

MEN OF

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THE 57TH

*Women of the 57th Bomb Wing,
Army Air Force in World War II*

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Gabes Aerodrome Tunisia

March 1943 the column of British trucks move in to take possession of the recently captured airfield.

Read about the 310th BG missions to Gabes that helped secure its capture.

Photo credit: Imperial War Museum

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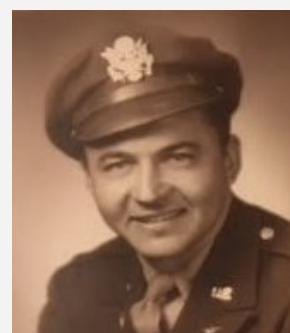
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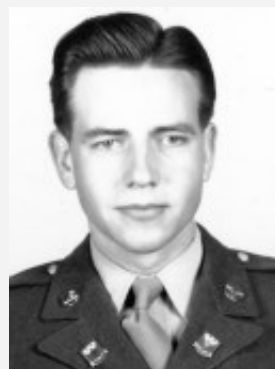
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Millard Rives



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - DICK REED 340TH/486TH

I think it was General Macarthur who said that old soldiers never die, they just fade away.

That's also probably true for old Air Force guys.

We, me anyway, now that I've passed 100 years, still clearly remember those few short months in early 1945 when my 40-some odd missions over northern Italy took place.

I still see the Nazi Flak exploding right on target and those unlucky ships going down without a sign of a parachute.

80 years later, and fading away and still remembering my many friends and comrades in that war (some made it; some didn't) who in my mind will never die and will stay with me to the very end.

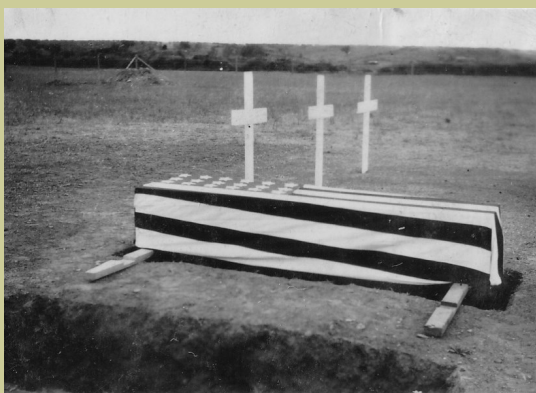
I ask you to remember the meaning of Memorial Day.

God bless. ★

*Lt. James V. Quitta, 380th BS.
KIA June 1944. Buried at the US
Army Cemetery at Bastia, Corsica*



Chris Gilley Photo



s for Lt. James V. Quitta, killed in action

Down Wind - - - Dead Stick

By Alexander C. Stewart, 489th Bomb Squadron

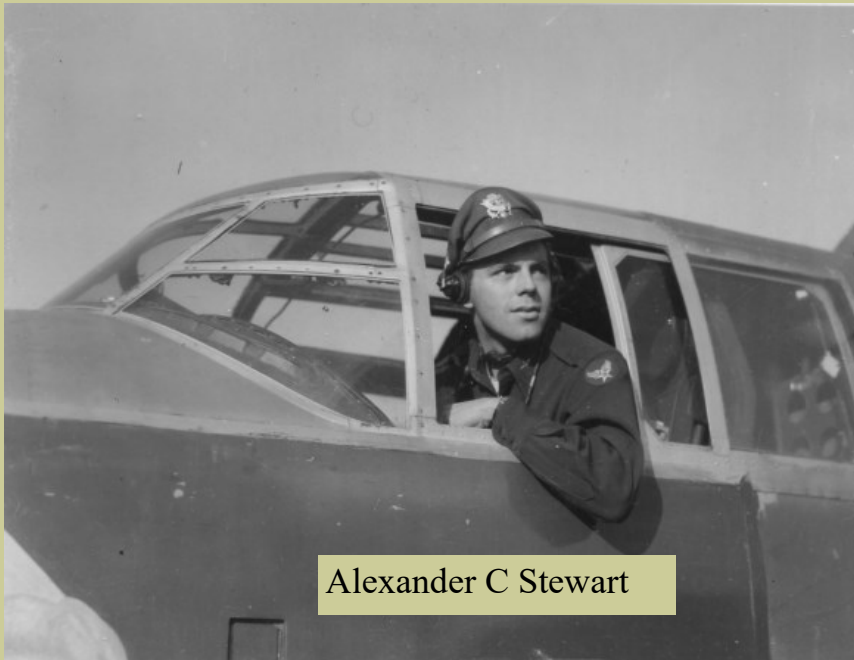
The wind sock at the air field on Corsica was erect as an impassioned jock on November 10th, 1944 when, on my 59th mission, I “greased in” B-25 9R with both engines dead. A 22 mph NW to SE cross tail wind was

pushing us at 162 mph ground speed as we flared out over the runway. Why was it that our best landing was often made under the most adverse conditions?

It all started when we lost the right engine oil, from flak over the Cassale Montferrato railroad bridge, in Northern Italy. Having made a successful drop, we were now headed home with a feathered prop. We were flying in #4 slot, leading the second element behind Captain Emil Roesler. My two wing men, with Pilots James N King and John J. Franks in #5, and Lt. Bob Helle and Lt. Jim Milliken in #6, throttled back and escorted us to Corsica. My crew included co-pilot Lt. Joe Nuessle, bombardier Lt. James T. Clayton, Jr., waist-gunner Sgt. Harley A Hutton, turret-gunner Sgt. John J. Lauria and tail-gunner Sgt. Myron H. Reinhard.

