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 22

The Squadron "War Room" opens today and Majors Whitwell, and Waters and Lt. Schwab, the first to inspect it, pronounce it "bon!"

With backs sore from doing our own washing and eyes tired by limited horizons, we welcome the news that Nouvion is "on-limits" again.

Another beer ration night and the day room is a lively place.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 23

Those who head for Perregeaux in the movie truck tonight view a German war newsreel meant for French consumption at the time the Nazis held North Africa. In the concentration of shots showing diving German planes and great explosions, we can well see the much-flouted Nazi "strategy of terror."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 24

In an atmosphere flickering with soft candlelight, an impressive Thanksgiving service is held in our Chapel tonight. S/Sgt. Bill Roseberry reads his thoughtful piece on the meaning of Thanksgiving, Capt. Tyler speaks to us on "Thanksgiving Before the War and Now," Lt. Kalinowski once again provides gentle organ accompaniment to softly sung hymns, and Lt. Traylor leads the closing prayer . . . "a moving experience."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Day 1943 dawns, a bleak, cloudy day with the sun breaking through only now and then. . . . Long before noon time, the chow line begins to form and soon extends throughout the building. Restless feet shuffle unceasingly and lips are continually wetted at the thought of the feast to come. The cry of "time to eat! . . . cho—ow time!" is finally answered as the kitchen doors open and before us stretches a long line of GI pots filled with turkey, sweet potatoes, turnips, onions, dressing, gravy, jello, chocolate cake, and coffee. At the table, we sit beside Italian prisoners who wink comically and comment, "turkeno . . . buono!" And then we begin the business of eating again!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 27

Six new men cast their lot with our Squadron this day: T/Sgt. John Llewellyn, S/Sgt. Orville Knudston, Sgt. Phil Seligman, Pfc. Robert Drennan, Pvt. Florencio Baragan and Pvt. William Roessner.

Italian prisoners here on the base gratefully accept bits of string and colored paper from men around camp (we

save these items from Christmas boxes which we have already received) and use them to tie up packages of "Chuckles" (gelatine squares), hard candy, and toothbrushes which they are sending home as Christmas presents to their families here in Africa.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Nov. 29

During the morning hours, we run artillery adjustment missions in co-operation with French units stationed near Zammora — "what a day trying to figure out those 'Frenchies' on the radio!"

What looks like an Arab shop filled with leather pocket-books, belts, wallets, folders and hassocks turns out to be only the Supply Section in disguise with "Ben Mohamed" Buddy Diemer selling his native merchandise at what he violently claims "cut rate" prices.

DECEMBER, 1943**Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 1**

The momentous news of the meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai Chek in Cairo for the "Japan Conference" comes over the air waves today and brings forth, "I told you so," from all those who heard of the great military commotion in Oran about a week ago.

Promotions announced today: Ladislaus Kish, James Lodge to STAFF/SERGEANT; James Brennan, Eugene Gerig, Bill Goodner, Charles Girola, Paul Kahanic to SERGEANT; Carl Anderberg and Brady Fillingim to CORPORAL.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 2

"Buon giorno . . . dove il ristorante?" Thus musical Italian is repeated by a group of Squadron members that gathers in the Day Room and is bent on learning the intricacies of the Neapolitan language. Two Italian prisoners act as our instructors, nod their heads patiently as we stumble over the words. "Wonder if we'll ever get a chance to use this stuff?"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 4

We rise long before dawn this morning and even as the sky brightens to a brilliant orange-blue, our planes sputter impatiently on the runway and are on the alert for the first artillery adjustment mission in conjunction with a nearby French unit. Four such missions are sent out and at morning's end the results are pronounced "most satisfactory."

Comes the long awaited news: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin have met in Teheran, the capital of Persia. We realize with a thrill that great events are in the making, if not made.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 5

Major Whitwell and Captain Finch return today from a visit to Italy and have this to say of their stop-over in Naples—"sunken boats in the harbor, burned out oil refineries, docks torn down. The Americans did some real precision bombing here! The blackout of the city itself was a half-way job. A war 70 miles away and no one seeming to care a bit. All the vehicles had their lights on and many of the buildings also. Even in the harbor, men were working under lights. We gathered that Allied soldiers were openly baiting 'Jerry,' just waiting for him to come over. We visited the 111th Squadron, stationed on Pomigliano Air-drome. There were 400 planes on one field. The whole trip impressed us as being a member of the winning side. The Italians themselves are a disappointment for lack of co-operation with the Allied Military Government. Black markets everywhere."

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 6

Early this morning, a well-loaded jeep and trailer winds out from camp and sharp-shooters Lts. Steman, Black, M/Sgt. Patrick and S/Sgt. Tunnell head for two days of hunting in the "wilds" of North Africa.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 7

All during the day, our planes sputter noisily on the runway and the air is spotted with our machines until almost dusk.

Promotions announced: Alfred C. Schwab to CAPTAIN; Philip Crookham to FIRST LIEUTENANT.

"Off to Italy!" This time it is Majors Waters and Delapp and Lt. Slagle who head for the Italian mainland.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 10

As a gentle, steady rain falls, the Squadron reluctantly says "good-bye" to Ordnance's Lt. Lucius Traylor, Frederick Ambault, Harold Zynda, Theodore Beke, Erwin Bell, Lowell Black, Stanley Butrymowicz, Guy Lamkin, Edward Lipka, John Russell, Clarence Shade, James Shank, Ernest Tyree, and Herbert Yopp—all headed for an Ordnance Depot near Oran.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 11

Hammering, sawing and much activity in and around the Headquarters building precede the moving "up on the hill" of the Operations, Intelligence and Parachute Sections.

The native food "gazelle" (which our quartet of hunters bagged south of Oujda) for dinner and some pronounce it "pretty good, not bad at all!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 14

Clearing weather brings with it renewed activity on the line and all over camp.

Lt. James Glanville today receives the news of his promotion to FIRST LIEUTENANT.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 17

Another day passes here at Nouvion and our field, still muddled and rutted by the rains, is undisturbed by the roar of our planes.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 18

Majors Waters and Delapp and Lt. Slagle return from Italy and tell of Major Waters' artillery adjustment mission over the center of the 5th Army front lines!

As we mill into the theatre building tonight and glance around at the graduated seating arrangement, we offer mental congratulations to all those who worked on this project, especially to S/Sgt. Lemaster, Cpls. Gerig and Raddatz.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 19

All during the day, we test fire our carbines for the first time and proud grins, sheepish glances and incredulous roaring tell of a variety of scores.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 20

Lt. Leonard Riemer leaves us this day for new duties with a heavy bomber unit.

Herman Smith hears the good news, "hello, CORPORAL!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 21

Early this evening, three GI trucks draw up before the Mostaganem Red Cross and soon afterward our Squadron Christmas Dance is in full swing. "Well, will you look at all the girls; beau—coup!" On one large block of chairs coyly sit the girls, traditionally accompanied by their eagle-eyed mothers and whoever else in the family, from six to sixty, felt like coming! For three hours, we dance in the Christmas atmosphere provided by the Red Cross, stand by and watch "Pop" Ross uphold his reputation as the most violent jitterbug in the Squadron and listen to Percy Moon's shaming plea, "com'on, boys, let's get out there and DANCE!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 22

Just before the movie tonight, a drawing is held and the following Squadron members win a three-day trip to Algiers "sometime in the near future": Jack Trier, Frank Stanley, Andrew Ondovchik, Harold Sandbeck, Hubert Siemer, Robert Huey, Francis Stevens, Bernard Bower, Alexander Winstead, Beecher Samples, Clair Gibbons, James Brennan, Robert Heater, Robert Lynch and Dan Owens.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 23

More rain and threatening weather confine activities to preparation for the coming holidays. Setting up a few Christmas trees, everything from a branch hung with a bit of colored paper to large, expertly decorated trees with colorful ornaments (painted light bulbs), add much to the spirit of things.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 24

At 1500 hours today, a revolutionary change takes place here in camp. From this hour today until the same time tomorrow, our Officers take over Enlisted Men's duties, from guard to doubling for our cooks! Already tonight come shouts of "how's the guard going, Lieutenant?" And our Officers, encased in flying suits and beating their hands together, solemnly stand their shift!

Come dusk, the shifting beams of flashlights spot the campgrounds and move toward the Chapel where our special Christmas Service is to be held. Appropriately decorated and filled to capacity, this small room is the scene of a most impressive ceremony with our good friend Lt. Traylor returning for the night and capably presiding over the service. Slowly and softly the portable organ sends out its tremulous music and deep voices join in the singing of old familiar Christmas carols. A beady steam clings to the windows and candles placed around the room waver and flicker crazily. At the conclusion of the service, Sgt. Diemer presents Lt. Traylor with a watch, a token of appreciation for all that he has done for us in times past.

Tonight, President Roosevelt speaks to us via radio from the U. S., reminds us of the "long struggles yet to come" and of the great American sacrifices which must be borne in the coming year. Somber and yet suitably so, we listen to these words and nod in agreement as the President closes hoping that this time next year will see "peace on earth, good will to men."

All over camp tonight and well into Christmas morning, small groups of men gather together in the Day Room, around the bar, in crowded barracks, or on the water-mirrored streets. Barber-shop quartets roam through the area, shadowy figures grouped arm in arm wail discordantly but happily into the crisp night air . . . so comes Christmas Morning 1943.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 25

Sleeping until the unheard-of Army hour of 0900 hours this morning, we finally rise and go over for Christmas morning breakfast. "How do you want your eggs?" shouts Lt. Crookham to each man and then proceeds to fry them to order. But our Officer-Cooks' best efforts were yet to come. At precisely four o'clock, the kitchen door swings open and we file through the line and end up with a mess kit heaped high with turkey, potato, dressing, pickles, salad, tomatoes, cranberry sauce, cake and coffee. "Come back later if you want more," exclaim our cooks and many's the man who returns for generous seconds! . . . Enjoying the day with us are S/Sgt. Russell, Sgts. Zynda, Beke, Bell, Cpl. Yopp, and Pfc's Black, Tyree and Shank. One and all second Sgt. Beke's exclamation, "it's good to get back with the boys again!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 26

All camp buzzes with wild rumors and that "confidential" attitude hovers over every group of men that gathers together—"no planes . . . soon to be out of the XII Train-



CANESTEL STAGING AREA. . . . Our Camp from afar. . . . Jimmy Rodgers with "Blida". . . . (Below) Our Cooks—John Lensis, Virgil Snoddy, Jesse Smith, John Grochowski and Harry Sandbeck—ready the night meal. . . . (Right) "Shorty" Martin poses "briefly!" . . . Chow time. . . . Camp vista. . . . Passes to town usually include a visit to the NCO Club with its "almost American" beer.

ing Command. . . . JUST WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?" The guesses run the range from a trip to England, the Baltics, Burma, or the Aleutians to MP duty in Algiers and replacement centers for us all!

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 28

Clearing weather brings with it a clean sweep of our runway as our P-39's go to the French for patrol duty. "We now have the unique distinction of being a Squadron without planes!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 29

The line grows barer with each hour that passes and Arabs stand off at a comfortable distance and thoughtfully survey our transfer of equipment to buildings up on the hill. Construction of crating equipment is begun and we continue to speculate, "where? . . . when?"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Dec. 31

As of 2400 hours tonight, we are no longer under the operational and administrative control of the XII Training Command.

Late into the night, the cry of "Hap—py New Year!" booms out all over camp and the Day Room and the entire base is a scene of lively activity which begins to waver only with the coming of dawn and complete exhaustion!

JANUARY, 1944

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 3

After many false alarms and days of wild imaginings, we begin at 1500 hours today to pack our Squadron equipment for a move by sea. All camp suddenly becomes a hive of activity and before dusk comes on, the greater part of our equipment is crated and ready. As in the past, there arises an infectious joy and sense of welcome expectation at the prospect of moving—"it's good to be going somewhere once more!"

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 4

A meeting of all Section Heads is held early this morning and loading and transportation problems are discussed.

Once more, we are formed into platoons in the order in which we will board ship and are told that the move from Nouvion is set definitely for tomorrow morning.

Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 5

After a morning of waiting around and hilarious last minute bargaining with the throng of Arabs that senses our moving and clusters about the outer camp fences, we load aboard trucks and stream away from Nouvion. Thus terminates almost seven months' knowing of the little town nearby, of Odette's and the nightly laundry excursions; of the "Bar de Coin"; of greasy chicken dinners in the dim and cozy atmosphere of weak lights and crackling, smoky fires; of trips to Mostaganem ("the hometown") and those whom we have come to know during our visits there; of holiday jaunts to Oran and Relizane and always the unmeaning threat, "I'll never go to town again!" These are but a few of the mind-pictures which ease through our consciousness as we bump along the road leading out from Nouvion.

Episode Fifteen

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 5

After two hour's riding, we reach our destination—a square block of pyramidal tents to the east of Oran and near the southern base of Lion Mountain—the Canestel pre-embarkation camp. . . . After preliminary setting up is taken care of, we stand formation and hear the unbelievable and whistle-be-getting news that breakfast will be at nine o'clock each morning! Early to bed tonight (on cots!), and we are once more at home wherever we lay our "sack."

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 6

With chattering teeth and be-numbed bodies, we rise in a heavy mist this morning and make as the project for the

day the fixing of our beds for a warm night's sleep. . . . Passes to town claim the bulk of camp on our first day here. Others read, wash, go to a movie at the nearby "two by four" Red Cross, or just take it easy with one eye fixed on the prospect of a priority trip to town tomorrow.

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 7

Major Whitwell and Capt. Tyler today head in the direction of "our next base."

Trips to the city of Oran, the coldness of the nights here, and wild rumors as to where we are going continue to occupy most of our time and thoughts. Before dusk and late into the night, we gather 'round small wood fires in camp and make compact, intimate circles reminiscent of those at Oujda about a year ago.

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 9

With closer and more realistic anticipation, we watch our trucks leave the camp area late this afternoon and head for "the boat."

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 11

For those who gain passes to town each day, the city of Oran has many attractions. The NCO Club with its novel French atmosphere, its all-French band which plays American swing with a noisy gusto, the heavy-set woman violinist with her reminiscing smile and severe mannish hairstyle, the sprit of camaraderie—soldiers, sailors, British, and American, all gathered together, some rowdy, some slobberingly sentimental, but most of them hearty and contagiously good-humored. The bars—"Joe's Joint" and "Al's Place" with their voice-dinned atmospheres. The streets of the city crowded with throngs of soldiers and civilians, each one bent in his separate all-important direction and pursued by Arab kids yelling "shoe—shin? . . . cat? . . . bif steak? . . . mademoiselle?" The almost fruitless search for a restaurant as dusk comes on and the inevitable and expensive compromise for eggs, heavy French bread, and wine. Finally, the slow wending down narrow, cobbled streets splotted with shaded triangles of eerie yellow-white light and leading to the parking lot. Such is a trip to town.

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 12

Each morning, we scour the outlying country around camp for firewood and keeping warm becomes a major problem. . . . Disdaining continual trips to town, many of our more hardy soldiers set out from camp in the direction of Lion Mountain. An hour or so later, they near the top, pause increasingly as the going gets tougher. "It's a hard, long climb (1½ hours), but when you get to the top, it's worth it! You can see Oran, Arzew and almost to Mostaganem. Some view!"

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 14

As dusk comes on tonight, fires around camp send up an orange tracery of sparks; curling wisps of blue-white smoke rise lazily into the night air. And with the soft, inspired playing of Russell Brossman on the guitar ranging over the camp and filling the whole area with a haunting warmth and inclusiveness, we slide off into sleep. . . .

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 15

"No Passes . . . Formation at 1030 hours." This concise notice on the bulletin board confirms our thoughts: "we are soon to go aboard ship." Restricted to the camp area, we ready our belongings and wait through a day of warmth and calm.

Canestel Staging Area, Algeria, N. Africa—Jan. 16

Pre-dawn fires and a heavy white, all-engulfing mist greet us as we rise at six this morning and stagger, chattering and clumsy, to breakfast. . . . But not until almost noon today ("that's the Army; hurry up and wait!") do we finally march away from the camp area and up to the hill nearby, here to wait for transportation. Lazy plumes of

smoke and the occasional flapping of canvas are the only signs of life in our former camp below. . . . After many false alarms, the trucks come rolling in from the valley, are soon crammed with personnel and equipment, and lurch away toward Oran. As we ride along on this, probably our last trip through the lands of North Africa, many thoughts pass through our mind. Our eyes fan over the figure of an Arab standing silently by the roadside and staring in mute acceptance as our convoy passes. "It's good to be leaving this God damned country at last," says one man. Others do not give their thoughts to words.

Episode Sixteen

Aboard the "George G. Meade," Oran Harbor—Jan. 16

Arriving at the docks, we are loaded onto a mammoth barge and along with a group of ground troops head for the "Liberty Ship," the "George G. Meade," anchored near the exit of the port. Again comes the reluctant thought, "we are leaving the land."

Once on board ship and down in the hold—a square formation with iron-canvas cots rising five tiers up and five rows back to the walls; a large open square in the center—we lay on our cots and wait for supper.

As dusk comes on, we stand on deck and watch a small sea craft close the sub-gates nearby and are told by two sailors of the depth charges which are set off every half hour and less than two hundred yards away! "This is done," comments one seaman, "to hit any enemy sub which tries to smash through into the port and also to set off any small mines which Arabs might plant by swimming out from shore." And so, with the intermittent metal-banging thunder of depth charges brutally smashing into our sleep and the familiar jargon of long-run poker games, we begin our first night aboard ship.

Aboard the "George G. Meade," Oran Harbor, N. Africa—Jan. 17

Watching the activities in the harbor and bemoaning "a mere two meals a day" while at sea, we spend another day which ends joyfully enough in the arrival of Lt. Emmert with mail and packages. . . . More depth charges throughout the night!

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 18

About 0745 hours this morning, the grinding of the clangorous anchor chain and a hissing of water tell us that we are on our way out to sea. . . . Once outside the harbor, we rendezvous with 13 craft much like our own and about noon head eastward to Arzew, here pick up another 30 ships. "Not such a small convoy after all!" . . . A calm sea around us, a blue sky and warm sun above, we scan the skies as we move slowly eastward.

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 19

Sliding along effortlessly on an extra calm sea, we play cards, read, bask in the sun, or just look out upon the sea and ships around us. . . . As dusk falls tonight, many of the ships on our port side spew forth great snakes of smoke from their sterns and two sleek destroyers skirt with demon swiftness around the far edges of the convoy and lay a kinky black rope of smoke protectively around us. "Just a practice smoke screen."

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 20

Our convoy moves on with relentless, undisturbed precision and all activity is in keeping with the unhurried atmosphere around us. . . . Another smoke screen is laid down at dusk tonight and is even more effectively concealing than that of last night. . . . Come blackout time, we

gather in the hold for a nightly snack of sandwiches and coffee. All agree, "our cooks are really on the ball this trip!"

About eight o'clock tonight, a deep, heavy throbbing comes from the entrails of the ship. Some of the machinery belowdecks has broken down. Leaving the convoy and hugging the coastline, our ship finally arrives before the port of Bone. After much signaling, we are allowed into the safety of the harbor. "Make 'er fast . . . give me more rope . . . pull 'er over!" These cries ring out into the air as a thudding rain beats down on the ship and makes of all a glistening mass of cold, grey shimmering steel. The anchor clangs down mightily and we are at rest within the harbor of Bone, North Africa.

**Aboard the "George G. Meade", Bone Harbor,
N. Africa—Jan. 21**

Rumors of a two-day to two-week layover for repairs pervade the conversation on board ship and we spend a calm day watching the various waterfront activities and gazing with speculating anticipation at the skeleton ruins of the docks.

**Aboard the "George G. Meade", Bone Harbor,
N. Africa—Jan. 22**

The good news, "passes to town," is quickly spread around and many are allowed to climb over the sides of a neighboring ship and head for a few hours "shore leave" in the city of Bone.

A city whose waterfront buildings are pock-marked and gape through windowless sockets; a people care-worn, weary and passive; the clomp-clomp of hordes of English soldiers' boots—all greet us as we come into the city itself. "Not much doing," is the general comment of a brief visit here.

Over the small speaker hooked up in the ship's hold, we learn tonight of the Allied landing at Anzio, behind the German lines in Western Italy. The news that "the battle for Rome has begun" is to all a promising prelude to great events. The infantry replacement troops on board now scan maps of Italy with a new, debating intensity and somber meaning.

**Aboard the "George G. Meade", Bone Harbor,
N. Africa—Jan. 23**

Church services are held under a warm sun this Sunday morning and the ship's decks are later a haven for those who would just bask, read, or observe. . . . The ailing part of our ship is returned late today and it is said that "we will leave sometime tomorrow."

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 24

The rumor, "we are to leave Bone today," is converted to fact at midday as we slide out of the harbor with the simple music of a violin and a guitar falling in strange harmony upon the stilled air. . . . Heading north into increasingly choppy seas, we are courted by a fast-moving tug which swishes great sweeping swaths of blue, greenish-white foam around us. . . . "Convoy ahead! A big one!" This cry is taken up late this afternoon by all aboard and

soon the mere specks in our field glasses take on their true size and we skirt around to the rear of a large convoy to take our position as number 55, in "coffin corner."

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 25

The passing of Cap Bon this morning and the night-observed island of Pantelleria tonight are the events of the day.

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 26

Extremely heavy seas rock and roll the ship all during the day and those men living in vehicles and trailers on deck test the cables which hold their homes. "Hope they're strong enough." . . . We skirt Malta and still head east. . . .

**Aboard the "George G. Meade"; Augusta Harbor,
Sicily—Jan. 27**

Turning north, by midday we approach the rugged, greenish-purple cliffs of Southern Sicily, then head for the port of Augusta. Here we anchor in the unruffled harbor and spend the day hanging over the ship's rail, bargaining for boxes of almonds and oranges, and finding that the change from habits of 15 months' standing in North Africa still has its difficulties. Some of us still try to bargain in francs and hurl French at the unwitting and thoroughly bewildered "paysan!"

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; at sea—Jan. 28

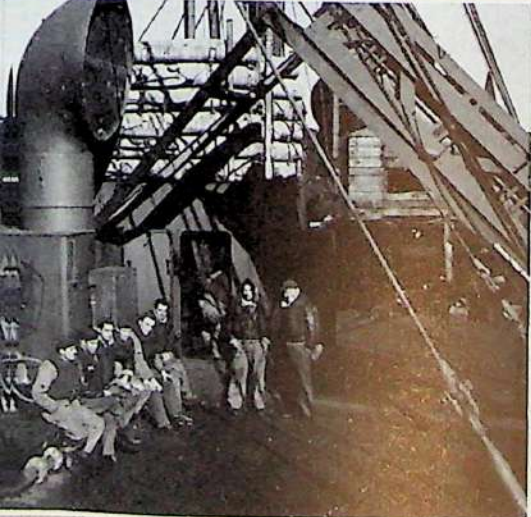
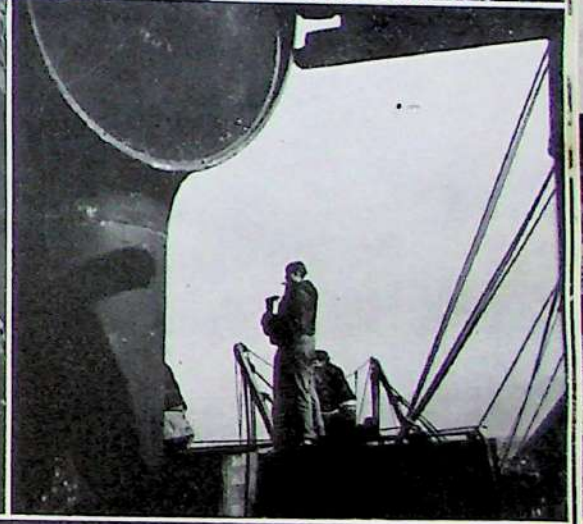
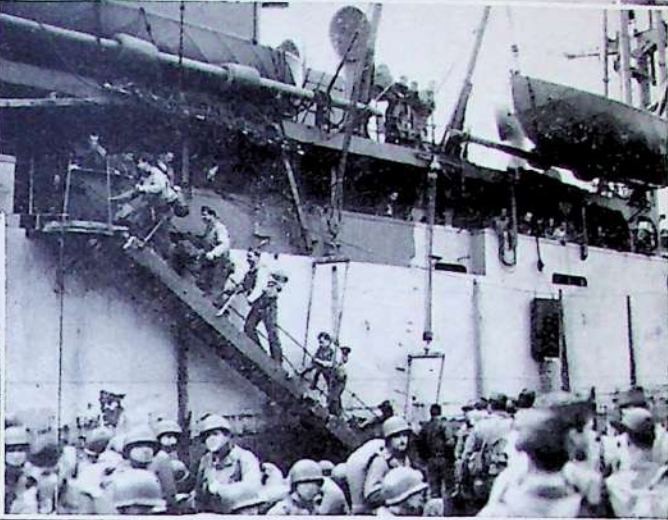
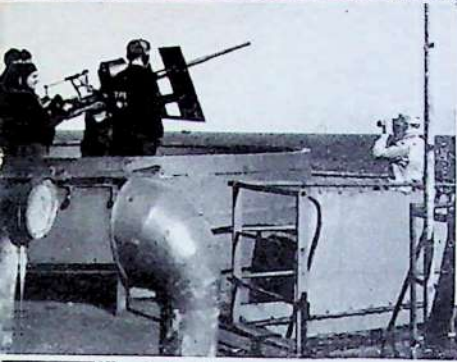
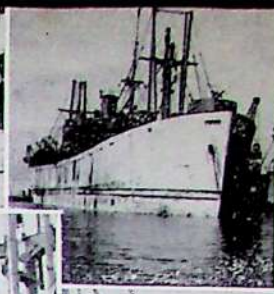
Sputtering powerfully and grinding with gritty thunder, the winch hauls up anchor early this morning and we head north once more. . . . The high cone of mist which yesterday hid Mt. Etna has now given way to clear, unobstructing skies and we gaze wonderously at the austere, snow-capped majesty of this famed semi-active volcano. . . . As we plow further along by the coast of Sicily, the closely-spaced, flesh-colored towns nestled flatly along the shore, the sculptured, clay-moulded cliffs and mountainside verdancy of the land lead us to exclaim that Sicily is a much more beautiful and rugged country than we had believed. Always we look at the terrain and cities with a wonder that armies could deploy and advance over such lands.

Late this afternoon, we arrive at the northern reaches of the Straits of Messina and can now view closely the lands of Italy. With almost religious calm and quietude, we pass through the narrow Straits and all eyes are turned on the towering, verdant Italian hills to the east. Through the glasses, a village can be seen—no life is visible, just shattered buildings and homes and piles of debris. The peaceful atmosphere of the reed-lined coast all but denies that men and armies, in strengths up to then unheard of, recently surged across their shores.

As a brilliant orange-fire sunset is swallowed by the night, the jagged Lipari Islands come into view.

In the blacked-out silence aboard ship tonight, we can look to the southwest and watch the volcanic Isle of Stromboli in eruption: first, a reddish glow on the horizon, then a whoosh, a huge rising ball of fire pushing into the blue-blackness of the night, bursting and throwing out hundreds of thin, red, stabbing shafts which fall gracefully and expire in the sea.

TRIP TO ITALY. . . . (Jan. 16, 1944) Jammed into GI trucks, we ride through Oran and down to the docks. . . . The last Squadron formation held in Africa. . . . Not far away, our "liberty ship," the "George G. Meade," lies at anchor. . . . Ferried by barge from the docks, we pull up to the side of the "Meade". . . . Loading goes on without a hitch. On gangplank, top to bottom, are Willie Wright, Michael Halick, Michael Whitehead and Walter Woodard. . . . (Jan. 18, 1944) We are on our way. . . . (Left, second from top) Gunners scan the sea and the skies and we sail on relentlessly. . . . (Below) A group of Squadron members gathers forward. . . . (Jan. 20) We are forced to put in at the harbor of Bone, North Africa, and lay over here three days for repairs. . . . Once again at sea, Squadron officers are snapped in a jovial mood. . . . The austere, snow-capped majesty of Sicily's famed Mt. Etna. . . . We eat chow on deck and then stand in an unsteady mess kit wash line. . . . All activity is unhurried and in keeping with the calm atmosphere around us. . . . An early morning gathering: Mahlon Sweet, D. Ross Grimes, James Wetzels, William Hall, John Llewellyn, Michael Halick, John Traffenstedt, Frank Stanley. . . . We read, play cards, talk, or just bask in the sun. . . . Night comes on over the convoy. . . . (Jan. 27) We put in to the port of Augusta, Sicily. . . . Shouting "paysans" offer almonds, oranges, vegetables, wine and cognac for sale or barter. . . . We head North once more and edge up to the Straits of Messina. . . . The lands of Italy are eagerly scanned by all.



With an ever-present crescent moon casting down a glittering silver pathway, we move silently through what are now termed "dangerous waters."

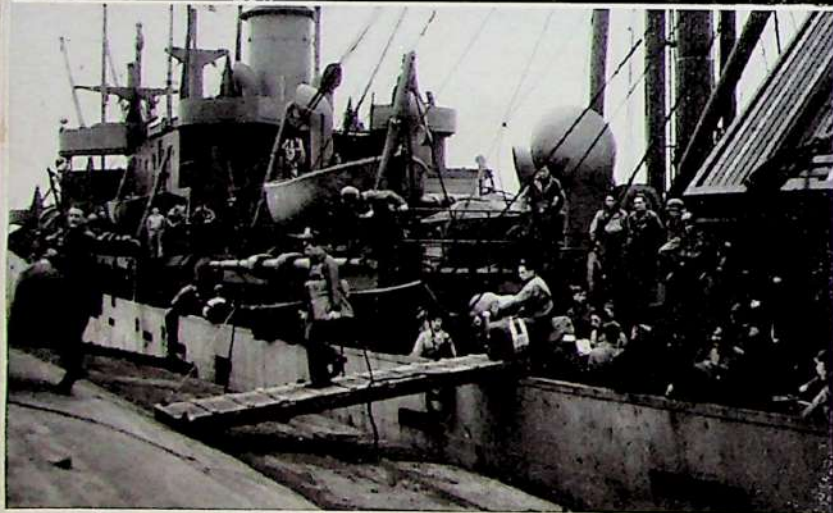
Aboard the "George G. Meade"; Bagnoli Harbor, Italy—Jan. 29

We rise this morning to find on our port side the Isle of Capri and, to our starboard, the bloody invasion springboard of Salerno. Of the famed Isle of Capri, some of our men claim a definite let-down and one goes so far as to ask as he looks at the sheer crags and cliffs on the south side of the island, "I wonder if there ARE any olive trees there?"

At midday, we sail slowly into the Bay of Naples and to our starboard is the famed Mount Vesuvius, shrouded in a pall of mist and issuing forth a kinky column of grey-knotted smoke.

Instructed by the port authorities to make anchorage at nearby Bagnoli Harbor, we turn northwestward and proceed along the coast. As we view the gentle slope of Mt. Vesuvius, suggesting the ruins of Pompeii, the crowded light-colored buildings and homes which go to make up the tiered city of Naples, and the coastal hills and plains dotted with classic umbrella trees, we receive our first slight impressions of the lands of Italy.

TRIP TO ITALY. . . (Jan. 29) As we sail slowly into the Bay of Naples on a crystal-blue day, we can make out the form of smoke-shrouded Mt. Vesuvius to the east. . . Anchorage is made temporarily in the cove of Bagnoli. . . (Jan. 31) The "G. G. Meade" pulls up to a wharfside sunken ship and unloading begins. . . Amid the wreckage on the Naples waterfront. . . Thirty men to a truck. . . We pass through the shattered dock areas of Naples.



Not long after we anchor in the cove of Bagnoli, we throng the ship's railings, yell, hoot and bargain with the scores of Italian "cigarette-conscious" paysans who cluster around in their dinghies. "One pack cigarettes," shout expectant paysans who point dramatically to their baskets of oranges, apples, walnuts, cabbages, cauliflower, carrots, radishes, wine, cognac and gaudy souvenirs. All afternoon the bartering goes on, rising and falling; the clear-skinned, open-faced, grinning Italians yelling for all they are worth. Old women with a brood of their young bob around in their boats, keep their eyes constantly on the alert for any food which might be thrown down, snatch graham crackers from the water and lay them on the seat of the rowboat to dry.

As dusk comes on, the small boats begin to leave the hulking sides of our ship and, one by one, glide over the surface of the almost motionless, satiny water of evening. Three young Italian girls dip their oars in and out of the water in hushed rhythm and raise their voices, shrill and young, in the singing of "Home to Sorrento." And as the voices grow fainter and fainter, and a white, dusk-heralding mist creeps across the mouth of the cove, there comes a soft, quiet peace and beauty, a sense of satisfying inner contentment. . . .

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; Bagnoli Harbor, Italy—Jan. 30

We spend another day in the harbor of Bagnoli and from early morning until late at night, bargain and joke with, or just watch the many Italian trading people clustered around the ship's sides. One thin, sparkling-eyed paysan thrusts a prized cigar into his mouth and joyfully and with a demon gleam in his eyes sings, "O Solo Mio!" while his three bambinos look on with bursting pride. On another side of the ship, a buxom signorina gives a show (for four packs of cigarettes) which has cameras clicking and half the ship's personnel hanging over the rail! On the second day of her "performance," she is dubbed the "waterfront dairy!"

Before dusk and on into the night, we watch landing craft slide past the cove and, under a heavy shroud of mist, head with ominous meaning in the direction of the bridgehead south of Rome.

Aboard the "George G. Meade"; Naples Harbor, Italy—Jan. 31

Early this morning, we pull into the Naples outer harbor and here spend the remainder of the day. "We will be on land tomorrow morning. . . ."

Episode Seventeen

FEBRUARY, 1944

Naples, Italy (Nesida Staging Area)—Feb. 1

Once again this morning, the ship's engines turn over

powerfully and before the day is little older than nine hours, we pull into the Naples inner harbor and up to a fire-charred, half-sunken ship now being used as an unloading point for personnel. Here the first, second and third platoons leave the "George G. Meade" (the fourth, fifth and sixth platoons remain on board with our equipment), pile 35 in a GI truck and are driven off through the ruined dock area of Naples.

After passing through a huge, electrically-lighted tunnel and swiftly streaking past the thronged tenement districts of the lower city, we arrive at the Nesida Staging Area—a group of ultra modernistic buildings which were in the making as a school for crippled children before the war. Soon assigned to one of these three-story buildings, we spread out blankets on the marble floors of a large room, the walls of which have been knocked down to make a military dormitory. Later on, we walk around the "campus," view the spacious Red Cross building with its many separate rooms for various interests, taste its creamy American-style ice cream which smiling signorinas heap unstintingly on a plate; visit the busy campside marketplace where oranges, apples, nuts and gaudy souvenirs are hawked with screeching gusto; comment on the raw, bold square lines of the Fascist-style church; climb up on a prow-like rostrum which dominates the entrance to the school and confound passers by as we stand with hands and chin thrust out and lips puffed up in the manner of Mussolini!

After supper tonight, Major Whitwell calls us all together and in an informal group meeting tells us of the impending set up: we are to be attached to the Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters as a Weather-Reconnaissance Squadron; we will lose all but a few of our old pilots; there will be no breaking up but rather an addition to our Squadron of an attachment of Officers and Enlisted Men that is already doing this work; we will leave for the eastern city of Bari tomorrow; that he, Major Whitwell, may leave the Squadron "but I hope to stay"; all sections will operate as usual; there will be a Flight (Courier) Section and a Weather Section. . . . At the conclusion of the Major's speech, we all feel a grateful sense of inclusiveness. As we disperse and later sit around on the floor of this candle-lit room and talk in small groups, there is not one gathering which does not discuss with reluctance the fact that we may lose the bulk of our old pilots.

Nesida Staging Area, Naples; Enroute to Bari, Italy—Feb. 2

At the word "pack up" early this morning, we quickly clear the marble floors of our dormitory and the Italian civilian sweeper begins once more to clean up for another arrival of men.

It is not until late afternoon, however, that we pile men and equipment into trucks and our "Oakie-styled" convoy winds out to the east for Bari. As we ride along through the devastated dock area of Naples, we note ragged skeletons of buildings rising sheer and gaunt into the sky;



NESIDA (NAPLES) STAGING AREA. . . . After one night on its cold marble floors, we pack up, pose a la Mussolini on its speaker's rostrum (center), leave the cleverly camouflaged Nesida Staging Area (at left, note pastoral painting on building) and, packed into trucks (extreme right), head across the Apennines for Bari.

whole areas crumbled and pulverized; block-long sectors flattened and surrounded by the ugly, snaky menace of barbed wire; pock-eyed buildings staring through great black sockets where once there were windows; a corner of a building, its whole side cut away as if by a ragged, hacking knife and revealing a plaster-littered room from whose ceiling strangely hangs a sparkling, glass-beaded chandelier; water hydrants uprooted and still trickling forth a stream of their crystal white life's blood. . . . As we pass through all of this, the comments are, "God, but these people must have suffered!" And more emphatic, "if the people back home could just see these ruins, they wouldn't have to guess what war means!"

Arriving at the outskirts of the city just at dusk and with the promise of cold growing more certain with every mile, we dig into boxes of "K" rations and eat on the move. To the south, Mt. Vesuvius slides slowly out of sight, its cone partly obscured by mist and approaching night.

Our trucks roar on through all-covering clouds of dust and edge higher and higher into the mountains. Beating our hands together and with our flight caps pulled down over our heads, our bodies encased in overcoats, flying jackets, blankets—anything warm, we are still cold! As the stark cold hours before and after midnight crawl by, we wind around the tortuous curves of the Apennines. Some of us are able to sleep; others shift, turn, and curse the wind, the numbing cold and the sifting dust. So we ride eastwards into the night and across the heights of Central Italy.

Episode Eighteen

Bari, Italy; 22nd Replacement Battalion—Feb. 3

Early morning brings with it a damp penetrating cold which rushes past our already be-numbed bodies with a new, cutting keenness. As dawn breaks, clear and sharp, the air begins to take on a slight warmth. Haggard, sleep-swollen faces begin to show signs of life and many men, still cursing the cold, haul out "K" rations and have "break-fast in bed!"

About nine o'clock, we arrive at the eastern city of Bari, skirt the main sector and pass the harbor where the hulks of sunken ships rise up as grim markers of the heavy enemy air raid here two months ago. At the entrance to the Bari Airdrome, we are re-routed back into town and out to the 22nd Replacement Center. Wild rumors float around as we unload here and we look apprehensively at the sign, "22nd REPLACEMENT." It is not long before we settle down in pyramidal tents and flop wearily on a cot. After last night's ride, sleeping becomes a serious and all-consuming affair.

Toward evening, the cry of "mail call!" runs electrically through camp and we later pour greedily over a month's accumulation of mail.

1st Lts. Eugene E. Churchill, Donald L. Clark, William M. Bechtold, 2nd Lts. Robert Zirkle, Walter D. Pittman and Dana C. Lovejoy are today assigned to our Squadron.

Bari, Italy; 22nd Replacement Battalion—Feb. 4

In order to escape the cold, many take advantage of passes to Bari and soon become acquainted with the Red Cross ("it's the only place you can get warm!"). A note of interest is added to the luxurious surroundings of this Club when we learn that it was once the headquarters of a large Fascist group.

Of the city of Bari itself, we have many impressions. Its wide, clean streets. The throngs of English, Canadian, New Zealand, Australian, Indian, Yugoslav, Polish and American troops roaming the streets. Candy and pastry shops in which you can buy anything from chocolate to a glass of

cognac. Wide-eyed bambinos tagging behind on the streets and slyly coaxing for "caramel, Joe?—chungum?—signorina?" The crusted old fort by the waterfront with its gaunt, mediaeval suggestion. The old Italian sector with shop-like homes whose massive wooden doors open directly onto the cobbled, rut-worn street; the numerous plaster saints and dieties set in bulb-lighted enclosures along the streets. . . . Bari is the first Italian city of any size which we have seen and we are optimistic.

Bari, Italy; 22nd Replacement Battalion—Feb. 5

Threatening weather early in the morning turns to a torrential sweeping gale and rumor discussions and visits to town are the order of the day.

Bari, Italy; 22nd Replacement Battalion—Feb. 9

The first half of our rear echelon arrives here by truck and there are familiar tales of a cold and hectic trip across the Apennines.

Bari, Italy; 22nd Replacement Battalion—Feb. 11

About midday, we are told to ready our baggage for a move to the airfield. But as a heavy rain becomes more intense, plans are changed and we remain another night in this camp.

Our Squadron is complete once more as the last half of our rear echelon arrives by truck from Naples today.

1st Lt. George Vapaa, S/Sgt. Chester Lemaster and Cpl. Calvin Hauf are the first members of our Squadron to start back to the States on the new "rotation plan."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 12

As trucks become available early this morning, we hurl our personal belongings on them, climb aboard, and head for the airport on the other side of town. . . . "It will be good to settle down again."

Arriving at Bari Airdrome, we make for an adjacent, tree-studded olive grove and here set up our camp of pyramidal tents. . . . "It's good to hear the sound of planes again," comments one man as he pauses to watch the variety of American and British planes which just clear the tops of the trees to the east of camp.

Reluctantly do we lose many of our "old pilots" this day: Capt. Monthei, 1st Lt. Riemer, 2nd Lts. Flynt and Gordon to the 97th Bomb Group; 1st Lts. Black, Crookham, Dubois, Glanville, 2nd Lts. Cobb, Emmert, Gille, McDonald and Mallett to the 5th Wing. Also transferred: Capt. Arthur Hadler—to the 323 Service Group; S/Sgt. Orville Knudston—to the 9th Combat Camera Unit.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 13

Operations are commenced today down on the line and our Engineers, impatient to begin work again, look at the four P-38's so far assigned and silently hope for "just a few more planes."

Flying the first all-Squadron weather-reconnaissance mission here in Italy, Lt. Walter Pittman is airborne from our mud-rutted airfield early this morning and less than three hours later, returns to base after having successfully reported on the Rome area.

Operations and Intelligence take up stations "downtown" in the Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters building and there is much good-natured ribbing directed at the "khaki-collar" workers!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 14

More of our "old hands" leave the Squadron: Capts. Anstine, Howard, 1st Lts. Kingsbury, Potts, Weil, 2nd Lts. Clark, Parr and Steman—all to the 5th Wing at Foggia. Those few of our former flying officers who remain with the unit begin to learn the rudiments of weather-reconnaissance and conclude, "not as technical as I thought—quite a difference, though, from those wadi-hopping days

in North Africa!" In contrast, the present weather flights will be comparatively long (3-4 hours) and will become longer as the war progresses. Considerable flying at high altitudes (20 to 30,000 feet) will also demand more precise knowledge of instruments and navigation. Mission reports will also become more formal in that they will be coded and relayed back to 15th Air Force Headquarters by radio, thus considerably speeding up all subsequent Air Force activities for the day. . . . Two planes will usually be sent on each mission in order to provide mutual protection (some of our ships are un-armed) and to insure the accomplishment of the assignment in case one aircraft is prevented from going on. . . . Briefing will also take on a fuller aspect in that a session in the Squadron Operations Section (Bari) will be followed by another more technical period in the Air Force Weather Office, also in Bari. "De-briefing," following the mission, is also to be centered in the Weather Office.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 16

Each morning as we awake here in camp, we are greeted by smiling-faced, unabashed Italian women and their brood

Raddatz, Sgt. Kester, S/Sgt. Travers, Sgts. Simetkosky, Waters, Wetzel, S/Sgts. Roseberry and Lee—"a job to be proud of!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 22

After many low-ceilinged, rain-soaked days, the skies clear to a blue brilliance this morning and pensive faces all over camp, on the airfield and poking from office buildings in Bari are focussed on the large formations of "forts" which slide relentlessly northward. Previous to this, Lts. Lovejoy and Cordes, Capt. Schwab and Major Whitwell complete preliminary weather reconnaissance over the Klagenfurt, Adriatic and Turin sectors.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 23

In a radio speech tonight, Prime Minister Winston Churchill issues a sober admonition when he says, "I have given no guarantee or even held out any expectation that the year 1944 will see the end of the European war, nor have I given any guarantees any other way. This is no time for sorrow or rejoicing. It is a time for preparation, effort and resolve." He also notes that the Germans are un-



Arriving at Bari Airdrome, we set up our pyramid-tent camp area in a nearby olive orchard. . . . Some men dig foxholes. . . . Others begin work down on the line. . . . (Lower right) Intelligence-Operations makes its headquarters in the 15th Air Force building in the nearby city of Bari.

who dart around from tent to tent on their daily hunt for laundry. Poking expectant faces into a tent, they pipe shrilly, "allo—washy?" and repeat the question in varying tones until they receive a reply! Half out of his cot and dejectedly leaning on one elbow, a yawning soldier wails, "no privacy whatsoever!"

"New blood" is gratefully received as Sgts. Clifford Deaton and Walter Fey join the Engineering Section, Pvt. Carl Rorick the Supply Section.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 19

Rains today and intermittently since we have been here force us to seriously doubt the pre-war travel posters which always proclaimed a "sunny Italy." Operations go on, mud or no.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 20

As the last nail is powerfully hammered in and stoves set up under the canvas roof, we eat our night meal in the new Squadron-built mess hall. Among those who contributed their time and skill to this project are Sgt. Gerig, Cpl.

doubtedly preparing on French soil a new means of attack on Britain: "either by pilotless aircraft or possibly rockets, or both."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 25

M/Sgts. Dick Red and Percy Moon return today from a session before an Officers' Candidate Examining Board in Algiers; the tortuous "sweating out period" now begins.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 27

As heavy rains surge over the soggy camp area late this afternoon and continue long into the night, we watch with pained looks as the water seeps, sometimes rushes over our rock-floor tents. Grabbing frantically for barracks bags and clothing in the path of the flood, we hurl them on anything above the water level, then begin watching for new leaks. Aftermath of the storm: "gotta dig a trench around the tent tomorrow!"

A "special reconnaissance" mission is flown this early morning when Lts. Donald Clark and Eugene Churchill wing over the Knin area of Yugoslavia. Here the observer-photographer crammed "piggy-back" in Lt. Churchill's P-38

goes to work gathering notes in preparation for a subsequent mission during which weather personnel and equipment will be dropped by parachute. After passing over the main target, our pilots press a diversionary strafing attack on the Knin marshalling yards, then head for base. "Mission extremely successful."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 29

After a fortnight's operations during which we have provided pre-bombing coverage for many 15th Air Force raids in Italy, Germany, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Greece and France, we have come to class our operations as "comparatively meager," more of the "routine, milk-run" variety.

MARCH, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 2

Although each morning sees a further decrease in the number of Italians that hangs around the outskirts of our camp area, there remains one staunch attendant—the smiling, red-scarfed Italian laundry man who replies to our inevitable "quanta costa?" . . . "you pay me what you want—one pack cigarettes—what you want."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 3

A new zest in Lt. Kalinowski's bearing, a gleam in all our mechanics' eyes and a balm to the neglected status man's ego are the visible results of the assignment of three more P-38's to our Squadron. (Our total of operational aircraft now stands at an unimpressive seven.)

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 5

The novelty of our new status having worn off, the days here roll into one another and tend to have little separate identity. Come nightfall, guards on the line slowly walk their post, peer through the speckled darkness which seems to grow even denser before the dawn, and wish that the minutes would not crawl by so slowly. About four-thirty AM, the airfield becomes strangely dotted with moving

lights. The guttural splutter of a jeep breaks the quiet. The alert crew, sleep still in its swollen eyes, arrives to pre-flight the planes to be used on the morning's missions. An hour later, the headlights of a passenger-converted radio wagon pierce the darkness and come to a staring halt before the parachute tent. A pilot jumps from the car, sprints into Parachute and commences to don his electrically heated flying suit. Between conversation and dressing, he pokes his head out of the tent and comments, "raining again; not so good." Slowly, the sky in the east is fused with filtered light. The motors of the planes far out on the field whirl smoothly and the ships themselves are spotted flatly with the bright yellow-white glare from the headlights of a jeep. The planes' engines begin to whirl even more powerfully and then the hand of the crew chief squelches this power and there is a wavy whine and then silence. After bumping across the mud-rutted field in a jeep, the pilot climbs onto the wing of his ship, talks and jokes casually with his mechanics and then slides down into the cockpit. A few minutes later, on the precise dot of six o'clock, a deep, smooth droning comes rushing down the runway and the graceful form of a P-38 rises into the sky of a silver, rain-shredded dawn. Far over in camp, a few early risers dart out of the mess hall and stand, necks craning, as the pilot makes a complete circle around the field and then heads north. Another day has begun. . . .

