

12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 57<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing  
310<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group  
History: March 1943



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

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

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# 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 57<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing

## 310<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group

### History: March 1943

The following is a compilation of the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group's Headquarters and individual Squadron War Diaries. They have been transcribed word for word, from the Squadron Histories provided by the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), Maxwell Air Force Base Alabama. At the end of each Squadron's daily entry, the individuals cited in the entry are identified by *full name, rank and duty*, in alphabetical order. The day's entry begins with the Tactical Operations Statement, from the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) Chronology, for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). The history also includes mission reports, mission crew rosters, Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR), personal mission logs, journals, and diaries made available by various sources.

### *Invitation*

*Anyone who has documentation pertaining to the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group or its members, and would like to have it included in this history, is welcome to participate. Copies of: photos (official or personal); orders (promotion, decoration, travel, etc.); Mission Reports; Missing Air Crew Reports; personal diaries, logs, journals, etc; other documentation; or information that will help identify **hi-lited** individuals will be greatly appreciated, as one of my goals is correctly identify every man and plane assigned to the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.*

*My only interest in this project is to honor those who served by perpetuating their story, and making it available for future generations, particularly the families and friends of our Great Heroes. If you are interested in helping, or if I may be of assistance in finding information about your 310<sup>th</sup> BG Hero, please contact me at: [Lil-Butch@nc.rr.com](mailto:Lil-Butch@nc.rr.com)*

### *Contributors*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Contributors (continued)**

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

## **Crew lists**

<i>Aircraft information - serial #, name, etc</i>	<i>Sometimes used</i>
<b>P</b> <i>Pilot</i>	<b>Bomb/Nav</b> <i>Bombardier-Navigator</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Co-pilot</i>	<b>BN</b> <i>Bombardier-Navigator</i>
<b>N</b> <i>Navigator</i>	<b>EG</b> <i>Engineer-gunner</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Bombardier</i>	<b>RG</b> <i>Radio-gunner</i>
<b>E</b> <i>Engineer-gunner</i>	<b>TG</b> <i>Turret gunner</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Radio-gunner</i>	<b>AG</b> <i>Aerial gunner</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Gunner</i>	<b>PH</b> <i>Photographer</i>
<b>F</b> <i>Photographer</i>	<b>AP</b> <i>Aerial photographer</i>
<b>CL</b> <i>Cannon Loader (on B-25G)</i>	<b>CC</b> <i>Crew Chief</i>
<b>O</b> <i>Observer</i>	

*Note for the 381<sup>st</sup> BS only: The letter in ( ) following the A/C No. represents the position # of the aircraft in the formation. For example: A/C No. 41-13052 (P) - the P is position 16.*

**A-1 B-2 C-3 D-4 E-5 F-6 G-7 H-8 I-9 J-10 K-11 L-12  
M-13 N-14 O-15 P-16 Q-17 R-18 S-19 T-20` U-21 V-22 W-23 X-24  
Y-25 Z-26**

## *Acronyms & Abbreviations*

<b>A/C:</b> Aircraft	<b>M/G:</b> Machine Gun
<b>A/D:</b> Aerodrome	<b>MIA:</b> Missing In Action
<b>A/F:</b> Air Field, also Anti-Flak	<b>M/T:</b> Motor Transport (Truck)
<b>AA or AAA:</b> Anti-Aircraft (Artillery)	<b>MTB:</b> Motor Torpedo Boat
<b>abs:</b> absent	<b>M/V:</b> Military Vessel, Maritime Vessel
<b>AGL:</b> Above Ground Level	<b>M/Y:</b> Marshalling Yards
<b>ALO:</b> Allied Liaison Officer	<b>MC:</b> Maintenance Crew
<b>ALW:</b> Alive and Well	<b>NARA:</b> National Archives and Records Administration
<b>AMGOT:</b> Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories	<b>NASAF:</b> Northwest African Strategic Air Force
<b>A.R.C.:</b> American Red Cross	<b>NATC -</b> Northwest African Training Command
<b>ASN:</b> Army Serial Number (personnel)	<b>NATOUSA:</b> North Atlantic Theater of Operations USA
<b>Assg:</b> Assigned	<b>Nav:</b> Navigator
<b>ASV:</b> Anti-Surface Vessel (radar)	<b>N.B.S.:</b> National Bureau of Standards
<b>ATA:</b> Actual Time of Arrival	<b>NC:</b> Nurse Corps.
<b>ATC:</b> Air Transportation Command	<b>NCO:</b> Non-Commissioned Officer
<b>ATS:</b> Air Transport Service	<b>Nickels:</b> propaganda Leaflets
<b>Azon:</b> Azimuth only (guided bomb)	<b>(NMI):</b> No Middle Initial
<b>BC:</b> Bomber Command	<b>NOK:</b> Next Of Kin
<b>BIC:</b> Bruised in Crash	<b>NRO:</b> National Reconnaissance Office
<b>Bmb:</b> Bombardier	<b>OAF:</b> Occupation Air Forces
<b>Bn:</b> Battalion	<b>OD:</b> Officer of the day, also Olive Drab
<b>B.R.L.:</b> Ballistic Research Laboratory	<b>OLC:</b> Oak Leaf Cluster
<b>BSM:</b> Bomb System Maintenance	<b>OTU:</b> Operational Training Unit
<b>CA:</b> Heavy Cruiser	<b>PAX:</b> Passengers
<b>CAVU:</b> Ceiling and Visibility Unlimited	<b>PDI:</b> Pilot Direction Indicator
<b>C.B.I.:</b> China-Burma-India Theater	<b>POE:</b> Point of Embarkation
<b>C/D:</b> Coastal Defense	<b>POW:</b> Prisoner of War (also PW)
<b>CE:</b> Circular Error	<b>PRO-Kit:</b> Individual Chemical Prophylactic packet
<b>CEP:</b> Circular Error Probable	<b>PW:</b> Prisoner of War (also POW)
<b>Chaff</b> (US term): Radar countermeasure: tiny strips of aluminum, metalized glass fiber, or plastic. See <b>Window</b>	<b>PWB:</b> Psychological Warfare Branch
<b>CL:</b> Cannon Loader	<b>PX:</b> Post Exchange
<b>CO:</b> Commanding Officer	<b>QBB:</b> Base of cloud
<b>CG:</b> Commanding General	<b>QDM:</b> Course to steer
<b>CP:</b> Command Post	<b>QM:</b> Quarter Master
<b>CQ:</b> Charge of Quarters	<b>R/B:</b> Road Bridge
<b>C/S:</b> Call Sign	<b>RC:</b> Red Cross
<b>CWS:</b> Chemical Warfare Service	<b>R/J:</b> Road Junction

**D/H:** Direct Hit  
**DD:** Destroyer  
**DED:** Declared Dead - no body or remains found  
**Demo:** Demolition  
**DL:** Dead List  
**DNB:** Died Non-Battle / Died Not-Battle  
**DOW:** Died Of Wounds.  
**DOWRIA:** Died of Wounds Received in Action  
**DS:** Detached Service  
**E/A:** Enemy Aircraft  
**E/F:** Enemy Fighter  
**EM or E/M:** Enlisted Men  
**ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival  
**ETIR:** Estimated Time In Route  
**EUS:** Evacuated to the United States  
**E/V:** Enemy Vessel  
**F Boat:** Flying Boat  
**F/L:** Formation Leader - also Flight Leader  
**FO or F/O:** Flying Officer  
**FOD:** Finding Of Death  
**Frag:** Fragmentation  
**F.S.:** Flight Section  
**GLO:** Ground Liaison Officer (UK)  
**GO:** General Order  
**GP:** General Purpose/Gun Position  
**GTC:** General Time Convention (railroad)  
**HE:** High Explosive  
**IAS:** Indicated Air Speed  
**I & E:** Information & Education  
**(i. o.):** Initials Only (initial is the name)  
**IP:** Initial Point  
  
**KNB:** Killed Not Battle  
**KIA:** Killed In Action  
**L/A:** Landing Area  
**LC:** Landing Craft  
**L/G:** Landing Ground  
**Lox:** Liquid Oxygen  
  
**L/S:** Landing Strip  
**L/V:** Large Vehicle  
  
**LST:** Landing Ship Tank  
**Ltr:** Letter  
  
**R/Y:** Railroad Yards  
**Repl:** Replacement  
**RMC:** Returned to Military Control  
  
**RON:** Remain OverNight  
**RR/B:** Railroad Bridge  
**RR/J:** Railroad Junction  
**RR:** Railroad  
**RTD:** Returned To Duty  
  
**R/V:** Rendezvous  
**SAP:** Semi-Armor Piercing  
**SD:** Special Duty  
**S/E:** Single Engine (plane)  
**S.E.:** Special Equipment (Shoran)  
**S/F:** Siebel Ferry  
**sk:** sick  
**S/M:** Submarine  
**SO:** Special Order  
**SOI:** Standard Operating Instructions?  
**S/P:** Sea Plane  
**Sq:** Squadron  
**Sqdn:** Squadron  
**SWA:** Seriously Wounded in Action  
**T/A:** Target Area  
**T/C:** Troop Concentration  
**T/E:** Twin Engine (plane)  
**TAC:** Theater Allied Command  
**TBF:** Tactical Bomber Force  
**TD:** Temporary Duty  
**TDY:** Temporary Duty  
**TLC:** Tactical Landing Craft  
**TO:** Take-Off (time), also Technical Order, and Transportation Officer  
**T/O:** Table of Organization  
**TOT:** Time Over Target/Time On Target  
**Trfd:** Transferred  
**TWX:** Teletypewriter Message  
**u/i:** Unidentified, also unit of issue  
**UNRRA:** United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration  
**Very Pistol or Verey Pistol:** Flare gun  
**VOCO:** Verbal Order of the Commanding Officer  
**W.O.:** Warrant Officer  
**WIA:** Wounded In Action

**LWA:** Lightly Wounded in Action

**MACR:** Missing Air Crew Report

**MATS:** Military Air Transport Service

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

**WP:** White Phosphorus (bombs)

**WT, W/T:** Watch Tower

**XC:** Cross Country

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

## Monday, 1 March 1943

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

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

**In Italy**, B-24s raid the harbor at Naples; 1 bombs Soverato while 2 others hit Staletti and Catanzaro as targets of opportunity. AA fire is accurate and several B-24s are hit over Naples and Palmi.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** General Carl Spaatz assumes command of the Twelfth Air Force in Algeria. Colonel Laurence P. Hickey becomes acting commander of the XII Fighter Command until the arrival of Brigadier General Elwood R. Quesada. Lieutenant General John K. Cannon takes command of the Northwest African Training Command (NATC).

**In Sardinia**, B-17s bomb docks and shipping, also hitting railroad yards and the town area, at Cagliari.

**In Tunisia**, B-25s and B-26s of the Northwest African Strategic Air Force attack bridges and AA gun positions in the La Hencha area. Fighters escort bombers and hit ground forces in the battle areas around Sidi Nsir and Bedja. B-25s of the Northwest African Tactical Air Force bomb the Mateur area.

**In the Mediterranean**, B-26s attack a freighter NE of Bizerte, Tunisia. The 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing transfers from Biskra, Algeria to Chateaudun, Algeria while the 47<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing moves from Chateaudun, Algeria to El Guerrah, Algeria. The 319<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 325<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group establishes HQ at Tafaraoui, Algeria upon arrival from the U.S. The squadron is equipped with P-40s.

**HQ 310th BG War Diary:** No Entry

#### **HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 53:**

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##### **Mission Report # 63, 4 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 1500 9 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C

early. None dropped No bombs on target at      from     .  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude

9 returned to base at 1810.  
No. A/C Time

**Monday, 1 March 1943 (continued)**

3. RESULTS: No shipping sighted. 54 X 500 lb bombs returned to base.
4. OBS: Two destroyers observed at 37 deg 35 min N, 11 deg 10 min E heading NE at 1635 hours. Approximate speed 15 to 20 knots. No attack made as bombers were on far leg of search and were looking for shipping, also great difficulty to hit fast moving target.
5. WEATHER: En Route-- Scattered cumulus 3/10 coverage at 7000 ft, slight haze, visibility 8 to 10 miles.  
Over water and Return: CAVU
6. PRESS DATA: None

Flight Leaders: Capt. Helsabeck  
Lt. Canham

Nine (9) sorties flown 1/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 53:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

*A/C No. 1 aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P  
CP  
N  
B  
E  
R  
G  
F**



## Monday, 1 March 1943 (continued)

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

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 53:**  
*(380<sup>th</sup> BS did not participate)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. W.F. Wigger's first mission after waiting most impatiently for over 6 months.

*Wigger, William Franklin, 2Lt, pilot*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 53:**  
SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 53	Flight 9 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 35	Escort 16 P-38's
Take Off 15:00	Bomb Load: (6 x 500)
Down 18:10	Bombs Dropped: None

Total Time: 3 Hrs. 10 Min.

Weather: Visibility unlimited.

Remarks: No enemy aircraft or flak observed. A short mission, on which no shipping save two enemy destroyers were sighted. They were not attacked.

### A/C No. 41-13086 (C)

**P** *Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Elder, Donald W., Cpl*  
**G** *Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 41-13074 "BALLS OF FIRE" / "ROYAL FLUSH" (B)

*Phillips, Carl A., 1Lt*  
*Wigger, William Franklin, 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Kelley, Donald C., T/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Nickelson, Royal C., T/Sgt*  
*Kiel, William H., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** The planes went on a sea sweep but the sea lanes were clean. Could be that maybe the Axis have learned their lesson.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 53:** The mission for this date was more or less uneventful. The planes were out on a sea search and no shipping was sighted. Two destroyers were seen at a distance but no attack was made as our bombers were on the far leg of the search and were looking for merchant shipping.

**Monday, 1 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 1** *probably* **41-13077** “**The Reluctant Dragon**” (later “**Old Patch**”)  
(flight leader)

**P** *Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Cunningham, Robert L., 2Lt*  
**N** *Colvin, Jay W., Jr., 1Lt*  
**B** *Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *Walker, James P. "Chief" Capt,  
Commander (observer)*

**A/C No. 3** *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Gshwandtner, Frank J. "Gish", 1Lt*  
**CP** *Williams, Edwin W., 2Lt*  
**N** *Norvell, Richard T., 1Lt*  
**B** *Truelove, Denver Vernon, 1Lt,*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Mathis, Paul E., T/Sgt, gunner*  
**G** *Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 5** *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Middleton, Laula M., 2Lt*  
**CP** *Frost, Roland (NMI), 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Surbaugh, Steven G., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Everard, William J., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Dickey, Norris D. "Pop", S/Sgt*  
**F** *Jenkins, Howard L. "Larry", T/Sgt*

**A/C No. 2** *probably* **41-13070** “**Shanghi Lil**” (flight leader)

*Canham, Arthur E., 1Lt*  
*Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt*  
*Hartman, Richard J., 1Lt*  
*Vestal, Marion S., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Rebello, John E., Jr., T/Sgt*  
*Parker, Perrie C., Sgt*  
*None*

**A/C No. 4** *aircraft unidentified - may be*  
“**Skunk Hunter**”

*Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt*  
*Stack, James F., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt*  
*None*  
*Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt*  
*Payne, Charles C., Sgt*  
*None*

**A/C No.** *probably* **41-13094**  
“**Seasweep**”

*Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt*  
*Butterfield, William M., 2Lt*  
*Haines, Wilson R., 2Lt*  
*Lindeberg, Richard T. "Lindy", 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Richardson, Warren F., T/Sgt*  
*Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**Tuesday, 2 March 1943**

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

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

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

**In Sicily,** Northwest African Strategic Air Force B-17s bomb shipping and the harbor area at Palermo.

**In Tunisia,** B-26s attack bridges and flak positions at La Hencha. Northwest African Tactical Air Force fighters hit troops, tanks, and motor transport S of Mateur and NE of Bedja as the enemy renews an attack along the Mateur-Tabarka road near Jefna. HQ 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Group and its 58<sup>th</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons with P-40s transfer from Telergma, Algeria to Berteaux, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Another tragedy befell the squadron today. Lts. Call, Shiver, Harris, Kuhn and Alexander were hit by a 2 ½ ton truck while they were being towed in from Telergma. Lt. Call was killed instantly. Lt. Shiver suffered a head injury and a broken leg. Lt. Kuhn's injury wasn't determined as he was still unconscious. The others had cuts and bruises.

*Alexander, Homer P., 1Lt*

*Harris, Wayne A., 1Lt, Asst S-2*

*Shiver, Arthur M., Jr., 2Lt, Transportation Officer*

*Call, Wilbur French, 2Lt*

*Kuhn, Burton J., 2Lt*

## Wednesday, 3 March 1943

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

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

**In Italy**, B-24s dispatched against Naples fail to reach the primary target. Several bomb the secondary target, Messina, while 3 bomb bridges at Bianco and Siderno Marina.

**In Tunisia**, P-40s fly fighter-bomber missions along the Mareth Line as a probing attack against the British 51 Division positions near Mareth is driven back. The German Afrika Korps issues a plan for a counterattack from the Mareth Line. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 12<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) with B-25s transfers from Castel Benito, Libya to El Assa, Libya. The 343<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-24s transfers from Gamut, Libya to Lete, Libya.

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

**In Tunisia**, B-17s bomb docks and shipping at Tunis and shipping and a power plant at La Goulette harbor. Fighters and medium bombers of the Northwest African Tactical Air Force hit ground forces in the areas around Bedja, Bou Arada, and Mateur. Fighting around Bedja subsides but enemy forces take Sedjenane. HQ 319<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) and its 437<sup>th</sup>, 438<sup>th</sup>, 439<sup>th</sup> and 440<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Medium) with B-26s are pulled out of combat for training and reorganization and transfer from Telergma, Algeria to Oujda, French Morocco.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

#### **HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 54:**

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#### **Mission Report # 66, 3 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 1300 18 B-25-C's took off to Bomb L/G at Z0456. Nothing observed at  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target  
designated target, bombed opportunity target at Z0048. 2 returned early,  
No. A/C  
16 dropped 1152 X 20 lb frag bombs on target of opportunity at 1445 from  
No. A/C No & Type Time  
from 8000 to 9500 ft. 16 returned at 1615.  
Altitude No. A/C Time

### Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (continued)

3. RESULTS: No activity, no aircraft observed on designated target. Target at Z0048 landing ground contained 15 to 20 aircraft. Bombs covered entire target area, strings of bombs across length of field. Eight or ten revetments, open toward field, some planes in revetments. One string fell entire length of field about 15 yards in front of revetments. One string across road where six trucks were firing at formation. Many of planes believed destroyed.
4. OBS: 15 to 20 A/C seen on field at opportunity target. Eight to ten revetments on field some containing planes. Six trucks on side of road, parked, firing at formation. Fresh tank tracks observed at 34 deg 12 min N, 8 deg 15 min E going N and S. Road across Chott Djerid apparently in use. Four large white tents at 34 deg 5 min N, 9 deg 43 min E.

