

12th Air Force, 57th Bombardment Wing
310th Bombardment Group
History: December 1943



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

*"Lil Dutch"
John T. Fitzgerald, SMOgt, U. S. Air Force (retired)*

12th Air Force, 57th Bombardment Wing

310th Bombardment Group

History: December 1943

The following is a compilation of the 310th 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 310th 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 to correctly identify every man and plane assigned to the 310th 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 310th BG Hero, please contact me at: Lil-Butch@nc.rr.com

Special Thanks to Very Special Folks

Agostino Alberti: Professor - historian (Soncino, Italy)

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

Jack Brellenthin, great nephew of: Harold Ray Brellenthin, 2Lt, pilot, 446th BS

Cecile Burandt, daughter of: Charles Lawson "Chuck" Burandt, Capt, pilot, 446th BS

Sally Brown, daughter of: Barnard H. Seegmiller, Sgt, armament, 445th BS

Dave Charville, grandson of: Leighton Daniel "Danny" Charville, 1Lt, pilot, 445th BS

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

1Lt Robert S. Crouse: pilot, 379BS

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

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

Ed Haney, cousin of: Gale Monroe Dickson, Capt, pilot, 446th BS

Special Thanks to Very Special Folks (continued)

Jim Hawkins, son of: Frank B. "Pancho" Hawkins, 2Lt, pilot, 381st BS
John Hughes, son of: John Jerome "Jack" Hughes, 1Lt, bombardier, 446th BS
Patti Johnson: genealogist, proofer, and family friend of: James Raymond Orechia,
T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 446th BS
Don Kaiser, son of: Quentin C. Kaiser, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 489th BS
John Lanza, nephew of: William A. Lanza, Sgt, gunner, 446th BS
Stephanie Lile, daughter of: Keith B. Lile, S/Sgt, gunner, 445th BS
1st Lt Joseph A. Malec: bombardier, 448th BS and friend of: Vernon Curtis Dossey, Capt,
pilot, 448th BS
Vince Mango, son of: Vincent A. "Vince" Mango, S/Sgt, aerial gunner, 447th BS
John J. McCarthy: Sgt, engineer-gunner, bombardier, 447th BS
Lorraine McRae, daughter of: James Arrington McRae, 1Lt, bombardier, 446th BS
T/Sgt Rocco F. "Rocky" Milano & daughter Peggy Chatham: Crew Chief of Peg O' My
Heart, Lil Butch, and Haulin' Ass, 446th BS
Bob Ritger, nephew of: Frederic Charles Ritger, 1Lt, pilot, 446th BS
Irving J. Schaffer: T/Sgt, radio-gunner, photographer, 448th BS
1st Lt Frederick H. Smith: pilot, 447th BS
Marsha Gurnee Suszan, daughter of: Clarence E. "Shine" Gurnee, S/Sgt, gunner,
448th BS
Dominique Taddei: author, U.S.S. Corsica (Corsica)
S/Sgt George B. Underwood: gunner, 381st BS
David Waldrip, nephew of: Robert Laseter Waldrip, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 447th BS
Vinny J. White, son of: Joseph P. White, T/Sgt, radio-gunner, 381st BS
S/Sgt, Harry (NMI) Yoa: engineer-gunner, 445th BS

Crew lists

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

Note: for 381st BS: 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-21 W-23 X-24
Y-25 Z-26

Acronyms & Abbreviations

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

CQ: Charge of Quarters
C/S: Call Sign
CWS: Chemical Warfare Service
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.F.F.: Identification, Friend or Foe
(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

R/J: Road Junction
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
S-1: Administration

S-2: Intelligence
S-3: Operations
S-4: Supply
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

L/V: Large Vehicle
LST: Landing Ship Tank

Ltr: Letter
LWA: Lightly Wounded in Action
MACR: Missing Air Crew Report
MATS: Military Air Transport Service

Very Pistol or Verey Pistol: Flare gun
VOCO: Verbal Order of the Commanding Officer
WC: Water closet
W.O.: Warrant Officer
WIA: Wounded In Action
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.)

Wednesday, 1 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): B-25's bomb gun positions in the Sant' Ambrogio area; fighter-bombers, including some Royal Air Force (RAF), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and South African Air Force (SAAF) aircraft, hit trucks, gun positions, and other military targets E of Casoli, at Lanciano, near Guardiagrele, W of Mignano, W of Minturno, and near Chieti. Several of these missions are in support of the US Fifth and British Eighth Armies. During the month of Dec 43, HQ XII Bomber Command transfers from Tunis, Tunisia to Bari, Italy. HQ 52nd Fighter Group and its 5th Fighter Squadron transfer from Boccadifalco and Bo Rizzo, Sicily respectively to Corsica with Spitfires.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 1 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Day after payday, and the usual rush for passes to town.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Wednesday, 1 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Work commenced on the Enlisted Men's mess hall.

Enlisted Men's promotions made 1 new T/Sgt., 1 Sgt., 4 Cpls. and 5 Pfc's.

2nd Lt. James T. Edwards and S/Sgts. J.C. Hughes, R.W. Fleming and R.J. Fox were assigned to the Squadron today.

Edwards, James T., 2Lt, pilot

Fleming, Robert W., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Fox, Robert J., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Hughes, James C., S/Sgt, radio-gunner

428th BS War Diary: The unit was busily engaged in practice bombing and formation flying exercises. The boys are rusty. Something seems to be impending.

Thursday, 2 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): B-25's, A-20's, and RAF light bombers support ground forces in the Monte Trocchio area, and other B-25's, A-20's, and RAF and SAAF airplanes support ground forces near Sant' Ambrogio; more B-25's hit bridge and approaches near Chieti; fighters strafe trucks and trains while fighter-bombers blast gun positions along the US Fifth and British Eighth Army fronts, and hit harbors and shipping along the Yugoslav coast at or near Omis, Drvenicki, Trogir, Vrbnik, and Ston.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 2 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: A cold night, but stoves (self-made) kept the boys warm in their tents.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Thursday, 2 December 1943(continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The following new personnel were assigned to the Squadron today: 2nd Lts: B.H. Adams, I.B. Akst, W.H. Branum, G.T. Black, J.W. Brett, W.A. Callery, I.S. Clark, E. (NMI) Dorman, F.R. Eaton, D.G. Foote, J.W. Gilluly, G.J. Grim, J.J. Innis, R.F. Killian, R.C. Kienitz, J.G. Kresge, S.J. Larkin, J.W. Lemmer, R.W. Letsinger, R.A. McLaughlin, F.L. Riederer, W. (NMI) Uhl, Jr., A. (NMI) Vlahon, A.E. Vosburgh, Jr., and D.A. Whitcomb; S/Sgts: I.H. Berzon, R.A. Biebighauser, H.W. Campbell, P.C. Cardimino, M.D. Drotts, J.L. Gatlin, R.H. Gordon, J.A. Heaney, S.E. Hodnett, C.A. Holler, A. Kovalchick, J.F. Leist, M.M. Levine, P.W. Ochs, H.O. Wright, H. L. Zittel, and T.A. Zoll; Sgts: A.J. Burgess, R.L. Gifford, W. (NMI) Goldyn, K.E. Phipps, M.J. Rennie, G.B. Underwood, and J.P. Williams; and Pvt. J.J. Farrell.

Adams, Benjamin H., Jr., 2Lt, pilot *Akst, Irving B., 2Lt, pilot*
Berzon, Isadore H., S/Sgt, radio-gunner *Biebighauser, Roy A., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*
Black, Glenn T., 2Lt, pilot *Branum, William Henry, 2Lt, pilot*
Brett, James W., 2Lt, pilot *Burgess, Archie J., Sgt, engineer-gunner*
Callery, William F., 2Lt, navigator
Campbell, Herbert William, S/Sgt, engineer-gunner
Cardimino, Peter C., S/Sgt, turret-gunner *Clark, Isaac S., 2Lt, pilot*
Dorman, Edgar (NMI) "Bud", 2Lt, pilot *Drotts, Marshall D., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*
Eaton, Frank R., 2Lt, pilot *Farrell, John J., Pvt, bombardier-gunner*
Foote, Douglas G., 2Lt, pilot, navigator *Gatlin, Jack L., S/Sgt, gunner*
Gifford, Richard L., Sgt, gunner *Gilluly, John W., 2Lt, pilot*
Goldyn, Walter (NMI), Sgt, gunner *Gordon, Robert H., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*
Grim, Gresham J., 2Lt, bombardier *Heaney, James A., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*
Hodnett, Stephen E., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner
Hollar, Cecil A., S/Sgt, radio-gunner *Innis, John J., 2Lt, pilot*
Kienitz, Richard Carlton "Dick", 2Lt, navigator
Killian, Robert Faherty, 2Lt, pilot
Kovalchick, Alexander (NMI) "Alex", S/Sgt, radio-gunner
Kresge, James G., 2Lt, navigator *Larkin, Storey J., 2Lt, pilot*
Leist, Jacob F., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner *Lemmer, John W., 2Lt, pilot*
Letsinger, Ralph W., 2Lt, *Levine, Meyer M., S/Sgt, radio-gunner*
McLaughlin, Robert A., 1Lt, pilot *Ochs, Percy W., S/Sgt, turret-gunner*
Phipps, Kermit E., Sgt, gunner *Rennie, Melvin S., Sgt, gunner*
Riederer, Floyd L., Jr., 2Lt, pilot *Uhl, Walter (NMI), Jr., 2Lt, pilot*
Underwood, George B. "Woody", Sgt, gunner
Vlahon, Arthur (NMI), 2Lt, bombardier *Vosburgh, Albert E., Jr., 2Lt, pilot*
Whitcomb, Donald A., 2Lt, *Williams, James P., Sgt, engineer-gunner*
Wright, Hobert O., Sgt, radio-gunner *Zittel, Howard L., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner*
Zoll, Thaddeus A., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

428th BS War Diary: Official orders to move us to Corsica were aired today. Three echelons, as usual, were established. A hurried move seemed in the offing.

Friday, 3 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): The Twelfth Air Force transfers its entire II Air Service Area Command with all of its subordinate units to the Fifteenth Air Force, where it shortly becomes the XV Air Force Service Command. This is a major step toward making the Fifteenth a separate, self-sufficient air force. B-25's bomb harbor and marshalling yard at Sibenik, Yugoslavia.

In Italy, fighter-bombers, along with RAF Desert Air Force (DAF) airplanes, hit tanks and trucks in the Guardiagrele-Lanciano areas. Other fighter-bombers attack a vessel at Sibenik, Yugoslavia and vehicles and trains N of Rome. Anzio and Nettuno, Italy are also bombed. The 2nd Fighter Squadron, 52nd Fighter Group, transfers from Boccadifalco, Sicily to Corsica with Spitfires.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Some men were transferred to a Bombardment Group in Italy and will no doubt see plenty of action.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Christmas packages are coming in great profusion, with the result that S/Sgt. Zeiss is a very busy man. They are filled with fruitcake, cookies, candy and personal items. One quart of Scotch got through the censors, and is tormenting the willpower of the Sergeant who received it. If his luck holds out, he will have it for Christmas.

Zeiss, Fredrik W., S/Sgt, mail clerk

The Enlisted Men's Mess Hall was ready in time for the evening meal. It has a new interior arrangement. Tables with benches stretch down its center from one end to the other, while shelves have been put around the side walls to accommodate the overflow. Those eating at the shelves must stand.

The Communications Department installed a public address system in the area. Its control panel is located in the Orderly Room, from whence one may throw his voice over the entire Squadron. Additional speakers were installed on the line and in the mess hall. The first broadcast was dedicated to Pvt. Dick Wong, whose honorable presence was desired in the Orderly Room.

Wong, Dick C., Pvt,

Training Program: Nine ships flew practice runs in formation.

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Saturday, 4 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): The Second Cairo conference, Operation SEXTANT, opens and lasts until 6 Dec. President Franklin D Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston S Churchill, and President is met Inonu of Turkey attend. Churchill discusses the possibility of Turkey entering the war; the plan for the amphibious assault in the Bay of Bengal is cancelled; a tentative timetable is set up for Pacific offensive; and a unified Command is established in the Mediterranean effective 10 Dec. Weather grounds Twelfth Air Force elements of Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF). The 4th Fighter Squadron, 52nd Fighter Group, transfers from Boccadifalco, Sicily to Corsica with Spitfires.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 4 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 4 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Many Xmas packages started to arrive, with a noticeable uplift in the men's morale!

