

November 1943

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

War Diary, 487th Bombardment Squadron, 340th Bombardment Group

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October 1st

The 487th's mission today was a long one – a round trip of 700 miles to Ancona, a port on the East Coast of Italy. 12 ships from the 487th followed the 486th over the target at 1255 hours. They dropped their bombs in the port area, among warehouses and machine shops. Photos show shipping in the harbor, but smoke from the 486th bombs prevents accurate assessment of damage. One large explosion was observed and this column of smoke can be seen in the oblique photos....On the return, Lt. Warnock's ship fell out of formation because of engine trouble and landed at Foggia A/D. Lt. Emslie followed him down to learn that the trouble was not serious. No ack-ack was encountered. The port is evidently being used to supply axis troops in Yugoslavia....Lt. Warnock finished his 50th mission today....Rumor: that the 12th Bomb Group is moving to Foggia main and that we we'll go to a satellite field....The Americans have made a landing on Bougainville Island in the Pacific. This is the next step toward Rabaul....The Russians have cut the last land escape route of the Germans from Crimea....Lt. Warnock was flying the Squadron's most famous ship – Most famous by adverse publicity - #304, 7A, "Satan's Sister." She is one of the four original ships remaining to the Squadron. Lt. Willhite brought her over from the States with Lts. Emslie, Cunningham, S/Sgt's VanDeraa, Dzialo, Elliot and M/Sgt. Johnson, flying with him. "Satan's Sister" has given more trouble than any other ship, and will get two new engines before she comes back to the Squadron. She's a B-25C, with 273 hours and 38 combat missions. At Hergla she was known as "Ground Hog" because frequent mechanical difficulties kept her out of the air so much. T/Sgt. Gillis is crew chief and Sgt's Barnes and Bolonis are assistants. At Deversoir "Satan's Sister" received five nose guns but these were removed in May.

2nd

Mission today was to the town of Aquilla, and the target was the Marshalling Yards there. The alternate target was Popoli, with the 486th taking the marshaling yards, the 487th the bridge, and the 489th the town itself. Object was to cut supply communications for the seven divisions facing the 8th Army, which is preparing to attack in an effort to crack the line at the Piscara (which will mean a retreat from Rome). Take-off was at 0940 hours. There was 9/10ths cloud coverage around the target, and navigation was difficult. The town was discovered in a hole in the clouds, and bombs were dropped beginning Northeast of the town, and across a road, a railroad, a secondary road, and perhaps ending in the landing ground Southeast of the town. Ack-ack was negligible for our formation, although the formation following the 487th got more of it. All planes returned safely....Captain Rogers, T/Sgt. Driscoll, and T/Sgt. Grillo finished their fifty missions today. Says Doc Grillo: "Well, its a funny feeling. Now you know you're going to live to go home." Lt. Henderson et al have spent five days in and around Naples. They report that Eboli is a shambles. That the ruins of Pompei are in ruins. Evidently the 487th hit the ruins in a couple of places when they were over in September. There are tow

craters in the amphitheatre, and the museum is wrecked....The Fifth Army has its headquarters in a beautiful palace North of Naples. Naples itself is not as badly torn up as we hear....Captain Bugbee wanted to go up to the front lines, but the others persuaded him it wasn't profitable.

3rd

Target for today was a pinpointed area west of the little town of Cupello, Italy, wherein were located munitions stores and supplies. Three pinpoints marked the area. The first box of bombs fell yards South of the Southern pinpoint, while the second box fell within an equal distance of the Northern point. No bombs fell exactly within the area. A/A was scattered, but Lt. Garrett got a piece of flak in his plane. The boys were back safely in time for lunch. Lt. Gellman's plane took the lead in the second box when the lead ship, equipped with bombsight, failed to take off. There was no bombsight in Lt. Gellman's ship, so he lined up the target with a pencil and the toe of his shoe. His bombs landed where he wanted them to land, but unfortunately he hadn't paid much attention at briefing, not expecting to lead, and he picked out the wrong bend in the road....Lt. Fonda finished his fifty missions today. He recently commented that missions were beginning to bore him....Lt. Loysen reports that he could see divebombers giving the Jerrys hell, and that ship were shelling the shore, so the offensive on the East coast must be on....No movies yet. If we go on to the 12th of November, a month will have passed without them....Scads of packages came in today, in double quick time. Capt. Meriwether got a package in thirty days, quicker than the first class mail has in many cases been coming through. Most of them are Christmas packages, but are not being kept for the glad day....Lt. Fonda's bowlegged dog is now the property of Sgt. Holmstrom, a gift. His name is Mike and he wobbles. Sgt. Cashat's dog Rex was purchased with a package of cigarettes in Arizona (not USA). He's good for nothing, says Sgt. Cashat. 1st Sgt. Parkins' latest pet was a hound of very ordinary appearance. Pfc Hausmann lost him in the shuffle of moving to this base....First class travel on the local choo-choo to Lecce is a ride in a cattle car....

4th

Stand-down today....Story has it that some man in the Group had a girl in town at Catania. And when we moved he bundled her up in GI clothes and brought her along. She's now over in the Provost Marshall's office, and hes in hot water for transporting a civilian across the border, or something.... Most men wish they could speak Italian. They feel they could have a good time, "if they could only speak the lingo." It's getting colder, and looks like a hard winter ahead, especially for ones who've had their blood thinned out in Africa....Today we had a nice vegetable salad for supper. Purchasers in Naples brought back an airplane full of fresh vegetables, including red apples....T/Sgt. Ralph Williams is back in the Squadron, after spending some months in the hospital. He was dropped from our rolls, and presumed to have gone back to the States....Christmas cards over here are gaudy things. They have "Bon Natale" in a corner, but that's about the only traditional Christmas touch. They usually feature pretty girls in the arms of extravagantly handsome males, surrounded by piles of roses. They are all slicked up and highly colored....