Flak: At target slight heavy flak, inaccurate as to range and deflection, across road from target. Intense heavy from El Hamma, not firing at formation, believed to be of barrage type. Slight, heavy at 34 deg 5 min N, 9 deg 50 min E also 34 deg 5 min N, 9 deg 58 min E, range good deflection fair, containing about seven guns. Heavy flak at Y9846

5. WEATHER: En Route--CAVU, slight ground haze.  
Target--CAVU, slight ground haze.  
Back--4/10 cirrus clouds.
6. PRESS DATA: None

Comment--Two A/C returned early because of turret trouble.

Flight Leaders: Capt. Cometh  
                  Capt. Allan  
                  Lt. Canham

Sixteen (16) sorties flown 3/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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379<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: No Entry

**Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (continued)**

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 54:**

*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

*A/C No. 1 aircraft & crew unidentified      A/C No. 2 aircraft & crew unidentified*  
(flight leader)

**P** *Allan, John T., Capt*

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R** *Marple, Louis F., T/Sgt*

**G** *Pagano, Salvatore A., S/Sgt*

**F**

*A/C No. 3 aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P**

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R**

**G**

**F**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: (No non-mission information)**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 54:**

Mission Report # 36

Date- March 3, 1943

Target- Landing Ground at Z-0456 (NW Gabes).

Squadron airplanes- four

Rommel gave us nothing to shoot, at the first target, but the sharp eye of the flight leader picked out an opportunity target and we went to work. Fifteen to twenty airplanes were seen on the ground and fragmentation bombs well covered the field

One string hit straight down through the middle while another lined themselves along the front of the revetments. Slightly heavy flak greeted but no one was hit and all the planes returned safely. Our fighters gave us wonderful escort and "Jerry" had no opportunity to jump us.

*A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified (flight leader)*

*A/C No. 2 aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Capt*

*Santos, Carroll A., Jr., 1Lt*

**CP** *Grow, Clyde L., 2Lt*

*Picklesimer, Marion L., 2Lt*

**N** *Huffman, Arnie J., 2Lt*

*None*

**B** *Liverman, Ernest W. "Big Red", 2Lt*

*Lively, Jake S., S/Sgt*

**E** *None*

*None*

**R** *Mount, Robert J., S/Sgt*

*Smith, Teddy L., S/Sgt*

**G** *Melhus, Palmer C., S/Sgt*

*Redding, William D., S/Sgt*

**F** *None*

*None*

## Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 aircraft unidentified		A/C No. 4 aircraft unidentified	
<b>P</b>	<i>Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt</i>		<i>Batten, Earl E., Capt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt</i>		<i>Shorsher, Fred A., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Links, Albert G., S/Sgt</i>		<i>Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Dackiewicz, John A., Cpl</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Grace, John J., Sgt</i>		<i>Szczesniak, Alfred A., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 54:**

### LANDING GROUND N.W. OF GABES

Group Mission # 54	Flight 16 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 36	Escort 26 P-38's
Take Off 13:00	Bomb Load: (72 x 20) Frag.
Target 14:45	Bombs Dropped: 5 (72 x 20). 7200#
Down 16:10	

Total Time: 3 Hrs. 10 Min.

Weather: Visibility unlimited.

Remarks: No enemy aircraft got through the large fighter screen, so the many Spits, Hurricanes and P-40's which were waiting upstairs weren't needed. Flak: Heavy, moderate, accurate; coming close, in fact hitting a P-38 which, as a result, was forced down, landing in friendly territory.

This was the first flight made by Capt. White since he became the Squadron C.O. on Feb. 23, 1943. This was also the first mission for the crew of 41-13065, and for 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lt. R.W. Stecher.

A/C No. 41-13052 "TABOO" (F)		A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE" (D)	
<b>P</b>	<i>VanDivort, Richard (NMI), 1Lt</i>		<i>Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Stecher, Robert Walter, 2Lt</i>		<i>Lewis, Kenneth E., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Smith, Willie A., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Myers, John H., 1Lt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Chaffins, Ray (NMI), T/Sgt</i>		<i>Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Nelson, Forest S., S/Sgt</i>		<i>Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>White, Alpheus Wray, Jr. Capt, Commander (observer)</i>

## Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (continued)

### A/C No. 41-13065 (M)

**P** Wert, Donald S., 1Lt  
**CP** Marlow, Jack F., 2Lt  
**N** None  
**B** Rogers, Lee C., Cpl  
**E** None  
**R** Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt  
**G** Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt  
**F** None

### A/C No. 41-13086 (L)

Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt  
Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt  
None  
Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt  
None  
Elder, Donald W., Cpl  
Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt  
None

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Had the funeral for Lt. Call this noon. Lt. Kuhn died at 1400 hours. The others are on the road to recovery. They dropped frags on an airport in Gabes with plenty of damage done. Estimated 15 to 20 planes destroyed. Jimmie Smith burnt his hand starting a gas fire.

Alexander, Homer P., 1Lt

Harris, Wayne A., 1Lt, Asst S-2

Shiver, Arthur M., 2Lt,

Call, Wilbur F., 2Lt

Kuhn, Burton J., 2Lt

Smith, Jimmie (NMI), Sgt

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 54:** The planes were out again, and the target was a landing ground in enemy territory without, as far as we knew, a name. Its coordinate number was Z-0456. There was no activity and no aircraft at the assigned target, so the bombers went on to a landing ground at Z-0048, which contained 15-20 aircraft. Bombs covered the entire target area, and strings were seen to fall across the field. There were eight or ten revetments on the field and another string was seen to fall the length of the field about fifteen yards in front of the revetments. Still another string fell across the road, where six trucks were parked, firing at the formation. Many planes were believed destroyed on the ground.

### A/C No. 1 probably 41-13070 "Shanghi Lil"

**P** Canham, Arthur E., 1Lt  
**CP** Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt  
**N** Hartman, Richard J., 1Lt  
**B** Vestal, Marion S., 2Lt  
**E** None  
**R** Rebello, John E., Jr., T/Sgt  
**G** Parker, Perrie C., Sgt  
**F** None

### A/C No. 2 probably 41-13094 "Seasweep"

Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt  
Butterfield, William M., 2Lt  
None  
Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt  
None  
Bennett, Robert L., T/Sgt  
Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt  
None



**Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 3 aircraft unidentified - may be  
"Skunk Hunter"**

**P** *Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Stack, James F., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Payne, Charles C., Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 5 aircraft unidentified**

**P** *Wheeler, William A. K., "Gus", 2Lt*  
**CP** *Peterson, Arthur C., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Lindeberg, Richard T. "Lindy", 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Mathis, Paul E., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 4 aircraft unidentified**

*Gshwandtner, Frank J. "Gish", 1Lt*  
*Williams, Edwin W., 2Lt*  
*Doolittle, Leonard N., 1Lt*  
*Herold, Armin F., Jr., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Temple, Robert W., Sgt*  
*Stage, Albert A., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**Thursday, 4 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia**, P-40s fly top cover missions as the British Eighth Army completes the concentration of troops and weapons in forward areas and awaits an attack which seems imminent in view of German troop movements in the mountains W of Medenine. The 344th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-24s transfers from Kabrit, Egypt to Lete, Libya.

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

**In the Mediterranean**, B-25s and B-26s fly unsuccessful missions against shipping between Tunisia and Sicily. B-17s attack a convoy NW of Bizerte, Tunisia, claiming 4 vessels sunk.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 55:**

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**Mission Report # 68, 4 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 0700 15 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C

early. None dropped No bombs on target at        from       .  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude

15 returned at 1100.  
No. A/C Time

3. RESULTS: No shipping sighted on course, no attacks made. Bombs returned.
4. OBS: Two destroyers approximately 5 miles off Cape Bizerte at 0835 hours, heading 62 deg. Could not tell whether moving or not.
5. WEATHER: To Coast--High cirrus.  
Over water--CAVU until nearing Sicily where visibility cut down to six to seven miles due to haze.  
Back--Over water visibility lowered, haze closing in until land fall, made visibility 6 to 7 miles. From coast to base 8/10 at 10,000 ft.
6. PRESS DATA: None

**Thursday, 4 March 1943 (continued)**

Flight Leaders: Capt. Allan  
Lt. Canham

Fifteen (15) sorties flown 6/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary:** (Ops Order ---/mission ---) **Group Mission # 55:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

A/C No. 1 *aircraft & crew unidentified*      A/C No. 2 *aircraft & crew unidentified*  
(flight leader)

**P** *Allan, John T., Capt*

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R** *Marple, Louis F., T/Sgt*

**G** *Pagano, Salvatore A., S/Sgt*

**F**

A/C No. 3 *aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P**

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R**

**G**

**F**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary:** (Ops Order ---/mission ---) **Group Mission # 55:**

Mission Report # 37

Date- March 4, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- four

Another trip over the water proved fruitless although two destroyers were seen at the harbor in Bizerte. We made the entire trip without seeing a thing to make a run on.

Nothing unusual happened and all the airplanes returned safely.

## Thursday, 4 March 1943 (continued)

### A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified

**P** *Amick, Cecil D., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Porter, Lloyd L., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Longrie, Kenneth R., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Meyer, Albert J., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Huffman, Herbert (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 3 aircraft unidentified

**P** *Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Capt*  
**CP** *Miller, James I., 2Lt*  
**N** *Huffman, Arnie J., 2Lt*  
**B** *Liverman, Ernest W. "Big Red", 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Mount, Robert J., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Melhus, Palmer C., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 2 aircraft unidentified

*Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt*  
*Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Links, Albert G., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt*  
*Grace, John J., Sgt*  
*None*

### A/C No. 4 aircraft unidentified

*Batten, Earl E., Capt*  
*Shorsher, Fred A., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Dackiewicz, John A., Cpl*  
*Szczesniak, Alfred A., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Eric O. Linden left for O.T.U. at Casablanca this A.M.  
*Linden, Eric O., 1Lt, pilot*

### **381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 55:**

#### SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 55	Flight 15 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 37	Escort 20 P-38's
Take Off 07:00	Bombs Dropped: None
Down 11:00	
Total Time: 4 Hrs. 0 Min.	

Weather: Visibility from unlimited to 6 to 7 miles.

Remarks: Despite an early start the convoy of 4 ships which were to have been the target for this flight had reached Bizerte harbor by the time the group's aircraft arrived. No other shipping was sighted. No flak or enemy aircraft.

### A/C No. 41-13052 "TABOO" (C)

**P** *VanDivort, Richard (NMI), 1Lt*  
**CP** *Wightman, Henry B. "Hank", 1Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Smith, Willie A., T/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Chaffins, Ray (NMI), T/Sgt*  
**G** *Nelson, Forest S., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 41-13065 (B)

*Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt*  
*Lewis, Kenneth E., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt*  
*Molnar, William J., S/Sgt*  
*None*

## Thursday, 4 March 1943 (continued)

### A/C No. 41-13086 (L)

**P** *Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Elder, Donald W., Cpl*  
**G** *Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 41-13074 "BALLS OF FIRE" / "ROYAL FLUSH" (B)

*Phillips, Carl A., 1Lt*  
*Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Kelley, Donald C., T/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Nickelson, Royal C., T/Sgt*  
*Koehler, Robert R., Cpl*  
*None*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Lt. Kuhn was buried today. Planes again swept the sea lanes with nothing but calm sea visible. Capt. Walker bought 5 kegs of beer for the Squadron and what a party we had! Everyone was so lit-up we had a hell of a time keeping a black-out.

*Kuhn, Burton J., 2Lt*

*Walker, James P. "Chief" Capt, pilot Commander*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 55:** The weather over the water was CAVU, but no enemy shipping was sighted. Two destroyers were observed approximately five miles off cape Bizerte, but no attack was made.

### A/C No. 1 *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Gshwandtner, Frank J. "Gish", 1Lt*  
**CP** *Williams, Edwin W., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Truelove, Denver Vernon, 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Temple, Robert W., Sgt*  
**G** *Stage, Albert A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 2 *probably 41-13077 "The Reluctant Dragon"* (later "Old Patch")

*Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt*  
*Cunningham, Robert L., 2Lt*  
*Colvin, Jay W., Jr., 1Lt*  
*Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt*  
*Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt*  
*None*

### A/C No. 3 *probably 41-13070 "Shanghi Lil"* (flight leader)

**P** *Canham, Arthur E., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt*  
**N** *Hartman, Richard J., 1Lt*  
**B** *Vestal, Marion S., 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Rebello, John E., Jr., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Parker, Perrie C., Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 4 *aircraft unidentified*

*Middleton, Laula M., 2Lt*  
*Frost, Roland (NMI), 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Surbaugh, Steven G., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Ficeto, Bartholomeo T., S/Sgt*  
*Dickey, Norris D. "Pop", S/Sgt*  
*Jenkins, Howard L. "Larry", T/Sgt*

**Thursday, 4 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 5** *probably* **41-13094**

**“Seasweep”**

**P** *Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt*  
**CP** *Butterfield, William M., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Richardson, Warren F., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

## **Friday, 5 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy**, RAF Liberators, under operational control of the IX Bomber Command, bomb the harbor at Naples during the night of 4/5 March. All operations by the IX Bomber Command are suspended for 7 days so the crews can rest. The 66<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40s transfers from Libya to Tunisia.

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

**In the Mediterranean**, Northwest African Strategic Air Force B-17s hit convoys NW of Bizerte, Tunisia while B-26s attack motor vessels between Tunisia and Sicily. North-west African Tactical Air Force fighters and medium bombers hit the Djedeida, Siki Nsir area, and ground forces in the Bedja-Mateur areas. HQ 14<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group and its 49<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron with P-38s are pulled out of combat and transferred from Berteaux, Algeria to Mediuna, French Morocco. HQ 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group transfers from Le Kouif Airfield, Algeria to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No news.

**Saturday, 6 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia**, 35 planes strafe and bomb installations in the Mareth Line as Rommel's expected attack in Tunisia takes place and is defeated. Four thrusts toward Medenine are repulsed by the British, and the enemy retreats after nightfall, having lost about 50 tanks.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather cancels Northwest African Strategic Air Force bomber missions.

**In Tunisia**, fighters fly reconnaissance along the battle line. HQ 47<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Light) transfers from Youks-les-Bains, Algeria to Canrobert, Algeria. HQ 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) transfers from Ain M'Lila, Algeria to St-Donat, Algeria. The 92<sup>nd</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadrons, 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group with P-39s transfer from Le Kouif Airfield, Algeria to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 56:**

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**Mission Report # 70, 6 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 0715 15 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C

early. None dropped None bombs on target at        from       .  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude

15 returned at 1030.  
No. A/C Time

3. RESULTS: No attacks made, no shipping sighted.
4. OBS: None
5. WEATHER: Base to Coast--9/10 overcast at 6500 to 7000 ft, visibility 6 miles. At Sea--Scud clouds at 3000 ft, higher layer of cumulus, visibility lowered to two miles with showers NE and S of 37 deg 38 min N, 10 deg 58 min E. At coast on return scud lowered to 1000 ft, visibility 6 miles lifting over the mountains. Coast to Base--8/10 overcast at 8000 ft, visibility increasing to 10 miles.



**Saturday, 6 March 1943 (continued)**

6. PRESS DATA: None

Flight Leaders: Capt. Allan  
Capt. Helsabeck  
Capt. Cometh  
Lt. Canham

Fifteen (15) sorties flown 6/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 56:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

A/C No. 1 *aircraft & crew unidentified*      A/C No. 2 *aircraft & crew unidentified*  
(flight leader)

**P** *Allan, John T., Capt*

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R** *Marple, Louis F., T/Sgt*

**G** *Pagano, Salvatore A., S/Sgt*

**F**

A/C No. 3 *aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P**

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R**

**G**

**F**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** On the morning of March 6, 1943, the entire squadron was joined together for the first time since August 28<sup>th</sup>, seven long months, when the motor convoy arrived to the Base.

## Saturday, 6 March 1943 (continued)

### 380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 56:

Mission Report # 38

Date- March 6, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- three

We left this morning at 7:15 hoping to catch "Jerry" attempting to run some shipping through, but it was to no avail. The weather was bad. Showers were found out over the water and the visibility was limited.

After a futile attempt to find an opening to see through we turned back with all of our ships returning safely.

#### A/C No. 1 *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Amick, Cecil D., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Porter, Lloyd L., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Longrie, Kenneth R., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Meyer, Albert J., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Huffman, Herbert (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

#### A/C No. 2 *aircraft unidentified* (flight leader)

*Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Capt*  
*Miller, James I., 2Lt*  
*Huffman, Arnie J., 2Lt*  
*Liverman, Ernest W. "Big Red", 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Mount, Robert J., S/Sgt*  
*Melhus, Palmer C., S/Sgt*  
*None*

#### A/C No. 3 *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Links, Albert G., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Grace, John J., Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary: (*No non-mission information*)

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 56:

#### SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 56

Flight 15 B-25's

Sqdrn. Mission # 39

Escort 24 P-38's

Take Off 07:10

Bombs Dropped: None

Down 10:25

Total Time: 3 Hrs. 10 Min.

Weather: Extremely poor visibility.

Remarks: Zero visibility 20 minutes after reaching initial point necessitated return of the flight. No enemy aircraft or shipping sighted, and no flak.