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 3

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Saturday, 4 December 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified

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379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The C.Q. awakened us before dawn with a broadcast over the P.A. System. He announced that breakfast would be served in 15 minutes, and by way of persuasion added the menu: Dried apricots, fresh fried eggs and bacon, bread and coffee. Not a bad way to get us out of bet. Not bad at all.

Saturday, 4 December 1943 (continued)

The following Combat Personnel, members of B-25-C crews, were transferred to the 68th Reconnaissance Group: 1st Lt. M.C. Hanna; 2nd Lts: C.J. Sautter, R.L. Sheets, D.B. Warren, R.C. Wahl and C.A. Young; F/O L.C. Mitchell; T/Sgts.: A.F. Fiumecel, J.R. Pelkey, M.L. Shapiro; S/Sgts.: J.R. Blackshire, C.F. Camagna, J.K. Doty and G.R. Trevethan; Sgts, E.J. DeCastro and R.E. Frazier; Cpls. D.L. Hinds and, B.E. Howell; and Pvt. R.W. Buckner.

<i>Blackshire, Joseph R., S/Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Buckner, Roy W., PFC, turret-gunner</i>
<i>Camagna, Celest F., S/Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>DeCastro, Emil J., PFC, bombardier-gunner</i>
<i>Doty, James K., Sgt, bombardier-gunner</i>	<i>Fiumecel, Albert F., T/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>
<i>Frazier, Robert E., Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Hanna, Malcolm C., 1Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Hinds, Donald L., PFC, turret-gunner</i>	<i>Howell, Bob E., PFC, radio-gunner</i>
<i>Mitchell, Lenyard C., F/O, pilot</i>	<i>Pelkey, John R., T/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>
<i>Sautter, Carl U., 2Lt, pilot</i>	<i>Shapiro, Marvin L., T/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>
<i>Sheets, Richard L., 2Lt, pilot</i>	
<i>Trevethan, George R., S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner</i>	
<i>Wahl, Roy C., 2Lt, bombardier, navigator</i>	<i>Warren, Donald B., 2Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Young, Charles A., 2Lt, pilot</i>	

The following Enlisted Men joined the Squadron today: Sgt W.J. Parmelee, Cpl. J.A. Osborne, Pfc. F.A. Guyer, and Pvt. L.D. Billedeaux.

<i>Billedeaux, Lincoln D. "Count", Pvt, supply</i>	<i>Guyer, Floyd A., PFC,</i>
<i>Parmelee, Walter J., Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Osborne, John A., PFC,</i>

Training Program: Three crews made practice runs in formation.

428th BS War Diary: By now everything was in readiness for the departure. The Air Echelon apparently was to be the first to go. The expectation--logical according to past performances--was that they would arrive first.

Sunday, 5 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): At the Cairo Conference, President Roosevelt decides on General Dwight D Eisenhower as the Supreme Allied Commander for Operation OVERLORD, the invasion of W Europe. The CCS issue a directive for the organization of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces (MAAF) consolidating British and US forces of the Mediterranean Air Command (MAC) and Northwest African Air Force (NAAF). Weather hampers medium bomber operations, but B-25's manage to bomb a bridge at Pescara, Italy and marshalling yard and shipyards at Split, Yugoslavia. In Italy, US fighter-bombers and fighters (and a number of other Allied airplanes) hit gun positions S of Chieti, Italy, a vessel in Poljud, Yugoslavia harbor (near Split), trains and trucks W of Aquino, bridges near Mignano and Ladispoli, the town of Arezzo, airfields at Piombino and Aviano, and building S of Garda Lake. HQ Twelfth Air Force transfers from Tunisia to Italy.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 5 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: The practice of having movies almost every night in our hangar continues.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Sunday, 5 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Training Program: Six crews participated in formation flying and dry runs.

428th BS War Diary: Situation reverses. Late today the ground echelon was scheduled to leave in the morning. Result: a hurried scrambling.

Monday, 6 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, P-40 and A-36 fighter-bombers bomb bridges at Ceprano and W of Mignano; weather cancels other operations. The 91st Fighter Squadron, 81st Fighter Group, transfers from Castelvetrano, Sicily to Montecorvino Airfield, Italy with P-39's. The 347th Fighter Squadron, 350th Fighter Group, transfers from Rerhaia, Algeria to Corsica with P-39's. A detachment of the 415th Night Fighter Squadron, 64th Fighter Wing, based at Cantania, Sicily, begins operating from Gaudo Airfield, Italy with Beaufighters.

HQ 310th BG War Diary:

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 6 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 6 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: A Public Address system was installed in our Squadron Area for official notices, news, music and comedy programs, heard during the day.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Monday, 6 December 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Recently, Corporal Ralph (“Mr. Five by Five”) Corsi, who in addition to his other activities, is the friend, confidant, stern taskmaster and interpreter to our Italian Prisoners, was very respectfully approached by one of them on a subject of the greatest delicacy, The prisoners, it seems, had been talking amongst themselves. This is not unusual. Wishful thinking crept into their conversations, as it does even sometimes into the conversations of G.I.’s. This also is not unusual. But the subject of their wishful

Monday, 6 December 1943 (continued)

thinking was indeed unusual, if one considers these men as Prisoners of War. However, they are also now, co-belligerents, and above that, they are human. It is the human element which caused the wishful thinking, and after some length of time and very careful consideration, they decided to bring the matter before their friend, Corporal Corsi. Accordingly, a spokesman was chosen from among them, and entrusted with the important mission of selecting an appropriate moment in which to lay their request before Cpl. Corse. As Cpl. Corsi afterwards confided, no time would seem exactly appropriate. The whole thing was ridiculous, impossible. "Would Corsi be so kind," they had wanted to know, "as to seek an interview with the Squadron Commander on their behalf?" Corsi reflected, balked, and then finally consented. An interview was arranged. As Corsi stood at attention before the Commanding Officer, the flicker of a smile must have crossed his lips. Major Cometh, perhaps, was tempted to smile just a little bit too. Nevertheless, the atmosphere was solemn, and Mr. Five by Five began to state the prisoner's case. Their fondest hopes, it seems, would be realized if, perchance, it would be possible for the Commanding Officer to consider the advisability of granting them permission to go into Philippeville. This, they realized, was probably presumptuous on their part, and they hoped that this would be overlooked. Further, in the event that the request were granted, would it be permissible for them to be accompanied by an interpreter --- Corporal Corsi, for instance? The purpose of their anticipated journey, Corsi explained to Major Cometh, was to get haircuts and to bathe. The Major grinned, gave his immediate, tho surprised consent, and returned Mr. "Five by Five's" salute.

*Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Maj. pilot, Commander
Corsi, Ralph R. "Mr. Five by Five", Cpl,*

And so this morning, Cpl. Corsi, with his brood, walked happily out of the area bound for town. They had their showers, their haircuts and their lunch. Lunch served on real plates, with chicken and salad and tangerines, and the good red wine of Algeria. Actually what they had was a bang-up good time --- but they would probably use other words to describe it.

The ground personnel of the 428th Squadron, whose area joins the 381st on its eastern side, folded their tents in the early morning, and by noon had left for their new operational base in Corsica.

Training Program: Aircraft Identification lectures for six crews.

One Year Ago Today: The Ground Echelon arrived in Louis Gentil from Mediouna; the Flight Echelon disembarked from H.M.S. Derbyshire at Mers el Kebir and headed for the mud of Tafaraoui.

Monday, 6 December 1943 (continued)

428th BS War Diary: Movement went off as scheduled. 156 men and officers with the vehicles left for Bizerte at 0600, arriving at Souk El Arba with several other units by 1600 hours. A rush call late in the evening by the town provost marshal sent Captain Haines and Lt. Basich scurrying townward to clear up an impending riot in a particularly notorious house of pleasure. Situation under control. Not a 428th man there, much to our pleasure and relief--or did they leave before the officers arrived?

Basich, George F., 1Lt, intelligence

Haines, Wilson R., Capt, Executive Officer

Tuesday, 7 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, B-25's and A-36's bomb the harbor and town of Civitavecchia; B-25's also attack Pescara, hitting the railroad, road, and town area; A-36's, P-40's, and RAF DAF fighters hit a gun position W of Orsogna, the towns of Viticuso and San Vittoria, and a bridge at Civitella Roveto.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 7 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 7 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 7 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Work goes on as determined as ever

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Tuesday, 7 December 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Tuesday, 7 December 1943 (continued)

A/C No. 3 *aircraft and crew unidentified* A/C No. 4 *aircraft and crew unidentified*

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry.

381st BS War Diary: Pearl Harbor Day.

The following named Combat Personnel were transferred to the 340th Bomb Group: 1st Lts.: J.W. Boston, Jr., G.D. Samson and W.M. Wolfe; 2nd Lts.: J.H. Burlingame, W.A. Kneecum, L.R. Stoeber, and C.H. Weaver; T/Sgts.: W. (NMI) Jereb, W.L. Rea and G.T. Rounis; S/Sgts.: W.B. Campbell, E.A. Dingle, S. (NMI) Erceg, J.R. Lyon, L.R. Marvin, H.B. Micks, E.G. Schoen, and C.W. Sentlingar.

<i>Boston, Joseph W., Jr., 1Lt, pilot</i>	<i>Burlingame, John Hancock, 2Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Campbell, Warren Bertwell, S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner</i>	
<i>Dingle, Ernest A., S/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>	<i>Erceg, Samuel (NMI), Cpl, turret-gunner</i>
<i>Jereb, Vincent (NMI), T/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>	<i>Kneecum, Walter A., 2Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Lyon, John R., Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Marvin, Lawrence R., S/Sgt, gunner</i>
<i>Micks, Henry B., S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner</i>	<i>Rea, Willis L., T/Sgt, radio-gunner</i>
<i>Rounis, Gus T., T/Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Samson, George D., 1Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Schoen, Everett G., S/Sgt, bombardier-gunner</i>	
<i>Sentlingar, Charles W., S/Sgt, gunner</i>	<i>Stoeber, Leslie R., 2Lt, pilot</i>
<i>Weaver, Claude H., 2Lt, pilot</i>	<i>Wolfe, Warren M., 1Lt, pilot</i>

428th BS War Diary: The ground echelon arrived in Bizerte--two days before the port authorities said they expected us. We do not load on to a vessel. The whole thing is beginning to look like a tremendous dry run. We proceed to the staging area West of Bizerte. A look at the grounds and we knew we were in for it, come the first rain.

Wednesday, 8 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

Italy, B-25's bomb bridges, industrial targets, marshalling yard, and town areas of Pescara, Ancona, and Aquila; A-20's hit gun emplacements and bivouac area near Sant' Elia Fiumerapido; other A-20's, operating with RAF and SAAF aircraft attack troop concentration and gun positions near Miplinnico; fighter-bombers of the AAF, RAF, RAAF, and SAAF bomb targets in support of ground troops near Orsogna; A-36's and P-40's hit communications targets (roads, railroads, bridges) at Avezzano, Frosinone, Viticuso, Gaeta, and Sant' Elia Fiumerapido. HQ 3rd Photographic Group (Reconnaissance) and its 12th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron transfer from La Marsa, Tunisia to San Severo, Italy with F-4's and F-5's. HQ 5th Photographic Reconnaissance Group transfers from La Marsa, Tunisia to San Severo, Italy.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 8 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: New winter clothing was issued, by Supply, and the waiting line was long and started early.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Wednesday, 8 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Fifty-one officers and 81 enlisted men of the 428th Squadron have been attached to the 381st for rations. These represent a rear echelon of that Squadron, which will embark for Corsica at some future date.

The Cork Forest, which covers the surrounding hills and extends for miles, is said to have plenty of game in the shape wild boar. Several hunting expeditions have been planned, but so far as is actually known, none has taken place. Nevertheless, 1st Lt. John J. Mason, Jr., who censors the mail, isn't too certain about it. He confides that he has read of at least 13 wild boar, ranging in weight from 158 to 263 lbs., having been shot by enlisted men. The Lieutenant, being a chow-hound of sorts, has decided to institute a thorough investigation. Of course no one is really holding out on the Lieutenant, tho he threatens that if he doesn't get some wild boar meat, by one means or another, he is going to start a victory garden right here in the Squadron Area, with rabbits and chickens and even a cow, if he can get one. Cpl. Nels Johnson keeps an interested ear cocked whenever Lt. Mason discusses these plans. Being the Squadron's Ace Chow-hound, Nels seems undecided as to whether to collaborate with Lt. Mason, or to start a farm of his own.

