



War Diary of the 340th Bombardment Group May 1943

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*

May 1, 1943

No mission today, and the weather was cloudy and gloomy most of the day. There were a few spurts of rain this afternoon and this evening, but it hardly settled the dust. Everyone was quite restless, especially the combat crew members. We are trying to work out some kind of special services for the men and Colonel Mills has suggested some kind of weekly show.

The British are pounding the Hell out of the Germans, and it looks as if they will either evacuate or be annihilated soon. The American 1st Army is pushing in from the other front, and the front is getting almost congested. A British Captain talked to the men in the 486th last night and gave quite a glowing picture of the Allied drive against the Germans.

May 2, 1943

It was terribly warm today, and we are beginning to get a preface of what we will have to face in the summer. However we hope it will all be over by summer, and we can settle down to some cooler climate. We haven't had any mail for 4 days now, and we would sure welcome it now. Lt. Gjertson is scheduled to go to Cairo tomorrow for a special service meeting. We have our special service tent set up as a sort of a day room for the men, and the officers are thinking of setting up an Officer's club soon. We are also planning a Group bakery for baking bread and pastries for the Group. There has been no missions for the Group for the past several days.

May 3, 1943

A very dull day today, and the men are getting quite impatient at the inactivity. Colonel Mills is quite active in trying to organize the different departments such as ordnance, armament, etc. to meet the needs of the organization. Captain Summers is the Colonel's right hand man, and with his 25 years of experience in maintaining aircraft, proves invaluable as Group Technical Inspector, Engineering officer, and mainly, Matériel officer. Captain Marquand [Captain Donald J. Marcan], who joined us at Kabrit, had replaced Major Whittington as Commanding Officer of the 487th Squadron. Thus things gradually heal themselves after a major catastrophe like the loss of Major Whittington.

May 4, 1943

Early this morning eighteen planes took off for a mission. The results were successful as far as the planes were concerned, as all returned safely with crews. However, it wasn't so successful, so far as the bombing was concerned. The ceiling was low, and there was a dense fog over the target. Several of the planes found a small hole in the clouds and dropped their bombs on Axis targets. However, some of our planes and more of the British planes bombed our own lines, and must have played Hell with the morale of the British Eighth Army. We are still working with the 12th Bomb Group.

May 5, 1943



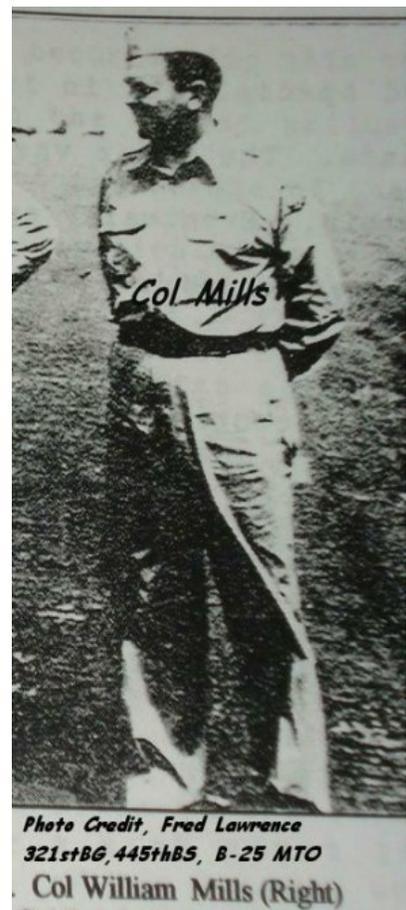
The Yacht Club Boys: Charles Adler, George Kelly, Billy Mann & Jimmie Kern

The main event of the day was the visit of the Yacht Club Boys who accompanied us over here on the West Point. They had befriended many of our officers on the boat, and they were all quite glad to see each other. Captain Keller, 486th Bomb Squadron C.O., was honored with a birthday party including the Yacht Club Boys. Everyone is in good spirits. This afternoon the Yacht Club Boys gave a show at 2:00 and one at 6:00 P.M. In the middle of the 6:00 o'clock show Colonel Tokaz came forward, and announced a mission for tomorrow of great proportions and all were awakened to the grim work at hand.

