

## October 1943

[Transcriber's note: Some entries are truncated. Please see the original document for the full details.]

War Diary, 487<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 340<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group

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October 1, 1943

Mission today was to Benevento again. The target was the long bridge spanning the river dividing the two sections of the city. Photos showed the bombs narrowly missing the bridge. All planes returned safely.

This was the fiftieth mission for Lt. White and Sgt. Kinsinger, first in our Squadron to reach that number. Lt. White's only comment was "The first fifty are the hardest."

A new addition to the Squadron was Pvt. A.D. Rice, who transferred today from the 489<sup>th</sup>. He likes the men in the squadron, and thinks the 487<sup>th</sup> is the best squadron in the Group. He's driving the decontamination truck.

We had our first rain today – a sprinkle beginning at dusk and continuing intermittently through the night. The "rainy season" has begun, and operations for the next few weeks may be held up considerably. Crews returning yesterday from the Naples area said targets were obscured by 8/10ths cloud. Raincoats are popping out in the squadron for the first time since we were in the boat coming over. Swede Lindstrom, the Texas City kid, went off to the hospital today. His eyes are jaundiced and he's been feeling punk for the past few days. No diagnosis yet of his trouble. Lt. Wolkoff, with a couple of stiff legs also departed for the hospital. He feels that scratching a mosquito bite caused an infection.

Naples was occupied today by the famous British 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, who were first at Bengasi, Tripoli, and Tunis. The radio announces that the population cheered wildly. We think they were probably saying, "Allo; nuts?"

S/Sgt. Harding and Pfc. Glenn Returned from the hospital.

2<sup>nd</sup>

The crews bounced out of here in a hurry yesterday morning, target was a road junction west of Capua, got over to group briefing, found the time over target had been changed. They came back and waited for an hour or so, and were briefed in the squadron. Just around roll call, the mission was canceled, and shortly there after the squadron was given a stand-down for the remainder of the day.

Finchhaven fell to Australian troops today, the third Pacific victory within a month. Other Australian troops, going home from Britain after four years, were officially welcomed by New York city, with ticker tape and all.

Rain fell today in great buckets. These desert tents (most of us are just using the tips) don't hold back the water either. There were some "sacks" right out under the trees got a good soaking. Moose Sather glumly commented, "I hope the sun shines tomorrow – and hot." The green camouflage paint rolled down the sides of our tents like mascara from tearful female eyes.

The American Theatre in town has reopened. Last night's show was "Jailhouse Blues" very bad. The

British were showing "They all Kissed the Bride." Somewhat better.

Communications section had a party today at the restaurant in Via Grande. They had a swell time, and all got wet coming home.

Promotions: S/Sgt. Preswich made Tech; Sgt. Morgan got a rocker; and Pfc. Baker became a full fledged non-com with two stripes.

3<sup>rd</sup>

Stand-down all day.

the show at the hangar was "The Great Waltz" with Louise Rainer, Ferdinand Gravet, and Melitza Korgeous. It was rather nice until the rain started. The roof of the hangar is full of holes and gaps, and keeps out very little rain. Many left to see to their personal belongings at home. Some tried to leave, got wet just looking for transportation.

General Arnold says activity in Italy at present is minor compared to what is expected to take place some day.

Many new automobiles are springing up in the Squadron. Captain Parsons has a good looking job which probably will soon become a familiar sight around the British hospital. Lt. Coyle could be seen riding along close to the curb, blowing his horn at the natives.

Rumor has it that Lt. Egbert is getting the DFC for flying transition with Lt. O'Neill. Rumor has it that Lt. Simenitzky is going to get hell if he doesn't stop buzzing his little ME 109 over the S-2 tent.

Vignette: Lt. Donald G. Hammond, born some time ago in the general area of Boston, Massachusetts (Groton, perhaps). Assistant to Captain G. Meriwether in the S-2 section, squadron athletic director, and Class A finance agent. Something over five feet in height, wears gold rimmed specs. Says "coh" for car, "pok" for park, and gripes because he doesn't have a coh to pok in one of the local poks. A dignified young man who does surprising things on impulse. Has just discovered the delights of sex, reminisces about same constantly and with deep running ferocity. Sometimes known as "fart-sack." His voice grows husky when he thinks of Savanna, Georgia. Once known as the "Savanna kid." His motto: "Suffer not little children to come unto thee."

F/O Griffiths returned from rest leave in Efrain, found the place very pleasant.

4<sup>th</sup>

Today's target was a road junction and railroad four miles north of Capua, near Pignatara. This was one of the main roads used by the Germans in supplying their new line on the Volturno River. 486<sup>th</sup> took off at 1030, followed by 487<sup>th</sup>. "As we approached the mainland of Italy, the sky was covered with clouds and the navigator was quite worried about seeing the target," says Lt. Loysen; "we were sweating it out. through a break in the clouds we spotted the Volturno River and Benevento. We swung westward, keeping the Volturno in sight. When we neared the target, the sky was black with ack-ack bursting on both sides of us. They were really throwing it up there – not so much before we dropped our bombs as after. It was about the same as at Furnay. We made our run, dropped our bombs, with ack-ack bursting on all sides at the same time. Made a sharp right turn off the target and started to make for the Volturno River. the ack-ack was especially heavy over the river, because there seemed to be no way of going around it. For what seemed ages, we finally got across the river, and started to take inventory to see if everybody was still with us. the formation was intact, and we proceeded to the base. When we neared the base, one plane pulled out of the formation and proceeded directly to the field. We figured there must be someone wounded on board. As we came in for a landing, we saw 7X parked on the runway, and then we know for certain that someone had been wounded. We later learned that Sgt. Pinion had been wounded in the thumb and leg."

Sgt. Pinion was hurt seriously, but not critically. Lt. Fonda and Sgt. Peterson administered first aid in

the plane, giving him ten sulfa tablets and doing a swell job with bandages and what-not.

Nine ships were holed.

S/Sgt. Hall was lead bombardier in the second box, and did a calm, smooth job. Bombs landed within a few yards of the actual road junction, and hit both roads. The railroad was also believed to have been damaged.

On the international scene, Corsica has at last been cleansed of all Germans, and the French have occupied Bastia.