We were dragging along at 9,000 feet with an indicated air speed of 150 mph when we crossed the jagged mountainous tip of Corsica, about 35 miles from “home.” I probably gave a sigh of relief that we just about had it

made, when the left throttle slammed hard back into my hand. I eased the throttle forward and the engine responded to my urging regaining power. Joe alerted the tower of our plight and I made an as-



Alexander C Stewart

essment of our situation. The sea was too rough for a successful ditching, a crash landing site was non-existent, making bailing out the only viable option.

Our confidence, however, was enhanced by a temporary shortage of more back-fires as we closed the gap to Alesan, though the loss of power was evident. We were losing altitude to maintain sufficient airspeed. I sensed that quite possibly we could make it. Holding a steady course, with a few more back-fires under our belt, we maneuvered for a final approach. Now down to 2,000 feet, and lined up with the runway, the engine gave a final

blast and died. Later, on the ground we saw the gaping hole in the engine cowling where #12 cylinder had made its exit. All power was gone, and now a wind-milling propeller was our reward. Long since I had abandoned the idea of circling the field for an up-wind landing, and so notified the tower that we were coming in down-wind.

My right leg felt a cramp coming on when I realized I was holding full rudder to compensate for the power loss, and hadn't re-trimmed. Meanwhile, Joe was ready to feather the left prop when I gave the word. It was the natural thing to do, but for some unexplainable reason, I signaled "NO," and might have even pulled his hand away from the feathering button, I don't remember. We had been flying with full flaps and had enough reserve hydraulic pressure to lower the landing gear. It was obvious that we were a little too high, and I opted for an "S" turn to shorten the "glide." I had never slipped a B-25 with two dead engines, with one prop feathered, and the landing gear lowered. I gingerly executed a shallow "S" and it worked. I flared out for the landing with 140 mph airspeed. Old 9R floated and floated while I was wondering when she would cash in. I felt a stalled landing was the best way to go. Inches above the runway with more than half of the 5,800 foot strip behind us, she finally touched and held.

The brake system pressure was still intact and we screeched to a stop with about 100 feet of runway to spare, though I was ready on the air brake if needed.

We were immediately towed to a hard stand where the crew was happy to evacuate. Squadron Commander Major Leonard Kaufmann drove up in his jeep and hollered to me, "What happened?" I tried to answer but my

voice wouldn't work (a rarity for me) and I could only waggle my jaw. Joe slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Nice work Stew!"

That's all I needed. The dam broke, the release was triggered and I burst into tears. I finally crawled through the hatch and out under the wing and sat fumbling for a cigarette. I was shaking too hard, so someone gave me a lighted smoke and I soon regained some composure.

At interrogation, Squadron S-2 officer, Captain Jack Casper declared that I would be recommended for the Silver Star. "That is awarded for gallantry in action," he said. I asked him, "What do you get for saving your own butt, an airplane and five great crewmen?" I had received the DFC for action on another mission. No one made any overtures. I privately awarded myself a second DFC for this one. (Once I showed these and my Air Medal to my grandson and he asked, "Is *that* all you got?")

I flew four more missions when Squadron Flight Surgeon, Captain J. O. Nestor and Group Flight Surgeon Maj. Albert E. Brussell determined that I had had enough and recommended me for rotation back to the States. How that was decided is another story.

Oh!... About that un-feathered, windmilling prop! I later judged that the drag it induced compensated for the cross tail wind, and kept us straight down the runway, and was our greatest saving factor. Strange... they never taught us that in flight school.

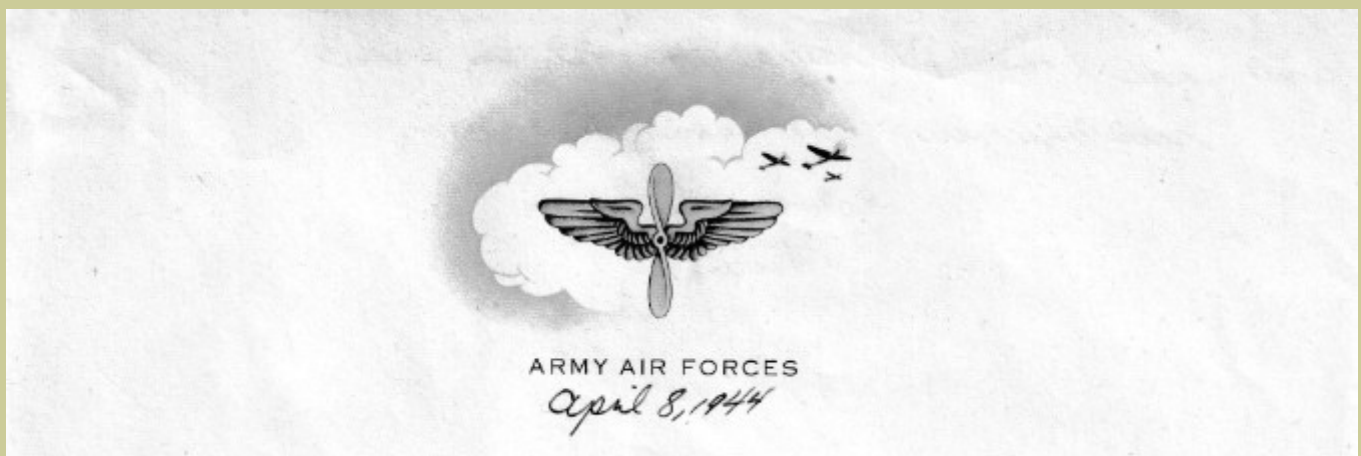
Who pulled Joe's hand off the feathering button? It couldn't have been me... I wasn't that smart!