5th

Stand-down all day. Rain all night....Otto Stellato spent nearly a week in Naples with the vegetable-buying crowd, visiting his relatives in between cabbages. He says when he gets back to America he never wants to leave, because he has too many cousins over here. He reports that they could not believe that New York and other cities had not been bombed to ruins....An explanation of why there have ben no movies in three weeks has been given. Special Services officer says he has no generator

and no help. Recommendation: The T/O should provide him with a generator plus projector, and should give him from three to five helpers, at least one of whom is trained to care for the machinery....Lt Chandler has returned from the hospital, ready for duty. He shows no outward ill effects. When questioned on how he got out of Lt. Bell's plane, he says he just "walked out," but those who saw the plane wonder what there was to walk out of. It was a miracle....The knitted sweaters which arrived overseas from mothers and sisters in the last war are not yet a common feature of this war. But a few men have been requesting them....In a Jersey City paper appeared a War Bond ad captioned: "Whose Blood Saved Pvt. Parkins?" It went on to say that Pvt. Stan Parkins had been injured at Guadalcanal, etc. An Aunt of the 1st Sergeant Stanley Parkins, 487th Bomb Squadron, now of Italy, sent the clipping to Sgt. Parkins' papa, who made official queries, wondering about his boy who he thought was in Tunisia and not Guadalcanal. The Bond Salesmen said the name was meant to be entirely fictional....Some allotments are being lowered in amount, with the explanation that champagne and other whoopee is very expensive in these parts....The Fifth and Eighth Armies both advanced as the fall of Vasto and Isernia were reported. The Germans have evacuated Venafro (bombed by the 487th in October) and allied troops are approaching that city....The Russians have cleared the Dneiper and Bugestuaries. A point near Nikopol is the last point on the East bank of the Dneiper left to the Germans. Russians only 3 miles from Kiev and the fall of that stronghold is inevitable.

6th

Stand-down today....Three ships went to Bizerte for modification (addition of waist guns, etc). They took off today at 1400 hours, with skeleton crews. Upon reaching this area, they couldn't find the field, because darkness had set in. One crew circled around for two hours, bailed out. Lt Auter is back in the Squadron. The others in his crew have not been heard from, and nothing is known yet of the other two ships, piloted by Lts Hague and McCabe. It is possible, and entirely probable, that they RON'd in Catania....A fighter-bomber pilot says the fighter-bombers are sweating out a classification. If they are bombers, they have fifty missions on a tour, but if they are fighters, the tour consists of 80 missions....Big rain today. Washed away all the outside latrines....Lt Wolkoff remarks that pilots on their last mission are more excited than they were on their first....Christmas cards are coming in already....The OM is getting a nice supply of cigarettes to us. There still has been no movie since October 12th, nearly a month; the food is still dull, but enlivened somewhat briefly by real potatoes with the skins on, purchased in Naples....The Notre Dame-Army game had very poor reception on this end. Score 26 to 0....A random count of a part of the day's mail revealed the following information: Of 73 letters, 34 were addressed to "Mrs.", 14 to "Miss", 14 to "Mr." (of these, 9 were to men in the service) six were to "Mr. and Mrs.", and 1 was addressed to "The Blank Family"....The German radio says the Allies have bombed the Vatican City....The Russians announce the fall of Kiev....Lt. Lather reveals an interesting sidelight: Lt. Anderson dreaded being alone in the dark. He didn't like to be outside a flashlight's beam; he wouldn't park his car in the garage, because it was dark behind the house. He must have been in terror when he had to bail out in the dark, and was alone in the dark water.

7th

Take-off this morning was at 1015 hours, and the target was again the harbor at Ancona. 9 planes of the 487th were over the harbor at 1225 hours, encountered no opposition. The first box claimed 90 percent hits in the Northeast quarter of the harbor basin and shore. The second box dropped their bombs west and parallel to the pattern of the first box and also in the Northeast quarter of the harbor basin and shore. There were no casualties, and all planes returned safely to the base. The entire second box refueled at Bari, and were consequently late in returning....Lts. Loysen and Garrett completed their fifty missions. Lt. Loysen says he'll be like an old warhorse turned in his old age to pasture, ready after

a few days for the harness again....Still no movies since October 12....Lts. Hague and McCabe have not yet been heard from. All passengers and crew of Lt. Cox's plane have been accounted for. One of the passengers was a movie photographer, who was coming over with some equipment to photograph the Group's activities. Another passenger was Lt. Auter, who was returning from leave given him after Capt. Roger's plane, in which he was riding as NB, belly landed....Lt. Cox got a bunged up nose when he landed on a roof-top, and someone else hurt his ankle, otherwise no casualties from the jump. The plane was a brand new one. Some photographs taken in Walterboro have come to light and have been distributed as far as they will go....It is reported that the Germans call the B-25's "Devil Murders."....One of the combat crew members going home says he expects to go into combat again after a short rest, but he doesn't mind a second tour so long as he has the chance to see his folks....Some popular post-war plans; to get married; to get drunk; to go on a long auto trip; to go to a good restaurant and eat....Sicilians and Italians share the opinion that all Americans are very rich....Capt. Parsons returned from the hospital where he has been recovering from yellow jaundice....One of the missing planes is Lt. Coyle's favorite - #530, 7U, "Rosie." She is famous for her lovely Petty girl, painted by Sgt. Greg Moore. She was our first replacement ship from Columbia, our old station. Ferry pilots brought her over. A tail gun was put in at Hergla by Squadron Armament, and she has been in Bizerte getting waist guns and extra armor. She had her name when she came. Crew chief is T/Sgt. Horwitz. Assistant are Sgt. Barankovich and Sgt. Grossman. "Rosie" came to us when we were in Sfax, but because she had no waist guns, no tail gun, and no lower turret, she could not fly in combat until we reached Comiso. She is a B-25C, has 340 hours, and 26 combat missions. On a night mission to Grozzanise L/G on Sept. 9th, "Rosie" got lost, landed at Casabile L/G for the night.