May 6, 1943

Today goes down on the annals of the 340th Bomb Group as one of tragedy. Even more tragic than Shakespeare's "Hamlet," one of the most terrible horrors of war, was the loss of the key man of our group, the commanding officer. Colonel Mills, Lt. Zerga, Lt. Penny [Edgar Penny], Captain Marquand [Marcan], C.O. 487th Bomb Squadron, T/Sgt. Warren, and Sgt. McGuire [Russell E. McGuire] went down in flames today when hit by flack while leading a flight across the target. Colonel Mills would have wanted it that way. All day throughout the Headquarters, his presence prevailed. His desk sat idle with papers in the in basket waiting to be signed, and all the time we expected to see the Colonel bend down, push aside the netting at the door of the tent and walk in. His humor of yesterday still ringed in our ears, and his recent speeches to department heads, Commanding Officers, and others filled the memories of all. His body is dead, but his work goes on, and the 340th goes on.

Captain Bachrach [Robert Bachrach] brought his ship in with the co-pilot lying dead on his shoulder, a piece of flak in his leg, and all of the instruments shot away from in front of him. The dead co-pilot was Lt. Bennett [Robert R. Bennett] of the 486th who had a leg shot away and probably bled to death. Captain Bachrach brought the ship in for a beautiful belly landing, being unable to get the landing gear down. In a complete daze from the recent shock, he must have brought the plane in on a sixth sense being without instruments or co-pilot.



*Photo Credit, Fred Lawrence
321stBG, 445thBS, B-25 MTO
Col William Mills (Right)*

Photo: 57th Bomb Wing Archives

B-25C Mitchell of the 340th Bomb Group was forced down at Djedeida, Tunisia and closely examined by Luftwaffe personnel who sent detailed reports on the bomber back to Germany.



"Pink Lady" Desert Camouflage Paint

The planes left on a second mission this afternoon and all returned safely. Captain Bailey [Malcolm A. Bailey] went on both missions, and surely deserves credit, though we still consider Captain Bachrach our one live hero of the day. Colonel Mills has gone ---- almost unbelievable that Major Whittington, "Whit," the Colonel, Captain Marcan, all the big boys gone ---- just a few left. The boys this morning were all pretty badly hit, and one crew from the 486th bailed out near the field when they returned this morning. We on the ground look up at the skies and sweat them out as the "pink ladies" come back, some with but one motor, half a tail, or full of holes, coming in on their bellies, or crashing when

landing, salvoing a hung bomb over the Mediterranean not far off. The 12th Bomb Group has not fared so bad, though at first they had our bad luck also. They lost a Colonel at first, captured to the Germans.



Photo: 57th Bomb Wing Archives

Colonel Mills was that unusual composite of an old seasoned pilot, and an incomparable administrator. He was proud of his Group. It was his baby, and he had nursed it along to the best of his ability. It was Colonel Mills who stood El Kabrit and all eastern Egypt on end shaking down equipment for the group. It was Colonel Mills who whipped the group into shape to come over here in the first place. It was Colonel Mills who believed in a cause so much that he died for it. It was not necessary, expected or the custom for him to go on that mission this morning; but that old democratic spirit prevailed. He wouldn't ask his men to do anything that he wouldn't do.

And the good men pass on leaving the weaklings and less talented to carry on. That is the sacrifice for victory. The Axis is loosing terrific ground, and we are loosing also; but not as great as they are.

May 7, 1943

Today the 340th awoke to the grim reality of yesterday, and shook its battered frame indignantly, but still went on. Colonel Tokaz caught up the dangling strings, and knotted them together to tie the group once more into that persevering band of pugilists it has always been. The personal effects of the deceased were packed, and taken care of by Lt. Fowler and Captain Kisselman.

One cannot help take cognizance of one little book found among the personal belongings of Lt. Jo Zerega [“Honest Joe” Joseph J. Zerega], his diary. Here were recorded some of the most pitiful premonitions of the conscience that I have ever read; written by a man who held a mixed fear and certainty of death that must have been heart-aching. Having barely escaped from that great eternity of blackness by a hair breath several times, he probably had good reason to be uneasy. Lt. Zerega had bailed out, and missed the crew of Major Whittington's ill-fated ship merely by the flip of a coin. Fate had toyed playfully with Jo Zerega for many months before she dealt her final blow.