Lt. King, Assistant Group S-2, went on the raid and was interrogated in our squadron. This adds another raid toward his first cluster to his Air Medal.

ENSA theatre in town showed "Moon and Sixpence," which is a rather talky show. The South\_Sea ending is pleasantly decorated by a lush little beauty.

5<sup>th</sup>

Sgt. Dillingham reports having seen Lt. Chandler in the hospital, and that he is doing well. He says they are going to take the cast off his toe soon. The squadron medics deserve a good deal of credit for their swell care of Lt. Chandler. They got to him quickly, warded off the effects of shock, which might have proved a great deal more serious than the broken toe and burns which he received in Lt. Bell's crack-up.

One of the medics brings news that Swede Holmstrom is doing O.K. The medic said he was suffering from yellow jaundice, but Holmstrom writes that he is taking pills for malaria.

Six of the new crews flew a practice mission today, bombing Agrigento with amazing precision. They reported flak was extremely heavy and that 98 ships had been holed. Everyone returned safely, and Lt. Gellman reported combat to be nothing.

There is considerable discussion of the new B-25 G's, and some few men have seen them. They carry a 75 mm cannon in the nose, which is covered over. There is no bombardier. Evidently the co-pilot does the navigation. There is an 11 inch recoil. It's used for tank busting. Rumor has it that one formation went out to get a bunch of ships and got one fishing vessel.

The 321<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, new in Italy, has been bombing Greece. This may be a shadow of things to come for us.

Lt. Peterson has added another jeep to the squadron's growing supply of vehicles. (R.N. Peterson, not D.R., who added one some time ago.)

No show at the hanger tonight. The officers club paid off four dollars of the eight it collected from each officer at Hergla.

We seem to have the moving bug again. Preparations are already being made, but no time has been given. The place is also rather indefinite.

The S-2 section now has transportation – the command car formerly used by Supply. Captain Meriwether has a chain and padlock looped around the steering wheel. When he drives off, it sounds like something clanking out of a Universal thrill picture.

The Cardinals and the Yankees played the first game of the World Series in New York, the Yankees winning 4 to 2. Very poor reception started about 1900 hours, and inning by inning rather than play by play results were given. The broadcast was very faint.

6<sup>th</sup>

Two 487<sup>th</sup> crews went with the 486<sup>th</sup> today, to attack a road junction at pinpoint N-0694, north of Capua. They went in 486<sup>th</sup> planes. The 1<sup>st</sup> box hit the town, but the second box overshot. Lt. Egbert's plane had trouble in one engine. Over the inner phone, he told Lt. Sather "if the right engine conks out, salvo bombs immediately." Lt. Sather did not hear the if, but only "the right engine conked out,

salvo immediately.” He did, dropping the bombs in the sea. They left the formation and came home early. Lt. Garrett's ship went on. The Cardinals walloped the Yanks to even the series at one game apiece. Cardinals 4: Yankees 3. Batteries: Morton Cooper and Walker Cooper; Erne Bonham and Bill Dickey. This was Cooper's first victory over a team of American Leaguers and just managed to stave off a Yankee rally in the 9<sup>th</sup> which netted them 2 runs but 1 run short of a tie.

The rain tonight was heavy, but it at least let us see a good show, “Night Train to Munich,” an English film that would have been better if the sound track had functioned better.

The A.L.O. spoke briefly at 1715 hours, had very little new to impart. he spoke of the probable difficulties of the allies in holding the seven Dodecanese islands, said they were vital to us (along with Rhodes and Corfu) if we planned an invasion in Greece and Balkans. Captain Schreiner then made an announcement that tomorrow's Group mission (including 12 ships from the 487<sup>th</sup>) would be to Greece. The target would be the L/G at Ioannina.

C-ration hash for supper tonight.

7<sup>th</sup>

The rains fell heavily last night and early morning, but the sun was shining brightly at the 7 o'clock group briefing. Thirty six planes of the 340<sup>th</sup> took off, lead by the 487<sup>th</sup>, at 8 o'clock. They were to gas up at Brindisi, rendezvous at Lecce at noon, and hit the L/G about 1245. But fifteen minutes from Brindisi they were called back because of the weather over the target. Sgt. Schwartz said it looked pretty angry over in that direction. They were all down in time for lunch.

A lot of American nurses, one month overseas, bay be seen hereabouts now. “They look stunning in their brass buttons and new uniforms,” says Lt. Sherbourne. The new uniforms look like a WAC's uniform. Very bono, says Lt. Hammond. Lt. Loysen seems to be checking out on the girls (and that doesn't mean “to leave in the lurch.”)

The show in town was “Pardon my Sarong,” with Abbott and Costello. The British laughed, evidently advocating the slapstick highly.

F/O Griffiths advocates the rest camp in N. Africa, near Oran. Says its swell, with much swimming, golfing, tennis, best meals in this hemisphere. Lots of women in the parks. Lt. Hague won't come home.

Lt. Jackman is R.O.N.ing in Tunis.

The Officers Club features champagne again after a dry spell.

News on the international front is scarce. The Russians are bogged down in the rain.

The Yanks won the third game of the series 6 to 2.

The preparations for our moving have been postponed indefinitely.

Thumbnail: Lt. O'Neill, a Vermont lad who talks and walks like a Louisiana boy. Blonde, of medium weight and height. Wanders around a good deal, looking for something. Bounds upon people, twisting their arms unmercifully. Crows with delight when they shout “uncle” and struts over his victory.

Seemingly an agreeable cuss-seldom moans about life in the rough. Had a chance in July to go on pass to Tunis, preferred to stay in camp. Absolutely inexplicable conduct. Sometimes know as “Lights” or “Hammering Hank.” On a night mission over Paterno, turned on both landing lights over the target. Is assistant crew chief on an ME 109. Is married, and for all we know a true and faithful hubby. Must check on this. Hobby: defusing red devils.