8th

No mission today because of rain....There seems to be considerable sickness in the Group as a whole, and we probably have our proportion in the Squadron. The weather is getting cold, and of course it is damp. Someone comments that there are no a great many colds....Temporary stoves are blossoming. They are made of metal, burning diesel oil, and of mud and brick, burning scarce coal and wood. Stoves have been ordered from the quartermaster....Frequent comment: the British dentists and doctors are good. They have the "civilian" touch....It is reported in conversation that the Italian soldier's pay is about \$3.00 per month, that he has one uniform, and that his food is PP. In Sicily the Italian soldiers put on civilian clothes, went trudging home to the farm. In Italy, the civilians put on soldiers uniforms, got themselves captured, and went jubilantly to the United States. Or so we hear....Some of the boys were cheering about the carton of so of cigarettes (a bonanza) we've received lately, then found theirs got soaking wet in the rains....

Talk: that the photographer in the plane the other night would not jump, had to be shoved out. In Walterboro, a man in the squadron evidently "froze" and went down with a plane rather than jump....Still missing with "Rosie," is T/Sgt. Latady's ship #389, squadron No. 7J. She was a replacement, coming in at Hergla. Because she had no waist guns, no lower turret, and no tail gun, she could not fly in combat until we reached Comiso. The Squadron installed a tail gun, and she had been sent to Bizerte for waist guns and additional armor plating. A B-25D, she was brought in by ferry pilots. Our won pilots say she is a very nice plane, that they like to fly her. She's never received much flak, never given much mechanical trouble, never had an engine change. Assistant crew chiefs: S/Sgt. Harding and Sgt. Gears. All her boys like to hear her motors run, so 7J has a lot of "ground time." She has 25 combat missions to her credit....

9th

A pleasant sunny day, but stand-down all day. Probably lots of weather over the targets...Lts. Hague and McCabe brought their planes in. Lt. McCabe came only as far as Catania. Lt. Hague went farther, returned to make a night landing at Catania. The weather was ferocious....Quotes: "One of the crew chiefs awoke in the night, reached to the floor alongside his cot for his flashlight. He felt a little water and instantly thought his puppy had wet the floor, but even as he thought that, his hand kept going deeper into the water, until most of his forearm was submerged. When he found his flashlight – it still worked though it had been submerged – he saw that there was about a foot of water on the floor of his tent, and his shoes were floating around like boats on a lake. "This is "Sunny Italy" for you." Group has made up some mimeographed Xmas greetings on V-mail forms. A map of Italy and Sicily, a candle, and the legend "Season's Greetings from over here," adorn the front....Some men have acquired very attractive greeting cards showing the squadron at services in the Cathedral of St. Agatha, Catania....Tarkany and others in Lt. Cox's plane had taken all their possessions to Bizerte, planning a long stay while guns and armor were put in. Everything was lost, and they have only the clothes on their backs....We're getting our daily pack of cigarettes now....Our first show since October 12 came our way tonight. It was a B picture, "One Thrilling Night," but everyone enjoyed it. Lt. Sumner went to Manduro for the film. Lt. Winebrenner furnished the generator. Lt. Gjertson was present....Plane No. 539, Sq. No. 7P, "Eileen," a B-25C, has recently been to Bizerte for modification. It has a new tail gun, and a new waist gun installation. The size of the windows is increased and the mount is hinged so the that guns can shoot straight down. "Eileen" came in as a replacement at Hergla, already named. Lt. Cerutti brought it to Deversoir, left it. She has 323 hours and 53 combat missions, and is a "molte bono" plane. Never given much trouble, and has, according to Major Murray and Capt. Parsons, the best set of instruments in the group. She now has a sort of box of armor plate for the pilot, with armor overhead, and on the left side. T/Sgt. Van derAa (spelling correct) is crew chief and Sgt. Hill and Cpl. Brandt are assistants....

10th

Dull weather, but no rain. Stand-down. Col. Tokaz spoke to the officers at 1500 hours, calling on them to play less and work more. He revealed also that the raid tomorrow would be interesting. The bomber field in Greece which had been troubling the British in the Dodecanese would be wiped off the map in one grand gesture, with 48 planes from this Group and 84 other B-25's going over at about the same time, Dropping frags and big delays varying up to 12 hours....No Mail has arrived in several days....One man is glad he hasn't been sick, because he's seen a lot of the "don't-give-a-damn" attitude in the Army....A number of little Okie shacks have sprung up around. With the construction of stoves and other effort to make things cozy, many individuals are getting a real thrill out of home-making. They feel a real affection for their little shacks....The Squadron is looking forward to spending Christmas in Rome, which seems to rank next to spending it at home. Serio has two cousins there, and he wants to take in services with them at St. Peter's...."Dixie Girl" (#081) is an interesting plane. She had her name when she arrived with the 3 other oldies on August 28th from the 310th. She evidently had been used for torpedo work, because there were no bomb controls on her. She was in bad shape – gas gages didn't work, control cables were loose, etc. - and she had been shot up considerably. A B-25 C, she had 53 combat missions when she came to us. Underneath her 53 little bombs, someone had drawn a red line, inscribing thereon the legend. "Any more is against our better judgment." She has now 69 combat missions and 502 hours. "Dixie Girl" has regular B-25 armament and no extra armor. There are no wing racks, because of inability to replace the wing rack controls. Crew chief is T/Sgt. Truex, and assistants are S/Sgt. Kelly, and S/Sgt. Kolinek. "Dixie Girl" has the distinction of being the only one of our ships to return with a wounded man aboard: on the October 4th raid of Capua, T/Sgt. Pinion

was wounded in the leg....