Johnson, Nels R. "Chow-hound", Cpl,

Mason, John Joseph, Jr., 1Lt, intelligence

Training Program: Practice firing on range.

428th BS War Diary: On this day the air echelon was C-47 borne to Ajaccio, the 1st Bomber unit (detachment though it was) to arrive in Corsica. The next day they arrived in Ghisonaccia Gare.

Thursday, 9 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

Italy, B-25's bomb railway and road bridges at Giulianova, tracks at Pescara and Teramo, and a marshalling yard and ironworks at Terni; A-20's hit gun positions and bivouac area at Sant' Elia Fiumerapido; A-36's and P-40's attack Orsogna and coastal targets in support of the British Eighth Army, Avezzano marshalling yard and villages along the US Fifth Army front, troops at San Pietro Infine and Viticuso and nearby gun positions, viaduct and railway bridge E of Guidonia airfield, crossing at Furbara, and trains and trucks in the Rome area. Brigadier General George H Beverley takes over as the new Commanding General, XII Troop Carrier Command (Provisional).

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: A dance for the Group in town. Music was furnished by radio and phonograph. Many French girls from the town attended and a good time was had by all.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The following named Enlisted Men joined the Squadron today: Pfc. V.L. Dell and Pvts. Z.R. DeMoises, F.D. Gaddy, J.T. McGeever, B. (NMI) Oglensky, and S. (NMI) Scherman.

*Dell, Vernon L., PFC,
Gaddy, Franklin D., Pvt,
Oglensky, Bernie (NMI), Pvt,*

*DeMoises, Zool R., Pvt,
McGeever, James T., Pvt,
Scherman, Sol (NMI), Pvt,*

A meeting of the upper three grades of N.C.O.'s was held in the Enlisted Men's Mess Hall at 14:30 hours today, for the purpose of organizing an Enlisted Men's club. The following N.C.O.'s were elected Club Officers: President, M/Sgt. E.L. Porter, Secretary, S/Sgt. H.R. Tourtellot; Treasurer, Cpl. Nels R. Johnson. An Executive Council of the following men was appointed: M/Sgt. Henry J. Rumeau, T/Sgt. E. Sandstead, and S/Sgts V.R. Drew, F.R. Kiefer and P.W. Ochs. This Executive Council will draw up house rules for the approval of the Upper Three Grades. A corrugated iron barn located on one edge of the area, and formerly used as the 428th Squadron's Officer's Mess, was chosen for the site of the club, and two committees were appointed to get it set up: A Procurement Committee, under direction T/Sgt. E.H. Schutkesting and an Interior Decoration Committee, under direction S/Sgt. M.C. Munson. S/Sgt. Zeiss was unanimously appointed a one man committee for the procurement of liquid refreshments for the bar. The meeting lasted a little longer than an hour, and when it was concluded, the committees set to work immediately.

Drew, Vilas R., S/Sgt, armorer

Johnson, Nels R. "Chow-hound", Cpl,

Thursday, 9 December 1943 (continued)

Kiefer, Frank (NMI), S/Sgt.

Munson, Myron C., S/Sgt.

Ochs, Percy W., S/Sgt, turret-gunner

Porter, Ellis L., T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Rumeau, Henry J., M/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Sandstead, Earl S., T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Schutkesting, Eugene Henry, T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Tourtellot, Hudson R., S/Sgt.

Zeiss, Fredrik W., S/Sgt, mail clerk

Work on the Enlisted Men's Club was not even interrupted by the fact that 1st Lt. Fisher, Group Special Service Officer, had arranged a dance in town for tonight. The committees worked on. Only a few 381st men attended the dance, which was held in a large building in Philippeville. There were beaucoup mademoiselles, wine, and recorded music. A wonderful time was had by all. Some of the French girls had to be taught to dance in the American Manner, and they caught on fast. Speech was no barrier to social enthusiasm, for even though most of the girls could only understand a few of the words the "Amerikans" were saying, they seemed to get the point of it all, and enjoyed themselves tremendously.

Fisher, Earl W., 1Lt, Special Services Officer

Training Program: Ground School Lectures in Naval Identification.

428th BS War Diary: By the 10th those of us at Bizerte had settled down for a stay. Just a little comforted, perhaps, by the view our position commanded, we were nevertheless not too happy. Bizerte harbor is one of the finest natural military naval bases in the world. The ocean to the North of us and the harbor to our East were both to be seen from the hills on which we were bivouacked. Sunsets and sunrises afforded scenes that technicolor motion films could not record with full justice. Many of the boys have been out, climbing the surrounding hills.

The rations were a secondary course of pleasure. Fried chicken of Q.M. issue was part of our morning allowance. It tended to confirm our suspicion and long-standing bitch that the best rations are usually short-stopped at entrance points. Our food was infinitely better than any we had received for any comparable length of time since we arrived overseas. The Q.M. trucks which we had with us and some of the squadron's equipment left for Corsica today, with S/Sgt. William Metz as guardian. We were not to be included on a shipping list for a time to come. We wonder whether the Bari disaster might somehow have been responsible.

Metz, William J., S/Sgt, communications

Friday, 10 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, P-40's and A-36's attack oil tanks, warehouses, railroads, and vessel at Civitavecchia, the town of Acquafondata, and with RAF, SAAF, and RAAF airplanes, hit tactical targets along the British Eighth Army front, and later strafe road traffic in the Canosa Sannita-Chieti area. Fighters also bomb a vessel in the harbor at Split, Yugoslavia. HQ 310th Bombardment Group (Medium) transfers from Philippeville, Algeria to Corsica. The 23rd Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, 5th Photographic Reconnaissance Group, transfers from Foggia to San Severo, Italy with P-38's and F-5's.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 10 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Friday, 10 December 1943

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: M/Sgt. Clyde L. Arnold, who wrote the story on the Squadron's Dogs for November's history, has dug up some further information on Fluffy, the Squadron's newest pup, from her owner, Sgt. W.J. Parmelee. Fluffy, despite her tender age, has flown five missions over Italy with the 321st Group. In fact, Fluffy comes from a flying family. Although she was born in Africa, her father a Toy Spitz, based in England, has chalked up over a hundred missions with the R.A.F. over Germany. Her Mother, a Toy Fox-Terrier, is also in the R.A.F. and when last heard of, had just completed her 60th mission. We are quite fortunate to have a pup of Fluffy's excellent background operating with the Squadron, and hope that she will be able to better her parent's records when we get into combat again.

Arnold, Clyde L., M/Sgt, engineering, line chief, crew chief
Parmelee, Walter J., Sgt, gunner

Training Program: Ground School lectures in Naval Identification.

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Saturday, 11 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, P-40's and A-36's attack Anzio, Nettuno, Viticuso, San Vittore del Lazio, Pontecorvo, Acquafondata, the railway siding at Arce, tracks and junction N of Ostia, and railway between Ostia and Lido di Roma. Weather causes abandonment of B-25 operations.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 11 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Fried chicken was served for dinner, with generous servings!

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Saturday, 11 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Real fried chicken for lunch. It was learned from Sgt. Romo that it had come from the states, having been shipped across frozen.

Romo, Jose (NMI), Sgt, cook, Mess Sgt

The Enlisted Men's Club is coming along fine. The bar has been completed, and furniture is now being constructed. Everyone who isn't busy is pitching in and having a lot of fun getting the place in shape. It should be ready in a few days.

428th BS War Diary: The routine of purposeless life has established itself. Bridge, poker, baths at the E.B.S., the Red Cross in the battered town of Bizerte, and the almost nightly movies have assumed their spots in what almost amounted to a staid routine.

Sunday, 12 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Weather curtains operations.

In Italy, B-25's bomb the road, railroad, and landing ground at Terracina; P-40 and A-36 fighter-bombers hit trucks along roads in the Chieti-Francavilla area and bomb the town of Itri; fighters fly patrols and reconnaissance over the battle area. The 10th Troop Carrier Squadron, 60th Troop Carrier Group, transfers from Gerbini, Sicily to Pomigliano, Italy with C-47's.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Chicken soup, as an aftermath of yesterday's chicken.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The following officers and enlisted men were assigned to the Squadron today: 2nd Lts.: H.C. Block and G.M. Prior; F/O's: R. (NMI) Corbin and J.L. Peplinski; S/Sgts.: B.A. Cobb, E.R. Colby, F.J. Mintus, A.C. Williams, and J.F. Wright; Sgts.: M.A. Haberman, C.O. Krueger, and L. (NMI) Maddox; and Cpl. C.E. Nithman.

Block, Harry C. "Bloke", 2Lt, pilot

Cobb, Bert Alvin, S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Colby, Edward R., S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Corbin, Robert (NMI), F/O, pilot

Haberman, Marvin A., S/Sgt, gunner

Krueger, Charles Oliver, Sgt, gunner

Maddox, Lemuel (NMI) "Lem", Sgt, engineer-gunner

Mintus, Frank J., S/Sgt, gunner

Nithman, Charles E., Cpl, engineer-gunner

Peplinski, James L., F/O, pilot

Prior, Gordon M. "Gordie", 2Lt, pilot

Williams, Almas C., S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Wright, Joseph F., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

A softball game between the Officers and Enlisted Men netted the following results: Enlisted Men 7, Officers 6.

428th BS War Diary: The long-feared damp weather has set in. Our area is a sea of mud. The route to the main road is negotiable only by means of detours. The clay roads are slick. Low low is the favorite of jeep gear positions.

Monday, 13 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Yugoslavia, B-25's bomb an oil depot, harbor, warehouses, and railway yard at Sibenik and Split.

In Italy, P-40 and A-36 fighter-bombers attack defended points in the Miglionico area; quays, roads, railway yard, and gun emplacements at Terracina; and bridges at Pontecorvo and W of Isolella; town areas and bridges at and near Atina and Acquafondata are also hit. The 91st Fighter Squadron, 81st Fighter Group, based at Montecorvino Airfield, Italy with P-38's and P-39's, begins operating from Capodichino, Italy.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 13 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: General DeGaulle visits the town and drops in at the Base for a while.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Monday, 13 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: General DeGaulle passed by the base today en route from Bone to Philippeville. Headquarters had been alerted to receive him but his car passed the base without stopping and only a few were able to catch a fleeting glimpse of him.

DeGaulle, Charles André Joseph Marie, Brig Gen, Leader of the Free French Forces

428th BS War Diary: The troops in Ghisonaccia re quartered in buildings of the town. After 13 months in canvas castles it was a pleasant change. The structures are reminiscent of those featured in “Parlez-vous” post cards of '19. Drab, thick-walled, stone constructed establishments with thick walls predominate. They're not beautiful, but a fire log in the fireplace once the smoke problem is subdued makes the rooms quite comfortable.

Tuesday, 14 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, medium bombers hit Orte, concentrating on the marshalling yard; light bombers attack road bridge SW of Pontecorvo in front of US Fifth Army lines; P-40 fighter-bombers hit bridges S of Roccasecca and E of Atina; A-36's destroy a bridge at Ceprano and bomb railroad yards, the town area, and highway at Sora, and docks and town area of Civitavecchia.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Men continue to pull plenty of Base Guard duty in addition to their regular duties.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Tonight, the grand opening of the Enlisted Men's Club, "Kuku Nut Gruve". It cannot be disputed that this marked the all time high for Squadron activity. Officers and Enlisted Men were present in force, as well as the Group Commander and several of his aides. For sheer beauty, for genius of organization and ultra swank appointments, the club can't possibly have an equal in all of North Africa. M/Sgt. John E. McGary has written a description of tonight's opening which will appear in the Special Events Section of December's history.

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

McGary, John E., M/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

2nd Lt. B.A. Joyce was assigned to the Squadron today.
Joyce, Bryan A., 2Lt, navigator

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Wednesday, 15 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Yugoslavia, B-25's bomb the airfield at Mostar and A-36 and P-40 fighter-bombers attack vessels, vehicles, and parked aircraft N and E of the Peljesac Peninsula, near Mostar, and at the Zemonico landing ground. In Italy, B-25's and A-20's bomb roads at Pontecorvo and N of Frosinone; fighter-bombers blast gun positions along the US Fifth Army front.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 15 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: PX rations. The usual line of cigarettes and toilet articles.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Wednesday, 15 December 1943

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The Officers started work on their club, clearing and leveling ground in preparation for putting up the Nissen Hut which will house it. They will have to be mighty sharp if they expect to have a club which will in any way approach the beauty and luxury of Kuku Nut Gruve.