Vignette:

Lt. Clifford W. Swearingen, commonly known as Swearinger. Born? Presumably yes, in that quaint territory called Texas just Southwest of the United States proper. You may see him “swinging” along the squadron area and if he greets yo with “good morning” at 3 P.M. and “good afternoon: at 10 A.M. think nothing of it – we are all entitled to our idiosyncrasies. He sometimes gambles sometimes drinks; neither very well. He admits his sex life has been equal to that of a hermit crab, but sneaks silently off

by himself for some mysterious purpose. He is quite a cynic on marriage and believes there is no future in it. His tent-mate is doing his best to convert him from his warped state of mind but it is doubtful if the war will last that long. For personal interviews he may frequently be found “over yonder” on his fart sack – his first love.

8<sup>th</sup>

The sun was shining at this morning's briefing, but in the Northeast, over the sea, the sky was beginning to darken. Take-off was at 0940, and the primary target was a road junction across the Volturno, northwest of Capua. The 486<sup>th</sup> led the formation, but returned to the base with their bombs. The 487<sup>th</sup> made an attempt to go through the clouds hiding the target from the East, then tried it from the West. Simenitzky, who doesn't advocate flying around on a limited supply of gas looking for a target was a little worried. Finally, the search was given up and the formation went for the alternate target, a road bridge over the Garigliano River near Sessa Aurunca L/G. They came at it from the sea on a West to East heading, could see the road, the bridge and the stream until the bombs were dropped, when all were obscured by cloud. Most of the crews felt the bombs went slightly South of the road, the pattern beginning with the stream and perhaps extending across the L/G. One bombardier was certain the bridge had been hit. Time of the attack was 1202 hours.

Lt. Warnock complains of the mice eating his candy, chewing up his gum, and ripping the cellophane off his cigarettes. There have been several complaints about snakes. The lizards upset everyone until it was learned that they eat flies.

The show at the hangar was “Gold Rush Maisie” with Ann Sothern. It was a warm, friendly show about a tough girl with a heart of gold. Maisie appeals to a great number of men. Special Service has a few good records, recently added to the collection. Some small orchestra featuring a piano and an accordion turns out a good recording of “Stardust” and “Solitude” played as a medley. The old ones, like “There will be other nights like this” are still good, although the dust of Africa long ago scratched them until you can hardly hear the music.

A new system has been worked out on the line whereby men are assigned to definite planes, and are “indispensable.” This keeps them out of the reach of the Orderly Room for details, and they are happy. All the engineers live out on the line. By this arrangement, they are all up early and there for preflighting, a job which formerly was done sometimes by crew chiefs alone, because the others were up in the area for all formation.

Today's mission was the fiftieth for Lt. Brown, bombardier, and S/Sgt. Hall, who had seven missions as a gunner and 43 as a bombardier. Lt. Brown: “I don't know nothing. I didn't see nothing.” Sgt. Hall: “The first and the last are the hardest.”

Sgt. Birkley and others have moved into a barn out of the rain....Sgt. Berry's Italian friend found him a bottle of German beer for two bucks. It is reported that Serio is so adept at Italian these days that he talks it in his sleep....One man in the Squadron says his mother outranks his brother. She's a PFC....Yom Kippur is tomorrow.

Lt. Hague is back from rest camp at Efrain with a dog named Jackson.

9<sup>th</sup>

No mission today....Photos of yesterday's mission show a great deal of cloud. bombs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> box are falling over the river and south of the place where the bridge should be, so it is doubtful if they came close to the bridge. Nothing can be told from the other photos....At 1000 hours this morning newspaper photographers took pictures of men in the Group from several cities in the U.S. They assembled them in the 488<sup>th</sup> area, beside a wrecked enemy aircraft. Thirteen of our men from Chicago were there, including S/Sgt. Futterer. Sgt. John Smith of Boston was there with the rest of the Bostonites. Captain

Meriwether stood beside those from Kansas City....Sgt. Litwin says there are three bit items hereabouts: "Vino, Senora, and nuts."....It used to be "home by Christmas," but it's changing gradually to "home by Easter" - maybe. Men seem to be less homesick, however....S/Sgt. Goodrich says he'd like to have a jeep when the war is over. This seems to be a fairly common desire – something to go riding around the U.S. in, to see that good old country with new eyes.....PX supplies came out late yesterday. These luxuries used to be taken for granted, and there were great howls when we didn't get big stocks when we first came overseas. Now we look on them not as our inalienable right but as chance good fortune.....The amount of money being sent home in money orders is dropping off. Could the Sicilians be getting rich?.....Much of the money spent around here is going for photographs. This is the first opportunity we've had to get our pictures struck, and everybody's taking advantage of it. Some of the photos are a little too "prettied" up for American tastes, but others, not so doctored, are very good. Favorite shot seems to be the group photo, sometimes with wine bottles and glasses, supplied by the photographer. Pvt. Gross, T/Sgt. Gilles, and T/Sgt. Elliot don't look particularly tanked up in theirs.....Had chicken for lunch today. Not bad....Ordinance held an inspection of firearms, with alarming results. Two men had to buy new barrels....A camera club is under way among some of the men. the idea is to trade prints, and is a very good one, considering the scarcity of negatives.....T/Sgt. Buller stepped on a third rail while in Tunis a day or so ago, got the shock of his life. The Russians are attacking Kiev. The Kuban, announces the French Radio, has been entirely cleared of Germans. An offensive begins tomorrow on the Volturno. In the Pacific, the drive on Madang is progressing.