11th

No rain, but the anticipated raid on Greece was canceled....Our second show was presented tonight - "Dr. Gillespie's New Assistant." There were two showings, one at 6 PM and one at 8 PM. The theatre is located in a building inside a former Prisoner of War camp for British prisoners who built the landing strip for the Eye-ties....The moon was bright. Romance stirred in innumerable bosoms....Comment: "I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me, but I sure as hell don't want anyone telling me how lucky I am being overseas." More comment: "We've stood it for nine months; I guess we can stick it out." The cool weather has reminded many old outdoorsmen that the hunting season is in full swing back home. They're a little wistful....Some of the men were in Bari a few nights ago when the Germans came over. There were three alerts and one plane each time. No damage was done, and the A/A barrage was awe-inspiring....Reports have it that the Eye-ties were receiving 3 cents per day in training, and 5 cents per day in combat, with a few cents extra for families....Italian cooking doesn't appeal to American tastes. It is rank with olive oil....Some mail was in today - not much....One of our original ships is "Early Bird" (278 - 7K). Lt. H.H. Anderson flew her across. At Sfax, she was nearly always a standby. Then at Hergla she caught up, and then at Comiso she had more missions than any ship and held the record until "Tuff Stuff" began to work up. "Early Bird" has 50 combat missions and 338 hours. She is a B-25C, and was one of those with five nose guns for a while. Crew chief is T/Sgt. Laiten, and assistants are S/Sgt. Handzel and Sgt. Deveau....

12th

Most of the men in the Squadron never tire of watching the airplanes takeoff and land. There is always a fascination about them. But this morning's formation was a sight to behold. Some 48 planes of the 340th joined with other B-25's to make a total of about 130 B-25's in the air at one time. They roared over the field in a great cloud and rendezvoused with 60 or 70 fighters over Lecce. The target for this mass of planes was Athens/Tatoi A/D, but because of weather they attacked the alternate target, the A/D at Berat Kucode, Albania. They were over the target at 0950, and dropped clusters of 20 lb frag bombs. They covered the field, our 11 planes dropping theirs on the runway and to the right of it. Some fires were started. The frag bombs were a new experience, and a hazardous one, since they fell out of the bomb bays like pieces of paper, endangering the planes behind. Lt. Emslie's plane got a hole in the tail by one of the cluster rods. A/A was intense and accurate, but only one plane was reported to be holed. All returned safely. This was the 487th's first raid in the Balkans, and was the 50th raid for Lt. Cerrutti....

The women here seem to do all the work. You can always see them busily picking olives. And when you go to town, you see the streets crowded with men doing nothing....Some American Christmas cards are being sent home. They must have been brought over by thoughtful souls. They are much more colorful and attractive than the Bon Natale cards bought here. The latter feature romance and champagne more than they do the St. Nick spirit....For supper tonight, we had coffee without sugar, due to the shortage of the latter....The Orderly Room has acquired a wonderful new stove, made of 55-gal drum, and burning coal. It makes a sweat box of the tent, and Sgt. Dunlap has been seen to remove his shirt to keep cool....Nearly everyone has some sort of stove in his tent. Some are using blow torches....Reports are coming in that the Boston papers have published the group photos taken at Catania by press representatives....A new war-bond slogan at home appears to be "Buy your son's ticket home with a War Bond." Some of the boys are critical, probably because the subject of going home is too sacred to be bounced around for publicity purposes. Comment: "We ain't fixing on coming home until we whipped Jerry as much as we love our homes so don't believe them 4-Fers back home...."Hell's

Pecker” will soon have enough missions to go home. He likes to ride so much that he goes into a lather when he sees a plane taking off. He wants to get into it....Those visiting Naples find it very attractive, and a good town. A bunch of ratings have come out, and the additional pay is appreciated.

13th

The show tonight was “Meet John Doe.” Gary Cooper and Walter Brennan were impressive, and everyone enjoyed a first class show for a change, even though an old one. There were two matinées in the afternoon....Everyone knows when Saturday night comes, because the Chaplain announces Sunday's services. It's very difficult to keep up with the other days of the week. Catholic services here are held in the Officers Club at 9 AM, and are conducted by a Chaplain from another Group. He has a German Accent, and is considered a very good chaplain. Protestant services are held at 10 o'clock and are presided over by Chaplain Cooper. Jewish services occur on Friday evening, also at the Officers Club....”Our Jewel” (246-7E) was named after Lt. Wilkerson's wife. It is an original ship. Lt. Wilkerson, Major Whittington, Lt. Loysen, M/Sgt. Czarnowski, S/Sgt. Jones, S/Sgt. Durie, and T/Sgt. Grillo came over in it. It leads the Squadron in engine changes, has had six new engines three on each side. T/Sgt. Adkins is the crew chief, and S/Sgt. Heinzelman and Sgt. Buchanan are assistants. “our Jewel” has 45 combat missions and 317 hours. She is a B-25C, and was one of those formerly equipped with 5 nose guns. She has armor plate on the floor of the pilot's compartment and on the floor of the bombardier's compartment. The most severe damage she has received was caused by a tip hatch falling into a prop on a preflight. It took two days to repair the damage....A new order allows one-half of one percent of ground personnel to be sent home per month. At this rate, it will take some fifteen years to get everyone back to the States....