**Saturday, 6 March 1943 (continued)**

<b>A/C No. 41-13052 "TABOO" (C)</b>		<b>A/C No. 41-13065 (B)</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>VanDivort, Richard (NMI), 1Lt</i>		<i>Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Wightman, Henry B. "Hank", 1Lt</i>		<i>Lewis, Kenneth E., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Smith, Willie A., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Chaffins, Ray (NMI), T/Sgt</i>		<i>Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Nelson, Forest S., S/Sgt</i>		<i>Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>Brinkley, Hamilton M., 1Lt, pilot, 447th BS (observer)</i>
<b>A/C No. 41-13074 "BALLS OF FIRE" / "ROYAL FLUSH" (P)</b>		<b>A/C No. 41-13086 (O)</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>Phillips, Carl A., 1Lt</i>		<i>Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt</i>		<i>Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Kelley, Donald C., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Nickelson, Royal C., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Elder, Donald W., Cpl</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Koehler, Robert R., Cpl</i>		<i>Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** On the sixth we learned that Lt. Milius, who previously had gone to the Headquarters of the Twelfth air force, had been transferred to the Northwest African Training Command. Another sea sweep with nothing happening.

*Milius, Morris O., 1Lt, pilot*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary:** (Ops Order ---/mission ---) **Group Mission # 56:** Another sea search by the boys and again nothing happened. No enemy shipping sighted and all planes returned to the base with their bombs.

<b>A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified</b>		<b>A/C No. 2 aircraft unidentified</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>Gshwandtner, Frank J. "Gish", 1Lt</i>		<i>Middleton, Laula M., 2Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Williams, Edwin W., 2Lt</i>		<i>Frost, Roland (NMI), 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>Doolittle, Leonard N., 1Lt</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Truelove, Denver Vernon, 1Lt</i>		<i>Surbaugh, Steven G., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Temple, Robert W., Sgt</i>		<i>Ficeto, Bartholomeo T., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Stage, Albert A., S/Sgt</i>		<i>Dickey, Norris D. "Pop", S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>Jenkins, Howard L. "Larry", T/Sgt</i>

**Saturday, 6 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 3 probably 41-13077 "The Reluctant Dragon"** (later "Old Patch")

(flight leader)

**P** *Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Cunningham, Robert L., 2Lt*  
**N** *Colvin, Jay W., Jr., 1Lt*  
**B** *Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 5 probably 41-13070 "Shanghi Lil"** (flight leader)

**P** *Canham, Arthur E., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt*  
**N** *Hartman, Richard J., 1Lt*  
**B** *Vestal, Marion S., 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Rebello, John E., Jr., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Parker, Perrie C., Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 4 aircraft unidentified - may be "Skunk Hunter"**

*Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt*  
*Stack, James F., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt*  
*None*  
*Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt*  
*Payne, Charles C., Sgt*  
*None*

**A/C No. 6 probably 41-13094 "Seasweep"**

*Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt*  
*Butterfield, William M., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Bennett, Robert L., T/Sgt*  
*Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt*  
*None*

## Sunday, 7 March 1943

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

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

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

**In the Mediterranean,** B-25s hit shipping between Tunisia and Sicily while B-17s bomb a convoy in the Gulf of Tunis and shipping and the marshalling yard at Souase, Tunisia. The 352<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) with B-17s transfers from Ain M'Lila, Algeria to St-Donat, Algeria. The 445<sup>th</sup>, 446<sup>th</sup>, 447<sup>th</sup> and 448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Medium), 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) with B-25's arrive at Oujda, French Morocco from the U.S.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 57:**

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**Mission Report # 71, 7 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 0730 6 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C

early. 6 dropped 35 X 500 lb bombs on target at 0920 from 200 ft.  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude

6 returned at 1110.  
No. A/C Time

3. RESULTS: One large merchant ship, believed to be a freighter, had many hits on it, huge columns of smoke and large pieces of debris went high in the air, and ship was sinking when last observed. A smaller freighter was also hit and was seen to go down quickly. Two other ships observed to be on fire, escort reports that three ships were on fire. The bombers and escort strafed entire convoy.
4. OBS: Sighted convoy consisting of 3 merchant vessels (freighters) and from 4 to 8 escort vessels at 0920 hours at 11 deg 15 min E, 37 deg 48 min N heading 229 degrees.  
Enemy Aircraft--Five ME-109's, two JU-88's, one flying boat and probable one HE-177 all at target.  
Flak--Intense heavy at target, accurate to range but poor to deflection. Intense light and M/G fire at target.  
Barrage balloons, reported attached to largest vessel fore and aft, close to deck until bombers started run, then they were released immediately into the air.

## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

5. WEATHER: To Coast--3/10 cover at 3500 to 4000 ft. 5/10 cover at 6000 to 7000 ft, visibility 6 to 8 miles.  
Over Water--3/10 cumulus at 3000 ft, scattered showers, visibility 6 to 8 miles to Cape Serrat, after Cape Serrat 7/10 at 2000 ft., visibility unlimited.  
Coast to Base--7/10 cumulus at 4500 ft, visibility 10 miles.
6. PRESS DATA: One ME-109 destroyed, seen to burst into flames by S/Sgt. Robert M. Brunner, 38110765 (*379<sup>th</sup> BS*), of Dixon, California. Also one ME-109 probably destroyed.

Flight Leaders: Lt. Thorndike  
Capt. White, Observer  
Lt. Marsh

Six (6) sorties flown 7/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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**379<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1943 at 0920 hours, flying on a sea search mission, Lt. Hamilton and crew covered themselves with glory for their dauntless courage and bravery for singling out an enemy M/V in a convoy of eleven ships headed for Bizerte. Flying at 200 feet and dodging between a balloon barrage, Lt. Hamilton struck viciously at this ship, scoring direct hits and leaving it a mass of flames. Crippled by flak, he kept his ship up with the formation and when jumped by 3 ME-109's his ace turret gunner, S/Sgt Brunner, went into action with both 50's pumping lead at the oncoming foe. One ME exploded in mid-air, the 2<sup>nd</sup> burst into flames and went down smoking; it was then that enemy fire hit Lt. Hamilton's valiant gunner, wounding him and putting his guns out of action.

*Brunner, Robert M., S/Sgt, gunner*  
*Hamilton, Robert M. "Ham", 1Lt, pilot*  
*Pettibon, Woodrow W., S/Sgt, bombardier*

*Grant, Isaac E., 2Lt, pilot*  
*Haskell, Harris M., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*

Co-pilot Lt. Grant and S/Sgt. Haskell administered first aid to all crew members including themselves; all were hit by this violent enemy action. The ship had 115 bullet and flak holes.

Lt. Hamilton - Foot wound  
Lt. Grant - Shoulder wound  
S/Sgt Haskell - Chest Wound  
S/Sgt Pettibon - Arm wound  
S/Sgt Brunner - Eye wound

## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

Back over land, “Ham” began to drop behind the flight, but determined to bring his wounded crew in and although hurt himself he kept his “mole” flying. Back over the home base he flew and in spite of the fact that his bomb bay doors were still open and could not be closed, he brought his ship in to a safe landing.

To Lt. Hamilton and his crew the entire group pays high tribute. Few at home will realize what he and his crew went through and how well he did his job. But his brothers-in-arms know and we say” “Well done, crew.”

### **379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 57:**

*A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified -  
probably “June Bug”*

**P** *Hamilton, Robert M. “Ham”, 1Lt*  
**CP** *Grant, Isaac E., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Pettibon, Woodrow W., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Haskell, Harris M., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Brunner, Robert M., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### **380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: (No non-mission information)**

#### **380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 57:**

Mission Report # 39

Date- March 7, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- none

N- Lieut. H.A. Sessler, flight navigator flying with Lieut. Thorndike of the 381<sup>st</sup> Squadron.

*Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt, navigator*

*Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt, pilot, 381<sup>st</sup> BS*

We were highly rewarded with a sea-going mission today, when we found an 11 ship convoy. Getting ready to come in at low-level we found what we had long expected, barrage balloons.

They bothered us for a minute but we soon found that they trailed behind the ships so in we went again. Results: one large merchant vessel sunk, one small merchant vessel sunk, and two others on fire, although our fighter escort stated that three were seen burning.

Fighters once again played a leading role shooting down one ME-109 and strafing the entire convoy.

All of our airplanes returned safely.

## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 57:**

### SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 57	Flight 6 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 40	Escort 17 P-38's
Take Off 07:30	Bomb Load: (6 x 500).
Target 09:20	Bombs Dropped: 3(6 x 500). 9,000#
Down 11:08	

Total Time: 3 Hrs. 38 Min.

Weather: Visibility 8 to 10 miles.

Remarks: From an altitude of 200 feet, all A/C attacked a convoy of merchant vessels, three in number, with an escort of one cruiser, two destroyers, and five smaller naval craft. In spite of heavy, intense flak causing hundreds of holes in our A/C, and personal injury to two Officers and three Enlisted Men, all of our A/C returned safely after a running fight with three ME-109's, one ME-110, and one JU-88. One merchant vessel was sunk and the other two left sinking and on fire.

Despite the fact that three P-38's had returned early, the escort shot down one ME-109 and strafed the Enemy naval vessels. All bombs were dropped with extreme accuracy.

#### A/C No. 41-13086 (C)

**P** *Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt*  
**N** *None*

**B** *Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Elder, Donald W., Cpl*  
**G** *Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

#### A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE" (A)

(flight leader)

*Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt*  
*Durgin, James L., 2Lt*  
*Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt, 380<sup>th</sup> BS*

*Myers, John H., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt*  
*Molnar, William J., S/Sgt*  
*White, Alpheus Wray, Jr. Capt,*  
*Commander (observer)*

#### A/C No. 41-13065 (B)

**P** *Wert, Donald S., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Marlow, Jack F., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Rogers, Lee C., Cpl*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt*  
**G** *Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*



## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS Special Account:

#### THE 40<sup>th</sup> MISSION OF THE 381<sup>st</sup>

By Lt. Jack F. Marlow

Do you remember the Sunday you started out for a nice quiet drive and ran into a big fire, a train wreck, and old “friend” whom you owed a punch in the nose and you gave it to him, marking one of the most eventful days of your life?

Well that just about described the 57<sup>th</sup> mission of our Group and the 40<sup>th</sup> of our Squadron.

In the wee hours of the morning, the Colonel called six crews into the briefing room for this “nice quiet drive” which was one of our routine sea searches. He told us that during the past week or so, several 18 plane formations had been out and that nothing had been sighted, so they were only sending six today, and he was “pretty darned sure we wouldn’t see anything.” However, he was sending along a good escort of P-38’s in case of interception, so we had nothing to worry about.

Lt. Thorndike, who was on this day marking his 25<sup>th</sup> mission, led the flight. Our ship was on the right wing and Lt. Kearns, pilot, and Lt. Rouch, co-pilot, were on the other. We were rather new at the game with two missions under our belt and Kearns and Rouch had about eight. The second element also had one comparatively green crew.

*Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt, pilot*

*Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt, pilot*

*Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt, pilot*

We took off a little after daybreak and headed for the coast. There was a comparatively low ceiling, along with some ground fog and a lot of low scattered scud. By the time we put out to sea, the low stuff was gone, but the ceiling was still about 1500 feet. Fourteen escort ships were with us. We cruised along for about an hour over enemy waters, and finally turned on a new heading toward Sicily, when right on the horizon in front of us sat a nice juicy convoy. It looked as if there was one merchant vessel with an escort vessel on each side. I really didn’t know what to expect from the looks of it, because to me, who had never seen anything larger than a 7,000 ton freighter at close range, this thing looked like the Queen Mary.

There is no thrill in the world to compare with piling into a bunch of ships at sea. When the leader gives the signal of attack, all the motors start to roar in an effort to gain speed and the fighters get excited and start bobbing in and out like a bunch of chicks around an old hen, every thing gets pretty good. Then when you get about 250 m.p.h. and all the ships start bearing down on the kill at 200 feet altitude and the escort vessels spot you and start throwin’ those big five inches out in the water to make spouts in an

## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

effort to clip someone's wing and throw out heavy flak, and your gunners start answering back with .50's, there is a lot of lead flyin' and things are pretty hot in general. Just about that time, some enemy fighters popped down out of the sky and some of our boys in the P-38's spot 'em and start up after 'em.

In our ship I called the bombardier as we started on our run and told him to get set and then called the gunners and gave them their target position. I wanted them to take everything they could find at the right of us. Just when getting within what I thought was range, I hollered, "Let 'er go, and damnit, melt those guns right off the turrets." Boy, they did. The gunners both fired ahead of the plane but everything fell short at first and the bombardier let go with his gun and a lot of lead started to fly. I fired a few bursts out of the pilot's gun just before we got to the target and broke the damned thing and he was really "browned off." The gunners never let up, and the lower turret (which everyone had said was no good), manned in our ship by Sgt Frank A. Dittmar, put more lead on the decks of those two leading escort vessels than Carter has pills, knocking out two gun positions.

*Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt, radio-gunner*

Just as we approach our target with everybody throwin' lead, those bastards threw up two barrage balloons on the large merchant vessel but not one ship gave way. Everyone bore right on down and all bombs hit on the bow, breaking the ship in half. We drove right on over and dodged and ducked for a long time until out of range.

Here is a good place to mention the work of the first pilot of our ship, Lt. D.S. Wert. Being on the side of the formation opposite the balloons, and as the lead ship headed for the bow of the ship, he would have been forced entirely off the boat, if he hadn't done some cool, quick thinking. He raised about 40 feet higher than the formation; fell directly in train of the leader until the bombardier dumped his load. This forced him a little out of formation; he avoided giving Jerry a belly shot by going right down to the deck and intercepting the formation a few seconds later.

*Wert, Donald S., 1Lt, pilot*

Also, I think Lt. Thorndike deserves much credit for leading his first attack on shipping so successfully.

*Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt, pilot*

As we left the target I looked around for the other element and one ship was dragging behind. His Bombay doors were open and his lower turret was extended. He looked to be in bad shape, so we took it easy on the way back. When we got over land, he fell far behind and we thought he was going into another airport. He came home shortly after we did and crash landed on the field. Both pilots, and all the crew were injured, but they were home alive and safe. The plane had over 150 holes in it.

## Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)

What had happened to him was this. He had been unable to get in between the balloon cables and the plane next to him so he went to the left of the balloons and dropped his eggs on another ship, which sank. But when he broke formation, a couple of enemy fighters spotted him and dove right through their own flak and shot him up pretty badly.

Some of the bombs overshot the big merchant ship we were on and hit a smaller merchant vessel on the other side, setting it on fire. So the report brought back was that 6 B-25's sank two merchant vessels and left one burning. The report read that our ships hit a convoy of three merchant vessels with an escort of one cruiser, two destroyers, and five smaller naval craft from 200 feet. In spite of intense flak causing hundreds of holes in our aircraft, and personal injury to two officers and three enlisted men, all our aircraft returned safely after a running fight with three ME-109's, one ME-110, and one JU-88. Our fighter escort shot down one ME-109 and strafed the escort vessels.

All of our planes brought back battle scars.

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**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Convoy sighted and boy did they blast the hell out of it! 3 ships were left a flaming wreck. McDonald dropped a 500 pounder right dead center of one. Two of the three ships were sunk. Action took place as the convoy was proceeding from Sicily to Tunisia.

*McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt, bombardier-gunner*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 57:** The seventh was a bad day for the enemy's supply system. It started out like the rest--another sea search, but the ending was quite different. The group caught the enemy where it hurt. One large merchant ship, believed to be a freighter, received deadly hits. Huge columns of smoke and large pieces of debris went high into the air and the ship was sinking when last observed. A small freighter was hit and seen to go down quickly. Two other ships were seen to be on fire. The escort reported three ships on fire. Both bombers and escort strafed the entire convoy, which consisted of from four to eight escort vessels. The flak was intense, and heavy at the target, accurate as to range, but poor deflection. There was also intense light machine gun fire at the target. Sergeant McDonald dropped a five hundred pound bomb in the dead center of one of the three ships sunk. When hit, the convoy was proceeding from Sicily to Tunis.

**Sunday, 7 March 1943 (continued)**

	<b>A/C No. 1</b> <i>aircraft unidentified - may be</i> <b>“Skunk Hunter”</b> (flight leader)	<b>A/C No. 2</b> <i>probably 41-13050</i> <b>“Virginia Sturgeon”</b>
<b>P</b>	<i>Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt</i>	<i>Peterson, Arthur C., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Stack, James F., 2Lt</i>	<i>Purifoy, Lawrence Lloyd "Peter Plink", 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt</i>	<i>Queen, Kenneth E., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Guilfoyle, Frederick J., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt</i>	<i>Michalek, Joseph F., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

## Monday, 8 March 1943

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

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** The 314<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 324<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40s transfers from El Kabrit, Egypt to Libya and is attached to the 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group to gain experience. The 434<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 12<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) with B-25's transfers from Castel Benito, Libya to El Assa, Libya.

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

**In the Mediterranean,** Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-17s and B-25s attack shipping between Tunisia and Sicily, claiming the destruction or the heavy damage of several motor vessels.

**In Tunisia,** other B-17s hit shipping and marshalling yard at Sousse. P-38s escort the bomb missions. Fighters of the Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fly several reconnaissance and patrol missions along the Tunisian British First Army battlefield while Western Desert Air Force P-40s and Spitfires hit the rear of columns attacking Medenine from the west. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons, 52<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group with Spitfire Mk Vs transfer from Telergma, Algeria to Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. The 32<sup>nd</sup>, 353<sup>rd</sup> and 419<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Heavy), 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-17's transfer from Ain M'Lila, Algeria to St-Donat, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** In a fitting ceremony that took place this noon, T/Sgt Lockhart and S/Sgt Swim were presented the Purple Heart by Colonel Hunter. Officers and enlisted men turned out in full uniform to witness the citations. Afterwards, in front of the Orderly Tent, Capt. Walker presented combat wings to T/Sgt Richardson, S/Sgts Bennett, Dickey, Ficeto, Jenkins, Langford, Myers, Naworski, Queen, Stilp, Swim, Schletz, Sgts Payne, Surbaugh and Cpl Phillips.