10<sup>th</sup>

Tragedy visited the squadron today – tragedy that was unnecessary and avoidable. S/Sgt. Mackevich, in the engineering section, was fatally wounded when an Italian Baretta pistol held by Sgt. Floyd was fired. An explanation of the tragedy as it circulates informally among the men in th squadron was that Sgt. Floyd had in his safekeeping an Italian pistol owned by a combat crew member who had bought it the night before and was at the time on a mission. That Sgt. Floyd was unfamiliar with the pistol; that he was demonstrating the "safety" which is found on the U.S. .45 pistol – that of placing the muzzle against the resisting surface and pressing forward. Evidently, from general talk, the clip was removed, but a round remained in the chamber. The bullet passed through Sgt. Floyd's hand and very nearly through S/Sgt. Mackovich's body. Mackovich died within a few minutes. His funeral will be held tomorrow at 1000 hours....The target today was troop concentrations and equipment North of Capua, near the town of Finchi, Italy. Our bombers were over the area at 1104 hours and reported good results. Photo coverage showed the patterns within 600 yards of the given pinpoint, which is not so bad in anybody's bombing....The show at the hanger was a pleasant surprise – a GI show with talent and an infectious quality that won the audience. The 5 piece orchestra worked nicely together – with the trumpeter and the pianist showing real talent. A fellow mimicking Bob Burns got a good hand, as did the tap dancers. The show was mixed, colored and white. Notable by their absence were ancient jugglers, magicians, and fat precious Masters of Ceremonies....Sgt. King's motorcycle caught fire near the gasoline dump, burned to a crisp. His frequent comments at the show led to the belief that he was holding a wake for the departed machine....Lt. Sullivan, bombardier, and Lt. Peterson, bombardier, finished their fiftieth mission today. Results of their celebration of the event are not yet known....Permission has been granted by Col. Tokaz and Capt. Bramble to make prints for the squadron album. Sgt. Buller is busy at work on same....On the Russian front, Gomel. is being encircled. Tanks have crossed the Dnieper. Our own front is soaking wet. Chief item of interest from England was the BBC assertion that Col. Ira Eaker made the statement that the air offensive could not alone bring victory. This is direct contradiction of former statements attributed to him. But Flying Fortresses and escort alone accounted for 102 aircraft (enemy) yesterday. Can Germany be bombed to unconditional surrender without the aid of ground and naval forces?.....The Yanks won the 4<sup>th</sup> game of the series – 2

to 1....Pvt. Nagy has been transferred to 486<sup>th</sup> squadron.

11<sup>th</sup>

Shortly after the funeral was held today for Stg. Mackovich, tragedy stalked the squadron again. Lts. Hover, Pirnie, and Simenitzky went down to Comiso A/D to find a tire for the latter's ME 109. While there they discovered that all ME's on that field had been grounded after a pilot had been killed a few days before, that two men who owned these fighters were glad to give them away. Lt. Hover, although he was not very familiar with the plane, wanted to fly the ME. He took off, evidently discovered he could not get through the circle of cloud covering the hills, probably came back to tell the other men to wait for a more favorable day to fly the planes to Catania. On the landing, his plane either hooked right or was caught on something. It flipped over on its back. Lt. Hover was taken away in an ambulance to a hospital, and his death was announced late at night.....In spite of heavy rains, Sgt. Mackovich's funeral was dignified and impressive. Chaplain Cooper conducted services at 1000 hours.....Transition night mission begin soon for the new pilots. Perhaps more night missions....Officers who failed to have their pistols inspected have been confined to the base until same is done. Most rushed over to Ordnance in today's downpour to get it done....Grillo has bought a new radio for sixty bucks..Bombardier Peterson, he of the finished missions, has been sleeping in the ambulance to keep out of the rain....Lt. Wolkoff's promotion, dated as of August 25, has just come through....There are a hell of a lot of biting flies in the shower bath. And that matting doesn't keep out the cold wind....The Enlisted Men's club in Catania has folded for lack of attendance....Major Paul is in the hospital. One doesn't hear much of him these days....The squadron area is not a lovely sight when wet with rain. Looks vaguely like a barnyard. All the men remind one of wet chickens wandering aimlessly and uncomfortable around in the water. Too damned depressing....A frequently expressed opinion is that when we get home it's going to be hard to say the right things in polite society. We're too used to cussin....Some men in the squadron feel that being stationed here in Sicily is better than being stationed at Walterboro, South Carolina. One man says that "being overseas is better than being stationed anywhere below the Mason-Dixon line"....The men enjoyed the stage show last night. One man says "When we see shows it seems like we are back in the States, and not way over her in Sicily."....Best liked songs: "As Time Goes By," and "In My Arms." Chorus to the latter:

"In my arms, in my arms;  
Ain't I ever gonna have a girl in my arms"  
In my arms, in my arms:  
Ain't I gonna have a honey holding me tight?  
You can keep you knittin and your purlin -  
Gimme a girl in my arms tonight."

No opinion on the song has been voiced by Albert J. DeLorge, who has female acquaintances in Berlin – New Hampshire....The Yanks won their forth game, 2 to 0. They tell us Lt. Gavin won seven hundred bucks, and the Lt. Rosengerg lost a tidy sum....Ack-ack opened up in the South this afternoon. No planes were seen. Nobody got excited....In Italy, the Volturno offensive is soon to start....In battered Naples there is saying that no German will ever dare to visit the city again....In Russia, there are three big bridgeheads across the Dnieper. Many divisions of men and tanks have crossed.

12<sup>th</sup>

The rain is playing hob with our activities. Filled-in bomb craters are soft and treacherous. An old R.A.F. Albemarle got a nose wheel in the soft mud, turned its tail up in the air. Two DC's had a little trouble. And our runways themselves are having trouble – They are caving in where craters were filled close by or on the tarmac....Orders have come for some of the planes to leave for our new field. Their chief purpose will be to stake out a claim on the field and hold it, so that some other Group won't come in and take it. The field seems to be located at San Pancrazio, about 20 to 30 miles south of Brindisi, near Taranto. No one seems to be particularly enthusiastic about it. Six of the oldest planes, with crews who have completed fifty missions, will leave in the morning. The idea is for us to remain operational here....Swede Holmstrom, a little yellow around the gills, has returned from the hospital...."Strawberry Blonde" was scheduled to show at the hangar tonight, but was changed to "Yank on the Burma Road" at the last minutes. We got over there, hung around for an hour and forty-five minutes and finally left without seeing anything. Trouble with the machine, so they say....Captain Bugbee, Lt. White, and Lt. Coyle, who have weekended in Palermo for some reason, are back. They say they went up to buy O.D.'s for the officers. Maybe so....Handkerchiefs are the big items being sent home as presents. Most are made of parachute silk, and many are handpainted with Air Force insignia, maps of Sicily, silver-winged birds, etc. They are being put in letters....The cognac hereabouts is bottled lightning....When Tuff Stuff completed fifty mission with original engines, the crew broke a bottle of champagne on her nose wheel....Snow White II has completed 54 missions. Her crew claims two ships and a Nazi plane for her. They're all proud as punch....Rains poured again throughout the day. You can get in some good sack time if your tent doesn't leak....Among our Characters: S/Sgt. Allen P. Kosack. From Duluth, Minnesota. Known as "Kosey." Propensity for typewriters and slit-trenches. Vocabulary limited to, "When do we go home." Can't stand cold weather, and uses more blankets than anyone in the squadron. His life is just one roster after another. Knows a beautiful girl named Alice, whom he married on a 7-day furlough. Took him three days to get there and three to come back. Tall, wears glasses, always smiles, in spite of working in the Orderly Room. Always obliging and accommodating. Doesn't smoke or drink....The battleship "Tripitz" has been hit and put out of commission in Norwegian waters by midget submarines. It is not clear whether it was sunk but at least it can't be used. In Russia, the situation is grave for the Germans. There is still a lull in activity on the Volturno....This morning two planes containing an honor guard composed of friends of Lt. Hover went to Comiso A/D. The flag draped coffin was placed in Captain Parson's ship and transported to Ponte Olivo. In a large cemetery there quiet but impressive funeral services were read by Capt. V.C. Frank. The honor guard fired three volley salute as the casket was lowered and Lt. Hover was laid to rest....