Sgt. J.W. Holubek was assigned to the Squadron today.
Holubek, John W., Sgt, gunner

Promotions of Enlisted Men created five T/Sgts.

Training Program: Two lectures, "Maintenance of Armament Equipment in Combat" and a lecture on Aircraft Recognition.

One Year Ago Today: The Ground Echelon leaves Louis Gentil, and, at Casablanca, boards a train of 40 and 8's, which takes off for Telergma.

428th BS War Diary: Our old tents were salvaged at the Ferryville Port for more substantial ones. S/Sgt Barbour once again displays his remarkable talents abetted by a rather gullible Q.M. Pfc.

Barbour, Larry W., S/Sgt,

Thursday, 16 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Yugoslavia, B-25's bomb shipping at Zara and the harbor and marshalling yard at Sibenik; P-40's and P-47's hit a vessel S of Zara and strafe targets of opportunity on the Peljesac Peninsula.

In Italy, A-20's attack gun positions near Mignano; P-40's and A-36's hit gun batteries and strongpoints along the British Eighth Army front S and E of Chieti, gun emplacements and troop concentrations all along the US Fifth Army front, especially NE and S of Cassino, and also bomb Roccasecca and docks at Civitavecchia.

HQ 310th BG War Diary:

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , December 1943

379th BS War Diary: An excellent movie about New York, "City For Conquest." It made many of the boys homesick!

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Thursday, 16 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

380th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

381st BS War Diary: The Motor Pool is mourning the death of Vino, who was killed this morning when he ran into the path of a moving jeep, which was unable to avoid hitting him. Pfc. J.W. Potts, Vino's owner, is in the hospital, and has not yet been informed of the accident.

Potts, James W. "Mister", PFC,

Training Program: Two lectures in Aircraft Recognition.

381st BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

381st BS: *War Diary of: Hawkins, Frank B. "Pancho", 2Lt, pilot
"Back with Allies Dec. 16 after escaping from the Germans."*

428th BS War Diary: Our Phillipville mail plane arrived--without mail, much to our chagrin. It's been two weeks since we've had any--and the likelihood of getting any until we arrive at Corsica does not seem too great.

428th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Friday, 17 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, A-20's strike an artillery concentration near Sant' Elia Fiumerapido; All B-25 missions are abortive; A-36's and P-40 fighter-bombers bomb positions at Monte Trocchio, Cervaro, and Cardito, and the marshalling yard, barracks, warehouses, and docks at Nettuno and Anzio.

In Yugoslavia, P-40's and P-51's, with SAAF escort, strafe a vessel near Trpanj.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Another large group of combat personnel were attached unassigned to the Squadron today.

Training Program: A lecture by Lt. Col. Dixon, of the Anti-Aircraft Section of Coastal Command.

Dixon, Lt Col, Coastal Command, Anti-Aircraft Section

428th BS War Diary: Jupe Pluvius reigns supreme,--bigger and better than ever before. Wet cork will burn if you try hard enough, curse enough long enough.

Saturday, 18 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Weather limits operations.

In Italy, P-40 fighter-bombers attack positions in Tollo, Canosa Sannita, and Orsogna, and strafe a schooner off Trogir; A-36's hit defended areas near Cassino and at Viticuso, a supply dump and gun emplacement near Tenacina, and positions at Monte Trocchio.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: More Xmas packages starting to arrive.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: As of today, twenty members of the Squadron are absent sick at the 57th Station Hospital. This is the largest number ever recalled by Cpl. Smith, who keeps the sick book. They are: 2nd Lts. B.C. Bailey and F.R. Eaton; M/Sgts J.W. Hartsock, W.J. Malloy and E.W. Vardaman; T/Sgt. C.I. Johnson; S/Sgts. F.C. Collom, R.W. Fleming, W.H. Kiel, W.D. King, O.C. Olson, G.Q. Sandvick, and R.J. Stanton; Sgts.: L.A. Green, R.E. Johnson, J. (NMI) Mauthe, and J.C. Rockett; Cpls.: C.D. Shoemaker and E.R. Wolfrom; and Pfc. J.W. Potts.

Bailey, Bert C., 2Lt,

Eaton, Frank R., 2Lt, pilot

Collom, Frank C., Jr., S/Sgt, gunner

Fleming, Robert W., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Green, Leonard A., Sgt,

Hartsock, Jack W., M/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Johnson, Clair I., T/Sgt,

Johnson, Russell E., Sgt,

Kiel, William H., S/Sgt, gunner

King, Wayne D., S/Sgt,

Malloy, William J., M/Sgt,

Mauthe, Joseph L., Sgt,

Olson, Oscar C., S/Sgt,

Potts, James W. "Mister", PFC,

Rockett, James C., Sgt,

Sandvick, Glenn Q., S/Sgt,

Shoemaker, Cecil D., T/Sgt, radio-gunner

Smith, Walter S., Cpl, clerk

Stanton, Robert J., S/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Vardaman, Edwin W., M/Sgt, engineering

Wolfrom, Earl R., Pvt, radio-gunner

Training Program: Two lectures, "Maintenance of Armament Equipment in Combat" and "Proper Handling of Aircraft Equipment and Accessories in a Combat theatre."

Saturday, 18 December 1943 (continued)

One Year Ago Today: 1st Lt. P.D. Pickett and 2nd Lts. F.C. Gollnitz and J.H. Myers flew the Squadron's first combat mission from Telergma, Algeria. The target: Sousse R.R. yards, Tunisia. No 381st planes were involved, the above named officers flying in planes of other squadrons.

Gollnitz, Frederick C., 1Lt, navigator, bombardier

Myers, John H., 1Lt, bombardier

Pickett, Perry D., Capt, bombardier, navigator

428th BS War Diary: Mail, turkey, and sunshine all in one day. Any but a manic-depressive reaction to the pattern of things would be strictly abnormal. A 2½ ton truck with 15 bags of mail, which contained many packages, satisfied our aching desire for letters.

Sunday, 19 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, B-25's bomb the Terni marshalling yard and the Orte marshalling yard and airfield; A-20's attack road, bridge, and the town of Orte and hit Cassino; P-40's bomb Orsogna, Sant' Elia Fiumerapido, and dump near Arce, and hit shipping at Split, Trogir, and Solin, Yugoslavia. A-36's hit railroad and harbor area at Civitavecchia, Italy.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 19 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Double-feature at the movie in the hangar.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Sunday, 19 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Rain throughout the day.

The officers have finished putting up the Nissen Hut for their club, and have begun to construct furniture and gather material for decorating it.

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Monday, 20 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): The MAAF is established, retroactive to 10 Dec 43. Commanded by Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Tedder (RAF), MAAF is comprised of all Allied air elements (RAF, USAAF, French, and other) which are operating in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). These elements previously were part of the Mediterranean Air Command (MAC) and Northwest African Air Force (NAAF), which are disbanded. US Army Air Forces, North African Theater of Operations (USAAFNATO) is established with General Carl Spaatz as commander, to facilitate administration of AAF units of the Twelfth and Fifteenth Air Forces.

In Italy, P-40's and RAF, SAAF, and RAAF fighter-bombers blast vehicles and heavily defended areas near Chieti and Orsogna, and hit a fuel dump near Manoppello. A-36's bomb Terracina and hit water towers, a train, and a railway station S of Rome.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 20 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Monday, 20 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: There has been lots of activity around the Intelligence Tent lately. Two large map boards were constructed and put into a wall tent that was recently erected behind the Intelligence Office. On one of these boards have been placed situation maps which show all of the World's battlefronts; on the other, a large map of the Mediterranean area, together with posters and clippings of current interest. Sgt. Freddie Barnes, Squadron Carpenter, and Sgt. Caddy, S-2, have been constructing boxes for intelligence paraphernalia. They will be used when, and if, the Squadron ever goes into combat again.

Barnes, Freddie H., Sgt, carpenter

Gaddy, Franklin D., Pvt, intelligence

Cpl. A.F. Olson went to the 57th Station Hospital, while M/Sgt. E.W. Vardaman, and S/Sgts. R.W. Fleming and G.Q. Sandvick returned from there completely recovered.

Fleming, Robert W., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Olson, Arthur F., Cpl,

Sandvick, Glenn Q., S/Sgt,

Training Program: Eleven training flights, and two lectures. The first lecture was by Capt. VanZytveld on "The Proper Handling of Aircraft Equipment and Accessories in a Combat Theatre". The Second lecture, by Capt. Abplanalp, "Maintenance of Armament Equipment in Combat".

Abplanalp, Walter J., Capt, Armament Officer

VanZytveld, Roger F., Capt, Engineering Officer

428th BS War Diary: Passes cancelled. Are we going to move?

Tuesday, 21 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Lieutenant General John K Cannon takes command. In Italy, B-25's bomb Terracina; P-40's hit the same target and also bomb positions and munitions factory S of Sant' Elia Fiumerapido; A-36's bomb positions, a fuel dump, and munitions factory in the Cervaro area, and hit trains, a seaplane base, a radar station, trucks, and other targets in the Rome-Civitavecchia area.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: The men went out hunting for "vino" and whatever liquors they could find, in preparation for a Xmas celebration.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Fresh eggs for breakfast.

Twenty -one officers and twenty-one enlisted men were attached to the Squadron for combat training.

Training Program: Eight training flights. Two lectures on Aircraft Identification.

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Wednesday, 22 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Major General Paul L Williams reassumes command of the XII Troop Carrier Command (Provisional).

In Italy, P-40's and Spitfires of the Twelfth Air Force, RAF, SAAF, and RAAF hit strong points in the Tollo-Miglianico-Chieti areas; P-40's blast bridge, locomotives, trucks, and railroad tracks at and near Tortoreto and Benedello; P-47's strafe targets of opportunity in the area around Zara, Yugoslavia.

HQ 310th BG War Diary:

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 22 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Wednesday, 22 December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: More excitement in the Supply Tent this early, rainy morning:

Pvt. "Count" Lincoln D. Billedeaux gave a stifled grunt and then a yell. He hauled himself out of bed, his voice cutting through the 4:30 A.M. stillness. "Crolley!" -- he made it as loud as he could. "Crolley, come quick --- I got another Arab! CROLLEY" By that time Cpl. Crolley Weatherd was on his feet, grabbing for his Tommy Gun and making tracks to the Supply Tent where Pvt. Billedeaux had been sleeping, surrounded by Quartermaster Supplies. Now the "Count" was prone on the ground clutching the ankle of a wiggling Arab, in the manner of a shoe-string tackle. When Crolley arrived, the "Count" let go and stood up. He, with Crolley, now an old hand at Arab catching, stood there and surveyed the mass of quivering flesh, clad entirely in G.I. clothing. The Arab looked back at them. No one said anything, and Crolley reached for ammunition and slowly loaded his gun. The Arab leaped to his feet, and let go a gibberish of words which the fear in his eyes translated into frantic pleading. Billedeaux grabbed him by the wrist and forced him to his knees. Crolley removed the safety on the tommy-gun. The Arab squirmed. "Allah!, Allah!, Allah! --- Allah something or another!" he began to repeat over and over again.

*Billedeaux, Lincoln D. "Count", Pvt, supply
Weatherd, Crolley Earl, Cpl, supply, fire rescue*

The "Count" set to work, and garment by garment ripped the stolen clothing from the Arab's quivering flesh, until he stood there as Allah had made him, and still yowling. Then Crolley applied (forcibly) a G.I. shoe to his Arabic rear, and sent him sprawling through the tent flaps. He picked himself up, and tripped on a tent rope. He regained his balance and crashed into the barbed wire fence. Crolley shot his tommy-gun into the air. The Arab got through the fence and took off. Crolley shot again. The Arab vanished over the brow of the hill. Crolley and the "Count" went back to bed.

This morning they reconstructed the incident before admiring throngs. The clothes were exhibited, all of them filthy. From the pockets they had taken a makeshift knife, too dull to cut anything, and twenty francs. Crolley and the "Count" divided the francs. The knife they threw away. The clothes will be burned.

S/Sgt. A. (NMI) Kovalchick went to the hospital this morning, while T/Sgt. E.H. Schutkesting and Sgt. L.A. Green returned to duty.