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 7

As our camp lies steeped in the early hours of sleep tonight, a series of dull thuds fills the air, comes suddenly and with increasing nearness. Before many seconds have passed, we throw back the blankets and, clad mostly in underwear, stand outside watching the splintered fire of tracer bullets and listening to the powerful belch of our own heavy guns. As eyes peer and search into the darkness, a soft whirring pushes liquidly through the night above and then is lost again. The firing finally ceases. A short



Officer Personnel ~ 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron 3-5-44

Front Row L-R. Maj. E.O. Waters, Lt. G.A. Vetromile, Lt. E.E. Churchill, Maj. J.E. Whitwell, Capt. A.C. Schwab, Lt. D.C. Kenney.
Second Row L-R. Lts. W.R. Binker, D.A. Mc Caslin, Capt. W.A. Beason, Lts. R.P. Zirkle, D.L. Clark, G.E. Myers, R.E. Neill.
Third Row L-R. Lts. E.G. Ammerman, W.D. Pittman, R.C. Anderson, and J.S. Harris.
Fourth Row L-R. Lt. F.S. Kalinowski, Capt. W.L. Tyler, Lts. J.W. Tipton, A.F. Noel, H.S. Cook, W.M. Bechtold, K.H. Cora, and J.A. Walker.

while after the alert comes the complaint. "can't get back to sleep now!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 8

Encountering two single-engine enemy aircraft in the Treviso area of Northern Italy, Lt. Kenneth Cordes manages a successful evasion. As he puts it, "I dropped my belly tanks and just let go!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 9

The incessant drumming of rain and a puddle-strewn runway combine to ground all planes this day.

S/Sgt. F. B. Clark and Sgt. Joe Schmidling tell of a narrow escape early this morning when a skidding transport slides across the road just after their jeep passes over the end of the runway . . . "the first thing we knew about it was when we noticed the bulging eyes of the Italian guard at his post at the end of the runway. We looked back and on the part of the road we had just passed over, a short space behind us, was the stilled hulk of the transport!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 12

Before leaving for the U. S., our Commanding Officer, Major Joseph Whitwell, says in parting: "I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the Enlisted Men and Officers of the 154. The Squadron's excellent record is a direct reflection of the fine work and loyal spirit shown by you men. I am leaving with Capt. Finch to be transferred to tactical reconnaissance work at Meridian, Mississippi. Trust you will all soon be home again. Good-bye and good luck to everyone."

Our new Commanding Officer, Capt. Alfred C. Schwab Jr., calls a formation this afternoon and in his own affable manner affirms the value and importance of the work we are doing here, informs us that we might as well make ourselves as comfortable as possible, for "it looks like a long stay here!"

1st Lt. Gerard A. Vetromile today takes over the much abused name of "Doc" in our Squadron. "A friendly little guy," is how one man marks our new Medical Officer.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 13

A steady, plucking rain falls today and once again makes of our camp and airfield a muddy quagmire. Gathered around the radio in the Communications tent, a group of men listens to the day's war reports: "Soviet troops are only 30 miles from Roumania; on the Mediterranean front, rain and snow continue to hold up the inevitable attacks from the Anzio beachhead and Cassino area; American DAYLIGHT heavy bombers hit Berlin for the first time."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 14

Italian guards who stand watch just outside of our camp area look longingly at the American guard's warm clothing and in halting English-Italian proclaim—"Italy finito; America, Italy good." Walking post, this youthful Italian studies an American phrase book and shifts the copy between two gloveless, cold-cracked hands. "Cold," he says almost apologetically and, wrinkling up his forehead in a quizzical smile, walks on. . . .

This day, during which our planes provide pre-attack reconnaissance over Budapest, Cassino, Rome and Southern Germany, is representative of our activity during the two weeks past. With our pilots living and spending most of their time in Bari, missions lack much of a personal side brought about only by closeness of association. "You don't get much of a chance to get acquainted when you see them (the pilots) just a few minutes before and after a mission. It was better in the old days when we all lived in the same tent area."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 17

Each night a number of men amasses enough courage to

clop across the wind-blown camp area, shed overcoat and flying boots, then stand under the tent-enclosed, hot showers set up by Sgt. Gerig and Cpl. Raddatz. "They ought to get a medal for this hot water," proclaims one soldier enthusiastically and perhaps at the same time faintly remembering many cold sponge baths taken under bare grey skies and in the path of cutting winds or in the close confines of a pup tent!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 18

The big surprise of the day comes in the arrival of Percy Moon's going-home papers. Percy comments characteristically, "well, God fer damn!"

The first of our Squadron to make this trip, S/Sgt. Shehans, Sgt. Deaton, Cpls. Raddatz and Huey head for a seven day leave at the famed Isle of Capri.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 20

At 0830 AM this morning, Percy Moon, our veteran Engineering Line Chief, climbs into a transport here on the field and heads for Casablanca, thence home. Watching him leave, linemen comment, "old 'Perc' was always fair, that's one thing . . . they don't come any better than Percy."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 21

Increased operational activity is the order of the day as six missions wing out over Budapest, Vienna, Genoa, Milan, Florence, Klagenfurt, Munich, Nice, Sofia and Belgrade. Lts. Cordes, Pittman, Walker, Myers, Cook and Nelson complete all assignments without incident.

But a few hours before dusk tonight, we rush from the line, race for the camp shower, shoot back to our tents. Feverishly, we polish shoes, brush clothes and finally, after many critical self-inspections, are ready for our first Squadron dance here in Italy. By eight o'clock, WAC's from the 15th Air Force Headquarters and Italian signorinas line the sides of the small room at Number Nine Via di Rossi and under gala decorations, our eyes rove over the scene and beam approvingly. The music of the "Squadronaires" orchestra blasts forth suddenly and the dance is soon in full swing. . . . Gayly celebrating his birthday, "Shorty" Martin roams through the crowd, stops here and there to chuckle and cackle, "well, how we doin'?" then, cigar firmly in one corner of his mouth, passes on to another group. . . . Over in another corner, "Doc" Tanner and his WAC partner grin slyly at one another, then glide on in happy oblivion. . . . Not missing one dance if he can help it, Dick Red passes by wagging, "com'on, let's dance!" . . . In yet another part of the room, "Pop" Ross and Toscano make the floor boards quiver and shake as they uphold their reputation as THE jitterbugs of the 154th. . . . Later on in the evening, refreshments are announced and the crowd, as if with one common thought, turns in upon the serving counter where Buddy Diemer and Bill Roseberry attempt to hand out pastries and sandwiches to the many waving hands which continually thrust toward them. "These Italians must really be hungry," comments more than one soldier as he watches them come back again and again for cakes and coffee. . . . All too soon, however, the final piece is played and, genial and friendly and talking of dates to come, we mill from the hall into the absolute darkness of the blacked-out city.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 23

"It's raining mud!" And, as far-fetched as this sounds, mud is just what comes from rain-soaked skies most of the day and brings forth curses and vows of "well, I've seen everything now!" . . . From violently erupting Vesuvius on the far west side of Italy, this volcanic dust sifts across the breadth of the peninsula, spews down on Bari, and then sails far out to sea. All morning long, the skies hang a grey, heavy cloak down almost as far as the water's edge and only here do they break into a wan, yellow-purple glow crazily streaked with wind-swept feathers of grain-

like soot. At day's end, all of our planes, our tents and even our exposed skin and clothing are covered by that same rusty brown layer of dust from Vesuvius. We curse and bite down disgustedly on the sifting dirt—"raining mud! Well, I'll be damned!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 25

Shaking and quaking, Lt. Myers takes an "unscheduled flight" today as he checks out Lt. McFarland on the P-38. Here is the story from a disinterested observer: "The instructor (Lt. Myers) had just finished giving last minute pointers to the novice (Lt. McFarland). Lt. Myers had even closed the canopy and was preparing to jump down from the wing. Just then, Lt. McFarland pushed forward on the throttle and the passenger, clinging for dear life to the stepway, was breezily taxied down the runway at a mere sixty miles an hour! Finally reaching the end of the strip, the plane mercifully came to a halt and off hopped a shaky Lt. Myers, only to receive a surprisingly generous squirting of cold gas all over his person!" . . . "And that," comment men who hear this "typical" tale, "is the latest story on 'Mutt and Jeff'!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 27

In heavy winds which have not abated since yesterday but risen in wailing intensity, linemen, their hands red and brittle from the stinging, fitful cold, again send our planes into the air, this time to Marseilles, Milan, Turin and Vienna.

It is close to 10:30 PM when the second showing of "Andy Hardy's Double Life" comes to an end and the whole camp, as if guided by an unseen finger, filters from the mess-hall theatre and from warm tents and heads for the campside Red Cross. A large throng is already gathered in the main room of this building for our 18-months-over-seas get-together. Milling around and exchanging jokes and opinions is a spiritedly optimistic Lt. Kelsey ("yes, sir, in a few months I expect to see the 154 go home all together; a few months home and then out to China or the South Pacific!") . . . In a sweep of the room, eyes fall on many animated scenes: Fred Stefano, Forrest Clark, Phil Seligman, Lonnie Pearson, Walter Fey, Harry Schelling-burger, "Pop" Ross, Russell Brossman, John Fischer and Manuel Lean raising their voices lustily to the accompaniment of Lt. Kalinowski's organ-swing; "Si" Wilson handing out cherry brandy and wines with an expert and somewhat reminiscent air; Orville Stolnack and Tommy Taylor supplying the long coffee and doughnut line; Tom Stone challenging Major Waters to a game of ping pong; Capt. Adell in close-headed conversation with his Communications men; soldiers toasting one another over the din of spirited, husky laughter. Come the hour of midnight, however, and the final toast is drunk and we begin to stream back across the rutted road to camp. Soon, our camp settles down to its usual nighttime silence and from afar we hear a wind-dulled shout, "I can't find my God damned tent!" Hearing this, men in many a tent smile broadly in the darkness, then totally surrender to the accustomed claims of sleep. . . .

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 28

On the early morning mission to Verona, Lt. Delphon

Kenney is jumped by enemy fighters in the Rimini-Ancona sector and at day's end has not returned to base.

Lts. Churchill and Lovejoy, S/Sgt. Shehans, Sgt. Deaton, Cpls. Raddatz and Huey all return from the Ise of Capri Rest Camp—"a swell time; expensive, but worth it!"

A spirited line before the PX tent tonight cranes impatiently and watches intently to see if the beer issue (one bottle of Italian brew) will hold out until the end. Later on tonight, we uncork the bottles and pronounce our first beer in a long time "pretty good!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 29

Our second loss within as many days is recorded when Lt. Arthur Noel, jumped by an estimated five FW-190's in the Rome area, does not return to base.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 30

Our support to 15th Air Force heavy bomber operations continues on an ever more co-ordinated scale and even before our first mission to Sofia, Bulgaria, is down on the field, the "heavies" are on their way to this target.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 31

In a busy day's operations during which four weather-recon. missions are dispatched to Bucharest, Salzburg, Southern Germany and Budapest, Lt. Robert Zirkle scores a "destroyed" on one of the two ME-109's which jump him in Northern Italy. In Lt. Zirkle's own words . . . "one of these enemy planes avoided combat but the second attacked head on. Noticing that the tracers from the ME were passing below me, I raised the nose of my plane to keep above his fire. As the ME approached, I stalled my ship and dropped down so that one of my belly tanks hit him. The enemy plane spun out of sight and I saw a parachute open. . . ."

On the last mission of the day, a weather-reconnaissance to Budapest, Lt. Walter Pittman obtains photographic coverage along the route and directly over the target, thus inaugurates the use of the K-24 aerial camera, modified and installed by Squadron Photo and Engineering personnel.

APRIL, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 1

Adding that "third rocker" to their collection, Robbie W. Barham, Julian R. Stires, and Otis E. Taylor confirm their promotion to MASTER/SERGEANT this day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 3

Closely co-ordinated with our morning coverage of Budapest is this afternoon's 15th Air Force bomber attack on this same target, significantly the first Allied raid of the war on the Hungarian capital.

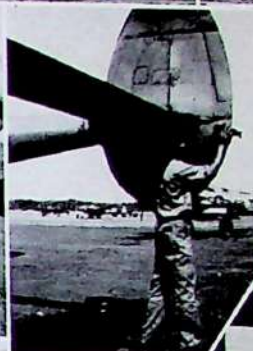
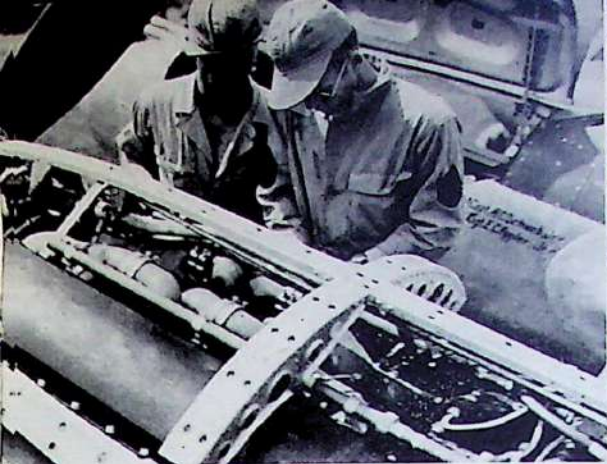
Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 4

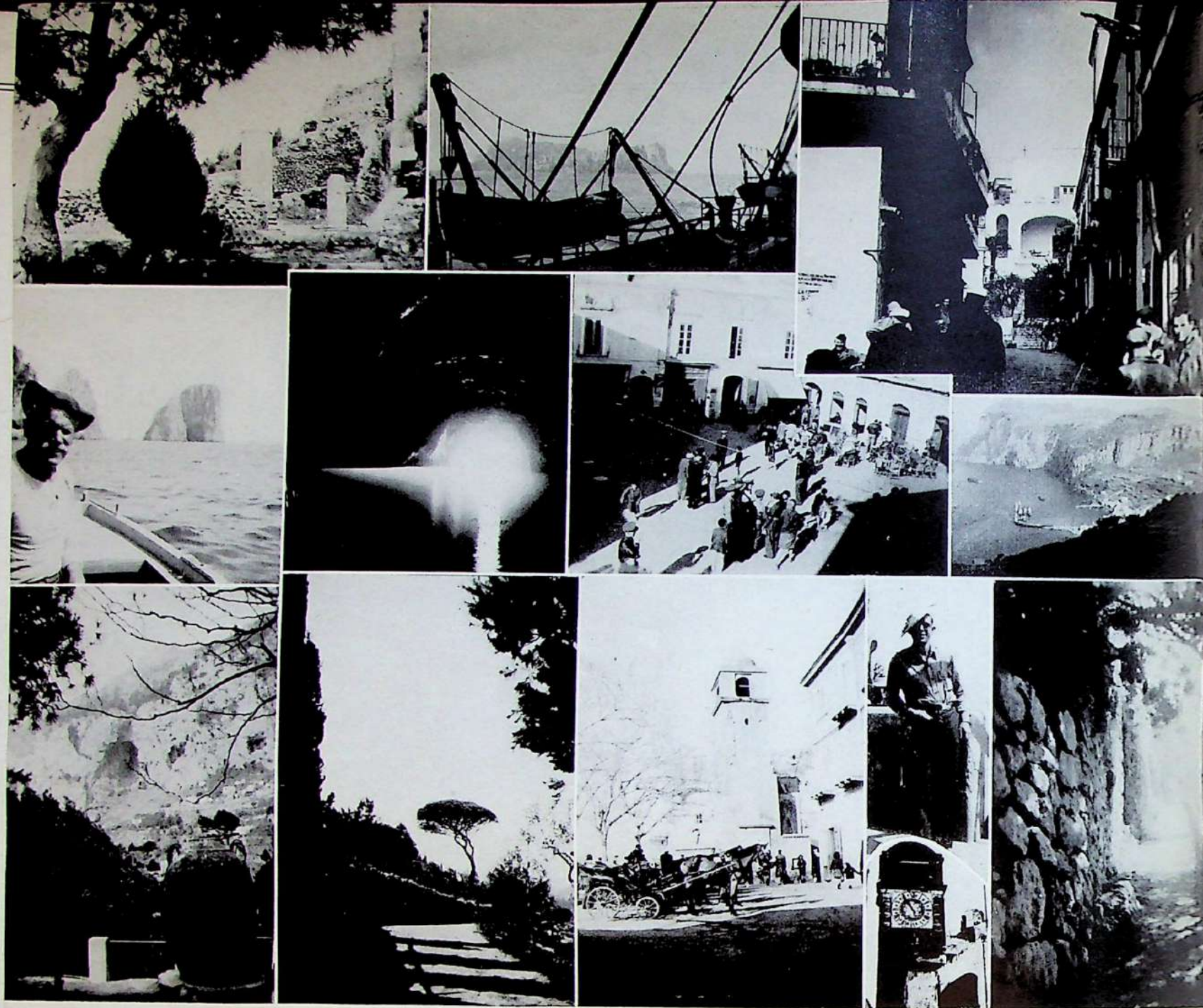
Once again our planes precede an initial U. S. bomber raid on a European target, this time on the Roumanian capital, Bucharest. . . . Of his first weather mission in the Italian theatre, our veteran pilot, Lt. Verne Kelsey, says, "it's mighty lonesome up there for so many hours at a stretch."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 5

Outstanding in the day's assignments successfully com-

DOWN ON THE LINE (ENGINEERING). . . . An engine check-up is made by Leo Tunnell and Edward Appler. . . . Warren Weeks puts the finishing touches on one of his popular plane-tiles. . . . A parachute is repaired by Albert Raper and Thomas Schaffner. . . . Engineering's Line Chief, Dick Red, and Section Officer, Capt. Francis Kalinowski. . . . Flight Chiefs: James Tanner, Dick Red, Otis Taylor, Robert Stires. . . . Cleaning up an oil-spattered plane is no easy job (Thomas Stone). . . . The parachute jeep waits for a mission-returned pilot. . . . Francis Stevens and Thomas Harness work just outside the new all-weather hood. . . . Dick Red installs a new hot air tube. . . . The Tech-Supply tent is "the storehouse for almost everything." . . . Scene of an engine change. . . . Robert Lynch before his efficient Battery Shop. . . . Closer view of an engine change (Richard Fichtner and Jack Trier). . . . Gas-truck crew: Donald Still, George Shirutis, Clair Gibbons, George Crowell. . . . (Below) Fred Stefano and Orville Stolnack at work in the Engineering Office. . . . "Fill 'er up!" says the crew chief to George Crowell and Joseph Lynch. . . . (Below) Line-up of Squadron aircraft, July, 1944. . . . Tech-Supply crew: Jack Finn, Carl Rorick, and Lloyd ("Daddy") Dallas.





THE ISLE OF CAPRI. . . . A section in the ruins of the ancient castle of the Emperor Tiberius. . . . "Capri looks like a barren rock from the sea." . . . GI's find its hillbound town filled with winding streets and hundreds of shops. . . . "Antonio" asks, "wanna go blue grotto?" . . . Interior of the Blue Grotto. . . . The Central Square in the town of Capri is the popular meeting spot. . . . Panorama from one end of the island. . . . Vista of Caprian countryside. . . . An inviting path and a classic umbrella tree set the mood. . . . Just off the main Square, carriages and their drivers wait expectantly. . . . John Fischer in holiday garb! . . . (Below) The ancient clock on the bell-tower in Capri. . . . A shaded path is the epitome of Capri's peace, quiet and beauty.

pleted is that of supplying pre-attack reconnaissance for the first 15th Air Force, Italy-based bomber attack on the Ploesti, Roumania, Oil Refineries. Pilots: Lts. Cook, Tipton, Lovejoy and Capt. Slagle.

The swish of horeshoes cleaving the stilled air, and landing with a resounding clank against metal posts, the jeering and friendly by-play of the ever-excited volley ball players, the sight of open tents wherein sit or lay soldiers reading, writing, smoking or just talking are all unmistakable American reactions as the nights bring forth a new mildness and warmth. "Summer is not far off."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 8

The first bottle of ICE COLD COCA COLA in 18 months is issued by our PX tonight and many soldiers turn connoisseurs, savor each drop and then fondly hold the empty bottle long afterward!

For the second night running, the concerted booming and thudding of heavy guns bring us brutally out of an early

sleep and the sky is filled with tracers and exploding shells reminiscent of the orange-yellow shredded curtain which cut the skies in Algiers over a year ago. The guns soon begin to taper off, cough grudgingly, then cease their rumbling. "Enough's enough," puts forth one soldier as he flops back on his cot and pulls the covers up over his head.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 9

As the light of day slowly fills the sky of this dull grey Easter Sunday morning, a small group of soldiers gathers at the open-air amphitheatre beside camp and marks the day with simple but appropriate church services. At the conclusion of the impressive service, the group slowly breaks up; some men head for the line, others for camp. "Just another day."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 11

The second group of Capri visitors (M/Sgt. Taylor, S/Sgt. Fischer, Sgt. Gillies and Cpl. Rodgers) returns today

by B-25 and is enthusiastic about this trip. "The island is an amazing one—small, compact, yet a place where anyone with any interest, could have a good time. It helps, though, if you have plenty of money. The island itself offers many sights for those who are in such a mood. There is the 'finicolare,' the local version of the 'Toonerville trolley,' which runs up the mountainside to the little town of Capri. Hundreds of small shops outside of which anxious tradesmen and women stand and ask of passers by, 'allo, want to buy some—thing? The two Americanized bars where, come nightfall, soldiers gather together and, in a haze of smoke and under a misty glare of shaded artificial lights, dance, drink and make merry with local, buxom, knowing-eyed signorinas. The many historical spots—the castle of Tiberius; the Certosa (convent) dating back to the year 1300; the famous baths of Tiberius; the Blue Grotto with its dripping, solid rock walls and almost phosphorescent blue-shimmering waters; the Piccola Marina with its white pebbled beach and landing place for small boats. I guess the best aspect of the whole trip to Capri is the absolute change which the island offers—beds with mattresses and sheets; meals promptly and attractively served; the freedom to come and go as you please; the sense of timelessness; the very far away aspect of the war. I guess that is what gets you at Capri."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 12

As during the past weeks, our pilots who fly daily weather missions deep into France, Germany, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Roumania note an increase in the number of enemy aircraft patrolling the skies. Of two enemy planes sighted over the Vienna area this day, Lts. Cook and Walker report, "we saw them trailing us, but that's the closest we ever let them get!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 13

Much construction work takes place in camp on these spring-heralding days and we extend and convert tents to all shapes and sizes. Many of these homes are examples of marked ingenuity—with separate reading and writing rooms, hand-made bookcases, wash stands, tables and envied displays of pin-up girls saturating every blank space.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 15

Crafty soldiers recognize the beer cases stacked up before Supply late today and even before supper is half over are already in line before the PX tent. To one man the Supply Sergeant wails, "but you got some beer last week; one issue a man every other week!" And the sheepish answer comes, "o.k., o.k.; there's no harm in trying!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 16

A bawdy, lusty group of Italian singers, dancers, tight-rope walkers, jugglers and magicians keeps our large American, British, Yugoslav and Italian soldier audience well amused tonight and the universal comment is "good entertainment!" After this show, we filter back to our tents, sit around writing, reading, listening to the soft portable-organ music which comes from Lt. Kalinowski's tent, talk of the coming invasion, of the war in general, of the day's events on the line, or of home. . . .

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 17

Crammed into the mess hall tonight, we watch apprehensively as Capt. Anderson stands up to read the Articles of War. ("We'll be here an hour or more; wait and see!") But fifteen minutes later, after a brief but "comprehensive" scanning of this book, we are told, "well, I guess that's all!" Still pondering on this, the shortest reading yet, we leave the mess hall in wonder and amazement. "Never thought I'd see the day!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 18

Although many Italian civilians are provided with work

and food by our Squadron, the many others (including Italian soldiers) who gather near our mess hall at every meal and gratefully accept any scraps left in our mess kits or forage in the garbage cans are sober reminders that all is not well with many people here in Italy.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 19

An "invasion map" of Europe mounted on the wall of our downtown Bari War Room presents an ever present inducement for long pondering and speculation . . . "it's bound to come soon . . . no, I think it's been indefinitely postponed . . . Churchill does not want the invasion; it is Stalin who is putting on the pressure . . . this month . . . May . . . mid-June . . . no invasion at all."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 22

Even before supper tonight, a quartet of patient English "Tommys" occupies the first row of stone benches at our campside amphitheatre and waits with stolid calm for the passing of the two hours before the Marlene Dietrich show is scheduled to begin. Fully an hour before starting time, we fill most of the available seating space, read, play cards, or just speculate in no uncertain terms on what Dietrich will be like. Finally, the show begins. After a side-splitting dialogue introduction by the comedian, Danny Thomas, the star herself comes forth—pale, thin, clad in a gold-spangled "glamor dress," frigid, chalk face, looking over the crowd with a languorous stare. Following her passive mind reading routine, Marlene gives over to Danny Thomas once more. He, in turn, introduces Lynn Mayberry (eccentric whistling dancer who gives fellow-stater, Buddy Diemer, a thorough mauling on the stage) and Milton Frome, expansive-gesturing, he-man baritone. Marlene appears twice more, singing huskily, playing the musical saw (!) and acting a torrid love scene with the impromptu, giggling star of the night, Buddy Diemer!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 24

Favorable route and target weather reports on our two missions over Bucharest, Budapest and Southern Czechoslovakia (Lts. Cook, Fox, Myers, and McFarland) are the go-ahead signal for hundreds of bombers to stir up massive, long-settling clouds of sifting dust on many fields here in Southern Italy and later in the day drone over the targets of Bucharest, Ploesti and Belgrade.

The entire Engineering Section and all Squadron members gladly spread the news: Francis S. Kalinowski promoted to CAPTAIN.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 26

Watching Lt. Walker's ship come limping in on the field from a mission to Northern Italy, our Engineers resignedly go about the task of pulling out the cleat-track and staging equipment and mentally set themselves for the eighteenth engine change in less than three months' time.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 27

Increasingly grey, overcast skies receive our two missions this morning and Vienna and Milan are the objectives of Lts. Cook, Fox, Myers and McFarland. . . . Returning from the latter target, our pilots are forced to fly on instruments as a sifting white haze cuts to within 100 yards of the planes. During this flight, Lt. Fox radios to Lt. Cook—"turning back . . . turning back"—makes his 180 degree turn and disappears into the swirling haze. At day's end, Lt. Fox has not been heard from and late in the afternoon, Lts. Cook and Honeycutt are up on a voluntary search mission. "No trace," is the flat-toned report as they return at dusk.

Late tonight, the BBC staidly announces—"as of midnight tonight no one may leave the United Kingdom without a special pass; at this time Britain becomes a sealed fortress."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 28

Returning from the Isle of Capri Rest Camp, T/Sgt. O'Quin, S/Sgt. Roseberry, Sgts. Geekie and Abernethy throttle none of their enthusiasm. "To me," says Bill Roseberry, "Capri was like a dream and yet very real and so different that war seemed distant and unimportant. My old carriage driver once said, 'two paradise—Capri and heaven.' This was by far the nearest thing to paradise I have known for nineteen months!" . . . Sgt. Abernethy waxes poetic:

"A ride 'cross the mountains in a B-25 to the shores of Naples Bay,

And there on the horizon floated Capri on that unforgettable day.

(Once Ashore) I called for a rig, a be-ribboned horse, a driver in full costume,

A wedding it was to all things gay and I was a capable groom.

We spent a quiet evening, just a few in a hotel bar.

The humor was fast and plenty, everyone seeming on par.

We went for a walk next morning and met 'Antonio' on the way.

'You wanna go blue grotto? It's a vera nica day!'

We refused Antonio's offer, but promised to return.

There were things more fundamental for which my heart did yearn.

Men die young and men die old but none will ever be

As content in life or serene in death as those who have been to Capri!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 29

"Well, Kenney, you old b——d!" Thus Lt. Delphon Kenney, given up as missing after his failure to return from a mission over a month ago, is welcomed back to the Squadron. Tanned and much thinner, he tells his story. . . . "The day I went down, three ME-109's intercepted me off Ancona point. I tried to let go both my belly tanks but the left one wouldn't release. I turned in toward the Yugoslav coast, called in my interception and told them I would go on if I could. Thought maybe I could make Steyr. When I got to Klagenfurt, and looked in the mirror, there they were, right on my tail. They had me boxed in. I saw 20mm shells bursting two-thirds of the way to me, but I was still out of range and for ten to twelve minutes led all three of them. Finally, one plane came up on my left, dipped his wing, as they do when they go in on the bombers. I figured on his third dip he'd attack, so I broke into him, stalled and dove for the low overcast. Somehow, he hit the top of my canopy and the bottom of the gondola and split my helmet and head. Scared the p—— out of me! I dove, feathered the prop and climbed out on the wing and jumped off. The plane was on fire and melting even then. From then on, the Major in A-2 won't let me say. I'll say one thing about Yugoslavia, though. Your meals don't come regular and there are entirely too many Germans." Picking at his GI uniform (pants, field jacket, and flight cap) he asks, "well, what kind of a private do I make? . . . The women over there? Man, do they come in big sizes! On one 16-hour march, they carried 40 to 50 pound packs without stopping. They're fighting this war for keeps! I saw strafing in the small towns. No fun. I was with Gordon (Lt. Gordon, former Squadron pilot) on the trip back. He was sick; fever, I guess . . . I've really had the experience, I can tell you!"

Just after dusk tonight, our Supply men, John Sigler, "Mama" Fischer, William Salter, Lonnie Pearson and Buddy Diemer, hold a party in the cozy confines of their tent for

"Shorty" Martin, due to leave for home the middle of next month. After what Buddy Diemer marks a "real meal and all the fixins," cigars are passed around and all lean back and relax in a glow of contented calm.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 30

Although the skies are clotted with grey thunderheads and the land and seas are stirred up by a demented, wailing wind, three planes are airborne to Northern Italy, Yugoslavia and Roumania. Our pilots, Lts. Myers, Kelsey and Cordes, complete these missions without incident.

Cpl. Max Goldberg of our Medics tells of a harried night of ambulance duty here on the airdrome. "You just settle down to get some sleep and about midnight a couple of planes land and you are busy transferring Yugoslav wounded to our ambulance and rushing them to the hospital. On the way you try to make conversation using your hands (parlez-vous francais? . . . cappish Italian?), but this usually fails and we continue on in silence."

MAY, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 1

Thin and quiet after his escape from Yugoslav enemy-held territory, former Squadron pilot Lt. Leo Gordon visits with us and tells some of his experiences. "It was just one big bundle of nerves over there. Hiding with friendly Partisans from the Germans, we'd hear a sound and everyone would be up. . . . 2,000 Germans came in and took a town while we were still in it. They bombed us, strafed us, shelled us; the people couldn't do anything but sit there—women, kids and men would just sit there and scream. That's when you really begin to hate the Germans."

Another group is Capri-bound this day: S/Sgt. Crowell, Sgts. Skuba, Wm. Smith, Cpl. Wojcik and Pfc. McCullough.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 3

Those who visit the small seaside town of Molfetta bring back interesting tales of much construction and building. "Landing barges and supply barges stored in lines along the waterfront. Small boats being loaded with hand grenades, bombs, small-arms ammunition for the Yugoslav Partisans. The very sounds around the waterfront, the chorus of blunt hammering and the far away, air-softened scratch and bang of loading are in themselves like the steady, relentless music of a foreboding overture."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 4

Coverage of Skoplje, Bucharest and Southern Germany by Lts. Cordes, Walker, Dinker, Nelson and Hopkins is carried out without incident during the day, while the sound of the "heavies" on their way northward shreds the air with its driving thunder. A step-up in the air offensive is felt by all who watch and listen.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 5

Even before breakfast this morning, a thundering of heavy guns rends the air and we wake indignantly to the sound of the air raid siren rolling wavily over the area. At once all camp becomes alive and a voice proclaims, "there he is, circling overhead; see the vapor trail." The guns put forth a more concerted booming and then wane again. Soon, the all-clear comes. "For once," gloats an early riser, "everyone got up for breakfast!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 7

Almost any conversation on the line and in camp eventually leads to the topic of rotation of personnel and then the questions begin to fly. "Why can't they make it known how this rotation works? How come all the secrecy? Almost every other outfit is sending men home, and regularly." Into these discussions there creeps a martyred attitude, but more often the calibre of thinking is marked only by a sincere desire to know all the facts.



MEMORIAL DAY ALL-STAR SOFTBALL GAME (MAY 30, 1944). . . . Bill Roseberry at bat. . . Squadron all-star players: (front) Charles White, Charles Girola, William Roseberry, (rear) Lts. Edward Ammerman, Verne Kelsey and Clayton Hobbs, and Orville Stalnack (manager). . . "Peanuts, 'cokes', 'n hot dogs" add an American touch to the ball game.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 8

S/Sgt. Charlie Hill today realizes an ambition as he leaves the Squadron for duties as a ball-turret gunner with the 97th Bomb Group.

Piercing the dulled torpor of the heat-charged afternoon comes the whine of the air raid siren. Almost at once, Italian workers in camp rush to shelter and all the while cast backward glances at the sky and harbor to the east. Those of us on the line are ordered back to camp and told to get helmet, gun and gas mask and disperse in the orchard area to the side of camp. Thus clumsily weighted down, we clomp through camp and, beaded with sweat, flop down under a tree and wait. The deep, dull thud of gunfire shakes the stilled air and we look up passively and scan the skies. A single droning comes and goes and is broken only by the unsteady air currents. After what seems an interminable period of waiting, during which we are baked by the glaring sun, we gratefully hear the all-clear and shuffle back to camp and to the line where work begins once more.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 9

"Monotonous as hell!" Thus the men who finish the 16-day guard trick here on our airbase aptly express themselves.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 10

Mosquito bars over every cot—signs along the road, "USE HEADNETS AND MOSQUITO CREAM"—and, more appealing, "BATHING BEACH AHEAD" are all pointed reminders that our second summer overseas is almost upon us.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 11

The word "rotation" comes to life today as T/Sgt. Howard ("Shorty") Martin and Sgt. Andrew Orsini are off to the 22nd Replacement Center, there to await orders which will take them home.

The news that "the Crimea is entirely in Russian hands" comes as a leader of great events. Here in Italy, we note lumbering tanks rolling over the roads to the north and materiel stores which grow ever larger. The all-out Allied air offensive from England goes into its 26th consecutive day and the German propaganda reflects an uncertain jitteriness. "Midge," German propaganda and successor to "Axis Sally," warns us over the German radio of the coming invasion: "remember, American soldiers" (all this in a sarcastic, cloying sweetness) "you started it. But here's a musical number anyway. It's entitled, 'I've Got A Feeling You're Fooling!'"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 13

The radio and various British, Italian and American newspapers excitedly report the launching of a new large-scale Allied offensive on the Western front here in Italy. In support of this effort, our planes reconnoiter Northern Italy and the bombers rise to a new peak of tactical and strategic intensity as they hurl down almost 2,000 tons of

bombs on enemy-held communication targets just ahead of Allied troops. We wait for the first all-important details.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 14

Heading for the 22nd Replacement Center and then USA-bound, Sgt. Virgil Steele and Pvt. Alvin Hafley leave our Squadron today after 22 months overseas.

The center of a peppering barrage of questions, former Squadron member Joe Rice visits from tent to tent tonight and tells many a harried account of experiences as aerial gunner on raids over enemy territory. "Some missions I really sweated out and others didn't even bother me." His face lined and his eyes telling of an inward weariness, he adds, "the way I figure it, the more Germans you kill now, the less you'll have to kill in 20 years."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 16

Just before noon today, the quiet, leisurely atmosphere of Operations-Intelligence is suddenly broken by the electric word, "Mission!" Following a plotting of courses, a careful setting up of code tables, a marking of maps of the areas to be covered, and a breakneck ride to the airfield, six smooth-droning planes take to the air and Lts. Dinker, Hobbs, Cook, Conger, Walker and McFarland are on their way to Bucharest, Munich and Vienna.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 18

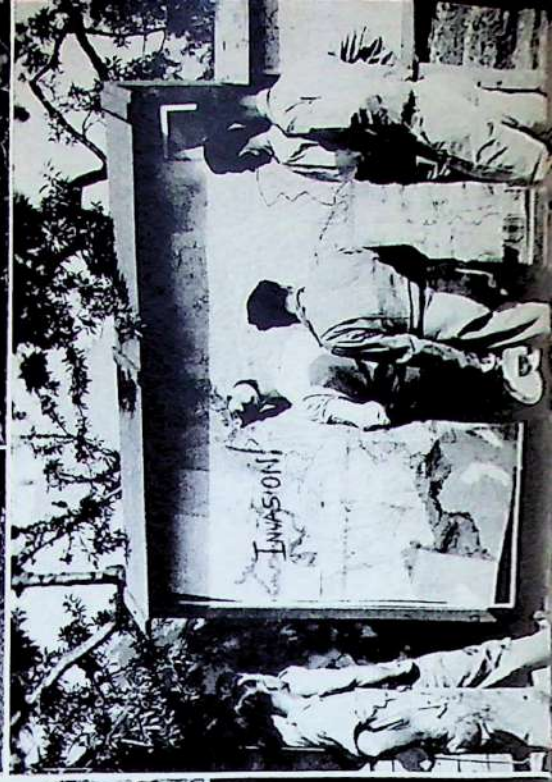
Late today, the German radio solemnly announces the news: "the heretofore impregnable fortress of Cassino has been evacuated by Axis forces." All along the line in Italy, Allied troops go forward in a steady flow. We watch endless convoys of trucks and tanks roll along the roads leading to the front lines, note streams of boxcars trundling northwards. "The forgotten front" is in the news again.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 20

In "Mama" Stoppani's downtown Bari dining room tonight, eight men gather together and raise their glasses in a spirited toast—"happy birthday, Orr!" Thus begins the gala birthday feast in honor of Engineering's "old hand," S/Sgt. Orville Stalnack. Upon a table splashed with red roses, course after course is served until Edwin Tole, Leo Tunnell, Thomas Taylor, Fred Stefano, Harold Steed, Francis Stevens and Fred Gillies find that even the silverware has become noticeably heavier! . . . "You only want a little bit?" asks "Mama" Stoppani as she playfully extends a plate of succulent roast beef to Fred Stefano. A throaty chuckle and a protesting "now, Mama!" from "Stef" and the whole table shakes with laughter! . . . Almost three hours later, this well-padded octet climbs aboard the returning truck and repeatedly comments, "what a night, what a night!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 24

Shading our eyes against the slanting rays of the early morning sun, we watch silver-gleaming B-24's roar over our camp. Formation after formation come over the field, wheel into position and then head north. . . . Preceding



these bomber attacks, two dawn missions (Lts. Cook, Cordes, Dinker and Hobbs) are up over Vienna and Bolzano. Later in the day, Lt. Kelsey and Capt. Schwab provide Vienna with its second coverage.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 25

Grinning widely and the object of many "well, congratulations, old boy!", Gerard A. ("Doc") Vetromile spiritedly receives the news of his promotion to CAPTAIN this day.

The linking-up of the Anzio Beachhead forces with the main Allied Armies here in Italy comes as the big event of the day. "Now watch them go!"

Over here in Italy and attached to the 97th Bomb Group, S/Sgt. Jack Russell, Sgts. Beke, Zynda, Cpl. Yopp and Pfc. Tyree fall into our chow line tonight and afterwards visit around camp and renew old times. "Visited Nouvion just a few days ago," says Jack Russell. "Everything is just about the same—Odette's and Louise's. They really miss us. Remember those chicken dinners!"

Leaving the field late this afternoon, two planes (Lts. Cook and Hobbs) slip off as quietly as rabid speculation will allow and later land on the Island of Corsica (Ajaccio). Here they will remain until tomorrow morning when they will take off at dawn to cover targets in Southern France. Thus, if all goes well, the bombers will have weather reports and be on their way to this far distant target at an unprecedented early morning hour.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 26

With the morning still young, our two dawn missions to Lyons, France (covered from Corsica as the advanced landing ground) and Leghorn-Rome are down at base with Lts. Cook, Hobbs, Myers and McFarland reporting, "routine mission."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 28

Another day comes to a close and although all operations have ceased and the line is almost deserted, the planes, sleek and in their arrow forms a feeling of flight, some catching an orange glow from the salmon-fused sky, hold a promise of excitement, a subtle expectancy, a hint of impending movement. A crew chief stands watching far out on the field as a novice-mechanic taxis his plane for the first time. The plane stirs up great whirling clouds of thin, amber dust, wheels around and comes to a purring halt. "Did pretty well that time," comments the crew chief to the lanky mechanic. . . . Night comes on and with it a rising in the wind, a silver-vent sky. A bright orange moon fills out its crescent form in the ever-darkening skies. The lights from ships in the busy harbor to the east spike the night with yellow splinters. The long, far-reaching beam of the harbor lighthouse pierces out over the dark haze which is the sea, then fades off again. Bluish-silver searchlight rays wave loosely, almost caressingly over the skies of night, dramatically backlight the many forms of planes on the field. . . . Guards are posted. Relieved. Posted. . . . In camp, a soldier is awakened, asks, "three o'clock already?", then crawls from his cot, pulls on coveralls and a jacket, grabs his carbine and heads for the line. Another soldier follows. Another and another. Lights wink on in the mess hall. Cooks wearily slip into the routine once more. . . . Downtown in Bari, pilots are shaken out of sleep by an Operations man; a few minutes later they are being rushed

by command car toward the airdrome. Soon, they are sitting in the mess hall, gulping down breakfast of hotcakes, joking and laughing and commenting upon the weather and the ship they will fly this morning. . . . The night slowly begins to feel the irresistible fusion of the day. Now down on the line, pilots fasten on high altitude clothing, helmet, boots and gloves. The sound of engines being pre-flighted fills the air and then breaks off, leaving a strange, portending silence. Two planes wait at the end of the runway for the hour of the scheduled take-off. Radios are checked with men in the radio shop. . . . Now the east puts forth a glowing smile, begins to show the imminent promise of the dawn. One following the other, the planes roar down the runway, soon push through the air above camp. With a liquid smoothness, they wheel north and head for their targets. Crew chiefs, mechanics, radio men, armorers—all watch the plane until it is safely away, then climb aboard a truck and head for the mess hall—"really looking forward to that cup of coffee this morning!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 29

With the climax of a "pretty fair" USO show, the movie for the night flashes on the outdoor amphitheatre screen. . . . Two reels lay to one side and the third and last is watched carefully by the projector operator. Suddenly, heavy guns are heard; large blobs of arching fire burst forth in the blue-black sky. Even before the movie machine is stilled, we streak from the amphitheatre. Footfalls and questioning voices break the silence and our camp is a mass of running soldiery. "Shut off your lights! Put 'em out!" The PE is quickly flicked off. The red warning blinker on the airport tower folds into nothingness. Even as the cascading fire is at its height, the hesitant air raid siren bursts forth. "Just now they're sounding the warning," comments one man comically. After a short period, the firing ceases and a time of watchful waiting follows. The all-clear comes. Eye-blinding lights switch on in our tents and many return to the movie. And then, once again, the guns become alive, this time with even a more bristling, thundering emphasis. A wavy drone sounds above our camp. A flash blots the blue-black sky with eerie yellow—"must be a flash bomb for taking photographs." The second flash is seen near the entrance to Bari Harbor. After another short period of thudding intensity, the firing wanes, then cuts off entirely. Again comes the high wail of the all-clear. Only the ineffectual crack of a single rifle or the steady rip of a lone machine gun cuts the silence. Warily some men return to the movie to see the finish of the film—"had to see him eat that pork chop, that's all!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 30

The Vienna, Pola and Zagreb areas are the targets of Lts. Myers, McFarland, Capt. Schwab and Lt. Hobbs this day. Fifteenth Air Force bomber assaults are later aimed at these same points and we thus give almost tactical support to the now critical situation of the Partisan armies in Northwestern Yugoslavia.

Many in our Squadron head late this afternoon for the seaside athletic field near Bari where the Memorial Day All-Stars Softball game is to be held. As part of an "aerial circus" and prelude to the game, transports drone above the field. From our own unit, Capt. Kelsey, Lts. Cook

(March 21, 1944) First Squadron Dance in Italy. In the foreground are Squadron members Bowers, Wright and Travers. . . . Capt. Eugene Churchill (Operations Officer) and Major Edwin Waters (Intelligence Officer) in our downtown Bari office. . . . (March 27, 1944) Some close harmonizing at our 18-months-overseas get-together. Around the photo: Lonnie Pearson, ———, Walter Fey, Harry Schellingburger, Russell Brossman, Phil Seligman, John Fischer, "Pop" Ross and Manuel Lean. Capt. Francis Kalinowski (seated) is at the portable organ. . . . (April 1, 1944) Lt. Robert Zirkle (center), claimant of one ME-109 destroyed, shows Lt. Myers, Capt. Schwab, Lt. Lovejoy and Capt. Churchill how it was done! . . . (April 9, 1944) Easter services at the Red Cross amphitheatre. . . . (March 23, 1944) A "rain of dirt" from erupting Mt. Vesuvius covers our planes down on the line. . . . (Below) Percy Moon (far right) just before he leaves for the U. S. (March 20, 1944). . . . (June 6, 1944) An air-alert is called and we wait near the foxholes to the rear of camp. . . . (March 23, 1944) Mt. Vesuvius in eruption. . . . (April 8, 1944) We receive our first "cokes" overseas. . . . (June 6, 1944) News of the Allied Invasion of Northern France reaches camp.

and Cordes sweep through the skies in silver-gleaming P-38's and gain the open-mouthed admiration of all. After this display, the game begins. Representing our Squadron softball teams, Bill Roseberry, Charles Girola, Charles White, Capt. Kelsey, Lts. Clayton Hobbs and Edward Ammerman turn in outstanding individual performances. A hearty rooter on the sidelines is Orville Stolnack, popular choice as coach of the "American League" All-Stars. . . . The second inning is in progress. All eyes are focussed on the playing field. Transports wing idly over the seashore. And then, suddenly, a soft whoomph comes from the skies above. Sheets of brilliant orange flame shoot upwards and great, slow-eddy bunches of black-grey smoke rise from the spot where two transports met in mid air. . . . Soldiers returning to camp find that their accounts of the game are continually overshadowed by the aerial accident. . . . "I guess no one got out. Not a one."

A doubling of the guard on the airfield tonight and anticipation is high that "Jerry" will pay a return visit after his flash bomb trip last night. One by one, lights in camp switch off. Midnight comes and goes and only the familiar sounds of British-manned transports break the night stillness. . . .

JUNE, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 1

Alert crews down on the line tonight watch apprehensively as only one of two planes up on a mission to Uxhored, Hungary, circles the field and lands. A short while later, the story of this flight has been shuttled through camp. "Lt. Myers had been flying for 15 minutes with his right engine feathered and then sent a call through saying that the other engine was going out. He told me to go on. He was heading east the last time I saw him," reports his wing man, Lt. McFarland. . . . "Sure hope he makes the Russian lines," comment linemen as they hear that number fourteen is missing.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 2

Assigned to our Communications Section today: S/Sgt. Millard F. Potter, Pfc's Cecil H. Long, Roy G. Butler and Pvt. Paul S. Bronson.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 3

The power of speech is given a severe test today when Lewis Leopold is told—"say, got a letter from 'Shorty' Martin. Says he and Andy Orsini arrived in New York and were sent right away to California and to an INFANTRY replacement center!" More sad-eyed than usual, Leopold heads slowly for the mess hall, stops here and there, imparts this bit of knowledge, wearily shuffles on. Hearing the news, other men shake their heads sympathetically and pass on this tale of woe. And so, from many a tent today and tonight comes the muffled conversation—"Shorty" Martin—no furlough—to an INFANTRY replacement center!—now what do you think of rotation?!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 4

News that a P-38 pilot has landed on Russian territory comes in this morning and all bets are on Lt. Myers, missing on a flight three days ago.

1535 HOURS. . . . The radio waves are strangely silent for a moment and then comes a voice: "HERE IS A SPECIAL BROADCAST. . . . OUR TROOPS ARE NOW FIGHTING IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF ROME." . . . A recording made only an hour ago and but two miles from the fighting near the Ancient City crackles on: "THROUGH THE HEAVY HEAT HAZE WHICH IS ALL ABOUT US I CAN SEE THE CITY OF ROME. SO TANTALIZINGLY NEAR IT IS ON THIS DAY WHICH FOUR YEARS AGO MARKED THE LEAVING OF THE LAST SOLDIER FROM THE BEACHES OF DUNKIRK." . . . Conversation in our mess hall tonight is sent into a high pitch by this news and one man asks, "I

wonder if the Germans will put up much of a fight there? I hope not. Sure would like to visit Rome!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 5

The news that Allied troops have entered Rome spreads swiftly through camp. In Bari, the newsstands are surrounded by yelling, arm-flinging Italians waving lira in the air and grabbing violently for the noon edition of the newspaper which is blotted with the black headlines, "ROMA LIBERATA!" In camp, the new super-situation map placed to the side of our mess hall is crowded around with intense-eyed soldiers who watch "Judge" Horwich mark each and every change.