13<sup>th</sup>

Six planes and the 488<sup>th</sup> mess finally got off for Italy, somewhat later than the time set. The 488<sup>th</sup> is now messing with us....Plans for our movement are definitely up in the air. No shipping can be spared, and there is doubt about our being able to make it in our vehicles. There are no bridges over the many rivers, all of which are roaring torrents by now. There is some plan for our planes to operate with the 12<sup>th</sup> while the Ground tries to get to Italy....Our publicity is coming out in the states. Clippings are coming in to the boys....New addition: Gunner K.C. Grantham, injured over Pantelleria, sent to a hospital, and transferred to us. Says he: "Seems to be the best outfit I have met since the old 71<sup>st</sup> back in 1940-41. Boy it sure is hard to find a good outfit nowadays."....Back home there is an epidemic of polio....surprise: no rain today....Impressario Otto Stellato and friends in squadron supply got together a show in Catania - "Sicilian Varieties" - advertised as guaranteeing a strip tease. Performers were our old friends whom we had seen before, plus a couple of kids who sang, accompanied by a blind violinist. The chorus was new, and the most hideous set of women ever found on the wrong side of the



footlights. They were all sizes and all shapes, and all ugly. Climax came when they argued with each other over the routine. In the special bedroom scene the bra came off but the gal began to fight before her panties came fully down. One babe finally took everything off, revealed a surprisingly unhandsome body. Captain Meriwether received a sweet kiss from a blonde singer who bounced down into the audience. Comment: "It was so bad it was good." Everyone had a good time....Italy has declared war on Germany.

14<sup>th</sup>

Six more planes started to leave for Italy but were called back because the weather wasn't so favorable. Plans are changing momentarily, and nothing is definite about the move....Weather is cooler, and sleeping is good. It's mighty easy to get in 10 or 11 hours of good sack time....Eight months ago, on February 14<sup>th</sup>, we go on the U.S. West Point in San Francisco harbor and got ready to pull out....Some of the men in the Engineering section found a Sicilian with some Irish Whiskey which tasted pretty good. They went on a little party to a restaurant where some piano player knew a few American songs. They reported a good time and much food....In Sicily, the American soldier is impressed by the peculiar local attitude toward sex, the picturesqueness of the island, and the general poverty....The roads are becoming more and more cluttered with carts. The country is over-run with them....Some of the men have some snappy looking rubber stamps for placing their address in the upper left hand corner of their envelopes. Complete with bomb....On the Russian front, the capture of Zaparoché has been announced as an important victory. There is fighting in Melitopol. The allies announce that Southern Germany will be bombed from Corsica and Sardinia. Over Western Germany, 60 Forts were knocked down, but Germans lost 104 fighters. The B-29 is in production, and will see service next year. It has two motors, 50 cal MG's, and high speed and great range. Made by Martin and North American.

15<sup>th</sup>

Three planes and four crews of the 487<sup>th</sup> left this afternoon to join the 12<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group for an indefinite period. They will do night missions with the 12<sup>th</sup>, and rumor has it that a mission was flown tonight....Plans for moving are still in the air, but definitely....Returning from Via Grande tonight, a bomb trailer skidded on some rocks, was stopped by a building at the side of the of the highway. Webb, Pugh, Hammond, and Lester Brown were injured, not seriously....T/Sgt. Goulding returned from rest camp outside Algiers, reported having a good time....Lt. Wolkoff returned from hospital looking well....Eight months ago at supper time the U.S.S. West Point passed under the Golden Gate and out into the Pacific and our Foreign Service Additional Pay began....

THUMBNAIL: Sgt. James G. Johnson. From Birmingham, Alabama. Birmingham Southern graduate – wanted to be a doc like his pa. Never been out of his sack after nine o'clock, but calls himself a light sleeper. Known as "Be Sweet" Johnson. Loses everything – the only man who didn't lose his "B" bag on purpose. Punctual at meals. Argues with himself out loud – and frequently argues himself into a change of mind. The new one never seems to work any better. Started to smoke a pipe – took him fifteen minutes to light it – gave up the habit fifteen minutes later because it gave him a headache. Ambition: to go home and marry some Georgia peach. Present occupation: wandering through the war, and keeping Lewis Lloyd's morale up. "Gollee – I'm not going to think about that anymore.".... At Gerbini: The planes arrived in afternoon, tents were set up, supper eaten. Night mission sweated out, but a stand-down was announced. The show was "Girl Trouble," with Don Ameche. At a bingo game later, where tea was served, Lt. Hague won a couple of dollars.

16<sup>th</sup>

Pilots of the 487<sup>th</sup> operated a shuttle service between Sicily and Italy, transporting as many men and as much equipment as possible by air. The only unusual incident occurred when Lt. Peterson was delayed by having a wheel stuck in the mud, finally took off at five o'clock, got to San Pancrazio well after dark. When he shot a red flare, a flare path was lit for him, but it went out before he could land. He went on to Brindisi for the night.