*Bennett, Robert L., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*

*Dickey, Norris D. "Pop", S/Sgt, gunner*

*Ficeto, Bartholomeo T., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*

*Hunter, Anthony G., Col, pilot, 310th BG Commander*

*Jenkins, Howard L. "Larry", S/Sgt, photographer*

**Monday, 8 March 1943 (continued)**

*Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt, gunner*  
*Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt, radio-gunner*  
*Myers, Loy G., S/Sgt, gunner*  
*Naworski, Edward F., S/Sgt, gunner*  
*Payne, Charles C., Sgt, gunner*  
*Phillips, William E., Cpl, gunner*  
*Queen, Kenneth E., S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner*  
*Richardson, Warren F., T/Sgt, radio-gunner*  
*Schletz, Howard G., S/Sgt, gunner*  
*Stilp, John P., T/Sgt, radio-gunner*  
*Surbaugh, Steven G., Sgt, bombardier-gunner*  
*Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner*  
*Walker, James P. "Chief" Capt, pilot Commander*

**Tuesday, 9 March 1943**

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

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** HQ 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group and it's 65<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron with P-40's transfer from Libya to Tunisia

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Bad weather cancels Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) operations and restricts other commands to reconnaissance, patrol, and transport missions. HQ 52<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group transfers from Telergma, Algeria to Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. The 1st Antisubmarine Squadron (Heavy), 25<sup>th</sup> Antisubmarine Wing with B-24's, transfers from St. Eval, England to Port Lyautey, French Morocco. The 347<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 350<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-39s transfers from La Senia, Algeria to Orleansville, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Lt. Brock and Lt. Blaauw flew in with their crew of Black and Marrs.

*Blaauw, Harold A., 2Lt, pilot*  
*Brock, James C., 1Lt, pilot*

*Black, James F., Cpl, gunner*  
*Marrs, Horace S., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*

## **Wednesday, 10 March 1943**

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

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

**In Egypt**, the flight echelon of the 340<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) begins arriving. The 64<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40's transfers from Libya to Tunisia.

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

**In Tunisia**, B-17s bomb El Aouins Airfield and La Marsa landing ground, destroying several parked airplanes and hit the town of Gafsa. Fighters escort the B-17's and carry out numerous reconnaissance missions. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron, 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group with P-39s transfers from Berteaux, Algeria to Youks-les-Bains, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No change.



## Thursday, 11 March 1943

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

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

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

**In the Mediterranean,** B-26s attack a convoy between Tunisia and Sicily. B-25s in the area carry out no attacks on vessels.

**In Tunisia,** fighters escort medium bombers and attack guns, vehicles and tanks in the Sedjenane, Jefna, and Bedja areas. HQ 31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group and its 307<sup>th</sup>, 308<sup>th</sup> and 309<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons with Spitfire Mk V's transfer from Kalaa Djerda, Tunisia to Thelepte, Tunisia. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Antisubmarine Squadron (Heavy), 25<sup>th</sup> Antisubmarine Wing with B-24's transfers from St. Eval, England to Port Lyautey, French Morocco.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 58:**

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### **Mission Report # 72, 11 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 0715 15 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. 1 returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C

early. None dropped No bombs on target at      from     .  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude

14 returned at 1100.  
No. A/C Time

3. RESULTS: No shipping vessels sighted on sea search. One bomber returned early. There were two flights, the higher one carrying bombs with instantaneous fuses, and the lower one carrying bombs with 4 to 5 second delayed fusing. The ship fell out because of the V.H.F. was smoking and the bombardiers interphone went out. The only spare ship available carried instantaneous fused bombs and therefore could not substitute for the one which fell out of the lower flight of the formation.
4. OBS: Three small naval vessels, corvettes or destroyers, heading 40 deg at 0930 hours at 37 deg 20 min N, 11 deg 15 min E. Vessels traveling abreast. Oil and debris on water, 0900 hours at 38 deg N, 11 deg 40 min E.

## Thursday, 11 March 1943 (continued)

Flak--Slight, heavy flak from three naval vessels above. Inaccurate as to range and deflection, began firing when formation was a long distance away. Ships turned to keep broadsides to formation.

- WEATHER: En Route--High scattered at 10,000 to 12,000 ft, 4/10 to 5/10 cover. Visibility good except for slight ground haze.  
Target--7/10 cumulus cloud base at 2000 ft, visibility unlimited at 0930 hours at 37 deg 20 min N, 11 deg 15 min E.  
Back--At sea showers between Isle of Galite to Bone. 6/10 coverage over mountains. At Base CAVU.
- PRESS DATA: None.

Flight Leaders: Capt. Helsabeck  
Capt. Allan  
Capt. Batten

Fourteen (14) sorties flown 11/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 59:**  
**Target:** 381<sup>st</sup> BS flights from England to North Africa (27 Dec 42 through 28 Feb 43)  
*(Group report not available)*

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 58:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

A/C No. 1 *aircraft & crew unidentified*      A/C No. 2 *aircraft & crew unidentified*  
(flight leader)

**P** *Allan, John T., Capt*  
**CP**  
**N**  
**B**  
**E**  
**R** *Marple, Louis F., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Pagano, Salvatore A., S/Sgt*  
**F**

**Thursday, 11 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 3** *aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P**  
**CP**  
**N**  
**B**  
**E**  
**R**  
**G**  
**F**

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 59:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS did not participate)*

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: (No non-mission information)**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 58:**

Mission Report # 40

Date- March 11, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- four

Many weather with rain at Bone played tricks on us today as we started out once again to search the water. Three small naval vessels were all we could find to attack.

They fired on us from some distance away but all the shot fell short leaving large splashes in the shadow of our planes.

All of our planes returned safely.

**A/C No. 1** *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Cromartie, Harry L., Jr., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Wright, John E., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Kechter, Harry H., T/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Smith, Eldon M., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Kobasa, Joseph (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 2** *aircraft unidentified*

*Grow, Clyde L., 1Lt*  
*Hubbard, Jack W., 2Lt*  
*Coffey, John D., 2Lt*  
*Same as Navigator*  
*None*  
*Hill, Raiford B., T/Sgt*  
*Pintar, John L., Sgt*  
*None*

**A/C No. 3** *aircraft unidentified (flight leader)*

**P** *Batten, Earl E., Capt*  
**CP** *Shorsher, Fred A., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Dackiewicz, John A., Sgt*  
**G** *Szczesniak, Alfred A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 4** *aircraft unidentified*

*Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt*  
*Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Links, Albert G., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt*  
*Grace, John J., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**Thursday, 11 March 1943 (continued)**

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 59:**  
*(380<sup>th</sup> BS did not participate)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary: (No non-mission information)**

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 58:**

SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 58	Flight 14 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 41	Escort 18 P-38's
Take Off 07:15	Bombs Dropped: None
Down 11:00	

Total Time: 3 Hrs. 45 Min.

Weather: Visibility good. Slight ground haze. Showers at sea.

Remarks: No bombs were dropped, as only 3 small corvettes, and no Enemy A/C were sighted.

**A/C No. 41-13065 (F)**

**P** Wert, Donald S., 1Lt  
**CP** Marlow, Jack F., 2Lt  
**N** None

**B** Rogers, Lee C., Cpl  
**E** None  
**R** Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt  
**G** Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt  
**F** None

**A/C No. 41-13086 (E)**

**P** Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt  
**CP** Wigger, William Franklin, 2Lt  
**N** None  
**B** Follansbee, William (NMI), S/Sgt  
**E** None  
**R** LaPorte, Frank R., T/Sgt  
**G** Koehler, Robert R., Cpl  
**F** None

**A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE" (D)**

Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt  
Durgin, James L., 2Lt  
Hickman, James G., 1Lt

Myers, John H., 1Lt  
None  
Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt  
Molnar, William J., S/Sgt  
None

## Thursday, 11 March 1943 (continued)

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 59:

ENGLAND-NORTH AFRICA

Group Mission # 59

Squadron Mission # 38

The following Combat Crews were given credit for one complete Combat Mission, representing their flight from England to North Africa. These flights took place between 27 December 1942 and 28 February 1943.

*Note: the 381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943: section at the end of this document contains the list of aircraft and crews.*

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**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** A sea search today. Three destroyers sighted but did not attack. 5 kegs of beer put on tap for the boys. "Grapes of Wrath" shown in the new day-room.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 58:** On the eleventh there was another sea search. No shipping was sighted once again. Three small vessels were seen, believed to be destroyers or corvettes, but no attack was made on them. Flak was slight, heavy, and came from the small ships, but the formation was out of range.

<b>A/C No. 1 <i>aircraft unidentified - may be</i></b>		<b>A/C No. 2 <i>probably 41-13094</i></b>	
<b>"Skunk Hunter"</b>		<b>"Seasweep"</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt</i>		<i>Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Stack, James F., 2Lt</i>		<i>Brock, James C., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>Hartman, William J., 1Lt</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt</i>		<i>Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Glass, John D., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt</i>		<i>Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>A/C No. 3 <i>probably 41-13077</i> "The Reluctant Dragon" (later "Old Patch") (flight leader)</b>		<b>A/C No. 4 <i>probably 41-13050</i> "Virginia Sturgeon"</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt</i>		<i>Peterson, Arthur C., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Cunningham, Robert L., 2Lt</i>		<i>Purifoy, Lawrence Lloyd "Peter Plink", 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>Colvin, Jay W., Jr., 1Lt</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt</i>		<i>Queen, Kenneth E., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt</i>		<i>Guilfoyle, Frederick J., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt</i>		<i>Michalek, Joseph F., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>		<i>None</i>

## Thursday, 11 March 1943 (continued)

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 59:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS did not participate)*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Special Account:** The other thing that made this a good day was the five kegs of beer that were rolled out for the boys, and the movie that night, “The Grapes of Wrath” which was shown in the new day room, the same being one of the out-buildings which had been fixed up with the seats and cleaned out.

## Friday, 12 March 1943

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

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** HQ 79th Fighter Group transfers from Libya to Tunisia.

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

**In Tunisia,** B-17s bomb the docks and marshalling yards at Sousse. B-26s pound supply dumps and score near misses on bridges at Enfidaville, while B-25s bomb shipping between Tunisia and Sicily. Fighters escort the bombers and carry out attacks on ground targets, destroying several vehicles in the Pichon area and south of Pont-du-Fahs. RAF Wellingtons bomb the Tunis docks during the night of 12/13 March. The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) and its 445<sup>th</sup>, 446<sup>th</sup>, 447<sup>th</sup> and 448<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Medium) with B-25's transfer from Oujda, French Morocco to Ain M'Lila, Algeria. The squadrons will enter combat on next Monday and Tuesday.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

### **HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 60:**

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#### **Mission Report # 73, 12 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 1200 15 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C  
  
early. 9 dropped 54 X 500 lb inst and 6 dropped 36 X 500 lb 4-5 sec  
No. A/C No & Type No. A/C Altitude  
  
delay bombs on target at 1430 from 8000 ft and 200 ft respectively. 18 returned  
Altitude No. A/C  
  
at 1300.  
Time
3. RESULTS: Sighted eleven vessels at 37 deg 20 min N, 10 deg 55 min E, at 1430 hours. Vessels consisted of, reported by R.A.F. Officer, to be Seibel Ferries and barges. Three barges definitely sunk and three probably sunk. Observations impaired for top element by weather.
4. OBS: Flight Lt. Dunn, R.A.F. observer in lead plane, lower element, reported eleven vessels, consisting of Seibel Ferries and barges. He further reported that as the lower flight bombing run was made he saw bombs from the higher flight make huge splashes among the vessels and saw black smoke come up from two of them. He stated that he believed the bombs from the ship in which he was riding struck one

## Friday, 12 March 1943 (continued)

large barge and that as they went over the barges he could count only four, and was of the opinion that at least six were sunk.

Enemy Aircraft--Two 2 engine aircraft seen at a distance, too far away to be identified. Attacked by escort and were seen to go down into the ocean. Time, 1341 hours at 37 deg 55 min N, 11 deg 44 min E. heading SW.

Flak--Intense accurate light flak and machine gun fire at target.

Own Losses--One B-25-C, shot down by flak at target, plane crashed into the sea, hit hard and exploded.

5. WEATHER: Base to Coast--7/10 cumulus at 6000 ft, visibility unlimited.  
Over Water--4/10 coverage at 2000 ft, top at 8000 ft, visibility unlimited.  
Target--4/10 coverage at 2000 ft, cumulus clouds, visibility unlimited.  
Back--Same as out.

6. PRESS DATA: None.

Flight Commander: Co. Hunter

Flight Leaders: Capt. Helsabeck

Capt. Batten

Observers: General Vandenberg

Flight Lt. Jones, Royal Navy

Flight Lt. Dunn, R.A.F.

Fifteen (15) sorties flown 12/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 60:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

A/C No. 1 *aircraft & crew unidentified*      A/C No. 2 *aircraft & crew unidentified*

P  
C  
P  
N  
B  
E  
R  
G  
F



## Friday, 12 March 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 *aircraft & crew unidentified*

P  
CP  
N  
B  
E  
R  
G  
F

380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: *(No non-mission information)*

380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 60:

Mission Report # 41

Date- March 12, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- four

The sight of feasting our eyes on an enemy convoy was our reward for another sea search today. They looked to be merchant vessels and Seibel Ferries, with some barges thrown in. We went in from low levels, the high element bombing first and throwing them around so we could get them at our pleasure.

Three were definitely sunk with three more probables. Two unidentified German planes were shot down by the fighters before they had a chance to attack the formation. The first one was an exceptional fine job while the running tactics of the second was not fast enough and he failed to make land.

One B-25 went down at the target, the result of a heavy barrage of flak. He hit hard and exploded in the water. The remaining planes returned to the base.

### A/C No. 1 *aircraft unidentified*

P *Cromartie, Harry L., Jr., 1Lt*  
CP *Wright, John E., 2Lt*  
N *None*  
B *Kechter, Harry H., T/Sgt*  
E *None*  
R *Smith, Eldon M., T/Sgt*  
G *Kobasa, Joseph (NMI), S/Sgt*  
F *None*

A/C No. 3 *aircraft unidentified* (flight leader)

P *Batten, Earl E., Capt*  
CP *Shorsher, Fred A., 2Lt*  
N *None*  
B *Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt*  
E *None*  
R *Dackiewicz, John A., Sgt*  
G *Szczesniak, Alfred A., S/Sgt*  
F *Dunn, F/Lt, RAF (observer)*

### A/C No. 2 *aircraft unidentified*

*Grow, Clyde L., 1Lt*  
*Hubbard, Jack W., 2Lt*  
*Coffey, John D., 2Lt*  
*Same as Navigator*  
*None*  
*Hill, Raiford B., T/Sgt*  
*Pintar, John L., Sgt*  
*None*

A/C No. 4 *aircraft unidentified*

*Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt*  
*Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Links, Albert G., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt*  
*Grace, John J., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**Friday, 12 March 1943 (continued)**

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 60:**

SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 60	Flight 15 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 42	Escort 32 P-38's
Take Off 11:50	Bomb Load: (6 x 500)
Target 14:30	Bombs Dropped: 3(6 x 500). 9,000#
Down 16:00	

Total Time: 4 Hrs. 10 Min.

Weather: Visibility unlimited.

Remarks: Eleven Siebel Ferries were sighted. Each of our A/C dropped (6 x 500#) bombs, the high elements using instantaneous fuses and the low element using 4-5 second fuses. Three or more of the Ferries were sunk.

Flak from the Ferries wounded one Co-pilot in the shoulder. P-38's chased and shot down 2 Enemy A/C 5 or 10 miles away.

Lt. Schrupp's ship failed to return.

**A/C No. 41-13052 "TABOO" (F)**

**P** *Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Wirth, Thomas F., F/O*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Crouch, Jacob F., Jr., 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Rogers, Mike D., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Dees, Paul (NMI), Sgt*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 41-13086 (MACR-? - shot down over target by AAA) (G)**

*Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt*  
*Wigger, William Franklin, 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Follansbee, William (NMI), S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Nelson, Edwin N., S/Sgt*  
*Koehler, Robert R., Cpl*  
*None*

**A/C No. 42-53445 "LOTTIES GOOSE" (H)**

**P** *Lewis, Kenneth E., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Stecher, Robert Walter, 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Smith, Willie A., T/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *LaPorte, Frank R., T/Sgt*  
**G** *George, Wade Clayton, Cpl*  
**F** *None*

## Friday, 12 March 1943 (continued)

**381<sup>st</sup> BS: Extracts from Missing Air Crew Report # ?:** (*MACR not available*)

**A/C No. 41-13086 (MACR-? - shot down over target by AAA) (G)**

**P** *Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt - MIA, POW*  
**CP** *Wigger, William Franklin, 2Lt - MIA, POW*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Follansbee, William (NMI), S/Sgt - MIA, POW*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Nelson, Edwin N., S/Sgt - MIA, POW*  
**G** *Koehler, Robert R., Cpl - MIA, POW*  
**F** *None*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** They sighted an 11 ship convoy of Seibel Ferries and Barges today and tore into it. Couldn't determine the extent of damage done. Lt. Stack received a pretty bad shoulder wound from flak.

*Stack, James F., 2Lt, pilot*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 60:** The following day the outfit had a battle on their hands. The mission was the same as usual--another sea search. The formation sighted eleven vessels consisting of Siebel Ferries and barges. As before there were two flights, upper and lower. Then ran into intense, accurate light flak and machine gun fire at the target. As the lower flight was on its bomb run, bombs from the higher element were seen to drop among the vessels and black smoke came up from two of them. The lower flight then tore into the vessels, dropping bombs and finishing what had been started by the first flight.

It was hard to determine the exact damage done, as the weather was bad; however, an observer, Flight Lieutenant Dunn, R.A.F., was of the opinion that a least six vessels were sunk. A two-engine enemy aircraft, seen in the distance, was attacked by escort and seen to go down into the sea. Lt. Stack received a nasty shoulder wound from flak.