Long before the show begins tonight, we crowd the amphitheatre and wait expectantly for the "sensational" Arabian dancer, "Rouhia," to appear. Finally, this loose-jointed, beguiling charmer slides onto the stage and gives her all. "Guess my eyes are goin' back on me," comments one soldier as he watches "Rouhia" in one of her more "intense maneuvers!" As a "relaxation" between dances, we hear weird-wailing Arab music, watch a be-turbaned Fakir who pushes needles through his ears and arms, lays on a sharp-spiked board and then, stretched out on two sawhorses, sustains a crashing blow from a sledge hammer wielded by a hefty, gleaming-eyed soldier! "Makes me weak just to watch 'em!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 6

Up on two dawn missions to Ploesti and Nis, Capts. Schwab and Kelsey, and Lts. McFarland and Hopkins provide coverage for the first American bomber attack made from Russian bases; the target is the Brasov, Roumania, marshalling yard. A new dimension is thus introduced into the air offensive.

At eight o'clock this morning, the news that we have so long awaited, and sometimes thought would never come, is announced, ironically enough by the German News Agency. . . . "EARLY THIS MORNING, THE EXPECTED ANGLO-AMERICAN INVASION BEGAN. AIRBOURNE FORCES ARE LANDING IN THE AREA OF THE SEINE; LE HAVRE HARBOR IS BEING FIERCELY BOMBARDED FROM THE SEA AND AIR; ANGLO-AMERICAN PARACHUTISTS ARE DROPPING FROM NUMEROUS AIRCRAFT ON THE NORTHERN TIP OF THE NORMANDY PENINSULA." . . . The news flashes electrically through camp. "Is it true?" we ask, wanting to believe and yet almost afraid, uncertain. At 0900 hours, the radio waves again begin to crackle and, with the sing-song jamming of the Axis radio almost drowning out the words, announcements of the invasion are given in Norwegian, Danish, French and Flemish; these are repeated again and again with tantalizing sameness. We gather around the nearest radio. Eyes meet and fall away again. There is a tautness in the very brooding silence. . . . Over the BBC—"IN TEN SECONDS THE SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ALLIED INVASION FORCES WILL MAKE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT." Then comes the voice of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, speaking slowly and with marked clarity and seriousness: "PEOPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE. A LANDING IS NOW BEING MADE ON THE COAST OF FRANCE. THE HOUR OF YOUR LIBERATION APPROACHES. CONTINUE YOUR PASSIVE RESISTANCE. FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF YOUR LEADERS. BE PATIENT. PREPARE. THOSE WHO HAVE MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH THE ENEMY WILL BE PUNISHED. THIS LANDING IS BUT THE OPENING PHASE. KEEP YOUR FAITH STAUNCH AND LET US ALL BESEECH THE BLESSING OF ALMIGHTY GOD UPON THIS GREAT AND NOBLE UNDERTAKING." And so, the invasion begins. In camp, there is no wild shouting, little flagrant optimism. Instead, men crowd around the map, search for the landing points and soberly

study these spots. "It's been such a long time in coming; now that it's here, it seems unreal." Throughout the day we hear those same reports given in the morning repeated again and again — "operations proceeding satisfactorily." Overshadowing all else, talk of the invasion goes on far into the night.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 8

The announcement of the capture of Bayeux, the first town to be liberated by Allied Invasion troops, comes in subtle contrast to the dry, clipped reports of the German propagandists who claim that "many Allied bridgeheads have been annihilated or cast back into the sea." . . . The first broadcast from the Allied European station in France comes over the radio tonight and graphically records actual on-the-spot battle scenes. Gathered around the switchboard radio, a group of men listens intently to the whir of German planes over the beachhead, to the dull, drumming answer of our guns and to the sharp pelting rip of machine guns. "It's the real thing," proclaims one listener as he edges closer to the radio.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 9

From all war fronts, the news is predictive: fishermen in Atlantic, Norwegian and Danish waters are warned to clear the seas for the next six days; a new Russian offensive from the south is said to be in the offing; the advance of our troops here in Italy continues and daily gains grow ever larger as our Armies chase the Axis troops in areas above Rome.

Trudging back to camp this afternoon and calling out, "a wonderful time; what a place!" are two more Capri visitors. Thus T/Sgt. Fred Higdon (with memories of his two-hour kayak trip from Tiberius' beach to the Blue Grotto) and Cpl. Hubert Siemer (choosing his boat trip-around the island as the most enjoyable experience during his stay) return to the routine Army life vowing, "a never-to-be-forgotten vacation!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 10

Covering Trieste and Verona at dawn this morning, Lts. Cordes and Hobbs leave the target area none too early—"we got out just in time; the bombers were coming in right behind us!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 12 and 13

Experimenting in the Communications "Hut," Capt. Albert Adell and S/Sgt. Forrest Clark have brought forth an aircraft radio installation which should solve a problem confronting this Squadron for some time: the transfer from Very-High-Frequency radio equipment to LONG RANGE High-Frequency equipment. By finagling parts, re-making old ones, and modifying new ones, they have created a new transmitter. If a future test of this equipment is successful, then some of our relay missions can be eliminated. If not, a worthy try and "Capt. Adell will probably send an S.O.S. to Lockheed for a larger model P-38 in which he can install a larger transmitter!"

With our first mission scheduled for 0230 hours tomorrow morning, alert crews crawl into bed at an early hour tonight and launch into a period of fitful sleep. But a few hours later, they are awakened to go down on the line. Our cooks have been in the kitchen since midnight. Radio men, harassed all night long by the inconstancy of the new High-Frequency radio set which was to be tested during the coming flight, catch a few hours' sleep on work benches or in a vacant corner while waiting for the planes to take off. And so, at 0230 hours this morning, even before dawn is a promise in the east, Capt. Fuller and Lt. Hobbs wing over the field and head for Munich. An hour later, Lts. Cook and Conger head for the same target. After all mis-

sions are airbourne, those on the alert return briefly to the mess hall and, half-awake, hold a cup of steaming coffee to their lips and mutter, "rough . . . rough!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 14

"Well, how are they? How many's she got?" All day long men file in and out of tent number eight and our canine "camp follower," "One-Eye Connelly," and her brood of four pups, born between the beds of Forrest Clark and Joe Schmidling, are the center of all attention. While prodding fingers predict "a couple more before noon," her total reaches five later in the day and there, stops!

"If it isn't old Myers himself!" So Lt. George Myers returns to the Squadron after what he describes as "some time!" in Russia. . . . "I landed on a deserted airdrome northeast of Melitopol. The Russians thought I was a German flying an FW-189 and began to search and question me under guard. After they looked over my belongings and found no enemy articles, they decided I might be an American Officer after all. I was taken to the Russian authorities in the nearby village. They didn't treat me roughly, but gave me good food and lodging that night. The next morning, I was flown to Russian Headquarters at Melitopol. A General and his Staff received me there, told me that I was most welcome in Russia. He questioned me—asked me where I came from, where was I going, what kind of trouble did I have with my plane and what was my work. I told him that I was a reconnaissance pilot but that my work was secret. When he heard this, he was pleased and said that he would ask no more questions. I was assigned an interpreter for the purpose of meeting different people, military and otherwise. During my two-day stay here, I went to banquets, dinners, plays, presentations—everyone was wonderful to me. As the Commandant told me, my stay in Russia was a very enjoyable one. Three days later, I boarded a plane, flew by way of Egypt, Tunis and Algiers, and here I am!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 15

Herman Smith's slow pronouncement on his going home—"seems . . . like . . . a . . . dream"—typifies the actions and strained facial expressions of T/Sgt. Elmer Gibbons, S/Sgt. Mahlon Sweet, Sgt. Clifford Deaton, Cpls. Robert Grado-ville, John Lensis, (Herman Smith) and Charles White, all of whom say their good-bye's this morning, pile aboard a waiting truck and head southward.

Undergoing our fourth change of name, we are today redesignated the "154th WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MEDIUM)."

Our camp is a scene of unhurried calm tonight. Many men hunch over home-made, soot-spewing stoves and carefully watch a panful of sizzling potatoes. Others pass by, look longingly at the skillet, then, after making a mental note to get some potatoes "domani," pass on.

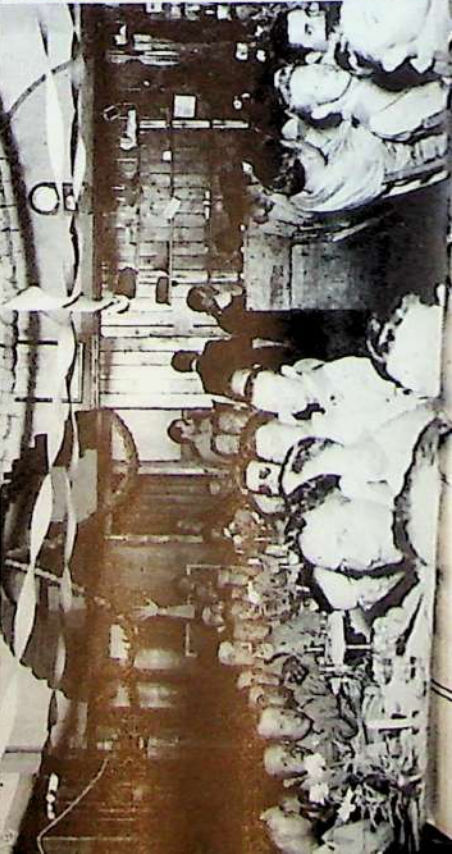
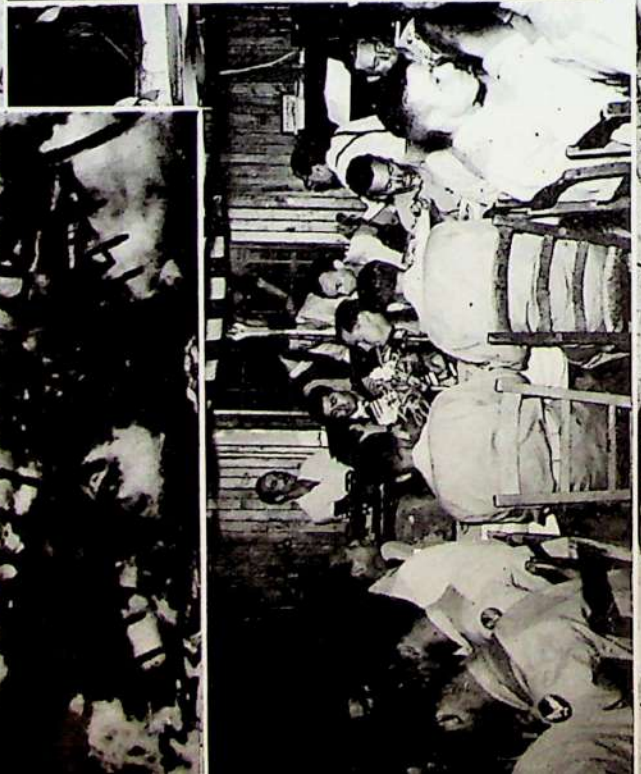
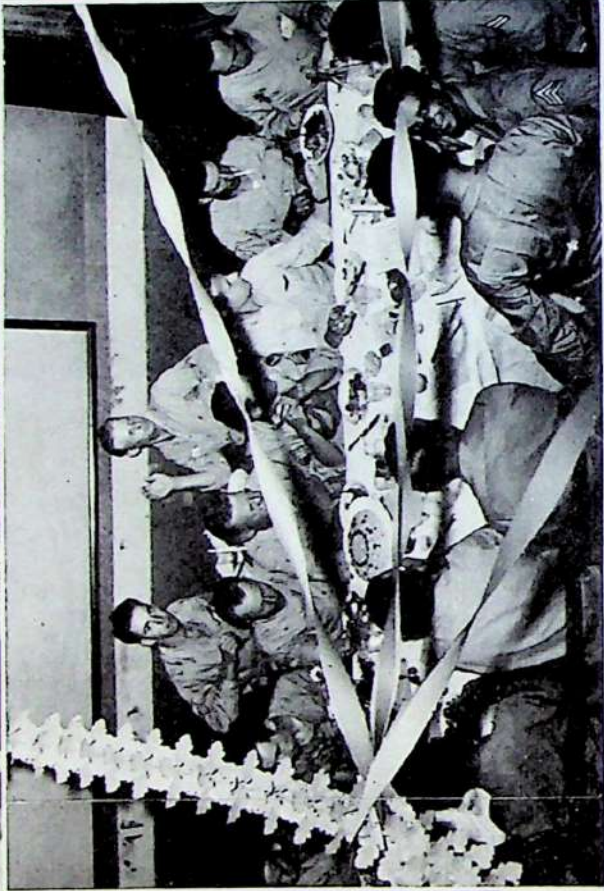
Our outlook here in Bari becomes ever more timeless and many complain, "up till now, we always knew that we would be moving sometime; but here—looks as though we're just stuck!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 17

The German radio propagandists now threaten "many more secret weapons to come" in addition to their flying bombs now inflicting a "little blitz" on England. Of the recent French and American landings on the Island of Elba, they sweepingly announce, "the enemy troops have been hurled back into the sea." Allied reports state briefly, "operations proceeding accordingly to plan."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 19

With a mounting intensity, we follow news of the successful American thrust across the Cherbourg Peninsula—"it sure looks like a small beachhead on the map . . . there's a lot of territory between there and Berlin!"



Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 20

The news of "no alert" this morning allows our crew chiefs and linemen to smile smugly, then turn over on their cot and catch up on much-needed sleep. On the other hand, guards wail, "no alert? Would happen when I get on! Three extra hours!"

Just back from a shuttle trip to Russia and with 22 combat missions to his credit, T/Sgt. Charlie Hill visits around camp and maintains that Russia is a "soldiers' paradise." Coming down from Foggia with him is Sgt. Robert Drennan who has completed his gunnery training flights and begins on combat missions tomorrow.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 21

The question, "do you want rotation and re-assignment to another outfit or a 30-day furlough and return to the Squadron?" drops as a bombshell in camp and we are asked to make a snap decision. Gatherings on the line and in camp all center on this subject and as one man puts it, "it all comes down to the fact that no one has yet come out with the full details . . . sure I want to go home and yet I don't want to get shoved around again." A newly assigned Squadron member fresh from the States breaks into the conversation, "well, they can have their rotation; personally, I'll stay over here and sweat it out. They can have the States!" Immediately, our "old men" are down upon him: "wait a minute, brother! When you've been over here almost two years, then you can say that!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 22

1st Lt. Schuyler S. Harris transfers this day to the 301st Bomb Squadron, now in the Foggia area.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 24

As of today, we add a third bronze Battle Star to our collection—the Italian Campaign Star.

Moving into one of the tents in our camp area is 2nd Lt. Frank Duckworth, our new Photo Officer.

A crew chief ducks into Engineering this morning, sheepishly reports, "number four is out," then quickly disappears. Soon the story is going the rounds: the P-38 in question started to roll backward, rammed into a transport!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 25

Targets in Southern France are covered by Lts. Conger, Cordes, Myers and Horrocks this morning. On his return from the first mission, Lt. Cordes trains his lens on Rome and brings back some remarkably clear pictures of the "ancient city."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 27

The static-sputtering BBC interrupts its musical program early this morning and dryly announces, "the city of Cherbourg has fallen to Allied troops." Thus comes the first big news since the announcement of the invasion and the beginning of the new Russian offensive now spearheading into Northern Poland.

Our first issue of real American beer sends many thronging to early chow tonight, then into a long line before the PX tent. Later on, the pile of empty cans in each tent grows ever larger as we leisurely sip our first American brew since leaving the States . . . "God, but it's good!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 29

With the sun becoming ever stronger and the locust-ringing atmosphere increasingly sultry, our camp takes on a

more casual tone. Down on the line, a hot wind and a dry, strength-sapping heat spread over all and many strip down to shorts reminiscent of former days in Africa. After work, a small group heads for a swim in the coves of San Spirito . . . "summer is here to stay."

JULY, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 1

As of this date, Sgt. William Reid takes over the duties of Transportation Sergeant.

With promotions to TECH/SERGEANT posted for Edward Appler, Charles Brown, Lloyd Dallas, Thomas Harness, William Lewis, L. Dan Owens and Lawrence Wewer, a soldier scanning the bulletin board eagerly comments, "there'll be some celebration tonight!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 2

A letter from the office of Major General Nathan F. Twining heartily commends the recent work of Capt. Kalinowski, M/Sgts. Percy Moon, Dick Red, S/Sgt. William Roseberry and T/Sgt. Thomas Harness: "it is a credit to your unit that the plans were laid, materials procured, and this aerial camera modification made by members of your Photographic and Engineering Sections in addition to their normal duties and without interrupting the schedule of operations."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 3

"Finito!" sweepingly comments Lt. George E. Myers, the first of the "old 154" pilots to round out his required number of missions (50) while still with the outfit.

"Capri must really have something," comment soldiers who note Sgt. Selmer Clark and Cpl. Ray Serda returning to camp this afternoon and listen to their enthusiastic raving about the Isle.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 4

The day of the "154th O' July Banquet" has arrived and from morning until early evening, Number Nine Via di Rossi, the scene of the event, is a place of uninterrupted activity and feverish preparation. . . . At seven-thirty PM, Buddy Diemer, our hard-working Special Service chief, takes one last look around the room and gives the final signal. All is ready. . . . Before many minutes have passed, we fill this room to capacity, range ourselves closely around attractively-set, candle-spiked tables and fill the muggy air with enthusiastic comments—"they did a wonderful job fixing up the place . . . multa bono . . . multa bono!" . . . Soon, the dinner begins and formally-attired Italian waiters sidle back and forth with course after course of distinctive "Mama" Stoppani cooking. Decanters of wine are filled and within a few minutes filled again. One man sweepingly proclaims, "let the wine flow like water!" . . . Breaking forth into lusty community singing, we soon banish all formality and the night takes on a mellowness and warmth. Crew Chiefs share song sheets with their Pilots; Section Officers with their section N.C.O.'s. The room is one mass of wide-grinning faces, one sound of male heartiness. . . . At the end of the singing, Capt. Kelsey climbs upon a table and calls for silence—"it's been a long time since the 154 had such a get-together and I'm for bigger and better ones and more often!" . . . The dinner swings on with increasing vigor. George Moon ranges around the room, squints behind the finder of his camera and then looses a blinding yellow flash. Boo's come from those who are not in the picture; cheers from those who are. . . . Buddy Diemer

FOURTH OF JULY BANQUET, 1944. . . . Souvenir-photo originated by Capt. Kalinowski for the event. . . . General view of the head tables. . . . Russell Brossman on the guitar and Jack Philips (RAF) on the piano are encored again and again. . . . A third quartet (John Grochowski, Robert Huey, Quentin Miller and Lt. Frank Duckworth) tries out for the coveted prize—a bottle of real rye whiskey! . . . General views of the banquet. . . . (Extreme right) The winning quartet (Thomas Harness, Dalton Raiford, Lt. Kenneth Ade and Edgar Duff), along with "co-operative" Squadron members, drink up the prize! . . . All formality is forgotten. . . . "The best banquet ever!"

takes the microphone and thanks all those who helped so much with the banquet: Orville Stalnack, Bill Roseberry, Harold Haley, Wesley Whitaker and John Sigler for the decorations; Fred Gillies for the entertainment; Capt. Kalinowski for his unique souvenir photo; Robbie Barham for the amplifier arrangements. At this point, Capt. Schwab fittingly adds, "Sgt. Diemer has been handing out bouquets to everyone but himself tonight, but I think that we owe him a great deal of praise not only for tonight's banquet but for all his many efforts in our behalf." The room fills with spontaneous applause while Sgt. Diemer grins widely and grows happily redder and redder! Following this, we hear Russell Brossman on the guitar and L. A. C. Jack Phillips (RAF) on the piano. After every number, we clamor for more. . . . And then the high spot of the evening arrives. "I have here," cries Capt. Schwab with slow, deliberate emphasis, "a bottle of real rye whiskey." At once the bedlam ceases and heads crane toward the center table. "This little jug of evil spirits," continues the Captain, "will go to the best quartet in the room. . . REAL RYE WHISKEY, awful isn't it?" The air is immediately filled with plaintive urging: "aw com'on; just get up there and sing, that's all!" . . . The first quartet gingerly approaches the platform: Bill Roseberry, John Goin, Joe Abernethy, and Lonnie Pearson bend their heads together and out comes a weak rendition of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." A second group, (Tom Harness, Lt. Ade, Edgar Duff and Dalton Raiford) troops up to the platform and with a smug grin begins—"rye whiskey, rye whiskey, that's all that I cri—ied; if I don't get rye whiskey, I surely will die—ie!" At once, we burst forth with hooting, hollering and "encora! encora!" And so once again these four wail forth with their song and we roar and stomp for more. Three more quartets follow: Quentin Miller, Lt. Duckworth, Robert Huey and John Grochowski singing "Down By The Old Mill Stream"; Herman Steinborn, Lts. Walker and Nelson, and Jack Waters in a spirited rendition of the "Strip Polka"; finally, Fred Higdon, Cecil Long (playing "dead pan" on the "sweet potato"), Capt. Tyler and Paul Kahanic in a clever parody on "White Christmas." But the strains of "rye whiskey, rye whiskey, that's all that I cri—ied!" still ring in our ears and when a vote of applause is taken and Tom Harness' quartet introduced, the room thunders and shakes with violent clapping and table thumping. "O.K.; I guess it's theirs," concedes Capt. Schwab. . . . And so on this high note the banquet comes to a close. Of the really excellent meal so skillfully prepared by "Mama" Stoppani, of the entertainment and singing and the intangible flood of good fellowship, one man says, "I've been to many banquets, but never to one as good as tonight's!" And many a "multa bono!" choruses in reply.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 5

In formation down on the line this afternoon, we witness the presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross to 1st Lts. George E. Myers and Jack H. McFarland. After the

official ceremonies, General Born, Chief of the 15th Air Force Operations, speaks informally—"you men are doing a bang-up job here . . . every time your pilots say the weather is fit for operations, the bombers go out; when they say the weather is bad, they don't . . . in effect, you are the Commanding General of the 15th Air Force." . . . A few minutes later, as we march back to camp, one soldier comments dryly, "not a word about rotation!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 7

Those men to leave the Squadron on rotation tomorrow saunter around camp, stop in tent after tent, smile sheepishly at good-natured ribbings ("they're getting rid of all the cripples, I see!"), then resume the joyful job of packing.

Cursing and muttering come nightly from the direction of our shower tent and those within hearing distance realize that someone has been caught again—"all soaped up and the water goes off! It's getting to be a gamble to see if the Italians over at the mess hall or those in the shower get the water first!" Thereupon, the soap-covered soldier pokes his head out of the shower tent and yells at the Italian KP's over by the mess hall, "shut that water back on, you G—d—ginzols!", then resumes his shaky vigil under an unyielding faucet!

On hearing that our first mission is set for three o'clock in the morning, one of our cooks wearily comments, "early? Hell! We were in the kitchen getting this morning's breakfast at 11 o'clock last night!", then with a scathing contempt repeats, "early!!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 8

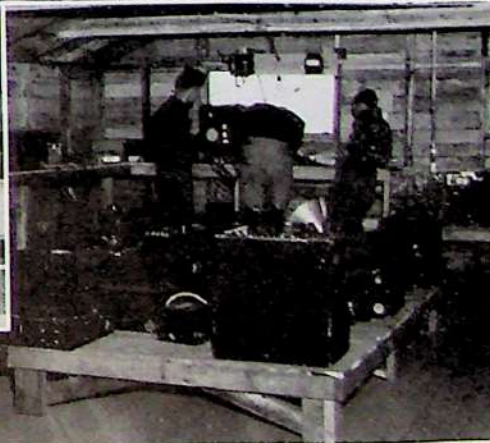
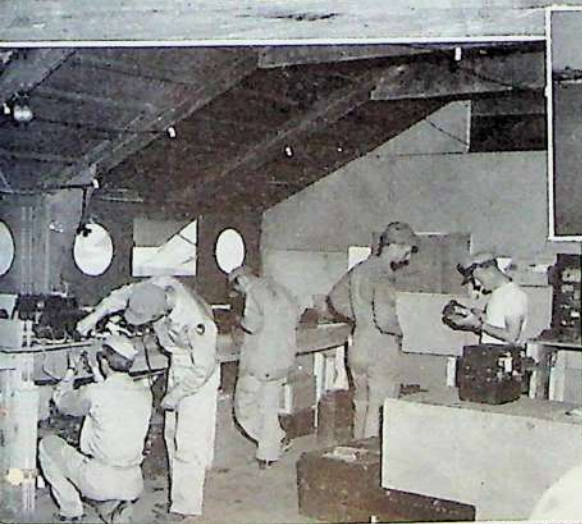
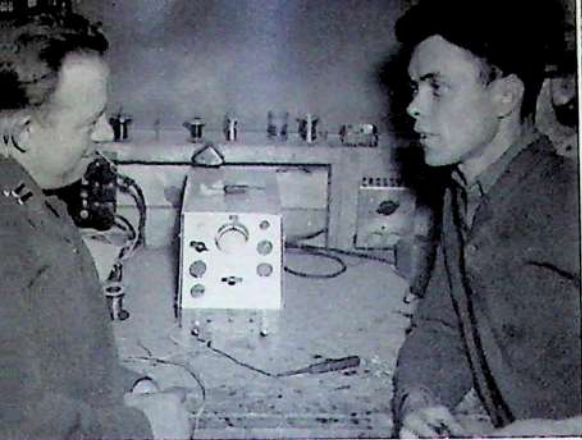
"Well, here we go at last!" Thus T/Sgt. Eulon Weeks, S/Sgt. Byrl Sloan, Sgt. Sam Shields, Cpls. Moses Ross, Lonnie Pearson and 1st Lt. Edward Ammerman leave the Squadron under that agreeable arrangement, rotation.

"Under pressure," our Medics begin the building of a new wood-floor dispensary and drive each nail with a resounding whack! Recalling the matter-of-fact question of the visiting Technical Inspector—"and where is the private consultation room?"—our Medics shake their heads and, for the moment only, are speechless!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 12

Under the rain-spattered tentage roof of our mess hall tonight, we see the mellow Bing Crosby film, "Going My Way," and most all of us agree with Capt. Tyler's shouted comment, "this picture is just tickling the hell out of me!" As the movie comes to an end and midnight approaches, we race through the pelting rain, across the water-logged camp area and then dart into the cozy confines of our tents. "This damned tent leaks!" is a cry heard from more than one tent as the night goes on. After plastering up the offending hole with a piece of adhesive tape or pulling the cot to a dry spot, the soldier climbs back into his bed and waits for sleep to come while an insistent and torrential rain still drums on the taut canvas above.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION. . . . Their home-made oscilloscope (center) is discussed by Capt. Albert Adell (Section Officer) and Forrest Clark. . . . In the Section office are Thomas Taylor and Robbie Barham, Section NCO. . . . Switchboard crew: Jacob Stadler, Elias Toscano (with "Blue B—s!"), Julian Sandoval, Carl Anderberg, Florencio Baragan. . . . A "successor" to Briney Golba, Cecil Long carries on as "PE man." . . . Capt. Adell tests an ailing radio set. . . . Russell Brossman slides a shop-adjusted set back into position in the rear of a P-38 cockpit. . . . A spare-parts radio is tested by Stanislaw Kij, Forrest Clark and Robert Scales. . . . (Below) Paul Kahanic tries out a newly installed radio set. . . . (Right) The first Communications (tent) set-up in Bari. . . . Communications-Radar Shack built by Section personnel. . . . This hut in the building. . . . A newly arrived (Nov. 1944) radar-equipped P-38 ("droop snop") is examined by Fred Higdon and Joseph Schmidling. . . . Typical scene in Communications shop: Robbie Barham, Mike Simetkosky, Russell Brossman, Capt. Albert Adell. . . . A group of radar personnel: Aaron Sinkoff, Ernest Chandler, Charles Tomayko, Francis Dailey, Sidney Swirsky, Billy Liles (on ground), John Ware, Wilbur Huot, Lawrence Hadobas. . . . A test of plane radio equipment is made by James Rodgers and Cecil Long. . . . The Radar workshop. . . . "On the alert," Millard Potter checks out the radios on mission-bound aircraft. . . . An early photo of Radar personnel: Leon Barnett, Melvin Ross, John Best, (rear) David Chapman, William Chaffee, (rear) Jack Bottarini, Stanley Barnish, Stephen Ewing, (rear) James Cokl, Lt. Theodore White (Section Officer). . . . "Who do you want to speak to?" asks Julian Sandoval, at work in the camp switchboard tent.





BIRTH OF A MISSION. . . . In the Squadron Operations-Intelligence room in Bari, Navigator, Lt. Gerald Dubuc (second from right) plots the course to Vienna, Austria. Lt. Albert Rizzo, Capt. Roy Nelson and Lt. Albin Wenzel take in the details. . . . Lt. James Turner (second from left) "briefs" fellow pilots, Lts. Robert Clifford, Albin Wenzel, and Roy Fortner. . . . A final technical weather briefing is attended by all pilots in the 15th Air Force Weather Office in Bari. . . . Capt. Roy Nelson Lts. Loel Timm, Thomas Watson (radar-navigator) and Floyd Bishop don electrically-heated flying clothes in the Parachute hut. . . . Mission-bound aircraft are warmed up. . . . (Inset) The take-off. . . . (Inset above) "Bigfence," radio direction-finder station familiar to all pilots based in Southern Europe. . . . One of our weather P-38's flying high over enemy territory of Axis-held Europe. . . . Pilot and plane return from a mission and are directed in by their crew chief. . . . The pilot fills out an Engineering-status form. . . . Engineers, photo men, armorers, radio men and gas truck crews ready the plane for another mission.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 13

Just down the road from camp, tanned Yugoslav soldiers, in British battle dress but with the identifying Red Star on their caps, work all day long on the packing of bundles of food, clothing and ammunition. Come nighttime, groaning, British-manned transports rise from the airfield into the star-spiked sky, head deep into enemy territory to drop these same life-giving bundles of supplies or land at some Partisan-held airfield to pick up Yugoslav wounded or evacuees. "I don't particularly like to go on those evacuation missions," says one English Flying Sergeant slowly shaking his head. . . . "the stink from the wounded is bloody awful!" Many nights our guards on the line watch intensely as these transports slide in on the field and then listen to the air-deadened gabble of many voices—guttural, tongue-twisting Russian, Slavic, Polish and, mixed in with

them, clipped English and twangy American. And so every night as our camp sleeps, the throbbing sound of these planes comes and goes. The battle without glory or recognition goes steadily onward.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 14

As contrasted with the first warmth of feeling which we had for the Italian people, a passive dislike has now surged forward. A distrust and mild contempt for the unmilitary American soldier and an almost tangible hatred but far more outward cow-towing to the British soldier is apparent everywhere we go. "If we could only speak the Italian language, not just the few words that everyone finally picks up, it would help." And yet for reasons of mental laziness or just lack of incentive, there are few of us who go beyond the "molto buono—quanta costa?" stage.

We look at these explosive, sweepingly-emotional people and wonder if they will not be ever-changing, swinging to the side which offers them the maximum of sensual comfort and material satisfaction of their needs. Their immaculately uniformed police proudly parade the streets; poorly dressed Italian soldiers range out in long lines and clomp wearily down to the docks where they will load and unload Allied ships; arm-flinging crowds gather before the tobacco shops early each morning and wave ration coupons wildly in the air, push and shove to get nearer the door; the Italian military still strut the streets and wear their Tunisian and Ethiopian medals. . . . Distrust and opportunism is everywhere, hidden many times in the tolerant smile which turns to a dismissive sneer. Many times, the American good nature is severely imposed upon, his somewhat sloppy dress ridiculed, his basic contempt for regimentation in thought, actions and dress marked as a weakness. And yet, there are many warm-hearted Italians, those who stop on the street and talk to the Americans and British in halting English; those who find the American moderately good and many times unexpectedly naive. In camp, discussion of the Italians is heated: "I can't figure these people out. Sometimes they are so cynical I think they would follow anyone. It seems that all Europe is sick with a disease which will always breed wars and distrust." . . . "the less I see of them, the better." . . . "their nice girls don't speak to us and we don't speak their language. So what can you expect? Naturally we get p——d off!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 16

S/Sgt. Forrest Clark and Sgt. Robert Halboth are no exceptions to the enthusiastic boosters who return from the Isle of Capri—"the time we spent on Capri was worth more than all other experience during two years in the Army. And yet, without those two years, who can tell?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 17

Keeping up a fairly constant coverage of Southern France targets, Capt. Fuller, Lts. Walker, Cook and Ade successfully cover communications and rail centers in the Avignon sector of South-Central France. . . . With the greater part of our operations confined to the early morning hours, the line soon settles down to a comparative calm. Except for an occasional test hop, our planes stand in brooding stillness throughout the rest of the day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 18

With Lt. McFarland the only "old pilot" still flying with our Squadron, one Officer comments, "the old 154 has just about had it!"

Capt. Adell and Tyler, S/Sgt. Diemer, Sgt. Girola and Cpl. Sigler head for Rome by command car this day and are the advance planning party for those of our Squadron who will soon have an opportunity to see this city.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 20

The sight of cots piled up in the supply tent brings forth the comment, "after 22 months overseas, we finally get a cot!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 21

In the stain-paneled Fifteenth Air Force War Room in Bari, Commanding General Nathan Twining today presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to Capt. Verne Kelsey and 1st Lt. Kenneth Cordes. . . . Later in the day, veteran Squadron pilots Capt. Kelsey and Lt. Myers climb into a B-25 and head west. A notice scrawled on the bulletin board by these two USA-bound pilots reads: "Good-bye and good luck! Keep up the good work; see you back in the States!"

Commenting by radio on the recent attempt on Hitler's life, "Lord Haw-Haw" (William Joyce—English traitor propagandist) whines, "a stab in the back!" We watch this psychological front in Germany with a new, keen interest . . . "it happened the same way just before the end of the last war."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 22

A stifling heat and a continuous blast of wind-borne dust sifting all over camp and the airfield mark this day and we search for a place in the shade and away from the gritty blast. Later on in the afternoon, a swim truck heads out for the cool waters of San Spirito and many climb aboard to get some relief from "the hottest day yet."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 23

"I wish this would become a habit," comment our pilots as they eat breakfast at a "civilized hour" (0725) and then are on their way to targets in Southern Yugoslavia and Albania—"it's a novelty taking off in the daylight!" . . . By mid-morning, all planes are down at base and the line settles down to another day of heat-seared inactivity, disturbed only by the great clouds of brown dust which continue to blow across the field.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 26

Up on a mission to Vienna, Austria, Lt. Russell Field, Jr. successfully tests a VHF radio set modified by Capt. Albert Adell and S/Sgt. Forrest Clark and now yielding an increased range of 300 to 400 miles. The range, previous to this modification, was only 100 to 200 miles.

Before leaving for the U. S., Cpl. Harry Schellingburger stops by many a tent tonight and says "so long!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 27

Piling into a weapons carrier early this morning, S/Sgts. Lodge, Stone, R. White, Sgts. Stefano, Gerig, Stevens, Cpls. Fillingim and Hubay and Pvt. Rorick head for four days' leave in the city of Rome.

Around camp and down on the line, Capt. Harold ("Snake") Slagle says his last good-bye's this morning and then heads westward to the U. S.

Each day, our engineering area takes on more the appearance of a shipyard. Those who have the time and inclination spend tortuous hours welding two old belly tanks together and only hope that the finished product will float! (It does!)

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 28

Squinting into the early morning sun, Major Schwab calls the Squadron together for the last time before he goes home on a hospital ship this coming Saturday. . . . "In some respects, it is better this way as I didn't have to make the decision. Soon after I took over the Squadron, I found that you didn't have to give orders to get things done. In this spirit, I hope that you will give Capt. Fuller the same co-operation you have given me. It has been fun and you took a new job and made the best of it. I have two loves—the 154 and my wife. But the 154 is strictly a duration wife! In closing, I want to say that the 154 is the best damn Squadron I ever hope to command. Well, I guess that's all."

Completing his 50th mission this morning, "old timer" Lt. Jack McFarland is asked, "did you do a slow roll to celebrate?" . . . Hell, no!" he replies emphatically.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 29

The first group of rotation replacements arrives this day: Sgt. Harold Bond (Engineering), Cpl. John O'Conner (Communications) and Pfc. Orien H. Craghead (Armament). Discussing these new arrivals tonight, we comment, "just come over from the States July 10th? ROOKIES!" Later on, however, we buttonhole these new men and are amazed and pleased at their picture of life in the U. S.: "things are still pretty nice back home . . . ice cream is still plentiful . . . no, the beer isn't too good, but you can get it and that's what counts . . . sure, you can go to a store and buy a steak . . . C-rations? never heard of 'em till I came over here! . . . I'm glad to get over though; they're really getting pretty 'chicken' back there."



THE CITY OF BARI. . . Outdoor fish market and informal eating place on waterfront. . . Main street in downtown Bari. . . The Red Cross is a former Fascist Club. . . One of the winding passageways in the older living quarter of the city. . . A Bari institution: "Mama" Stoppani (left) and her sumptuous dinners. . . (Inset) Colorfully uniformed city police ("carabinieri"). . . Water is still drawn in the surrounding country by horses which circle 'round and 'round the outdoor well. . . Precious grain is cut on a field just outside the city. . . Another "old world" section of Bari. . . A sea-front corner of the nearby town of San Spirito. . . (Below) Typical street in a small Italian town just outside Bari. . . Ancient fort along the city's waterfront. . . The silver-encrusted tomb of the Patron Saint Nicholas (the original "Santa Claus") is located in the lower depths of the Cathedral bearing his name here in Bari. . . (Inset) Waterfront panorama. . . (Below) Church in downtown Bari. . . Like "Buddy" Diemer (left), many a Squadron member stops in at the shop of "Mama" Stoppani (right) when in Bari.



On our way back from Rome, we pass through Cassino. In the air about this ruined village and from the rain-filled bomb and shell craters everywhere there comes the sickly-sweet smell of death. . . . (Right) The gaunt ruins of Monastery Hill stand high above the pulverized town.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 30

Their faces severely wind-burned and dirt-caked from the ride, our first group of Rome sightseers arrives back in camp tonight. . . . "The trip to Rome in the weapons-carrier was gruesome. Our route took us over some of the worst roads and mountains in Italy. We visited Salerno, Pompeii, rode through the total ruins of Cassino—here you really see war; I've never seen anything so thoroughly leveled—then through town after town which was nothing but a shell. On arriving in Rome, we found the city itself hardly touched by war. A strange sight to see after passing through so much rubble and destruction. Our living quarters in a private apartment were good. Soft comfortable beds. Quite a contrast to GI cots. In the city itself, the people seemed of a much better class than those in Southern Italy. The girls were trim and neat and not too fat and sloppy like most of the Italian women we have seen. Food was hard to get, but if you had the money, you wouldn't go hungry. We toured the city in our weapons-carrier and were fortunate to get a guide who spoke English very well and took us to all the outstanding centers. We visited the Pantheon, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and Vatican City with all its wealth of treasures. In a crowded audience with the Pope, we received his blessing and were pleased at his warm personality. He spoke English and French, both very fluently. After two full days in Rome, we headed back to camp, but this time took a much better route. I guess most of us wouldn't trade this trip for anything you could offer."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—July 31

Our new Commanding Officer, Capt. James H. Fuller, speaks to the Squadron this morning, assures us of the importance of the work we are doing, and closes his brief talk by hoping that "the next time I call you all together it will be to tell you to pack up for home." (The rumors start!)

Promising, "I'll write, so help me!," S/Sgt. Louis Stathakis, Sgts. Walter Fey, Lewis Leopold, Virgil Snoddy, and Pfc. Dempsey Reed head for home this day.

With Squadron members acting as waiters, carefully balancing trays of drinks on splayed finger tips, and towel in their back pocket or slung over their arm, our Day Room is fittingly opened this night. Looking over the interior of "Elwood Inn" (named so after its main creator, S/Sgt. Elwood Travers), men nod approvingly at the marble topped bar, the many tables and the dimly lighted atmosphere. . . . Long after midnight has come and gone, the misted yellow lights strung outside this building wink out over scattered groups of men gathered around a glass-littered table. Taking the hint, these men rise uncertainly and begin the devious trek back to their tents. "A—damn—good—party!"

AUGUST, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 1

After a farewell dinner in Bari last night (at which the main course is Vienna sausage!) Maj. Edwin Waters, our Intelligence Officer, climbs aboard a transport at five AM this morning and heads south to Algiers. Scheduled for a

(July 31, 1944). . . . "Our Day Room, 'Elwood Inn', is officially opened tonight." . . . Squadron cooks provide "hot dogs" to order. . . . The bar does a brisk business. . . . Small groups gather 'round outdoor tables and gorge on "all the ice cream you can eat!"



refresher gunnery course at Laredo, Texas, and 21 days' leave in the States, the Major steps quickly and grins widely as he leaves the Squadron in his usual whirlwind fashion.

With the radio telling of gains on all fronts, some in camp comment, "this European war ought to be over by fall or early winter if things keep going as they are."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 2

Sgt. Bill Goodner and Cpl. Evans Libby leave today on the now "premium" trip to the Isle of Capri.

The "line" sees a sharp surge of activity this afternoon as our new pilots fly test missions from Bari to San Stefano. During these flights, our radiomen tell of the birth of a new phonetic alphabet: "a voice came over the radio with 'n' for 'nuts', 'g' for 'guts', 'c' for 'candy', and 'h' for 'hell'!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 3

The skies above robot-bomb-parts factories in Friedrichshafen, Germany, are the targets for Lts. Cook, Cordes, Horrocks and Turner this morning while, at 1300 hours, Capt. Fuller and Lt. Taylor are up on the first afternoon mission in many weeks, this to Mezotur, Hungary.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 4

Cpl. Norman C. Jackson is today assigned to our Squadron Mess Section.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 5

Promotions posted this day: Forrest B. Clark and James O. Pullin to TECH/SERGEANT; William A. Reid to STAFF/SERGEANT; assigned to duties as Intelligence Officer (PD), 1st Lt. Donald A. McCaslin.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 6

In close co-operation with smashing bomber attacks on rail and oil targets in Southern France, Capt. Fuller, Lts. Turner, Walker, Cordes, Dinker and Cox cover these same areas in three pre-dawn and one early afternoon missions this day. . . . Pointing up this coverage, Sgts. "Fris" and Howard, back from a short period of detached duty with the U. S. 7th Army, tell of a massing of troops in Naples. "Must be for the invasion of Southern France," conclude many around camp.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 7

Capt. Anderson, our Soldier-Vote Officer, tells of the response to vote application cards: "about one third of the Squadron filled them in." In general, interest in the coming Presidential Election (Roosevelt vs. Dewey) is only moderate and there is a marked disgust and disappointment with the barriers which many States have constructed to impede or just about deny the soldier overseas a chance to vote.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 8

Flying in a sifting white haze, Lts. Turner, Cox and Smith cover the Lake Balaton, Split and Pola areas and radio back reports which ground all 15th Air Force bombers for the day.

Winging north in a C-47 this morning are Cpl. Boffie Sims, Pvs. Edward Harris and John Hood, all glowing at the prospect of three days in Rome.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 10

A thunderous rain tonight and we gather in the Red

Cross for ice cream, a game of billiards, ping pong, or just a cozy chair and a book. "A good night for sleeping," murmur some as they slip contentedly into their cot back in camp later tonight.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 11

Flying our 600th mission since beginning operations overseas, Lts. Walker and Leavens cover the Genoa area and bring back the increasingly frequent report, "closed in."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 12

With the news that "Allied troops are now less than 40 miles from Paris," conversation in the mess hall this noon is rabid—"they're really moving! . . . won't be long now before they have Paris . . . when this war ends, it will come all of a sudden."

On the return flight from Toulon (France) today, Lt. Walter Humphrey experiences severe engine trouble and is forced to abandon his plane over Luccera, Italy. From the Foggia Hospital, where Humphrey is confined because of injuries, come reports that our pilot is "doing O.K."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 14

For the third day running, our pilots are briefed for missions covering Toulon and Genoa and, as before, the bombers follow closely upon our coverage of these areas.

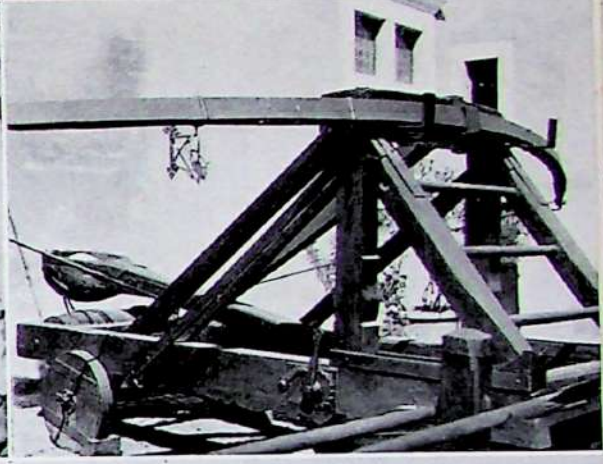
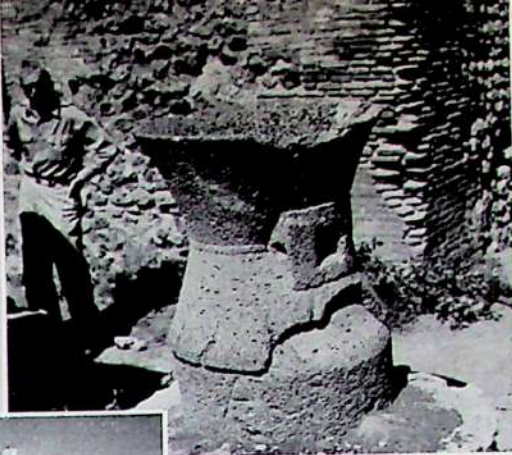
Early this morning, Sgt. Dalton Raiford (Operations) piles his baggage into a command car and heads for Foggia and a gunner's berth with the 97th Bomb Group.

With German troops now steadily retreating on Paris, Gen. Eisenhower issues a significant Order of the Day: "Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen . . . through your combined skill, valor and fortitude you have created in France a fleeting but definite opportunity for a major Allied victory, one whose realization will mean notable progress toward the downfall of the enemy. With all of us resolvedly performing our special tasks we can make this week a momentous one in the history of this war." . . . Meanwhile, here in Italy we watch long convoys of tanks and material grind northward and it seems that "all is being readied for the final push."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 15

Returning from dawn missions to Cannes and Genoa, Lts. Harry Cook and Kenneth Cordes bring back the first indications of the Allied invasion of Southern France—"P-38's were bombing the beaches—the Libs and Forts hit the area about 0700 hours—smoke and dust from the bombings covered the whole cove—as we turned back for Corsica, we could see landing craft beginning to move in." This unofficial news is confirmed at 1230 hours when the radio voice of Gen. Sir Maitland Wilson (British) breaks over the din in the mess hall—"the Armies of the United Nations have landed in the south of France. Their objective is to drive out the Germans and join up with the Allied Armies advancing from Normandy. Frenchmen: your duty will be made clear to you. Listen to the Allied radio, read notices and leaflets, pass on all instructions from one man and woman to another. Let us end the struggle as quickly as possible so that all France may resume again her free life under conditions of peace and security." . . . In camp and down on the line, this latest Allied blow is calmly, almost stoically accepted . . . "we knew it was coming, but didn't

A VISIT TO ROME-POMPEII. . . . Animals' den in the Colosseum. . . . Ancient bread oven in Pompeii. . . . "Lorenzo" and family before their apartment in Rome. . . . Jack Booth, Russell Brossman, Fred Gillies, Fred Higdon, Otis Taylor, Robert Jennings, and Norbert Raddatz rest and look around in the courtyard of a former Pompeiiian home. . . . Fountain in the court of St. Peter's (photo by Joseph Schmiedling). . . . With Vesuvius in the background, the remains of a typical Roman temple still stand in Pompeii. . . . A stone-hurling weapon of former times in Rome's Castel San Angelo. . . . One corner of the famed Roman Forum. . . . St. Peter's. . . . The "brown and muddy" Tiber flows through Rome. . . . Sightseers in Pompeii. . . . A more distant view of St. Peter's. . . . Exterior of St. Paul's Cathedral. . . . The Colosseum. Note wooden cross at lower right. . . . Honeycomb of underground chambers below the former arena of the Colosseum. . . . Victor Emmanuel Memorial. Note size of guards at lower center. . . . A street in Pompeii.