*Green, Leonard A., Sgt,
Kovalchick, Alexander (NMI) "Alex", S/Sgt, radio-gunner
Schutkesting, Eugene Henry, T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief*

Wednesday, 22 December 1943 (continued)

Forty-six officers and eighty-four enlisted men of the 428th Squadron, who have been attached to the 381st for rations, are moving to the 380th area, and will not longer share our mess hall with us.

428th BS War Diary: Passes began again--just another dry run.

Thursday, 23 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): P-40's and P-47's attempt to support Yugoslav partisans resisting the German invasion of Korcula Island off the Peljesac Peninsula, but bad weather prevents location of targets.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The Officer's Club is nearly complete. The finishing touches are being applied, and it is expected that it will open tomorrow night, Christmas Eve.

Sgt. Jose Romo was observed pinning the following Christmas Day menu on the bulletin board.

DINNER

Green Salad	Green Peas
Toast Turkey with Dressing	Cranberry Sauce
Giblet Gravy	Bread with Fresh Butter
Mashed Potatoes	Cake Tangerines Candy
	Coffee

Romo, Jose (NMI), Sgt, cook, Mess Sgt

Later in the day another notice appeared. It was signed by Colonel Hunter, and ordered that Christmas will be a complete holiday for all departments.

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

Training Program: Two training flights and two lectures by Capt. Malloy Miller, (Headquarters), on the "The Group History".

Miller, Malloy M., 1Lt, intelligence, Statistical Officer, HQ 310th BG

428th BS War Diary: No Entry

Friday, 24 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Weather severely hampers operations. P-40's fail to locate the target, a vessel at Ugljan Island, Yugoslavia, but shoot down 1 airplane in the Adriatic Sea.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: A French choir from a nearby village came around to entertain us with Xmas carols over our Public Address System.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Friday, 24 December 1943 (continued)

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The great day finally arrived, and moved slowly forward under the blue of a brightly polished African sky. There was a tension of expectancy which was centered in three places: The Officers' Club, the Kuku Nut Gruve and the Mess Hall. Most particularly in the Mess Hall, for in the kitchen the naked bodies of thirty-three frozen turkeys were receiving the ministrations of a round dozen of our cooks.

At the Kuku Nut Gruve, S/Sgt. Munson stored away the fabulous stock of liquid jewelry which he and S/Sgt. Fred Zeiss had managed to procure during a foraging expedition which lasted almost a week and which covered most of Northern Algeria. But this was only a small part of the day's work which lay before Sgt. Munson and his staff. There were hurried trips to town for ice; for bread and mustard to be used for making sandwiches: and for an additional supply of champagne which somebody had discovered.

Munson, Myron C., S/Sgt,

Zeiss, Fredrik W., S/Sgt, mail clerk

Friday, 24 December 1943 (continued)

Flowers were found and festooned along the back of the bar. Wreathes, with red ribbons and berries were hung at strategic spots, while a tiny Christmas Tree glistening with tin and tinsel stood on the dice table surrounded by heaps of oranges. It was fully 20:00 hours before the last glass had been polished and the white aproned bartenders stood behind the bar ready to greet the onrush of thirsty G.I.'s.

In the Officers' Club, hammering and sawing went on far into the day. Fatigue clad officers rushed back and forth, hither and yon, singly and on details, until finally, at 19:00 hours the hammering stopped and the music began. Drove of officers, now resplendent in pinks and blouses, and covered with decorations, thronged into their tunnel shaped casino for its official opening. Chairs and tables and bar had been decorated with a profusion of palm fronds and bamboo. Captain Knight, assisted by 1st Lt. D.D. Horrocks and J.M Baisch, III, served as bartenders. A London radio program of good American Jive gave way to a dozen mixed quartets. There was reminiscing about last Christmas --- the adhesive qualities of the mud at Tafaroui --- the wind and cold of Telergma. Some ingenious practical joker cut off a fellow officer's necktie. The tie-less officer retaliated on someone else. It caught on fast --- soon only the stub end of the ties were to be seen --- the cut ends were hung as trophies on the wall. Major Alexander removed his tie, and thereby sacrificed the collar of his shirt and both trouser legs up to the knees. Colonel Hunter and his Staff arrived, and ten seconds later were also tieless.

Alexander, William T. "Alex", Maj, pilot, Asst Operations Officer, HQ 310th BG

Baisch, Joseph M., III, 1Lt, pilot

Horrocks, Donald D., 1Lt, intelligence

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

Knight, Thomas R., Capt, Signals Officer

2nd Lt. Glenn T. Black stepped up to the bar, and in stentorian tones ordered a bottle of Coca-Cola. Captain Knight reached beneath the bar, brought forth a genuine bottle of Coca-Cola, popped the cap and handed it to him. The crowd went wild. Of course it was a frame-up, there being only two bottles of the precious beverage in the Area. Colonel Hunter was presented with the second bottle, consumed it with perceptible gusto, and then, with Lt. Col. Bower went behind the bar and took over from Capt. Knight.

Black, Glenn T., 2Lt, pilot

Bower, William M., Lt Col, pilot, Operations Officer, HQ 310th BG

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

Knight, Thomas R., Capt, Signals Officer

At the Kuku Nut Grube, matters were proceeding about as usual. The bar was already crowded. The huge sandwich supply lasted nearly seven minutes. There was a din of singing and talking and laughing. "At ease!" was called when one man laughed and lost an upper tooth---it was never found. One Sergeant, with three sheets in the wind,

Friday, 24 December 1943 (continued)

cruised homeward with an Italian Prisoner escort on each beam for ballast. A dog wandered in, was offered one of Cpl. Yousaitis' "Orange Blossom Specials", took one experimental sip and politely refused the rest. Champagne corks popped and rocketed into the crowd. There was reminiscing here, too: About pup-tents and such, and the long cold winter nights at Berteaux, when Chaplain Poynton's two by nothing office was the only heated gathering place for the entire Group. Some men remembered Casablanca and the long ride to Telergma by 40 and 8. Others shook their heads in contemplation of the new combat men, who are fresh from the States and very green. "Could they possibly", it was wondered, "appreciate the profusion of luxuries that are now ours." Were they enjoying it as much as our older men could, were they here? ---Those who, for instance, flew out from Berteaux to sever the Axis life lines in Tunisia, and who now are scattered throughout heaven and earth. Sfax --- Gabes --- Sea Sweeps---

Poynton, Walter J., Capt, Catholic Chaplain

Yousaitis, George (NMI) Cpl,

Suddenly it was all over. It was time to close the club. Small groups of officers and men took bearings with their flashlights, and started up the muddy road for Midnight Mass in Valle's village square. When the village clock struck twelve for the second time, Father Poynton intoned the first words of the Mass. Colonel Hunter, his officers and men bowed their heads in prayer. The girls of the village lifted their voices to choir "Adeste Fidelas", and the Americans joined in. Their voices wafted out of the tent-chapel into the night, and mixed with the sound of rustling leaves as the wind blew through Valle's giant eucalyptus trees. Christmas was here.

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

Poynton, Walter J., Capt, Catholic Chaplain

428th BS War Diary: December 26th has been established as our sailing date? More mail came. What finer Xmas present could there be? F/Sgt Johnston returned from Tunis with some Christmas Spirits, which flowed freely that night.

Johnston, Melvin R., S/Sgt, 1st Sgt

Saturday, 25 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): A-36's bomb road, trucks, and the town area at Pontecorvo, Italy. P-40's, with a few SAAF Spitfires, hit a motor launch in Peljesac Channel of Yugoslavia.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Xmas Day. The first overseas for many of the men: the second for others. Turkey was on the menu with all the trimmings; there were free rations of beer, candy and cigarettes. The boys were not boisterous and passed a joyous day.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: “Good morning, gentlemen. Good morning. Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas to you all”, chanted Sgt. Whiting to the line of mess-kit rattling G.I.'s which was funneling into the kitchen. “Step right up, gentlemen, Merry Christmas! Fried eggs on your right, toast and fresh butter on your left. As many eggs as you want. Six, seven, or eight. Don't be bashful. We can lend you an extra mess kit if that one isn't big enough, Corporal Johnson! Step right up, gentlemen. A Merry Christmas to you all! A very Merry Christmas!!!”

Johnson, Nels R. "Chow-hound", Cpl,

Whiting, Frank L., Sgt, cook, mess Sgt

Cooks worked furiously at the stoves, frying eggs, toasting bread. In the background were the turkeys, roasted brown, and waiting to be heated. K.P.'s labored over greens for salad, and Pfc's Peck and Walker rushed back and forth between the kitchen and officers' mess with plates and platters and cups of teaming coffee. The enlisted men filed past the cooks, gave their order for eggs, and staggered on into the mess hall, mess gear overflowing. Here there was talk of the night before, and of the early morning. It hadn't all ended at midnight. After the clubs had closed, each tent had had its own party, lasting long into the night. Experiences were related and notes compared. Here at the breakfast table those experiences were woven into tales, and the tales into stories. These stories will not grow old as long as the Squadron is together, for last night History was made in the 381st.

Peck, Paul E., PFC,

Walker, Patrick E., PFC,

During the morning, messages of Christmas Cheer were broadcast over the Public Address system from President Roosevelt, from General Marshall and General Arnold, and from General Spaatz.

Arnold, Henry H. "Hap", General, Chief of the Army Air Forces

Marshall, George C., General of the Army, Chief of Staff

Spaatz, Carl Andrew "Tooey", Lt Gen, Commander, Strategic Air Forces

Saturday, 25 December 1943 (continued)

The crowds that had gathered for this morning's session at the Kuku Nut Grube began to thin out tout suite as the hour for dinner approached. After a proper interval of waiting, which, together with perfume from the kitchen, increased the apprehension, serving began. The meal, one of the largest and best ever to be served in the Squadron, was eaten in almost complete silence. The bountiful portions, even though eaten with gusto, took considerable time to consume. During the afternoon, a few men listened to the President's Christmas message rebroadcast by transcription over B.B.C., but the great majority of officers and men, overcome by excessive eating, chalked up sack time in their tents, and the area was quiet.

The girl's choir from Valle sang Christmas Carols over the Public Address system during the evening meal, and competed for applause with S/Sgt. Mack Hosack, who had stolen a horse from a neighboring farm, and exhibited a rather questionable ability at horsemanship by riding it bareback through the chow line.

Hosack, Mack B., S/Sgt.

In the evening, the Officers' Club and Kuku Nut Grube were open for business, but operated at a somewhat decreased tempo. Both clubs closed at their regular hour. Christmas was over.

428th BS War Diary: Ham for breakfast. Turkey, Fresh potatoes, dressing, cranberry sauce, fresh lettuce salad, fresh orange cocktail, all in almost unlimited quantities. Last but not least, church services. It was an infinitely happier holiday than Christmas 1942. The move was cancelled again. Our boys at Ghisonaccia made an enlisted man's bar that was something to behold. Xmas cheer was dispensed in great quantity--from bottles to all and sundry. An Xmas tree in the bar was the scene of mail distribution of packages by Major Epperson. The Group Captain visited each room of the village. Feelings ran high. It was a merry Christmas.

Epperson, Elmer H., Maj, pilot, Commander

Sunday, 26 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): Weather limits operations to uneventful reconnaissance flights. The 415th Night Fighter Squadron, 64th Fighter Wing, transfers from Catania, Sicily to Montecorvino, Italy with Beaufighters. A detachment is operating from Gaudo Airfield, Italy.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: The Squadron started to move up on a hill overlooking the Base, to get away from the mud down in the lower area.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Seventeen officers and 46 enlisted men showed up for breakfast this morning.

S/Sgt Alan J. MacDougall replaced Cpl. Earl R. Wolfrom and Pvt. Warren O. Kirby at the 57th Station Hospital.

Kirby, Warren O., PFC,

MacDougall, Alan J., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Wolfrom, Earl R., Pvt, radio-gunner

428th BS War Diary: At 1100 in the morning word came that one-half our number were to be at the dock by 1400 hours. 75 Em and 3 officers were on board.

Monday, 27 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): B-25's attack a vessel near Zara, Yugoslavia. A-36's attack targets in Italy, hitting a factory and railroad at Anagni, harbor and railroad facilities at Civitavecchia, a bridge at Pontecorvo, and several gun positions and vehicles. A detachment of the 416th Night Fighter Squadron, Twelfth Air Force, based at Grottaglie, Italy with Beaufighters begins operating at Rerhaia, Algeria.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

379th BS War Diary: Moving was completed and tents set up and the self-made stoves blazing away in the tents, for it was a cold day.