*Dunn, F/Lt, RAF*

**A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified**

**P** *Aldridge, Richard A. "Dick", 1Lt*  
**CP** *Bingham, Henry G., Jr., 1Lt*  
**N** *Norvell, Richard T., 1Lt*  
**B** *Truelove, Denver Vernon, 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Richardson, Warren F., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Versaw, Robert E., Sgt*  
**F** *Sampson, Raymond D. "Sammy", Capt, Commander, 447<sup>th</sup> BS (observer)*

**A/C No. 2 aircraft unidentified - may be "Skunk Hunter"**

*Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt*  
*Stack, James F., 2Lt*  
*Hartman, William J., 1Lt*  
*McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt*  
*None*  
*Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt*  
*Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt*  
*Schwane, Henry H., Capt, Commander, 446<sup>th</sup> BS (observer)*

**Friday, 12 March 1943 (continued)**

**A/C No. 3 aircraft unidentified - may be  
"Bad Seed"**

**P** *Brock, James C., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Blaauw, Harold A., 1Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Spencer, Ronald L., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Marrs, Horace S., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Black, James F., Cpl*  
**F** *None*

**A/C No. 4 probably 41-13094  
"Seasweep"**

*Holley, James Taylor, 1Lt*  
*Butterfield, William M., 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Connors, Charles L., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Glass, John D., S/Sgt*  
*Langford, Alvin I., S/Sgt*  
*None*

**A/C No. 5 probably 41-13077 "The  
Reluctant Dragon" (later "Old Patch")  
(flight leader)**

**P** *Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Hunter, Anthony G., Col, pilot, 310th BG  
Commander*  
**N** *Colvin, Jay W., Jr., 1Lt*  
**B** *Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *Vandenberg, Hoyt S., General, Chief of  
Staff, NASA (observer)*

**Saturday, 13 March 1943**

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

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton, Commanding General Ninth Air Force, directs that Headquarters Desert Air Task Force be redesignated Advance Headquarters, Ninth Air Force, and that the USAAF tactical units with the HQ be designated Desert Air Task Force (DATF).

**In Italy,** B-24s bomb Naples harbor through heavy clouds.

**In Tunisia,** 34 P-40s of the 57<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group fly top cover and fighter sweep, and engage about 25 Bf 109 fighters in combat; we claim 4 destroyed; we lose 4 including 3 pilots. The 7<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 62<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, based at Nouvion, Algeria with C-47's, begins operating from bases in Egypt and Palestine. The 85<sup>th</sup>, 86<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons, 79<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40's transfer from Landing Ground 150, Libya to Causeway Landing Ground in Tunisia.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** B-25s are sent against shipping NE of Bizerte, Tunisia but fail to locate the target. Fighters hit positions and movement in the Mareth Line area, and fly patrols and reconnaissance. HQ XII Air Support Command transfers from Algeria to Tunisia. The 154<sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron, 68<sup>th</sup> Observation Group with P-39's and P-51's transfers from Youks-les-Bains, Algeria to Thelepte, Algeria. The 154<sup>th</sup> is an ex-Arkansas National Guard outfit.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Combat crews were told to get ready for a rest. Latest flashes have it that President Roosevelt has cited the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp for its meritorious work.

## **Sunday, 14 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy**, during the night of 13/14 Mar, RAF Liberators under the operational control of the IX Bomber Command hit the harbor at Naples.

**In Tunisia** during the day, fighters fly cover and sweep over the battle area. The 85<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons of the 79<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group fly their first combat mission when 12 P-40's escort 11 B-25's on a mission against the Mareth Line.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather cancels all missions except Northwest African Tactical Air Force fighter reconnaissance in the Enfidaville-Sfax area and between Tunisia and Sicily.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Dry run for the combat boys. Bad weather kept the transports from picking them up.

**Monday, 15 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia**, B-25s, escorted by P-40's of 79th Fighter Group (the group's first operation in the theater), bomb Zarat. Fighters also fly strafing and bombing raids against ground targets. The 81<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 12<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) with B-25's transfer from Berteaux, Algeria to Canrobert, Algeria. These Ninth Air Force units are TDY to the Northwest African Air Force. The 316<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 324<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40's transfers from El Kabrit, Egypt to Libya.

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

**In Tunisia**, Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-26s, with fighter escort, attack the landing pound at Mezzouna. B-25's follow with an attack on the same target. Fighters of the Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fly tactical reconnaissance over the battle area as the units of the US II Corps prepare to attack east from the Gafsa area.

**In the Mediterranean**, B-17s, with fighter escort, hit shipping off Northern Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

310<sup>th</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)  
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER  
NEW LONDON

15 March 1943

SUBJECT: Tactics and Formations.

TO : COMMANDING GENERAL, Northwest African Strategic Air Force.

1. In compliance with XII Bomber Command letter dated 21 January 1943, the following tactics and formations used in the Mediterranean Area are outlined as follows:

1. Three formations or combination of formations are used in counter shipping missions in Mediterranean Sea.
  - a. Two three ship elements at 200 feet or less.
  - b. Three three ship elements at 8000 feet to 10,000 feet.
  - c. Three three ship elements at from 8000 feet to 10,000 feet with the two three ship elements attacking twenty seconds after the high flight at 200 feet or less.

## Monday, 15 March 1943 (continued)

2. While on search the six ship formation is flown at 100 feet above the surface of the water in either right or left echelon. The flight is made at an indicated air speed of 190 to 200 miles per hour. The total length of each mission ranging from three hours and twenty minutes to four hours.

The direction of attack is left up to the flight leader to decide so as to fit the proper approach to the different targets. The factors which control the approach are as follows:

1. The size of the convoy.
2. The type of merchant vessel and location in convoy.
3. Size, number, and type of escort vessels and how located.
4. Size and dispersion of enemy aerial escort.
5. Position of convoy with reference to the sun.

When the method of attack and the number of ships to be attacked is decided on then the prearranged signals are used.

### Signal

- a. Landing signal: Denotes whether or not the attack will be made on two vessels simultaneously or not.
- b. Echelon signal: In which direction the turn will be made after the attack to facilitate a quick reformation of the original formation.
- c. Attention signal: The start of the attack or the location of the initial point. The attack is made in elements of three aircraft.

The controlling factor in regard to the number of bombs to be dropped is the type of target. The usual merchant vessel requiring only a stick of three bombs per aircraft or nine bombs per element large tankers being of greater importance necessitates the dropping of the entire bomb load

The accuracy of the altitude used is approximately 60% direct hits with another 15% of very near misses, giving 75% effective bomb load.

The altitude used is from 150 feet to 200 feet with the air speed above 220 miles per hour. No sight is necessary if a combat crew is used that has been flying together, and knows each others failings and merits; otherwise it takes perfect coordination between bombardier and pilot.



## Monday, 15 March 1943 (continued)

3. Some vessels has such a heavy concentration of fire such as barges, that it is not practical to bomb at low altitude due to the high percentage of losses. The group had to devise some other method of attack, so the converging attack was developed.

The formation is made up of three three ship elements flying in stagger. The search is conducted at 300 feet until an objective is sighted, they then climb to altitude. The altitude used is from 8000 feet to 10,000 feet. The convoy is approached from the stern. When the attention signal is given by the leader the two wing elements turn 45 degrees to the basic course, and proceed on the course for 45 seconds. Then turning in on the target. The approach is made at 195 to 200 miles per hour until the peel off, then the leader decreases to 190 miles per hour. The number two element descends 500 feet, and the number three element ascends 500 feet, this change in air speed due to change in altitude gives ample spacing at the target. After leaving the target the formation either turns right or left as arranged previously for the purpose of reforming.

4. The combination flight of high and low attack is used only on a definite and important target. The low level attack being the same as before, except it strikes the target from thirty to forty seconds after the high flight has released its bombs. Each element leader in the high flight calling "bombs away" when his bombs are released so that the low element will know when it is clear to start their run. Their run has to be as close as possible in order to take advantage of the confusion and the fire power drawn by the high flight. This should not be used very often as the value of the surprise caused by the low element will be lost and gun fire concentrated on the low element just as before.

ANTHONY G. HUNTER,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Well the boys took off today for their rest cure. We got the orders that sent Lts. Thompson and Kelly back to the States.

*Kelly, Andrew B., 2Lt, pilot*

*Thompson, Charles A. "Twitch", 1Lt, pilot*

**Tuesday, 16 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia,** P-40s fly fighter-bomber operations against enemy positions as British ground forces prepare to conduct limited attacks as a preliminary to the main assault against the Mareth Line.

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

**In the Mediterranean,** B-17s attack shipping between Tunisia and Sicily, leaving 2 small vessels aflame. Weather prevents completion of other bomber operations.

**In Tunisia,** fighters fly reconnaissance and patrols but bad weather hides enemy ground activity. The 346<sup>th</sup> and 348<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Heavy), 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-17's arrive at Navarin, Algeria from the U.S. The squadrons will fly their first mission on 31 March.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No news.

**Wednesday, 17 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia,** P-40s fly scramble and fighter-bomber operations as British ground forces continue local operations in preparation for the assault on the Mareth Line.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather cancels Northwest African Strategic Air Force bomber (NASAF) operations. Tactical fighters and light bombers fly numerous armed reconnaissance missions and sweeps over Sedjenane, Cap Serrat, and the Sidi Nsir area and attack ground forces east of Gafsa in preparation for the allied assault. The US II Corps opens an offensive to the east from the Gafsa area after air and artillery preparation. Northwest African Coastal Air Force (NACAF) aircraft continue coastal and sea patrols. The 37<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 14<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-38's transfers from La Senia, Algeria to Mediouna, French Morocco.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Lt Harris was discharged from the hospital. Lt. Shiver and M/Sgt Woods were evacuated to Oran. Captain Walker was appointed Major. What a surprise for him when he gets back from his rest cure.

*Harris, Wayne A., 1Lt, Asst S-2*

*Walker, James P. "Chief" Maj, pilot Commander*

*Shiver, Arthur M., 2Lt,*

*Wood, Ernest C., M/Sgt*

**Thursday, 18 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy**, B-24's, escorted by P-40's, bomb the harbor at Naples.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather cancels operations of the Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) bombers.

**In Tunisia**, Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters fly sweeps and reconnaissance over the Sidi Nsir-Sedjenane-Medjez el Bab areas and attack a railway station, other buildings, railroad sidings, and motor transport at Temara.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Hot cakes for breakfast. Nothing exciting. Whitfield and Akulonis sent to hospital.

*Akulonis, Frank J., PFC,*

*Whitfield, Albert E., Sr., Sgt,*

## Friday, 19 March 1943

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

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Ninth Air Force):** Colonel Uzal G. Ent assumes command of the IX Bomber Command, replacing Colonel Hugo P Rush. Ent AFB, Colorado was named for Col. Ent.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Landing grounds are non-operational due to continued bad weather. Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) and Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) cancel missions. Northwest African Coastal Air Force (NACAF) aircraft fly routine patrols. The Northwest African Troop Carrier Command (Provisional), consisting of the 51<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Wing and its subordinate units, which are transferred from the XII Air Force Service Command, is activated. Colonel Ray A. Dunn is acting Commanding Officer.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Had an alert, first in a long time.

**Saturday, 20 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia,** B-25's bomb the Mareth area. AA is intense and all medium bombers suffer hits. P-40's escort bombers and carry out fighter-bomber and top cover operations as British ground troops open the assault on positions with infantry and artillery. The British 30 Corps gains a bridgehead across the Oued Zizgaou.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Northwest African Tactical Bomber Force (NATBF) is formed under the Northwest African Tactical Air Force with a small combined HQ which has under it the 47th Bombardment Group (Light), the RAF 326 Wing, and air echelons of 2 squadrons of the 12<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) which are attached for operational control. B-26's and B-25's launch consecutive attacks against the landing ground at Djebel Tebaga. Fighters fly escort and carry out numerous reconnaissance missions as the British Eighth Army opens an assault on the Mareth Line.

**In the Mediterranean,** B-25's bomb shipping between Tunisia and Sicily. HQ XII Fighter Command transfers from La Senia, Algeria to Algiers, Algeria. A detachment of the 59<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Group based at Berteaux, Algeria with P-40's begins operating from Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Received orders to start wearing helmet, gas mask and arms at all times. Pvts Leonard and Ruh assigned to a week of hard labor for overstaying their passes.

*Leonard, Charles O., Pvt,*

*Ruh, Frank W., Pvt,*

## **Sunday, 21 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy** during the night of 20/21 March, B-24's attack the harbor and surrounding area of Naples, hitting a vessel, the city area, and in the vicinity of the railroad yards.

**In Tunisia**, B-25's bomb targets, including a highway, in the Gabes area. They are escorted by almost 100 P-40's.

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

**In Tunisia**, during the night of 20/21 March, RAF Wellingtons bomb the docks at Ferryville. On the morning of 21 Mar, B-17's, with P-38 escort, attack the landing grounds at Djebel Tebaga, and Mezzouna. Elements of the US 1st Armored Division push toward Maknassy, placing it under artillery fire in preparation for the assault on the town. The 35<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 64<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group which has been operating it's C-47's from Telergma, Algeria returns to its base at Blida, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No news.

## Monday, 22 March 1943

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

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

**In Italy**, during the night of 21/22 Mar, RAF Liberators, under operational control of the IX Bomber Command, bomb Naples.

**In Tunisia**, B-25's hit the Gabes area, bombing a road junction, motor transport, and troop concentrations. P-40's fly 5 escort missions during the day. British ground forces, after expanding the Oued Zigzaou bridgehead during 21/22 Mar, are severely handicapped by heavy rain. The enemy counter-attacks and forces 50 Division to give ground.

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

**In the Atlantic**, German submarine U-524, is sunk north of the Canary Islands at 30-15N 18-13W, by aircraft of 1st Antisubmarine Squadron (Heavy).

**In Tunisia**, Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) Wellingtons hit the landing ground near Sfax during the night of 21/22 March. Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters fly numerous reconnaissance and patrol missions while A-20's bomb Mezzouna and fighter-bombers hit motor transport and tanks in the northern Tunisian battle area.

**In the Mediterranean**, B-26's on a sea sweep attack vessels near Zembra Island.

**In Sicily**, B-17's bomb shipping in the harbor at Palermo.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Received orders to break up the outfit. Looks like another move. Had an alert around midnight.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Special Account:** The 22<sup>nd</sup> came, and with it orders to split the squadron into various echelons again. It looked as though we were in for another move, which seemed like a good idea. Berteaux was getting tiresome. That night there was an air raid alert, but as usual, we didn't even hear an airplane. It was getting so that no one got out of bed for the alerts.



**Tuesday, 23 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy**, B-24's bomb Messina, concentrating on the ferry slip.

**In Tunisia**, B-25's hit the Mareth area. P-40's fly fighter-bomber operations and bomber escort over the battle area as the British 50 Division withdraws from the Oued Zigzaou bridgehead under cover of artillery fire.

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

**In Tunisia**, during the night of 22/23 March, RAF Wellingtons hit El Maou Airfield near Sfax. During the day, B-17's bomb shipping in Bizerte harbor. Fighters fly reconnaissance and patrol, bomb and strafe trucks, tanks, and troops near Bir Zallujah, hit tanks and trucks east of Mezzouna and Maknassy, and east of El Guettar, where the enemy ground forces are making thrusts toward the town.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Capt. Walker officially made Major. Lts Wilson and Norvell made Captain. Lts Ferrand, Haines and all co-pilots made first.

*Ferrand, Raymond H., Jr., 1Lt, Asst Armament Officer*

*Haines, Wilson R., 1Lt, Adjutant*

*Norvell, Richard T., Capt, pilot, navigator*

*Walker, James P. "Chief" Maj, pilot Commander*

*Wilson, Samuel A., Capt, intelligence, S-2*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Special Account:** Promotions began coming in for the officers in the squadron. Captain Walker was officially a Major, Captain Wilson from 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. to Captain, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts. Blaauw, Brennan, Basich, Ferrand, Haines, Purifoy, Wescott, and Harder were all promoted to First Lieutenants. First Lieutenant Norvell was promoted to Captain. More promotions followed; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Bingham, Butterfield, Cunningham, Frost, Lindeberg, Middleton, Smith, Wheeler, Williams and K.G. Wilson all promoted to First Lieutenant.

*Norvell, Richard T., Capt, pilot, navigator*

*Basich, George F., 1Lt, Asst S-2*

*Bingham, Henry G., Jr., 1Lt, pilot*

*Blaauw, Harold A., 1Lt, pilot*

*Brennan, Samuel J., Jr., 1Lt, pilot*

*Butterfield, William M., 1Lt, pilot*

**Tuesday, 23 March 1943 (continued)**

*Cunningham, Robert L., 1Lt, pilot*

*Ferrand, Raymond H., Jr., 1Lt, Asst Armament Officer*

*Frost, Roland (NMI), 1Lt, pilot*

*Haines, Wilson R., 1Lt, Adjutant*

*Harder, Frank A., 1Lt, pilot*

*Lindeberg, Richard T. "Lindy" 1Lt, bombardier*

*Middleton, Laula M., 1Lt, pilot*

*Purifoy, Lawrence Lloyd "Peter Plink", 1Lt, pilot*

*Smith, Merle E., 1Lt, pilot*

*Walker, James P. "Chief" Maj, pilot Commander*

*Wescott, Robert M., 1Lt, pilot*

*Wheeler, William A. K., "Gus", 1Lt, pilot*

*Williams, Edwin W., 1Lt, pilot*

*Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt, pilot*

*Wilson, Samuel A., Capt, intelligence, S-2*

## Wednesday, 24 March 1943

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

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

**In Italy**, B-24's attack the ferry installations at Messina. Direct hits are scored in the target area and adjacent railroad yards and naval oil and storage tanks are set afire. Just before midnight, RAF Liberators, under operational control of the IX Bomber Command, blast the docks at Messina.

**In Tunisia**, B-25's hit Zarat. P-40's fly an escort, armed reconnaissance, and strafing mission. The British Eighth Army prepares to assault the west flank of the Mareth Line.

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

**In Tunisia**, Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-17's hit shipping and the dock area at Ferryville. B-26's bomb the La Smala des Souassi landing ground and B-25's hit the Djebel Tebaga North landing ground. Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) A-20's and B-25's hit troop concentrations near El Guettar (where the US 1st Infantry Division is under attack) and the landing ground at Djebel Tebaga. Fighters escort bombers and strafe ground forces along the battleline. HQ 68th Observation Group and its 16<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> Observation Squadrons transfer from Oujda, French Morocco to Berrechid, French Morocco. The 16<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup>, with P-38's, P-39's, P-40's and Spitfires, begin training fighter pilots.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**379<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** On March 24<sup>th</sup>, old crews returned and missions were resumed.

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** The workshop caught fire and all decontaminating trucks were pressed into service. Most of the combat crews returned from rest cure with some tall tales.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Special Account:** On the 24<sup>th</sup> the workshop caught fire. In it at the time was an ambulance, and before the fire could be put out, it had burned completely up, as did the workshop itself. All the decontaminating trucks were pressed into service, and there was a great deal of excitement and rushing around. Some of the combat boys returned from their rest cure, and said they had a wonderful time.