The 12th Bomb Group sent out a nine plane mission to sink a German destroyer, but the weather was so cloudy that the planes came back without sinking the ship. No other missions. In the meantime the Allied forces took Tunis and Bizerte going at break-neck speed through the German tanks, taking thousands of prisoners and following closely at the heels of the devastation wrought [wrought?] by the bombings.

May 8, 1943

Today a stringent process of renovation of the executive branch of the 340th Bomb Group Headquarters took place. Captain Shireman [Samuel F. Shireman], of the 486th Bomb Squadron was placed in operations as assistant Group operations officer. Lt. Parsons [Lewis F. Parsons] was placed as the new Commanding Officer of the 487th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Fowler's together with the other adjutant's promotions went in. In one month all of our officers should be up another notch.

There was a mission went off today and Pantelleria, a small island in the Mediterranean off the coast of Tunisia not far from Tunis, was bombed heavily. There was a field held by the Axis that had harbored many annoying fighter planes. Eighteen planes of ours came back safely.

An athletic show was put on in Sfax today by the British, starring some good horsemanship, and track events.

May 9, 1943

Two eighteen plane formations from the 12th Bomb and 340th went out this morning and again this afternoon to bomb Pantelleria. They are doing a full time job upon the retreating Axis armies, and the small island of Pantelleria has been practically demolished. No word of Colonel Mills.

Chaplain Cooper held services outside of Headquarters this morning, and many men attended the Catholic services over at the 12th. The British boys from the Royal Engineers stationed near here come around quite often and seem quite desirous of obtaining our friendship. A couple of “Wogs” came around to HQ to obtain permission to gather some of the produce from the gardens in our tenting area. We gave them permission, but kept a guard on them at all times.

The Allies have, by means of splitting the forces of the German and Italians over again and again, drove them back so fast it is almost unbelievable. Bombs, tanks, and infantry have pushed the Nazis into the sea. It is our belief that an Allied air force may be established at Pantelleria island.

May 10, 1943

They bombed Pantelleria island again today this morning and this afternoon concentrating on the harbor there. The Germans and I-ties have made futile attempts to restore order on the island after the bombings, but they are so concentrated and frequent that it is practically useless.

Visited Sfax today and was very much impressed by the lack of life and total destruction present. The downtown district was absolutely depopulated, and all the fancy French shoppes and business establishments were nothing more than a store front with piles of debris behind them. We visited the town major, an austere looking Englishman with a handle-bar mustache, and tried to get some lumber for showers. "There is no lumber to be had here my lad," and so we drove past the old French fort whose gray stone walls were crumbling from age and recent battle, and returned back to camp.

There are quite a few "recommendations for awards" being sent in to the Ninth Air Force Headquarters on behalf of some of our boys of the flight echelon who have performed miraculous feats on missions, or who still live and bear the battle scars. I for one am in favor of giving them everything we can. They deserve it. Morale has considerably improved though, due largely to the brilliant successes the Allies have made in the past few days in their big push, and partly to the supreme efforts of men like Lt. Pearlstein to raise morale by baseball games, and other forms of diversion.

Our planes have had little opposition over the island of Pantelleria and have all returned safely. Frequently a couple of B-25's sneak out and sink an enemy cruiser, spot a submarine, and are getting quite adept at "spotting" enemy movements, which are in turn reported and lead to their destruction. (the enemies)

May 11, 1943

Today 18 planes went on a mission to bomb some gun emplacements about 10 miles North-North-West of Enfidaville. Considerable damage was inflicted and many enemy casualties were caused. All our planes returned safely. These missions are becoming quite routine, and the safety factor is much better than for the first few missions. The mopping up operation on Cap Bon is almost complete, and has been one of the most spectacular of the current war. It can safely be called equal to any German Blitz yet performed. One and only one thing made this rapid advance possible, and that was AIR SUPERIORITY. We trust we may maintain superiority for the rest of the war.

Today we were honored by the visit of the crew of officers of a merchant marine ship in the harbor at Sfax. Lt. Fowler, Lt. Pearlstein, and Captain Cover brought these gentlemen out to the field after imbibing in a bit of good food and spirits on the boat. Lt. Gjertson returned from Cairo last Monday, yesterday, and brought back the spirits that fired some of the dignitaries of the 340th to happiness.