A group of Squadron members which, for various reasons, is not present in Diary-Album action photographs. . . . Lt. Walter Humphrey, Cpl. Robert Drennan, Lt. Everett Harris (MIA), Lt. Paul Hicks, (inset) Cpl. Christopher Hamilton, Cpl. Gerald Hladky, S/Sgt. James Howard, Sgt. Paul Gruenig, Lt. Roscoe Brady, Lt. John Johnson, Cpl. William Herndon, Lt. Edmund Lukas, Sgt. Thomas McGonigle, Sgt. John McHugh, Lt. James Murphy, Cpl. Patrick Haley, 1st Sgt. Eugene Ellis, Sgt. Joseph Noel, Lt. David Riead, Lt. Andrew Tice, Sgt. Henry Walling, Sgt. Eugene Wendorf, Sgt. William Baldrige, Lt. Justus Wetherill.

think so soon." The sunwarmed calm in camp and down on the line flows over all and is in strange, uncanny contrast to the momentous war reports which are coming over the radio waves.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 17

Inaugurating the first phase of a "Special Assignment" over the Ploesti (Roumania) oil refineries, our weather P-38's provide continuous cover over the five distinct targets in the specified area, radio information directly to the approaching bombers, and name the position of those targets not obscured by smoke screens.

Our life in camp passes much the same from day to day and even the changing of the seasons brings forth little basic difference. At 0615 each morning, the Sergeant of the Guard puts a chirping whistle to his lips and produces a trembling, throaty whistle-roll. One by one, we leave our tents, rub sleep-swollen eyes and gradually focus on the mess hall. Here all is quiet and roomy for early risers. But comes the deadline period from 0715 to 0730 and half-dressed soldiers stream from tents, mess kits crash tinnily in the air, and a long line pushes out from the mess hall door. Before eight o'clock, we are on the road leading out to the airdrome and, arriving at the line, are greeted noisily by the alert crews that have been down here since the hours before dawn. A mission has just returned and engineers, armorers, radio, photo and gas truck men converge on the ships and ready them for the next flight. With all the morning's missions down at base, the line is disturbed only by the roar and gritty blast of other units' transports, pursuit planes and photo ships which take off almost continually. . . . Come noontime, we head back to camp, take a look at the war situation map, air our daily predictions, then line up before the mess hall. After we "mangare" heartily, and have discussed the day's news, the events of the morning and the latest rumors, there follows a brief midday siesta—an issue of the "Stars and Stripes" for some, the "sack" for others. . . . At one o'clock, we re-trace our morning route back to the line and fan out to our sections. Heat waves simmer roily on the field and work goes on with the demands of the day. . . . With the coming of early evening, we gather in our tents, in the Day Room, over at the Red Cross, at the horseshoe pits, or on the Red Cross tennis courts. Towel-girded soldiers ply back and forth between tents and the cold-prickling showers and ask the hopeful question, "how's the water?" and hope against hope not to hear the inevitable reply, "cold as hell!" As darkness slides in, we oftentimes fill the campside amphitheatre, stolidly sit through a movie ("you're afraid not to go because you might miss something, but then when you do go, you wonder why!"). The movie over, we stream back to our tents, sit around, talk, read, write letters, while some make directly for their cot. One by one, the camp lights fold into night. The guard watches the last yellow glow in camp and then that too is gone. The stars, the warm intimacy of the night and the roar of planes remain the only companions of those who stand watch in camp and down on the line. . . .

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 19

As the day comes to a close, we complete the last phase of a unique three-day "special assignment" over the flak-walled Ploesti oil refineries in Roumania. During this period, our weather craft (Capt. Dinker, Lts. Nelson, Taylor, Field, Leavens, Major Fuller, Lts. Ade, Cook, Nutter, Horrocks, Pitner, Hopkins, Turner, Cox) are over the target long in advance of the bombers. Circling and weaving to avoid the enemy box pattern of flak, our pilots have obtained technical weather data, plotted the direction and intensity of the ingenious smoke screens over the refineries, and kept watch on all seven areas marked for attack. In addition to being in the area long before and all during the

bomber assaults, our weather P-38's have photographed the effects of the entire operation. Despite a relative defenselessness against a large potential of enemy fighters and flak, all of our pilots taking part in this highly co-ordinated operation return to base without loss or damage sustained.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 20

Late this afternoon, our pilots are called together by General Charles Born (A-3) at the 15th Air Force Headquarters and unofficially commended on their part in the recent "special assignment" over Ploesti: "the past three attacks (on Ploesti) have done more damage than any other attacks; in fact, the three have done almost as much damage as all previous attacks combined."

As a result of cockpit trouble while on his way to Zagreb (Yugoslavia), Lt. Charles Leavens is prevented from going on any further after less than two hours out from base. In the resulting crash landing which he is forced to make one mile north of our field, Leavens suffers a severe shaking up and numerous body burns—"the main thing is that he got out O.K."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 21

Switching attention to oil target areas in Hungary and German troop concentrations in Yugoslavia, Lts. Hopkins, Taylor, Nelson, and Turner radio back information which later sends over 700 heavy bombers roaring to these targets.

2nd Lt. Kurt E. Sterner is today assigned to our Squadron. Of the many transports which wing out from our airdrome, C-47's piloted and crewed by Russians grow in ever-increasing number. The Red Star painted boldly on the side of these ships, cropped-headed, high-booted Russian crewmen walking around on the far side of the field, and the sounds of strangely guttural voices—all are visible evidence of the close integration of our fighting forces.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 22

The name of Capt. John L. Pinney is today added to the roster of our Squadron Flying Officers.

This morning, as on almost every morning, a jeep-with-trailer winds out from camp and bumps half way across Italy. Hours later, this vehicle returns, its trailer now filled with large chunks of ice. Into home-made ice boxes (a box within a box, the outer rim packed with sawdust) goes this summertime luxury. At day's end comes the real appreciation for this service. Returning from the line, we wash up quickly, then grab for a chilled, water-beaded bottle of beer—"nothing like it!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 23

All day long, momentous news comes pounding over the radio: "a new Russian offensive is splintering into Roumania—(and at 1245 hours and in French, Flemish, English, Yugoslav, Italian and Afrikaans) "PARIS HAS BEEN FREED OF NAZI RULE; French Forces of the Interior hold the city!" This last announcement dominates all conversation everywhere—"don't you know the French are going wild!—when you have Paris, you have France—if they can only keep them on the run!" . . . From an unusually quiet "Lord Haw-Haw" speaking from Berlin, we hear that "territorial gains mean nothing. Remember, the Germans once stood at the gates of Moscow but Russia is far from a beaten nation today—in the final battle, Germany has many surprises; all will be used."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 26

Completing missions to Northern Italy, Yugoslavia and Roumania, our pilots radio back favorable weather data and at the last target (Ruschuk, Bulgaria) carry out a direct Roumanian request to seek out a lone ferry which is being used to shuttle Axis troops out of peace-minded Bulgaria. Not without much searching is this ferry found, hidden in

a small cove. Before long, the bombers come over and, with precise information given by our pilots as to the target's position, score a direct hit on the mid-deck of the small craft.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 28

Reading a clipping in the "Stars and Stripes" in which Army Officials say that the European war will be over by October 1st and the Pacific war by the end of 1945, we are both hopeful and apprehensive . . . "we've been in this war from the beginning and it would be just our luck to be there when the very last shot is fired!"

With the appearance of cooler nights and mornings comes the remark, "we'll soon have to get out the old stove," and then the optimist's stinging dismissal, "stove? never have to use it again!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Aug. 30

Coming back from Wright Field Testing Station with nineteen endorsements, the VHF radio modification (increasing radio range from 100 miles to 400 miles) which Capt. Albert Adell and T/Sgt. Forrest Clark recently worked out returns to Italy and is marked "approved." Tacked on to the back of this approval is the memo—"the War Department is to be informed when all such modifications have been made in this Theatre."

SEPTEMBER, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 1

All during the day, billowing, grainy clouds of brown dust obscure the airfield and grind into our skin as Fortresses come in by the dozens and unload hundreds of repatriated Allied Airmen returned from Roumania. . . . In the "now-it-can-be-told" category is the closely connected information that 1st Lt. Russell Field, Jr., up on a "special mission" on the 29th of last month, acted as the relay for a Roumanian airman at a pro-Allied airdrome in his own country, P-51's over the airdrome, and the DF station, "Bigfence." Waiting only on the signal that this airdrome is in Allied hands (this signal relayed by Lt. Field to "Bigfence"), scores of Italy-based heavy bombers were soon on their way to carry out this mass evacuation of hundreds of Allied Airmen shot down over Roumania during the war.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 2

Swinging a bulging val-pack onto the Naples courier plane, T/Sgt. Jack Finn and Sgt. Richard Fichtner are bound for Capri. Heading in the Rome direction are M/Sgt. Barham, M/Sgt. Patrick and S/Sgt. Stolnack.

We experience the first air alert in over two months tonight, but many confidently assert, "the Germans can't get down this far; no gasoline!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 3

Flying Officers assigned to our Squadron this day: 2nd Lts. Albin R. Wenzel, Glen E. Buchanan, Albert Rizzo, Daniel W. Dixon, Carroll W. Feather, Robert T. Fieldhouse, Wesley B. Meeteer and Blaine Murray, Jr.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 6

Of the war in the west, we hear Gen. Dittmarr, Germany's most suave propagandist, say—"because of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy in numbers and material, we are forced to shorten our lines of defense; it is now a battle for time; we must lead the German forces in France back into Germany . . . build hedge-hog positions from which Germany can launch a counter attack; it is now a war of the people, by the people, and for the people!" (shades of Lincoln!)

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 7

Returning from North Africa, Capt. William Dinker tells

of a changed scene: "very few GI's over there now—only one plane on the field at Nouvion; the place looked deserted."

"Really looking forward to this trip," comment Sgts. Joe Schmidling and Paul Kahanic as they leave this afternoon for seven days on the Isle of Capri. Also off on a well-earned leave, to Rome, are Pfc's Thomas Taylor, James Thomas and Zolton Varga.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 8

Flying in direct support of the newly co-ordinated Yugoslav-Russian offensive attempting to cut off German troops in the lower Balkans, Lts. Nelson, Rizzo, Cook, Feather, Field, and Murray precede the bombers to Belgrade, Nis, Sarajevo, Brod and Budapest.

With a fatalism and almost passive resignation, we point to the following paragraph in today's "Stars & Stripes": "what is the average GI's chances to come home?" (and the answer) "small; most of the Army's strength will be shifted to the Pacific and a large occupation force will be needed in Europe." . . . Many men begin piling up lumber before their tents; some even begin re-building and re-trenching.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 9

Heavy, overcast skies prevent the running of any missions this day and the only activity on the line is reflected in the arrival of three more "Mosquito" aircraft along with their sportily dressed British and Canadian personnel. In the shower tonight, one of these RAF Sergeant-Pilots asks, "just what are they going to do with us?" "Beats me," one of our men answers crisply!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 10

At the close of the daily "briefing" in the 15th Air Force Headquarters War Room this morning, Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to Capt. Joseph Walker and Harry Cook.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 11

With tales of a "rough trip" back in a sputtering weapons-carrier which would stop in the valleys, chug up the hills, then speed wildly down into the valley only to repeat the same performance, another group of men returns from Rome long after midnight tonight—"what a trip!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 12

With the official news that Allied troops have crossed from Belgium into Germany, we are told that "the battle for Germany begins."

In a "U" formation on our wind-swept airfield late this afternoon, we stand at rigid attention as Major Gen. Nathan Twining presents the impressive Legion of Merit medal to Master Sergeant Dick Red—"for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service rendered in the modification and installation of aerial camera equipment in weather-reconnaissance type aircraft." Setting us at rest after the formal presentation, Gen. Twining again tells us of the "good job" which we are doing, of our "key position" in the 15th Air Force, and closes with the hope that "we will all be home soon." This last remark is leaped upon by many as we straggle back to camp. "I told you the 154 is going home." . . . "You're crazy with the heat! What he meant was that we'd all go home after the war, the entire war, is over!" . . . At supper tonight, we talk over the General's tour of our camp area, his inspection of one of the tents, and his visit to the mess hall, here surprising a group of early "chow hounds" and confronted by an open-mouthed, wide-eyed Jim Lodge who stops dead in his lunge for the mess hall door just as the General steps out!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 14

Sharply increased operational activity sends Capt. Pinney, Lts. Meeteer, Hopkins, Murray, Major Fuller, Capt. Dinker,

Lts. Horrocks, Turner and Fieldhouse over airdromes in Greece where the enemy is said to be concentrating aircraft for the expected withdrawal, over areas in Southern Germany, and on a "weather-escort" mission to Bucharest.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 16

For those going to Capri, Sgt. Joe Schmidling, just returned from the Isle, advises: "shed your everyday, cynical GI outlook as soon as you arrive. Perform what odious routine marketing tasks your conscience or Squadron mates have dictated and then try to re-orient yourself to the fact that, for once in your GI existence, you are entirely on your own—to do what you please, where, when, and how you please. Not until then will you be able to do justice to what Capri has to offer: peace, quiet and beauty."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 17

Having completed their tour of duty ("and then some!"), Capts. Harry S. Cook, Kenneth H. Cordes and Joseph A. Walker are U. S. A. bound.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 18

In the camp shower tonight, some men discuss the possibility of remaining here another year or more—"if we have to stay overseas another year, there's going to be a change; morale is just going to hit bottom and stay there." Another soldier puts in dully, passively, "you know you'll go where they send you and do what they tell you; you know that."

SPORTS. . . . SOFTBALL: John Sigler, a Canadian player, and Albert Raper. . . . **BADMINTON:** Maj. Edwin Waters, Lt. William Dinker, Capt. Warren Beason. . . . **SOFTBALL:** (154th vs. the Canadians) Charles White, Albert Raper. . . . **HORSESHOES:** Paul Wojcik, Quentin Miller. . . . **TENNIS:** Harold Haley, William Roseberry and Silas Wilson. . . . **Swimming at nearby San Spirito. . . . SWIMMERS:** an unknown Britisher, Roy Butler, James Thomas, another Britisher, Fred Stefano, Robert Jennings, Paul Bronson. . . . **NIGHT FOOTBALL in Bari stadium. . . . Squadron Football team:** (1st row) Thomas Taylor, Kenneth Gunter, Thomas Schaffner, Walter Woodard; (2nd row) Edwin Robinson, William Roseberry, Harry Chiles, Swayne Whitehead, Robert Halboth, Orville Stalnack, Richard Fichtner.

Mushrooming our camp area with their many new tents and injecting their clipped English speech into the conversation are twenty-three English and Canadian crewmen assigned to our Squadron along with newly arrived "Mosquito" aircraft. The "limeys," as they are soon dubbed, watch our uninhibited actions with frank amusement, and, gravely shaking their heads, mark them "daft." We, in turn, make their varied accents, their "gay nineties" mustaches and their exceptional shyness a topic of unbridled conversation. The extreme rank-consciousness of the British Non-Com (one RAF Sergeant moves from a Squadron tent when he learns that all the occupants are Privates) is openly discussed and many times ridiculed. Others dig down a little deeper into the significance of this action and find a reason for its being and strict adoption. "It's always been that way with them; they're Army from way back. . . . I guess the whole story is that we've been together for so long that rank doesn't mean a damn thing; we can't get used to it any other way."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 19

With darkness setting in soon after supper and with the arrival of cooler weather, tents become the nightly gathering spot for many in camp. . . . "winter's not far off."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 20

Returning from a trip to Bucharest, Roumania, Capt. Dinker and Lt. Field are enthusiastic: "it's more like home than anything we've seen yet. Russians are everywhere,



but they are not too well liked. The Roumanians keep asking when the Americans are coming. . . . If an American is refused a room over there, he will usually go and look for another. But not so with the Russian. He just brushes the clerk aside and stands there glaring. Suddenly the clerk remembers that he has just one room left! . . . The countryside over there reminds you of home—lots of trees, large wide fields. The people are just like those at home—well dressed, well fed. They have plenty of everything—eggs, meat, wheat, beer and whipped cream. They say that when the Germans first came down there, they would eat masses of whipped cream—just that!”

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 22

In a new Squadron-formulated operations procedure (the “Lead” mission plan whereby weather-recon. ships precede the bombers 50-75 miles to the target and/or on return from the target and all the time constantly radio weather data to the trailing bombers), Lts. Nelson, Dixon, Capt. Dinker, and Major Fuller are airborne to Munich.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 23

Those who attend the Katherine Cornell-Brian Aherne stage play, “The Barretts of Wimpole Street,” in Bari tonight are of no single mind at its conclusion. “Too slow—pretty good—what a play!” . . . “They ought to send more

All day long, jeeps and trucks back up to the mess hall and disgorge their varied stocks. Orville Stalnack, James Kester, Walter Lee, Clyde Smith, Bill Roseberry and Harold Haley survey the festively decorated Day Room on which they have labored to good effect. Last minute arrangements are hurriedly completed.

Before long, the bar opens and we gather around tables and drink rum and “cokes.” Reflectively, sentimentally, cynically and robustly we talk over the significance and meaning of this day—“should be a swell party; look at all the food Buddy Diemer is setting out—really going to get high tonight—it’s too quiet here; let’s pep things up!—can’t seem to get in the spirit of things—they can have their overseas stripes; just give me the U. S. A.!”

Soon the Day Room is crammed with dimly lighted faces, an ever-moving mass of animated bodies. Amid cheers and whistling, the first girls are squired in by Bernard Bower and “Pop” Ross. More Italian signorinas follow with their soldier-escorts and one man slyly remarks, “looks like quite a few of our laundry women are here tonight!” Out of the hospital for this event come Elias Toscano and Warren Weeks, while down from Foggia come Dalton Raiford, Jack Russell, Herbert Yopp, Edward Lipka, Charles Hill and Robert Drennan. With shiny-faced exuberance, American WAC’s break in upon the scene and are lustily received—



(Sept. 27, 1944). . . . Our two-years-overseas marker is “celebrated” by (left) a buffet supper, (center) a dance (Wesley Whitaker and Douglas Quist refuse to be daunted by the girl shortage!), and (right) good conversation over a week’s ration of beer.

of those kind of shows over here,” exclaims one enthusiastic supporter of the play as he climbs aboard the returning truck. “S—t!,” chews out a dissenter emphatically!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 24

Assigned to our Squadron: Flying Officer, 1st Lt. Edward F. Touhy.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 25

Assigned to our Squadron Engineering Section: T/Sgt. Harvey H. Vaughn and S/Sgt. Simon J. Walaitis.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 27 and 28

“Two years? Hell! Seems like twenty-two!” Thus the day of our being two years overseas slides in upon us. As if in deference to the occasion, there are no operations on the line during the day. In addition, a notice on the bulletin board proclaims the welcome news, “a Squadron holiday from 1200 hours today until 1700 hours tomorrow.”

“American gals, nothing like ‘em!” Another man grumbles sourly, “you can have them; too dull and stiff compared to the Italian girls.” Our cooks, Roy White, Everett Hull, Harry Sandbeck and Norman Jackson, wade through the crowd and place mouth-watering dishes one after the other on a long, white-covered table. Flash bulbs splinter the hazy atmosphere as Hubert Siemer squints behind the lens of his camera and tries to please one and all with his picture taking. . . . Parading in with their well-groomed, knowing-eyed Italian signorinas come many Squadron officers. Of one of these women, an “amazingly built” specimen, someone exclaims, “it would be a physical impossibility for that woman to fall flat on her face!”

From across the way at the British Airmen’s Mess we hear the sounds of thumping music. Here the other half of our celebration, a Squadron dance, is in full swing. Colored lights swirl over the moving couples. The music of the “Squadronaires” blasts assuredly throughout the room. . . . One WAC shrilly asks her partner, “are you one of the

boys who has been overseas two years?" "Hell, no," comes the booming answer, "two months!" The music is suddenly given an injection of jungle drumming, ear-blasting trumpeting. The colored lights whirl; the couples dance almost frenziedly. Our officers feel the heavy hand increasingly upon their shoulder, turn around to face the smile of a Squadron member, then graciously, some not so graciously, hand over their partner.

Although the dance breaks up shortly before midnight, for many in camp the party goes on throughout the night. For others, the news brought in by our English Sergeant-of-the-Guard—"there's going to be a one-thirty alert in the morning; six ships will be taking off."—is a sobering reminder that this will not be a full holiday for all. "Thought it was too good to be true!"

At four o'clock in the morning, the sleeping silence in camp is broken by the mess-kit rattling of the alert crew and the fist-hammering arguments of three loud-voiced men still in the mess hall—"I tell you, the only way to stop wars is to kill every German; every damn one of the bastards!"

Come morning, great quantities of tomato juice are drained by those who manage to make breakfast. Those not at work on the line or on the alert in some other part of the camp sleep on. As the day grows older, a drumming rain throws down a steady silver curtain and makes of all camp a mass of soggy, shoe-clinging mud. We gather in tents and discuss last night's party—"Buddy Diemer did a wonderful job. . . . I don't know; I don't seem to be able

to enjoy such things any more." Referring to the spirit of close comradery which existed between Officers and Enlisted Men last night, one man comments to Capt. Tyler, "shows you just what a democratic Army this is!" Ironically, Capt. Tyler replies, "democratic? I thought so too until someone backed me up in a corner with 'hello, you no good chicken s—t s.o.b.'!"

As the steady rain pecks at the canvas above, some men sleep; others are still held by routine duties down on the line. The holiday spirit has come and gone and a concern for the everyday, the commonplace, seeps in once more—"it's beginning to get chilly; have to start work on a stove pretty soon."

While five of our planes cover Southern Germany and Northern Italy, a sixth plane (Lt. Hobbs) heads toward Bucharest, thus inaugurates the first of a regular series of courier runs to the Roumanian capital.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Sept. 29

S/Sgt. Ralph N. Ferguson is today assigned to our Squadron Engineering Section.

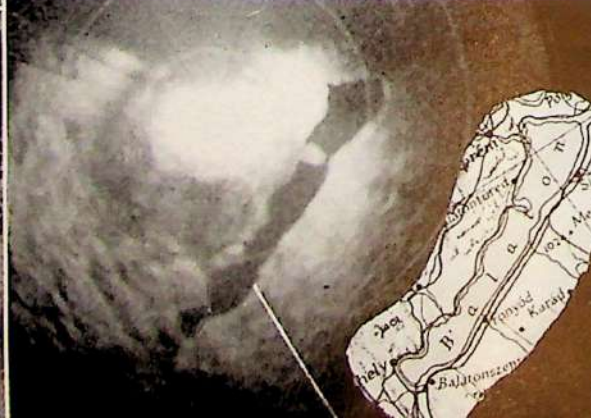
OCTOBER, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 1

The effects of last night's pounding rain are all about us this morning as we slog through a mud-rutted camp—"our tent hardly interrupted the rain at all! . . . wished I never built on that addition; leaks everywhere . . . thank God we put in our wood floor when we did . . . the worst night since the flood at Youks!" . . . "Bloody rain!" is the only

"ON SHIFT". . . For our cooks, the routine never ends. . . . (Top left) Italian KP, and cooks Norman Jackson, Harry Sandbeck, Everett Hull. . . . (Top right) cooks John Grochowski, Quentin Miller. . . . (Lower left) John Hood. . . . (Lower right) Mess Sergeant Roy White, cooks Robert Huey, Harry Sandbeck, an Italian KP, and Evans Libby.





comment which the English and Canadian Airmen spurt out as they recall trenching around their tents late last night while the rain poured down "in buckets!" . . . All during the day, many work on home-made stoves (fashioned from half-size oil barrels), pause only to collect an issue of OD's, an overcoat and another blanket—"our third winter over-seas; I wonder how many more?" Come nighttime, a number of tents once again push forth the old familiar soot-spewing stove pipe.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 2

Pvt. Clyde O. Smith today transfers to the 49th Wing.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 3

The headline in this morning's "Union Jack"—"THE BATTLE FOR GERMANY BEGINS"—sends us once more to reading all papers and listening to all newscasts. "If the war doesn't end this month, it won't be over until next spring."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 4

The "busiest day yet" is marked today as eleven planes (Lts. Feather, Dixon, Meeteer, Capt. Pinney, Lts. Turner, Fieldhouse, Hopkins, Murray, Nelson, Taylor and Reid) provide coverage over a wide arch of targets from Central Germany to Southern Greece.

AERIAL PHOTOS. . . . Mt. Vesuvius; note outer crater. . . . St. Peter's in Rome. . . . Bomber condensation trails, clouds, and the sun's rays combine over Pola, Italy, to form a fragile scene. . . . The ruins of Cassino, Italy, just after its capture by the Allies in June 1944. . . . The rising sun is no stranger to our pilots. . . . A radar-equipped P-38 ("droop-snoop") heads for Southern Germany. . . . Having completed their mission and now returning to base, our weather planes pass heavy bombers heading for the beaches on "D" Day (Aug. 15, 1944) in Southern France. . . . Our home base, Bari (Italy) Airdrome. Squadron aircraft and section buildings are at right, center. . . . (April 9, 1945) On the day of the "big push" in Italy, our pilots photograph strings of bombs bursting in the Po Valley. . . . Augsburg, Germany, from 12,000 feet. . . . Typical winter cloud conditions ("nine-tenths") through which our weather-craft must fly. . . . The bleak coastline of Northwest Yugoslavia. . . . Mountainous area near Pecs, Hungary. . . . A radar photo of Hungary's Lake Balaton. Note radar image's accuracy to map figure (at right). . . . A sun-molten layer of cloud over the Yugoslav coast.

ARMAMENT SECTION. . . . Joseph Delaney cleans the guns on a P-38 just returned from a mission. . . . Aircraft armament is given a thorough check-up by James Thomas. . . . In the Armament hut: James Welch, Charles Sutliff, John Patrick, Lt. Cletis Bennett (Section Officer) and Ladislaus Kish. . . . Exterior of Armament Hut.

For his "exceptional and untiring" work performed on the modification of the K-24 aerial camera, Capt. Francis S. Kalinowski, our rangy Engineering Officer, is today awarded the Legion of Merit.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 6

Arriving as replacements for men recently rotated are T/Sgt. James W. Jacobs (Supply), Sgt. William D. Hern-don (Mess) and Sgt. David Cohen (Operations).

Bari Airdrome, Italy, Oct. 7

The resumption of 15th Air Force bombings on a large scale (928 bombers; 1627 tons) is directly supported by ten of our planes which precede the "heavies" over Vienna, Lake Balaton and the Zagreb area at spaced intervals throughout the day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 8

Creating a definite gap in camp, many of the attached English and Canadian Aircrews leave our Squadron this day. "It was good while it lasted," says one Englishman on departing. "At least we ate like human beings for a change; a man can go just so long on 'bully beef' and such as that!" One RAF aircraftsman puts his sentiments to verse:



FRIENDS FROM AMERICA

"We hate alike a common foe, we share a common fight,
 And yet our soldier friends we scarcely knew.
 Their homes across the ocean were beyond our feeble sight.
 Our island minds remained unseeing too.
 But fortune smiled on us abroad, and ordered thence, we
 found within their midst perforce we had to live.
 We dined together, pitched our tents upon the self-same
 ground, received what they, our hosts were glad
 to give.
 We spoke their tongue except, perhaps, a chance colloquial
 word, and thus exchange in thought did freely flow.
 Their frank, and bold opinions we with keen attention heard,
 And much about their lives we came to know.
 Their glittering efficiency, their industry and zeal,
 We watched with praise and wonder in our eyes.
 Their open hospitality and friendship set a seal,
 Upon the bond which now our nation ties.
 We thank you, gallant comrades, who a mutual exile rue,
 Our joint success the stricken world awaits.
 And soon in peace we hope an old acquaintance to renew,
 As pilgrims to your great United States."

H. Komiliades, Flt./Sgt.
 256 Squadron, RAF

Also leaving our Squadron is Pfc. Joseph Lynch, heading
 for the Rome Airbourne Training Center.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 12

"Lead" missions to and from varied targets in the Bologna
 area of Northern Italy and in close co-operation with the
 U. S. 5th Army's renewed offensive on the central sector are
 the prime efforts of the day.

In our downtown Bari "War Room," our Officers stand
 at attention late this afternoon as Maj. Gen. Nathan Twin-
 ing presents many Squadron awards: the Legion of Merit
 to Capt. Francis S. Kalinowski; the Distinguished Flying
 Cross to Major James H. Fuller, Capt. William R. Dinker,
 1st Lts. Roy E. Nelson, Russell W. Field, Jr., Robert C.

CAMPBIDE RED CROSS. . . . Panorama showing Red Cross tennis courts, amphitheatre, and main club building. . . .
 1st Sgt. Doyne Townsend squires "Louise" to a popular Friday night dance. . . . The reading room—"a good place on
 a rainy night!" . . . "Coffee and doughnut time": (at counter; 2nd and 3rd from left) Charles Sutliff and Zolton Varga.
 . . . Ice cream comes in with another summer. Elwood Travers, James Rodgers, Harry Schellingburger, Thomas Schaff-
 ner, and Fred Stefano. . . . Through the line for "seconds." (At counter) Fred Stefano, Leo Tunnell, Percy Cooper and
 Thomas Schaffner.

Hopkins, Richard J. Horrocks—all flying awards for par-
 ticipation in the highly successful "special assignment" over
 the Ploesti, Roumania, oil fields on the days 17-18-19 of
 August this year.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 13

Friday the 13th is marked an "exciting day" by Lts.
 Murray, Turner, Sterner, Rizzo, Dixon, Fieldhouse and
 Capt. Pinney who, covering the areas of inner Czechoslo-
 vakia, Austria and Hungary, experience flak and trailing
 enemy aircraft at some time or other during their separate
 flights.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 15

Playing their first games of the season, our Officers and
 Enlisted Men form their football "eleven's" on different
 fields but end up with the same lament, "beaten!"

"Just the same as ever" is beaming, former Squadron
 member Joe Stanley (now a 1st Lieutenant with a Bomb
 Squadron in Corsica) who stops by our Squadron for a
 brief visit.

Rumors that our Communications and Engineering Sec-
 tions will be substantially upped in strength are rampant as
 we hear of a projected addition of radar equipment to our
 Squadron aircraft. "What with all this intricate radio equip-
 ment, the planes themselves will be incidental!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 19

Leaving on an emergency furlough, Capt. Francis Kali-
 nowski heads for the U. S. this day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 22

At day's end, 1st Lt. Carroll W. Feather has not returned
 from a mission to the Po Valley. Information later re-
 ceived from "Bigfence" tells of a "crashed aircraft in the
 Spur area"; this plane is subsequently identified as that of
 our missing pilot. Another of our airmen who passed
 through the same treacherous area comments, "in between
 the mountains, the wind and air currents threw my ship
 around like a leaf."





("Tonight we saw a stage show at the outdoor theatre just across from camp"). . . . "Rouhia," Arabian dancer. . . . USO singers. . . . Pert girl singer at our 30-months-overseas stage show. . . . Another "chanteuse." . . . Danny Thomas ("a good comedian!") . . . "Buddy" Diemer and fellow-stater (whistling-dancer) Lynn Mayberry. . . . Torch singer. . . . "She looked over the audience with a languid stare" (Marlene Dietrich). . . . We gather at the amphitheatre hours before any show, talk, play cards, read, or just sit and wait. . . . A nimble USO acrobat.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 25

The first Enlisted Man to be so honored in our Squadron, S/Sgt. William E. Roseberry, Photo Section, is today awarded the Bronze Star, this for "meritorious achievement during March 1944 when his Squadron experienced crippling problems with newly installed aerial camera equipment—(at that time) he undertook the task of effecting a solution to the technical difficulties and perfected innovations of aerial camera usage which proved highly successful under combat conditions imposed upon them by operational activity of (high-flying) weather aircraft."

A slight breeze stirs the threatening Italian skies this afternoon as 1st Sergeant Doyne Townsend stands before the Squadron grouped on the ragged stone benches of the campside amphitheatre. Once again he outlines the Squadron rotation plan: "in this drawing out of a hat, we'll pick twelve names; six to go home on 30-day furlough and six to go home for permanent change of station." All this while, some men sit mumbling quietly to their neighbor, others laugh out with forced, nervous hoarseness; some just sit and wait—"why don't they get it over with?" Three mess cups are filled with small capsules, inside of each a name. The drawing begins. Amid expectant hoots and hollering three Red Cross Girls finger out the twelve capsules. A further sub-division is made, this for those on rotation and those on furlough. The folded slips are now taken from their capsules. The first name is read—"Private Edward Harris; temporary duty!" ("well, old 'gizelle' finally made it!") Then—"Sgt. Bill Goodner (Permanent), Cpl. James Hennessy (P), Cpl. John Hubay (Temporary), Cpl. Boffie Sims (P), S/Sgt. Clair Gibbons (T), S/Sgt. Herman Steinborn (P), Sgt. Mike Simetkosky (T), Sgt. Havis Overton (P), Cpl. Douglas Quist (T), S/Sgt. George Crowell (P), Sgt. John Waters (T) and Cpl. Jack Booth (T)." The last name read, we quickly leave the amphitheatre and filter back to camp or down to the line once more. All over camp, wherever the "chosen few" are spied, there is a session of hand-shaking and hearty back-slapping. "I still feel pretty shaky," comments one of the rotation-lucky—"it sure is a funny feeling; you begin to think of

things you never thought of before." Another soldier, down on the line at the time of the drawing and later told that he is to go home on 30 day furlough, glares at his beaming informant, then blurts out, "you're just slinging me a line of s—t!" and goes on with his work. Others comment dully, "well, we know we're here for another few months!" For twelve men in camp tonight, there will be a new tone to communicate westward. Some of the lucky twelve may even begin their letter with the simple, slowly-formed words, "I AM COMING HOME!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 26

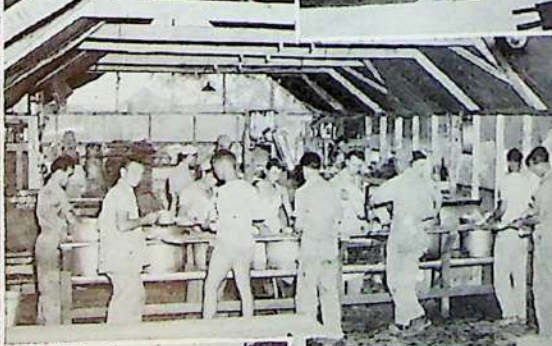
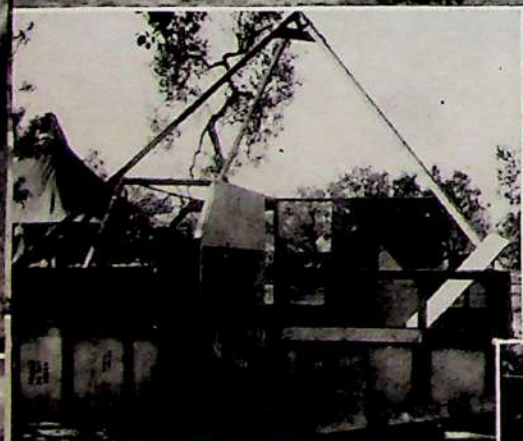
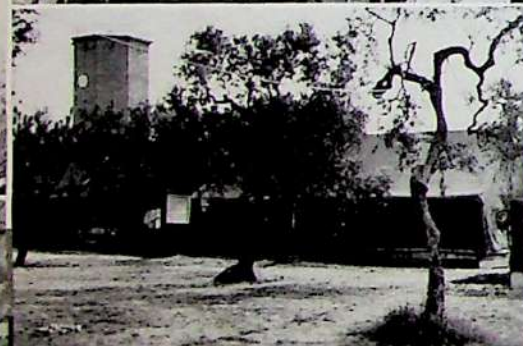
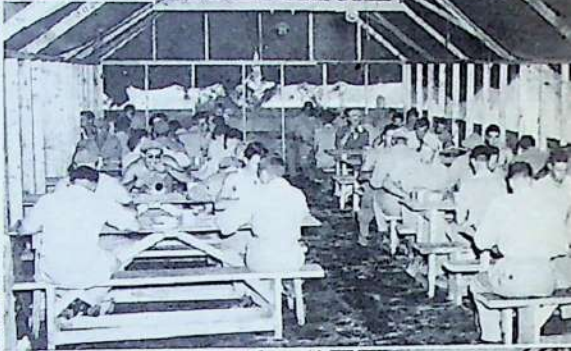
Notification is today received that all Squadron personnel is entitled to wear another Battle Star (the 4th), this for aerial participation and ground support before and during the invasion of Southern France.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 27

The prediction, "winter is not far off," is given an ever increasing reality as the days pass by. The airfield once again becomes sodden and rutted; our camp area takes on a rain-soaked, bare appearance. Each morning a sharper chill comes into the air and the skies are wavily streaked with soot-spewings from the stoves in each tent. With the coming of the rains in earnest, the lands about us break into a strange out-of-season greenness . . . "you'd think Spring was here if you didn't know Italy better. Beats the hell out of me why they call it SUNNY Italy!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 28

Briefed for a mission to Klagenfurt, Austria, Lts. Murray and Meeteer are told that although the weather is known to be bad all along the way to the target, a comparatively small number of bombers is to take part in this operation and that their job (the weather-craft) will not be, as in previous missions, to seek a route void of clouds, but this time to help the bombers stay in the clouds. A few hours later, the bombers, preceded by our P-38's, are brought over the Klagenfurt aircraft factory. Thus our planes and pilots inaugurate another technique—"180 degrees different" from all previous experience.



Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 29

Attached to our Squadron today for the purpose of setting up a radar shop are Cpls. Leon R. Barnett, Jack J. Bottarini, John W. Best, and James W. Cokl.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 30

Hearing the news this afternoon, our Executive Officer, William L. Tyler, smiles widely, then self-consciously dons the gold leaf of a MAJOR.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Oct. 31

On a mission to North and Southwest Yugoslavia today, Lt. Daniel Dixon encounters an ME-109 which shoots out his coolant and hydraulic systems. Forced to fly on one engine and on instruments for three hours, our pilot returns to base and makes a skid landing down the length of the runway, across the road, and practically up to the stone wall on the other side. "A close one!"

In camp this pay day, a group forms in front of the Supply tent. Voices rise and fall, pleading, demanding, harsh, soothing—"little Joe . . . My God, not that! . . . blind their eyes . . . faded!" All afternoon the game goes on and come supper time, men grudgingly leave in shifts. When they return, the play has been moved indoors to the Day Room. Darkness settles down over all. Hours pass and midnight comes and goes and there is no perceptible thinning of the group. Now "rolling them" on the wood floor of a tent, these men push away the accustomed claims of sleep and intently watch the spotted cubes. A yellow moon-flood and silver mist-cape cover the stilled camp area. Men trying to sleep in tents close to the scene of the game mutter and curse. The game goes on, breaking up only as a light rain fingers on the canvas above and a scudding moon slowly pales with the imminence of another day. . . .

NOVEMBER, 1944**Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 1**

With a growing resignation, we read the words of Winston Churchill's latest speech—"I certainly cannot predict, still less guarantee, the end of the German War before the end of spring or even before we reach early summer."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 2

Continuing on the close-support efforts to PFF (radar-equipped) bomber formations hitting at Vienna oil refineries and targets in Yugoslavia and Hungary, Lts. Rizzo, Verplanck, Field, Bates and Chaulsett are airborne on five missions throughout the day.

Over at the British Airmen's Mess tonight, we hold a dance, expectantly called the "Citation Dance." . . . "If not the best, then the noisiest one yet."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 5

In co-operation with "the greatest force of MAAF bombers (500) to drop on one target," Lts. Field, Bates,

Fieldhouse and Touhy precede the heavies to the Vienna Florisdorf oil refinery upon which an unprecedented 1029 tons of bombs are loosed.

Transferred to Air-Sea-Rescue duty at nearby Taranto: 1st Lt. Walter Humphrey.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 7

If the "Stars and Stripes" had not played up its arrival, election day in the States would have gone practically unnoticed here in camp. Terse and brief, many men agree that "Roosevelt will probably get in again; there isn't much choice . . . it will be a close race."

For those of us so inclined (exclusive of men in the Radio Section) three-day "on-your-own" passes are granted and become increasingly popular—"I take every chance I can to get away from camp."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 9

News that Franklin D. Roosevelt has won his fourth consecutive Presidential election is casually noted—"I thought he would win out, but not by such a wide margin . . . Dewey talked himself out of the election . . . the soldier vote didn't mean a damn!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 10

Taking spirited leave of Squadron Officers and Enlisted Men after an early morning session of lusty community (!) singing in the mess hall, our former Commanding Officer, Major James H. Fuller, is United States bound—"if all C.O.'s leave us alone the way he did, they'll be O.K."

Radio reports tell of an American offensive in the Metz area of France and there are a few optimists who mumble, "breakthrough; the big push." Others just glance at the winter-greyed skies here in Italy, add to this a visualization of the scenes of mud and rain in France and comment, "won't be over till next spring; you can't move in this kind of weather."

Heading for a radio gunner's berth on a B-17, Pvt. Paul S. Bronson leaves the Squadron this day to join the 97th Bomb Group, now in Foggia.

Captain William R. Dinker today takes over his duties as Commanding Officer of our Squadron.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 11

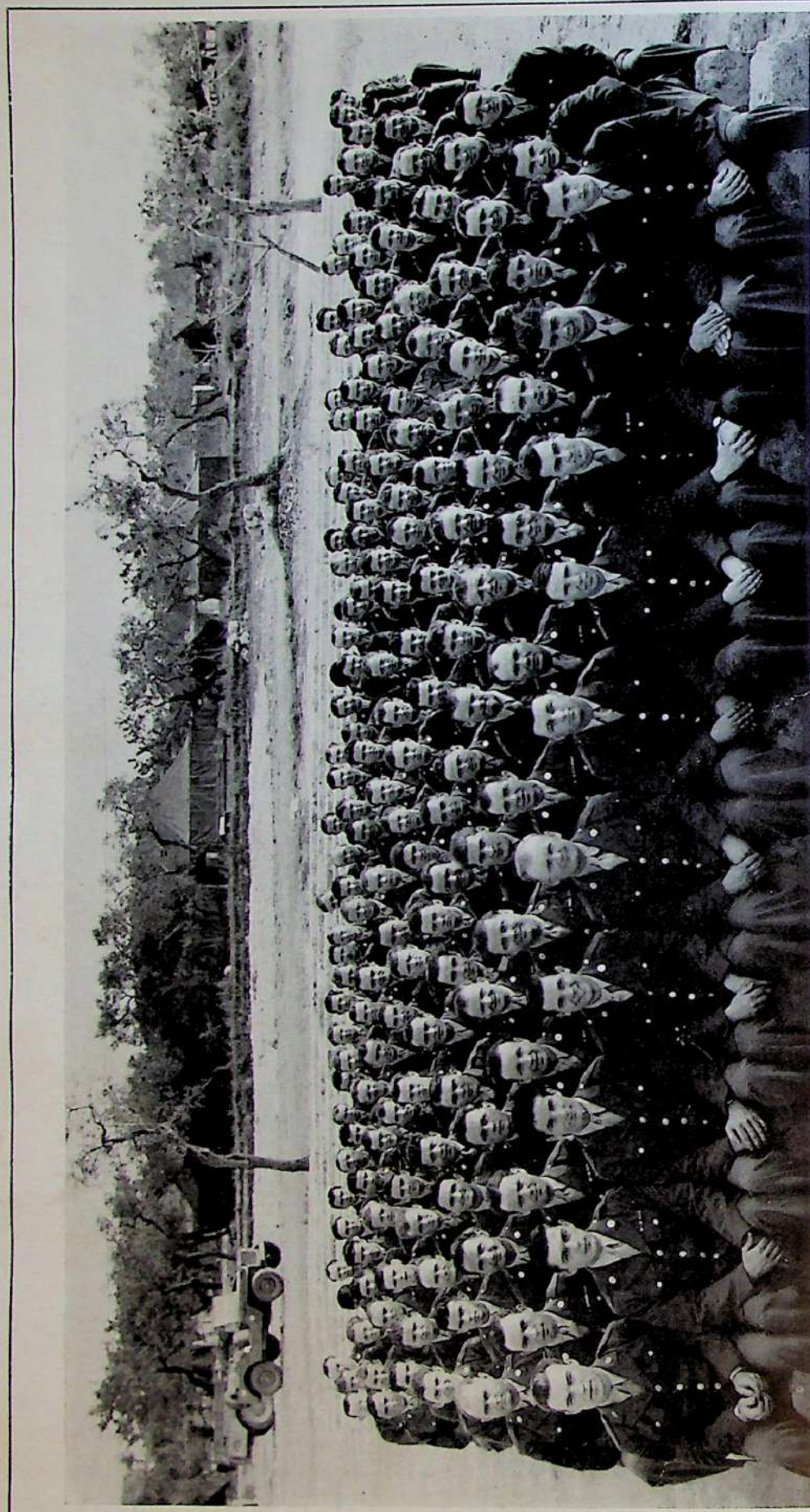
Assigned: 2nd Lts. William R. MacVittie, Roy A. Herres, Willis L. Hart, Elwin S. Harrison, Donald F. Huntsman, Everett L. Harris.

Commenting on steadily increasing operational activity, workers down on the line say, "we're doing more now than ever before—the only drawback is this alert business—Jesus, but it gets cold when you have to get up at two o'clock in the morning!—might as well be a night-flying squadron!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 14

Once again our estimates as to the war's end in Europe are painfully stretched as Winston Churchill declares, "it is

LIFE IN CAMP. . . . Ralph "Judge" Horwich marks the daily changes on the war-situation map as Robert Heater and Donald Still look on. . . . Beer ration night in the Day Room. Orville Stolnack (left) and Ralph Ferguson (right). . . . Max Goldberg gets a "trimming" from the Italian barber set up in camp. . . . "Mail's In!" Norman Geekie sorts out the day's letters while Ralph Horwich watches eagerly. . . . The first shower set-up in camp. . . . Interior of Enlisted Men's Day Room. . . . Deluxe shower building, another of the many Gerig-Raddatz efforts. . . . "Uncle Tom's Gabinetto". . . . Cook's eye view of the mess hall any summer noontime. . . . Church services are held every Sunday night in the Chapel across from camp. . . . Poker is a popular pastime (William Smith, Robert Halboth, Harvy Vaughn, Selmer Clark, Willie Wright, Lonnie Pearson). . . . Exterior of four-room Camera Club tent. . . . (Below) Ration line. . . . "Water's a bit cold." (Joe Schmidling in shower). . . . Mess Hall. . . . Ingenious interior of one tent. . . . Another tent interior showing half-oil-barrel stove in foreground. . . . Entrance to Day Room. . . . Camera Club in the building. . . . Scene which we note each day while walking back from chow. . . . We pass through the line in the mess hall. . . . Guards (standing) Francis Stevens, John O'Connor, Joseph Schmidling, Fred Stefano, and Zolton Varga glumly read off their shift and post to Sergeant-of-the-Guard, Forrest Diemer. . . . The Headquarters-Personnel building. . . . Special Service's "Buddy" Diemer (left) is host at a surprise birthday party for fourteen Squadron members. Among them, (at table, left to right), Manuel Lean, John Hood, Selmer Clark, James Pullin and Harold Sander. . . . "Water man" William ("Frog") Roessner, fills up the Photo Section tank. . . . Edwin Robinson and Thomas Taylor take a leisurely hot (!) shower.