"Old 9R floated and floated while I was wondering when she would cash in. I felt a stalled landing was the best way to go. Inches above the runway with more than half of the 5,800 foot strip behind us, she finally touched and held."

Above: 9R "Snot Nose"



YOU can't afford
to miss **EITHER!**



BUY BONDS EVERY PAYDAY

OFFICIAL U. S. TREASURY POSTER

The 310th's First All-Squadron Raid

By Frank B. Dean, 380th Squadron

Reprinted from the February 1987 edition of the Men of the 57th

The little French train had carried the Ground Echelon of the 310th Bomb Group from Casablanca, Morocco, across the top of North Africa to the little railroad town of Telergma, Algeria. We had arrived on the 21st of December, 1942. From the train we could see the high, twin tails that identified our groups' B-25s and the single tails of some B-26s that were stetting on the nearby airfield.

Cold and intermittent rain made us miserable. Thin pup tents on wet, soggy ground let in the cold and proved that the two woolen blankets, issued to each man, was inadequate for North African winters.

Seeking out friends who had flown over with our B-25s gave us some information, but not a great deal. Only part of the 310th Group's planes had arrived at Telergma.

Of the original eight B-25s, that had flown the Group's first missions from Maison Blanche, only six had made it to Telergma. All four of the 428th Squadron's aircraft had survived. Two of the 379th Squadron's B-25s had crashed, leaving only two. They had already flown seven missions, three from Telergma.

On the 16th of December nine more planes from the 310th had arrived, six from the 381st Squadron and three from our 380th.

The B-26s that we had seen belonged to the 319th Bomb Group who had gone into action on the 28th of November, 1942. They had flown ten missions and had already lost eight of their aircraft.

On the 22nd eleven B-26s from the 17th Bomb Group arrived to add to the growing number

of aircraft, including some P-40s from the 33rd Fighter Group. The air raid alarm that signaled the flyover of a German reconnaissance aircraft let us know that the enemy was also aware of the build-up. This knowledge brought back, to me, the same type dread that had plagued me, aboard ship, when I knew the German submarines were stalking our convoy. It was an uneasy feeling and I didn't like it.

The assignment of Leon George and me to Crew Chief Ray Conrad's crew moved out duties from the bivouac area to the air field. There the three of us mechanics became the responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of Lt. Robert Lacy's VIRGINIA BELLE. Lt. Lacy, along with Lt. Charles Barnwell and Lt. Lawrence Cometh piloted the three B-25s that was the 380th Squadron's contribution to the 310th Bomb Group strike force.

Rain, overcast skies and muddy runway kept all the medium bombers grounded despite the scheduling of missions.

The cold, damp weather made us miserable and air raid alerts kept us apprehensive. On the 27th there had been three alerts signifying the German and Italian interest in our activities.

These alerts did little to ease our minds or to induce sound sleep. The fear of night bombers became real and the threat of being killed entered the minds of young men who had previously thought that they would live forever.

On the 30th of December the muddy runway was judged to be dry enough for loaded bombers to take off.

First to go was six B-26s from the 17th Bomb Group. They lifted off and headed toward the airdrome at Gabes, Tunisia.

A little later twelve B-25s from the 310th would take off to bomb the railroad installations and roundhouse at Sfax, Tunisia. This formation would be the first 310th's mission in which all four squadrons participated. All three of the B-25s from our 380th Squadron would be in the formation with five from the 381st. It would be the first mission for either of these two squadrons. The 379th and 428th Squadrons, who were combat experienced, would furnish the rest, one from the 379th and three from the 428th.

The combat crews came out with information. Take off would be at 12:45. They should be over the target, with their twelve P-38 escorts, around 2:30 and be back at the base around four p.m.

Engine starters whined and radial engines coughed blue smoke and settled into a steady roar of power that drug the loaded bombers through the mud to the end of the runway. Pilots pushed throttles and twelve B-25s dragged themselves from the muddy runway into the air.

The formation disappeared toward the northeast. Now, those of us on the ground could only wait, watch and hope they all returned.

We searched the sky, anxious for our aircraft to return. We spotted six black spots in the distance. They were the B-26s from the 17th Bomb Group. It looked as if they had all made it back safely.

Long distance looks proved to be deceiving. They had run into both enemy fighters and flak. All had been damaged. One of them slammed down on it's belly with wounded aboard. From another I watched the crew lower the limp body from the aft section of a fu-

selage while another gunner was helped down holding a bloody bandage over his hand where his left thumb used to be. The wounded were loaded into ambulances that sped away.

These were the first casualties and combat damaged, American aircraft that we new arrivals had seen. It was not like the movie versions where heroes never died but bled little, hurt less and talked much. These men's blood had been red, the bodies limp and there were moans of pain instead of heroic statements.

The face of the war had turned ugly and we worried about OUR combat crews. Until now, I had not thought such things could happen to them.

We search the skies anxiously, awaiting their return. We counted twelve dots that grew into the familiar forms of twin-tailed B-25s.

Upon landing we found that there had been damage to some of the aircraft but little from enemy opposition. The low flying aircraft had passed over an olive grove and had frightened hundreds of birds into the air. Lt. [William T.] Alexander's plane, from the 381st, had received the most damage. The windshield was broken, navigator's dome missing, upper turret canopy damaged, wings dented, engine cowlings wrinkled, bombardier's plexiglass broken and dead birds jammed the carburetor scoops and were cooked into the cylinders of both engines. The crew had been lucky to get it back to the base. It would never fly again but would become our spare parts bin.