No other than the famous Eddie Rickenbacker landed this morning just before noon in a DC-3, and just before the mission took off for Enfidaville, this gentleman addressed the members of the 12th and 340th Bomb Group. He told us of his experience at sea, when he was lost on the ocean for eighteen days, and then proceeded to size up the war situation in true Newspaper style, emphasizing the difficult fighting from island to island with the Japs, and casting bouquets on the recent Allied successes in North Africa. Personally I was little impressed by his address, and thought it rather canned and colored by nationalistic enthusiasms.

May 12, 1943

Several days ago, we were visited by a Rabbi, (Jewish Chaplain) and given some startling news. The British Chaplain was fresh from the front and affirmed the former report of three parachutes coming out of Colonel Mill's ship. Today, Captain Bachrach received information that Captain Marcan was interned in a hospital in Tunis, formerly in German hands, but now Allied. Lt. Fowler wired for confirmation.

“Today is a red letter day in the history of the World War No. 2. Africa is in Allied hands. A small band of Germans remain encircled between Enfidaville and Hammamet. Otherwise the war is over in Africa.

May 13, 1943

[No entry for this date.]

May 14, 1943

Lt. King, Anthony J. came in this afternoon upon request by wire of Colonel Tokaz. Captain Kisselman has had quite a job in S-2 keeping everything going, and Lt. King is said to have more weight with the combat crews than Captain K. However, this may be just a rumor. Lt. King has been acting adjutant of the 340th rear party and we are extremely happy to see him with us again.

Haircuts and showers have been quite a problem here. Several of the squadrons have erected showers out of barrels on stilts, and HQ has constructed a platform with drainage for the decontamination truck to squirt water on us. Haircuts have been taken care of to some extent by young would-be barbers in the squadrons, but we need something like a Group barbershop. “Cross-Country Romance,” a movie was shown at the 12th Bomb Group last night, and many of our boys attended.

Many of the fellows in our Group including myself have been suffering with diarrhea, or the G.I.s, probably due to improper washing facilities for mess kits. The water for these is usually pretty hot, but it is so hard, that the soap won't dissolve. The “G.I.'s” are the most irritating malady in the army. Besides the discomfort of running for the stool every fifteen minutes, the patient has no appetite, headaches, is weak as a cat, and is generally out of sorts.



May 15, 1943

Colonel Tokaz flew up to Tunis today to see Captain Marcan who is interned in the hospital there, and also to try to find out something of the others in that ill-fated plane. He returned with little news, however, as Captain Marcan had been moved to another hospital. However, he did make one startling discovery, and that was Lt. Davis's ship [See April 27, 1943 entry.] lying on the beach after apparently making a successful belly landing. Its crew is probably safe in enemy hands, or better yet may be

among the many prisoners that the Germans left behind.

The day passed rather dull otherwise. With no missions and a two-day stand-down, there is very little to do but mark time until our orders to move come.

May 16, 1943

Saturday proved to be another quiet day for the 340th. Battle has completely ceased in North Africa now as far as we are concerned and renewed activity is not expected for almost a month when the Allies will probably start another big push, into Italy. Latest information places us some place between Tunis and Bizerte carrying out raids on Sicily and Italy. Corsica and Sardinia are in consideration also.

May 17, 1943

Last night we put on a little show for the group, and it was well attended by the British lads from across the way. They seem to enjoy our entertainments very much. The 12th Bomb Group observed Sunday today, but the 340th took little cognizance of it except to conduct regular church services. No one is doing a lot of work these days, and trips to the ruins of El Djem as well as other forms of recreation are in order. The Red Cross has arranged fishing trips for the boys in Sfax. They rent small sail-boats and tackle and spend the day on the Mediterranean fishing for small fish.

The Post Exchange truck came in today and brought Post Exchange supplies. These are distributed evenly among men and officers in the group, except in the case of Hard liquors and these are distributed to the Officers only. The 12th distributes the latter also to enlisted men. Day rooms have been built by the squadrons for officers and enlisted men. Headquarters has had some dissension as to day rooms. Quite an emphasis is being placed on Special services at the present time. Major Paul has taken quite an interest in this work, but his effusive "spinning his wheels" does not do much towards special services but arouse the animosity of Lt. Gjertson, special services officer. Major Paul has fallen a little out of control since that supreme governor, Colonel Mills, passed away. Much of the old steady stick-to-itiveness of the Command section has disappeared, and the executive machinery has been missing badly lately. Enlisted men are nettled at the officers, the officers are nettled at each other and at the enlisted men.