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Major Cometh and 1st Lt. Joseph M. Baisch, III, flew to Tobruk today where they will be on detached service with the 379th Squadron. They expect to visit Cairo while they are away.

Baisch, Joseph M., III, 1Lt, pilot
Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Maj, pilot, Commander

Capt. W.J. Abplanalp left by motor vehicle for Algiers with S/Sgt. L.T. Boos and Cpl. L. Kellar, for the purpose of picking up material for the Armament Department.

Abplanalp, Walter J., Capt, Armament Officer *Boos, Lawrence T., S/Sgt, armament*
Kellar, Loyal (NMI), Cpl, gunner, armament

2nd Lt. James W. Burris has been reassigned to the Squadron, having transferred to the 19th Replacement Battalion after leaving the hospital.

Burris, James Warren, 2Lt, pilot

2nd Lt. Edgar (NMI) Dorman, formerly of the 321st Bomb. Gp., was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant.

Dorman, Edgar (NMI) "Bud", 1Lt, pilot

T/Sgt. Oscar C. Olson was replaced at 57th Station Hospital by Cpl George Yousaitis,

Olson, Oscar C., S/Sgt, *Yousaitis, George (NMI) Cpl,*

Four officers and three enlisted men were attached to the Squadron, while nine officers and nine enlisted men who had been attached were relieved.

Monday, 27 December 1943 (continued)

The Squadron has received a bang-up Christmas present --- beaucoup cases of real Scotch beer. It happened this way: Colonel Hunter discovered a British Merchant Vessel in the harbor in Philippeville, loaded with the beer. The Captain of this vessel had received orders to sail, and desired to dispose of his cargo before weighing anchor. So the Group and all of the Squadrons raised what money they could, purchased the beer and prorated it among the various organizations according to strength. The 381st, by tapping various sources, was able to contribute some \$1,600.00 to the fund, and was allotted three hundred eighty cases. Ninety-five cases went to the Officers' Club, and two hundred and eighty-five to the Kuku Nut Grube. A detail composed of at least thirty men was dispatched to the docks to perform the all-night task of bringing it home. Each of the cardboard cases was resplendently marked, "McEwan's Red Label Sparkling Beer, Edinburgh."

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

428th BS War Diary: The morning of the 27th was filled by instruction from the crew of H.M.S. L.S.T. 425. That night we pulled out with 4 LST's, one Liberty Ship, and two mine sweepers for escort. We are to prepare and dispense our own food. At least there's one thing for which we'll have only ourselves to blame. Many of the men are sleeping topside, some by choice. At Ghisonaccia, 3 high-flying JU-88's looked over the field.

Tuesday, 28 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): B-25's, A-20's, and A-36's, in coordination with Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force (MASAF) heavy and medium bombers operating against targets in the Rome area, bomb landing grounds at Ciampino, a bridge at Roccasecca and a road and railway to the E of town, ships and harbor at Civitavecchia, and railway sidings W of Frosinone; and P-40's hit the harbor at Anzio and communications in the Pontecorvo and Atina areas. The 486th and 487th Bombardment Squadrons (Medium), 340th Bombardment Group (Medium), transfer from Foggia to Pompeii, Italy with B-25's.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 28 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: A rainy day, and when it finally stopped, our new Area was found to be as muddy as our former location.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Tuesday, 28 December 1943

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: Sgt. J.C. Rockett returned from the hospital.

Rockett, James C., Sgt.

Eleven officers and fourteen enlisted men were attached to the Squadron today.

Tonight, with song and precise festive spirit required for so momentous an occasion, the Squadron settled down to a real beer bust. McEwan's Red Label Sparkling Beer is the first real beer we have been able to get in Africa, for its flavor is indistinguishable from any good standard brand of American Beer. It seemed, among other attributes, to have a stimulating effect on the vocal cords, as the entire evening was spent in song. None of the umpteen duets, quartets, or octets synchronized with one another, the result being a loud and lovely din; a proper and requisite atmosphere in which to practice the art of elbow bending. This, the midpoint of our holiday festivities, lasted far into the night, or at least until 22:50 hours, when the Gruve closed.

Training Program: Eight training flights. Two lectures on "Communications and Air-Sea Rescue" by Major Burger, Group Communications Officer.

Burger, Joseph L., Capt, communications, Signals Officer, HQ 310th BG

428th BS War Diary: One Liberty ship and 1 LST off at Cagliari and the 5-ship convoy became three. The convoy commander is aboard our vessel. LST quarters for officers are comfortable. We saw two Spits covering our boats for an hour today.

Wednesday, 29 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): P-40's hit a vessel on the N side of the Peljesac Peninsula in Yugoslavia and a railway station at Anagni, Italy. In Italy, A-36's attack the railway station at Ferentino, harbor and railroad yard at Civitavecchia, and truck park near Aquino.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 29 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Routine Activity.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry

Wednesday, 29 December 1943 (continued)

381st BS War Diary: A very quiet day. The rear echelons of the other Squadrons are moving into the area formerly occupied by the 428th Squadron, in order to take advantage of the drainage afforded by the sloping terrain.

The following personnel, absent sick at the 57th Station Hospital, returned to duty today: 2nd Lt. F.R. Eaton; M/Sgts. J.W. Hartsock and W.J. Malloy; T/Sgt. C.I. Johnson; S/Sgts. F.C. Collom, W.H. Kiel, and R.J. Stanton; Sgt. R.E. Johnson and Pfc. J.W. Potts.

Collom, Frank C., Jr., S/Sgt, gunner

Hartsock, Jack W., M/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Johnson, Russell E., Sgt,

Malloy, William J., M/Sgt,

Stanton, Robert J., S/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Eaton, Frank R., 2Lt, pilot

Johnson, Clair I., T/Sgt,

Kiel, William H., S/Sgt, gunner

Potts, James W. "Mister", PFC,

Training Program Eight training flights, two lectures on aircraft identification.

428th BS War Diary: In the evening we pulled into scenic La Maddalena. The Island naval base, inserted in an island cove with the straits and the snow-covered mountains of Corsica was just another breath-taking page to add to our memory book. The island-dotted channel seemed to add strangeness to our voyage. Our trip was happily, uneventful, and we tied up in Maddalena for the night.

Thursday, 30 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF): B-25's bomb Zara, Yugoslavia, hitting a junction, railway station, repair shops, warehouse, and harbor. **In Italy**, A-20's hit Atina; P-40's and A-36's support ground forces, hitting targets in the Chieti-Miglianico area; vessels are hit at Crkvice, Yugoslavia, railway sidings near Frosinone, gun positions near Arce and W of Minturno, and the town areas of Sant' Elia Fiumerapido, Ferentino, and Atina are bombed.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: Another hunt for "spirits" to celebrate New Years' Eve.

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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Thursday, 30 December 1943

380th BS War Diary: No Entry

381st BS War Diary: The following combat personnel were transferred to the 380th Squadron: 2nd Lts. J.W. Gilluly, B.H. Harris, Jr., and J.G. Kresge; S/Sgts. A. Kovalchick and T.A. Zoll and Sgt. L.T. Rowley. The following combat crew was transferred to the 428th Squadron: 2nd Lts. B.C. Bailey and J.T. Edwards; and S/Sgts. R.W. Fleming, R.J. Fox and J.C. Hughes.

Bailey, Bert C., 2Lt, pilot

Fleming, Robert W., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Gilluly, John W., 2Lt, pilot

Hughes, James C., S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Kovalchick, Alexander (NMI) "Alex", S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Kresge, James G., 2Lt, navigator

Zoll, Thaddeus A., S/Sgt, engineer-gunner

Edwards, James T., 2Lt, pilot

Fox, Robert J., S/Sgt, gunner

Harris, B.H., Jr., 2Lt,

Rowley, Lester T., Sgt, gunner

The following enlisted men were assigned to the Squadron: Cpl. F.J. Dzienkiewicz and Pvts. J.L. Bazzett, J.T. Daniell, R.M. Harris and T.F. Youngman.

Bazzett, Julius L., Pvt, turret-gunner

Daniell, James T., Pvt, turret-gunner

Harris, Robert Milton, Pvt, turret-gunner

Dzienkiewicz, Francis J., Cpl, turret-gunner

Youngman, Thomas F., Pvt, turret-gunner

Five new officers and six enlisted men were attached to the Squadron for training.

F/O Charles F. Keith, who is a patient in a hospital, Cairo, Egypt, was assigned to the Squadron.

Keith, Charles Frederick, F/O, pilot

Sgt. F. Fritz left for the hospital.

Fritz, Frederick E., Sgt,

Pvt. William Krasovec let his razor slip and as a consequence was forced to shave off his flowing beard. Insomuch as his kinky black facial adornment has been with Pvt. Krasovec ever since he reached Africa, most of us saw what he looks like for the first time. He managed to save the mustache part, and continues to twirl its pointed ends very carefully.

Krasovec, William F., S/Sgt, radio-gunner

Training program: Eight training flights, two lectures in the use of V.H.F. and I.F.F. equipment.

Thursday, 30 December 1943 (continued)

428th BS War Diary: About 10:00 we received orders to proceed to Ajaccio after a night on board. This time we were two LST's and one mine sweeper strong. The third ventured the Bastia route and hit a mine. We pulled into the harbor of photogenic Ajaccio that afternoon. By nightfall we had unloaded, after some trouble getting the British trucks out of the hold, and had established a bivouac out at Mezzovia, some distance from the harbor. We were greatly pleased with what we could see of the country, but were in bad sorts anyway, because we were neatly swindled out of our rations, which were "B" rations, by an unknown Major who drove up and ordered them loaded on a truck, which promptly departed for points unknown.

Friday, 31 December 1943

USAAF Chronology: MTO Tactical Operations (12th AF):

In Italy, P-40's and Spitfires of the AAF, RAF, RAAF, and SAAF, strike infantry and heavy artillery around Tollo, Orsogna, Miglianico, Ripa, and Teatina in support of the British Eighth Army. A-36's bomb the town of Formia and hit gun positions.

HQ 310th BG War Diary: No Entry

HQ 310th BG Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Mission Report # , 31 December 1943

Target: Sea Sweep

379th BS War Diary: The end of another month, and a year filled with plenty of excitement. Some of the boys will never be back with us again, but we will never forget their contributions to the Victory and to the well-being and success of our Squadron!

379th BS Mission Summary: (Ops Order ---/mission ---) Group Mission # :

Target: Sea Sweep

Number of Planes: 4

A/C No. 1 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 2 aircraft and crew unidentified

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A/C No. 3 aircraft and crew unidentified A/C No. 4 aircraft and crew unidentified

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380th BS War Diary: No Entry

Friday, 31 December 1943 (continued)

381st BS War Diary: Captain Abplanalp, S/Sgt. Boos and Cpl. Kellar returned from Algiers.

Abplanalp, Walter J., Capt, Armament Officer

Boos, Lawrence T., S/Sgt, armament

Kellar, Loyal (NMI), Cpl, gunner, armament

Three officers and three enlisted men were attached to the Squadron.

Training Program: Two Lectures in Aircraft identification.

The enlisted men were paid today in the Kuku Nut Gruve. The Kuku Nut Gruve giveth and the Kuku Nut Gruve taketh away.

Jupiter (NMI) Pluvius stages on of his periodic ill-tempered benders beginning this morning, gleefully spending his wrath on the Squadron Area. He thoroughly splashed everything with rain in the morning, and created a nice slippery, sticky mud to slide in. He pelted the men with rain and hail as they waited for pay call, and before and during each meal he drenched the waiting chow lines. Not content with getting everyone thoroughly wet and muddy and uncomfortable, he started fooling around with wind during the late afternoon. He first concentrated on ten flaps, flapping them almost to shreds. He then divided his amusement between pulling up tent pegs and tossing marble-sized hail stones all over the place. At dusk he ripped out the power lines and left the tents in blackness. Around 21:00 hours he took off, and didn't return until nearly midnight.

Jupiter (NMI) Pluvius notwithstanding, the day hurtled forward toward the "Gruve's" New Year's Eve celebration. There were the usual last minute preparations, S/Sgt. Munson competently supervising the work, the worrying, the rushing hither and yon and the going to and coming from. The Gruve was packed with G.I.'s long before the hour of opening. Flashlights and a gasoline lantern illuminated the room and threw shadows among the palm fronds. There was the sound of rain on the tin roof. It swept across, it thundered and it tinkled and it pounded. It was a sound effect. It was a free and natural imitation of a Crane Plumbing Fixture Company installation in a little bar on one of Hollywood's boulevards, designed to create a South Sea Island rain-on-the-tin-roof atmosphere for the edification of its customers.