SQUADRON ENLISTED MEN: MAY 4, 1944, BARI, ITALY. . . (FIRST ROW) John Llewellyn, James Wetzel, Andrew Orsini, Thomas Taylor, Andrew Ondovchik, George Replyuk, William Hall, Virgil Snoddy, Roy White, Virgil Steele; (SECOND) Julian Stires, Lewis Leopold, John Sigler, Forrest Diemer, John Fischer, William Salter, Clair Gibbons, Glen Hefner, Kenneth Gunter, John Grochowski; (THIRD) John Patrick, Louis Stathakis, Samuel Owens, Manuel Lean, Harry Sandbeck, Norbert Raddatz, Harold Sander, Eugene McKenna, John Goin, John Lensis, Robert Scates; (FOURTH) William Hunt, Ladislaus Kish, Wesley Whitaker, Eugene Gerig, Francis Sanders, Edgar Duff, Elwood Travers, Charles Brown, Lawrence Weaver, Ray Serda, Willie Russell; (FIFTH) Albert Raper, Silas Wilson, Dick Red, Byrl Sloan, James Welch, Edwin Robinson, Mike Simekowsky, Phil Scigman, Elmer Gibbons, Stanislaw Kij, Briney Golba; (SIXTH) Eulon Weeks, James Pullin, Lonnie Pearson, William Roessner, James Thomas, Charles Sutliff, Charles Girola, Bernard Bower, Lloyd Dallas, Ted Ferguson, Charles Ross; (SEVENTH) John Hood, Robert Huey, Evans Libby, Jesse Smith, Quentin Miller, James Shehans, Harold Haley, Hubert Siemer, William Roseberry, Walter Lee, James Tanner, L. D. Owens, Dalton Raiford, George Moon; (EIGHTH) Harry Schellingburger, Ralph Horwich, Harry Chiles, James Kester, Everett Hull, Clyde Smith, James Rodgers, Thomas Schaffner, Otis Taylor, Jack Finn, Mahlon Sweet, Orville Stolnack, Fred Stefano, William Sawyer; (NINTH) Max Goldberg, John Traffenstedt, Jacob Stadler, Robbie Barham, Frederick Gillies, James Lodge, Fred Higdon, Joseph Schmidling, Forrest Clark, Carl Anderberg, James Hennessy, Robert Heater, Percy Cooper, John Hubay, Joseph Abernethy; (TENTH) Bill Goodner, James Brennan, Havis Overton, Robert Gradoville, Russell Brossman, Howard Martin, Vincent Martinek, Alexander Winstead, Warren Weeks, Swayne Whitehead, Paul Kahanic, Edward Harris, George Stanley, Charles White, Joseph Lynch, Walter Woodward, Robert Lynch; (ELEVENTH) Alvin Hafley, Jack Booth, William Lewis, George Shirutis, Florencio Baragan, John White, George Casey, Gerrel O'Quin, Harold Steed, Edwin Tole, Francis Stevens, Clifford Deaton, Walter Fey, Carl Rorick, Arnold Christenson, D. Ross Grimes, Charles Hill; (TWELFTH) William Morene, William Reid, Julian Sandoval, Donald Still, Herman Smith, Willie Wright, Frank Stanley, Thomas Stone, Beecher Samples, Brady Fil-
ingim, Joseph Delaney, Eutalio Rodriguez, Albert Drewke, Boffie Sims, Robert Halboth, Robert Jennings, Selmer Clark, Herman Steinborn.

possible that six months hence the enemy will be beaten." . . . Here in Italy, Gen. Alexander, Commander of the Armies in Northern Italy, warns all Italian patriots to cease large-scale operations because of the "inevitable slackening of the battle under winter conditions." Also in the news: Hitler's failure to speak on the anniversary of the famous "beer cellar night" and his warning to the German people and made through Himmler—"anyone who today lifts a sword or throws a bomb again in Germany will be mercilessly and ruthlessly exterminated."

An "all-too-seldom" promotion letter is posted today and we read of and heartily agree upon the latest advancements: James W. Tanner to MASTER/SERGEANT; John A. Fischer to TECH/SERGEANT; Selmer D. Clark and Harold L. Steed to STAFF/SERGEANT.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 15

That "fatal 50th" mission is completed by 1st Lt. Russell W. Field, Jr. on a flight to Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, today.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 16

Leaving the Squadron on emergency rotation, Pfc. Harry K. Sandbeck heads for the U. S. . . . Assigned: 1st Lt. Edwin M. Rosenthal, 2nd Lts. Robert V. Clifford, Kenneth

C. Vradenburg, Roy T. Fortner, William A. Verplanck, Warren A. Bates, and F. O. Charles F. Kyle. Attached to our unit are radar-maintenance personnel: Cpls. Stanley F. Barnish, William F. Chaffee, David H. Chapman, and Stephen D. Ewing.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 17

News that "the entire Western Front is aflame with a series of Allied offensives" is headlined in today's "Stars & Stripes" and we realize that despite snow, mud and rain, an all-out attempt to break through into the heart of Germany has begun . . . "the Germans still have plenty of fight left in them . . . you've got to respect the bastards!"

Slipping away from the Squadron almost unnoticed go Sgt. Bill Goodner, Cpl. James Hennessy, Cpl. Boffie Sims (all permanent change of station), Cpl. Jack Booth and Pvt. Edward Harris (both 30-day furlough). These are the first men to go home on the new rotation-lottery system.

At midday today, we hear the dulled report of Lt. Johnson, one of our pilots up on a mission to Vienna, Austria—"on the way back, Touhy's plane spun in over Yugo . . . no parachute left the plane . . . the ship was burning when I left."

"Awarded this day." . . . (Sept. 12, 1944) Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining (center) awards the Legion of Merit to M/Sgt. Dick Red (right); Squadron Commander, Major James Fuller, is at left. . . . (Oct. 12, 1944) Capt. Francis Kalinowski (right), Engineering Officer, is decorated with the Legion of Merit by General Twining. . . . (Jan. 17, 1945) Congratulations to Photo Section's S/Sgt. William Roseberry (right), awarded the Bronze Star, are extended by Lt. William Turner. . . . (April 4, 1945) S/Sgt. William Reid (center), Bronze Star recipient, is congratulated by Squadron Commander Major William Dinker (right). Reid's Section Officer, Lt. Henry Lanini (Transportation) is at left.





Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 18

Up on a practice mission this afternoon, Lt. Everett Harris reports severe engine trouble in the Ancona area and shortly thereafter is forced to abandon his plane. As yet, no further data have come in as to the whereabouts or condition of our pilot.

Most "confidential" toward all who ask them anything about their doings for the past week, S/Sgt. Millard Potter, Sgt. Stanislaw Kij, Cpl. Robert Scales and Pfc. Roy Butler return from radar school at nearby Gioia. Telling of their stay—"Kij tried all week to stump the teachers on a technical question, finally caught them up on a simple procedure! . . . we learned a lot; slept, ate and thought with the set (tail-warning radio device); I could draw it blind-folded I know it so well . . . taught me one thing; I can't go to school after the war is over; can't stay awake!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 21

A "strangely immaculate" camp area (unlived-in looking tents—"everything you use hidden away!") and an unnatural "Sunday feeling" mark the second formal visit of the Inspector General. "For once, they should leave things as they are and see what happens!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 22

"Hart's on his way in!" Thus do we hear of the return of 2nd Lt. Willis L. Hart, missing on yesterday's mission to the Lake Konstanz area of Germany. Mistaking the west coast of Italy for the west coast of Yugoslavia, this pilot lands safely at Sardinia! "I was pretty low on gas about that time; saw a U. S. Navy balloon over the island and landed!"

About 1600 hours each and every afternoon, eight "chosen men" walk slowly into the mess hall and reach for one of the folded slips cast out upon a table by the current Sergeant-of-the-Guard. The "line" posts, the switchboard post, and the transportation post—all are soon allotted. . . . As darkness descends, we take up our post, slowly patrol the area; more often, if we are down on the line or at the switchboard tent, seek out the other guard or whoever happens to be around and re-hash the day's events, the war news or the latest rumors—"the only time I do any serious thinking is when I'm on guard—not me; my mind's a blank; all I can think of is sleep!" Down at the "bastard post," the transportation tent, we automatically fall into a conversational routine with the Italian sentinel nearby—"America buono—Italia non buono—signorina buono—finito guerra; casa—militari non buono—poco cigarette; poco mangiare." And so the night passes. With impatient, increasingly frequent watch-consultings, we follow the progress of the time, crane eagerly for the appearance of the headlights of a jeep or the bobbing circle of a flashlight which signify that our relief is coming. The last shift over, we head back to the tent and by the light of a flashlight crawl back into the cot. Soon the body is lost in the sleep so much pondered on and so eagerly awaited. So passes another night of "seemingly endless" guard duty.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 23

"Damned if today doesn't seem like a holiday," exclaims one soldier who stretches out on his cot after this day's Thanksgiving dinner, then mutters, "the best yet, bar none—"

"The Distinguished Flying Cross is today awarded to: Lt. Edwin Rosenthal (right); Colonel Fellows, presenting Officer. . . . Capt. Eugene Churchill (right); Major General Nathan Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Robert Hopkins (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Donald Clark (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Kenneth Cordes (left); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Albert Rizzo (right); Brig. Gen. Charles Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Robert Fieldhouse (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Jack McFarland (left); Gen. Myers (right); Gen. Born (left), presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Joseph Walker (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. George Myers (right); Gen. Born (left), presenting Officer. . . . Capt. Verne Kelsey (left); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Capt. William Dinker (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Capt. John Pinney (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Roy Nelson (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Harry Cook (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer."

Hull and the boys outdid themselves today!" For those on duty down on the line and in camp, however, this day is just a little out of the ordinary—"the ships get dirty just the same, have to be gassed up just the same; the war doesn't stop. That sure was a good dinner, though; all you'd need to really enjoy it is to be back in the States."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 25

Preceded by a short explanation of the "new deal" on Squadron furloughs to the States ("anyone who can be spared from the Squadron can go back to the U. S. on a 30-day furlough; when he returns to the outfit, he comes as a 'rookie' as far as rotation or another furlough go"), we take part in the second rotation drawing, this for twelve men who, during the next four months, will go home on permanent rotation. One by one, the names are drawn and read: Bernard Bower—William Smith—Jack Finn ("there goes Tech Supply!")—Briney Golba ("who'll take care of the PE's?")—Francis Sanders—James Tanner—Charles Girola—Robert Heater—Forrest Diemer—Joseph Abernethy—Michael Halick and Harold Haley. "It's better drawing a large bunch this way; you know one way or the other and you don't have to sweat it out." . . . At the end of the drawing, an election is held to choose a Bar Committee. The lucky (?) three: S/Sgt. Stolnack, T/Sgt. Appler and S/Sgt. Lodge.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 27

By 1700 hours tonight a report of the number of men who can be spared from their sections for a 30-day furlough is submitted to Headquarters. For the greater part of the Squadron (Engineers, Radio Men), however, there is no chance for such a furlough and the reason is given, "short handed." Those who have a chance to take this furlough and refuse are definite in their opinions: "every day I'd be home, my wife and I would be thinking the same thing—one day less to go." Others come forth with, "anything at all that will get me out of the Army even for a short time is good; never refuse anything the Army offers."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 28

The addition of a tail warning device, (to warn of possible rear attacks on unwary aircraft), installed by S/Sgt. Potter, Sgt. Kij, Cpl. Scales, Pfc. Butler, Lts. Clausen and DeGraut, is tested on a practice mission and "works O.K.!" . . . "Now if 'Jerry' only had some planes!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 29

Noticeable during these days are two main outlooks. One has settled down to patient, resigned waiting. In this there is no questioning, only a day-to-day acceptance. The other attitude fairly bristles with real or imagined ills. The continued sameness, the knowledge that there is little likelihood of change, the close ("too close"), constant association with the same men in the same atmospheres have all begun to indicate their effect, noticeable in increased restlessness, discontent, sudden irritation, brooding and short temper . . . "used to be that the little things didn't bother me, but now it seems that sometimes I just look for trouble or someone to curse!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Nov. 30

Noting the arrival here on our airdrome of Gen. Eisenhower's Chief Air Deputy, Sir Arthur Tedder, and specu-

SORTIE

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

154th Weather Squadron Gets Citation For Ploesti Reports

Veteran of more than thirty months' foreign service, the 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron has been presented the Distinguished Unit Citation.

This high award was given in recognition of the part played by the unit in the final attacks on the Ploesti oil refineries. Assigned the important and entire new task of covering this high priority target before and during the attacks by the Fifteenth Army Air Force heavy bombers in order to report to the formations which of the targets were clear of the effective screens that had made Ploesti an elusive target to the squadron so successful.

Pilots as Weather Detectives

AN AMERICAN BOMBER BASE IN ITALY (ONA)—How thoroughly Germany will be bombed this winter, and the effect of this factor upon the length of the war, depends largely upon a youthful West Point lieutenant colonel, a group of expert assistants, and a squadron of busy boys flying P-38s, and their battle with the Alps, flak and fighters.

Flight Plans Depend on Weather

The ice-sheathed peaks of the Alps are, to the 15th Air Force and the British bombers based in the Alps, and we're always operating on two sides—one of Germany. And the Alps have a nasty habit of pushing up a so high that nothing can get it—and that is dangerous.

Reports Unexpected Changes

Neelson's weather detecting pilots. When ground weather stations lead these pilots, their equipped planes, beginning deep into enemy territory, looking for targets of opportunity, but for an unexpected change in cloudiness and weather. That's important success or failure of a mission. It means a lot of a weather Lightning busy man, over the continent.

AIR WAR By PAT FRANK

Weather Recon Passes 1,000th

HQ MAAF — The 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, with the 15th AAF, completed the 1,000th mission for the weather reconnaissance unit. The mission was a routine patrol over Trieste in northern Italy when he ran into two 109s battling around in high cloud corridors.

P-38 Recon Plane Downs ME-109 By Sitting On It

By JOHN O. KEARNEY (Stars and Stripes Staff Writer)

WITH THE 15TH AIR FORCE, April 6—A P-38 reconnaissance plane operating with the 15th Air Force knocked down a gun-blazing ME-109 by squatting on it at 26,000 feet, it was announced today.

Lt. Robert P. Zirkle, shy 24-year-old from Venedocia, Ohio, was out on a routine patrol over Trieste in northern Italy when he ran into two 109s battling around in high cloud corridors.

It was a bad moment. Zirkle had been having trouble with his ship. One motor was out. Speed was down some 60 miles an hour below normal cruising. And besides, he wasn't up there to pick a fight; he'd been sent aloft to get vital weather information. But you can't tell that to an enemy fighter when he starts after you.

The MEs came on at about eight o'clock, just below and over Zirkle's left shoulder. With a half-crippled ship there was no point in trying to run for it. Zirkle turned in to meet them. The fact that he was having trouble with a motor must have been obvious. One of the

Lead Out For Weather

By Sgt. ALLAN PALMER Staff Writer

WITH THE 15TH AAF

IN THE cold dawn of Jan. 31, 1945, two P-38s of a weather reconnaissance squadron of the 15th AAF swished off the runway at their southern Italy base and, climbing in an expanding circle, pointed for Vienna. As they moved out over the Adriatic they contacted the leader of a train of bomb-laden Liberators and Flying Fortresses which were trailing within easy radio range. The clipped conversation, at quarter-hour intervals, went something like this:

7:45: "Rattop to Pruneface. Low stratus at 10,000 in sector B. Ground visible. Acknowledge."

8:00: "Rattop to Pruneface. Cumulus in sector C reaching to 12,000. Ground

These P-38s Cut Half A Year Off The War With Their Snooping

squadron — which a few months ago initiated the "lead out" mission—it has been explored, developed, improved and brought to as near routine as the vagaries of air war and Alpine weather will allow. The unit's accomplishments, according to an unqualified statement from A-3, 15th AAF, has reduced the length of the Mediterranean war by at least half a year.

WORK of the "weather snoopers" falls roughly into three phases. Beside the "lead out" mission, an innovation, there is the old standby, the

concerned—that were behind the Alps. Southern Europe's crags, swept by as freakish and turbulent air masses as any in the world, became an enemy equal to flak and fighters in cost of operation.

THEN EACH group began sending out a fast fighter to look around and report back. It was an improvement, but results resembled efforts of a football team on which every player charged down the field without thought to coordination. The Weather Reconnaissance Detachment, soon to become a squadron, was formed to bring weather matters to a head.

In the record of January, this year, is irrefutable proof of its efficiency. During this month of rough weather, heavies were over Europe from the south on only eight days. On 19 additional days "weather snoopers" were in the air, grounding scheduled take-off, saving, among many fliers' lives.

umber, refineries at Brux were almost completely out by five consecutive days. On each day, the forced to and from their oiler ships which found inter murk for B-17s and

YS do the "rekites" look weather, or even for holes recently a formation of led from their intended the weather ship flashed the last leg of the route the formation was unseeing cloud layers as promising cloud bombing run. pilots had a ringside al round for Ploesti. Ger- is were spreading a daily refineries. A plan of vary- attack, according to the

News OBSERVATION Bulletin SQUADRON RADIO and World Wide Newspaper Coverage

VOL. 1, NO. 5

DECEMBER 15, 1942

NORTH AFRICA.....

From Allied Headquarters here, we are told that the news of Rommel's abandonment of El Agheila and the Eighth Army's fast pursuit will have a great effect on the future Allied efforts. This enemy rout will now make possible a two way attack by air from East and West....In heavy bombing operations over Sicily yesterday, the Fortresses... drawn by mules Ethiopia has Japan and Ital the Allies in mainly respond the enemy, the air supremacy RUSSIA.....

From Moscow we

Stalingrad set

of Stalingrad,

offensive which

enemy loss of

Don Volga batt

advances with

VOLUME I

MARCH 26, 1945

NUMBER 2

WE HAVE A NAME

As you see the official title of your paper, otherwise known as "The Gabinotto Sheet" has been changed from 154th News to Tailpiece.

This title was born from

THE C.O.'S COLUMN

1. While preparing a report the other day, some statistics were found which should make up all rather proud. It was a comparison of all other outfits in this Air Force's Bomb. photo,

lating on the hush-hush news from Britishers across from camp who claim that "we have been told that we can expect a cease fire order within the next fourteen days," we find ourselves, as the month comes to a close, pondering on the inevitable—"is it possible that peace is coming?"

Squadron non-stop operations are set at an all-time monthly record this day as Lts. Buchanan and Huntsman fly the 137th mission, this to Munich, Germany.

DECEMBER, 1944

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 2

On a flight to the one remaining major Axis oil source at Blechhammer, Germany, Lts. Glen Buchanan and Edward Chaulsett complete our 1000th mission since beginning combat operations overseas . . . "a lot of missions."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 3

His head bandaged up, F. O. Charles Kyle returns to the Squadron this day and ends all speculation about his failure to return from a mission to the Northern Yugoslav area a week ago. His compass out, Kyle landed on a hayfield near Mitrovica. Four days later, and still at the same field in the hands of friendly Partisans, he was able to obtain what he was told to be 100-octane fuel. On the take-off which followed, one engine went out and the plane crashed into part of a nearby house. Kyle was scratched and shaken up. Taken over to Sofia, Bulgaria, by means of wagon, cart and carriage, he soon procured passage on an Italy-bound B-25.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 8

Their return to camp eagerly awaited each morning and afternoon, "Buddy" Diemer and Norman Geekie nose their jeep over to the Day Room this day, grunt and groan as they drag in mail sacks filled with "molto packages." Within a few minutes, the room is filled with men, all of one mind—"have I got a package?" With impatient fingers, we sort through the pile, sometimes load up until we can carry no more, other times return to the tent empty handed. One man mutters, "wonder if I'll ever get that salami?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 10

"I'd hate to be flying in this weather," exclaim men down on the line as they scan the blue-grey skies this morning. In the face of this extremely low-ceiling weather, our planes penetrate as far north as Brux, Germany, and radio back reports which re-call all 15th Air Force bombers, already on their way to the target.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 11

The center of a group wherever he goes, Major Edwin Waters returns to the Squadron this day after four months in the U. S. Questioned about every phase of his trip, the Major is enthusiastic as usual and replies briskly, "it's a strange feeling coming back; over there (in the U. S.) you soon get used to eating anytime and anything you want; things are just about the same; plenty of taxis, few hotel rooms; you soon fall right back into everything."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 12

Little over a year after the Allied entry into Italy, much has taken place. If not representative or extreme, the nearby city of Bari and its people illuminate a part of the canvas of Italy-entire.

In a year's time, meagerly-stocked stores have blossomed out into enterprises jam-packed with all sorts of souvenir material, "real" cognac, vermouth and unlimited "vino." Cautiously, small bits of clothing, shoes, hats, shirts, dresses, even bolts of cloth have made their appearance. And yet, neatly set below all these items is an untouchable price tag, usually totaling in the "mille lira" class and far above the

purse of the average Italian. The markets, too, have taken on a more robust tone. Prodded on by the mild, crop-producing climate and an increased need to use every ploughable inch of ground, sleeping Italian farmers, oblivious of the continued blastings of American and British trucks behind them, daily jog to market in their high-wheeled, horse-drawn carts and fill the city's bins with the current yield. Within a short time of their arrival at the market, stocks have dwindled to a few picked-over vegetables and sharp-eyed kids are grubbing around for the left-overs.

For more years than he cares to remember, the food-loving, essentially warm-hearted Italian has found the necessities of life—food, clothing and shelter—comparative luxuries. And yet, with increasing truth comes the observation, "if you have lira, you won't go hungry or cold; if you don't have lira, then God help you!"

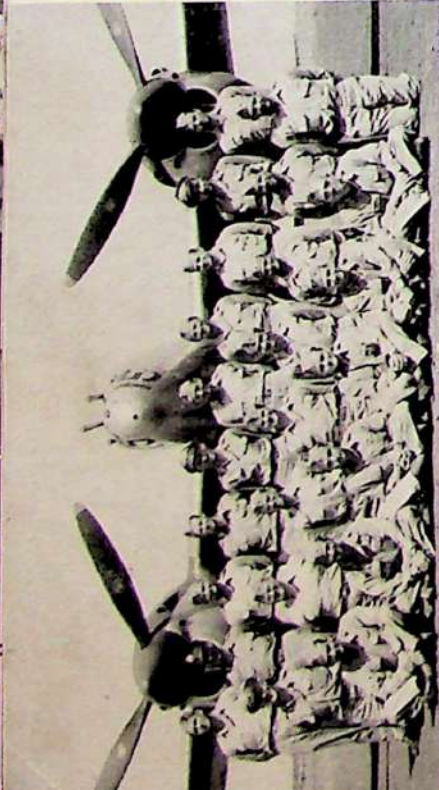
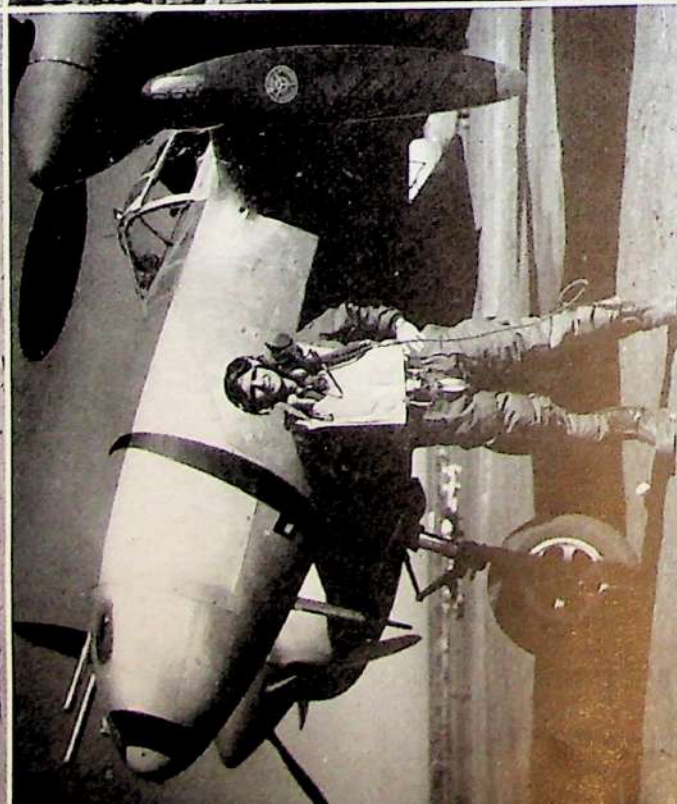
The vague picture which America is currently receiving of Italy is sharply underscored by the recent U. S.-printed photograph captioned "AN AMERICAN SERVICEMAN EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS TO SOME ITALIAN CHILDREN." In reality, it is more likely that the Italian children depicted in this homey photo have just paused from a session of carrying rocks, digging deep trenches, mixing cement, washing heavy pots and pans, or grubbing in garbage cans. Childhood has become a short-lived experience, if an experience at all, in present-day Italy.

Strangely enough, despite circumstance or poverty, the coming of Christmas slowly begins to make itself known. Small stocks of gaudily painted figures and novelties are closely scrutinized by groups of kids who crowd around store windows and stare with thoughtful muteness. Parents look at the price tags, smile wistfully, and gently pull their offspring away. In a life of change, flux, grubbing, yelling, constant assertion, mental and physical badgering, the time for thinking about or observing holidays is indeed limited.

On sullen, rainy days, the pitiable, almost seemingly hopeless condition of the Italians is even more so. Young and old in the larger cities and in the numerous poor districts shuffle along painfully in clapping, mud-barnacled shoes, shiver under thin shawls, and with glaring looks and explosive cursing jump to one side of the road as a military vehicle comes careening down the highway and splashing mud in all directions. . . . On such days, a sheened, mushroom growth of shifting umbrellas covers a mass of Italians waiting for the daily cigarette ration. Patiently ranged alongside the men, women squall unmercifully if another tries to edge ahead in line. . . . Over at a nearby water-spout, young boys and girls with patched coats pulled tightly around their sharp bodies jig up and down to keep warm, blow their breath on brittle hands while their large jug is filling with water. . . . The living from day-to-day, the ceaseless, mole-like striving for continued existence is heart-rending in its daily pageant.

Representative of many of the military is the soldier who walks through the city or town in Southern Italy, winks knowingly at two eager-eyed, severely-painted signorinas who pass by and give him "the eye," then a few minutes later watches with passive sympathy or none at all as a bambino grunts and tugs to pull a heavy cart along the street, or an old woman snaps at a piece of bread offered almost reluctantly by her gnarled hands. The current attitude is shown by the remark, "if you could only help these people! . . . If you try, though, they take advantage of you. . . . I'm beginning to think you can't help them; just leave 'em alone!"

The 154 in the news: clippings from various overseas publications. . . . Lower two items: (top) first Squadron newspaper published by Pfc. Fred Gillies in Blida and Oujda, North Africa; (bottom) Squadron newspaper published by Cpl. Edgar Kobak in Bari, Italy.



Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 14

1st Lt. Thomas J. Watson, a "Mickey" (radar) operator, is today assigned to our Squadron.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 15

Just after take-off on a training flight today, Lt. Louis Orren crashes into the orchard to the north of the airfield. Luckily escaping from the wreckage but sustaining third degree burns on the hands and face, our pilot is quickly removed to nearby Bari hospital.

Fifteenth Air Force bomber attacks on Linz and other scattered attacks on marshalling yards in Southern Germany are prefaced by the coverage of our planes and we "just manage" to supply the number of operational aircraft demanded by Higher Headquarters. With increasingly bad weather, a continued abundance of mechanical trouble, and numerous radio modifications and depot cases, Engineers and Radio Men work constantly to keep pace with each day's requirements. "Even have to use number seven (the 'piggy back') and the 'droop snoops' (radar-equipped P-38's) on missions; things are really getting bad!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 16

Having turned in their surplus clothing to Supply, spent their last night in camp in robust toasting of one another over at the Day Room or quietly in their tent, and after a session of interminable good-bye's in camp and down on the line this afternoon, (one man comments, "God, but it makes me homesick to see them go!"), S/Sgt. Herman Steinborn, S/Sgt. George Crowell, Sgt. Havis Overton, (all three change of station), and 1st Sergeant Doyne Townsend, Cpl. John Grochowski, Pvt. Jesse Smith, M/Sgt. John Patrick, Sgt. Andrew Ondovchik, Cpl. Alexander Winstead, Sgt. Charles Girola, Sgt. John Traffenstedt, Cpl. Brady Fillingim, Pfc. Frank Stanley, Cpl. George Stanley, Sgt. Norman Geekie, S/Sgt. Clair Gibbons, Cpl. John Hubay, Sgt. Mike Simetkosky, Cpl. Douglas Quist, and Sgt. John Waters (all 30 day furlough) head for the 22nd Replacement Center on the first phase of their trip home.

Noting "Buddy" Diemer setting up a large Christmas tree in the Day Room, we react differently—"well, at least we'll have a Christmas tree if nothing else. . . . Don't care if we have one or not. . . . What's the matter with you? Lost all your spirit? . . . Kids' play all this fussing and bother; who wants to be reminded? . . . I DO!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 19

Reports that an "all-out" German attack has already penetrated fifteen miles behind our lines in Belgium is heralded by headlines such as "GERMANY'S ALL IS THROWN IN—LAST EFFORT." Hearing this, and the shaky attempts of Allied news commentators to make little of a thrust which has gained "substantially" in two days, we are apprehensive—"in two days, they've advanced farther than we have in a month!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 20

A "security silence" is dropped over the German thrust into Eastern Belgium and we hear only the most general news. Becoming realistic or coy, the German radio blares forth with, "have no illusions; we will not be in Paris tomorrow."

For the fifth consecutive day, our planes lead the Fifteenth Air Force "heavies" to and from the Brux, Germany, oil refineries. As a result of these highly co-ordinated operations, we receive an "all-units" message from General Eaker, Commander in Chief of MAAF: "THE PAST SIX SUCCESSIVE DAYS OPERATIONS OF THE 15TH AIR FORCE AGAINST MOST DISTANT, DIFFICULT, AND IMPORTANT TARGETS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED BY ME WITH GREAT ADMIRATION. I APPRECIATE THE GREAT STRAIN SUCH SUSTAINED OPERATIONS PLACE UPON ALL ELEMENTS, INCLUDING SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, PLANNING AND OPERATING STAFFS, AND THE COMBAT CREWS. MY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU."

Of Lt. John C. Johnson, on a mission to the Brux oil refineries and not returned to base at day's end, Lt. Timm, his wing man, reports: "the last known message (from Johnson) was at approximately 1115 hours; he was calling Lt. Fieldhouse, telling him that his right engine had gone out and he was returning to base; this was somewhere between Udine (Italy) and Linz (Austria)."

Transferred this day to the 5th Wing as Gunnery Officer: Major Edwin O. Waters; assigned to our Squadron Communications Section: Cpl. Edgar H. Kobak.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 23

While our planes cover Northern Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia and bring back reports which for the second day ground all 15th Air Force bombers, a fitful rain falls over field and camp. Down on the line, some men are lucky enough to work under the new canvas plane hoods; others, cursing the cold, the wet and the mud, hands numb to feeling and forever dropping nuts and bolts, work on nevertheless. "Not helping things any around Christmas" are the war reports—"GERMANS HOLD THE INITIATIVE ON WESTERN FRONT; AXIS COUNTER ATTACK PENETRATES 35 MILES INTO BELGIUM; MAJOR ALLIED SET-BACK." Yet in face of this, there are those who dismiss the effective German effort as "not so serious; I'm not worried." Others, watching the Axis spearheads cut deeper into Belgium, anxiously note the report that Hitler has promised the German soldier "Aachen by Christmas; Paris by the New Year." Calling upon Allied troops, General Eisenhower says, "by rushing out of his fixed defenses, the enemy may give us the chance to turn his great gamble into his worst defeat." Such is the conflicting and unsettling scene as another Christmas approaches. . . .

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 24

After four bleak days, the skies clear and a strong, mid-winter sun spreads sharp shadows all over Southern Italy. In the city of Bari, churches are filled throughout the day and many of the stores present a closed front to the eagerly-talking throngs which crowd the streets. Come nightfall, the sidewalks are still peopled with noisy, ragged lines of Italians and soldiers of many lands. Over by the Enlisted Men's Red Cross, a loudspeaker midst a wreath of pine crackles forth tinnily with familiar Christmas carols. Soldiers stream in and out of this building and there is an unreal aspect about a scene which so outwardly proclaims that Christmas has come once more. . . . In camp on this Christ-

(July 1944) A group of Squadron Officers: (1st row) Lts. Dinker, Ade, Myers, McFarland, Capts. Slagle, Adell, (2nd row) Lt. Horrocks, Capts. Anderson, Vetromile, Schwab, Lts. Hopkins, C. Bennett, Capt. Beason, Lt. Field, (3rd row) Major Waters, Lts. Walker, McCaslin, Capt. Kelsey, Lts. Cook, Duckworth, Capts. Kalinowski, Fuller, Lt. Cordes, Capt. Tyler. . . . (July 29, 1944) Before leaving for the U. S., Squadron Commander Alfred Schwab calls his last formation. . . . (Aug. 11, 1944) Lt. Joseph Walker (center) completes the Squadron's 600th mission. Millard Potter (left) and Ladislaus Kish (right) greet the returning pilot. . . . (Oct. 20, 1944) Our 1000th Weather Sortie is chalked up by Lt. Wesley Meeteer. . . . (Oct. 25, 1944) A study in expressions is the first drawing for men to go home on rotation and furlough. . . . (Nov. 8, 1944) Former Squadron Commander Major James Fuller (left) relinquishes command to Capt. William Dinker. . . . "So long!" says 1st Sgt. Doyne Townsend to departing Commander Fuller. . . . James Welch and his unique pistol collection, in the main made up of items gathered overseas. . . . (Dec. 2, 1944) Returning from Central Germany, Lts. Edward Chaulsett and Glen Buchanan mark up the Squadron's 1000th (all-type) mission.



At Christmas dinner, 1944, our officers again take over, among many, the duties of cooks and KP's. One fact, however, is still outstanding: our THIRD Christmas overseas!

mas Eve, there are those of us who "get to feeling good" and pass the nighttime hours around a table in the Day Room, at the Red Cross, with our British friends, or in our tents. Some glance menacingly at the midnight-faced clock and disgustedly climb into the cot—"just like any other night!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 25

What with a "p— poor" breakfast and the prospect of a morning's routine work down on the line, we rise on this Christmas morning and can yet sense no difference in the day. Down on the airfield, we dispatch our first radar-equipped P-38 on an operational flight. As the delicate radar equipment becomes "ineffective" shortly after this plane leaves base, pilot MacVittie and radar-navigator Watson are not able to put the "droop snoop" through its paces. (The radar-P-38's are to be used, in the main, experimentally—to locate targets through heavy cloud cover, to simplify navigation through the all-type weather in which our planes must fly.)

Come noontime, with its cessation of work for most of the Squadron, and a changed, more carefree spirit suddenly takes hold. Spurred on by the sight of our Officers taking over our everyday jobs down on the line, in camp and in Bari, we begin to know the true holiday lift. At dinner time, we are served by our Officer-waiters with a "turkey dinner and all the fixings." Good-naturedly, we kid each other; sometimes with a demon gleam get off a pointed barb at one of our officers. Adding a touch of the feminine, "Louise," the Red Cross worker, is our dinner guest and takes in the scene with pleased but accustomed eyes and ears. Every now and then, a soldier nudges his buddy and says, "pipe down; remember, there's a woman here!" Robust, hearty, lusty—such is our Christmas dinner. . . . As the late afternoon shadows lengthen and then gradually fuse into night, we fill the Day Room on this Christmas night and gather around Lt. Perry as he plays the piano. Small groups fill the room with close-headed clusters and there is a new warm-hearted buzzing and mellowness in the air. Before this, it seemed that many were trying to have a good

time, ("after all, this is Christmas!"), but now, because of the music or the loose informality of the supper, we begin to "really enjoy ourselves." . . . Well after midnight and long into the next morning, many carry on the celebration. Others once again climb into bed at an early hour and disgruntledly insist, "no different from any other day; why try to kid yourself?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 26

A breakfast of fresh fried eggs, French toast, hot cakes and coffee brings forth a large number to our mess hall this morning and we linger with pleasure over that rare second cup of coffee. Later, many men stretch out in their tents, and, with the knowledge that they will be back to work again this afternoon, conclude dully and with a note of the inevitable, "well, it's over for another year." To all, there is one fact outstanding: "our THIRD Christmas overseas!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 29

Keeping many up all night, the "GI's" hit almost every tent and fill to overflowing the lone tent to the rear of our camp area. By midnight, there are so many cases of this perennial Army "nuisance" disease that Sgt. Joe Abernethy is roused from sleep and prevailed upon to take up his stand over in Medics; from here he dispenses paregoric to all those afflicted—"no rest for the wicked!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Dec. 31

As the year comes to a close, there is little wild celebrating. Over in the Day Room, Jim Brennan, Joe Abernethy, Eugene McKenna, Dave Cohen, Jim Wetzel and "Judge" Horwich gather around a glass-littered table and give forth with some barroom singing. Soon, the news spreads that free drinks, sandwiches, nuts and cake are to be had, but even then, only a few men appear. Later in the night, "Judge" Shirutis and "Kishka" Kish proceed to liven things up by playing billiards, horseshoes, and marbles—games all the more interesting as "there are no billiards, horseshoes, or marbles!" . . . "Very few" remain in the

PLANE-CREWS. . . . Plane No. 13—Robert Halboth, John O'Conner, Simon Walaitis. . . . Plane No. 6—Michael Skuba, Orien Craghead, Richard Fichtner, Eulalio Rodriguez. . . . Plane No. 16—Harold Steed, Briney Golba, Percy Cooper, Harold Bond, Andrew Ondovchik. . . . Plane No. 17—Harvy Vaughn, Willie Wright. . . . Plane No. 1—Charles Girola, Fred Higdon, Charles Brown, Michael Halick. . . . Plane No. 12—William Smith, Robert Jennings, Lawrence Wewer, James Rodgers, Robert Scales. . . . Plane No. 11—Elwood Travers, James Lodge, Harold Sander. . . . Plane No. 4—Ted Ferguson, James Rodgers, Herman Steinborn, Warren Weeks. . . . The B-25—Ralph Ferguson, Robert Scales, (standing) Thomas Schaffner, O. C. Weeks, (sitting) Paul Kahanic, Joseph Schmidling. . . . Plane No. 3—Gerrel O'Quin, Wesley Whitaker, Kenneth Gunter, William Smith. . . . Plane No. 9—Millard Potter, Robert Heater, Jack Trier. . . . Plane No. 14—Paul Wojcik, Lt. Russell Field, William Lewis, O. C. Weeks. . . . Plane No. 5—Edward Appler, Alexander Winstead, Walter Woodard, Paul Kahanic. . . . Plane No. 15—Selmer Clark, Francis Sanders, Vincent Martinek, Cecil Long. . . . Plane No. 7—Leo Tunnell, Mike Simetkosky, Swayne Whitehead, Joseph Delaney. . . . Plane No. 2—Joseph Schmidling, Francis Stevens, Charles Girola, Thomas Harness. . . . Plane No. 16—(kneeling) Kenneth Gunter, Harold Steed, (standing) Harold Bond, Percy Cooper, Charles Sutliff.



Day Room until the midnight hour and with the exception of scattered rifle shots and a few lone cries of "Hap—py New Year!", 1945 begin inauspiciously. "This is the quietest New Year's Eve since we've been in the Army!"

JANUARY, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 1

Heralding the year 1945, a layer of snow covers everything this morning and we are reminded of a New Year's Day when snow in another land (Oujda, N. Africa) fell on our pup-tent campsite.

Placed on flying status this day as part of the crew of our newly assigned B-25 (now being used to provide Squadron pilots with training on instruments and "blind" flying) are S/Sgt. Ralph Ferguson (engineer) and Sgt. Paul Kahanic (radio operator).

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 3

For the third day our planes are airbourne to Southern Germany and Northern Italy and bad weather not only precludes any follow-up bomber operations, but forces Lts. Fortner and Clifford to land at Foggia.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 4

Assigned to our unit: (Flying Officers) Capt. Stanley J. Obloy, 1st Lts. Robert V. Kieckhafer, Justus F. Wetherill and Roscoe H. Brady.

In response to a call for Warrant Officers and candidates for O.C.S. ("preference to be given to infantry choices") five Squadron members take their physical. "Somewhat wary" of this proposal, other men conclude, "might as well sweat it out where we are a little while longer."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 7

Sharp reaction follows a spurt from a U. S. Congressman (just returned from Italy) who maintains, "the soldiers in Italy want to finish the job; do not want to come home; rotation policy not popular with these men." Then comes the response from this side of the water: "who the hell is he to say that?! Damn politicians! Anything to get in the spotlight!"

Missing on a test hop this afternoon is F. O. Carl L. Martin. Every source of information is checked, but "there is no trace" of this pilot.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 8

Gathered around in the Engineering hut early this morning, our plane crewmen vote on whether to send four men home on a 30-day furlough (this necessitating the cancellation of all three or five day passes within the section). Taking the chance that their name will be drawn, ("I know it's a long one"), the majority votes for this proposal and the following names are drawn out of a hat—Lawrence Wewer, Edgar Duff, Otis Taylor and Arnold Christenson. Also drawn in other sections: Vincent Martinek, John Fischer and Kenneth Gunter. Thus, once again, many find themselves using reason up to a certain point, then strongly envisioning themselves home—"hell, yes! I'll vote for it!" The drawing over, the same mild disappointment creeps in again—"well, that's that!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 10

Brought forth by news of American landings on the main

Philippine Island of Luzon comes the conjecture, "at this rate, the Jap war will be finished before the European war!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 11

Assigned to our Squadron this day: Sgt. Charles Mitchell, Jr. (Engineering), Cpl. Gerald Hladky (Personnel), Pfc. Dan Gee (Mess), Sgt. Melvin Bryan (Armament) and 1st Lt. Henry Lanini, Jr. (Transportation).

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 14

"Much heavier" and "not able to tell my story yet," so 1st Lt. Elwin S. Harrison, lost on a mission to Brux, Germany, on the ninth of last month, returns to the Squadron.

For the sixth day running, our planes are airbourne to areas in Southern Germany and Northern Italy and bring back reports which ground all 15th Air Force bombers for the day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 15

Each day here in camp passes with much the self-same visage. We exchange the same outward pleasantries, rail at one another in a close-knit defense against absolute boredom and "just exist." Although most of us admit, "we have it pretty soft here," we also "have no sense of time, no goal, no purpose." The work which has to be done is completed in all kinds of weather and there are no complaints on that score. Minus the close association with our pilot-officers who heretofore lived in the same camp area with us, we have become more satisfied with camp life, made up almost entirely of associations with other Enlisted Men. Trips to town are still made by many, but there is an increasing tendency to "stay in camp and just take it easy on a day off." Movies over at the Red Cross tin-hut theatre still draw large numbers and despite the prevalence of poor grade films, "we go just the same." Noting the arrival of new men and their initial eagerness on their new jobs, one soldier remarks knowingly, "he's good for another year before he slows down!" In such a passive mood, we find ourselves in this first month of 1945 which marks a slowing down of the war in Europe and brings forth the conjecture, "1945 can be the year of victory if we all pull together."

Recorded this day over the Central and Eastern Mediterranean areas is the first "completely successful" radar mission. Pilots: Hart and Milne. Radar-navigator: Watson.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 17

A day on which slippery mud and continuous rain keep all planes grounded provides a fertile atmosphere for the somewhat substantial rumor that "30% of the Air Forces will be put into the Infantry; a screening board has already been set up in Bari." Forced to think of the possibility of becoming one of the chosen "dough-foots," ("it's coming pretty close!"), we kid each other with a somewhat forced humor and also gain a new appreciation of our present "pretty comfortable" life. Not one of us puts the idea entirely out of mind, for, in the oft-repeated phrase—"it would be pitiful to go through the war for more than two years overseas and then get killed just when it looks as though it might end!"

Leaving this day for the U. S. are Cpl. Bernard Bower, Sgt. William Smith, and Sgt. Robert Heater (all permanent change of station) and M/Sgt. Otis Taylor, T/Sgt.

AERIAL PHOTOS. . . . Our weather-craft snap American bombers on their way north to enemy targets. . . . Area of Klagenfurt, Austria. . . . His mission completed, our pilot passes Pescara, Italy, on his way back to base. . . . The Colosseum in Rome. . . . Snow in June on the Austrian Alps. . . . The fabled city of Venice, Italy; note extensive canal system spreading far inland. . . . Near the Brenner Pass, the strategic area of Innsbruck, Austria. . . . (Nov. 11, 1944) South of Ancona, Italy, Lt. Russell Field catches a rare phenomenon—a swirling waterspout in the Central Adriatic. . . . On 17-18-19 August 1944, our pilots photograph the effects of an enemy smoke screen over the Ploesti, Roumania, oil refineries. Here smoke screen is at its height. . . . The early-morning sun slides behind a bank of clouds and provides a striking picture. . . . (Aug. 17, 1944) From hundreds of smoke pots in the area, a protective smoke screen begins to take form over the Ploesti oil refineries. . . . At first light, one of our P-38's heads for Central Germany.





From the airfield (left) and from our downtown Operations-Intelligence (right), we see the effects of the explosion of an ammunition ship in Bari harbor (April 9, 1945). . . . Our flying-officers live in an apartment in downtown Bari. . . . In their personally decorated bar, Lts. Elwin Harrison, Jack Wagner and Sidney Pollard try out some of the stock. . . . (Jan. 1945) Snow on the line and (below) in camp.

Lawrence Wewer, S/Sgt. Edgar Duff, Cpl. Arnold Christenson, Cpl. Kenneth Gunter, Cpl. Vincent Martinek, and T/Sgt. John Fischer (all 30-day furlough).

Assigned to our Squadron: 1st Lt. Paul S. Hansen (pilot).

The new "giant" Russian offensive burning across the plains of Central Poland is brought into sharp focus as we hear tonight of the fall of Warsaw to Russian troops. Following this special news broadcast and on the regular German band, we hear a Nazi commentator tell the German people what will be the results of unconditional surrender to the Allies: "you will be formed into labor battalions—men will be sterilized—Germany will be destroyed." Listening to this, one of our men asks, "do you think the Germans believe this? If they do, it's no wonder they're holding on so hard!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 18

The cigarette shortage (5 to 6 packs a week) sends many of us to smoking a pipe for the first time. Others cut "Pall Malls" in half and grimace as they smoke!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 19

Flying missions from Foggia after a two-day lay-over because of weather, our planes, skeleton-crewed by T/Sgt. Harness and S/Sgts. Clark and Steed, closely support later 15th Air Force attacks on Central Yugoslav communications. During these operations, "the last one" (his 50th mission) is recorded for 1st Lt. Wesley B. Meeteer.

A cold-cut notice on our bulletin board today notes—"information available indicates the necessity for maintaining security measures and preparedness for defense of this base at the highest possible efficiency." The paragraphs which follow tell of the signals for possible ground or air attack and request all personnel to check their ammunition and guns. Behind all this is a report from "reliable sources" to the effect that the Italians may attempt to revolt for food and clothing.

Uppermost many times in our thoughts is the uncertain news of recruiting Air Force men for the Infantry. "I wonder when and if they'll hit us?" One of our men puts in decisively, "no, not us; they won't touch a Squadron like ours." Tales that 200 out of 600 men in the 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari have already been chosen keep rumor alive and ominous.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 20

Returning from Foggia (our secondary base while Bari Airfield is being repaired), our pilots say, "Harness, Clark and Steed are working their ass off up there! All of us are getting to be pretty fair mechanics—have to be!" . . . While covering the Northern Italy area, 1st Lt. Blaine Murray, Jr. completes his 50th mission in this theatre of operations.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 21

Filling most of our thoughts and conversation even while we work down on the line, in camp, or in Bari are the news and speculation on the mammoth Russian drive which has "penetrated into defense-studded Prussia and is already 100 miles west of Warsaw." Mindful of other highly raised hopes and then the following keen disappointments, we are openly cautious but inwardly lavish in hoping that "this offensive might end the war in Europe."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 22

Although one plane (Lt. Franklin) manages to get off in the morning's snow and sleet storm and later returns to base after once landing at nearby Manduria, there are no further operations credited to our Squadron or the entire

Air Force based in Italy. . . . While the day's heavy snow sometimes thumps, then fingers on tents above and covers our camp, airfield, and planes with a salt-and-pepper whiteness, a skeleton crew works down on the line, thus enabling many to make straight for the "sack" or a comfortable spot by the stove.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 23

Two more radar-navigators are assigned to our unit: 2nd Lt. Milton W. Woolfson, and F. O. Paul L. Hicks.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 25

Another operational milestone is marked today as 1st Lt. Robert V. Clifford completes the Squadron's 1000th weather mission (to Bruck, Germany) since beginning operations here in Italy (1 Feb. 1944) as a 15th Air Force Weather-Reconnaissance Squadron.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 26

At a formal ceremony in our Squadron War Room in Bari, the following awards are made: the Bronze Star (for "aerial camera modification and improvisation") to S/Sgt. William E. Roseberry; the Distinguished Flying Cross to 1st Lts. Wesley B. Meeteer, Blaine Murray, Jr., Roy T. Fortner, Capt. John L. Pinney, 1st Lts. Robert T. Fieldhouse and Thomas J. Watson.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 27

Of the Russian advance into Germany, we hear—"Soviet spearheads are 95 miles from Berlin." In the face of this critical situation, the Reich's Dr. Goebbels becomes questioningly uncertain—"what if we can't stop them?" then proclaims that "the German people will unite as never before." Companion radio reports chronicle the "slow poking out" of the German bulge in Belgium and an Allied promise to the Nazis of "coming heavy blows from the west."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 28

Another Squadron pilot, 1st Lt. Robert T. Fieldhouse, completes his 50th mission today. . . . Our field still in a "p— poor" condition, four P-38's take off late this afternoon and head south to the all-weather base at Brindisi.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 29

As a blinding, fitful snow sometimes makes the field invisible, then subsides into a light sprinkling, our planes return from missions to the Po Valley and Austria and, for the 8th consecutive day, ground all 15th Air Force bombers.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 30

Our camp area, airfield and planes are again covered with a silver glaze of snow and frost this morning and everything moves with a brisk tempo in keeping with the scene. There are no operations and in many sections only alert crews are grudgingly present—"too damned cold to do anything!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Jan. 31

Flying once again from Brindisi, our planes lead the "heavies" to the Moosbierbaum (Vienna) oil refinery. This operation, the first large scale effort in 10 days, is in support of the "heaviest single attack (1356 tons) made by the 15th Air Force on any single target."