14th

Lt. McCabe called today's raid “the most interesting” he had ever been on. The target was the marshaling yards at Sofia, Bulgaria, a hitherto-unbombed city. (Alternate targets were M/Y's at Nis and Skopje, Yugoslavia, and the A/D and refinery at Berat, Albania.) Besides accomplishing damage to military installations, the raid would accomplish a political result by letting Bulgaria, weakening in her love for Germany, know that a war is going on, and cause her to call for her soldiers on the Russian front to come home to protect the home front. Forty-eight 340th Group planes took off at 1010 hours (12 from each Sq, with one of our crews filling in the 12th for the 486th) to join 48 others of the 321st Group. 48 P-38's gave them fighter cover, and they were over the target at 1230. Three bombs in each box were 6-hour delays. Returning crews were more than satisfied with the results, saying at least 85% of the bombs hit the yards, but photographs (there were none from our Squadron) showed only patterns falling short. Colonel Tokaz, who went on the raid, appeared to be satisfied until he saw the photographs. At least 4 enemy fighters, probably ME 109's, arose to meet the invaders, and at least two of these were seen to be shot down by the P-38's. A/A was intense, but was inaccurate, probably because gun crews were inexperienced and excited. Two of our ships were slightly holed, but all returned in formation. The raid was announced by the Germans, but was not verified by the Allies on the radio. It was the first raid which impressed us with the horror of bombing, because it was on a bunch of civilians who must have been surprised by the approach of the planes. Many of the crews have heretofore expressed a dislike of bombing little towns to create road blocks, but most everyone realizes that the citizens should have got out into the hills, and probably had a chance to do so. But this raid was different, and must have cost a lot of lives....A birthday party was held last night for one of the first cooks. All the kitchen personnel had a fine time....A/A is familiarly known these days as “black olives”....The show last night was “Sporting Blood” with Robert Young and Maureen O'Sullivan. Everyone enjoyed it, especially the siren who wooed but lost. She rather made a bust of things....We

had biscuits for supper....That makes 3 “firsts”: first time Sofia has been bombed first time we've had P-38 cover, and the first time we've had biscuits....

15th

Today's raid was most successful. 48 planes of the 340th, including 12 for the 487th Squadron, took off at 1010 hours to bomb the Athens/Kalamaki Airdrome. 487th was tail-end Charley, and carried 500 pound bombs. All the other ships carried frag bombs. They were to beat the 321st, which turned back, either because of weather or because they figured the trip was too long for their gas supply. The 340th went on. The first box of the 487th covered the east-west runway in close concentration, crossing the intersection with the north-south runway.

One element of the second box hit the north-south runway at about its middle point, while the second element of the box hit it farther down. Direct hits can be observed. The frag bombs were extremely well placed in the dispersal areas. A reconnaissance photo taken yesterday shows two hangers, but our photos show only one, the other having vanished in smoke. Col. Tokaz is well pleased, and estimates that at least 30 planes were destroyed on the ground. These were the bombers harassing the British troops attempting to hold the island of Leros, and other islands in the Aegean. All of our planes returned safely, reporting that ack-ack was not intense, and that the few fighters which arose to intercept were taken care of by the P-38 escort. It was a long trip, and gas got low. Two planes stopped at Lecce for more gas. Suggestion for the next war: That a good gas gage be invented....The orderly room bulletin board carries a notice that we have been overseas 9 months today, and that the boys can now stop worrying about babies. Some smarties say its just the time to begin worrying....Also on the board is a cartoon showing an officer and a private just pulling onto a tiny island after being shipwrecked, with the caption: “Now lets get things organized. Your first detail, Jones, will be to get up an officer's mess.”....Show tonight was “Invitation to Happiness” with Irene Dunne and Fred McMurray. Nearly everyone wanted to spank the little boy....Cold weather evidently delayed the explosion of the six-hour delays dropped on Sofia, for the Germans said they were still exploding today. There were 48 of the m. Lt. Sumner took off for Tunis today, having been transferred to the photo reconnaissance wing. Lts. Warnock, Henderson, Howle, Captain Rodgers, T/Sgt. Grillo, and T/Sgt. Driscoll left for home, home in the U.S.A.....T/Sgt. Longman finished his 50th mission....

16th

Another successful raid today, although “not as good as yesterdays.” Target was Athens/Eleusis A/D, with the 487th having frags for the dispersal area in the Northeast corner of the field. They took off at 1015 and dropped their frags – guess where – in the dispersal area in the Northeast corner of the field. four squadrons of the 340th participated with as many from the 321st. Each squadron flew nine planes, in a new type of formation designed to give a wider front. No fighters were observed. Flak was intense coming off the target, but all planes returned safely. It was black, red, and white, all heavy. Some crew members observed fires still burning on the Athens/Kalamaki field bombed yesterday. (Note: a 487th bomb got one of the hangers on that field, unreported yesterday.)....Eight good men and true finished their 50th mission today: Lts. Emslie, D. R. Peterson, Black, T/Sgt. Campbell, Mancini, Pinion, S/Sgts. Crane and Dzialo....Show tonight was “Wake Island” with Brian Donlevy, popular in the States about a year ago....News came today that we will start moving to Foggia Satellite on the 19th and will complete the move by the 21st. It's tents again, and lots of mud. And lost of B25's, for the 321st is planning to move there, as well as the 12th. Rumor has it that B-24's will occupy this field, which is a very good idea. They should definitely come closer than Africa....