At Gerbini: Pilots awoke at 0500 hours by sounding of horns for prospective raid on Italy. Take-off finally occurred at 0900 hours, and the target was Sparanise, a small town North of Naples. Weather was clear and the target was plainly visible. No ack-ack was encountered. Results were good although no photos were taken. Stand down for the rest of the day. Three planes and 4 crews of the 487<sup>th</sup> took part in the raid....Gerbini resembled Hergla – a barren waste....

17<sup>th</sup>

A majority of the Squadron personnel have reached Italy, coming by B-25, DC-3 and Savoy Marchetti. Captain Meriwether shepherded a jeep over in one of the transports – the only means of transportation now in the squadron....Confusion reigns. Consensus of opinion is the no move was ever more disorganized....The movie equipment, many tents, and most transportation is coming by convoy, but chairs and tables from Group mess were flown in. We have chairs and tables galore already here, but the other equipment will be a week in arriving....There are some barracks here, but they are dilapidated and absolutely filthy. They are being used indiscriminately until Squadron areas can be marked out. A great deal is hanging in mid-air because the 310<sup>th</sup> Group is also trying to move to this field, and wants us to leave....We are not operational – There is no gasoline and there are no bombs....One plane of the 487<sup>th</sup> went with other planes of the Group to Gerbini to operate with the 12<sup>th</sup> Group....Rumors float around here in great abundance, probably because we are shut off from sources of news. This points to the value of a good S-2 section which disseminates enough real news that rumors are quelled.

Recommendation: that all S-2 sections be furnished with a good radio. At some point in this period of confusion, several men in the Group with 50 missions have left for home. But no one yet from the 487<sup>th</sup>.

At Gerbini: Intermittent rain all day. “Santa Fe Trail” showed in the evening. Walkoff, McLaughlin, and Rosengerg arrived.

On the Convoy: Convoy left Catania at 1100 hours and drove along the coast North towards Messina. Very mountainous. At 1600 hours came in sight of Italy across the Strait. Country rather pretty, with sheer cliffs dropping into the sea. Pulled into Messina at 1700 hours, gassed up, and bedded down for the night. The place was a wreck from bombing. Rain fell.

18<sup>th</sup>

Most of the Squadron went visiting today. One truck load of men hitchhiking to Lecce were surprised when they passed the King of Italy and his retinue on the highway between San Pancrazio and Lecce. All saluted. The truck made a grand procession through the flag decorated streets of several small towns, receiving a great ovation from those who were awaiting the king's arrival. The GI's were not in parade dress – there were coveralls, khakis, and OD's – but no one seemed to mind. It is hoped that the king did not object to having his royal thunder stolen. First impression of Lecce (about 20 miles from here) is that it is clean, that there are many attractive girls to be had, that the population is reserved but curious, that prices are high....Another plane joined those at Gerbini....Lts. White, Brown, Peterson, and Sullivan have received orders to go home. Everyone else is as excited as they are....Lts. Sullivan and Peterson are taking and must be enjoying an extended vacation someplace and don't yet know the good

news. It is hoped that they will turn up from their gallivanting in time for take-off for the U.S.....Rain tonight caused the uncomfortable discovery that our barracks leak....The chow line is extremely long these days, what with only one mess hall for this crowd.

At Gerbini: Raid today – takeoff around noon. Weather was bad and planes returned with their bombs. Credit was given for the raid. Three planes and three crews of the 487<sup>th</sup> took part. Target: road junction at Venafro.

On the convoy: Up at 0400 hours and prepared to leave. Rode down to docks at Messina. Practically every building was busted wide open. Pulled onto the barge at 0700 hours and landed on a beach between Reggio and Villa S. Giovanni at Gallico, Italy. Proceeded to a grouping area and reformed, taking the North road along the West coast of Italy. Traveled along the sea most of the way, seeing evidences of bombing but very few wrecked vehicles. Thousands of kids clamor for “cigaretta” or “bis-Ket.” People were terribly poor – no pretty girls and only three fair looking ones the whole way. Through mountains and into valleys. Road good, with only a few bomb craters. Railroad entirely blown out. Bedded down in a nice grove of trees for the night.

19<sup>th</sup>

Another plane went to Gerbini, making six we have there....Capt. Parsons says four new combat crews have arrived in the Squadron....This is a dull period of inactivity for us. Says one man: “If anyone asks you, we're ready to leave this place.”....Cpl. Nelson advocates Lecce....Sgt. Max Johnson got into an argument with some Italian soldiers, had to have four stitches taken in the side of his head. “It was partly my fault,” He grinningly admits....Capt. Schreiner, Capt. Bayless, and others had a swell time in Lecce. Their food bill was \$4.00 for eleven. Rumor has it that the crews in Gerbini have made four missions already, and the Lt. Howle has completed fifty missions. the plane leaving today went to relieve him....Lts. White and Brown tried to leave today, had to wait to clear the post....The 489<sup>th</sup> mess has been set up, relieving the congestion at the 488<sup>th</sup> mess somewhat....

At Gerbini: Rogers, Hague, Fonda, Walkoff, and Griffiths now at Gerbini. Briefing at 0800 for raid on Frozionone, a town half way between Naples and Rome. Takeoff at 0915. Cloud coverage over target was 9/10. Rogers, Over, and Loysen led the formation, did a fine job of navigation. Alternate target was selected (Terracina), and it could be seen through one hole in the clouds. Only the 487<sup>th</sup> - 486<sup>th</sup> formation hit the target. One formation from the 12<sup>th</sup> brought their bombs back; the other wandered around and dropped them someplace besides on the target....Some planes had trouble with bomb racks --- Rogers landed his plane with a hung bomb, being unable to get rid of it. Sherbourne brought mail and news that White, Sully, and others were leaving for the U.S.....In the evening, and American stage show presented music, singing and dancing.

On the Convoy: Started out at 0900 hours after swell sleeping and continued on along the coast, going up the most winding roads and around the sharpest curves. Road was bad. No evidences of war. People still unbelievably poor. 102 miles covered. Camped just South of Belvedere and built a campfire, as the mess truck had stopped at another place. More rain.

20<sup>th</sup>

Lts. White and Brown, S/Sgt. Hall, and S/Sgt. Kinsinger left for the United States....The 487<sup>th</sup> Squadron area has been assigned, but is filled at present with Italians who are slow on the move. The position of the Italians as our “allies” complicates matters....Some Italian officers in Lecce were buying pretty new uniforms in contemplation of entering the war again....They are very meticulous in matters of dress. The civilians here have difficulty recognizing the Americans because they appear in such varied costume....Nelson took up the outgoing mail for the first time.