May 18, 1943

The Yacht Club boys were here again Monday night, and will be here Thursday night. Our big dance is scheduled for tomorrow afternoon in Sfax. Morale is improved, but everyone is quite uneasy due to the lack of activity. Some formation flying is planned to finish up the time on the airplane engines, which do not have enough time left for missions, but can cruise around the immediate proximity with little trouble for the lifetime of the engines. Missions are usually performed at full-throttle.

May 19, 1943

The big event of the day was the dance in Sfax. Music was provided by an English orchestra and by recordings. The Yacht Club boys provided a bit of entertainment between dances, and refreshments

were served [by] the natives. All natives came...the whole family. Mothers wheeled baby buggies up the steps of the large hall that was partially shattered by recent bombings. The girls were simple but willing, and the dance was a great success on the whole.

May 19, 1943 [sic. The date was repeated in the record.]



Gen. Aubry Strickland

The great event of the day today, was the promotion of Captain Kisselman to Major, Lt. Fowler, Lt. Farmer [Galen V. Farmer], Lt. Garske [George C. Garske], Lt. Cassada [Randall C. Cassada], Lt. Nozick and Lt. Schreiner [Henry J. Schreiner] to Captain. Major Kisselman and Captain Fowler were the prominent figures around Headquarters, and the proper insignias miraculously popped out of nowhere upon the Officers. It all came about amid another whirlpool of activity out on the line. This was the decoration of Many men of the 12th with medals by General Brereton and General Strickland and also T/Sgt. Deardorf [Walter J. Deardorf] of the 488th Bomb Squadron. We had not been notified of the ceremony, and were surprised when we received an S.O.S. From the 12th Bomb Group, saying that T/Sgt. Deardorf was holding up the ceremony. Three generals waited out there in a chilly, rainy wind for one G.I. Sergeant.

Yes we have had rain of late. I never believed it could happen on the African dessert, but Monday night when the Yacht Club boys were here, the show was "rained" out and was finally held in the 486th Mess Hall tents. And it was a cold rain too. There was not so terribly much of it, but it settled the dust and the sand packed into a hard crust.

May 20, 1943

The Yacht Club boys performed again today or rather this evening, with something a little different. They had one new song, and a couple of new acts including a Negro who blew Hell out of a bugle and a corporal who was a pretty good magician.

Sgt. James Q. House, our public relations man of operations caused quite a little stir in Headquarters the other day. Sgt. House was former city editor on a newspaper in Alhambra California, and has been doing a darn fine job of writing for the Ninth Air Force Public Relations Office; in fact we received a wire from a Colonel there, asking for him to spend four weeks in Cairo in their office, and with some hint of a commission in the offing. Sgt. House was quite delighted of course, and the decision of whether or not he would go was left in the hands of Colonel Tokaz. The Colonel foresaw the possibility of losing Sgt. House and decided to keep him here, as one of our own personnel. Sgt. House, being somewhat griped at the decision, talked himself into a Staff Sergeant rating, and now is quite happy.

Then a question of T/O [Table of Organization] strength came up with the fact that most of the Squadrons and Headquarters have exceeded the T/O by promoting too many men. "No more promotions this side of the ocean" and all non-coms will have to toe the mark from now on to keep their rating from some other deserving G.I. One T/Sgt. in the 487th was busted to a private the other day for not eating in the right mess hall, more for his impertinence probably than his action.

Dysentery is still running rampant in the 340th, and very few Officers or men have missed these grueling G.I.'s.

May 21, 1943

“Wog” originates, so I am told from “Wily Oriental Gentleman.” At any rate that is not the impression of the average G.I. who sees a shabby clad, diseased looking native begging on the streets, or walking beside a heavily burdened little donkey down the side of the road. In other words, most army men look at “Wogs” in the same light that they regard Negroes back in the States. We have had a couple of desperate young gentlemen in the 340th who have asked permission to marry one of these “Wog” or French girls. Of course, disapproved.