17th

Everything happened today. For the third time, take-off was at 1010, and for the second time the target was Athens/Kalamaki A/D. 36 ships from the 340th and 36 from the 321st (9 from the 487th) were over the target at 1225 (usually over at 1300). Lt. Moose Sather says: "The fighters were on us before we hit the target. They were all coming at us from the sun, at 6 o'clock. But were we scared – hell yes. We continued on our run with the fighters on our tail and ack-ack all around us. It was a beautiful pattern in the dispersal areas to the left of the runway. We carried frag bombs. We used strong evasive action as we turned off the target, to avoid ack-ack. There was a terrific dog-fight going on just above the target. We had just hit the coast again, when I looked up and saw 4 planes dropping bombs on us. The planes were about a 1000 feet above our formation, and the bombs fell about 100 yards in front of us. We felt trapped – we couldn't use evasive action to avoid them – I was scared. It was the first time the 487th had been bombed, and it was a new experience. Immediately afterward, the P-38's went after them. I saw two of them go down in smoke, and was the P-38's going after the other one. I saw one P-38 follow an ME down till the Jerry pilot bailed out, then the P-38 pulled up into a steep climb and knocked off two more ME's. All this time, the gunner on our ship was blazing away. We proceeded on our way home, and over Argus we got ack-ack again, but it was negligible. We pinpointed a lot of shipping in about 5 different places in the Adriatic."...Dillingham, Casey, and Bradley each claimed planes, the latter claiming two shot down....All our planes returned safely, but Lt. Pirnie's 7-P was considerably shot up. The flaps were gone, and his hydraulic system was out. They lowered the landing gear by cranking, and came in without brakes or flaps. The plane went off the end of the runway and into the vineyard. There was a big hole between the fuselage and right nacelle, and in the tail assembly. Four P-38's escorted him back. Lt. Pirnie says: "I want to see those boys."...One of the 486th planes was shot down, and 4 chutes were seen to open. No one reported the loss of any of the fighter escort....M/Sgt. Lynch did not comment on "Eileen's" being shot up, other than to say that she is now the service group's problem....At dusk tonight a bunch of B-24's circled around trying to find the field. They came in for an hour or so, and the field was a great bustle of lights and badly parked aircraft. It is reported that the planes carried luggage and equipment, and that they plan to remain here. We have received orders to vacate by the 21st. Some 2000 lb bombs were observed being brought on to the field – a little large for effective use by us....Christmas cards were sold yesterday at 10 for a shilling. They are single fold of glazed paper, with a B-25 (probably 488th Squadron) on the front, flying over clouds. The legend inside says "Season's Greetings from the 340th Bombardment Group."...The show tonight was "Background to Danger" with George Raft and Sidney Greenstreet. Not bad....Lt. McCabe says "There are more characters in Italy than in all of North Africa." He should know....Simenitzky, the only one of the original flight officers remaining, finished his fifty missions. Gavin also finished.

18th

Captain Lambert and S/Sgt. Birkley left for the United States today. Stand-down all day, giving everyone a chance to pack up for the moving. Trucks came early for a change, and most sections were struck and on the trucks by dark....Nelson was peeved because several bags of Christmas packages arrived just at nightfall. But he distributed them....Captain Meriwether again questioned the gunners regarding the planes they knocked down yesterday, and will try to have credit given to the men for them....

Lt. Sherbourne brings a story about the B-17's which came into this field this afternoon. He says thirteen were shot down in the Athens area. He says they headed for the Athens/Kalamaki, found it a total wreck (from B-25 bombing) and headed on toward their alternate target. Fighters escorted one formation, and were to return and pick up the second formation. But for some reason there was no tie

up, and the B-17's went in without cover....Captain Meriwether is giving souvenirs to the men finishing their tours and going home, the silk maps of the Mediterranean area out of the escape kits. In Bizerte at present is ship no. 045 (7L), "Flak Happy," for modification. She is one of the 4 old 310th ships which came in on August 28, at Catania, and was painted green and had its very appropriate name when she came. She was the most shout up of the 4 when she came – she was almost one big solid patch. She's flown thirteen combat missions for the 487th and has got only one hole. But she did get hit by our own ack-ack at Catania while she was sitting on the ground, and received four more holes. A B-25C, she has no design painted on her, but did have the 310th Skull and Crossbones on her, which T/Sgt. Aul, the crew chief, had removed because there wasn't enough room for stenciling bombs on. She has never given much trouble – only once has she failed to go on a scheduled mission. Assistant crew chiefs are S/Sgt. Click and Sgt. Carlson. "Flak Happy" is T/Sgt. Aul's second ship. His first was "Miss Minooki" which crashed with Lt. Baran and crew on July 13th. "Flak Happy" has a total of 68 missions and 482 hours....

19th

The Ground Echelon pulled out from San Pancrazio A.D this morning at 0800 hours – only a hour later than the scheduled time. The air echelon remained operational, and expected to leave San Pancrazio A.D on the 21st, after perhaps doing a mission on the 20th. But in the middle of the morning, orders came through for all the planes of the 486th and 487th to fly to Foggia Main to operate with the 12th Bomb Group. Although we had precious little transportation, and although the declaration of a stand-down had sent a rollicking crowd of men off to Lecce, the planes were packed with baggage, and the first ship took off about 1400 hours. Four 487th and two or three 486th ships reached Foggia Main. The others either turned back because of the weather or never took off because of the late hour. At Foggia main, there was talk of fresh offensive operations to begin in the morning – that the 12th Group, and perhaps the 340th, would do two missions during the day. Crews were instructed to pile their baggage on the ground, that trucks would take them to the 81st and 82nd squadrons for supper and that TBF trucks would pick up their bedrolls and cots and deposit them at the large Tactical Bomber Force headquarters buildings, where crews would spend the night. In spite of the confusions and omissions, this general plan was carried out....The TBF buildings were former administrative buildings of a Fascist ONC agricultural project. Crews were bedded down in an auditorium behind the handsome church, used now by the TBF personnel as a mess hall. We were expected to vacate the place early next morning, fly a mission (perhaps two) and then take off for Satellite Three to join the ground echelon....A wine shop and officers and NCO clubs furnished amusement....It was fairly definitely decided around night fall that the half dozen planes present would not fly a combat mission the next morning....