The others had also been lucky. They had not run into enemy fighters. Though there had been enemy anti-aircraft fire it had been off to the side and there were only one or two flak holes as evidence.

There had been elation and celebration. The bombing had been a success. A bomb had his on the locomotive turntable, destroying it.

Other bombs had hit the roundhouse causing it to collapse.

This mission was evidence that with the 310th coming together we were going to hurt the enemy without too much damage to ourselves. The newcomers from the 380th and 381st were the most devout believers. Those from the 379th and 428th Squadrons knew that all missions were not so easy.

Time would prove them right. On the 22nd January, 1943 Lt. [James R.] McDougall's plane, from the 379th, would be shot down. Six days later, Lt. [Charles A.] Thompson's B-25, from the 428th, would be lost on a raid to the same railroad yards that were bombed on the 30th of December, 1942. On the 3rd of February, 1943 Lt. [Alfred N.] Allred and his crew, from the 379th, would be shot down on a raid on Sfax airdrome.

The 380th and 381st would escape losses until the 8th of February. Both Lt. Lacy and Lt. Barnwell, from our 380th Squadron would be lost over the airdrome at Gabes where the B-26s from the 17th had been shot up so badly on the 30th of December. Also lost were Capt. [Walter P. "Bitsy"] Crump and Lt. [Harold E.] Cox, of the 381st, who had flown as co-pilots on the December 30th raid. In the crews were other members of the 30th of December raid.

On the 23rd of February, 1943 Major [Ivan L.] Ferguson, who was flying with Lt. [Leonard A.] Eddy, was shot down at sea. Both had been on the raid on the Sfax railroad installation.

On March 12, Lt. [Elwin F.] Schrupp would be shot down at sea. Those who had been part of the first all-squadron raid, on 30 December; were dwindling. The numbers would dwindle more.

All this was in a future that I could not see. Now, I only knew that I had been part of history and part of the 380th Squadron's first mission in the North African war.

I was filled with elation over its success. The elation was made possible by my naivete and the unrealistic belief that, "Heroes never die." I thought that all bomb runs would be as successful and none of our men would be hurt or killed. I also believed that the Germans and Italians could not survive our aerial onslaught and would soon surrender.

I was wrong on all counts. The war drug on and, "heroes" were shot down or died like all other mortals. I would come to know the deep, aching pain from having friends fly away and never return.

The mission of the 30th was an unqualified success. It was a "Good" mission where damage had been done and all our men had returned safely. Later my definition of a "good" mission would be slightly altered.

Then, a "Good" mission was when all our men returned to the base safely, nothing more.





Seasweep. Lt. Bitsy Crump's leader

Lt. Walter P. "Bitsy" Crump leading a seasweep. He would be KIA during the raid on Gabes Aerodrome on February 8, 1943.

Photo credit: 57th Bomb Wing Archives



L to R: Robert M. Brown 380th BS, Charles M. Barnwell 380th BS, John E. Doddridge 82nd FG, Robert A. Lacy 380th BS, Frederick Loomis 380th BS, Harvey Doss 379th BS [All were POWs Stalag Luft III]

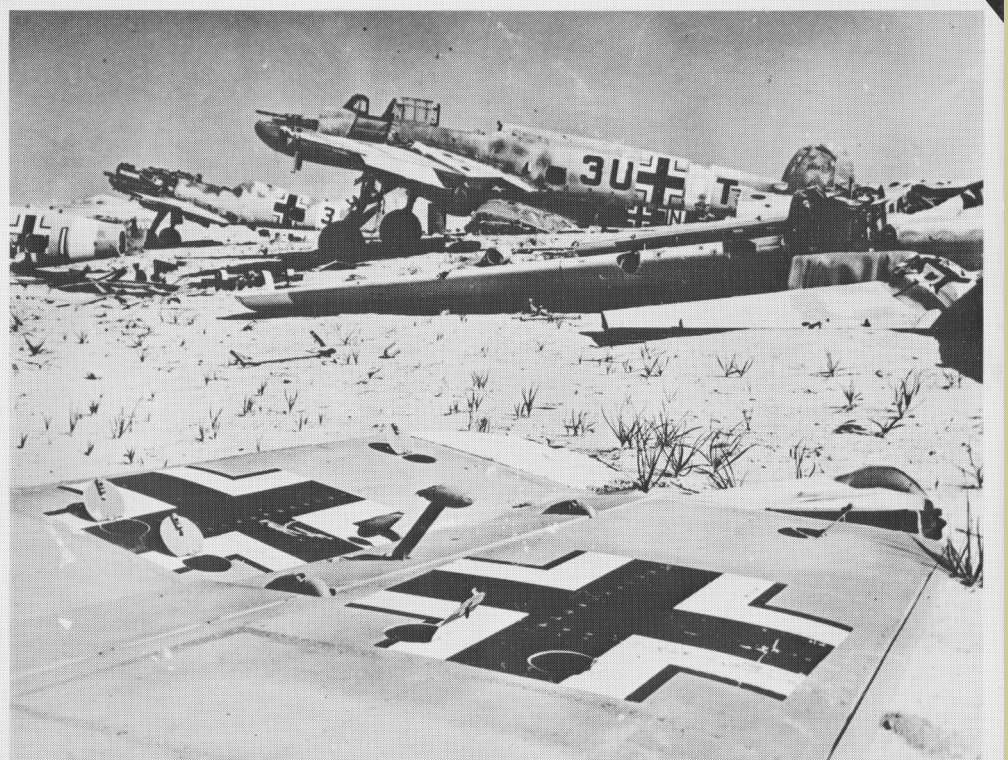


Wrecked German transport at a captured airfield in North Africa. Note the B-25 in the background (center) and a C-47 on the right.