Munson, Myron C., S/Sgt.

There was, and naturally, noise. Almost deafening quantities of it. It eddied and flowed and surged. There was beer and champagne and sandwiches; moonbeam specials and orange blossom specials and straight shots. There were periods of silence for necessary announcements, as when the P.A. called out the guard detail. Then the noise closed in and there was bedlam again.

Friday, 31 December 1943 (continued)

The night hurried onward, peeling off the last few hours of the remaining year. Major Campbell strolled in, followed by Captain Abbott and then by Captain Knight. They lost themselves in the crowd.

Abbott, Robert D., Capt, Adjutant
Knight, Thomas R., Capt, Signals Officer

Campbell, Ivan R., Maj, Executive Officer

At midnight the Major announced that he was buying drinks for the house, and then he went behind the bar and helped mix them himself. A little later the Major, in his own inimitable way, addressed a few words of New Year's cheer to everybody, and then introduced the evening's guest of Honor, 1st Lt. Frank B. Hawkins. After being shot down with Capt. Eddy's crew on 23 February 43, Lt. Hawkins spent nine months as a prisoner of war in Italy. Lt. Hawkins expressed his joy at being able to be on Allied soil once more, and, most particularly, the happiness it brought him to visit his old squadron. Captain Knight said a few words, and then Captain Abbott. His was the shortest of them all. He said, simply and without even raising his voice, "Before I came into the Army, I used to work with lots of people, and now I work with all of you." It brought down the house. Major Campbell supplied another round of drinks, and during the ensuing noise, the Old Year slipped out, and was gone forever.

Abbott, Robert D., Capt, Adjutant
Eddy, Leonard A., Capt, pilot
Knight, Thomas R., Capt, Signals Officer

Campbell, Ivan R., Maj, Executive Officer
Hawkins, Frank B. "Pancho", 1Lt, pilot

428th BS War Diary: A quick survey revealed that purloining by the ship's crew had been more serious than we had thought. We reported the deficiencies we could check as the LST was pulling out of harbor. Just another blow to Allied relations. We are to remain here in the staging area until the pass is cleared of snow and a landslide is removed. In the meantime, Ajaccio was to become a sight for sore eyes. Just to look at a quasi-civilization once again was a real treat. Unfortunately time prevented a further appreciation of its possibilities. The outfit took off en masse about 0730 in the evening and returned by 1100. The town was quiet for New Year's Eve, and there were no disturbances and no trouble.

December 1943

HQ 310th BG War Diary: Additional Information for December 1943: None

379th BS War Diary: Additional Information for December 1943:

HISTORY OF THE 379TH BOMB. SQUADRON DETACHMENT IN LIBYA

December at Gambut starts off with the very pleasant, mild, sunshine weather we had experienced the previous month. However, as the month wore on we began to get a taste of the unpleasant weather which we had heard about from the British old timers, and which we had begun to doubt. By the end of December we were experiencing sharp, cold winds which blew almost 24 hours of every day, whipping the sand and dust along with it till visibility was restricted to less than 100 ft. Keeping equipment, clothes, or even one's own self clean became a physical impossibility and we soon resigned ourselves to working, eating, and sleeping in the ever present and aggravating dust.

Nevertheless, the month was not without brighter spots. To the total satisfaction of everyone, our food which had been pleasing everyone during the previous month became even better, with an increased supply of fresh meats and vegetables being flow in constantly from Cairo by the ATC. In addition, we acquired a large refrigeration trailer which enabled us to keep our fresh foods in perfect condition. Appropriately enough, our Christmas dinner, agreed upon by all as the best meal they had ever had in the army, was a credit to our mess sergeant. Turkey and all the trimmings, topped off by pie and ice cream, was the object of all this admiration. The ice cream, 20 gallons of it, flown up from Cairo, was secured through the efforts of our executive officer Major Houk.

Houk, George R., Maj, Executive Officer

Nor was December lacking in entertainment. In addition to our motion pictures which we enjoyed almost every night, we had two U.S.O. shows, one consisting of 5 girls and 1 man. On both occasions the troupes remained in camp overnight in tents set up temporarily for their use. After each of the shows, the entertainers were the guests of first the enlisted men's and then the officer's clubs where everyone had the chance to speak for a few moments at least, with an American girl once again. Only men who have been overseas for as long as ours can appreciate what a treat that was.

Another big boost in morale was the result of the generous PX rations sold on December 2nd and 19th and also issued free on Christmas Eve. Liberal quantities of candy, cakes, cigarettes, gum, fruit juices and last but not least, real American canned beer were included. To many of us, this was the first American beer we had tasted for over 15 months. In addition to this a plentiful supply of American Whiskey and scotch was secured, in most part from the British, to be sold in limited quantities at the Officers and enlisted men's clubs. On December 31st, Major Wetzel, our CO authorized a liberal free issue of these "hard drinks" at both clubs and thus enabled most of the men to see the old year out in the proper style.

Wetzel, Manford J., Maj, pilot, Commander

December 1943 (continued)

During the month of December we sent out a total of 25 missions over the Aegean Sea. However the “game” in the way of Jerry Shipping was neither large nor plentiful. Nevertheless, our crews turned in a month’s score of 9 Caiques, ranging in size from 45 to 200 tons, sunk, one 500 ton M/V damage, one 100 ton barge sunk, and a 100 ft Naval Auxiliary and a 200 ton barge set on fire. The attack on these latter three vessels provided the most eventful and costly mission of the month. This was the second mission which we sent out on December 24th. Our four planes sighted three boats just west of Antiparos Island and twice went in and attacked in spite of intense and very accurate flak which hit and damaged all four planes, wounded four crew members, and killed the co-pilot of one of the planes, 2nd Lt. Lindsey L. McCall. The loss of Lt. McCall was felt by everyone and it definitely dampened any Christmas Spirit that we might have had. He was buried with military honor in Cairo two days later, with a guard of honor headed by our Commanding Officer, Major Wetzel.

McCall, Lindsay LaRue, 2Lt, pilot

Wetzel, Manford J., Maj, pilot, Commander

ELLSWORTH C. KNIGHT, JR.
1st Lt., Air Corps
Squadron Intelligence Officer

HISTORY

379TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

SECTION II...Operations for December, 1943.

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>TARGET:</u>	<u>No. PLANES:</u>
Dec. 1	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 2	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 4	Sea Sweep	2 miss. 3 & 4 pl. 7
Dec. 5	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 6	Sea Sweep	2 miss. 4 & 4 pl. 8
Dec. 7	Sea Sweep	3 miss. 4 & 4 & 4 pl. 12
Dec. 8	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 10	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 11	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 13	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 15	Sea Sweep	4
Dec. 16	Sea Sweep	4

December 1943 (continued)

Dec. 19	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 20	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 22	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 24	Sea Sweep	2 miss. 4 & 4 pl.	8
Dec. 28	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 29	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 30	Sea Sweep		4
Dec. 31	Sea Sweep		4

Total sorties.....99
Brought Forward...1115

Grand Total.....1214

Total Squadron Missions for month...25
Total Squadron Missions brought forward...168

Grand Total.....193

December 1943 (continued)

380th BS War Diary: Additional Information for December 1943: None

381st BS War Diary: Additional Information for December 1943:

SPECIAL OUTLINE SECTION --- DECEMBER 1943

December has been the first month in which the 381st Squadron has operated as a training unit. The quick transition from a combat organization, with a fixed personnel to a training organization with a complete new roster of combat men, has resulted in a profound change in the spirit which dominates the Squadron.

A growing city of pyramidal tents now spreads over the hillside on which the caravan from Menzel Temime arrived last November. Veterans of the Squadron find it a strange and unexpected experience to walk down the paths which lead between these tents and find a familiar figure among the throngs who walk there, as these tents are occupied by a vast assortment of strange-faced tenants --- B-25-G trainees, who, tho they are inexperienced in combat flights, have had even more O.T.U. training in the United States than our original crews. To quote statistics: When the 381st was a combat organization, it had a permanent personnel totaling, as of 30 September 43, 64 officers and 276 enlisted men, with no officers and only three enlisted men attached. For the last day December, the figures had changed to 50 officers and 281 enlisted men assigned, 12 officers and 13 enlisted men attached, and 99 officers and enlisted men attached for rations and quarters; 455 men in all...an increase of 32% in resident personnel. Of these 455 officers and enlisted men, only 55% have been in the Squadron longer than two months.

The enervating days of combat missions, born in the thunder of early morning pre-flights, nourished with pre-dawn breakfasts and attuned to the hurry and bustle of briefing and take-off, have given away under the training program to the unspectacular and routine process of indoctrinating the new men: Endless lectures are delivered in the enlisted men's mess hall, lectures covering the myriad subjects requisite to the education of men well informed in combat procedure; and then there are the so-called "briefings" which inaugurate each training flight. Briefings which are a far cry from those of earlier days, when the entire roster of Group's Staff Officers was present, and quite often a General or two. Now the crews assemble near the Operations Tent and listen to a few instructive words by Capt. Coddington or one of his assistant operations officers. When these flights return, they aren't greeted with the hum of excitement which used to precede the landings and interrogations and consolidations after the planes had roared in from their targets. Here in Philippeville there are no thronged Intelligence Tents, no flash reports of airdromes bombed or Messerschmitts shot from the skies. No Red Cross girls or doughnuts or coffee ---.

December 1943 (continued)

Yet, upon those who view these old days with nostalgia, the law of compensations has bestowed a multitude of privileges. Definitely the important and certainly the most deeply appreciated of these are the Kuku Nut Gruve and the Officer's Club. Then too, there are the mess-halls, the comfortable departmental offices, and the pyramidal sleeping tents, whose stoves and electric lights and real cots and native grass rugs provide a standard of living hitherto experienced only in day dreams.

But in these days, the 381st Squadron stands divided into two camps, the new and the old. Perhaps to the inexperienced perception of these new men, the old soldiers of the 381st appear rustic, uncouth. Some of these uninitiated doubtless ponder the why of all the exuberance attending the establishment of the Kuku Nut Gruve, and compare unfavorably its simple luxuries with the facilities of U.S.O Clubs and P.X.'s which they left behind in America. Too, they wonder at our chow --- wonder why we are ravenous for white bread; wonder why we hail a minute spot of real butter as a momentous event. They approve of the ice, and mixed drinks and Scotch beer at the Gruve, but view it all as something no more than due them. "Is this where I draw my bed sheets?", one brand-new young officer inquired of the Supply Sergeant; an embryo gunner asked where he might obtain hot shaving water. Tho they consider the going over here pretty damn rugged (particularly without bed sheets), they will not have it too awfully rough because of the sacrifices of those who fought in the early days of the Campaign.

The calloused old codgers of the 381st have their side of the story too --- strange as it may seem to these new boys --- for the old men know that if these new men are green today, they themselves were also green six or eight months or a year or two ago. They know instinctively that upon them alone, as it did upon and even older generation of soldiers, rests the responsibility of this molding this unwieldy pack of roaring rookies into a fighting force worth of perpetuating the Squadron's traditions. If they pray for the grace with which to do it, they pray with full knowledge that it can and will be done, and that they alone are capable of accomplishing it.

BIRTH OF THE GRUVE

By M/Sgt. John E. McGary (*engineering, crew chief*)

One Candy Johnson, of fictional fame, gave birth to many virtuous ideas ..and ideals, too numerous to mention over one bottle of vin rouge, but his outstanding achievement, in the eyes of us who knew him best, was the Square Deal establishment...a haven where men could lose or spend their money honestly, whether at turning the pasteboards, galloping the dominoes or tilting a friendly glass of the available beverage.

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Red blooded Americans that we are, we appreciate these solid principles practiced by our frontier ancestor, and tho we find ourselves practically as forgotten men, in a remote section of Caesar's once famous African Empire, a place truly out of this world, we still stand by the rights of man to bend elbows with his cronies over a glass of spirits.

Reference: 1941 movie "Honky Tonk" fictional con-artist Candy Johnson (Clark Gable) and his "Square Deal" saloon.