Signs of the times: "out-of-bounds" marked on all horse-drawn carriages in the city of Bari; anti-aircraft guns removed from many positions around the harbor area; and a rumored addition to the regular prayers of Italians—"and please, God, save us from the A. M. G.!" (Allied Military Government).

FEBRUARY, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 1

On this first day of February, we mark one year on Italian soil. With the usual reminiscing which such anniversaries produce, we talk about the quiet, easy boat trip to Italy, the Nouvion "rest camp" ("those were the days!"), and "wonder where we will be a year from now?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 2

With grim acceptance, we discuss the latest rumor—"only one man a month to go home on rotation." ("We'll be here until 1950 at that rate!")

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 3

His lean form striding across the field, Capt. Francis Kalinowski returns to our Squadron this day.

To Rome: Sgts. Joseph Abernethy, James Brennan, Cpls. Jacob Stadler and Eugene McKenna.

Assigned to our Supply Section: S/Sgt. Thurman H. Nix.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 5

Homeward bound after completing their tour of duty are Capt. Clayton Hobbs, 1st Lts. Wesley Meeteer, Blaine Murray, Jr. and Robert Fieldhouse.

During the day's operations, we record many incidents: on one engine, 1st Lt. Andrew Tice crash lands at the island airdrome of Vis in the Adriatic; 1st Lt. Albert Rizzo, returning from Bucharest and also on one engine, overshoots the field and is forced to ditch his plane in the sea just to the east of nearby San Spirito—a destroyer is rushed out to the spot and Lt. Rizzo dragged in; six jet aircraft sighted over Ancona trail our planes to Udine and then break off contact.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 6

"Every time we lose one ship, we lose three," comments a radioman down on the line as he hears that Lt. Chaulsett, on one engine and with the other one cutting out, abandons his plane this morning over Modugno, 10 miles west of the airfield.

Headlines in this morning's "UNION JACK"—"YANKS IN MANILA."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 7

"They had everything in the book out today," report our returned pilots who lead hundreds of 15th Air Force bombers to Vienna oil targets during the day.

In the news: Russians cross the Oder River south of Breslau and, in a dramatic interruption of a regular BBC broadcast tonight—"the Big Three, Churchill-Stalin-Roosevelt, are now meeting somewhere in the Black Sea area." (Yalta).

Promotion to PRIVATE FIRST CLASS is announced for the following: Florencio Baragan, John Hood, Carl Rorick, William Roessner, Edward Harris and Jesse Smith.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 11

The news quickly circulates through camp tonight: "Lt. Fred Walker—crashed—somewhere in Northern Italy." In many a tent mechanics and linemen quietly recall this pilot—"he was the little guy who worked on his motorcycle all day yesterday; just finished putting that last coat of paint on. . . ."

Cpl. Ernest S. Jones is today assigned to our Squadron Medical Section.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 12

Encouraged by our pilots who have seen the picture and mark it "one of the best about the Air Corps yet," we sit through two hours of the film "Winged Victory" tonight. While we are shown this glamorized, ideal picture of the Air Forces, groans, hoots and howls greet the many obvious technical blunders and the sugary, inspired-eyed characterizations of Army men and flyers. On the way out, we are

cutting in our reaction to this "civilian's picture!"—"glamorous all the way through! . . . after a while, I stayed to see just how bad it could get! . . . two hours when I could have slept!" Only natural is this sharp cleavage in pilot-ground crewman outlook—"you respect a pilot until they try to make a God out of him!"

New assignments announced this day: 1st Lt. Glen E. Buchanan to Assistant Operations Officer; Cpl. Edgar Kobak to Special Services; Pfc. Thomas Taylor to Communications; Pfc. James Thomas to Engineering.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 13

"Up in the air with every plane we have," (10 P-38's are available for operational flights), we support the first maximum effort of the 15th Air Force bombers in many weeks—this concentrated on the Vienna and Northern Yugoslavia sectors, vital feeder centers for Axis war materials heading for the Russian front.

Bari Airdrome, Italy, Feb. 15

Gratefully, we watch five newly assigned P-38's (three radar-equipped) taxied into our line area today and Sgts. Steed, Tunnell, Lewis, and D. Owens take over these new charges.

Assigned: radar-navigator, 2nd Lt. Erasmo Cantu.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 16

The routine courier flight to Bucharest this day turns out to be "not so routine." Our pilot, Lt. Vradenburg, edging in for a landing over the Roumanian field, reports, "they put up a box pattern of fire at me—when I turned away and looked back, the sky was black!—I wiggled my wings for recognition, but they kept on shooting!—must be those crazy, trigger-happy Russians!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 17

The object of a quiet send-off early this afternoon, Sgt. Briney Golba ("the PE man") stretches out his hand to the group of men gathered outside of Headquarters, then climbs aboard a GI truck which grinds away to the 22nd Replacement Depot. With "another man gone," nine men already picked to go home, and the probable future rotation quota set at one man a month, we settle down with—"maybe the war will end in another six months and the whole outfit will go home."

Returning from two days in Rome, Cpl. John O'Conner wails, "you're more in the Army up there than you are down here!"

Sometime late tonight, we waken drowsily to the sound of cracking small-arms fire. Voices from afar ride the air with amazing clearness and even in our drugged state we begin to wonder what is going on. Soon, a slow, steady droning intrudes upon the night air, seems to circle overhead. The sound is swallowed up again by the night. Once more, we revolve in semi-conscious questioning—"a raid? . . . will they bomb?" A few minutes later, the weird blast of the all-clear shatters the air and then cuts off into the night-silence.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 18

At breakfast this morning, we discuss last night's disturbance. Some maintain, "it was an enemy photo ship; he dropped two flares over the airdrome . . . the Italian guards did most of the shooting." "Didn't hear a thing," claims one man stoutly!

As a result of Lt. Vradenburg's "hot reception" over Bucharest two days ago, we are told, "no more Bucharest courier runs until further notice—General Eaker's orders."

Compared with last month's sudden and feverish spurt of interest in the war news, our present outlook has reverted to the somewhat casual, calmly accepting—"not optimistic; not pessimistic." With the war in the Pacific proceeding to a steady drum beat of landings and consolidations, with the Russians fanning out to a wide sucking

funnel before Berlin, with the Western and Italian fronts sloughed down in mud, weather and determined resistance, we currently ride on the median point known to us so many times just after the climax or before the eruption of big events.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 19

While cutting winds sweep across the airfield and a driving rain turns into a brief snow, those of us down on the line again work in a "cold which goes right through you" and for the sixth day running send up "just about all the planes available" on missions to Austria and Northern Italy.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 20

Colored MP's having arrived to take over the base guard, Cpl. "Judge" Horwich, Sgt. Stevens and Cpl. Raddatz lug their cots back to camp and thus relinquish the doubtful distinction of being the last Squadron members to draw 16-day airbase guard—"it's not the guard itself which is so bad—just that getting up at all hours, grabbing your meals, no peace of mind. It makes life a whole lot easier now that we don't have to sweat it out any more."

A Squadron order on our bulletin board makes known the award of the Safe Driver's Medal to S/Sgt. William Reid, Sgt. Charles Ross, Cpl. Beecher Samples, Cpl. William Morenc, Cpl. Merle McCullough, Pfc. William Roessner, Pfc. William Sawyer; also the Mechanic's Bar to S/Sgt. William Reid, Cpl. Willie Russell and Cpl. Beecher Samples. Reading this order, one man looks at another and asks with wide-eyed amazement, "Pop' Ross—a Safe Driver's Medal?!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 21

As for the past five days, our planes and pilots continue to fly in close co-ordination with 15th Air Force bombers attacking communications points just ahead of the onrushing Soviet armies.

Tonight's Squadron dance proves to be "better than expected—everyone seems to be having a good time—more fights than usual, but nothing serious." Midway in the dance, the air raid siren rolls wearily over the air and all lights flick out. Within a few minutes, however, the lights flash back on again and the dance rushes to its "crashing climax."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 22

While the "entire combined forces of the European and Mediterranean Allied Air Forces" range over Germany, our planes supply pre-raid and target reconnaissance for this, "the greatest mass bombing of the war."

Assigned: F. O. Gordon E. Hackbarth (radar-navigator).

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 24

A sense of coming spring floods over camp today. Come noontime, many a tent door is set open and we sit inside with a copy of the latest "Yank" magazine or the "Stars and Stripes." Looking over the latter paper, we read of the long awaited "Big Push In the West" and hope that "this is the last one." When we drop the paper and return to the line, work goes on once more in its familiar groove. In camp, cooks begin the preparation of the night meal; John Sigler and William Salter enlarge the PX tent; Hubert Siemer and the Italian "Bill" toss out a game of horseshoes in the pits to the side of the Medics' tent; the team of Gerig and Raddatz continues work on our "super-craper"; men come up from the line and stop in at the Red Cross for a cup of coffee and some cakes; Jake Stadler and John White enjoy a workout on the Red Cross basketball court; Buddy Diemer returns from Bari and reports reluctantly, "no mail." . . . Down on the line, one man looks over the scene appraisingly and drawls out, "if I only had the day off, I'd just lay in the sun and not think of a Goddamn thing!" With the passing of time, we tend to think more of "the good old days" at Nouvion, Le Sers, and Youks—"every-

thing got done, but things went along slower and without so much bother; probably it's just that we're getting fed up with doing the same thing and seeing the same people day after day." Also one of our favorite topics of conversation is the change in the outfit since the "Arkansas days." "Used to be by, for, and strictly of the Arkansas men. Two years of living together changed all that. Had to! When you think of all that has happened since we left the States, it seems impossible." And then comes the inevitable, "hell, I hope we go home soon!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 25

While the details of the "big push in the west" are still clothed in a security silence, we read the current headlines in the "Union Jack"—"I EXPECT TO DESTROY THE NORTHERN (GERMAN) ARMIES WEST OF THE RHINE" (General Eisenhower). . . . For the 13th consecutive day of major 15th Air Force heavy bomber operations, we provide target, route and pre-raid reconnaissance, this day over the Linz Ordnance Plant.

Our fifth Battle Star (for participation in "Air Offensive Europe") is today awarded to all Squadron members. At the news we will now exchange five bronze stars for one silver cluster, many men are dubious: "change five for one?—not so impressive!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 26

Almost every night some ardent "camera bug" can be found in the Camera Club tent set up by Squadron members (led by Sgt. Joseph Schmidling) for the purpose of developing, printing and enlarging film. In its fourth month of operation, this "photographers' paradise" (almost all equipment is home-made but extremely efficient) becomes an ever more popular work-in-leisure spot and it is the rare night that a member does not knock at one of the three inner compartment doors in this tent and hear the warning, "don't come in yet; I'm not safe!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 27

"Bingo" makes a sudden appearance in our Day Room tonight and "draws a larger crowd than was ever expected." While "Buddy" Diemer spiritedly calls the numbers, Mike Skuba, George Moon, Ladislaus Kish, Tom Stone and Jimmie Rodgers become the top winners of the night. . . . "It's something to do, anyway."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—Feb. 28

In recognition for the past 11 days (13-25 Feb. 1945) of concentrated effort, the Commanding General of the U. S. Army Air Forces writes to all 15th Air Force units—"I HAVE NOTED WITH FEELINGS OF PRIDE AND SATISFACTION THAT LARGE SCALE EFFORT OF THE 15TH AIR FORCE DURING THE PAST 11 DAYS. OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE EXCELLENCE OF THE MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION WHICH SUSTAINS OUR CONTINUED HIGH RATE OF AIRCRAFT OPERATIONAL."

MARCH, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 1

"A repeat of the Ploesti tactics" are the day's "special operations." Again, the target is a major Axis oil refinery, at Moosbierbaum (Vienna), Austria, and again our planes (Capt. Nelson, Lts. Vradenburg, Watson, Fortner, Huntsman, Cantu, Turner, Rosenthal and Woolfson), two to each wave, remain over the target area for an average period of one hour and ten minutes each, radio weather data to 15th Air Force bombers which attack in successive waves for close to four hours. . . . Significant in connection with this operation and the past 15 days of major effort is the exemplary maintenance record set by our engineers, radiomen, armorers and photo personnel. Despite the fact that eighteen engineers have been daily attending a P-38 school in Bari,

there has been no instance during this "heaviest period of the winter" when the number of planes called for (from four to eleven daily) has not been met. In many instances, the coming of darkness has not meant a stoppage of work and crews have been down on the line during the late evening hours in order to ready planes for pre-dawn take-off the next morning.

In our mess hall tonight, Sgt. Phil Seligman speaks capably on the "Fate of Poland," this the first of a series of Information and Education ("I & E") meetings designed so that they will be "easy to take."

Milestone for 1st Lt. Thomas Watson: completion of his 50th mission as senior radar-navigator for our Squadron.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 3

A surprised, blank look comes over many today as they note Sgt. John Traffenstedt, Cpl. Jack Booth, and Pfc. Edward Harris "already returned" from their 30-day furlough in the States. "It seemed as though they just left a few weeks ago and here they are back again!" Immediately, these three men are cornered and pressed to give "the whole story." . . . Cpl. Jack Booth says he "had a swell furlough but it hurt something awful inside having to come back overseas; it wasn't worth it!" . . . Of the return of Eddie Harris, Orville Stalnack claims, "we thought the sixth 'Mickey' had arrived on the line this afternoon but it was only Pfc. Ed Harris reporting back to work!" Speaking for himself, Eddie maintains, "the ride to Naples in a cattle car wasn't so bad since the horse dung was dry and if you managed to scrape enough together, it made a pretty soft mattress! My arrival home is an experience I'll never forget. My folks didn't know I was coming and when I knocked on the door, my sister opened it and let out such a yell that inside of two minutes every Jew in the Bronx was piled into the living room! It was a greeting I'll never forget. All the neighbors talking at once about what I'd like. First, one said a bath; another, some sleep; someone else said he wants something to eat! It was a real bedlam. Then a sweet young thing daintily staggered over to me and said, 'what would you really like, Eddie?' So I told her! Woo—ooo! Wooo—ooo! Anyway, I answered her question! . . . It was a real treat eating home cooking and sleeping in a bed without the bedbugs fighting for the first bite and using the bathroom without getting splinters in your tail section. I enjoyed every day of it, but like everything else, it had to come to an end. That was the hardest part. If I had it to do over, I don't think I'd take it." . . . The "unlucky" third to return, Sgt. John Traffenstedt, gives a somewhat brief and factual account—"the people were very friendly and nice to me while I was there. I got plenty of anything to eat and drink that I wanted. I had a wonderful time while it lasted, but it wasn't long enough."

Not even the 15th Air Force Staff Weather Officer can predict the atmospheric conditions as our pilots fly in snow and squalls to Vienna, Munich and Fiume this day. One of our weather pilots, sifting off his course and forced to fly on instruments, is asked somewhat brusquely by the DF station, "Bigfence," why he is in the wrong sector. "Hell!" the pilot replies snappily, "if we had any sense, we wouldn't be up here at all!" (This last sentiment is echoed by 15th Air Force officials and there are no heavy bombers up during this bleak, wind-swept day.)

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 4

Our Medics today begin a training program and initiate physical exams for all Enlisted Men for "redeployment purposes." "If you're warm, you go," exclaims bulging-eyed "Doc" Vetromile to Sgt. George Replyuk, the first Enlisted Man to be so examined!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 6

Under the heading "Infantry Replacements," a paragraph in the Daily Bulletin reveals—"15th Air Force Head-

quarters requested a report of personnel recommended for infantry training. A negative report was submitted; however, any members of the organization desiring assignments to the Infantry may apply through the Adjutant's office. The line forms any morning just outside the Headquarters building."(!)

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 7

Cpl. Patrick M. Haley is today assigned to our Squadron Transportation section.

A letter from the wife of 1st Lt. John C. Johnson, missing on a flight to Brux, Germany, on last December 20, contains the news—"just this week I learned through the Red Cross that John is a prisoner of war of the German Government. This is the best bad news I have ever heard!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 8

After a stomach-straining fifteen minutes listening to Ed Harris tell of his experiences while on furlough in the U. S., we sit back and listen to a "quiz show," the main event of this night's I. & E. meeting in the mess hall. Here Squadron members, S/Sgt. D. Ross Grimes, Sgt. David Cohen, 2nd Lts. Warren Bates and Theodore White, answer any and all questions thrown at them by quizzer Phil Seligman. The program over, and S/Sgt. Grimes declared the winner, we agree that "it was enjoyable; if you have to go, they might as well be like that."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 9

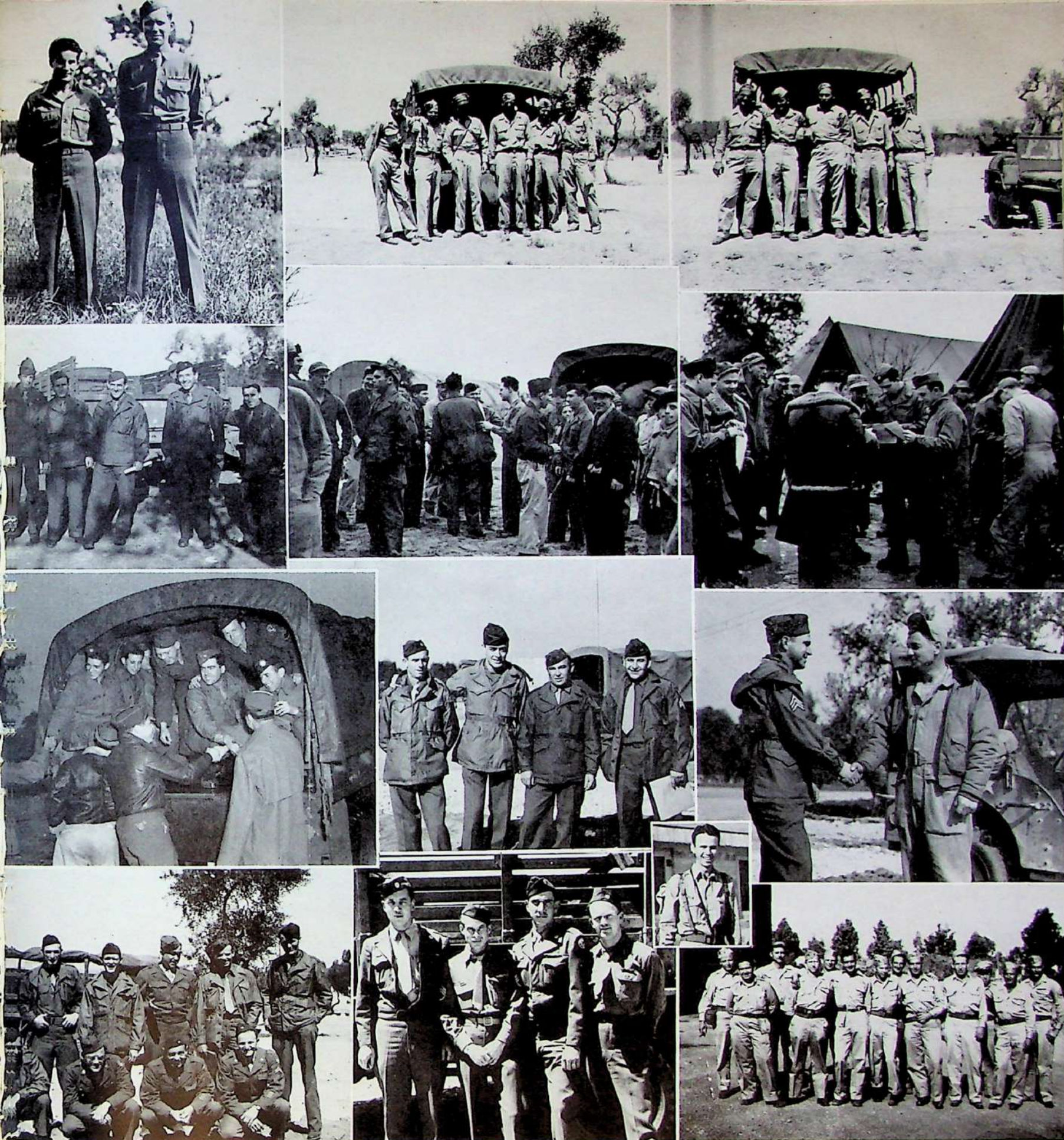
Back from their junket to Northern Italy and to within 15 miles of the 8th Army front lines, M/Sgt. Robbie Barham, Pfc. Roy Butler and Sgt. Fred Gillies are short on any radio equipment for which they were looking, but long on experiences and enthusiasm. "Going almost the full length of Italy is a revelation in itself. It seems as though you could draw a line at Rome, and below it, the people have little imagination or individuality; above it, ingenuity flowers. Northern Italy, especially the country east of Florence, is really beautiful. . . . We stayed at 'Casa Cantoniere,' state-maintained road-mender's homes, for two nights and at an Italian farmhouse on the fifth night. Meeting, talking and living with the Italian people even for a night gives you a new slant on things. There is a reason for all that has happened in Italy and the people, the common people, are not wholly to blame. There are many like 'Tony,' (a smiling-faced, stocky farmer who had been to the U. S. 30 years ago and now lived on his own farm) who say, 'the poor people always have to fight war—the rich people just sit back and get rich—always war!' . . . Two events, the announcement of the fall of the German bastion of Cologne and the march of bands of Communists on the city, marked our passing through Rome. All in all, an eventful and revealing trip!"

Our new "super-crappier" is opened for business today and, according to one soldier, "Joe Abernethy (the brains behind this project) is the most relieved person in camp when it works. He tore up his application for the infantry, opened up his 'A' bag, and treated all to drinks!"

Awarded this day to former Squadron member, Sgt. Samuel W. Shields (Armament Section): the Bronze Star—"for meritorious achievement in direct support of combat operations for the period 1 February to 12 March 1943."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 10

Into a tent of their own go S/Sgt. Buddy Diemer, Cpl. Edgar Kobak, and 1st Lt. Frank A. Duckworth, Special Service team for our Squadron. "We can begin to do something now," opines Buddy Diemer. Despite their new set-up and ambitious plans, these men have to admit that "there isn't much interest in anything nowadays—men have been overseas too long—don't think of anything but going home." On the other hand is the understandable general outlook—"we have learned to amuse ourselves pretty much of the time."



ROTATION AND 30-DAY FURLOUGH GROUPS . . . (May 11, 1944) Andy Orsini, Howard Martin. . . . (July 8, 1944) Byrl Sloan, Lonnie Pearson, Lt. Edward Ammerman, Samuel Shields, Moses Ross, Eulon Weeks. . . . (July 31, 1944) Louis Stathakis, Virgil Snoddy, Dempsey Reed, Walter Fey, Lewis Leopold. . . . (Nov. 17, 1944) Jack Booth, Boffie Sims, James Hennessy, Bill Goodner, Edward Harris. . . . (Dec. 17, 1944) General photo of large departing group. . . . (Jan. 17, 1945) Men leaving on furlough and rotation check over their orders—"just to make sure!" . . . (Jan. 17, 1945) In truck—Kenneth Gunter, Vincent Martinek, Bernard Bower, Arnold Christenson, Robert Heater, Otis Taylor, John Fischer. . . . (Feb. 17, 1945) Briney Golba (extreme right) with three other U. S.-bound men from an attached unit. . . . (March 16, 1945) Francis Sanders (left) is wished "all the best" by Michael Skuba. . . . (April 10, 1945) (front) Merle McCullough, Joseph Delaney, Charles Ross, Manuel Lean, (rear) William Morene, James Kester, James Shehans, James Tanner, William Sawyer. . . . (May 7, 1945) Jack Trier, Donald Still, Thomas Harness, Harry Chiles. . . . (June 2, 1945) Inset —Major William Tyler. . . . (Group), (front) Elias Toscano, Harold Haley, William Roseberry, Walter Woodard, Julian Stires, Clarence Ouderkirk, Fred Higdon, (rear) Forrest Diemer, John Goin, Norbert Raddatz, Michael Halick, Capt. Albert Adell, William Lewis.

3rd THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
They Fought Off Forty Focke-Wulfes
Stalingrad Defenders
Stand Fast

THE STARS AND STRIPES
AFRICA
Campaign Now
Becomes History
150,000 Axis Troops Taken
In Whirlwind Allied Attack
As War For Africa Ends

THE STARS AND STRIPES
AFRICA
PANTELLERIA SURRENDERS
Naval Units First
To Report White
Flag On Island
Axis Reported
Considering Use
Of Gas Warfare
Against Channel
Allies

THE STARS AND STRIPES
AFRICA
SICILY INVADED
Allied Forces Begin Landing
Operations On Axis Island
Sicily—New Allied Battlefield
Radios Warn French
People To Wait

THE STARS AND STRIPES
AFRICA
ITALIAN COAST INVADED
Allied Force Hits
Europe's Mainland
On Calabrian Coast
Continental Battleground

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
ALLIES IN ROME
sporadic Fighting Continues
Officials Urge People
To Help Preserve City
MARKS ANOTHER TRIUMPH
RAF Begins
In-Raiding
Little Man
Museum

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
FRANCE INVADED
Beach Defenses Pierced 10 Miles
Lessons Said
Lower Than
Anticipated
Eisenhower's
Order Of Day
Spurs Troops

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
INVADERS PUSH
IN FROM BEACH
Attack Biggest
Of Entire War
Only Slight Resistance
Said Offered By Nazis
Powerful

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
PARIS
City is liberated by Patriots after
four-day battle in streets
General
Koentig's
message

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
Yanks In Germany
AP Says Aachen,
Saarbrücken Won
LIBERATION EXPERTS TOLL ON
BERLIN

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
GREECE waits
for its
King's word
GERMANY'S ALL
IS THROWN IN
Fold: 'Our last effort'

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
THE GERMAN LINE IS
BROKEN-EISENHOWER

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
PRESIDENT
ROOSEVELT
DEAD AT 63

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
INTO BERLIN
Russians nearing the
Unter den Linden

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
FRONTS LINK UP
Genoa Captured By Allies
5th, Partisans Hold
Big Italian Seaport
U. S. 1st Army Joins
Hit Deeper
Into Berlin

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
HITLER DEAD, NAZI
ADMIRAL REVEALS
5th Fights For Pass;
8th And Tiro Link Up
Doenitz Runs Reich,
Radio Report Says

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
NAZI ARMIES
IN ITALY
SURRENDER

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
Krauts Surrender
In N. W. Germany
Holland, Denmark

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
Italy Victory
Cost 109,163
In Casualties
Nazi General
Sees Clark
For Orders
Million Nazis
Homeland Crushed

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
IT'S ALL
OVER
OVER HERE

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 12

Flying just ahead of (50-75 miles) and in general support of 15th Air Force bombers striking at the Florisdorf (Vienna) oil refinery, our planes take part in the heaviest single attack (1667 tons) by the Air Force on a single target.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 14

With alerts coming shortly after midnight (12:30 and 1 o'clock), we realize all too fully that the spring-summer period of intensive operations is here once more. Unlike that of the seasons past, however, the inner feeling is that "this will be our last summer in Europe." To meet this longer schedule, Operations goes on a fuller 24 hour set-up with officers and enlisted men working in continuous shifts.

To S/Sgt. William A. Reid (Transportation Section Head)—the Bronze Star—"for meritorious achievement in support of combat operations from November 1942 to March 1945."

Relieved from assignment to our Squadron and headed for the U. S.: 1st Lt. Edward H. Chaulsett.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 15

"We could have seen Berlin if it were clear," report Lts. Wenzel, Herres and Hackbarth who fly 700 miles northwards to Dresden, Germany, thus completing the longest Squadron mission on record.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 16

"The happiest guy you could ever want to find," is how Sgt. Francis W. Sanders is described by one of our men who watches him leave the Squadron early this afternoon and head for the U. S. on rotation.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 17

A colorful St. Patrick's Day party is held tonight at the campside Red Cross and come time to cut the "blarney-green" cake, "who should do the honors but Max Goldberg!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 18

"These P-38's have cut six months off the war by their snooping,"—thus begins an enthusiastically-accepted article on our Squadron in today's "Stars & Stripes." . . . "Quite a write-up! If we cut so much time off the war, then how about sending us home?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 19

Greeted by our Commanding Officer in his column as the "first issue of an excellent idea," the "154 NEWS," edited by Special Service's Edgar Kobak, makes its initial appearance today. "It'll still have stiff competition from 'Uncle Tom's Gabinetto!'"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 20

With the assignment of twelve new navigators and pilots (2nd Lt. David Ricad, F. O.'s Sidney Pollard, Edmund Lukas, James Murphy, 2nd Lts. Lloyd Garey, Ralph Bachus, Alvin Jaffee, Victor Wallace, Chester Laret, James Lavin, Jack Wagner and Edwin Weisinger), those who work down on the line and in camp again note that "you hardly get to know these pilots nowadays . . . when they come down from a mission, you ask them how the guns are, how the radio worked and what's wrong with the plane, and that's all . . . before you know it, they have 50 missions in, and are down on the line saying good-bye . . . when they're gone, someone turns and asks you, 'who was that guy, anyway?'"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 21

"Spring is here!" Of this fact the "Stars & Stripes" as

well as a slumbering picture of "Arab" Toscano posted on the bulletin board inform us today. Far ahead of this official date has been our perennial sense of spring fever. Sun-flooded days, the whole camp area bursting into the sudden white and pink bloom of its many fruit trees, the lengthening of the days—all these combine to make us look at everything with a softer, more reminiscent eye.

At the end of the movie, "Once Upon A Time," the story of a dancing caterpillar who, at the picture's conclusion, turns into a butterfly, one soldier cracks dryly, "a crock of cocoon s—t!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 23

Just after the movie tonight, we note a sudden bright flash over camp. Another appears like an orange-yellow shredded tear drop over the airdrome. Within a few seconds, the inevitable, "put them lights out!" echoes through camp. The droning becomes more pronounced and seems to pass right over the camp area. With flashes of gunfire bursting directly overhead and the air raid alarm just sounded (!), some men empty their catch-all helmets and, thus hatted, stand outside and watch the fireworks. Somewhat more real than previous alerts, this one brings out a current frame of mind—"after all this time overseas, I'd hate to get knocked on the head now by a piece of our own shrapnel!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 24

A little after 1300 hours today, the BBC interrupts a program with, "ALLIED FORCES TODAY ARE ACROSS THE RHINE FRONT NORTH OF THE RHUR."

Providing route reconnaissance, Lts. Fortner and Harrison arrive at a point south of Dresden early this morning and are followed closely by Italy-based bombers which attack Berlin for the first time in 15th Air Force history.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 25

Once again, we are in a period of listening to every news item. In the British paper, "Union Jack" (famed for its "screwy" comic entitled "Jane"), we read, "MONTGOMERY IS ACROSS; 15 MILE RHINE BRIDGE-HEAD; GOING VERY WELL INDEED; PATTON OVER TOO; ENEMY IN FLIGHT." Typical of the many comments on this new offensive is, "they've had it, if they only knew it!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 27

On this day, our 30-months-overseas anniversary, we find ourselves in a period of expectant waiting. For the first time in almost two weeks, our operations are held to a minimum (1 mission) by bad weather and sweeping, grit-laden winds. . . . Contrary to other "days of celebration," this one is only casually noted—"so it's 30 months overseas!" Only with the coming of dusk and the beginning of the planned program does any enthusiasm come into this observance. After a chicken dinner ("no mess kits; buono!") and a "really good movie" in our mess hall, we stream over to the South African theatre-building across from camp. Once here, we pull our benches closer to the stage so that "we can see everything!" With uncommon attention, we watch the different acts of the night: a thin "anemic looking" dancer—a sweetly-smiling, sparkling-eyed girl singer—a drawling-voiced GI magician—a violently versatile Italian whose impressions of exuberant Americans are "noisy but true!"—the moon-faced Viennese master-of-ceremonies who sings in all languages and is re-called again and again—a hefty Italian dancer who later "gives her all for the boys!" After this, "one of the best shows we have ever seen," we gather in the mess hall for ice cream, then head for the

Significant issues of Army newspapers, the "Stars and Stripes" and "Union Jack," published in England, Africa and Italy. (These papers are arranged chronologically. For correct order, read each column vertically, starting at left column and proceeding to right.)

Day Room and "free drinks on the house." On into the night and well into the next morning goes this celebration—"a damn good night!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 28

Aftermath of last night's party: "there's a rumor going around that Major Dinker made a speech and said that the war (in Europe) would be over in two months and we'd be home in four!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 29

One by one, grimy and red-faced from their cross-country truck trip from Naples, 1st Sgt. Townsend, M/Sgt. Patrick, S/Sgt. Gibbons, Sgts. Waters, Girola, Ondovchik, Geckie, Simetkosky, Cpls. Hubay, Winstead, G. Stanley, Quist, Fillingim, Pfc. J. Smith and F. Stanley, (Cpl. Grochowski is hospitalized at the embarkation point), all returned from 30-day furloughs in the States, come into our mess hall at supper time tonight. "Buttonholed" by eager questioners, these men are nowhere in agreement about the trip—"I wouldn't do it again—the furlough was O.K., but that boat trip!—had us all on KP, even Doyne (Townsend)—it was worth it just to please the folks at home." Of the States, these returnees say: "just about the same as ever—more cars on the road than ever before—one well-meaning woman asked me what was the difference between the bronze and silver battle stars; I told her that the silver one was for a bigger battle! She believed it too!—it was good just to walk down the streets of any town, large or small, see kids clean and dressed right, nice houses; gives you a new outlook on things." . . . Four of our men (John Waters, Andrew Ondovchik, Mike Simetkosky and Douglas Quist) take the nuptial vows while in the U. S. and are soon marked "old married men" and given the usual kidding. . . . "The worst part about it all was the leaving. That's why I wouldn't do it again." . . . "Hell," puts in another soldier, "I'll still take anything they give me!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—March 30

His missions "finito," 1st Lt. Albert Rizzo leaves the Squadron this day and reports to the Naples Replacement Center preparatory to going home.

APRIL, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 1

Early this morning, a shrill whistle breaks the silence in camp and many a man rolls somewhat reluctantly out of a warm bunk and heads for the nearby amphitheatre where Easter Day Sunrise Services are to be held. As a strong sun breaks forth over the blue sea-crest of the Adriatic and splays the assemblage with its flattened rays, the voice of a Chaplain intones over the loudspeaker, "for He is risen . . ."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 2

As the "war moves farther away every day," we reluctantly agree that the Army, with all its traditional red tape (inspections, monthly show-downs etc.), is seeping in once more—"from now on it looks like a paper war!"

SECTIONS IN CAMP AND BARI. . . . All is work in the Transportation tent: Willie Russell, Merle McCullough, George Stanley, John Traffenstedt, Frank Stanley. . . . The depleted Headquarters-Personnel Staff: James Brennan, Capt. Reese Anderson, Capt. William Dinker (Squadron Commander), Major William Tyler, and Phil Seligman. . . . With the coming of another winter, Joseph Schmidling (second from right) receives another blanket from Supply's John Sigler (at table). Also in scene are Supply workers James Jacobs, John Fischer, William Salter. . . . "Open wide!" says Capt. Gerard "Doc" Vetromile to Lloyd Dallas at "sick call" in the dispensary. . . . The ever-busy team of Eugene Gerig (on scaffolding) and Norbert Raddatz (hammering beam) sets to work on a new tent frame for Headquarters. Louis Stathakis, 1st Sgt. Doyne Townsend, and Bill Goodner look on. . . . James Brennan's (left) "pay call" is answered by Norbert Raddatz, Roy White and Merle McCullough. . . . "This won't hurt—much!" claims Medics' Joseph Abernethy to David Cohen, waiting to be "shot." Ernest Jones (right) also gives the needle to Aaron Sinkoff (2nd from right) while Lawrence Hadobas (left, rear) waits his turn. . . . Intelligence makes its headquarters in Bari: D. Ross Grimes, Capt. Donald McCaslin (Section Officer), Ralph Horwich and Frederick G. Liles. . . . Photo negatives, taken by our pilots over enemy territory only a few hours before, are processed and dried in the Photo trailer by Walter Lee. . . . Dental Inspection: (in line) Joseph Schmidling, Michael Skuba, Cecil Long, John Waters, Douglas Quist, William Hall, Inspecting Officer, Robert Lynch. . . . The Medics' Dispensary tent in camp. . . . Ration-Day line before the PX. . . . Photo-technician William Roseberry repairs a defective aerial camera. . . . Transportation shop. . . . In the photo trailer, James Wetzel closely follows the development of a film.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 4

Blaring forth with "FRONT VANISHES AS ALLIED SPEARHEADS RANGE REICH" the "Stars & Stripes" brings news that Anglo-American and Russian forces are but 160 miles apart.

Late this afternoon, in the 15th Air Force War Room, presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross is made to 1st Lts. Edwin M. Rosenthal, William A. Verplanck, and Robert V. Clifford; the Bronze Star medal to S/Sgt. William A. Reid, Transportation Section Head.

Among other results of a Squadron meeting in the Red Cross tin-hut theatre tonight is the suggestion that "we get rid of all the dogs in camp!" Amazement, hilarious guffawing and stunned silence greet this idea and long after the meeting, this dog "purge" is discussed—"it's getting pretty bad when you can't look a dog in the face! . . . this Squadron has really had it! . . . imagine the whole camp riled up over a bunch of dogs! . . . a dog's life isn't what it used to be!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 5

Long before dawn this morning, 1st Lt. Floyd Bishop, on his first operational mission, speeds down the runway on a night take-off, pulls up his landing gear too soon (his right prop hits the ground) and crashes into the stone building to the far end of the runway—"the plane burst into flames—he was thrown clear but we couldn't get to him in time. . . ."

1st Lt. William A. Verplanck, his 50th mission completed, leaves our Unit for the U. S. this day.

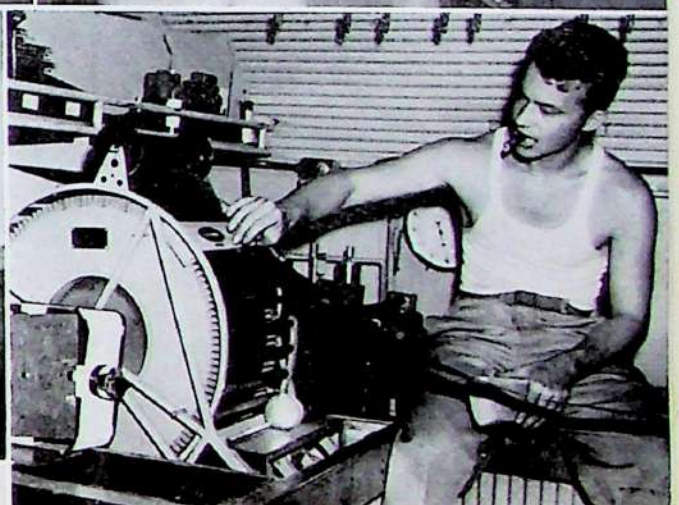
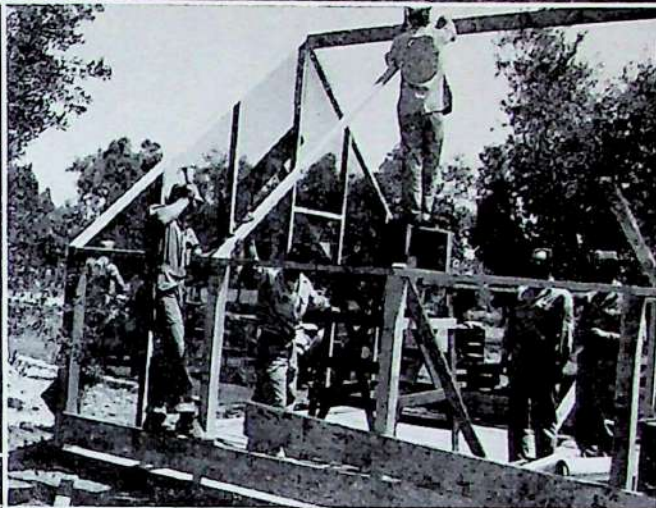
Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 8

In an article in today's "Stars & Stripes," General George Marshall indicates that "many men will be moved as quickly as possible after the European war ends to the Pacific—people at home must accept this fact." Although this subject is the prime topic of discussion in camp tonight, its tone "does not surprise" many—"I thought they'd finally come around to that. First it was through the U. S., then through England, and now through the Suez Canal. You're f—d and there's nothing you can do about it!"

Assigned to our Headquarters Section: Sgt. John J. McHugh. To the U. S.: 1st Lt. Robert V. Clifford and Capt. Edwin M. Rosenthal.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 9

Early this morning, our pilots are briefed for the day's operations: "it is the intention of the British Eighth Army to establish a bridgehead over the River Santerno with a view to rapid exploitation northward toward Ferrara and, in conjunction with operations of the Fifth U. S. Army, westwards toward Bologna—this Air Force, operating in close co-operation with the ground forces, will attack enemy troop concentrations, gun posts and defense installations in the area." Then, more specifically—"the targets for weather checks are the Innsbruck, Bologna, Pola and Lugo area." Within an hour's time after this briefing, our weather craft





are heading northward to provide route and target weather data to 15th Air Force bombers which follow at first light. Telling of his flight to Northern Italy, Lt. Milne remarks, "the bombers made a perfect run and from what I saw, I'm sure there couldn't be a living thing left on the ground in the bombing pattern."

Just at midday today, a terrific ripping and deep rumbling blast shake the earth and all upon it. At the noon meal in our mess hall, we at once think—"the gas supply; exploded!" We rush outside in one headlong dash and crane to find out what has happened. Over by the harbor to the east, a tall knotty plume of white smoke curls up into the flawless blue sky, is soon fused with a twisting mass of dark black smoke—"must be a ship blown up in the harbor." . . . In Bari itself, our Intelligence and Operations personnel undergo the full weight of the blast. These sections, in the large 15th Air Force building to the south of the docks, are one great litter of sprawling windows wrenched from their frames, shattered glass, buckled and shredded plaster and wood. Cpl. Eugene McKenna and Lt. Andrew Tice, in the Operations room at the time of the blast, are thrown on the floor and escape without injury. Cpl. Ralph Horwich and Sgt. Fred Gillies, just leaving the 15th Air Force building, also have a story to tell. "The blast came as a complete surprise. It was so terrific that you felt it couldn't be more than a block away. My first impression was of a shell lobbed in from the sea—it had such a powerful woosh to it. 'Judge' Horwich thought it was a 'sneak attack.' People on the streets at the time just seemed to lose the last covering of control and stand naked with emotion. One woman approached us wild-eyed and gestured again and again to the sky, all the time her whole body shivered convulsively. Some people darted madly for the shelters; others just milled about aimlessly. One woman pulled wildly at her long stringy hair, beat upon people and wailed softly. This wailing was far more pitiful than much of the screeching and crying for it seemed to have a sense of helpless doom about it. It seemed as though this was the straw that broke these people completely. Lulled into a sense of security, they couldn't comprehend the shattering return of death and destruction." . . . Over at the Officers' Bari apartment, those pilots in the mess hall at the time of the blast are spattered with flying glass; many are cut by these fragments. . . . Even three hours after the great explosion, Italians mill aimlessly about the streets, walk up and down with babies clutched in their arms and their eyes red from crying and bulging with stark fear. In the parks and in the open spaces by the waterfront, large masses of people huddle together—blankets, a loaf of bread, and sometimes a piece of furniture beside them. Some even head out into the country. Panic is written on every glass-littered, oil-spattered street. . . . Strange is the contrasting scene in camp this day. Far away from the danger of an expected second blast, soldiers who have not been in Bari cannot comprehend the terror which clutches a people but eight miles away. Those few who have been in the city repeat again and again, "it's a relief to get out of there; the people, though not accusing you, have such a doomed and helpless look written over their faces and in every uncertain action;

they say over 500 dead already." . . . A touch of humor is injected into this grim scene when it is learned that "Judge" Shirutis, in Bari on his day-off, has the filling shaken from one of his teeth by the blast!

"There's old Polock!" Thus the return of Cpl. John Grochowski is noted late today.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 10

For the second day, our planes fly close-co-ordination missions with 15th Air Force bombers hitting ahead of 8th Army troops, now engaged in a full-scale offensive to clear the Po Valley and link up with Russian and Yugoslav troops to the North and East.

Assigned to our Squadron: 2nd Lts. Hubert J. Bartlett, Lawrence N. Marcus, William E. McKinney, Ray Wilson, LaVelle Derhammer, Walter M. Marut, Robert E. Rentshuler, Edward A. Wright, Jr. and 1st Lts. Neal W. Foster and Harold L. Williamson.

Just after noon chow today, M/Sgt. James ("Doc") Tanner (rotation) and S/Sgt. Shehans, Sgts. Kester, ("Pop") Ross, Cpls. Morene and Lean, Pfc's Delaney, McCullough and Sawyer (30-day furlough) take leave of the Squadron and head for the 22nd "Repple Depple," the first stop among many leading to the U. S.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 11

With 24 P-38's lined up on our section of the airfield and our pilot-officer strength well above the 50 mark and about to be further upped, Squadron members look around and comment, "this is getting to be like a Group; the Officers will soon outnumber the Enlisted Men!"

Headlines in today's newspapers: "AMERICAN TROOPS ACROSS THE ELBE; LAST BARRIER BEFORE BERLIN; 64 MILES FROM GERMAN CAPITAL."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 12

"Roosevelt's dead!" This flat, startling revelation is repeated by almost every Squadron member early this morning and, for the time being, the President's death overshadows all talk of the war. "Roosevelt dead? . . . you're kidding! . . . a major blow for the Allies . . . what's the new President's name? . . . Truman? . . . what's he like? . . . now Stalin and Churchill will have the big say . . . couldn't have come at a worse time." Permeating all conversation is a sense of disbelief and we slowly realize that the indispensable man of party slogans had become the indispensable man in fact. "This is the crisis point for America. . . ."

In today's "Union Jack" is the first official admission of the Bari explosion—"SCENE OF INDESCRIBABLE HORROR—267 DEAD; 1600 WOUNDED!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 13

Encouragement for further rumors is the notice that "all personnel will bring barracks bags to Supply for the purpose of stenciling on men's names and serial numbers."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 15

In close and continued support to record-breaking numbers of 15th Air Force bombers which are airbourne in an

"The Distinguished Flying Cross is today awarded to: Major James Fuller (right); Major Gen. Nathan Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Russell Field (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Daniel Dixon (right); Gen. Charles Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Blaine Murray (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Charles Kyle (left); Brig. Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Capt. Thomas Watson (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Richard Horrocks (right); Gen. Twining, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Roy Fortner (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Wesley Meeteer (right) is congratulated by Capt. Roy Nelson. . . . Capt. Glen Buchanan (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Capt. Albin Wenzel (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Earl Shubert (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Roy Herres (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Willis Hart (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Elwin Harrison (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Erasmo Cantu (right); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Gordon Franklin (left); Gen. Mollinson, presenting Officer. . . . Lts. Gregor Milne (left) and I. Newton Perry. . . . Lt. James Turner (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Clayton Hobbs (right); Gen. Born, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. Robert Clifford (right); Colonel Fellows, presenting Officer. . . . Lt. William Verplanck (left) is congratulated by Capt. William Dinker."