The ground echelon arrived after dark, had difficulty finding the field. They were throwing something together for the night when it was announced that a cinema would show out in the open, in the area. It was Jeanette McDonald in "Cairo." Cracks from the audience were the chief attraction....

20th

At Foggia main, crews were up and around their planes early. They all stood on a rockpile outside 12th Group Ops and wondered what was up. The only orders seemed to be to hang around until Major Bailey should call. The 12th Group Colonel seemed displeased by our presence, and made little effort to conceal his displeasure. Air Commodore Sinclair, TBF Commander, approached in a natty blue uniform and said he was sorry for the confusion, adding that it was unfair for the heavies to push us out before the fighters got off our field. This was our first information on the reasons for the unfortunate move. At about 1100 hours the rest of the 487th came in, and in the afternoon many of the 489th planes

showed up. While practically on the verge of putting bombs in the ships, ordnance men received orders to wait. And at about 1500 hours, it was decided that we probably would not operate at all from this field, but would probably be here "several days." TBF trucks were late in arriving for luggage, and it was not until well after dark that crews got back to headquarters buildings. Crew chiefs, gas truck men, and others fortunate enough to have one, pitched their tents out by the planes....At Satellite No. 3, it began to rain. The 79th Fighter Group, containing the famous 99th Negro Squadron, could not leave the field because their base was not ready to occupy, probably because unserviceable....

21st

Several bags of mail had been brought up yesterday on the planes, and it was decided to open the sacks. This detail occupied most of a rainy morning, and a number of letters and musty packages were received. In the afternoon, Cpl. Nelson arrived to take away that part of the mail belonging to those at Foggia Satellite No. 3 (just called "Number 3"). He reported that the mess hall had been set up there, and that the place was a sea of mud. The colonel commanding the P-40's there was displeased by the arrival of the 340th, had drawn a line and dared anyone to cross it....The 12th Group attempted a mission in the rain, did a takeoff practically on instruments, circled the field and formed up but soon returned with their bombs....TBF personnel did not particularly approve of our moving in on them, but were decent about it. There was some talk about the Americans clogging the toilets....The other squadrons moved out of the building and didn't show up again. No one seemed to know where they went, although someone suggested they had done the wise thing and had gone to some comfortable hotel in Bari....

22nd

At Foggia Main it rained again. In the afternoon, two trucks went into Foggia to the Flagello Theatre (American Red Cross Theatre) to see a South African revue, put on by the "Troopadours." One truck left at intermission, to get back by chow time, but the other stayed for the whole show, which was fairly good. Some numbers were repeated almost, especially the numbers by the ballet team. Favorites were the female impersonator (especially the dance of the Seven Veils) and the six attractive girls. The second truck, having missed supper, stopped in at the Red Cross for bread, jam, and coffee. It hit the spot....Rain poured at Number 3, and activity became suspended. It was almost impossible to get even so far as the mess tent....

23rd

At Foggia Main, rain fell again. Lt. Pirnie, Sgt. Berry, and Sgt. Warrington came down with something, probably jaundice, and went to the hospital. Out on the line, Sgt. Horwitz and someone else also went....The line shifted more or less for itself, eating at the transit mess and the 81st line mess, and visiting the 12th Group movie at night. Several saw "Road To Morocco" a couple of times....At TBF, a truck went to Foggia again, to the Flagello, to see "Love Crazy" with William Powell and Myrna Loy....

24th

At Foggia Main, arrangements had been made with the Red Cross Clubmobile girls to serve donuts and coffee at ten o'clock in the morning. They were late in arriving, and all those who had slept through breakfast on purpose got hungry. There were two girls, very friendly, and the donuts and coffee were really appreciated. They promised to come again on Saturday and feed those who had been forgotten

out on the line....The evening show was "When the Daltons Rode" a western with Brian Donlevy, Kay Francis, and a bunch of quick trigger men. It was held at the American Red Cross Little Theatre in town, and for once the driver did not get lost in Foggia....

25th

AS one man put it, this was the day to begin a diary. And not because it was Thanksgiving....A mission from Foggia Main was scheduled, and the time over target was noon. Most of us knew it was a "noon mission" but we thought it was noon takeoff, whereas TBF referred to time over target. Consequently everything was delayed. At 1045, time of takeoff, some planes had no bombs. Credit is to be given to the 12th Group ordnance crews, who did a noble job of getting the bombays filled in nothing flat. Targets were strategic ones in Yugoslavia, with primary target being the World War famous Sarajevo, where someone got himself assassinated to begin the first great conflict. Our crews found the weather terrible and brought their bombs back, landing at Number 3. It was counted as a mission, and Lt. Mayer and Sgt. Dillingham finished their tour....At Main, orders seemed to be to send the luggage of those crews who had flown the mission to Number 3. Work was started, but delayed by a fine Thanksgiving dinner, with roast turkey, at the 81st Squadron mess. The luggage started out about four, just about the time the crews were being sent back to TBF for the night. They arrived to find their bedding gone, but blankets and warm places were found for them by sympathetic TBF personnel. Only a few wanted to return, although Captain Parsons said they should be sent back to sleep in the mess hall at Number 3. About six returned, but in the meantime the bedding had been sent back to TBF. It was a day for the books....A good stage show was presented in Foggia as part of a special Thanksgiving program....At Number 3, Thanksgiving dinner was a superb meal. Lt. Gellman said he honestly didn't believe he had ever had a better meal. It wound up with blueberry pie and cigars....