And thus it was, that with Boom Town currency in our pockets, and the inevitable fighter's craving for chance and the quenching of thirst, we were confronted with the problem of a temperate and sociable outlet for these inhibitions, under squadron sanction, but without the appearance of squadron domination. Tho many bull sessions on the subject were pervaded by doubt, as to authoritative frowns and possible down right objections, we found that our administration was solidly behind us in an appropriate solution to the problem. Our C.O. not only gave his permission to the establishment of an enlisted men's bar, he offered fullest approval and cooperation. Thus evolved the successor to the old Square Deal.

Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Maj, pilot, Commander

We all know that Billy Rose is a past master at the after hour entertainment, in an alcoholic sort of way. But his ingenuity has been outstripped by our own organization. Altho we have no women...we have found that they are purely incidental anyway, after twelve months of abstinence...the Kuku Nut Gruve can hold its own among the big ten of all time night spots. All the adjectives thus far applied by the human race to objects of quality would fail to praise it justly.

Reference: William "Billy" Rose, theatrical showman and lyricist, known for his "Diamond Horseshoe" nightclub in NY City, and the song "Me and My Shadow", among others.

A sheet metal barn, previously resided in by a family of French and their asses, proved to be the suitable location, after a thorough renovation. Situated as it was, on the outskirts of the squadron area, it offered all the convenience of the round-the-corner tavern. After an N.C.O. meeting, at which officers and directors for the club were elected, and the possible objections were refuted, a call for volunteers was broadcast, and the actual transformation of the building was begun. In spite of airplanes and guard details, a considerable number of talents were available, and after five days of arduous effort, a complete change had come to pass.

The walls and ceiling became alive with palm leaves, and a few trees of small growth were transplanted here and there in an uncivilized sort of way. A magnificent bar, stained to a rustic brown, filled one end of the room. Tables, made from scavenged scrap lumber, were painted white and green. The entire floor was carpeted with native woven, natural straw matting. With baskets of fruit placed picturesquely about, a bower of Melanesian splendor was the final result.

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Reminiscent of one of its predecessors, in name only, the Boston Coco Nut Grove, the club was fully equipped with carbon-tet dispensers, so....when and if the wrath of God breaks loose upon us, if the fires of hell don't get you, phosgene will.

In order to obtain sufficient operating capital for the initial venture, the first three grades of squadron N.C.O.'s contributed five dollars each in the form of a loan, amounting to something over five hundred dollars, which proved to be enough for a beginning.

A fast and thorough search was made for liquor, soda water, ice, and citrus, and, with an ample and elegantly displayed supply of all, the bar was officially opened at 7:00 P.M., December 14.

The gala grand opening was complete...with smiles of approval and praise, as well as profound surprise, from Col. Hunter and his staff, present for the occasion, and Major Cometh and squadron staff officers; with convenient and appropriate jive tunes over the club radio; with photographers, and their ever faithful flash bulbs; with lucrative crap game to initiate the new dice table; and far from least in importance with a specially prepared Kuku Nut Gruve Special drink, which took like a grass fire but lacked the burn. Grins of pride and complete satisfaction adorned the faces of each and every squadron member present, all dressed in their Sunday finery for the affair.

*Cometh, Lawrence (NMI), Maj, pilot, Commander
Hunter, Anthony G., Col, pilot, 310th BG Commander*

Behind the bar, attired in white aprons, made tout suite by a local tailor from G.I. mattress covers, were the busiest and soberest men of the evening, Moon Morningstar, Wade Dawson, George Yousaitis, William Krasovec, and Joe Czajka, all with previous experience, who spent probably their most active evening as middlemen for those tasty beverages. Raking in the frog skins was Nels Johnson, treasurer, changing little ones into big ones as the profit rolled in. Myron Munson, club manager, and most active individual during construction, was hither and yon thru out the evening, acting the part of manager with perfection.

*Czajka, Joseph A., Sgt, cook, Mess Sgt
Dawson, Wade D., T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief
Krasovec, William F., S/Sgt, radio-gunner
Johnson, Nels R. "Chow-hound", Cpl,
Morningstar, Boyd D. "Moon", S/Sgt,
Munson, Myron C., S/Sgt,
Yousaitis, George (NMI) Cpl,*

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As president of the organization, and looking prosperous and important, as is expected on such occasions, Ellis Porter greeted visiting dignitaries with a hearty Texas handshake, as thousands cheers. Hud Tourtellot, secretary, and number two big wheel, was also here and there, tilting glasses and spreading pearls of wisdom with genial gesture characteristic of one Hud Tourtellot.

Porter, Ellis L., T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Tourtellot, Hudson R. "Hud", S/Sgt,

Wreathed in smiles and looking quite self satisfied were the other members of the club council, Hank Rumeau, who among other things does his bit as interpreter; Earl Sandstead; Frank Kiefer, who incidentally was responsible to a great extent for the wide selection of liquor obtained; Vilas Drew; and P.W. Ochs.

Drew, Vilas R., S/Sgt, armorer

Kiefer, Frank (NMI), S/Sgt,

Ochs, Percy W., S/Sgt, turret-gunner

Rumeau, Henry J. "Hank", M/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Sandstead, Earl S., T/Sgt, engineering, crew chief

Bob Spradling and John Gullic, squadron artists among other things, can well be proud of their efforts. As well as the knotty pine effect on bar and cabinets, and green and white of the tables, numerous signs and price lists, they took additional pains to transform practice bomb cases into attractive cigarette receptacles, bearing the name of each branch of service in the squadron, and tin cans into classic ash trays bearing the names of each of the original combat planes possessed by the squadron.

Gullic, John F., S/Sgt, bombardier

Spradling, Robert L., Jr., Sgt, engineering

The air reeked with tobacco smoke and spirits, mingled with crap, ten or four and a call for double brandy. A convivial atmosphere, which made the hardships of global war remote, was ever present, and a spirit of brotherhood, so necessary to a wartime outfit, prevailed over all. You will shout when it gets you, but yes indeed, altho the shouting was held to a pleasing murmur, music to the ears of all confirmed reprobates, which fortunately, only a few of us can claim to be. A great deal more could be said to praise our contribution to the rebirth of social drinking, but we will personally carry our tales back to our homeland with jubilation when the time has finally come. So, with pride in our achievement, not only as an example of ingenuity, cooperation, and closer harmony, but as a job excellently done by the enlisted men, for the full benefit of the enlisted men, we bring another chapter of the squadron adventure to a close.

December 1943 (continued)

428th BS War Diary: Additional Information for December 1943:

OUTLINE HISTORY

The first few days of December, 1943 were strange ones for the 428th, just as were those a year ago when the unit was learning the technique of combat the hard way. Now the situation was reversed. The unit had proven itself one of the most successful and efficient air corps outfits in the theater. There were 353 officers and men together once again (no mean achievement considering the story of the previous four months), learning how to relax now that they were on non-combat status. It was strange trying to fill a routine on the line, in the office, and in the air whose end result was not “36 sorties against ‘_____’”. Somehow or other we were apart, a detached fringe from this corner of the tapestry of global war.

To be stationed near the comforts and “opportunities” of Phillipville added to a strange and pleasant picture. The food improved, there was a permanent runway, and fuel for heating could be filched from a cork pile out in back of the area. Though few thought of it for long, it was a tremendous step away from Berteaux, King’s Cross, and most of all, Menzel Temime. That it wouldn’t last long for some of us was to be expected.

Already there was a furious forming of echelons, alerts, transposition of alerts, and the usual shuffling of echelons. The 428th and 380th, bolstered by “G” crews from the 379th and 381st who had been transferred were Corsica bound. The 381st was to remain to obtain and train a full squadron’s complement of “G” crews who were soon to arrive with their airplanes. Subsequently cadres of both the 381st and 428th remained behind to train “G” crews. Apparently each squadron was to be refitted with the cannon-bearing airplanes. Oh, India, here we come!

On the morning of December 7th, the ground echelon of 6 officers and 148 enlisted men departed with 48 vehicles Eastward bound for the staging area at Bizerte. The chopping up of the unit started once again in earnest. We left before dawn, uprooted again--the same being by now a semi-normal state of affairs. It seemed but yesterday that we had spent a night at the barren staging area near Souk El Arba, toward which we were headed to spend the night. As we drove through the Medjerda chain, a few of us wondered whether we’d ever see these hills again. Ain Draham, a picturesque French village perched atop these mountains, had been a cool haven from heat-bound King’s Cross last summer.

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On the afternoon of the eight we drove through bomb-torn Bizerte. The streets were cleared now, and military personnel were everywhere about, but it was still a shell of a city, as badly cracked as it had been last Spring. One look at our assigned spot in the staging area and we knew we'd "had it". It was a place with a beautiful view and more beautiful prospects for a nice mess of mud when a drizzle came. And it came--by the bucketsful. Though we were scheduled to drive right on to a vessel for shipment as soon as we arrived, we didn't take it too seriously. We prepared to hole in until we were accepted by some Corsica-bound water express.

Perhaps the most redeeming feature the staging area had to offer to counterbalance the quality of the muck was the excellent quality and quantity of the food. It only proved to the cynics that too much of the best rations are shortstopped at port areas. A Year in little, out-f-the-way wastelands was hard to forget. Our Christmas menu was to that date one of the high points of the war. That meal and the mail call Christmas Eve fanned the flagging enthusiasm. After almost three weeks of silence it was just what the doctor ordered.

On the 23rd we planned to embark once again, but the preparation went overboard on the old dry run gangplank. With the outfit conveniently scattered at 1100 on the morning of the 26th, the order came through for half our number to be ready to embark by 1400. At 1530, 3 officers, 70 enlisted men and 16 vehicles started to load on HMS LST No. 425. The remainder were left behind to catch another the "next day", which by this time was a threadbare brushoff.

HMLST 425 was an American-built LST manned by the British Navy. Many of the men slept on the decks. Some preferred to do so--the jitters if you like. The food was as bas as we had expected. This time we couldn't object--we had brought our own. Many a man envied their friends in the Navy just for the food he saw accorded the ship's crew. They were a hardworking lot for the whip was undermanned. But in light-fingerdness they far outstripped our boys. The flotilla commander was aboard but the less said of him, the better. We weighted anchor at 2100 on the evening of the 27th and were on our way, four LST's and a Liberty Ship preceded by two mine sweepers.

That afternoon, one of the LST's and a Liberty Ship slipped into Cagliari and 3 LST's went what seemed their lonely way. Somehow or other the two tiny mine sweepers up ahead didn't seem too formidable an escort. On widely spaces occasions a single fighter plane would come into view. On the evening of the 29th, we pulled into the island harbor of beautiful Maddalena. In the distance we could see Capraia, the little island where it is reported that Mussolini had been taken and dramatically rescued by the Germans with the aid of bribed Italian Officers, into whose custody he was placed.

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The next morning we bulled anchor at 0700, Ajaccio bound. This time we left a mine sweeper and the 3rd LST behind. The next day she proceeded towards Bastia on an ill-fated run. She was blown in two by a mine some distance SW of Borgo with a loss of one half her human cargo of 300 QM personnel. The latter had been bivouacked next to us at Bizerte. Such is the stuff of fate.

All things considered, the trip was uneventful--perfect, from the official point of view. We dropped anchor in the beautiful harbor of Ajaccio at 1400 hours. By 1700 hours, the first motor convoy headed for the staging area at Mezzovia perhaps 7 miles Northwest of the town.

The 31st day found us busily engaged, both setting up after the hasty camp preparations of the night before, and trying to find out if we were to shove off the next day. As usual the end purposes were diverse. The personnel moved to Ajaccio almost en mass New Year's Eve. The evening was surprisingly quiet. At 10:30 we were back at the base, all of us sound, and most of us sober. Thus was the passing of Anno Domini 1943. Nor were there any tears over its passing.

As a unit, we had been lucky during the past year in many ways. Our losses were lower than any of the other squadrons in the group, and we had a larger number of enemy kills. Since the beginning of the year, when we first started into combat, the feeling had grown in the squadron that our unit was something more than just another squadron; in fact, sentiment could be found quite prevalent that the 428th Squadron was, in a large part, the 310th Group. Of course, it was always difficult to get members of the other three squadrons to admit this, but occasionally, in a confidential mood, or perhaps when not quite sober, and therefore not inhibited, they would sigh and confess that yes, the 428th was probably, all in all, the best squadron in the group.

Though we had been fortunate as a unit, there are very few, if any, among the squadron's personnel that regret that 1943 is over. We have come through some of the roughest living conditions any of us have ever seen, which probably reached their worst at King's Cross, where for two weeks the wind blew at 25 miles per hour, and it was 120 degrees in the shade, Surely 1944 will be better.