**Thursday, 25 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia**, B-25's, in the early daylight hours, bomb installations in the Mareth area. P-40's attack motor transport, tanks, and communications targets in the battle area. During the night of 25/26 Mar heavy, medium and light bombers blast forces gathering in the El Hamma area.

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

**In Tunisia**, Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-17's bomb the docks and shipping at Sousse. B-25's hit the Djebel Tebaga landing ground. Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters fly numerous patrols, sweeps, and reconnaissance flights over the battle areas. Northwest African Tactical Bomber Force (NATBF) bombers hit the Djebel Tebaga Airfield and motor transport west of Sfax and Sousse during the night of 24/25 March). XII Air Support Command medium bombers and fighters hit Djebel Tebaga Airfield, vehicles near Gabes, Mezzouna, Maknassy, and at several other points in the battle area. The 416<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-17's arrives at Navarin, Algeria from the U.S. The squadron will fly its first mission on 31 Mar.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Major Walker flew in with the rest of the combat men.  
*Walker, James P. "Chief" Maj, pilot Commander*

## Friday, 26 March 1943

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

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

**In Tunisia**, B-25's attack the Mareth area, dropping over 28.5 tons of bombs during 2 strikes. P-40's fly fighter-bomber and strafing missions, destroying or damaging over 50 military transport vehicles, tanks, and gun emplacements. Intense ground fire downs several US fighters. Following the aerial bombardment, Allied ground forces renew their assault on the Mareth Line.

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

**In Tunisia**, B-25's bomb the Grombalia area. Other B-25's and B-17's of the Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) fail to complete missions because of weather. P-39's destroy several trucks in the Maknassy-Mezzouna area. Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters and light and medium bombers bomb a fuel dump at Oudref, roads and a railway near Cekhira, docks at Sfax, and the airfield at Djebel Tebaga. Fighters strafe vehicles during armored reconnaissance between Faid and Gabes. The 347<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) with B-17's arrives at Navarin, Algeria from the U.S. The squadron will fly its first mission on 31 Mar.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 61:**

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**Mission Report # 74, 26 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF.
2. At 1230 12 B-25-C's took off to Bomb Grombalia Tank Farm. None  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C  
returned early. 2 dropped 16x300 lb, 1/10 sec. delay bombs near target at  
No. A/C No & Type  
1412 hrs from 8000' 10 dropped 80x300 lb. 1/10 sec delay bombs at 1410 hrs  
Time Alt. No. A/C No & Type Time  
at 36° 35' N x 10° 18' E from 8000' south of town of Laverie. 12 returned at  
Alt No. A/C  
1540.  
Time
3. RESULTS: Ten planes dropped bombs at a point approximately 36° 35' North x 10° 18' East near a hill just south of town of LAVERIWE. Two planes dropped bombs across railroad track at Northwest corner of town of Grombalia, bombs falling in a

## Friday, 26 March 1943 (continued)

Northwest to Southeast direction with a few hitting in the center of town. One crew reports what appeared to be some oil storage facilities along side tracks where bombs fell. No explosions or fire seen. Pamphlets were dropped in the target area.

4. OBSERVATIONS: The possibility of a landing ground near BIR MCHERGA was reported by several crews. At 36° 28' N x 9° 40' E, 10 trucks were seen on a secondary road just before reaching lake.

FLAK: At 1412 hrs very inaccurate light flak was reported coming from 8 to 10 batteries along railroad track at northwest edge of town of GROMBALIA. Flashes from machine gun fire were also seen.

5. WEATHER: En Route 8/10 10/10 cirrus at 15/10,000. Visibility 3 to 5 miles. Very hazy. At target: Ditto. Route back: Ditto.
6. PRESS DATA: None.  
Flight Leaders: Captain Helsabeck  
Captain Cometh

Twelve (12) sorties flown 26/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 61:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS did not participate)*

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 61:**

Mission Report # 42

Date- March 26, 1943

Target- Grombalia Fuel Depot.

Squadron airplanes- three

Captain Cometh proved the here for today. Ten of the twelve planes that left our North African Base failed to hit the right target by 12 miles, but Captain Cometh realizing that something was wrong, took his element out of the formation, hurried on ahead, bombed the right target and then hurried back in formation. It was really a fine feather in his cap and with the many all ready there, he should be an Indian Chief before long.

## Friday, 26 March 1943 (continued)

Although Captain Cometh pulled over the right target, his wingmen dropped their bombs too soon, and failed to drop with his, but a ship following behind helped to add to the damage. No smoke or fire was seen although pictures proved that bombs had hit the target.

The town of Laverie had innocently been the recipient of the bombs of the other ten planes. The weather was fine except for a haze that covered the ground and held visibility to a minimum. Three hundred pound bombs did the damage.

All of our planes returned safely, although some flak had arrived in their vicinity.

### A/C No. 1 *aircraft unidentified* (flight leader)

**P** *Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Capt*  
**CP** *Miller, James I., 2Lt*  
**N** *Huffman, Arnie J., 2Lt*  
**B** *Liverman, Ernest W. "Big Red", 2Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Mount, Robert J., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Melhus, Palmer C., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 2 *aircraft unidentified*

*Grow, Clyde L., 1Lt*  
*Hubbard, Jack W., 2Lt*  
*Hall, Paul R., Jr., 2Lt*  
*Same as Navigator*  
*None*  
*Hill, Raiford B., T/Sgt*  
*Pintar, John L., Sgt*  
*None*

### A/C No. 3 *aircraft unidentified*

**P** *Stutts, Earl Leeman, 1Lt*  
**CP** *Steger, Edward H., Jr., 2Lt*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Kessler, Paul E., S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Barbieri, Edward D., Cpl*  
**G** *Janicki, Andrew J., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary: *(No non-mission information)*

#### 381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 61:

##### GROMBALIA SUPPLY DEPOT AND TANK FARM

Group Mission # 61	Flight 12 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 43	Escort 43 Spitfires
Take Off 12:30	Bomb Load: (8 x 300)
Target 14:12	Bombs Dropped: 3(8 x 300). 7,200#
Down 15:20	

Total Time: 2 Hrs. 20 Min.

Weather: Visibility 3 to 5 miles. Very hazy.

Remarks: Poor visibility over target caused doubtful results. Photos showed two hits in town. The 43 Spitfires provided high, medium and low cover. No Enemy A/C. Flak: None.

## Friday, 26 March 1943 (continued)

### A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE" (J)

**P** *Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt*  
**CP** *White, Alpheus Wray, Jr., Capt, Commander*  
**N** *Hickman, James G., 1Lt*  
**B** *Myers, John H., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 42-53444 "PUNJAB" (L)

**P** *Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Stagner, Howard C., F/O*  
**N** *None*  
**B** *Douglas, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Swanson, William M., S/Sgt*  
**G** *Pontet, Emile A., Jr., Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 41-29961 "SNOW WHITE IP" (K)

*Jackson, William C., 1Lt*  
*Greenberg, Gerald J., 2Lt*  
*None*  
*Caron, John B., T/Sgt*  
*None*  
*LaPorte, Frank R., T/Sgt*  
*Hughes, Albert (NMI), S/Sgt*  
*None*

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Planes took off on first mission after their rest cure. Target was a gasoline dump but they didn't fare so well.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 61:** On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Target was Grombalia tank farm. Ten of the planes dropped their bombs near a hill just South of Laverie. Two planes dropped theirs across the railroad track at the Northwest corner of town, and some hit the center of town, but apparently they missed the tank farm, for no explosions or fires were seen. Pamphlets were also dropped in the target area.

### A/C No. 1 *probably* 41-13077 "The Reluctant Dragon" (later "Old Patch") (flight leader)

**P** *Helsabeck, Chester J. "Joe", Jr., 1Lt*  
**CP** *Cunningham, Robert L., 1Lt*  
  
**N** *Norvell, Richard T., Capt*  
**B** *Upchurch, Jerry E., 1Lt*  
**E** *None*  
**R** *Lockhart, James H., T/Sgt*  
**G** *Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt*  
**F** *None*

### A/C No. 2 *probably* 41-13050 "Virginia Sturgeon"

*Peterson, Arthur C., 1Lt*  
*Purifoy, Lawrence Lloyd "Peter Plink", 1Lt*  
*None*  
*Queen, Kenneth E., S/Sgt*  
*None*  
*Guilfoyle, Frederick J., S/Sgt*  
*Michalek, Joseph F., S/Sgt*  
*Walker, James P. "Chief" Maj  
Commander (observer)*



**Friday, 26 March 1943 (continued)**

	<b>A/C No. 3</b> <i>aircraft unidentified - may be</i> <b>“Mickey II”</b>	<b>A/C No. 4</b> <i>probably 41-13070</i> <b>“Shanghi Lil”</b>
<b>P</b>	<i>Brennan, Samuel J., Jr., 1Lt</i>	<i>Canham, Arthur E., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Knight, Gerald R., 1Lt</i>	<i>Wilson, Kieth Gordon, 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Herring, William S., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Vestal, Marion S., 2Lt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Smit, Richard F., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Rebello, John E., Jr., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Davis, Elvin A., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Parker, Perrie C., Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>Hartman, William J., 1Lt</i>
	<b>A/C No. 5</b> <i>aircraft unidentified - may be</i> <b>“Bad Seed”</b>	<b>A/C No. 6</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i>
<b>P</b>	<i>Brock, James C., 1Lt</i>	<i>Aldridge, Richard A. “Dick”, 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Blaauw, Harold A., 1Lt</i>	<i>Bingham, Henry G., Jr., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Spencer, Ronald L., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Truelove, Denver Vernon, 1Lt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Harris, Luther L., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Richardson, Warren F., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Black, James F., Cpl</i>	<i>Schletz, Howard G., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

**Saturday, 27 March 1943**

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

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

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

**In Tunisia,** Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters attack machinegun installations NE of Maknassy and a train at Mezzouna, and hit Djebel Naimia. Northwest African Coastal Air Force (NACAF) fighters on patrol claim several aircraft shot down. Weather prevents completion of an anti-shipping sweep by North African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-25's.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Planes took off but heavy dust forced them to return.

**Sunday, 28 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia,** P-40's launch a fighter-bomber attack against El Hamma, which the enemy has held as an escape corridor through which troops have been withdrawing during the night of 27/28 Mar.

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

**In Tunisia,** weather again prevents completion of Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) B-25 shipping strike. Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters attack trucks south of Maknassy and near Gabes, hit gun positions and tanks near Mezzouna, where fierce ground fighting is taking place, and fly patrols and reconnaissance throughout the battle areas of Tunisia. Bombers hit roads, railroads, and military transport in the Sousse and Sfax areas during the night of 28/29 Mar. HQ 51<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Wing transfers from Algiers, Algeria to La Senia, Algeria. HQ 82<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group and its 95<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadrons with P-38's transfer from Telergma, Algeria to Berteaux, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 62:**

**Mission Report # 75, 28 March 1943**

1. 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF. Flight Leaders: Capt. Allan, Capt. Cometh, Lt. Thorndike
2. At 0945 18 B-25-C's took off to Sea Search Shipping. None returned  
Time No. A/C Type A/C Mission Target No. A/C  
  
early. None dropped No bombs on target at      from     .  
No. A/C No & Type Time Altitude  
  
. 18 returned at 1300.  
No. A/C Time
3. RESULTS: No shipping sighted. No bombing. Turned back at 37 deg 38 min N, 10 deg 35 min E due to bad weather.
4. OBS: None.

**Sunday, 28 March 1943 (continued)**

- 5. WEATHER: En Route--Overcast 6/10 to coast at 4000 ft, visibility 5 miles. Over Water--20 mile strip of 10/10 overcast at 2000 ft with visibility reduced to one mile by heavy haze. At 37 deg 38 min N, 10 deg 35 min E visibility reduced to ¼ mile by heavy haze. Broken cloud deck at 8000 to 10,000 ft. Off Bizerte, surface wind from SE at 20 miles per hour causing very choppy sea. Conditions improved on return, clearing W of Galite Island to 5/10 broken coverage at 2000 to 3000 ft, visibility 10 miles. Return overland same as way out, except visibility improved.
  
- 6. PRESS DATA: None.

Eighteen (18) sorties flown 28/3/43.

GORDON C. LOCKE,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-2.

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

**379<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 62:**  
*(379<sup>th</sup> BS participation not determined)*

*A/C No. 1 aircraft & crew unidentified      A/C No. 2 aircraft & crew unidentified*  
(flight leader)

**P** *Allan, John T., Capt*

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R** *Marple, Louis F., T/Sgt,*

**G** *Pagano, Salvatore A., S/Sgt*

**F**

*A/C No. 3 aircraft & crew unidentified*

**P**

**CP**

**N**

**B**

**E**

**R**

**G**

**F**

## Sunday, 28 March 1943 (continued)

**380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**380<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 62:**

Mission Report # 28

Date- March 28, 1943

Target- Sea Search.

Squadron airplanes- six

Old man weather gave "Jerry" another big hand today, when after holding to our course just off the edge of the Tunisian coast for over an hour we were forced to turn back due to bad weather.

We saw no shipping and no bombs were dropped, but we swore we would make up for it at a later date.

<b>A/C No. 1</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i> (flight leader)	<b>A/C No. 2</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i>
<b>P</b> <i>Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Capt</i>	<i>Cromartie, Harry L., Jr., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Miller, James I., 2Lt</i>	<i>Wright, John E., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>Huffman, Arnie J., 2Lt</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Liverman, Ernest W. "Big Red", 2Lt</i>	<i>Kechter, Harry H., T/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Mount, Robert J., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Smith, Eldon M., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Melhus, Palmer C., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Kobasa, Joseph (NMI), S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>A/C No. 3</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i>	<b>A/C No. 4</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i>
<b>P</b> <i>Stutts, Earl Leeman, 1Lt</i>	<i>Batten, Earl E., Capt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Steger, Edward H., Jr., 2Lt</i>	<i>Shorsher, Fred A., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Kessler, Paul E., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Sessler, Howard A., 1Lt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Barbieri, Edward D., Cpl</i>	<i>Dackiewicz, John A., Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Janicki, Andrew J., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Szczesniak, Alfred A., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>A/C No. 5</b> <i>may be 41-13096 "The Question Mark"</i>	<b>A/C No. 6</b> <i>aircraft unidentified</i>
<b>P</b> <i>McCormick, Robert J., II, 1Lt</i>	<i>Sacknoff, David A., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Rich, Robert S., 2Lt</i>	<i>Walcott, Albert R., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Richardson, David L., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Jastrzemski, Walter F., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Oliver, Frank R., Jr., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Wesline, Richard L., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Leanza, Anthony (NMI), S/Sgt</i>	<i>Grace, John J., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

## Sunday, 28 March 1943 (continued)

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** *(No non-mission information)*

**381<sup>st</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 62:**

SEA SEARCH

Group Mission # 62	Flight 18 B-25's
Sqdrn. Mission # 44	Escort 24 P-38's
Take Off 09:45	Bombs Dropped: None
Down 12:55	
Total Time: 3 Hrs. 10 Min.	

Weather: Very poor visibility.

Remarks: Three of the P-38's returned before the mission was completed. Poor visibility caused our aircraft to shorten their course and return to the base 45 minutes early.

No shipping or enemy aircraft sighted. No flak and no bombs dropped.

A/C No. 41-13074 "BALLS OF FIRE" / "ROYAL FLUSH" (P)	A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE" (N) (flight leader)
<b>P</b> <i>Phillips, Carl A., 1Lt</i>	<i>Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Dauley, Charles G., 2Lt</i>	<i>Denton, Richard D., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>Hickman, James G., 1Lt</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Kelley, Donald C., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Myers, John H., 1Lt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Nickelson, Royal C., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Boone, Edward W. W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Kiel, William H., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
A/C No. 41-13092 "EL RAUNCH" (O)	A/C No. 41-13065 (S)
<b>P</b> <i>Carver, Joseph H., 1Lt</i>	<i>Wert, Donald S., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Therrien, Robert W., 2Lt</i>	<i>Marlow, Jack F., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Dombkowski, Stanley F., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Rogers, Lee C., Cpl</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Szymik, Emil (NMI), Pvt</i>	<i>Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Kim, Daniel (NMI), S/Sgt</i>	<i>Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
A/C No. 41-13052 "TABOO" (Q)	A/C No. 41-13085 "GREEN HORNET" (R)
<b>P</b> <i>VanDivort, Richard (NMI), 1Lt</i>	<i>Coddington, Walter E., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Collins, George Dennis, F/O</i>	<i>Ramsey, Thomas Upton, 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Crouch, Jacob F., Jr., 2Lt</i>	<i>Hartzell, James J., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Chaffins, Ray (NMI), T/Sgt</i>	<i>Thomas, Quentin W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Nelson, Forest S., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Moxey, Orville E., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

## Sunday, 28 March 1943 (continued)

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** A sea Sweep today almost to the coast of Sicily but nothing doing.

**428<sup>th</sup> BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # 62:** The mission of the 28<sup>th</sup> of March was a sea search. Visibility was very poor, and there were broken clouds over the entire route. Twenty mile per hour surface winds made the sea very choppy, and the mission did not uncover and shipping.