The landing field at Castel Benito is flooded from recent rains, and the Transport group that carried our mail and supplies is taking a four day moratorium so that it can move its outfit. Therefore we are going to have to run a Courier plane down to Tripoli if we want communication with the outside world. The Yacht Club boys are stuck here for the next three days until they get transportation out. There are quite a few fighter planes and bombers flying over and stopping for refueling, and most outfits are practicing maneuvers at this time.

May 22, 1943

Major Charles E. Murray was assigned to this Headquarters on May 17, 1943. Major Murray is a pilot and engineering officer who will no doubt be of great assistance to Captain Summers. However, that word “Assistance” presents a problem, as “Daddy” Summers as he has been nicknamed, has handled the Matériel section of the 340th so completely and thoroughly, that he will probably resent the advent of a superior officer. Captain Summers was an old master sergeant for some years on the line and has had considerable practical experience. He has proven himself of tremendous value since the 340th hit foreign shores. Colonel Mills had great confidence in “Daddy” and kept placing more and more responsibility on his hands.

33 vehicles including trucks, jeeps, ambulances and weapon carriers left Kabrit on the 15th, destined for Sfax and our “A” party. “A” party now consists of almost all of the 340th, and those remaining at Kabrit which consists of about 10 officers and 200 enlisted men, are being moved up here as soon as traveling accommodations by boat and truck can be arranged.

We are now enjoying a rest period in the 340th. Planes are being repaired, engines changed and “slow-time” being flown on new engines as well as that required to use up the remaining time on the old engines. The 12th Bomb Group held a dance in Sfax today for their officers and some of our notables. Swimming in the Mediterranean is quite in season, and visits to nearby boroughs, untouched by the horrors of war, is quite common. The rest has a desultory effect on some, and others slack off into foolish dissipation like over-indulging in “Wog” wine, visiting the town house of prostitution, and quarreling among themselves. The other evening several fellows got drunk, pulled out their 45's and started to give each other the works. Luckily, their aim was bad, but they filled several barracks bags full of holes, and caused the whole 488th Bomb Squadron to be restricted for a few days.

The S-2's are all going to Tripoli tomorrow for a meeting. The 486th flew down to Tripoli and brought back enough beer for their squadron. Captain Nozick and Major Brussels are in Tripoli for a few days

getting medical supplies and other business. Captain Nozick [Joseph H. Nozick] has been the subject of several complaints of late, due to his failure to keep appointments and do dental work. Several fellows with decaying molars have found it practically impossible to see the little dentist, appointment or no appointment. Colonel Tokaz has been flying a good bit of late, up to Tunis, down to Tripoli, and elsewhere. No news of moving orders to date, but we expect to move up on the other side of Tunis soon.

May 23, 1943

Sunday started with early morning Catholic services at the 12th Bomb Group and Protestant services later at our own Group conducted by Chaplain Cooper. Otherwise the day was extremely slow, with many of the Officers and men going to Sfax, the beach, and on little trips around the country-side.

May 24, 1943

There was a real old western "shootin'" picture over at the 12th Bomb Group this evening, entitled "Tombstone." Coming attractions are such pictures as "King's Row," "Cross-Country Romance," and "Gold Rush" with Charlie Chaplain. The 12th Bomb Group has their own 16-millimeter projector, and we are scheduled to get one of these also. The boys enjoy movies better than anything as evidenced by the terrific crowds that assemble over at the 12th.

Colonel Tokaz and Captain Bachrach are in Tripoli and the S-2's are there attending a S-2 conference. We are trying to get whip [sic] the group in shape at the present time for the struggles yet to come, and we are firmly convinced that there WILL be struggles of no small intensity. Captain Fowler has been applying himself with zest of late.

May 25, 1943

General Brereton is scheduled to arrive here Thursday, May 27th for a formal inspection of personnel and equipment. We hope that he will be convinced of the shortage of equipment in the 340th to such an extent that he will take action to try to get up some supplies.

A terrifically dull day today, with little to talk about.