Photo Credit: 57th Bomb Wing James McCommak Collection

Wrecked German aircraft in North Africa 1943.

Photo credit: 57th Bomb Wing
Archive Ed Betts Collection



CONFIDENTIAL

"GABES"

Mission Narrative by Lt. Eric O. Linden - Pilot

The "Gages Mission" proved to be the first major set-back for the 381st Squadron and our Group. It was the Squadron's 23rd mission and the Group's 40th.

We, being briefed on the Gages airdrome, set out to add another "Sunday punch" to the Jerries. Prior to this raid we had lost no men and only one ship. Consequently this was just another raid to us.

This Gages mission was different to all of us in that we were to use "B-26" tactics instead of our own "hit and run" method.

Eighteen B-25's took off at 11:00 hours escorted by 18 P-38's. This being a coordinating attack with B-26's we followed them to the target. En-route 4 P-38's and 3 B-26's returned to their base due to mechanical difficulties. Our approach to the target was made at 11,000 feet. A full 20 minutes before we were over the target we could see Rommel's fighters; of the famous "Yellow-Nose Squadron", we found out later; stirring up streaks of dust on the desert as they took off to meet our attack. There were between 30 and 50 Jerries to greet us and they were quite unwelcome. Considering that we had only 14 P-38's as escort for our 33 bombers, we had little defense except our own guns. From this point I will relate my own personal experience. We were flying in "POTCH-A-GALLOP" on the right wing of "DIS'N DID'T" piloted by Lt. "Bitsy" Crump and "Bitsy's" left wingman was Lt. Cox in "VAR ARIAN". Over the target we ran into a great amount of flak and "POTCH-A-GALLOP" received a direct hit in the bomb bay. Because of this we had to salvo the 12 racks of our fragmentation bombs. We also lost our hydraulic system due to this hit. As we left the target Lt. Crump's ship was also badly hit. He made a steep right bank and "pelled off" from the formation with Lt. Cox going along with him. At this time I was above "Bitsy" and he and Lt. Cox passed under our ship. It was the last time I saw either ship. I held my position on Capt. Allen's flight and turned out to be "tail end Charlie". All hell broke loose as one fighter after another made passes at "POTCH-A-GALLOP". During these attacks we lost our air speed indicators, emergency landing mechanism, and the lower turret was put out of commission. One Jerry paid the price for this damage by coming within range of S/Sgt. Hughes' guns. A few seconds later these guns became inoperative too.

One scare and close call was when, on the way home, a flak fragment shattered my left window but failed to penetrate the glass. By now we knew we had lost two of our other planes, piloted by our friends in the 380th Squadron, Lt. Lacy and Lt. Barnwell.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Mid-Air Collision

This entry in the January 21, 1945 War Diary of the 340th BG HQ squadron describes the tragic incident:

“2nd Lt. William B. Pelton and his co-pilot, F/O Harry K. Shackelford, of the 488th squadron pulled an “aerodynamic miracle” this afternoon when they brought their B-25 back from a mission to the Ora-San Michele rail diversion without any right stabilizer or right elevator.

How they landed the plane safely is still bewildering our operations officer and the hundreds of men who saw the damaged craft come in. The plane was battered in a collision with another 488th B-25 when one element of the formation was making a third run on the target, owing to a malfunction.

The other plane, piloted by 1st Lt. William Simpson, went down over the target, and Pelton's plane also went into a spin, but the latter officer was able to recover. The tail gunner [S/Sgt. A. B. Porter] was lost however, when Simpson's aircraft scooped out the empennage of Pelton's plane. No trace of his body, clothing or parachute was found when Lt. Pelton landed.

The target this formation was attacking was largely missed, but other 340th planes knocked down two spans of a road bridge nearby and the Pontetidone railroad bridge was also well hit.”

The pilot, William B. Pelton, unfortunately was KIA in March of 1945 and we do not have a first-person account of how he managed to bring this ship back home.

However, Herman Lisby was the turret-gunner on 8P and did live to tell his story about this terrible crash.

On the following page begins his story as told by his Granddaughter and published in the Summer 2007 edition of the *Men of the 57th* newsletter.

*Tail damage on
8P, “Sweet Pea”*



Where There is Doubt God Sends Proof

By Jennifer Lynn Powell

Granddaughter of Herman Andrew Lisby

Sometime between six and seven PM on January 20, 1945 Herman Andrew Lisby, a flight engineer and Technical Sergeant for the 488th, 340th B-25 Mitchell Bomb Group, visited the Operations Office to see if he had been assigned to a mission for the following day. He had been.

The next morning he rose, had breakfast around 4:30 am and headed over to a well-guarded briefing tent where he would be instructed on that day's mission and target. After receiving the information he proceeded to the runway to prep the aircraft "8P" he would be flying in, for takeoff. He checked the gas, oil, tires, and cranked the engines up for preflight.

Twenty minutes later the pilot, 1st Lt. William B. Pelton rechecked the plane as it taxied to the runway and took off. Their mission was to crater a rail road diversion at San Michelle on the Brenner Pass.

They had to make three fly-bys because of the turbulence caused by high winds and the incoming flak from the ground made it hard to

sight on their target. On their third fly-by they released their bombs.

Once their target was hit, they broke away and a propeller from near-by "8U" hit the tail section of "8P" and "8U" went down spinning.

Herman Lisby was in his position as Turret Gunner, manning his 50 caliber machine guns when the accident happened. He came out of his turret, kicked out the escape hatch and was putting on his parachute when Lt. Pelton came on the radio telling the men to bail out if they felt the need to, but he thought he would be able to level them out, which he was indeed able to do at about 12 to 13,000 feet.



