



War Diary of the 340th Bombardment Group July 1945

Transcribed from US Army microfilm and illustrations added by
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*The 340th Bombardment Group on Corsica
Photo Credit: 57th Bomb Wing Archives*

Prepared by S/Sgt. Martin Quigley

July 1, 1945

Well, there now seems to be no doubt that we'll be going home soon, very soon. Most say by the middle of the month. The combat crews are scheduled to start moving out this week. Today was another beach day with a movie in the evening. Most everybody has a fine tan by now. We couldn't have hit a better spot to sweat this redeployment.

July 2, 1945

The rumor has it the combat crews will fly their ships back – except the tail gunners who will go by boat with the ground echelons. It's getting almost impossible to find a seat at group movie because of the swarms of Limies who descend each evening. Of course, we can go to their movie too, but theirs is indoors, Odion Hall, which is called Odious Hall. C'est la paix.

July 3 – 4, 1945

[No entries for these dates.]

July 5, 1945

Well, the air crews have all left, and the field is really deserted. We've had clothing and equipment shakedowns, and the EM are all down to three suits of suntans and bare essentials. Good to get rid of the stuff.

July 6 – 7, 1945

[No entries for these dates.]

July 8, 1945

This really was a day of rest. We've been pretty busy getting packed and cleaning up odds and ends. The boys in the orderly rooms have really had their hands full. Men are coming in from other outfits to go home with us. The poop is there'll be a shaking down of the group when we get to the States and high-point men will be cut loose. Meantime there are furloughs ahead for all of us. Is there really a place called the States?

July 9, 1945

Went back to work in earnest today. Packing supplies and equipment, stenciling crates and shipping boxes, turning in equipment. It's hard to turn loose of a lot of equipment that was hard to get. Might need it in the Pacific.

July 10, 1945

Same thing.

July 11, 1945

[No entry for this date.]

July 12, 1945

Much more of the same. This packing is really a chore.

July 13, 1945

Rumors are really going around. Looks like we'll be in Naples sweating the boat before the end of the month. Some say we leave here the next few days.

July 14, 1945

Big crap game tonight at the EM club, which has closed up as far as drinks and dancing are concerned. Heavy, the cook, seems to be a large winner.

July 15, 1945

Well, two of the squadrons are leaving for Naples tomorrow, and headquarters and the other two will leave the next day. Can it be true? Everything's packed except the barest living facilities. Last Sunday on the beach, and we made the most of it.

July 16, 1945

The 486th and 487th squadrons left by truck today, and the place is more deserted than ever. It's a two day drive. We'll leave in the morning. Last night here. Whee.

July 17, 1945

We traveled all day, mostly in open trucks and jeeps, through some very beautiful and rugged country and made Rome toward late afternoon. Our convoy got scattered because two trucks had trouble and one stayed back to help them. But by midnight everyone was bedded down at the infantry conversion training center. It was a good feeling to know we were merely spending the night there instead of coming in to be made doughfeet. [sic]

July 18, 1945

We made Staging Area No. 1, Naples, this afternoon. It was another hot day on the road, but not as dusty as yesterday. We all got bedded down, showered and fed. Hope we don't stay here long, because we ain't used to this repple depple life.

July 19 – 20, 1945

[No entries for these dates.]

July 21, 1945



Young Italian Waif

Photo: Hymie Setzer Collection

Nothing going on much, except sweating the boat. We hear we're going home on a medium-sized troop ship called the Crystal Bowl, probably within a week. Lots of the men are taking their last fling at Naples which seems dirtier and fouler than ever. Little boys and little girls running along the street: "Wanna gal, Joe? Wanna drink, Joe? Wanna sleep, Joe?" But the opera and the Red Cross club are pretty nice.

July 22 – 24, 1945

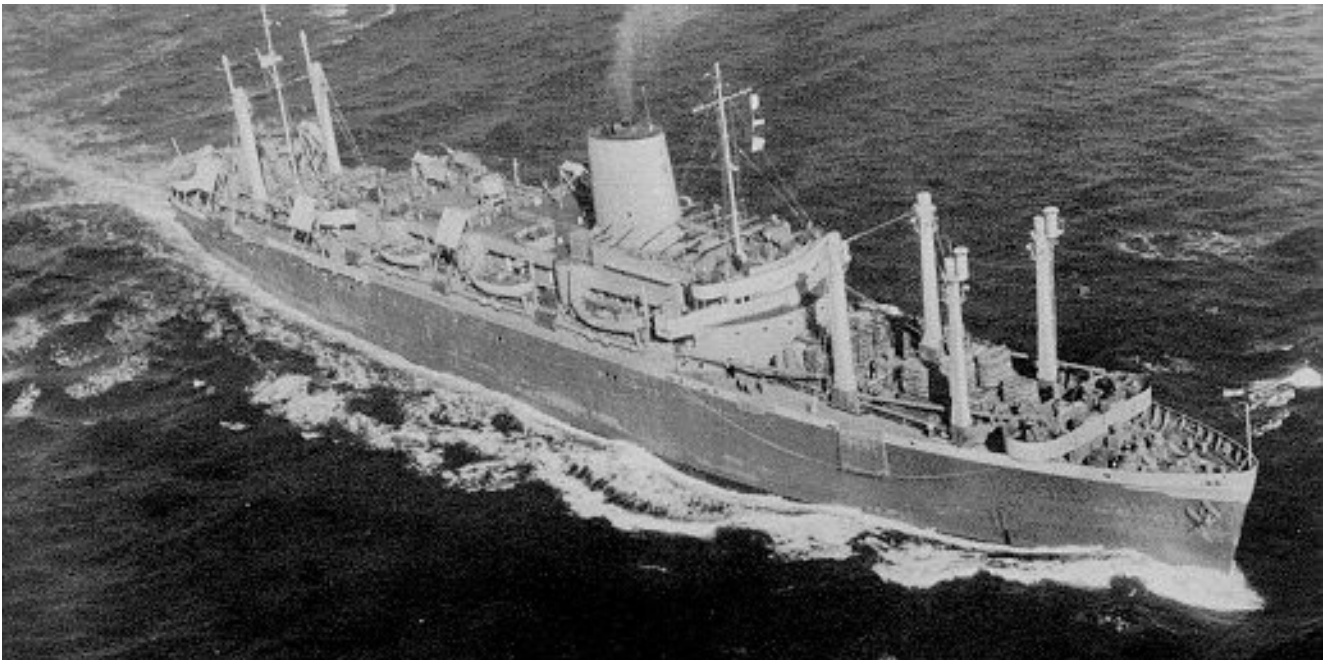
[No entries these dates.]

July 25, 1945

More of the same. We've got our personal baggage all tagged and ready to go. Rumor is that tomorrow's the last day for passes to town.

July 26, 1945

Saw Naples for the last time, and most of us don't care if we never see it again. The 486th and 487th actually boarded the ship today. It's the Cristobal, not the Crystal Ball, but that was close for a rumor at that. Understand it takes the ship 10 days to cross. Not too bad, not too bad at all. In two weeks we may be in our own homes.



The SS Cristobal during WWII

Photo: Collected from www.czbrats.com

July 27, 1945

We boarded about noon today in a pretty orderly and unconfused manner. The ship is double-loaded, and the EM share their bunks with others. We get them during night hours and they get them during daylight, and halfway along we'll switch over. The weather is hot and clear, and it won't be too bad sleeping on deck. At four p.m. the Cristobal steamed out and kept going, and by dark we were almost clear of any land.

July 28 – 31, 1945

[No entries for these dates.]