May 26, 1943

Flight Officer Dickson went to Cairo, and a new cypher Officer, 2nd Lt. Kalina is attached to us for duty. Major Murray reported for duty yesterday, and appears to be a regular fellow; ~~at least we have been able to find no trace of chicken manure in his makeup so far.~~ [sic. Strike-through in the original.]

Several of the officers have been going into SFAX for French lessons from some of the more comely feminine populus. We had an assembly this [sic. Sentence unfinished.]

May 27, 1943

There are serious movements in the group in the direction of preparedness for moving. We are under the impression that we will probably move about 100 miles north of here to someplace in between Sousse and Tunis. This will give us excellent bombing range for Sicily and southern Italy. Long range flying fortresses stationed around Bizerte would be in easy bombing range of Rome and Naples. We also believe that the 12th Bomb Group will move with us, though much equipment is being called for to enable us to function individually, such as a crash truck, field lights, etc.

Our convoy is expected in within a day or two, and the rest of the Group are coming up from Kabrit by boat. We should all be together again, for practically the first time since we left Walterboro, within a week or so. The 29th, a significant day of the month in our history, is Memorial Day, and preparations are being made for a service at the Sfax cemetery in memory of those brave members of our Group who have passed on in sacrifice for this dreadful war we are fighting.

May 28, 1943

Post Exchange supplies rolled in this afternoon from Tripoli, and now we have beer, toilet articles, and some tobacco. Efforts are being made to organize an "A" party to precede the Group to our next destination, though all personnel and equipment is expected to be moved in our next move as soon as possible by means of a shuttle service with the limited transportation now on hand. We have heard nothing more from our boat load of equipment that was scheduled to arrive in Suez at any time. All of the equipment sent over from the States is pooled at Heliopolis, Egypt, and new units never see their old equipment again, and are issued old stuff, inadequate supplies for successful operation. The convoy of 33 vehicles from Kabrit rolled in this evening with jeeps, office trailers, and trucks.

May 29, 1943

Major Murray has been assigned to the 487th Bomb Squadron and is now acting in the capacity of Squadron Commander. Lt. Parsons received his Captaincy. Several cooks from each squadron and from Headquarters are attending a short course in the culinary art down at Tripoli. At the present time we have almost a hundred men attached to Headquarters for duty, from the Squadrons, and the 340th is now beginning to function literally as a group. The latter part of the afternoon was spent in extensive planning by the 12th and 340th for a joint Memorial Day service tomorrow out at the Sfax cemetery. A mission of nine planes is being planned for tomorrow morning.

May 30, 1943

The Memorial Day services were quite impressive and both Group Commanders spoke a few words. The nine plane mission roared away overhead to the target, and gave evidence to the dead that the work they started was being carried on. Major Whittington's grave was beautiful, with a riot of colored flowers and foliage.

One plane failed to come back from the 487th Bomb Squadron, but is believed to have landed safely in Pantelleria. The target was troop concentrations on this island. The crew members of the missing plane were Sgt. Bernstein [Ted Bernstein], 1st Lts. Sherbourne [Ray Sherbourne], Cunningham [Edward

J. Cunningham] & McCabe [Charles P. McCabe] & S/Sgt. Berry. Later information this afternoon confirmed that all members were safe in Hospital in Tunis except T/Sgt. Bernstein who was killed. One motor conked out this side of the target, and they salvoed their bombs in the Mediterranean and landed in the sea. All managed to get out of the ship before she sank except Bernstein who was unconscious due to some Flak received before the target.

May 31, 1943

On March 27th, a Major from the Ninth Air Force with his Warrant Officer secretary, visited the 340th Bomb Group upon an investigation of Captain James F. Fowler. Captain Fowler had several charges against him, the most formidable one being that of doing away with some \$286.00 Ration check, belonging to those men who rationed separately back in Walterboro. Other charges were, \$500.00 reported stolen from Captain Fowler's safe belonging to an enlisted man, Tobias [Chester Tobias] of the 486th, a \$52.00 Headquarters' P.X. fund, a month's pay that was never delivered to a man from the 487th sick in Hospital, and other smaller funds entrusted to his care by enlisted men aboard the West Point. The Major made a thorough investigation, and went back to Tripoli yesterday morning. Captain Fowler is worried. He has been very shaky for some time. 1st Lt. Dellameter, 486th assistant S-2 officer made the appeal for the investigation.