Herman Lisby

With their left horizontal stabilizer and rudder bent and the cables locked and the right rudder completely missing; along with Tail Gunner S/ Sgt. Aubrey B. Porter, Pelton very carefully and with the grace of God, flew the plane in minus 30-degree weather without a tail section



8P Coming in on a wing and a prayer.

Credit: Dominique Taddei Collection

and while still under enormous anti-aircraft fire, was able to stabilize the aircraft.

Herman Lisby repeated later that “no one knows how we made it back safely.” Only Pelton himself would be able to give an accurate account of procedures he took to steady his plane and actually fly it safely back to base. (But, unfortunately, Lt. Pelton died, along with his six man crew, off the coast of Corsica while piloting a mission two months later.)

Nearly an hour later they spotted the island of Corsica, where they contacted the tower, were told the runway was clear and they were free to land. Lt. Pelton gave Herman the “thumbs down” signal to lower the gear as Pelton himself began carefully making his approach, using the trim tabs to line up with the runway.

One common mistake, said Lisby, is they seem to think “8P” was escorted back to Corsica. “We were not escorted,” Lisby states, “we flew in on our own.”

Once they had landed and they were off of the plane, every high ranking official in the area approached them to ask questions about what

had happened. They wanted to know about “8U” and her crew. Herman told them that by the time they had “8P” stabilized and they headed home they never actually saw it hit the ground. He also stated that he had not seen parachutes escape from “8U.” When asked about their own tail gunner he said the same, that he never saw a chute. A weapons carrier carried them back to the briefing tent.

The mission had been Herman Lisby’s 27th. He went on to fly another 60, but even though the tail section of “8P” was eventually reassembled, he never flew in that particular airplane again. Herman remained in Corsica a while longer but was eventually assigned to Rimini, Italy. In Rimini, after he finished his 87th mission, he approached Major Cassidy and asked to return home. Major Cassidy agreed and asked how he wanted to go home. Herman replied, “by boat.”

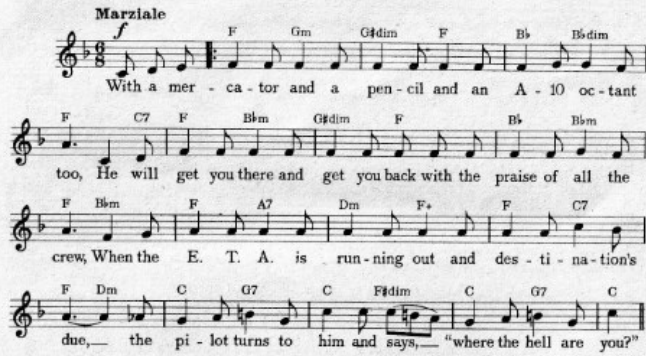
From Rimini, Herman went to Leghorn where he boarded the USS Liberty and began his journey back to the States. Today Herman Lisby is the only known living survivor from “8P’s” fateful flight. ★



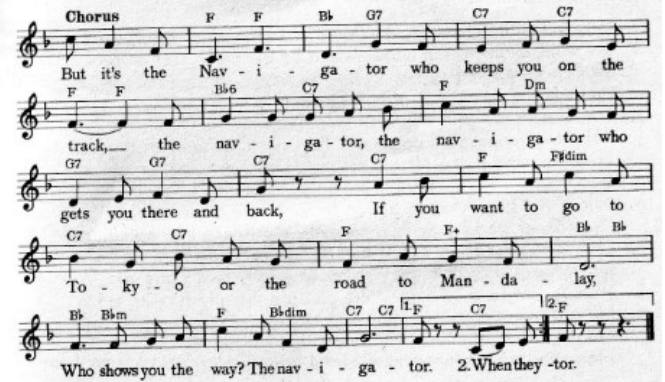
“Once they had landed and they were off of the plane, every high ranking official in the area approached them to ask questions about what had happened.”

THE NAVIGATOR

Words and Music by
Tom Childs and Danny Roth



Copyright, 1943, by Tom Childs and Danny Roth

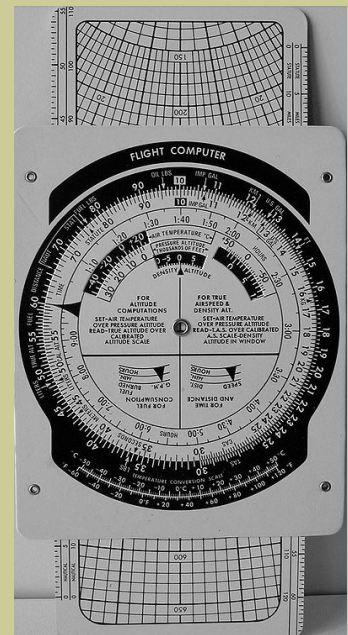


2. When they can't see down below and they don't know what to do,
He will look up to the heavens and he'll shoot a star or two,
With a speed line and a course line he will get himself a fix,
For he's the navigator, with his little bag of tricks.
3. Oh, there's variation, deviation, colibration too,
But the compensatin' errors are the ones that see him through,
His computer is the instrument on which he stakes his life,
Don't ask for his computer, for he'd sooner lend his wife.
4. When you start evasive action to avoid the bursts of flak,
The gunner works without a care, he knows who'll bring him back,
The pilot will cavort about and dodge around the sky,
But there is only one, they know, on whom they can rely.
5. If you want to know just where you are, at any time at all,
He will take out his dividers and he'll show he's "on the ball,"
He hasn't time for smoking, relaxation is taboo—
He never takes a nap, because he has a job to do.