At Gerbini: Stand-down all day. Most of the boys went to Catania. Henderson, D.R. Peterson, and

Lambert arrived. "Jailbird Blues" on at the movies.

On the convoy: Up a 0700 hours. Kids still begging food, saying the Tedescos took it all away from them. Some of the men visited Belvedere before looking up the mess truck 15 miles east for breakfast....At San Agate, girls were washing clothes in a stream....No more movement today.

21<sup>st</sup>

487<sup>th</sup> area has been to some extent occupied. Any further activity must await the arrival of the convoy....The convoy of jeeps arrived today. Drivers said they had passed the other convoy 300 miles back, that it would take at least two more days for them to reach us. Several cars had to be repaired. Preswich probably is still just outside the outskirts of Catania....Italian civilians say they haven't had any real coffee in five years, that an ersatz has been made from everything from almonds to grape seeds. They look forward to the arrival of food from America. They say that the plenitude of food in Sicily is caused by imports from America....The German club in our area has a "Texas bar" decorated with murals of cowpunchers, western belles, and house pistols.....Talk has it that two B-25's of the Tactical Air Force (meaning of the 12<sup>th</sup> or 340<sup>th</sup>) were shot down near Naples, but might have belly-landed in the Naples area. No other news. A B-25 is reported to have crashed into Mt. Etna....Talk has it also that our field is guarded by Eye-Tie A/A gunners, and that Col. Tokaz has registered an objection....Eye-ties know two towns in America and both of them are Brooklyn....Sgt. Jones heard the tail-end of the Camel Caravan program dedicated to the "leaderless" 340<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group – the "best medium Bombardment Group in the world." We're due to get a bunch of free Camels out of it. We need 'em. Nobody in the Squadron has any....Crack going the rounds: a Lt. knows everything and does everything – a Major knows nothing and does everything. ....Berlin "Sal" gave the world series results and football scores the other night....A guy back home is known as a "USO Soldier."

At Gerbini: A scheduled mission was canceled at the last minute....In the afternoon, Capt. Rogers found a truck and organized a swimming party, plus a trip for food. Via Grande was closed (because of difficulties with the British authorities) and the fellows went to Nicolosia.

On the Convoy: Left camp at 1000 hours. Beautiful country – mountains and valleys....Travelled from west coast over the mountains at the top of the toe of Italy to the east coast over rough roads. Camped at Trebassacre on the coast. Discovered an American citizen who was caught over here in 1940 by the war, who wanted to get back if possible....Mess truck supper was lousy and some men scraped around can cooked their own.

22<sup>nd</sup>

Capt. Lambert and Lt. Henderson returned from Gerbini, having finished their fifty missions in today's raid from that base. They reported that both of the two lost planes we heard about were 12<sup>th</sup> Gp. ships. They also reported that the going up there is getting pretty tough....We are not receiving the proper number of cigarettes, nor are they in the proper proportions when they arrive. Our cinemas are quite old, and it has been ten days since we had a show.

Major Keller bailed out of another plane tonight....The Eye-ties have as much junk as we have. There were not many here, but they've taken days and endless numbers of trucks to vacate. An elderly, somewhat rotund, Major grew loquacious in the 489<sup>th</sup> mess, about the situation: "A short time ago you were bombing our homes, our women, and our children. And now we welcome you into our homes and feed you."....The soldier's attitude is one of increasing cynicism....Men on the line have rigged up a shower with hot water. There are also hot showers in the flying officers barracks. So fine....Men living

near the Eye-tie A/A crews like them. They visit and play cards, sing, and play the accordion.

At Gerbini: Another raid. Takeoff at 0750. Target: a road in the town of Venafro, just North of Capua. Weather was good and target was plainly visible. A/A very intense and extremely accurate. Five of the six 487<sup>th</sup> ships were holed, but all got back safely. Capt. Lambert, finishing his fiftieth mission, kept the slug of shrapnel in the navigator's compartment for a souvenir. 12<sup>th</sup> Group had a wounded man. Lts. Henderson and Howle finished their missions....Real ice cream for supper caused quite a stir among the 487<sup>th</sup> contingent....The movie: "My Favorite Blonde" with Bob Hope and Madeline Carroll.  
On the convoy: On the road at 0900 hours. Road very rough. Stopped for the night just outside of Taranto.

23<sup>rd</sup>

Taranto, about 30 to 40 miles from here, is a clean, modern city. At present, it is filled with sailors of "Regia marina" who do not appear to have a care in the world. A number of shops are open. The harbor is a pleasant crescent, much like Tripoli's. The city does not appear to have been bombed....Fourteen B-17's from Africa landed here this afternoon. They will take off tomorrow to bomb a target in Austria, an aircraft factory near Vienna. A total of about 200 heavies from Africa will participate....Sgt. Parkins supervised the blowing of a latrine this afternoon. It was done with a teller mine, and Sgt. Parkins says he gave warning to those around. But officers in adjacent barracks thought we were being bombed when the buildings shook and plaster came falling down. The concussion was felt in the 488<sup>th</sup> area, so one can imagine what a sleeping man 30 feet away felt like doing....The convoy arrived. The general opinion was that it was an interesting journey -- "Oh, how I wish I could have had a camera" -- but that it was paid for by a lot of hard work. Vehicles were abandoned, engines were changed, and much repair work was done. The Service Group doesn't feel that our transportation will be up to another move....

At Gerbini: Sather, Egbert, Gellman, and Garrett came over from Italy. 12<sup>th</sup> Gp., 488<sup>th</sup> and 489<sup>th</sup> went on a raid. The movie: "Yank on the Burma Road."

On the Convoy: Left camp area at 0700 hours and by-passed Taranto. Roads much better. Arrived San Pancrazio at 1100 hours.