**A/C No. 1 aircraft unidentified - may be  
"Skunk Hunter"**

<b>P</b>	<i>Marsh, Edward D., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Wescott, Robert M., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>Hartman, William J., 1Lt</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>McDonald, Donald E. "Mac", Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Bosworth, William H., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Payne, Charles C., Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>A/C No. 3 aircraft unidentified</b>	
<b>P</b>	<i>Wheeler, William A. K., "Gus", 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b>	<i>Moulder, Robert W., F/O</i>
<b>N</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Swim, Lowell W., S/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>R</b>	<i>Mathis, Paul E., T/Sgt</i>
<b>G</b>	<i>Kirkland, Robert Olin "Kirk", S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b>	<i>None</i>

**A/C No. 2 aircraft unidentified**

<i>Middleton, Laula M., 1Lt</i>
<i>Frost, Roland (NMI), 1Lt, pilot</i>
<i>None</i>
<i>Surbaugh, Steven G., S/Sgt</i>
<i>None</i>
<i>Ficeto, Bartholomeo T., S/Sgt</i>
<i>Dickey, Norris D. "Pop", S/Sgt</i>
<i>Jenkins, Howard L. "Larry", T/Sgt</i>

**Monday, 29 March 1943**

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

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

**In Tunisia,** B-25's attack Sfax and El Maou area, scoring hits on several parked aircraft. P-40's fly escort and fighter-bomber missions as British ground forces pursue the enemy north through Gabes. The British Eighth Army completes the occupation of the Mareth Line. HQ 340<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Medium) and its 486<sup>th</sup>, 487<sup>th</sup>, 488<sup>th</sup> and 489<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (Medium) with B-25's arrive at El Kabrit, Egypt from the U.S. The group will fly its first mission on 6 Apr. The 315<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 324<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group with P-40's arrives at El Kabrit, Egypt from the U.S.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather cancels all Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) operations.

**In Tunisia,** Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters bomb and strafe a truck column south of Djebel Chemsî, a troop concentration near Mezzouna, and vehicles at other points along the Tunisian battlefield. The 4<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 62<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Group with C-47's transfers from Casablanca, French Morocco to Nouvion, Algeria. The 84<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Light), 47<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Light) with A-20's transfers from Youks-les-Bains, Algeria to Canrobert, Algeria. The 92<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadron, 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group with P-39's transfers from Thelepte, Tunisia to Youks-les-Bains, Algeria.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Bad weather kept the planes grounded.



**Tuesday, 30 March 1943**

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

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

**In Italy,** 3 B-24's sent to bomb the Messina ferry slip are unable to rendezvous because of bad weather; 1 B-24 bombs the Crotone chemical factory, hitting the center of the factory area, warehouses, and rail facilities. RAF Liberators sent against the same target return without bombing.

**In Tunisia,** B-25's hit the landing ground at Sfax, scoring direct hits on 4 aircraft. P-40's fly escort missions. British ground forces make contact with the enemy's new line along Oued el Akarit.

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Northwest African Air Force):** Weather halts all Northwest African Strategic Air Force (NASAF) missions except fighter reconnaissance.

**In Tunisia,** Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters bomb the area northeast of Oued Zarga, attack tanks, trucks, and troops southeast of Slourhin, at Djebel ben Kheir, at Djebel Chems, near El Ayacha and El Avoua, along the El Guettar-Mahares road, and in the El Agahea area. A-20's bomb the La Fauconnerie Airfield, hit troops at Djebel Chems, and bomb tanks and troops at Djebel Berda which is being assaulted by the US 9th Infantry Division. HQ 47th Bombardment Group (Light) and its 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Light) with A-20's transfer from Canrobert, Algeria to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** No mission.

## Wednesday, 31 March 1943

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

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

**In Tunisia**, B-25's bomb Sfax Airfield; bombs explode among 6 parked airplanes. P-40's escort bombers and fly fighter-bomber operations, during which motor transport along the highway north of Gabes is hit. The 9<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is inactivated at El Kabrit, Egypt.

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

**In Sardinia**, during the night of 30/31 Mar, RAF Wellingtons bomb Decimomannu Airfield. During the day, B-17's hit Villacidro, Monserrato and Decimomannu Airfields and Cagliari harbor.

**In the Mediterranean**, B-25's hit shipping off northeastern Tunisia. The B-17 and B-25 missions are escorted by P-38's. In Tunisia, Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF) fighters, and light and medium bombers attack La Fauconnerie Airfield, hit concentrations on the El Guettar-Gabes road (enemy positions through which the US II Corps is trying to break), bomb transport in the Djebel Tabouna area, attack roads in the Mezzouna-Mahares-Sfax-Sousse areas, hit trucks, halftracks, and tanks south of Djebel Berda and in the Djebel Berrani area, bomb the Djebel Chems Pass, strafe trucks on the Djebel Hadifa-Sidi Rouda road and in the Ofel-El Guettar area. Western Desert Air Force (WDAF) aircraft hit the El Maou landing ground. The 97<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Light), 47<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Light) with A-20's transfers from Canrobert, Algeria to Thelepte, Tunisia.

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary:** No Entry

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

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

**381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary:** No Entry

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary:** Rumors have the 310<sup>th</sup> moving to Fez where they will break up and form new groups. Pay call today. No mission. 36 planes flew practice formation at noon.

## March 1943

**HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943:** None

**379<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943:**

379<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (M)  
310<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group  
Berteaux, Algeria

1 April, 1943

SUBJECT: Squadron History for March.

TO : Headquarters, 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M).

In comparison with previous month's activities, this month has been rather inactive from a mission point of view. Only 9 missions were flown over enemy territory. However, those nine were full of dynamite. Three (3) enemy freighters were sunk, three (3) Siebel Ferries sunk and three (3) probably sunk and one (1) ME-109 shot down. Special commendations were rec'd from Generals Doolittle and Spaatz for this excellent work. (See attached copies of their messages).

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1943 at 0920 hours, flying on a sea search mission, Lt. Hamilton and crew covered themselves with glory for their dauntless courage and bravery for singling out an enemy M/V in a convoy of eleven ships headed for Bizerte. Flying at 200 feet and dodging between a balloon barrage, Lt. Hamilton struck viciously at this ship, scoring direct hits and leaving it a mass of flames. Crippled by flak, he kept his ship up with the formation and when jumped by 3 ME-109's his ace turret gunner, S/Sgt Brunner, went into action with both 50's pumping lead at the oncoming foe. One ME exploded in mid-air, the 2<sup>nd</sup> burst into flames and went down smoking; it was then that enemy fire hit Lt. Hamilton's valiant gunner, wounding him and putting his guns out of action.

*Brunner, Robert M., S/Sgt, gunner*

*Grant, Isaac E., 2Lt, pilot*

*Hamilton, Robert M. "Ham", 1Lt, pilot*

*Haskell, Harris M., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*

*Pettibon, Woodrow W., S/Sgt, bombardier*

Co-pilot Lt. Grant and S/Sgt. Haskell administered first aid to all crew members including themselves; all were hit by this violent enemy action. The ship had 115 bullet and flak holes.

Lt. Hamilton - Foot wound

Lt. Grant - Shoulder wound

S/Sgt Haskell - Chest Wound

S/Sgt Pettibon - Arm wound

S/Sgt Brunner - Eye wound

## March 1943 (continued)

Back over land, "Ham" began to drop behind the flight, but determined to bring his wounded crew in and although hurt himself he kept his "mole" flying. Back over the home base he flew and in spite of the fact that his bomb bay doors were still open and could not be closed, he brought his ship in to a safe landing.

To Lt. Hamilton and his crew the entire group pays high tribute. Few at home will realize what he and his crew went through and how well he did his job. But his brothers-in-arms know and we say "Well done, crew."

The following is a brief resume of the history of the rear ground echelon which left the States on Jan 13 and rejoined this squadron on Feb 28:

2. Under the command of Lt. Thomas W. Barrineau, the detachment left Greenville, S. C. by train on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942 for the overseas staging area at Camp Kilmer, N. J. They arrived here on the next day. The period from Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> to Jan 13<sup>th</sup> (1943) was spent primarily in preparing for overseas. Short leaves of absence were granted. Other than these there were few breaks in the routine.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1943 this detachment left camp for the P of E, New York, traveling there by train, and boarded the John Ericson at 1600 hours on that day. The transport sailed during the early morning hours of the 14<sup>th</sup>.

The voyage across took 12 days. The trip was generally calm and uneventful.

The convoy arrived at Casablanca on Jan 26<sup>th</sup> and disembarked at 0200 hours. It was necessary to march 4 miles to a designated bivouac area where camp was pitched.

From Jan 26<sup>th</sup> to Feb 27<sup>th</sup> usual squadron duties were performed.

On Feb 28<sup>th</sup> the rear echelon departed Gazes airport, Casablanca via army transports (C-47's) and rejoined the rest of the 310<sup>th</sup> Group in combat duties at Berteaux A.A.B., Algeria.

The complete roster of personnel in this detachment are as follows:

Barrineau, Thomas W.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Det. Comdr.
Bailey, Byron C., Jr.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Comm. O.
Canale, Philip M., Jr.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Supply O.
76 Enlisted Men.	

3. The 321<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (M) (B-25's) arrived at Ain M'Lila just a few miles east of this base to take up the work. They came with a full compliment of planes, featuring a tail gun and two waist guns. They should offer the foe an unpleasant surprise in air encounters.

Their first raid was to the E A/D at Mezzouna where they successfully attacked a/C on the ground. According to the communiqués at least 12 were destroyed. They attacked at 3500 feet which is something new for this area, as most attacks have been made from 8000' to 11,000'. They suffered no losses, but rec'd hits from flak. This attack was made on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Since then the weather has been against any flying. But they should do well in future operations.

## March 1943 (continued)

Many of the boys report interesting radio programs from Germany. One feature is "Sally of the Axis". In one of her programs she made the remark that the "President of the U.S. went home after his conference, why didn't the American soldiers go home, but they can't for they are soldiers- Now how can this be true Democracy?" She also states how we laugh over their jokes and enjoy their music. And that we are starving to the point where we are buying up all the Arabs' eggs.

The Group S-2 office has rec'd many commendations over their set-up as an S-2 office. Wing has been especially complimentary. And we have heard that we give the best briefing in this theatre; this may or may not be bull, but some feel that we are trying and doing our best, and this is meeting the approval of those in higher echelons.

A woman news correspondent from the International News Service visited us for a few days and some of our pilots rec'd encouraging remarks from her, with the possibility that their deeds would receive some publicity back home. Miss Robbs seemed very capable of writing up some delightful stories about our group for those in the States.

There are some rumors that the Group is to receive a special citation from the President of the U.S. for its excellent work. This, we hope is true. Certainly our pilots and their crews deserve all of the credit that can be given to them.

4. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March Colonel Hunter announced that certain combat crews would be sent to rest camps for about ten days. Some of the crews went to Ifrane, just SE of Fes and others went to a spot south of Casablanca. All crews left around noon on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Hunter, Anthony G., Col, pilot, 310th BG Commander*

5. The following Officers and Enlisted Men of the 379<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. left for a rest cure on Monday March 15, 1943:

Major Travis (NMI) Hoover, *pilot, Commander*  
Capt. John T. Allan, *pilot*  
Capt. William R. Pound, Jr., *navigator*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert M. "Ham" Hamilton, *pilot*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Donovan W. Rulien, *bombardier*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Charles W. Smith, *pilot*  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Gilbert J. Supple, *bombardier*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Graham C. Beachum, *pilot*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Isaac E. Grant, *pilot*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William C. Hughes,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Bertram J. Leask, *pilot*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Leo (NMI) Lesonik, *pilot*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jack D. Lindh, *pilot*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harry R. Logan, Jr., *pilot*

## March 1943 (continued)

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Howard J. Ross, *bombardier*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Kenneth M. Schlasinger,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Donald M. Smith,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Julius H. Taylor, *pilot*  
T/Sgt. Henry H. Chase, *radio-gunner*  
S/Sgt. Albert F. Dallaire, *gunner*  
S/Sgt. Harris M. Haskell, *radio-gunner*  
S/Sgt. Fred F. Hecks, *gunner*  
S/Sgt. Lester A. Kitzerow, *gunner*  
T/Sgt. Lewis F. Marple, *radio-gunner*  
S/Sgt. Stanley J. Kida, *gunner*  
S/Sgt Salvatore A. Pagano, *gunner*  
S/Sgt. Woodrow W. Pettibon, *bombardier*  
S/Sgt. Joseph (NMI) Rabinowitz, *gunner*  
Sgt. Walter I Sundstrom, *gunner*  
S/Sgt. Thomas Valentic, Jr., *radio-gunner*

6. The following officers, flight officers, and enlisted men joined this squadron on March \_\_\_\_\_ as replacements:

2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Donald C. Biggs	Bombardier
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harold E. Rogers	Pilot
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ellis A. Ruppelt	Co-pilot
F/O. Raymond C. Bloesel	Pilot
F/O. Leslie T. Crozier	Co-pilot
F/O. Frank H. Eaton	Co-pilot
F/O. Donovan S. Wall	Pilot
S/Sgt. Max F. Broadbent	Radio Operator
Sgt. Gerald E. Gulette	Gunner
S/Sgt. Gilbert F. Henderson	Bombardier
S/Sgt. Juan ( <i>NMI</i> ) Ramos	Gunner
S/Sgt. Mieras A. VanDam	Radio Operator
S/Sgt. George T. Wilson	Radio Operator
Sgt. Harry T. Waldrip	Gunner
S/Sgt. Carl L. Yager	Radio Operator

While the old crews went on their “rest cure”, O.T.U. training was carried out for the new crews.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, old crews returned and missions were resumed. Targets at Grombalia, Tunisia and a sea search mission were flown by the end of the month.

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, initial drives were started by the VIII<sup>th</sup> Army toward Gabes and the American Army from Gafsa. By Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>, the English had occupied Gabes. The American Army was well beyond El Guettar.

Thus ends the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of 379<sup>th</sup> Activities on the African front.

## March 1943 (continued)

### 380<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943:

1 March 1943

#### THE TAIL END CHARLIES

A month after the ground echelon had left Greenville for parts unknown, the “tail end charlies”, the rear echelon, were still sitting tight, waiting for orders. Lieut. Ross V. Seeton, Squadron Armament Officer, had taken over the duties of the commanding officer, and minor details and guard duty occupied most of the time.

*Seeton, Ross V., Jr., Capt, Armament Officer, Acting Commander*

Finally the order came through and off we went, leaving Greenville on November 21 and arriving at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey on November 23. Here drill proved our most arduous duty, but 24 hour passes for trips to New York, Philadelphia and Washington, helped to break the monotony. A minor epidemic of “absent without leave” broke out after a two weeks period, and although it was slight in nature, one man was left behind when the orders came through for us to leave.

January 13<sup>th</sup>, found us starting our great adventure. At Camp Kilmer we boarded a train and found New York City our destination. Late the same night we climbed aboard the former Swedish liner, “John Erricson” and early the next morning the steady throbbing informed us that we were finally under way. Twelve uneventful days were spent aboard ship and finally on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month the shoreline of Africa, greeted us.

Bivouac Area #1, located three miles from Casablanca, proved our camping ground for a thirty-four day period and then news came that soon we would be seeing the rest of the “gang.” Army transports, C-47’s were waiting in line for us at the Casablanca Airport on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of February and we loaded up, leaving but eight men behind to drive the motor convoy through.

The following came to Berteaux by air:

Lieuts. Ross V. Seeton, Elmer N. Carlson, Francis L. Mathews and John Summerfield.

Tech Sergeants Edwin C. Talley; Staff Sergeant George M. Felshaw; and Sergeants Joseph W. Driesbauch, William T. Hankins, Kenneth W. Howells, John H. Mohwinkel, Harold Nelson, Russell R. Palmer, Sidney L. Robinson, Robert M. Schaffler Jr., Donald K. Soderlund and Arthur W., Studyvin.

Corporals Otto C. Bruhlman, Stanley R. Crossman, Frederick S. Davidson, William R. Eckert, Joseph E. Fahey, Ray Johnson, Berton Mooney, William Moore, Robert L. Palmer, Eric E. Swanson, and Walter Wojcicki.

## March 1943 (continued)

Privates First Class, Lloyd Coblak, Stephen Collins, Durward W. Foster, Warren W. Haddock, Alois J. LaPlant, Herman F. Riemke, Joseph E. Rozewicz, Jack Spiegle and Stanley Thurman.

Privates George Ash, Howard Baumgartner Jr., Thomas J. Butler Jr., Vernon L. Carter, Charles E. Clatterbuck, Edward C. Cook, Myron J. Dise, Anthony R. Fink, Frank A. Furtado, William M. Hamm, George J. Huska, Abe Koren, R.L. (*i.o.*) Loy, Raymond A. Lysowski, Timothy J. Malloy, Alvin D. Martinets, Robert Motherwell, John Omana, Harry E. Piercy, Robert F. Potter, Leander J. Prella, Fred Richards, Sam L. Riggins, Virtner J. Roberts, Stanley I. Sawning, Henry I. Schmoll, George Schlayer, Warren Shelton, Dennis O. Taylor, Herbert J. Weilly, Levi Wiikus, Charles Strohl, Wayne Housken, John T. VanWinkle and Adolph Tovrog.

A six hour trip across the top of Africa greeted us although two of the planes stayed over night half way through the trip, and reported the following morning. Hardy handshakes, pats on the back greeted us on all sides and soon we were to work once again, pitching tents, unpacking and digging shelter trenches.

On the morning of March 6, 1943, the entire squadron was joined together for the first time since August 28<sup>th</sup>, seven long months, when the motor convoy arrived to the Base. It was composed of the following men:

Privates first class Walter E. Rogers, Howard P. Atkins, Eugene Lewis, Joe M. Ortiz, and Homer L. Roberts. Privates Eddie A. Alvino, George Riedl and Robert T. Silliman. Sgt. Gen Underwood, due to illness, was left in the American Hospital at Casablanca.



## March 1943 (continued)

### 381<sup>st</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943:

#### ENGLAND-NORTH AFRICA

Group Mission # 59

Squadron Mission # 38

The following Combat Crews were given credit for one complete Combat Mission, representing their flight from England to North Africa. These flights took place between 27 December 1942 and 28 February 1943.