From the "Air Force Airs Songbook" published 1943. [Joan DeBoer Heath Collection]



Navigator with his charts



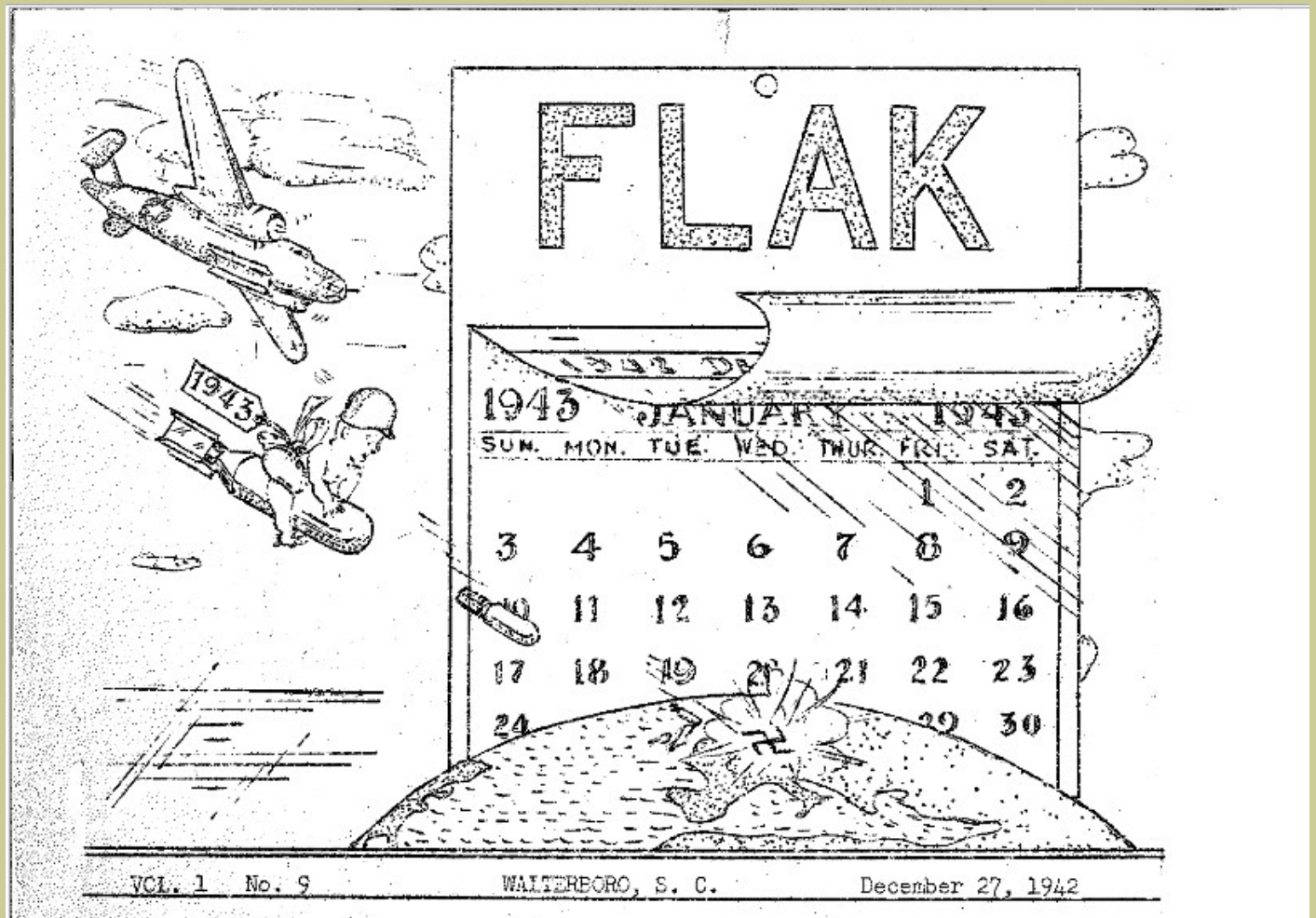
E6-B Navigation Computer

Credit: Dave Faige Wikipedia

Newspaper of the 340th Bombardment Group

December 27, 1942

Walterboro, South Carolina



Squadron Newspapers

340th Bombardment Group — FLAK

Each squadron was like a small city. There were places to dine, the local bar, recreation facilities and sports venues.

Some squadrons even had a local newspaper. The 379th had the “Journal,” the 380th had the “Bladder, the 381st had the “Tuff Sheet.”

In this issue of the Wing Journal we will take a look at FLAK. Rather than a squadron newspaper, FLAK covered the entire 340th Group.

It was published on flimsy paper not intended to last through the ages. We have only five issues of the publication in our Archives.

Those issues are:

Volume 1 No 9; Walterboro, SC December 27, 1942

Volume 2 No 1; Walterboro, SC January 10, 1943

Volume 1 No 11; Alesani, Corsica December 11, 1944

Volume 1 No 13; Alesani, Corsica December 18, 1944

Volume 1 No 20; Alesani, Corsica February 12, 1945

In the following pages we will offer excerpts from some of the issues to give you an idea of the flavor of this publication.

We also offer a huge “Thank You!” to the editor and staff of the paper who have given us a glimpse into the daily life of the Men of the 57th.