ENLISTED MEN'S GROUP PICTURE (not all Squadron members present in this photo). . . . FIRST ROW: Robert Jennings, Richard Fichtner, Willie Wright, Michael Widay, Orien Craghead, Robert Lynch, John Patrick, Charles Mitchell, Edward Appler, Robert Stires; SECOND: John O'Conner, Douglas Quist, Kenneth Gunter, Mike Simetkosky, Charles Sutliff, Zolton Varga, William Hallman, Stanley Barnish, Clair Gibbons, Walter Lee; THIRD: William Reid, Dan Gee, John Traffenstedt, John McMichael, Robbie Barham, William Salter, Forrest Diemer, John Sigler, Thurman Nix, Harold Haley; FOURTH: James Cokl, Leon Barnett, Charles Tomayko, Jack Bottarini, William Roseberry, Hubert Siemer, George Moon, Albert Raper, Dick Red, Francis Stevens, Leo Tunnell; FIFTH: Alexander Winstead, Vincent Martinek, Ted Ferguson, John White, Harold Sander, Norbert Raddatz, Eugene Gerig, Forrest Clark, Robert Scates, Fred Higdon, Joseph Schmidling, Frederick Gillies, Harold Steed, Edwin Tole; SIXTH: Lloyd Dallas, Jacob Stadler, Stanislaw Kij, Sam Owens, Eulalio Rodriguez, Edgar Kobak, Norman Geekie, Eugene McKenna, Roy White, Melvin Bryan, David Cohen, Simon Walaitis; SEVENTH: D. Ross Grimes, Orville Stobnack, Percy Cooper, Harold Kittner, Edwin Robinson, James Welch, Thomas Taylor, James Thomas, David Chapman, Michael Halick, George Scarborough, Harold Hubay, John Best. . . . (May 1945).

all-out effort to smash enemy defenses around the hotly-contested Bologna area, our weather P-38's are also up in record numbers (6 missions, 11 sorties, 15 airmen operational). "One of the busiest days of the year."

Another pilot "finishes up" (50 missions completed) this day: 1st Lt. Kenneth C. Vradenburg.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 16

Prefaced by Field Marshall Alexander's Order of the Day—"IT IS NOW OUR TURN TO PLAY OUR DECISIVE PART"—the whole Italian front blazes into an Allied offensive. Over the N. Italy area before dawn and during closely co-ordinated bomb runs by 15th Air Force "heavies," our pilots claim, "we had everything up there under the sun—it looks like the big push at last."

Announcement of the following promotions is made this day: Albert C. Raper to TECH/SERGEANT, Ted E. Ferguson to STAFF/SERGEANT.

Assigned to the Squadron Headquarters Section: T/Sgt. William H. Hallman.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 17

The announcement—"the advances of our ground forces have brought to a close the strategic air war; from now onward our strategic air force must operate with our tactical air forces in close co-operation with our armies,"—is made today and we note a similarity in our present "short-hop" operations and the last weeks of "milk run" operations in Tunisia two years ago.

The first Squadron softball game against the "Gay Nineties" tonight is called off at the end of the fourth inning because of darkness. Score, 10 to 8 in favor of the other team. "We need practice." "Hell, yes! And we need to go home, too!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 19

Another day of "maximum effort" sees twelve of our planes airborne on seven separate missions in co-ordination with Fifteenth Air Force attacks on the Brenner Pass communications lines.

Along with the war news on the front page of today's "Stars & Stripes" is the story of the death of Ernie Pyle, killed while covering an action in the Pacific. "He was my idea of a good writer," puts in one man. "Yeah, him and Mauldin. That guy's cartoons sure hit things right on the head most of the time."

Assigned this day: 2nd Lt. Roscoe Jennings (Pilot), S/Sgt. William L. Baldrige (Operations).

Fourteen Officers and ten Enlisted Men sign up for

various courses in the newly activated Army Institute Adriatica in Bari today while many disdain this chance to go back to school again—"getting too old for that; or is it just too lazy?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 20

Returning from close-support missions in the Po Valley area, Lt. Fortner tells of a concentration of enemy smoke pots in the Northern Italian Alps—"it looks as if they're trying to cover up the whole Po Valley from our bombers."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 21

Another "not too popular" I. & E. meeting is conducted tonight in our mess hall by Lt. Duckworth who speaks on "Post-War Germany And The Peace" and lays the factual ground-work for a discussion which somehow never materializes. One suggestion, made by Sgt. Goin, that we "set up a United Nations with a world President" is half-heartedly contested by a few Squadron members who mark it "impractical." Soon after this, without much further discussion, the meeting ends.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 22

Assigned: 1st Lt. James T. Moore, F. O. Edward C. Fenyn (pilots).

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 23

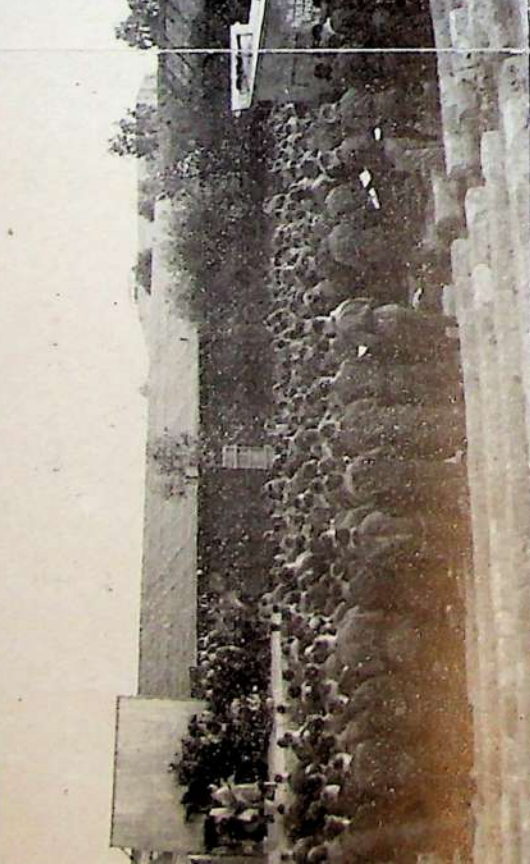
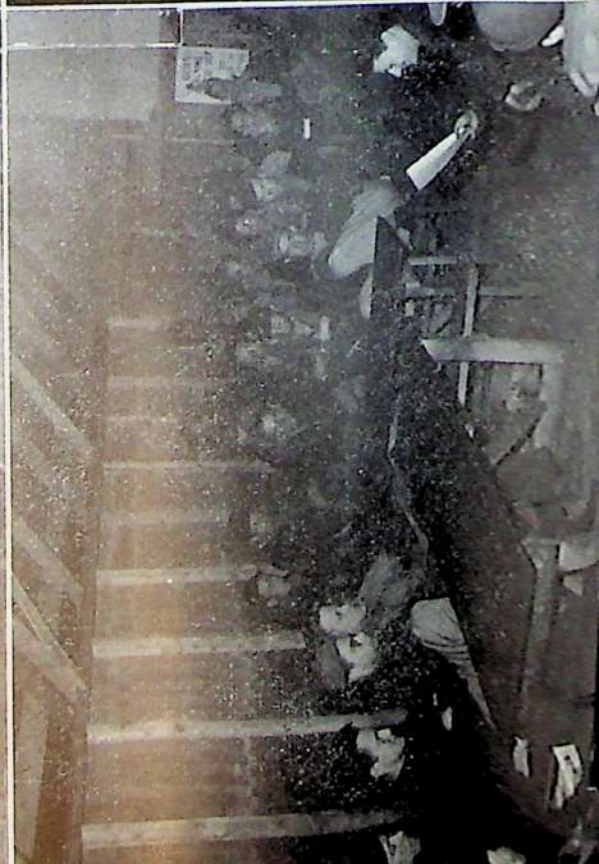
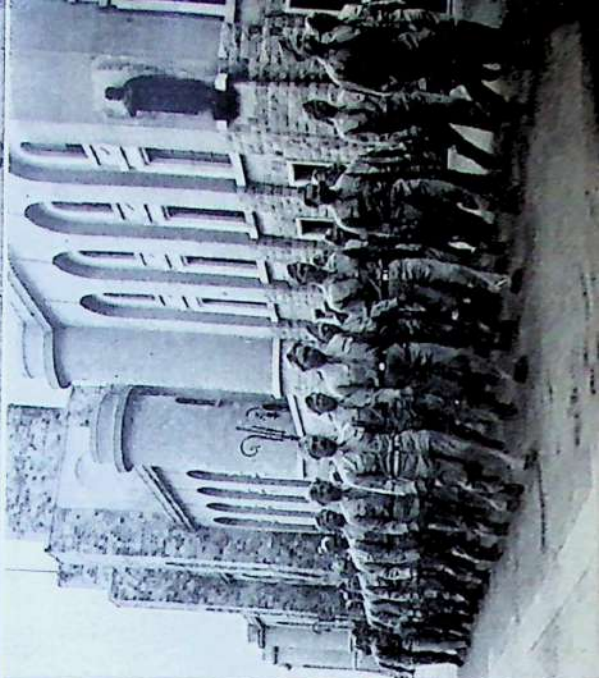
With twenty out of twenty planes up this day on regular operational missions to Northern Italy and Austria and on local training flights, our crewmen experience a hectic day—"they're just flying the p— out of everything!"

In the Squadron newspaper, "TAILPIECE," our Commanding Officer, Major Dinker, writes on redeployment: "many possibilities for disposition of the 154th, ranging anywhere from sending the outfit with or without equipment back to the States or to sending us to the Pacific. Every time I go to higher authorities in an attempt to find out what the score is they say, 'look, how can we tell you when we don't know ourselves?' When I told them they had (!) to send us home, that we were getting tired of gin-and-juice and wanted a quart of milk, they said, 'stop worrying, the fairest thing possible will be done in every case.' I know damn well they are right when they say stop worrying for I have to comb my hair a certain way now to cover up a spot where part of it fell out last week! So don't believe all these rumors like driving to Vladivostok by jeep, because we'll give everyone the straight dope as soon as we receive it."

News that Berlin has been entered by Russian forces is

OFFICERS' GROUP (May 1945). . . . (Front) Lts. Jaffe, Garey, Kyle, Hackbarth, Harrison, Wenzel, Shubert, Cantu, Bartlett, Turner, Franklin, Herres, Obloy. (Second row) Capt. Beason, Lts. Wilson, Foster, C. Bennett, Moore, Dudley, Huntsman, MacVittie, Perry, Milne, Dubuc, Capt. McCaslin. (Third row) Lts. Williamson, McKinney, Marcus, Lavin, Kieckhafer, Marut, Buchanan, Woolfson, Bennett, Hart, Fenyn, Jennings. (Fourth row) Capt. Nelson, Lts. Weisinger, Wright, Derhammer, Wagner, Rentshuler, Loyd, Bachus, Olsen, Major Dinker (Squadron Commander).





splashed in huge headlines in Army and civilian newspapers and the reaction is somewhat tempered: "well, it's in the final round."

"Your attention please, men! Major Dinker has asked me to make two important announcements." Thus the voice of our Adjutant, Major Tyler, breaks over the din in our mess hall at supper tonight. "First, another bronze battle star has been awarded the Squadron for the Balkan campaign. And now—the outstanding work of the 154 has been recognized officially—the Distinguished Unit Citation has been approved!" Elated and happily red-faced, the Major withdraws amid a buzz of voices and cheering. "Well, we got it at last!—about time!—when he came in and said he had an important announcement, I thought, at last, we're going home!—thought he said alerted instead of awarded!" . . . In talking of the citation award, men cannot hide a certain pride and joy—"it's not so much a citation for Ploesti as it is for our two years of operations overseas."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 25

As the Allied armies advance deeper into the Reich, we note the formerly large number of German radio stations now reduced to two or three outlets. . . . Also adding to our sense that "the end of the war (in Europe) isn't far off" is the presence of the same atmosphere which preceded the collapse of the war in North Africa two years ago: "no air raids or alerts—our bombers striking at will—no enemy air opposition to speak of—'milk run' missions."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 26

For the fourth day running our P-38 weather "snoopers" are occupied in providing pre-raid reconnaissance and target data for 15th Air Force bombers over communications targets in the midst of hastily retreating German Armies in Northern Italy and Austria.

"Berlin encircled; Russian troops hold half the city; link-up any hour—(in Italy) the rout has begun; 5th and 8th Army troops stream across the Po River." . . . so reads the news this day.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 27

Assigned to our Squadron Engineering Section: Cpl. Christopher K. Hamilton.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 28

After many days of rumors, and rumors of rumors, we hear the momentous announcement: "ALLIES MEET; SPLIT GERMANY IN TWO."

Off to Rome via train (a 22 hour trip) go Sgts. Mitchell, Bryan, Sandoval, Goin and Toscano.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 29

The third day on which adverse weather keeps our flights down to a minimum proves to be a fertile breeding ground for a "whopping crop" of rumors—"there's something big in the air; all this talk about peace isn't for nothing!—they'll probably make peace weeks before they announce it; life's pretty damn cheap to the big boys."

Issued today and proudly accepted is the gold-bordered, blue Citation Bar (Ploesti, 17-18-19 Aug. 1944).

(November 1944) Christmas-package call! Bob Stires is the happy recipient at right. . . . Squadron Commander Major William Dinker at his desk in camp Headquarters. . . . (Jan. 25, 1945) Lt. Robert Clifford successfully completes the Squadron's 1000th weather mission. . . . (April 1, 1945) Sunrise services are held at the campside amphitheatre on Easter Sunday morning. . . . (October 1944) Squadron Officers: (1st row) Lts. Hopkins, Reid, Capt. Vetromile, Lts. Feather, Turner, Capt. Adell, Lt. Nelson, (2nd row) Capt. McCaslin, Lts. Hobbs, Rizzo, Meeteer, C. Bennett, Capt. Beason, Lts. Taylor, Touhy, (3rd row) Lts. Duckworth, Wenzel, Horrocks, Field, Buchanan, Murray, Capt. Tyler, Lt. Sterner, (4th row) Capt. Dinker, Major Fuller (Squadron Commander), Col. Nelson, Capt. Pinney, Lts. Dixon, Fieldhouse, Capt. Kalinowski. . . . (July 1944) "One-Eye Connelly" (inset) has (below) "quin-pups!" . . . (March 8, 1945) Phil Seligman (right) tries to stump (at table left) D. Ross Grimes, Lt. Warren Bates, David Cohen, and Lt. Theodore White, participants in a quiz contest in our mess hall. . . . (March 8, 1945) After 30 days in the U. S., Ed Harris returns and "lays 'em in the aisles" (as usual) with his account! . . . (May 24, 1945) Seventy Squadron members led by Major William Tyler march in a farewell ceremony in Bari for the 15th Air Force Commander, General Nathan Twining.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—April 30

Before Headquarters this noon, a small group of men gathers round T/Sgt. Jack Finn, leaving the Squadron on permanent rotation. "The best of luck to you, Jack! We'll probably be seeing you in the States in a few months!"

A steady drumming in the rising climax of the war becomes ever more pronounced today: "MUNICH FALLEN . . . EXECUTION OF MUSSOLINI CONFIRMED (He and his mistress are shot, then hung up by the heels) . . . VENICE OCCUPIED . . . BATTLE FOR BERLIN IN LAST STAGES . . . THE GERMAN MILITARY POWER IN ITALY HAS PRACTICALLY CEASED (Gen. Mark Clark)."

MAY, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 1

For those in camp and down on the line, "May Day" (Communist celebration) in Italy is marked like any other: two missions are airbourne in weather which permits only radar attacks on marshalling yards in the Salzburg area. . . . Such a sense of routine does not pervade the city of Bari, however. Early in the morning, small groups of men, women and curious kids gather in various parts of the city. Around many an arm is a bright red cloth band with the Communist sickle and hammer outlined in contrasting white. Regular Italian soldiers, their hands hitched in the strap of their French rifles, stand in two's along the main streets. Later on in the morning, spirited parades flow down the streets and red flags and signs—W STALIN—W TOGILATTI—and smaller signs) W ROOSEVELT—W CHURCHILL—bob up and down in the stream of marchers. The crowds gape and cheer spasmodically; many are just silently curious. One of our men in Bari this morning and standing on the sidelines comments, "these people will take to anything; one day Fascism, the next day Communism. The Reds are getting stronger in Italy every day! The Italians—just a bunch of followers to whoever will offer them the most!"

Another straw in the wind is General Spaatz's announcement that strategic bombing is ended in Europe and the Air Forces will be moved to the Pacific—"oh, my back!" . . . A further peace offer from Himmler is the prime item of news this day and the feeling is "any day, any hour now, it will come." On the Hamburg radio, we hear a German commentator say, "the war is racing toward its end and this end may come tomorrow."

Assigned: Sgts. Thomas F. McGonigle and Eugene T. Wendorff (Engineering).

A late radio flash tonight: "HITLER IS DEAD!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 2

Sometime late this afternoon, a typewritten letter is posted on our bulletin board. All afternoon, groups of three to a dozen or more scan this letter: "MANY OF YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO AUGMENT THE GROWING ARMY AIR FORCES STRENGTH NOW ENGAGED AGAINST JAPAN . . . WE IN WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN GIVING CONSTANT THOUGHT AND STUDY TO THE MANY PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN YOUR REDEPLOYMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION. YOU

WILL BE MOVED AS RAPIDLY AS THE AVAILABLE TROOP SHIPS AND AIR TRANSPORTS CAN PLY THE SEA AND THE AIR FROM YOUR PORTS TO THE UNITED STATES AND BACK AGAIN. THESE PLANS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND ARE EVEN NOW BEING IMPLEMENTED . . . WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS, MEN WHO HAVE SERVED LONGEST IN EUROPE AND AFRICA WILL BE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES WHEN THE DEMOBILIZATION PHASE STARTS." . . . In our tents tonight, we talk under two patterns of thought, "it says we're going home—why don't you read it right; all it says is that we stand a good chance not to go to the Pacific." Not for many a month has there been such widespread optimism. Even men noted for their "sour" appearance break down and admit slyly at mess tonight that "it sounds pretty good." Over all, there is a relieved joyousness, a sense of reprieve. Some men, even though desiring to believe the most optimistic of their imaginings, hold themselves in rigidly—"I've got my hopes up too many times!" . . . Adding yet more brilliance to the scene are the momentous radio flashes tonight—"ALL TROOPS IN NORTHERN ITALY AND CERTAIN PROVINCES OF SOUTHERN AUSTRIA HAVE SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY TO THE ALLIES—BERLIN HAS FALLEN TO RUSSIAN TROOPS!" . . . Scrounging down into the cot tonight, soldiers comment softly, contentedly, "it—sure—looks—good."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 3

Aftermath of last night's Italy-Austria surrender: American and (smaller) British flags hang from government buildings in Bari; a new warmth of feeling on the part of the Italians toward the Americans; a catchy slogan going the rounds—"July pay, U. S. A.!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 4

For the second day, our P-38's are not airbourne on any operational flights. . . . Heightened by the order to pack up and turn in everything not needed for operations, as well as the building of crates and intensive efforts of "Doc" Vetromile and staff to put all Squadron members through their redeployment physical, the general feeling is that "it's just about finito la guerre."

Just after the movie tonight, a radio news-flash crackles out from London—"ALL AXIS TROOPS IN HOLLAND, WESTERN GERMANY AND DENMARK HAVE BEEN SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY TO THE ALLIES!"

A further Battle Star—"Rhineland"—is today authorized for all Squadron personnel.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 5

With news of further German mass-surrenders in Austria and Czechoslovakia announced hourly, one man claims, "if V-E Day (Victory-In-Europe Day) doesn't come pretty soon, the boys in my tent aren't going to be ABLE to celebrate!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 6

A Squadron holiday for all but the necessary alerts is favored by summer-like weather and the hope of imminent victory—"I'm not sweating out going to the Pacific any more; just get me back to the U. S.!"

Assigned: F. O.'s Sedgwick B. Loyd and Floyd B. Olsen. . . . Departing this day for a 30-day furlough in the U. S.: T/Sgt. William Hunt, S/Sgt. O. C. Weeks, Sgt. James Wetzel, and Cpl. James Rodgers.

Again and again today, the BBC begins its news broadcasts with "an announcement of the end of the war in Europe is expected very soon; within a matter of hours."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 7

After many days of expectant waiting, we hear the news:

"TOTAL AND UNCONDITIONAL GERMAN SURRENDER," (as yet unconfirmed by Allied reports). This event, on the surface the one for which we have been waiting since we landed in North Africa two years ago, is received quietly and is tempered by the knowledge that the Pacific war still lies ahead—"if it were only a total peace. . . ."

To the U. S. this day: Capt. Thomas J. Watson.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 8

The 8th Squadron Battle Star is announced: (Air Campaign) Northern France.

Today is officially proclaimed V-E Day and even now, with the war over, there is still no violent reaction. One man claims, "I guess nothing surprises us any more." Until passes to town are issued later in the day (we are briefed not to be rowdy, not to get drunk etc.), the day is one of leisure, visiting around in different tents, working in the Camera Club, playing softball, sitting around over at the Red Cross. . . . At three o'clock in the afternoon, we hear U. S. President Harry Truman broadcast—"the flags of freedom fly over Europe." At the same time, Prime Minister Winston Churchill speaks from London—"the war must be pursued to bring retribution to the aggressor in the Pacific." Listening to these "general" speeches, many feel that they "have heard the same old things again and again; nothing new." Within a few minutes after these broadcasts, conversation drifts back to those fifteen men due to go home on permanent rotation. One of the chosen men puts forth, "this waiting is worse than the two years overseas; I wish to hell they'd get us out of here! I can't sleep at night now." Since this selection was made, the general opinion is that "the old men will all go home eventually, but in groups like this one."

V-E night is marked with volley after volley of rifle fire from camps nearby. "That was a clever move to take up all our guns yesterday!" . . . British searchlight crews fan the sky over camp with piercing blue pencils of light and nearby Yugoslav troops splash the blue-black sky with red, green and yellow flares. . . . Returning from town tonight, the driver of the nightly truck tells of his trip: "Bari is mobbed—never saw so many people in all my life—the streets are jammed full." . . . In our Day Room, a few men gather for a game of poker and customers at the bar are "far and few between." . . . Different tents have their own ways of observing the occasion. Some men just sit around discussing any and all rumors, fry up a batch of new potatoes, or pass the bottle 'round and 'round. Many tents are dark long before midnight. . . . Down by the Transportation tent, a smiling Italian sentinel asks one of our guards—"guerra finito; voi casa?" (Now that the war is over, will you go home?) Our guard slowly shakes his head and draws out thoughtfully and with the play of a wry smile on his night-shadowed face, "non capisco, Joe; non capisco." (I don't know, Joe; I don't know . . .)

Thus with the end of the war in Europe comes a definite sense of a goal reached. The war, a reality for us on the night and morning of November 9-10 1942, when we landed on the shores of the Gulf of Arzew, North Africa, has run its course. During our thirty-one months overseas, we have written home from many places and under all conditions, from pup tent to city apartment. Now with many of the "old men" gone or ready to leave the Squadron, our unit has taken on a new complexion. Hardly a tent in camp has not felt the loss of one or more of its occupants and welcomed in a "new man" just from the States. We feel a sharp let-down and emptiness of the present. Our thoughts begin to push out towards our coming lot in the Army, at home, with our people, and towards plans for the future. We nod in reluctant agreement as we hear the comment, "all there is now is waiting . . . just waiting. . . ."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 10

"Back to the old haunt" come M/Sgt. Otis Taylor, T/Sgt. Lawrence Wewer, T/Sgt. John Fischer, S/Sgt. Edgar Duff, Cpl. Arnold Christenson, Cpl. Kenneth Gunter and Cpl. Vincent Martinek, all returned from a 30-day furlough in the U. S.—"we just missed staying in the States by a few days!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 13

With the release of the new War Department redeployment scores, we figure out our points and, in general, come far above the critical discharge score of 85 . . . "we ought to be among that first two million to be discharged . . . never mind the discharge now; let's get back to the States first!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 15

In this "let-down period" after the war is over, we continue to go through the motions of a one-hundred-hour-a-week training program. Alerts (0430 to 0730 hours in the morning) are still the order of the day as an average of eight P-38's take off on early morning navigational and general training flights. Come afternoon, the line is deserted by all except skeleton crews. Many men use the remainder of the day to stretch out on the "sack" and "catch up on all that sleep I lost in the past year!" Some swim off the rocky jetty at nearby San Spirito; others take out the kinks in inter-Squadron softball games. Reading and general bull sessions manage to fill up the remainder of the time.

The news that the eleven men alerted to go home on rotation are not going after all is broken today and those men



Fred Higdon "reacts" to the news that the war is over!

who made extensive preparations, turned in their clothes, sewed on stripes for the first time, and made a general and critical survey of themselves before leaving for the U. S. are fatalistic in their reaction—"as long as I've been in the Army, I ought to know better than to put all my hopes on something like that!—I felt sure we were really going this time—damnit! All that sleep I lost by thinking about going home!"

Assigned: 2nd Lt. Leonard Dudley, and the group of radar men which has been working tirelessly with us for so many months: M/Sgt. Melvin Ross, S/Sgt. George Scarborough, Sgt. Stanley Barnish, Sgts. Leon Barnett, John Best, Jack Bottarini, William Chaffee, David Chapman, James Cokl, Stephen Ewing, Cpls. Ernest Chandler, Francis

Dailey, Lawrence Hadobas, Wilbur Huot, Billy Liles, Aaron Sinkoff, Sidney Swirsky, Charles Tomayko and John Ware.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 19

At 0700 hours this morning, our planes are airborne to Northern Italy, thus beginning the first of daily two-plane weather runs in support of Air Force non-combat activities in Southern Europe.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 22

Announced this day: the award of two more Battle Stars (the 9th and 10th) to all Squadron personnel directly or indirectly supporting the Air Campaigns, North Apennines and the Po Valley.

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 23

On this haze-clouded day, we line up in rigid formation on a field to the south of camp, shift our eyes to the spot where Major General Nathan F. Twining, the Fifteenth Air Force Commander, attaches a Distinguished Unit Citation Streamer (for operations over Ploesti, Roumania, on the days, 17-18-19 August 1944) to the Squadron standard held forth by T/Sgt. Gerrel O'Quin. We then pass in review before the General and our Commanding Officer, Major William R. Dinker. . . . On the bulletin board later in the day is a letter from our C. O.—"I wish to congratulate you all on the commendable way you conducted yourselves in the formation . . . everyone had their head up and did their part well. It was a damn good show."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 24

Preceded by much grousing and almost two hours of standing in a sticky atmosphere, getting our lines straight and then changing them again, a brief speech by the Fifteenth's Major General Twining is heard by seventy-two representatives of our Squadron. (Phrases of the speech: "Victory is ours—the 15th Air Force the best in the world—hope to see you over fighting those 'sons of heaven!' I am leaving for the U. S.; will return; but probably not to the Fifteenth.") General reaction: "did you hear that about hoping to see us over fighting those 'sons of heaven!'?"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 27

News that twelve men are to go home on rotation the day after tomorrow and of the promotions of Wesley A. Whitaker and Millard F. Potter to TECH/SERGEANT; James C. Brennan, Richard P. Fichtner, Frederick W. Gillies, Robert V. Halboth and Stanislaw Kij to STAFF/SERGEANT breaks all at once in camp late this afternoon and there is a wide variety of mood, temperament and expression over the area. Those chosen to go home are highly excited—"who wouldn't be?!" Those who were rumored to go home and were not chosen are keenly disappointed. . . . "Goin' home!" exclaims Buddy Diemer—"just think of it!" . . . "I AM," growls one of those who almost went!

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 28

"Just in time to see the men off for home and celebrate the promotions" is the Squadron party tonight—"plenty of food, beer, and a good show."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 29

Early this morning, the largest group yet gathers outside of Headquarters to see Major William Tyler, Capt. Albert Adell, M/Sgt. Julian Stires, T/Sgts. Harold Haley, Fred Higdon, William Lewis, S/Sgts. Forrest Diemer, William Roseberry, Sgt. John Goin, Cpls. Michael Halick, Clarence Ouderkirk, Norbert Raddatz, Walter Woodard, and Pfc. Elias Toscano off to the U. S. (on rotation). As the truck pulls away and we stand watching it out of sight, one man speaks for many when he says, "this is the last time I come to see anyone off again!"

At noon in the mess hall today, our Commanding Officer,

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-rmb

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 2036)

2 April 1945.

CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

154TH WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON. For outstanding performance of duty in support of strategic bombing operations against the enemy. On 17, 18 and 19 August 1944, during a period of concentrated bombing attacks against the huge Ploesti oil refinery in Rumania, the aircraft of the 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, preceding the bombers over this vital target, conducted an extensive pre-attack reconnaissance of the target's defensive system. Prior to the attack the ground personnel worked tirelessly to have their aircraft at the peak of mechanical condition to insure the success of this maximum effort of the squadron. Facing defending enemy fighters and intense barrages of anti-aircraft fire with supreme courage and utter disregard of the extreme hazards confronting them, the pilots of these lightly armed, unescorted reconnaissance aircraft circled, crossed and recrossed the heavily defended target area while procuring target defense data. The weather aircraft pilots, following the initial transmission of the assembled detailed data, continued to traverse the target area, photographing the progress and results of the attack and maintaining a flow of target information to the successive waves of bomber aircraft. Utilizing the vital data furnished by the 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's pilots, the bomber forces carried out highly successful attacks, destroying large areas of vitally important refinery installations and supplies. The aggressiveness, daring and high tactical efficiency, together with the outstanding teamwork displayed in the execution of these missions, while inaugurating new tactics against heavily defended targets is an outstanding example of efficiency and versatility. By the untiring efforts and devotion to duty of the ground crews, together with the aggressiveness, courage and professional skill of the pilots, this mission, executed in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States of America, has contributed greatly to the hastening of the defeat of the enemy.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

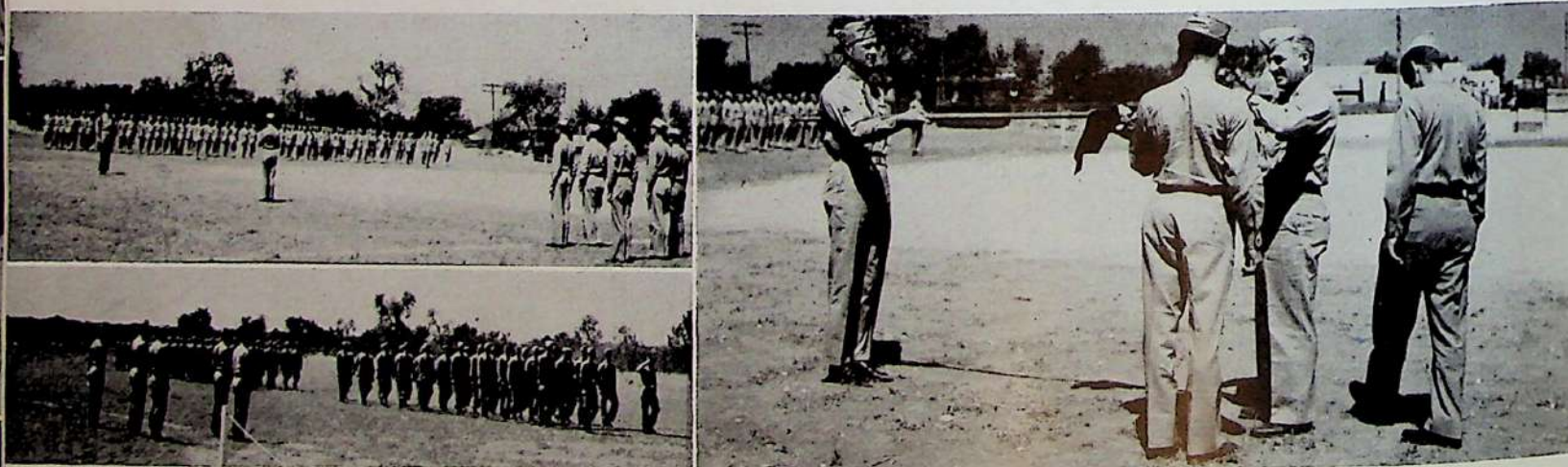
OFFICIAL:

J. M. IVINS,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION: "D"

- 1 -

R E S T R I C T E D



(May 23, 1945) For "outstanding operations" over the Ploesti oil refineries (in Roumania) on 17-18-19 August 1944, Squadron personnel is awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation. . . . (Top left) Capt. Warren Beason reads the order while Squadron personnel stands at attention. . . . (Right) Maj. General Nathan Twining, Commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, attaches citation streamer to the Squadron Standard held forth by T/Sgt. Gerrel O'Quin; Squadron Commander, Major William Dinker, stands second from left. . . . (Lower left) Squadron personnel passes in review before the General and Squadron Officers.

Major William Dinker, stands upon a bench and calmly reads from a typewritten sheet—"SUBJECT: REDEPLOYMENT OF THE 154TH WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON—1. THIS ORGANIZATION IS SCHEDULED FOR SHIPMENT TO THE UNITED STATES DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE." After the Major has read the entire letter, someone starts to cheer. In a second, others take it up with gusto. Almost everyone in the mess hall at the time breaks into a wide grin and eagerly discusses the news. One man toys with his food and comments, "I don't seem to be very hungry any more." All during the afternoon and long into the night, our "going home" is the main topic—"it seems too good to be true—I won't believe it till I get there—I thought it would come, but not so soon." Although our thirty-two months overseas have rendered us almost immune to noisy optimism and, from habit, made us prone to hold ourselves in and "not hope too much," we feel that "this time it really means something; imagine it! in a month from now, we may be home!!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—May 30

Changes in assignment: Capt. Reese C. Anderson to Administrative and Executive Officer; Capt. Warren A. Beason to Adjutant; 1st Lt. Cletis H. Bennett to Supply Officer; 1st Lts. Gordon E. Franklin and Roscoe H. Brady to Assistant Operations Officers.

With nine more men scheduled to go home within a matter of a few days and rumors of further batches to go to the U. S. before we leave as a Squadron, many of us evidence a noticeable uneasiness—"I know we're going home, but I wish we'd get started!"

Awarded by Brig. Gen. Mollinson in the Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters "War Room"; the Distinguished Flying Cross; to 1st Lt. Willis Hart, Capt. Glen Buchanan, 1st Lts. Erasmo Cantu, Elwin Harrison, Roy Herres, Earl Shubert, Capt. Albin Wenzel, 1st Lts. Charles Kyle, Gordon Franklin, I. Newton Perry, Gregor Milne, William MacVittie and Donald Huntsman.

JUNE, 1945

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 1-5

Most of our time is now taken up with the packing of Sectional equipment and the closing-out of Squadron records. Supply becomes the "catch all" for unwanted items

and we are glad to get gas masks, helmets and guns off our hands at last.

Day by day, the line becomes more barren; our P-38's are taxied over to the Depot side of the airfield. Empty section buildings, a lone B-25 and a great expanse of space are all that now mark our former active presence.

On the personal side, those of us with friends in Palese, San Spirito, Bari, or Molfetta say our final farewells and drink a last glass of vino to our going home—"these people aren't so bad once you get to know them."

By the fifth day of June, most of the packing and crating has been completed. All through camp, the joy of impending movement is noticeable and the noise at mealtimes is significantly louder and more boisterous—"think of it, Jack! We're all going home together!!"

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 6

Late this afternoon, we hear of "a new deal" on going home: all men with 85 points or above will be transferred out of the Squadron to either the 455th Bomb Group or the 82nd Fighter Group, both units "which are scheduled to go home in the very near future." All men whose points total under 85 will remain with the Squadron. On first hearing, this plan is marked as "not such a bad deal, except I would like to go home with the Squadron." Orders for this transfer are cut tonight and those on the list are told to "be ready to leave tomorrow morning."

Bari Airdrome, Italy—June 7

After rising early and eating a quick breakfast, those who are to leave the Squadron start pulling down their tents. By mid-morning, the camp area is dotted by many frame-skeletons of our former homes; a few tents are left intact and stand strangely amid all the surrounding debris.

Shortly after the noon meal, our First Sergeant, Doyne Townsend, speaks to those who are leaving and bemoans the fact that he cannot go along—"Goddamnit! I wish I were going with you fellas," bites out Doyne again and again as he smiles wryly and shakes hands all around. Of this personable, capable, fun-loving First Sergeant comes the general comment, "that's a good old boy!"

A little after one o'clock, trucks from both the Bomber and Fighter Groups pull into camp, disgorge the low-point men who will be assigned to the 154, then pull around by



"Most of the 'old men' leave the Squadron."

the mess hall and are quickly loaded again. Our Commanding Officer, Major William Dinker, shakes hands all around, then becomes one with the small group which waits for additional trucks. Motors grumble and the trucks pull away and head for the Foggia area.

Only as the body of the "new Squadron" is lining up for evening chow do the last two trucks of "old 154" members pull out from camp. "Well, here we go," says one man as he shifts his glance from the disappearing camp area and faces forward. . . .

Epilogue

In the weeks of heat-seared inactivity which followed our assignment to the Bomber and Fighter Units or to the "Repple Depple," we were forced to settle down once again to a period of resigned waiting. Such a life eventually took the salt out of even the most optimistic.

And then, for most of us, the first weeks in July brought definite hope. Men in the Bomber Units were shifted to a Naples Staging area. Men from the Naples "Repple Depple" were being flown home one by one and there was a rumor of a "big boat shipment coming up." On the 19th of July, the "USS ARGENTINA," loaded 30% over capacity, pulled out of Naples Harbor and headed westwards. On board this ship was most of the "old 154" which had left the Squadron a month and a half before. At last, we were on our way!

At sea, the days seemed to creep by. On a map posted belowdecks, we noted the daily progress of the ship. During the entire voyage, many men slept on deck; others alternated "in and out." On the fair nights, every inch of the decks was covered with sleeping forms. On bad-weather nights, we lined the hallways, corridors and stepways. There was little complaining, however, for we were going home!

Ten days later, on Sunday morning, July 29, we rose to a day of grey, creeping mist. Even before dawn, the sound of harbor buoys clanged out eerily and was mixed with the lapping waters below. With the appearance of each new buoy, we craned more intensely to catch sight of land. As a bright grey fused the western sky, someone abovedecks called out, "there's the land!" Up ahead, a hazy silhouette waved in and out of a grey mist-wall. Farther along, a small fishing craft passed us and its sole occupant waved wildly and we gestured even more wildly in return. Now on both sides of us was the land of the U. S. Cars threaded casually along a ribbon of road and seemed strange to our sight. Soon, "Miss Liberty" herself appeared and then the looming skyline of New York. Not one of us cared what

was said or done around him; this was a private moment for all aboard. On the way into the inner harbor, we were met by many small boats whose decks were covered with cheering forms, brassy bands and "welcome home!" signs. Many soldiers dashed from one side of the ship to the other so that they would not miss a thing. For each one of us felt that, despite the many thousands on board, this welcome was for HIM PERSONALLY!

By mid-morning and amid cheering, waving, and music furnished by a nattily-dressed colored Army band, we had docked at an uptown New York wharf. The sight of American women and WAC's brought forth the usual cat-calls and whistling. All was as it should be!

For most of us, however, it was not until late afternoon that we left the ship, gulped down bottles of milk and a handful of doughnuts offered by Red Cross women, and then hustled onto a ferry which was waiting to take us to the train yards at the far end of the harbor.

Many stood on the cool topdeck of the ferry as it pushed silently on past the finger-like piers and under the grey-concrete gaze of the skyscrapers fronting on the harbor. All along the way, the ferry whistle would sound out with three hoarse blasts and then from all sides would come three answering blasts. On and on slid our craft, and the whistles mounted in number and intensity. It was as if a strong, warm hand were reaching out and clasping ours in its grip. All of a sudden, here on this open deck, under the pallid grey sky of a July Sunday afternoon, and with the body-chilling tug whistles blaring forth a welcome from all sides, came the flesh-pimpling thought, "WE ARE TRULY HOME!!" At that moment of full realization, a thousand hoarse whistle-blastings seemed to fill the air. The ferry slipped almost reverently over the lapping harbor waters and turned in toward its pier. . . .



Appendix

Overseas Roster

OVERSEAS COMPLEMENT OF THE 154TH (OBSERVATION, TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE, RECONNAISSANCE) WEATHER RECONNAIS- SANCE SQUADRON . . . SEPTEMBER 1942 to JUNE 1945

KEY to alphabetical classifications after name:

PI—Pilot	E—Engineering	SS—Special Service
N—Navigator	H—Headquarters	T—Transportation
CO—Commanding Officer	I—Intelligence	U—Utilities
EO—Executive Officer	Md—Medical	* * *
Adj—Adjutant	M—Mess	(KIA)—Killed In Action
OO—Operations Officer	O—Ordnance	(K)—Killed In Training
LP—Liaison Pilot	Op—Operations	(MIA)—Missing In Action
Obs—Observer	P—Parachute	
PW—Prisoner of War	Ps—Personnel	
G—Gunner	Ph—Photo	(All home addresses are as
A—Armament	R—Radar	of the date individual was
C—Communications	S—Supply	assigned to the Squadron)

OFFICERS

A

Adell, Albert L. (C)—Rantoul, Illinois
Ammerman, Edward G. (A-T)—Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania
Anderson, Reese C. (Ps-Adj)—Logan, Utah
Anstine, Robert M. (PI)—Kearny, Nebraska
Armstrong, Thompson W. (PI-OO)

B

Bachus, Ralph E. (PI)—Alamosa, Colorado
Bain, Roy M. (PI)
Bartlett, Hubert J. (PI)—S. Virginia, Minnesota
Bates, Warren A. (PI-Hq)—Wyandotte, Michigan
Beason, Warren A. (S)—New Orleans, Louisiana
Bechtold, William M. (PI)—Norwood, Ohio
Bennett, Cletis H. (A-T)—Indianapolis, Indiana
Bennett, Wayne E. (PI)—Minneapolis, Minnesota
Billups, Ralph E. (PI)—(KIA)
Bishop, Floyd E. (PI)—(KIA)—Sacramento, California
Black, Robert M. (PI)—E. Chicago, Indiana
Brady, Roscoe H. (PI)—Babbitt, Nevada
Brownell, Gerald S. (PI)
Buchanan, Glen E. (PI)—Parkersburg, W. Virginia

C

Cantu, Erasmo (N)—San Antonio, Texas
Chandler, Don B. (PI)
Chaulsett, Edward H. (PI)—Long Beach, California
Churchill, Eugene E. (PI-OO)—San Mateo, California
Clark, George W. (PI)—Santa Rosa, California
Clifford, Robert V. (PI)—Los Angeles, California
Cobb, Bruce C. (PI)—Long Branch, New Jersey
Cook, Harry S. (PI)—Brockton, Mass.
Cordes, Kenneth H. (PI)—Loveland, Colorado
Cox, John M. (PI)—Detroit, Michigan
Crookham, Philip W. (PI)—Tucson, Arizona

D

Delapp, John R. (PI-OO-EO)—Ankeny, Iowa
Derhammer, Lavelle (PI)—Pueente, California
Dinker, William R. (PI-OO-CO)—Oakmont, Pennsylvania
Dixon, Daniel W. (PI)—Spokane, Washington
Dowling, William M. (PI)

Downie, Robert C. (PI)
Dubois, Lawrence C. (PI)—Boston, Mass.
Dubuque, Gerald P. (N)—Cambridge, Mass.
Duckworth, Frank A., Jr. (Ph-M)—Jacksonville, Florida
Dudley, Leonard (PI)—Seattle, Washington
Dyas, John R. (PI-CO)—Mobile, Alabama

E

Emmert, Ben (PI)—Erwin, Tennessee
Evans, George N. (PI)
Evans, John K. (PI)—(K)

F

Faxon, Jack K. (PI)
Feather, Carroll W. (PI)—(KIA)—New Ross, Indiana
Fenyn, Edward C. (PI)—Oakland, California
Field, Russell W., Jr. (PI)—Barrington, Rhode Island
Fieldhouse, Robert T. (PI)—Youngstown, Ohio
Finch, Horace J. (PI)—Northport, Alabama
Flatley, John L. (PI)—Ridgefield, New Jersey
Flynt, Robert C. (PI)—Tulia, Texas
Foreman, Felix H. (Obs)
Fortner, Roy T. (PI)—Kannapolis, N. Carolina
Foster, Neal W. (PI)—Chickasha, Oklahoma
Fox, Paul E. (PI)—(KIA)—Los Angeles, California
Franklin, Gordon E. (PI)—Oroville, California
Friedman, Leon J. (PI)—New York, New York
Fuller, James H. (PI-CO)—Plandome, New York

G

Garey, Lloyd F. (PI)—Cleveland, Ohio
Gille, Marshall F. (PI)—W. Duluth, Minnesota
Gompf, Jack W. (PI)
Glanville, James O. (PI)—San Leandro, California
Gordon, Leo B. (PI)—Dallas, Texas
Gravestock, John H. (PI)—(KIA)

H

Hackbarth, Gordon E. (N)—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Hadler, Arthur J. (Md)—Roxbury, Massachusetts
Hamilton, James C. (PI)
Hansen, Paul R. (PI-P)—Murray, Utah
Harness, Clarence E. (Obs)

Overseas Roster

Harris, Everett (MIA)—(Pl)—Oroville, California
 Harris, Schuyler S. (M-Ph)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Harrison, Elwin S. (Pl)—Los Angeles, California
 Hart, Willis L. (Pl)—Orange Core, California
 Herres, Roy A. (Pl)—Blackfoot, Idaho
 Hicks, Paul L. (N)—Rock Castle, Vermont
 Hilliker, Eugene F. (Pl-PW)—Xenia, Ohio
 Hinkel, Clifton B. (Hq-Adj)—Silsbee, Texas
 Hobbs, Clayton B. (Pl)—Brewer, Maine
 Holstegge, Bernard L. (A-1st Sgt.)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Honeycutt, Harvy, Jr. (Pl)—Pacoima, California
 Hopkins, Robert C. (Pl)—London, Kentucky
 Horrocks, Richard J. (Pl)—Salt Lake City, Utah
 Howard, Jack W. (Pl)—Llano, Texas
 Humphrey, Walter J. (Pl)—Danville, Maine
 Huntsman, Donald F. (Pl)—Baker, Oregon

J

Jaffe, Alvin (Pl)—Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Jennings, Roscoe C. (Pl)—Huntington, W. Virginia
 Johnson, John C. (Pl-PW)—Waterbury, Connecticut

K

Kalinowski, Francis S. (E)—Syracuse, New York
 Kaminsky, Harold B. (Pl)
 Keith, Roy E. (Obs)
 Kelsey, Verne B. (Pl)—Long Beach, California
 Keltner, James B. (Pl)—(K)
 Kenner, Howard (Pl)—(K)
 Kenney, Delphon C. (Pl)—Harlingen, Texas
 Kieckhafer, Robert V. (Pl)—Freeport, Illinois
 Killian, Francis M. (Pl)—(KIA)—New York, New York
 Kingsbury, Tillman A. (Pl)—Merkel, Texas
 Klotzer, Fred A. (Pl)
 Knapp, Clyde A. (Obs)—(KIA)
 Kresslov, Russell (Obs)
 Kuhl, Leroy L. (Pl)—Des Moines, Iowa
 Kyle, Charles F. (Pl)—Spokane, Washington

L

Lanini, Henry M. (T)—Salinas, California
 Laret, Chester L. (Pl)—Glendale, California
 Lavin, James E. (Pl)—Los Angeles, California
 Lawson, Albert S. (Pl)
 Laxson, Mack E. (Pl)—(KIA)
 Leavens, Charles W. (Pl)—Houston, Texas
 Lovejoy, Dana C. (Pl)—S. Pasadena, California
 Loyd, Sedgwick (Pl)—Terre Haute, Indiana
 Lukas, Edmund W. (Pl)—Holden, Mass.