26th

At Foggia Main the air echelon packed and moved out shortly after breakfast. The five remaining planes were expected by TBF to participate in the mission, but only two of them were loaded, and they had the wrong kind of bombs, so no mission was flown. Baggage was loaded on trucks and personnel piled on top of it. They got to No. 3 just in time for a mission from this field. Lt. Egbert arrived just in time to hop into this plane, without having gone to briefing. The target was a road junction at Lanciano, a few miles north of the bomblines, and five of our planes participated. The photos showed good results, with bursts, with the road entering town well covered. Number 3 is still muddy, and the runway is slick, but trucks are not sticking on it as they were....A truck went into Foggia to see "Love Crazy" again. Another truck went on to the 12th Group hanger to see the Naples Revue, a very good Italian show....

27th

Principal target today was Travinek, in Yugoslavia. Because of the weather the alternate target, Sibenik, was selected. Sgt. Buller says that some mix-up in the selection of targets in the harbor caused a bad run, and only a few bombs were dropped. Others were jettisoned and some were brought back....The very best rumor of the war has grown up in the past two days. The Red Cross man in Group had it from a colonel that a plane landed at El Aouina and Mr. Churchill got out; that another plane landed and Mr. Roosevelt got out; that later they were joined by two JU 88's and all left for Cairo. Another rumor put Mr. Stalin in Cairo. Then another rumor put Ambassador Von Papen in one of the JU 88's. Lt. Garrett (who returned from Naples with orders for several men to go home) says the pilot he flew with was the pilot of the ship on which Mr. Roosevelt rode about a week ago. Another rumor puts Mr.

Roosevelt now in Bari, and Major Bachrach says the airport there has been closed down for two days. Lt. Peterson says the P-40 pilots say they escorted Von Papen's ship. To top it all off, the Red Cross girls today said a colonel down town is taking any and all bets that the war will be over in fifteen days....The Red Cross girls brought donuts and coffee for the men on the line, as promised....Major Murray has a letter which says that 50 missions will no longer constitute a "tour" but will simply be a check point for physical examination. The boys are downhearted. Lt. Wrede finished his fiftieth today....At supper time tonight a tent burned down in a quick burst of flame. It belonged to communications men, who lost a lot of stuff....Lt. Hague's dog "Jackson" frothed at the mouth, acted peculiar, and as a result was shot by Charge of Quarters Pitonyak....Rations were given out tonight, and included great quantities of Lucky Strikes. Even the last men in the line got Luckies....

28th

Target for today was Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. Takeoff was at 0930 hours, and crews were briefed to look for shipping in Port Gruz, just North of Dubrovnik. It was believed that German troops were concentrating there in preparation for an invasion of the island recently taken by the Partisans. No invasion craft were observed, so patterns were laid along the West side of the port, among warehouses and buildings. Photos proved the raid was entirely successful. All planes returned safely....Peace rumors are still floating around. It seems now that Major Bachrach is reported to have actually seen Von Papen in Tunis....Trucks went in to Foggia in the afternoon, after a stand-down was declared for the remainder of the day. Some men went to the bath-house where a fine hot bath can be had. Others spent the afternoon drinking coffee and eating cookies at the Red Cross Snack Bar....Lt. Sather got in his fiftieth mission. Lt. Wrede got in his 51st....

29th

Mission today was to attack two bridges at Guilianova, Italy. Planes were over the target at 1145 hours, and photos show bursts covering the two bridges. On coming off the target, Lt. Cox's plane was hit by ack-ack, and one of his engines was knocked out. He planned to make a belly landing, but discovered a fighter field just North of Termoli and landed there. He and his crew were back safely in the squadron by supper-time, and the ship is considered reparable....Lt. Over made his fiftieth mission today....S-2 and the Orderly Room are popular places, being in the only buildings available, and having a couple of home-made stoves. Lights are being placed in most of the tents now, however, and perhaps there will be more staying-at-home hereafter....Scads of Christmas packages have arrived, and Nelson is working double time. They always seem to arrive about nightfall....On the Russian front, Gomel has fallen....Trucks went to Foggia to see "The Amazing Mr. Williams" at the Red Cross Little Theatre....For supper, each man had one pork-chop, the first since coming overseas 9 months ago....

30th

A mission was scheduled for this morning, but it was canceled at about the hour for Squadron Alert. For a few hours no other planes were in the air around the field, and the day was clear and bright. More rumors sprang up as to the reasons. Some said that four days armistice had been declared for settling up the discussions. When some formations flew over, it was suggested that they might be carrying leaflets, but the majority of opinion was that they were carrying steel and not paper. Reason for the stand-down was given as bad weather over the front. In the evening, two missions were scheduled for the next day....Show at the Flagello was "The Amazing Mrs. Halliday" with Deanna Durbin. It has been decided to try to show an outdoor movie in the Squadron this week. If the heavy winds which sprang up shortly after supper are to be an every-day occurrence, plans will have to be

changed....Lt. Hague is getting together a small Officers Club in the building next to S-2, with gravel on the floor and a real G-I pot bellied stove, the first in the squadron. The Enlisted Men's club will be in a farm building a short distance from the area. At a formation (for payday) this afternoon, Sgt. Parkins mentioned that the 12th Air Force was moving to Foggia, and would be very strict on matters of dress and military courtesy....More packages in tonight. Santa Claus is really coming in....The feeling is that we will probably be here for the rest of the winter, so we might as well make ourselves comfortable....

Transcribed by Dan Setzer
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