<b>A/C No. 41-13084 "DID N DIDN'T"</b> (12/2742)	<b>A/C No. 41-13093</b> (12/2742)
<b>P</b> <i>Ferguson, Ivan L., Maj</i>	<i>Alexander, William T. "Alex", Capt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Crump, Walter P. "Bitsy", 1Lt</i>	<i>Cox, Robert A., 1Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>Gollnitz, Frederick C., 1Lt</i>	<b>B</b> <i>Pickett, Perry D., Capt</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Kelley, Donald C., T/Sgt</i>	<i>McHarge, James Hayes, T/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>Arnold, Clyde L., M/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>	<i>Hartsock, Jack W., M/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Ough, James A., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Brink, Robert W., Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Neff, Richard L., Sgt</i>	<i>Windham, Duke Green, Jr., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>A/C No. 41-13062 "POTCH-A-GALOO"</b> (12/2742)	<b>A/C No. 41-13061 "LIL' JOE"</b> (12/2742)
<b>P</b> <i>Linden, Eric O., 1Lt</i>	<i>Thorndike, Robert W., 1Lt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Jackson, William C., 2Lt</i>	<i>Lewis, Kenneth E., 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Caron, John B., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Daly, Donald J., T/Sgt</i>
<b>E</b> <i>Porter, Ellis L., T/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>	<i>Sousa, Alfred E., T/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Krasovec, William F., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Boone, Edward W. W., Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Hughes, Albert (NMI), S/Sgt</i>	<i>Molnar, William J., S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>Kinney, Wallace H., S/Sgt (AE)</i>	<i>Miller, Foster Eugene, T/Sgt (AE)</i>
<b>A/C No. 41-13074 "BALLS OF FIRE"</b> / <b>"ROYAL FLUSH"</b> (12/2742)	<b>A/C No. 41-13102 "GREEN EYES"</b> ( <b>Pancho</b> under CP window) (12/2742)
<b>P</b> <i>Phillips, Carl A., 1Lt</i>	<i>Eddy, Leonard A., Capt</i>
<b>CP</b> <i>Schrupp, Elwin F., 2Lt</i>	<i>Hawkins, Frank B. "Pancho", 2Lt</i>
<b>N</b> <i>None</i>	<i>Katzenbach, Nicholas D., 1Lt</i>
<b>B</b> <i>Myers, John H., 1Lt</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>E</b> <i>Snyder, Earl L., S/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>	<i>Schutkeesting, Eugene H., T/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i>
<b>R</b> <i>Nickelson, Royal C., T/Sgt</i>	<i>Taylor, Milo K., Sgt</i>
<b>G</b> <i>Kiel, William H., S/Sgt</i>	<i>Schave, Henry Lloyd, S/Sgt</i>
<b>F</b> <i>O'Brien, Paul W., S/Sgt (AE)</i>	<i>Johnson, Floyd L., T/Sgt (AE)</i>

## March 1943 (continued)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13073 “VAR ARIEN”</b> (12/23/42)</p> <p><b>P</b> <i>Hinman, Harvey H., Maj, HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG</i></p> <p><b>CP</b> <i>Szczygiel, Joseph F., 2Lt</i></p> <p><b>N</b> <i>Green, William B., Capt</i></p> <p><b>B</b> <i>None</i></p> <p><b>E</b> <i>Daniels, Sam G., M/Sgt, HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><b>R</b> <i>LaPorte, Frank R., T/Sgt</i></p> <p><b>G</b> <i>Massengale, Jack T., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><b>F</b> <i>Michel, Norbert R., S/Sgt (AE)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13090</b> (1/15/43)</p> <p><b>P</b> <i>Martin, Robert W., 1Lt</i></p> <p><b>CP</b> <i>Sindelar, Emil Edward, 2Lt</i></p> <p><b>N</b> <i>Schick, Raymond E., 1Lt</i></p> <p><b>B</b> <i>Same as Navigator</i></p> <p><b>E</b> <i>Stanton, Robert J., Cpl (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><b>R</b> <i>Bush, Donald W., Sgt</i></p> <p><b>G</b> <i>Thomas, John P., Cpl</i></p> <p><b>F</b> <i>Mohr, Ralph C., S/Sgt</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13075</b> (2/5/43)</p> <p><b>P</b> <i>Atkinson, Fred M., 1Lt</i></p> <p><b>CP</b> <i>Hartley, John R., 2Lt</i></p> <p><b>N</b> <i>None</i></p> <p><b>B</b> <i>None</i></p> <p><b>E</b> <i>Sandstead, Earl S., S/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><b>R</b> <i>Blaschko, Lambert J., T/Sgt</i></p> <p><b>G</b> <i>Smith, James F., Sgt</i></p> <p><b>F</b> <i>Nelson, Frederick U., S/Sgt</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13092</b> (2/15/43)</p> <p><b>P</b> <i>Carver, Joseph H., 1Lt</i></p> <p><b>CP</b> <i>Therrien, Robert W., 2Lt</i></p> <p><b>N</b> <i>None</i></p> <p><b>B</b> <i>Dombkowski, Stanley F., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><b>E</b> <i>Dawson, Wade D., T/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><b>R</b> <i>Szymik, Emil (NMI), Pvt</i></p> <p><b>G</b> <i>Kim, Daniel (NMI), S/Sgt</i></p> <p><b>F</b> <i>Bartlett, Richard E., S/Sgt (AE)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13052 “TABOO”</b> (12/30/42)</p> <p><i>VanDivort, Richard (NMI), 1Lt</i></p> <p><i>Wightman, Henry B. “Hank”, 2Lt</i></p> <p><b>B</b> <i>Wilson, Francis E., 2Lt</i></p> <p><i>Smith, Willie A., T/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>McGary, John E., M/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><i>Chaffins, Ray (NMI), S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Nelson, Forest S., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>None</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13086</b> (1/16/43)</p> <p><i>Kearns, Archibald G., 1Lt</i></p> <p><i>Rouch, Melvin R., 1Lt</i></p> <p><i>None</i></p> <p><i>Grossi, Frank L., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Magouirk, Tillman R., S/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><i>Elder, Donald W., Cpl</i></p> <p><i>Moberg, Edward (NMI), S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Campbell, Warren B., S/Sgt (AE)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13065</b> (2/8/43)</p> <p><i>Wert, Donald S., 1Lt</i></p> <p><i>Marlow, Jack F., 2Lt</i></p> <p><i>None</i></p> <p><i>Rogers, Lee C., Cpl</i></p> <p><i>Rumeau, Henry J., M/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><i>Dittmar, Francis A., Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Bowden, Scott T., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Frederickson, (AE)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A/C No. 41-13085</b> (2/28/43)</p> <p><i>Coddington, Walter E., 1Lt</i></p> <p><i>Ramsey, Thomas Upton, 2Lt</i></p> <p><i>None</i></p> <p><i>Hartzell, James J., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Rennicks, Charles E., M/Sgt (Crew Chief)</i></p> <p><i>Thomas, Quentin W., S/Sgt</i></p> <p><i>Moxey, Orville E., Sgt</i></p> <p><i>None</i></p>
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## March 1943 (continued)

In describing the arrival of March, the proverbial axiom that it either comes in like a lion or goes out like a lamb, did not hold, as the weather continued to be cold and windy, with frequent showers which kept the ground perpetually damp and soggy. Very few missions were flown because of the weather, and also because the Combat Crews were sent for a rest.

One morning in the second week of March a fleet of C-47's departed from Berteaux, with all of the 310<sup>th</sup>'s Combat Crew members who had participated in 5 or more missions. They were bound for a rest camp high in the mountains of Morocco, near the Sultan's summer palace.

Besides the luxury of bedrooms with private baths and running water, the rest camp, which was formerly one of the best summer Hotels in North Africa, had many large public rooms, and lots of amusements. The food was strictly G.I., but a clever French cook disguised it with almost complete success. Diversions were plentiful: bicycle riding, boar hunting, trout fishing and trips into Fez and Meknes daily by bus.

In about ten days the combat crews arrived back at Berteaux much refreshed and ready to fly again.

First Lieutenants Campbell and Kindar were promoted to Captains, and Second Lieutenant Goyer was promoted to First Lieutenant. First Lieutenant Eric O. Linden was transferred to the North African Training Command of the North West African Strategic Air Force. Stated more simply, he was transferred to Casablanca for the purpose of becoming an O.T.U. Instructor. Corporal Ralph Jones was also transferred.

*Campbell, Ivan R., Capt, Adjutant*

*Goyer, Peter F., 1Lt*

*Jones, Ralph W., Cpl, orderly room clerk*

*Kindar, Adam A., Capt, surgeon*

*Linden, Eric O., 1Lt, pilot*

Answering a call from the 47<sup>th</sup> Wing for clerks to go on temporary detail, Corporal Jones departed one morning, heavily laden in the traditional manner. That was the twelfth of the month. Finally after he had been gone from the Squadron for about three weeks, word was received that, having been given a choice of returning to the Squadron, or of remaining with Wing, Jones had made a lamentable choice in favor of the latter. Why, nobody knew, and everyone was tired of guessing by the time they finally found out. One day while in Constantine, several Enlisted Men met Jones. He was in an exceedingly happy frame of mind, his natural good nature obviously having been enhanced by liberal applications of good Algerian wine (he would drink nothing but the best) which must have been given him by one of his newly found companions, as the thought of parting with even one centime is a process which would have caused the good Corporal profound mental anguish. "Why", he was asked, "did you forsake the 381<sup>st</sup>?" "Because", replied Corporal Jones, munching a candied date which had been proffered by one of his questioners, "because of the Cuisine."

*Jones, Ralph W., Cpl, orderly room clerk*

### March 1943 (continued)

Jones' answer was long and enthusiastic, each point being illustrated with gestures, in the manner of an excited Frenchman. He outlined the perfections of Wing's Mess --- perfections the chief virtues of which were their ability to satiate his colossal appetite. Among other advantages which he went on to enumerate, were pyramidal tents which were furnished with real beds and the beds were equipped with sheets. (It has since been determined that the latter was an exaggeration). Frequent passes into Constantine were mentioned, and beautiful Mademoiselles hinted at. Throughout the conversation, Colonels and other high ranking Officers were referred to --- apparently the Corporal was going places.....

Finally, his friends were able to inject a question into the conversation. "What kind of a job did you get, Ralph?" "Oh!" he replied, as he turned to start down the street, "I'm a permanent K.P. in the Officers' Mess."

Thus one of the Squadron's most colorful and amusing characters had been seduced by luxury, and had forsaken his friends. No longer would his strident baritone split the silence of the Algerian night with the melody of "Amapola", or the bizarre eccentricities carefully perpetrated, amuse the entire personnel for days on end.

About the middle of the month, two more Combat crews flew in from England, in ships piloted by Lt. Carver and Lt. Coddington. Also, four new Combat crews arrived to take the place of those who were missing in action.

*Carver, Joseph H., 1Lt, pilot*

*Coddington, Walter E., 1Lt, pilot*

As a result of the efforts of Chaplain and Lt. Karosen, a new Recreation Room and bar were opened for the Enlisted Men on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March. For some time they had been looking at the large grain warehouse which was the residence of the Combat crews. Upon consultation with Captain Cole, the Group Weather Officer, it was determined that despite the almost constant drizzle of rain, the worst of the bad weather was over, and it would be advisable for the Combat crews to sleep out of doors, in pyramidal tents. Within a few days the two large rooms of the grain warehouse were empty. The first decorations to appear were stencils on the wall, depicting Mitchells and Spitfires. Soon a bar was installed, with facilities for handling beer kegs. Next, tables and wicker chairs were purchased, and then a piano and radio. The entire project was a grand success. Two nights per week movies were shown, and on the other nights beer was served. Each Friday evening, the 209<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Band came to give a concert in the court yard. Afterwards, the "Jive" experts in the band would remain for a "Jam Session." The orchestra members, professional musicians in civilian life, could really dish it out. Their swing was delivered with a smooth expertness characteristic of only a few top name organizations. The audience really went wild when they beat out "one O'clock Jump", "In the Mood" or "Basin Street Blues." At nine o'clock, exhausted, they would pack their equipment and leave.

*Cole, Frederick J., Capt, Group Weather Officer*

*Karosen, Leon (NMI), 2Lt, Asst Adjutant, Special Services Officer, HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG*

*Poynton, Walter J., Capt, Catholic Chaplain, HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG*

## March 1943 (continued)

When the Combat Crews moved in pyramidal tents, the Officers did likewise, moving out of the upstairs portion of the Headquarters building. The large room which they had occupied was transformed into a new Officers' Club. The radio and the metal bar were moved in, and in addition, some tables and wicker chairs were secured. It was a very nice set-up as far as its facilities were concerned, but the Enlisted Men's Recreation Room and Bar had far more to offer, especially the 209<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Jam Sessions on Friday nights. Finally the Officers began to learn what they had been missing, and thereafter the Jam Sessions for the Enlisted Men would end at 20:30 hours, and continue in the Officers' Club until the musician became too exhausted to blow another note.

During March, the 381<sup>st</sup> engaged in nine missions, with a loss of one plane, Lt. Schrupp's, with a total of two Officers and three Enlisted Men. 32,400 pounds of bombs were dropped, and no Enemy A/C were shot down.

*Schrupp, Elwin F., 1Lt, pilot*

The following commendation received with enthusiasm and appreciation by every member of the Group is self explanatory.

### S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS 47<sup>th</sup> WING  
APO 520

12 March 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, New London.  
Commanding Officer, 82<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group, New Jersey.

1. The Wing Commander and Staff of the 47<sup>th</sup> Wing are exceptionally pleased to pass on the following message and are fully cognizant of the splendid work of you and your organizations:

“Reported results against shipping seven March are most excellent. My congratulations to all who participated.”  
(signed) SPATTZ.

“Desire to add my congratulations and appreciation.”  
(signed) DOOLITTLE.

By order of Colonel RIDENOUR:

J. C. CROSTHWAITE,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Chief of Staff

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## March 1943 (continued)

1<sup>st</sup> Ind.

HQ, 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M), AAF, New London, 17 March 1943. To: All Personnel of Group Headquarters, 379<sup>th</sup>, 380<sup>th</sup>, 381<sup>st</sup> and 428<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons (M), AAF

1. I am happy indeed to pass on to each and every member of this Command this commendation which you so justly deserve.

2. Your job has been a tough one, under adverse conditions and trying circumstances; but all of these have been met and overcome by your will to win regardless of such conditions or circumstances. For this I am extremely proud of each and everyone of you and happy to be a member of such an organization.

ANTHONY G. HUNTER,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

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### THE SOUTHERN ROUTE TO AFRICA

By Captain James Hickman, *navigator*

Finally that great day arrived, and amid last minute packing, frantic hunting of dogs, the first replacements for the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were loaded into trucks for the first phase of their trip to combat.

Beautiful women aren't beautiful when they cry. Amid pathetic last farewells, two coaches hooked to the slowest train in the South, and we really were on our way.

Early in the morning of 29 January 43, we were told that we could enjoy the smoke filled atmosphere of Cincinnati. One would have thought Germans were expected to attack at any moment from the look of the artillery packed by the men. Maybe the good people of Cincinnati were reminded with quite a jar that a war was going on when they viewed our dirty unshaved, well armed beings.

Have you ever seen the "Purple Cow"? Have you ever relaxed in an over stuffed chair, read the smutty little quips on the wall; listened to the latest on the Juke-Box, and ordered waffles?

Runt and Deacon and Skippy, the three pint size pups of the expedition were paraded, petted, admired, and fed. Then, with minutes to spare, we boarded the train.

## March 1943 (continued)

Somewhere on the last leg of our journey, a car was added to the train and filled with pastry faced admiring draftees. We, the nearly finished trained fighting men, and they the men looking forward to being trained. Worlds apart, and lots in common. We wondered how much they would have given to have been in our shoes, and we in turn would not have traded places with them for anything in the world.

Snow and more snow, wet feet, and cold bitten ears and faces. The remark that "If I ever get South of the Florida - Georgia line, so help me, I will never venture North again. Tales of miss-haps in crossings, and secret talks by well informed officers, these were the wonders of Kellogg Field.

Assignment of planes, frantic loading in wind and snow, finally the right moment, and each plane took off to fly its own way to Morrison Field. The Greenville Army Air Base seemed to be on the direct course between Kellogg and Morrison. Wonder how many of our planes did a final buzz-job?

Good eats, expensive hotels and many phone calls from our loved ones greeted us in West Palm Beach.

Confusion, last minute final preparations, gathering of maps and briefing greeted our happy little group at Morrison.

Lieutenant Katz, a man of excellent leadership ability, organized us and finally on 13 February 43, our six ships were on their way across the brilliant blue water of the Gulf Stream to Borinquen Field. Long will the excellent Planter's Punches, the good food and poor milk shakes remain in our memory. Borinquen would be an excellent place to be stationed after the war is over, that is if one would have to be stationed outside of the United States.

*Katz, William P., 2Lt, Personnel Officer*

Clear skies and miles of tropical water. The best ships in the world--- "Lottie's Goose" and her mates winged southward to cross over the eastern edge of Trinidad, and burst right into the wall like appearing mass of cumulo-nimbus clouds that formed the much dreaded "Stagnant tropical front". Detours here and there, and again we admired our leader for carefully planning our formation, with instructions for just such weather, and for his pleasant little quips over the radio, as he checked for our safety.

Further South each day, and a fleeting glimpse of Devil's Island at 10,000 feet, wonderment at the vastness of the mouth of the largest river in the world. A large island, sparsely studded with trees and thickly scattered herds of cattle. We had crossed the equator and were on our approach to Belem. Belem will remain in our memories because of the pungent smell of its newly constructed barracks, and its wide selection of tropical fruits. South American grape and tomato juice is good, and the Officers' Club was able to furnish enough, even to satisfy our terrific thirst.

## March 1943 (continued)

Arrived at Natal amid the usual shower, and for the first time our formation was broken up when an A-20 Group made a rat race of the landing pattern.

21 February brought Roberts Field in view and at last we landed in Africa.

Negroes, who worked for twenty cents a day shocked us by demanding a dollar for carrying our bags; we were being prepared for the crafty Arab.

Roberts Field sent our small formation on its way with a good breakfast, and the idea that we would be the first to land at Dakar.

22 February brought Dakar. Foul smells, nasty people and brother--you really are in Africa.

“Lottie’s Goose” took her separate way, leading five A-20’s across the desert. A bad scare with carburetor icing, a thrilling trip through mountain passes, a night spent in Marrakech and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February we arrived in Casablanca.

At La Senia they impressed us with unconcern as to our well being, our importance in this war. They stole our equipment, they froze our men, they gave us useless lectures, filled our ears full of thrilling bosh and in general made us so glad to leave on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March that Major Pell looked like an angel.

*Pell, Robert T., Maj, HQ 310<sup>th</sup> BG*

No accidents, a nice trip, an old experienced battle-wise outfit to join, and we were the first replacements to the 381<sup>st</sup> Squadron of the 310<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

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## March 1943 (continued)

**428<sup>th</sup> BS War Diary: Additional Information for March 1943: None**