M

MacVittie, William R. (Pl)—Williamsville, New York
 Mallett, Walter J. (Pl)—Vicksburg, Mississippi
 Marcus, Lawrence N. (Pl)—Brooklyn, New York
 Marquette, Elwyn J. (Pl)—(KIA)
 Martin, Carl L. (Pl)—(MIA)—Neosho, Mississippi
 Marut, Walter M. (Pl)—Brooklyn, New York
 Mayer, Theodore T. (Pl-CO)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Mayse, Norman B. (Pl)—St. Joseph, Missouri
 McCaslin, Donald A. (I)—Coffeyville, Kansas
 McClosky, John D. (Pl)—(KIA)
 McDonald, Donald J. (Pl)—Minneapolis, Minnesota
 McFarland, Jack H. (Pl)—San Antonio, Texas
 McKinney, Don W. (Obs-I)—Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 McKinney, William E. (Pl)—Marietta, Ohio
 McMath, Joseph J. (Ph)—Houston, Texas
 Meeteer, Wesley B. (Pl)—East Orange, New Jersey
 Milne, Gregor W. (Pl)—Seattle, Washington
 Monthei, Fred A. (Pl)—Jefferson, Iowa

Moore, James T. (Pl)—Kenosha, Wisconsin
 Morgan, Robert C. (Pl)—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Morris, John W. (Pl)
 Murphy, James F. (Pl)—Cincinnati, Ohio
 Murray, Blaine, Jr. (Pl)—Palo Alto, California
 Myers, George E. (Pl)—Indianapolis, Indiana

N

Nelson, Roy E. (Pl-OO)—Fairfax, Minnesota
 Noel, Arthur F. (Pl)—(KIA)—Lowell, Mass.
 Nutter, Thomas A. (Pl)—Bexley, Ohio
 Nutzal, William C. (Pl)—(KIA)

O

Obloy, Stanley J. (Pl-Ph)—Cleveland, Ohio
 Olsen, Floyd R. (Pl)—Burley, Idaho
 Orren, Louis M. (Pl)—Waco, Texas
 Osborne, John F. (Pl)—(KIA)

P

Parker, James K. (Pl)—(KIA)
 Parr, James (Pl)—San Antonio, Texas
 Perry, I. Newton (Pl)—Chicago, Illinois
 Pinney, John L. (Pl)—Chicago, Illinois
 Pitner, Richard A. (Pl)—Bridgeport, Ohio
 Pittman, Walter D. (Pl)—Cartersville, Georgia
 Pitts, Eugene P. (Pl)—San Antonio, Texas
 Pollard, Sidney D. (Pl)—Raleigh, N. Carolina
 Potts, Irwin L. (Pl)—Columbus, Georgia
 Powell, Bennington S. (Pl)—Danville, Kentucky

R

Reid, Robert F. (Pl)—Scaford, Delaware
 Rentshuler, Robert (Pl)—Mt. Pulaski, Illinois
 Riead, David W. (Pl)—Tamaroa, Illinois
 Riemer, Leonard O. (Pl)—Merrill, Wisconsin
 Rizzo, Albert (Pl)—Detroit, Michigan
 Rosenthal, Edwin M. (Pl)—Detroit, Michigan

S

Schwab, Alfred C., Jr. (Pl-CO)—St. Paul, Minnesota
 Sharp, Edward J. (Pl)
 Sheehan, Roy H. (Pl)
 Shubert, Earl L. (Pl)—San Leandro, California
 Slagle, Harold R. (Pl-OO)—Washington College, Tenn.
 Smith, Arthur F. (Pl)—Pinchurst, Mass.
 Smith, Robert R. (Pl)
 Snyder, Frank L. (Md)—Hollywood, Florida
 Spradley, Rush R. (Pl)
 Stanley, Joseph (LP-I)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Steman, John P. (Pl)—St. Cloud, Minnesota
 Sterner, Kurt E. (Pl)—New York, New York

T

Taylor, Fred H. (Pl)—Jersey City, New Jersey
 Thomas, William (Pl)—(K)
 Tice, Andrew W. (Pl)—Roanoke, Virginia
 Timm, Loel C. (Pl)—Fayette, Iowa
 Tipton, James W. (Pl)—Phoenix, Arizona
 Touhy, Edward F. (Pl)—(KIA)—Honolulu, Hawaii
 Traylor, Lucius H., Jr. (O)—La Grange, Georgia
 Turner, James L. (Pl)—San Gabriel, California
 Tyler, William L. (M-Hq-Adj-EO)—Wagener, S. Carolina

U

Utesch, Lewis F. (Pl)—(KIA)

V

Vapaa, George K. (A)—Harrington, Delaware
 Verplanck, William A. (Pl)—White Plains, New York

Overseas Roster

Vetromile, Gerard A. (Md)—Merrick, Long Island, N. Y.
Vetter, Hugo H. (Pl)
Vradenburg, Kenneth C. (Pl)—San Antonio, Texas

W

Wagner, Jack (Pl)—Hanging Rock, Ohio
Walker, Fred A. (Pl)—(KIA)—Kalamazoo, Michigan
Walker, Joseph A. (Pl)—Washington, Pennsylvania
Wallace, Victor (Pl)—Pasadena, California
Waters, Edwin O. (I)—Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Watson, Thomas J. (N)—Sacramento, California
Weil, Melvin S. (Pl)—Birmingham, Alabama
Weisinger, Edwin C. (Pl)—Gravette, Arkansas
Wenzel, Albin R. (Pl)—Brooklyn, New York
Wetherill, Justus F. (Pl)—Harros, Ohio

White, Theodore T. (R)—San Francisco, California
Whitwell, Joseph E., Jr. (Pl-OO-CO)—La Grange, Illinois
Wilder, Robert H. (Pl-PW)
Williamson, Harold L. (Pl)—Tampa, Florida
Wilson, Ray (Pl)—Cortez, Colorado
Witsell, Benjamin
Woolfson, Milton W. (N)—Dorchester, Mass.
Wright, Edward A., Jr. (Pl)—Los Angeles, California

Y

Yost, William R. (Pl-PW)

Z

Zirkle, Robert P. (Pl)—Venedocia, Ohio

ENLISTED MEN

A

Abernethy, Joseph A. (Md)—New York, New York
Akers, Clifton (S)—East Orange, New Jersey
Ambeault, Frederick (O)—Central Falls, Rhode Island
Anderberg, Carl E. (C)—Staples, Minnesota
Appler, Edward C. (E)—Hot Springs, Arkansas
Austin, Harold G. (O)—Long Island, New York

B

Baldrige, William L. (Op)—Eastpoint, Kentucky
Baragan, Florencio L. (C)—Silver City, New Mexico
Barham, Robbie W. (C)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Barnett, Leon R. (R)—Charlotte, Wisconsin
Barnish, Stanley F. (R)—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Beke, Theodore I. (O)—New York, New York
Bell, Erwin G. (O)—Burlington, Vermont
Best, John W. (R)—Long Island, New York
Bicoff, David (R)—Greenville, S. Carolina
Biggs, John P.
Black, Lowell E. (O)—Cincinnati, Ohio
Bond, Harold L. (E)—Milford, Maine
Booth, Jack C. (A)—S. Grange, Georgia
Bottarini, Jack J. (R)—San Francisco, California
Bowen, William H.
Bower, Bernard J. (A)—Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Brennan, James C. (Ps)—New York, New York
Bronson, Paul S., Jr. (C)—Dell Rapids, S. Dakota
Brossman, Russell E. (C)—Wernersville, Pennsylvania
Brown, Charles H. (E)—Jacksonville, Arkansas
Bryan, Melvin R. (A)—El Dorado, Arkansas
Burke, Frederick W. (A-LP)—Lowell, Mass.
Butler, Roy G. (C)—Fredericksburg, Virginia
Butrymowicz, Stanley (O)—Ansonia, Connecticut

C

Casey, George A. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Carlisle, Hugh D. (A)—Haralson, Georgia
Carpenter, Peter (E)—New Jersey
Chaffee, William F. (R)—Spearfish, S. Dakota
Chandler, Ernest T. (R)—Olanta, S. Carolina
Chapman, David H. (R)—Merriam, Kansas
Chiles, Harry R. (E)—Girard, Ohio
Christenson, Arnold J. (E)—Mt. Jewett, Pennsylvania
Clark, Forrest B. (C)—Waco, Texas
Clark, Selmer D. (E)—Creston, Montana
Cohen, David (Op)—Brooklyn, New York
Cokl, James M. (R)—Wabash, Indiana
Cooper, Percy A. (E)—Chatham, Virginia
Craghead, Orien H. (A-Ph)—Mexico, Missouri
Crowell, George R. (E)—Groom, Texas
Crudden, Thomas P. (E)—E. Greenwich, Rhode Island

D

Dailey, Francis J. (R)—St. Petersburg, Florida
Dallas, Lloyd F. (E)—Vilonia, Arkansas
Deaton, Clifford (E)—Des Moines, Iowa
Delaney, Joseph P. (A)—New York, New York
Diemer, Forrest W. (S-SS)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Drennan, Robert E. (T)—Los Angeles, California
Drewke, Albert A. (E)—Chicago, Illinois
Duff, Edgar W. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas

E

Ellis, Eugene A. (LP)—Windsor, Wisconsin
Ewing, Stephen D. (R)—Berkeley, California

F

Ferguson, Ralph N. (E)—Lacenter, Kentucky
Ferguson, Ted E. (T-E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Ferrara, John
Fey, Walter F. (S)—Aurora, Illinois
Fillingim, Brady W. (A)—Slacomb, Alabama
Finn, Jack (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Fischer, John A. (S)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Fichtner, Richard P. (E)—Jeanette, Pennsylvania
Fleisher, Michael (Md)—New York, New York
Flynn, George E. (H)—Brooklyn, New York

G

Galick, Vincent T. (G)
Gallone, Harry (Md)—Palisades, New Jersey
Gee, Dan (M)—Fresno, California
Geekie, Norman A. (H)—Yonkers, New York
Gerig, Eugene C. (U)—Mt. Ephraim, New Jersey
Gehrki, Norman A. (A-G-LP)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Gibbons, Clair B. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Gibbons, Elmer G. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Gillies, Frederick W. (I)—Medford, Mass.
Girola, Charles C. (A)—Bronx, New York
Goin, John M. (M)—Little Rock, Arkansas
Golba, Briney E. (C)—Frackville, Pennsylvania
Goldberg, Max (Md)—Brooklyn, New York
Goodner, Bill (Ps)—Nahunta, Georgia
Gottfredson, Robert (A-G)—Beaver Dam, Wisconsin
Gradoville, Robert J. (A)—Plattsmouth, Nebraska
Grimes, D. Ross (I)—Mobile, Alabama
Grochowski, John J. (M)—Scranton, Pennsylvania
Gruenig, Paul (A-LP)—Rockville, Connecticut
Gunter, Kenneth L. (C)—Erie, Pennsylvania

H

Hadobas, Lawrence J. (R)—Steubenville, Ohio
Hafley, Alvin C. (A)—Belleville, Illinois

Overseas Roster

Halboth, Robert V. (E)—Sheboygan, Wisconsin
 Haley, Harold R. (Ph)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Haley, Patrick M. (T)—Jersey City, New Jersey
 Halick, Michael (E)—Bayonne, New Jersey
 Hall, William T. (Op)—Durham, N. Carolina
 Hallman, William H. (H)—Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 Hamilton, Christopher K. (E)—Kearny, New Jersey
 Hamling, William (M-A)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Harness, Thomas E. (E)—Center Ridge, Arkansas
 Harris, Edward (E)—Bronx, New York
 Harrison, Henry W. (M)
 Hauf, Calvin J. (E)—Watertown, S. Dakota
 Heater, Robert R. (E)—Thompson Falls, Montana
 Hefner, Glen L. (M)—Newton, N. Carolina
 Hennessy, James F. (C)—Vineland, New Jersey
 Herndon, William D. (M)—Woodbury, Tennessee
 Higdon, Fred S. (C)—Tullos, Louisiana
 Hill, Charles J. (E-T)—Prescott, Arizona
 Hladky, Gerald J. (Ps)—Richland, Wisconsin
 Hoffmeyer, Charles J. (E)—Brooklyn, New York
 Hood, John (M)—Ranla Station, N. Carolina
 Hopkins, John M. (A)—Youngstown, Ohio
 Horwich, Ralph B. (I)—Chicago, Illinois
 Howard, James E. (LP)—Farragut, Iowa
 Hubay, John W. (E)—New Britain, Connecticut
 Huey, Robert R. (M)—Kokomo, Indiana
 Hull, Everett P. (M)—Ipswich, Massachusetts
 Hunt, William R. (H)—Clarksville, Arkansas
 Huot, Wilbur A. (R)—Miami, Florida

J

Jackson, Norman C. (M)—Point Lookout, Missouri
 Jacobs, James W. (S)—White Bear Lake, Minnesota
 Janson, Gunnar (A-G)—New York, New York
 Jeffries, Wilbur D. (A-LP)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Jennings, Robert (E)—Danville, Illinois
 Jones, Ernest S. (Md)—Beverly, Mass.

K

Kahanic, Paul (C)—Binghamton, New York
 Kester, James L. (U)—Sedalia, Missouri
 Kij, Stanislaw J. (C)—New York, New York
 Kish, Ladislaus M. (A)—Trenton, New Jersey
 Kittner, Harold P. (E)—Chicago, Illinois
 Knudston, Orville P. (Ph)—Lincoln, Nebraska
 Kobak, Edgar H. (C-SS)—New York, New York
 Kyeas, Samuel E.

L

LaBanchi, Genaro J. (I)—Bronx, New York
 Lamkin, Guy L. (O)—Crawfordsville, Indiana
 Leal, Peter C.—Kimball, Nebraska
 Lean, Manuel (A-Md)—Brooklyn, New York
 Lee, Walter H. (Ph)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Lemaster, Chester L. (U)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Lensis, John (M)—Trenton, New Jersey
 Leonard, Clarence (C)—Carlisle, Arkansas
 Leopold, Lewis J. (E-Op)—Brooklyn, New York
 Lewis, George D. (Op)—Brooklyn, New York
 Lewis, William J. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Libby, Evans S. (M)—Benton Station, Maine
 LiBrenz, John W. (Op)—Woodcliff, New Jersey
 Liles, Billy R. (R)—Dublin, Texas
 Lipka, Edward B. (O)—New Haven, Connecticut
 Llewellyn, John J. (Ph)—Long Island, New York
 Lodge, James H. (C)—Salem, New Jersey
 Long, Cecil H. (C)—E. Blue Hill, Maine
 Lynch, Joseph M. (E)—Chester, Illinois
 Lynch, Robert R. (E)—Newton, N. Carolina

M

Martin, Howard G. (S)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Martinek, Vincent E. (A)—St. Paul, Minnesota
 May, William C. (H)
 McArthur, Shirley W. (A-G-LP)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 McCullough, Merle (T)—Mingo Junction, Ohio
 McGonigle, Thomas F. (E)—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 McHugh, John J. (Ps)—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 McIlvaine, Charles R. (S)—Freehold, New Jersey
 McKenna, Eugene C. (Op-E)—Brooklyn, New York
 McMichael, John (E)—Fulton, Mississippi
 Miller, Quentin B. (M)—Ligonier, Indiana
 Mitchell, Charles C. (E-S)—Boston, Texas
 Mohr, Charles M.
 Moon, George R. (Ph)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Moon, Percy E. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Morene, William W. (T)—Gibsonville, N. Carolina

N

Newton, John P. (A-G-LP)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Nix, Thurman H. (S-H)—Fort Worth, Texas
 Noel, Joseph J. (G)

O

O'Conner, John J. (C)—Brooklyn, New York
 Old Coyote, Barny
 Old Coyote, Henry D.
 Ondovchik, Andrew J. (A)—Carnegie, Pennsylvania
 O'Quin, Gerrel (G-E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Orsini, Andrew A. (Ph)—Levy, Arkansas
 Ouderkirk, Clarence (Md)—Strasburg, Colorado
 Overton, Havis H. (Ps)—Malvern, Arkansas
 Owens, Frank R.
 Owens, L. Dan (E)—Pine Bluff, Arkansas
 Owens, Samuel M. (E)—Great Bend, Kansas

P

Patrick, John W. (A)—Hamlet, N. Carolina
 Pearson, Lonnie (S)—Manatte, Florida
 Perkins, Alonzo C.
 Picras, Nick (G)—(KIA)
 Potter, Millard F. (C)—Ashcamp, Kentucky
 Pozzi, William F. (G)—(KIA)
 Pullin, James O. (E)—San Antonio, Texas

Q

Quist, Douglas J. (Ph)—Minneapolis, Minnesota

R

Raddatz, Norbert O. (U)—Danube, Minnesota
 Raiford, Dalton H. (Op)—Groves, Texas
 Raming, Herman T. (C-G)—Chicago, Illinois
 Raper, Albert C. (P)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Red, Dick (E)—Mabelvale, Arkansas
 Reed, Dempsey (T)—Monroeville, Alabama
 Reid, William A. (T)—Mobile, Alabama
 Replyuk, George F. (Md)—Royalton, Illinois
 Reynolds, Edward H. (G)—(KIA)
 Rice, Joseph E. (C-G)—Mobile, Alabama
 Rich, Harold (C)—Providence, Rhode Island
 Richard, Charles (G-1st Sgt.)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Robinson, Edwin W. (A-Ph)—Somerville, Massachusetts
 Rodgers, James W. (Md-C)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Rodriguez, Eulalio (E)—San Antonio, Texas
 Roessner, William J. (Md-T)—St. Louis, Missouri
 Roonzani, Angelo C. (H)—Neewatin, Minnesota
 Rorick, Carl S. (E-S)—Athens, Ohio
 Roseberry, William E. (Ph)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Ross, Charles (T)—San Antonio, Texas

Overseas Roster

Ross, Melvin (R)—Elmhurst, Illinois
 Ross, Moses T. (Md)—Bechville, Texas
 Rountree, Roger R. (C)—Austin, Texas
 Ruck, Jefferson (LP-C)—New Orleans, Louisiana
 Russell, John (O)—Cedar Rapids, Iowa
 Russell, Willie E. (T)—Aurora, Illinois

S

Salter, William M. (S)—Monroeville, Alabama
 Samples, Beecher M. (T)—Frankfort, Illinois
 Sandbeck, Harry K. (M)—Shelly, Minnesota
 Sander, Harold (E)—Fergus Falls, Minnesota
 Sanders, Francis (E)—Jonesboro, Illinois
 Sandoval, Julian C. (C)—Raymondville, Texas
 Sawyer, William E. (T)—Frisco City, Alabama
 Scales, Robert J. (C)—Chicago, Illinois
 Scarborough, George A. (R)—Amhurst, Massachusetts
 Schaffner, Thomas L. (P)—Butler, Pennsylvania
 Schellingburger, Harry L. (Ph)—Perks, Illinois
 Schmidling, Joseph T. (C)—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Schmidt, George J. (H)—New Orleans, Louisiana
 Scurlock, Henry M. (G)
 Seligman, Phil F. (Op-H)—Brooklyn, New York
 Serda, Ray M. (C)—Mobile, Alabama
 Shade, Clarence W. (O)—Carlinville, Illinois
 Shank, James E. (O)—Indianapolis, Indiana
 Sheffield, Orlando B. (G-O)—Leighton, Alabama
 Shehans, James E. (G-A)—Migargil, Alabama
 Sheppard, Elmer A. (H)—Groves, Texas
 Shields, Samuel W. (A)—Brainerd, Minnesota
 Shirutis, George (E)—Collinsville, Illinois
 Siemer, Hubert M. (Ph)—Meppen, Illinois
 Sigler, John F. (S)—Frisco City, Alabama
 Simetkosky, Mike (C)—Chisholm, Minnesota
 Sims, Boffie (T)—Huntsville, Alabama
 Sinkoff, Aaron (R)—Detroit, Michigan
 Skuba, Michael (C)—Benld, Illinois
 Sloan, Byrl (E)—San Angelo, Texas
 Smith, Clyde O. (M)—Urbana, Illinois
 Smith, Herman E. (C)—Lower Peach Tree, Alabama
 Smith, James (G)—(KIA)
 Smith, Jesse J. (M)—Athens, Alabama
 Smith, William M. (A)—McClure, Pennsylvania
 Snoddy, Virgil C. (M)—Rogersville, Alabama
 Stadler, Jacob (C)—Bronx, New York
 Stankewicz, Carl J. (G)
 Stanley, Frank (T)—Huntsville, Alabama
 Stanley, George L. (T)—Huntsville, Alabama
 Stathakis, Louis P. (I-H)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Steed, Harold L. (E)—Zanesville, Ohio
 Steele, Virgil E. (C)—Hartford, Arkansas
 Stefano, Fred J. (E)—Columbus, Ohio
 Steinborn, Herman (E)—Chicago, Illinois
 Stevens, Francis M. (H-E)—Lindsay, California
 Still, Donald E. (E)—Fort Worth, Texas
 Stires, Julian R. (E)—N. Little Rock, Arkansas
 Stalnack, Orville C. (E)—Chicago, Illinois
 Stone, Thomas E. (E)—Chicago, Illinois
 Strickland, Cecil O.

Sutliff, Charles R. (A)—Damascus, Pennsylvania
 Sutton, Edward O. (H-M)—Washington, D. C.
 Sweet, Mahlon E. (E)—Chicago, Illinois
 Swirsky, Sidney (R)—New York, New York

T

Tanner, James W. (E)—Texarkana, Texas
 Taylor, Otis E. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Taylor, Thomas B. (A-C-SS)—Chicago, Illinois
 Thomas, James E. (A-E)—Dow City, Iowa
 Tole, Edwin J. (E)—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Tomayko, Charles T. (R)—Arnold, Pennsylvania
 Toscano, Elias P. (C)—Harlingen, Texas
 Townsend, Doyne R. (C-1st Sgt.)—England, Arkansas
 Traffenstedt, John L. (T)—Houston, Arkansas
 Travers, Elwood I. (E)—Evansville, Indiana
 Trier, Jack K. (E)—Youngstown, Ohio
 Tunnell, Leo S. (E)—Stillwater, Oklahoma
 Turner, William C. (Ph)—New York, New York
 Tyree, Ernest D. (M-O)—Royce City, Texas

V

Varga, Zolton (A)—Carteret, New Jersey
 Vaughn, Harvy H. (E)—Akron, Ohio
 Villanueva, Ramiro (G)—Harlingen, Texas

W

Wadzek, Richard F.
 Walaitis, Simon J. (E)—Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
 Walden, Lawrence R.
 Walling, Henry (G)—Los Angeles, California
 Ware, John D. (R)—Oak Park, Illinois
 Waters, John R. (E)—Winona, Minnesota
 Weeks, Eulon H. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Weeks, O. C. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Weeks, Warren (E)—Cabot, Arkansas
 Weiner, Sidney (A-G)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Welch, James C. (A)—Erie, Pennsylvania
 Wempe, Joseph A. (A-G)—Louisville, Kentucky
 Wendorff, Eugene T. (E)—Pewaukee, Wisconsin
 West, David R. (E-G)—Lockport, New York
 Wetzell, James Q. (Ph)—Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania
 Wewer, Lawrence J. (E)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Whitaker, Wesley A. (E)—Throckmorton, Texas
 White, Charles A. (A)—Tahoka, Texas
 White, John C. (A)—Wilmerding, Pennsylvania
 White, Roy J. (M)—Plainview, Kansas
 Whitehead, Swayne L. (E)—Taft, Texas
 Widay, Michael (E)—Newport, New York
 Wilson, Silas S. (Op)—Little Rock, Arkansas
 Winstead, Alexander (A)—Durham, North Carolina
 Wojcik, Paul J. (E)—Mocanaqua, Pennsylvania
 Woodard, Walter C. (E)—White Bluff, Tennessee
 Wright, Willie L. (E)—Ethelville, Alabama

Y

Yopp, Herbert B. (O)—Floyd, Virginia

Z

Zeller, Emmett F.
 Zynda, Harold E. (O)—Detroit, Michigan

Killed in the Service of Their Country

2nd Lt. James K. Parker (KIA);
Nov. 9, 1942; So. Atlantic

Cpl. Nick Picras (KIA);
Nov. 9, 1942; So. Atlantic

S/Sgt. James Smith (KIA);
Nov. 9, 1942; So. Atlantic

Capt. Clyde A. Knapp (KIA);
Jan. 7, 1943; W. Mediterranean

1st Lt. John H. Gravestock (KIA);
Jan. 7, 1943; W. Mediterranean

S/Sgt. William F. Pozzi (KIA);
Jan. 7, 1943; W. Mediterranean

Pfc. Edward H. Reynolds (KIA);
Jan. 7, 1943; W. Mediterranean

2nd Lt. John D. McClosky (KIA);
Jan. 30, 1943; Africa

2nd Lt. Mack E. Laxson (KIA);
Jan. 30, 1943; Africa

2nd Lt. William C. Nutzelt (KIA);
March 22, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. Elwyn J. Marquette (KIA);
March 24, 1943; Africa

2nd Lt. Lewis F. Utesch (KIA);
March 28, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. Ralph E. Billups (KIA);
April 1, 1943; Africa

Capt. Francis M. Killian (KIA);
March 31, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. John F. Osborne (KIA);
April 23, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. Arthur F. Noel (KIA);
March 29, 1944; Italy

1st Lt. Paul E. Fox (KIA);
April 27, 1944; Italy

1st Lt. Carroll W. Feather (KIA);
Oct. 23, 1944; Italy

1st Lt. Edward F. Touhy (KIA);
Nov. 17, 1944; Yugoslavia

2nd Lt. Fred A. Walker (KIA);
Feb. 11, 1945; Italy

2nd Lt. Floyd E. Bishop (KIA);
April 5, 1945; Italy

1st Lt. Howard Kenner (K);
April 3, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. William Thomas (K);
Sept. 18, 1943; Africa

2nd Lt. John K. Evans (K);
Oct. 2, 1943; Africa

1st Lt. James B. Keltner (K);
Nov. 7, 1943; Africa

F. O. Carl L. Martin (MIA);
Jan. 7, 1945; Italy

2nd Lt. Everett Harris (MIA);
Nov. 18, 1944; Italy

* * * * *

(KIA)—Killed in Action Against the Enemy.
(K)—Killed in Training.
(MIA)—Missing in Action

Wounded in Action

NAME	PURPLE HEART AWARDED
1st Lt. Verne B. Kelsey.....	March 11, 1943
1st Lt. Robert M. Anstine.....	May 31, 1943
Sgt. Elias P. Toscano.....	March 27, 1943
Cpl. Briney Golba.....	March 27, 1943
T/Sgt. Clarence Leonard.....	
Cpl. Willie E. Russell.....	March 27, 1943

NAME	PURPLE HEART AWARDED
S/Sgt. William E. Roseberry.....	May 31, 1943
1st Lt. Delphon C. Kenney.....	May 2, 1944
1st Lt. Richard J. Horrocks.....	June 27, 1944
Capt. Harold R. Slagle.....	July 27, 1944
2nd Lt. Charles W. Leavens.....	August 22, 1944
2nd Lt. Walter J. Humphrey.....	September 15, 1944
F. O. Charles F. Kyle.....	January 2, 1945

Squadron Awards

BATTLE-PARTICIPATION STARS AWARDED TO SQUADRON PERSONNEL, AIR AND GROUND

1st Battle Star.....	ALGERIA-FRENCH MOROCCO (North African Invasion); 8-11 November 1942
2nd Battle Star.....	TUNISIA; 8 November 1942 to 13 May 1943
3rd Battle Star.....	ROME-ARNO (Italy); 22 January to 9 September 1944
4th Battle Star.....	SOUTHERN FRANCE; 15 August to 14 September 1944
5th Battle Star.....	AIR OFFENSIVE EUROPE; 4 July 1942 to 5 June 1944
6th Battle Star.....	AIR COMBAT BALKANS (Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Roumania, Albania and Greece); 1 November 1943 to 31 December 1944
7th Battle Star.....	RHINELAND (previously called "GERMANY"); 15 September 1944 to 21 March 1945
8th Battle Star.....	NORTHERN FRANCE; 25 July 1944 to 14 September 1944
9th Battle Star.....	NORTH APENNINES; 10 September 1944 to 4 April 1945
10th Battle Star.....	PO VALLEY; 5 April to 8 May 1945
11th Battle Star.....	NORMANDY; 6 June to 24 July 1944
12th Battle Star.....	CENTRAL EUROPE; 22 March to 11 May 1945

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

Awarded to all eligible Squadron personnel for direct and indirect participation in operations over the Ploesti, Roumania, oil refineries on 17-18-19 August 1944. Citation Streamer for Squadron Standard presented by Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General Fifteenth Air Force; 23 May 1945; Bari Airdrome, Italy.

Operational Awards

(Officers listed in order of arrival in Squadron; Awards as of May 1945)

Major John R. Delapp—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Capt. Francis M. Killian (KIA)—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster, D. F. C.
 Capt. Eugene P. Pitts, Jr.—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 2nd Lt. Eugene F. Hilliker—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Robert M. Anstine—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. Jack W. Howard—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Capt. Verne B. Kelsey—Air Medal, Purple Heart, 6 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Norman B. Mayse—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Major Alfred C. Schwab, Jr.—Air Medal, 7 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Major John R. Dyas—Silver Star, Air Medal
 Major Joseph E. Whitwell, Jr.—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Capt. Horace J. Finch—Air Medal
 Capt. Fred A. Monthei—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Robert C. Morgan—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. John F. Osborne (KIA)—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Bennington S. Powell—Air Medal
 Capt. Harold R. Slagle—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart
 1st Lt. Jack H. McFarland—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. George E. Myers—Air Medal, 6 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Capt. Arthur J. Hadler (Medical Officer)—Air Medal
 1st Lt. William P. Bechtold—2nd and 3rd Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Harlon J. Conger—Air Medal, 10 Oak Leaf Clusters
 Capt. Eugene E. Churchill—6th, 7th, and 8th Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Dana C. Lovejoy—5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Delphon C. Kenney—2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart
 1st Lt. Robert P. Zirkle—3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Walter D. Pittman—3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Kenneth H. Cordes—Air Medal, 7 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Capt. Harry S. Cook—Air Medal, 7 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C., 1st Oak Leaf Cluster for D. F. C.
 Capt. Roy E. Nelson—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Capt. Joseph A. Walker—Air Medal, 7 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. Arthur F. Noel (KIA)—Air Medal
 1st Lt. James W. Tipton—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Richard J. Horrocks—Air Medal, Purple Heart, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C., 1st Oak Leaf Cluster for D. F. C.
 Capt. Clayton B. Hobbs—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Robert C. Hopkins—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Major William R. Dinker—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.

Operational Awards

Major James H. Fuller—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Kenneth M. Ade—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Russell W. Field, Jr.—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C., 1st Oak Leaf Cluster for D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. Charles W. Leavens—Purple Heart, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Capt. James L. Turner—4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. John M. Cox—Air Medal
 2nd Lt. Thomas A. Nutter—Air Medal
 2nd Lt. Fred H. Taylor—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 Capt. John L. Pinney—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Albert Rizzo—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Kurt E. Sterner—4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Walter J. Humphrey—Purple Heart
 Capt. Glen E. Buchanan—Air Medal, 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Robert F. Reid—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Robert T. Fieldhouse—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Wesley B. Meeteer—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Blaine Murray, Jr.—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Capt. Albin R. Wenzel—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Daniel W. Dixon—3rd, 4th and 5th Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Carroll W. Feather (KIA)—1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. Gerald P. Dubuc—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Roy T. Fortner—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. Harold B. Kaminsky—Air Medal
 1st Lt. William H. Verplanck—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Edward H. Chaulsett—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. Fred A. Klotzer—Air Medal
 2nd Lt. Jack K. Faxon—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Edward F. Touhy (KIA)—4th Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. Charles F. Kyle—Air Medal, Purple Heart, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Edwin M. Rosenthal—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Kenneth C. Vradenburg—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Robert V. Clifford—4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Roy A. Herres—Air Medal, 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Donald F. Huntsman—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. William R. MacVittie—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Elwin S. Harrison—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Willis L. Hart—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Andrew W. Tice—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. Gregor W. Milne—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Loel C. Timm—2nd, 3rd, 4th Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. I. Newton Perry—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 Capt. Thomas J. Watson—2nd, 3rd Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Fred A. Walker (KIA)—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Milton W. Woolfson—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Gordon E. Franklin—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Earl L. Shubert—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, D. F. C.
 1st Lt. Robert V. Kieckhafer—Air Medal, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 1st Lt. Gordon E. Hackbarth—Air Medal, 2 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Erasmo Cantu—Air Medal, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters
 1st Lt. Ralph E. Bachus—Air Medal
 1st Lt. Roscoe H. Brady—2 Oak Leaf Clusters
 F. O. Paul L. Hicks—1st Oak Leaf Cluster, D. F. C.
 2nd Lt. Lloyd F. Garey—Air Medal
 2nd Lt. James E. Lavin—Air Medal
 2nd Lt. Alvin Jaffe—1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 2nd Lt. Jack Wagner—1st Oak Leaf Cluster
 2nd Lt. Roscoe C. Jennings—Air Medal

Further Awards to Personnel

NAME	AWARD	DATE
Sgt. Elias P. Toscano*	Purple Heart	27 March 1943
Cpl. Briney L. Golba*	Purple Heart	27 March 1943
Cpl. Willie E. Russell*	Purple Heart	27 March 1943
*(For wounds received when jeep in which the above three men—also T/Sgt. Clarence Leonard—were riding ran over enemy land mine near Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia, North Africa; 14 March 1943.)		
Major John R. Dyas	Silver Star	24 April 1943
("For exceptional valor and service during the Tunisian Campaign.")		
S/Sgt. William E. Roseberry†	Purple Heart	31 May 1943
†(Wounded in enemy strafing raid on town of Youks Les Bains, Algeria, North Africa; 20 February 1943.)		
M/Sgt. Dick Red‡	Legion of Merit	1 September 1944
Capt. Francis S. Kalinowski‡	Legion of Merit	4 October 1944
S/Sgt. William E. Roseberry‡	Bronze Star	25 October 1944
‡(For modification and installation of K-24 aerial cameras in weather-reconnaissance P-38 type aircraft.)		
Sgt. Samuel W. Shields	Bronze Star	9 March 1945
(For "meritorious achievement—armament maintenance—in direct support of combat operations, 1 Feb. 1943 to 12 March 1943.")		
S/Sgt. William A. Reid	Bronze Star	14 March 1945
(For "meritorious achievement—ordnance maintenance—in direct support of combat operations, Nov. 1942 to March 1945.")		
Cpl. Norbert O. Raddatz	Bronze Star	1 May 1945
(For "meritorious achievement—utilities and construction—in direct support of combat operations, 1 Feb. 1944 to 28 Feb. 1945.")		
M/Sgt. Melvin Ross	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—radar techniques and installation—in direct support of combat operations.")		
T/Sgt. Thomas Harness	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Engineering innovations and maintenance—in direct support of combat operations.")		
T/Sgt. Fred S. Higdon	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Communications and Radio maintenance—in direct support of combat operations.")		
T/Sgt. Albert Raper	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Personal Equipment maintenance—in direct support of combat operations.")		
S/Sgt. Everett P. Hull	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Mess Sergeant—in direct support of combat operations.")		
Sgt. Joseph Abernethy	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Medical—in direct support of combat operations.")		
S/Sgt. James Brennan	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Personnel and Records—in direct support of combat operations.")		
S/Sgt. Frederick W. Gillies	Bronze Star	12 June 1945
("For meritorious achievement—Intelligence—in direct support of combat operations.")		

Squadron Commanding Officers (Overseas)

Captain Theodore H. Mayer	September 27 to December 19, 1942
Major John R. Dyas	December 20, 1942 to May 2, 1943
Major Joseph E. Whitwell, Jr.	May 3, 1943 to March 10, 1944
Major Alfred C. Schwab, Jr.	March 11 to July 27, 1944
Major James H. Fuller	July 28 to November 8, 1944
Major William R. Dinker	November 9, 1944 to September 1945

Squadron First Sergeants

Charles Richard.....	September 22, 1942 to January 5, 1943
Bernard Holstegge (Acting First Sergeant).....	January 6, 1943 to April 21, 1943
Doyne R. Townsend.....	April 22, 1943 to June 1945
John W. Patrick.....	June 1945 to September 1945

Section Heads — Non-Commissioned

Bernard Holstegge, John W. Patrick, John Russell.....	Armament-Ordnance
Clarence Leonard, Robbie Barham.....	Communications
Percy Moon, Dick Red, Otis Taylor.....	Engineering
George Schmidt, William Hunt.....	Headquarters
Louis Stathakis, D. Ross Grimes.....	Intelligence
James Rodgers, Joseph Abernethy.....	Medical
William Hamling, Roy White.....	Mess
Silas Wilson.....	Operations
Albert Raper.....	Parachute
Bill Goodner, Havis Overton, James Brennan.....	Personnel
Schuyler Harris, George Moon.....	Photographic
Melvin Ross.....	Radar
Howard Martin, John Fischer, James Jacobs.....	Supply
Forrest Diemer.....	Special Service
Ted Ferguson, Charles Hill, Samuel Owens, William Reid.....	Transportation
Chester Lemaster, James Kester, Eugene Gerig.....	Utilities

Commendations

S E C R E T

FLAG-OFFICER-IN-CHARGE
ORAN AREA

P-15

Serial: (0024)

5 February 1943

FROM: Flag Officer In Charge, ORAN Area.

TO : Commanding Officer, Western Algerian Composite Wing.

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation in the Case of Lieutenant Colonel John R. Fordyce, U. S. Army Air Corps,
Commanding Officer, 68th Observation Group, Oujda.

1. The arrival and expeditious unloading of stores and equipment in large quantities in the ORAN, Algeria area has a direct bearing on the prosecution of the war in North Africa. Many organizations have contributed their efforts to this successful accomplishment.

2. The 68th Observation Group, under the command of Lt. Col. Fordyce has been charged with the responsibility of conducting Anti-Submarine Air Patrols within a fifty mile radius of ORAN, and of furnishing A/S Air Patrols for convoys in this area.

3. The safe arrival of a large number of ships, with a relatively small percentage of sinkings in this Area speaks well for the efforts of the 68th Observation Group.

4. The Flag Officer In Charge, ORAN Area, takes pleasure in commending Lt. Col. Fordyce and the officers and men under his command for this accomplishment.

/s/ A. C. Bennett

/t/ A. C. BENNETT.

Copy to:

Comdg. Gen. Med. Base Sec.

C-in-C, Allied Forces.

N.C.X.F.

- 1 -

S E C R E T



HEADQUARTERS NORTHWEST AFRICAN AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO 650, U. S. Army
13 April 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding General, Northwest African Tactical Air Force.

1. During the past several days, your Air Force has carried out an unusual number of highly successful sorties against enemy airdromes, armored vehicles on the roads, and enemy planes in the air.

2. I desire to commend your entire organization for the efficient and effective manner in which, under your leadership, it is carrying out the systematic destruction of the enemy's resources. These operations have contributed enormously to hastening the enemy's retreat.

/s/ Carl Spaatz

CARL SPAATZ

Lieutenant General, U.S.A.
Commanding

1st Ind.

Hq., XII AIR SUPPORT COMMAND, APO 766, 19 April 1943.

TO: Commandings, 31st, 33rd, and 52nd Fighter Groups, and 154 Obsn. Squadron.

1. I take pleasure in forwarding this well merited commendation.
2. You have done a wonderful job. Keep smacking them.

PAUL WILLIAMS
Brigadier General USA,
Commanding

Commendations

HEADQUARTERS
XII AIR SUPPORT COMMAND
A. P. O. 766

2 May 1943

1. The following teletype received this headquarters repeated for your information.

THE AIR MARSHALL HAS NOTED THE HIGH STATUS OF DAILY SERVICEABILITY OF AIRCRAFT MAINTAINED BY ALL SQUADRONS OF THE TACTICAL AIR FORCE DURING THE PRESENT BATTLE PERIOD AND WISHED THAT HIS APPRECIATION OF THEIR EFFORTS BE PERSONALLY CONVEYED TO ALL TECHNICAL STAFF AND SQUADRON GROUND CREWS.

GENERAL WILLIAMS



HEADQUARTERS
XII AIR SUPPORT COMMAND
A. P. O. 766

11 May 1943

(TELETYPE)

THE GERMANS HAVE SURRENDERED ON THE CAP BON PENINSULA. THIS ENDS THE TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN. OFFICERS AND MEN ACCEPT MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESS IN WHICH EACH ONE OF YOU PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART. MY PROFOUNDTEST APPRECIATION FOR YOUR CHEERFUL AND WILLING CO-OPERATION WITH ME DURING THIS CAMPAIGN. I THANK YOU.

PAUL C. WILLIAMS
COMMANDING GENERAL
XII AIR SUPPORT COMMAND



FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
A. P. O. 520

201.22

26 June 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (M), APO 520 U. S. Army.

1. It has come to my attention through the Staff Weather Officer that the introduction of aerial photography to supplement weather reports by the pilots of your organization has increased the effectiveness of your operational missions immeasurably. This pictorial presentation has served to clarify what would in many cases be a confusing weather situation when reported verbally.

2. The fact that the installation of an aerial camera in the P-38 type aircraft flown by your organization meant further modifications is recognized. It is a credit to your unit that the plans were laid, materials procured, and this modification made by members of your photographic section and engineering section in addition to their normal duties without interrupting the schedule of operations.

3. I should like you to convey my commendation to the persons responsible for this achievement. The ability to perceive a problem and to effect a successful solution reflects with great favor on the initiative and competence of all concerned.

/s/ N. F. TWINING
/t/ N. F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding.

Commendations

HEADQUARTERS
154TH WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON
A. P. O. 520

JHF/fg

28 August 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All Personnel.

1. As evidenced by repeated attacks by this Air Force and other Allied Air Forces, the destruction of the enemy's oil supplies has been of paramount importance to the overall defeat of the enemy. The attacks of August 17, 18 and 19th by the Fifteenth Air Force upon the refineries at Ploesti were more effective than any Ploesti raids during the last year due to the fact that the bombers were informed of the refineries free of smoke screen in sufficient time to allow them to plan their attack upon visible targets. This information was supplied by the 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.

2. All personnel of the 154th share equally in the credit for these successful missions. I commend the Pilots for their judgment and courage in staying in the target area before and during the attacks while reporting the smoke screen situation. By so doing they subjected themselves to attack by the enemy similar to that feared by a straggler from a bomber or fighter formation. I commend the Engineering Section for excellent maintenance as proved by the success of each mission. I commend the Communications Section for the part the radios played in transmitting information to the bombers. I commend the Photographs Section for its part as proved by the photographs taken which were of so much value for intelligence purposes. All other sections I commend for their spirit and co-operation, making of our Squadron a highly efficient organization which can carry out a versatile job with maximum effectiveness.

/s/ James H. Fuller
/t/ JAMES H. FULLER
Major, Air Corps
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
A. P. O. 520

201.22

18 September 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All Units, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520, U. S. Army.

1. The Commanding General, United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, has requested that all personnel of the Fifteenth Air Force be commended for their part in the operations of this Command against the Ploesti Oil Fields. He has stated that our attacks, in connection with similar operations by the Eighth Air Force, have been the most effective blow so far struck against German industry.

2. It gives me much pleasure to pass on this tribute. I realize that our successes at Ploesti would not have been possible except for the skill and industry with which all of you, in both air and ground echelons, performed your assigned tasks. By your work you have made a major contribution to an early defeat of the German war machine.

N. F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
A. P. O. 520

201.22

3 October 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Major James H. Fuller, O-418671, Commanding Officer, 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (M),
APO 520, U. S. Army.

1. During the bombing operations conducted against the oil refining industries of Ploesti, Roumania, on 17, 18 and 19, August 1944, your Squadron performed pre-raid target reconnaissance which secured valuable data for the bomber forces. The skill and determination displayed by the personnel of your organization in achieving this feat of complete and efficient cooperation is a credit to you and your people.

2. I desire to commend your entire organization for the efficient and effective manner in which, under your leadership, it has carried out this and many other diverse tasks intrusted to it.

/s/ N. F. TWINING
/t/ N. F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding.

Commendations

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
A. P. O. 520 U. S. ARMY

GO/JMI/emf

25 February 1945

201.22

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All concerned.

The Commanding General is gratified to pass the following message of commendation received from General H. H. Arnold, Commanding General, Army Air Forces, to all units of this command:

I have noted with feelings of pride and satisfaction the large scale efforts of the veteran Fifteenth Air Force during the past eleven days. Operations of this character, in taking advantage of favorable weather conditions to deal the battered Germans continued decisive blows are in the best traditions of the Army Air Forces and reflect great credit on commanders and personnel in all echelons. Of particular note is the excellence of the maintenance organization which sustains your continued high rate of aircraft operational. Please convey my commendation to all command, staff, operating and service personnel.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
/t/ J. M. IVINS
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General



FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
A. P. O. 520

SUBJECT: Order of the Day

3 May 1945

TO : See Distribution

1. There follows an Order of the Day dated 2 May 1945, issued by the Air Commander in Chief, MAAF, which is addressed to all ranks of that command:

"Air Marshal Garrod and I offer our heartiest congratulations on the part you have played in bringing about the unconditional surrender of the enemy. This triumphant conclusion to many years of courageous fighting and supreme devotion to duty gives you one and all just cause for pride and satisfaction. Such complete victory has only been made possible by dauntless enthusiasm and by our Allied unity of purpose. Remember with deep gratitude those who have given their lives in service to our cause. For the many tasks that still lie ahead of us, keep alive that spirit that has brought us all in comradeship to the victory in which we are proudly rejoicing at this moment."

2. It is desired that this order be brought to the attention of all personnel.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

/s/ R. K. Taylor
/t/ R. K. TAYLOR
Colonel, GSC
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION:

"H" plus AOC 205 Group



HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
A. P. O. 520 U. S. ARMY

9 May 1945

201.22

SUBJECT: Message from the Air Commander-In-Chief, MAAF.

TO : All concerned.

EXTRACT

The following message from the Air Commander-In-Chief, MAAF, is published for the information of all concerned:
"I take the greatest pleasure in transmitting this grand tribute from the Honorable Mr. Stimson, Secretary of War, to all ranks of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces:

"My congratulations to you and the personnel of your Air Forces; the endurance and heroism of the members of your command in maintaining able, constant, and overpowering air attack throughout the campaign over the most difficult terrain under all sorts of weather conditions has been a vital factor in the achievement of complete victory over the enemy in Italy. You can be proud of your great contribution in the destruction of German resources, war industries, communications, supplies and personnel. You have earned the gratitude of your country."

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
/t/ J. M. Ivins
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

Overseas Combat Operational Record

NORTH AFRICA*

Sub-Patrol	25 Missions	27 Sorties
Attack, Photo, and Tactical Reconnaissance	144 Missions	342 Sorties
Total (North Africa)	169 Missions	369 Sorties



ITALY†

Weather-Reconnaissance	1326 Missions	2153 Sorties
------------------------	---------------	--------------



GRAND TOTAL

1495 Missions 2522 Sorties



*(16 Dec. 1942 to 8 Jan. 1943; 26 Jan. 1943 to 11 May 1943)

†(1 February 1944 to 2 May 1945)

Claims and Losses During Overseas Air Operations

PERIOD: SUB-PATROL OPERATIONS, 16 DECEMBER 1942 TO 8 JANUARY 1943

CLAIMS

1 Submarine (probable; 6 Jan. 1943)

LOSSES

1 A-20 (cause unknown; 7 Jan. 1943)



PERIOD: RECONNAISSANCE, ATTACK-RECONNAISSANCE, PHOTO-RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS, 29 JANUARY 1943 TO 11 MAY 1943

CLAIMS

76 Trucks

13 Tanks

2 Half Tracks

16 Gun Posts

5 Trailers

3 Radio Trucks

1 Radio Station

2 Large Tents

1 Staff Car

4 Recon. Cars

2 Personnel Carriers

1 ME-109 (on ground)

An Estimated 183 Axis Soldiers Killed or Wounded

(Damaged: 27 trucks, 11 tanks, 4 half tracks, 1 tank destroyer, 3 supply dumps)

LOSSES

9 P-39's

2 P-51's

1 P-38



PERIOD: WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS, 1 FEBRUARY 1944 TO 2 MAY 1945

CLAIMS

1 ME-109 (destroyed in air by
1st Lt. Robert P. Zirkle; 31 March 1944)

LOSSES

28 P-38's*

*(Lost over enemy territory or through mechanical failure enroute to or from enemy territory)

Closing Out the Records

Departure of Squadron from Bari, Italy.....	1 July 1945
Departure of Squadron from Naples, Italy.....	10 July 1945
Arrival of Squadron in U. S. A. (Hampton Roads, Virginia)*.....	19 July 1945

*(At this station, Squadron personnel was split up in many ways: some for discharge; some for furlough; others for re-assignment. Only a small detachment of Officers and Enlisted Men was returned to make up the ranks of the Squadron, re-designated October 1945 as the "63rd Reconnaissance Squadron, Long Range, Weather.")

Personal Album

(A concerted effort has been made to include photographs of all Squadron members in this volume. Through no lack of searching all available sources and files there are, however, some unavoidable discrepancies. This final section, "Personal Album," is offered, therefore, as a spot to include additional photos which will further personalize and round out this history for the individual reader.)