24<sup>th</sup>

Two more combat crews arrived today. They seem to be right fresh out of school...Red Cross gave out donuts today at Group Operations. Difficult to tell how many men heard the good news, outside of Group Operations....The 14 B-17/s took off at 0800, were back by 1700 hours. The huge formation found the target concealed by clouds. Some jettisoned their bombs, other returned with them. They encountered no enemy fighters... A barber shop has been set up in the Squadron....Someone describes Africa as "Texas with Arabs"...."Lili Marlen" is regarded among Sicilians and Italians as a German (Tedesco) song, but there are Italian words. The following were set down by an Italian officer with the aid of his Kitchen boys:

I

Tutte le sere  
Sotto quel fanal  
Presso la caserna  
Ti stavo ad aspettar

## II

Anche stasera aspettero  
E tutto il mondo scordero  
Con te Lili Marlen  
Con te Lili Marlen

## III

O trombatiere  
Stasera non suonar  
Che una volte ancor  
La voglio salutar

## IV

Addio piccina  
Dolce amor  
Ti portero per sempre  
In cuor  
Con me Lili Marlen  
Con me Lili Marlen

## V

Quando ne fango  
Debbo Cominar  
Sotto il mio bottion  
Mi sento vacillar

## VI

Che cosa mai  
Sara di mi  
Ma poi sorrida e penso ate  
A te Lili Marlen  
A te Lili Marlen

## VII

Se chiudo gli occhi  
Il vis to m'appar  
Co me quella sera  
nel cerchio del fanal

Translation: Every night under the street lamp by the police station I wait for you. This evening I look for you. I shall forget the world, with you, Lili Marlen. The bugler can't blow taps until I shall have seen you once again. Goodbye, sweetheart. I shall take you always with me in my heart, Lili Marlen. When the mud sticks to my boots, so that I can't move, I shall go on because of you, Lili Marlen,

etc....We should be able to great a good German translation in a few more months....Planes are being filled from 5-gallon cans of gasoline, in absence of gas bowzers. It's hard work, and the gas must be filtered....Wines are better here. Someone reports getting a few bottles of sparkling Burgundy...Stares and Stripes of Africa, October 23 edition, carries a fine photo of a 487<sup>th</sup> ship dropping bombs North of the Volturno....

At Gerbini: Up at 0600 hrs. for a raid. Target: Formia, a town on the coast N. of Naples. Six planes took off, one returned and let the alternate take his place. Capt. Rogers led. Weather was clear and target was clearly visible. Speed over target: 300 miles indicated. Results: good..A/A was not intense but was accurate. As the formation came off the target, there was a burst of A/A near Capt. Rodgers ship. He stayed with the formation at first, then fishtailed and pulled out. His left prop was windmilling, indicating his left motor was gone. He made for the airport at Naples. It was reported later that he had telephoned that he had landed near Naples.

25<sup>th</sup>

Reports drift in that Capt. Rogers bellied his ship in, hit a high tension wire, but no one was injured. They flew back to Gerbinin in a transport. Lt. Rosenber, F/O Griffiths, T/Sgt. Driscoll, and S/Sgt. Birkley (slying his fiftieth mission) were in his crew....All the other crews from Gerbini returned today. They were considerably impressed with the spirit in the 12<sup>th</sup> Group and offered many suggestions for improving our own. They especially liked the mess, the PX, and the movie at the 12<sup>th</sup> Group....Brindisi, about 20 or 30 miles away, is a "good town" but it's streets are a constant parade of Italian service men....We've had little news of the war. Our own front is practically stationary. The Russians have taken Melitopol, after savage ten-day fighting, which should cause a German withdrawal in the Crimea, open the sea of Asov and the Black Sea to Russian traffic, and out flank Roumania....Rumor has it that fields in Sicily are getting a bunch of gliders, which might presage a new landing someplace around.

26<sup>th</sup>

Operating from San Pancrazio for the first time today, 12 ships of the 487<sup>th</sup> had as a principal target the town of Frozinone (already hit by some crews of the 487<sup>th</sup> from Gerbini). Takeoff was at noon, and since the primary target was obscured by cloud the formation chose the alternate at Terracina. Results reported were good. No ack-ack was encountered and all planes returned safely. Capt. Parsons and Capt. Schreiner were on the raid. Lt. Gavin returned from the hospital, slept in the ambulance for want of a room....Loudest voices are those who never want to see any part of this side of the world again, but quieter voices admit what others may feel – that they'd rather like to come back after the war and traverse their route again....Requests going home include lantern wicks these days....Rumor has it that Congress has limited overseas service to 20 months. This probably should not be a law, but should be a sort of policy (which can be changed, in case of emergency). It does cut down the feeling that you'll be away from home until the end of the war, while three fourths of the men in uniform will drink milk shakes for the duration.....

27<sup>th</sup>

One of the guards shot and wounded an Italian working in one of the Squadron mess halls. Seems a little strange....The Group Officers Club has opened, with cookies, local chocolate bars, wine, bourbon and local rum. The chocolate bars are ersatz, and taste and smell peculiar....Captain Rogers and his crew returned. They say Lt. Rosenberg didn't advocate bailing out over enemy territory, and was all for

trying the belly landing.

28<sup>th</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Parkins and others flew to Pantelleria to look after Lt. Anderson's grave. They discovered the body had been transferred to the military cemetery in Gela.

29<sup>th</sup>

Lt. Winebrenner arrived with the operations trailer and other equipment which he shepherded from Catania via Landing Ship, Tank....Much ancient mail arrived....Rations, in good quantity, were distributed....Rains continue. Many of the landing fields in this area are entirely unserviceable. They will not hold up a heavily laden plane.

30<sup>th</sup>

Sgt. Harry Harasavich has learned he is the father of a boy, his first....  
The Italian A/A gunners let go on a flock of geese, missing them.

31<sup>st</sup>

Pay-day today. Everyone needs money....Bari, about 75 miles from here, is a slick-looking town. The 12 AFSC has sponsored nice facilities for housing and feeding transients. The town has a pretty waterfront, bordered with hotels, as in Alexandria. Prices have not gone sky-high – yet....Some man with the Squadron has been reclassified and is now subject to a deferment. He's been overseas nine months....The general opinion is that Italy is not as attractive as Sicily was. It must be the mud, which is like glue....Sgt. Copeland, who likes pie, traded the only piece he's had for months for a pack of cigarettes. Which shows how scarce the latter have been.

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