Editor - S/Sgt. George R. Voorhees

Asst. Editor - Sgt. George L. VonBerg

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Sports Editor - Cpl. Albert V. Knipfing

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Reporter 487th Sgt. Roger R. Hetzner

Reporter 488th Cpl. Sidney Schneider

Reporter 489th S/Sgt. John J. McNamara

It is the end of December 1942. The 340th BG is completing their training in Walterboro, SC prior to shipping out to the war zone. These young men can be forgiven for blowing off a little steam at Christmas time.

Each squadron has a column. This is from the Headquarters Squadron.

Headquarters

Here's a toast to Lt. Colonel Tokaz, on his recent advent into the Colonel class. Your humble reporter hereby resolves as one of his New Year Resolutions, to avoid all embarrassing entanglements with Colonels.

Captain "Bouncer" Bachrach is seriously thinking of placing a request with Base Engineers to have the runways on the field raised about five feet to allow him to land his Cub plane smoothly.

If you had been in the dining room of the Lord Colleton Hotel in Walterboro, on Xmas Eve, there would be no need to write this column. However, since we were not all included in that formidable gathering of Headquarters men, we will try to give you a running account of the proceedings.

A long festive board was laid out with olives, pickles, potato chips, nuts, cheese, sandwich meats, and of course those great big beautiful bottles.

When a goodly part of the men had gathered, they sat down at the table and were put at ease by T/Sgt Dullinger, the toastmaster. M/Sgt. McElroy favored us with a short speech, and from then on it was a series of toasts and speeches. Sgt. Slutsky was the first to be overcome by the influence of the toasts, and proclaimed his affection for every member of our little clan. The Cpl. Deese arrived on the scene, and was immediately supplied with a large tumbler of panther oil.

Cpl. Setzer rendered us a couple of original

solos to the tune of St. Louis Blues and Pen-nies from Heaven, accompanied by T/Sgt. Voorhees, who fell down on the piano. Sgt. Kepp gave his own inimitable imitation of Boake Carter and Bob Burns above the roar of the applauding audience.

The highlight of the evening was a visit from Colonel Mills, Colonel Rhudy, Major Paul, and some other officers. The short visit was filled with much wit on the part of the Colonel, and he left a house full of good feeling as he made his departure.

Captain and Mrs. Kisselman dropped in later and paid their respects. The somewhat inebriated Sgts. Slutsky and Kepp rather over-did themselves in wishing their very best to the Captain and his wife. We were finally able to drag them away to a safe, non-inflammable distance.

However, about 10:00 PM horror gripped our midst. All hilarity ceased, and a mournful depression set in; for over by the piano, the body sat draped over a chair. Resuscitation efforts proved to no avail, and as we laid the corpse upon the kitchen sink, we feared that the old man was dead. Never more would that still mouth encompass those wiry che-roots; never more would those red-lidded eyes see the dawn. The body was finally loaded into a taxi, and hauled home, where it finally came to life about noon the next day.

The last thing that this man saw as he drifted off into the arms of Morpheus was T/Sgt. Ryan carrying the limp figure of Sgt. Kepp through the barracks door.

We offer our hearty appreciating to T/Sgt Dullinger and T/Sgt. Gambon for their splendid job of arranging this party.

FLASH: Sgt. Kepp arose this morning and made this statement: "Woooo, I feel sort of naked this morning. I got a haircut yesterday."



Major Cyrus Whittington was the Squadron Commander of the 487th Bomb Squadron. He was KIA shortly after the squadron arrived in North Africa.

Whittington's Warriors

Our Christmas dinner was a gourmet's delight. It was quite a spread. A big hand is due to the cooks who worked so hard to prepare it for us. And another hand, no smaller, is due to Lt. Bayless, our Mess Officer, for planning such a feast.

Another epoch this week: Pfc (bucking for Cpl) Nelson, the pillar of our social life (mail orderly to you) successfully passed the motor vehicle driver's test. No longer will our erstwhile carrier of the mail stay grounded in the Orderly Room while someone else goes to get the mail.

We have a certain Master Sergeant, probably accustomed to the Artic Climate who persists in running from the barracks to the latrine rather naked. We are waiting for an alert.

Malcolm Bailey began as Squadron Commander for the 488th Squadron. He later became Group Deputy CO of the 340th BG.

Capt. Bailey's Boys

And now we turn our thought to the blissful papoose usually associated with the New Year. But before leaving Christmas, let us first praise Messieurs Rexford and Collazo; the first for contributing a noble feast and the latter for strewing tinsel and good cheer. And Captain Bailey for standing at his post so late on Christmas Eve. Or couldn't he bare leaving his game

of darts?

A very woe fellow with an exceedingly long name gave up a plaintive cry in the wilderness. "Oh, please add Junior to my name." Apologies from Finance. Kocherschnitz and Junior will not fit on the Payroll. Take your choice, little man.

Demoss can be found any time between the hours of six to six at night behind barricade with a tommie gun pointed at the inner wall of Supply. He must stand his guard over G.I. and one kitten.

We have stumbled across a new "character." There is a gent from Boston with a simulated "cookie duster" who has crooned himself and his guitar into the dubious light of notoriety. He alone can wear O.D.s a la Zoot Soot.

Then, too, there is Hana. Come over to 109 and have a look. He is an Indian like on the other side of the Buffalo [nickel]. His barracks' bags are stuffed with trophies of the War Path. He is our secret weapon against the Axis. We trust we will last until he gets there.

Fred Hampton was Squadron Commander for the 489th Squadron. He and his crew died in during a training flight in Texas on December 26, 1942 just as this newspaper was going to press

Hampton's Handsomes

Greetings Gates — let's elucidate.

Well, another Christmas has passed us by and a big New Year looms ahead. A bigger and better new year in which to knock off the Axis and establish peace throughout the world again.

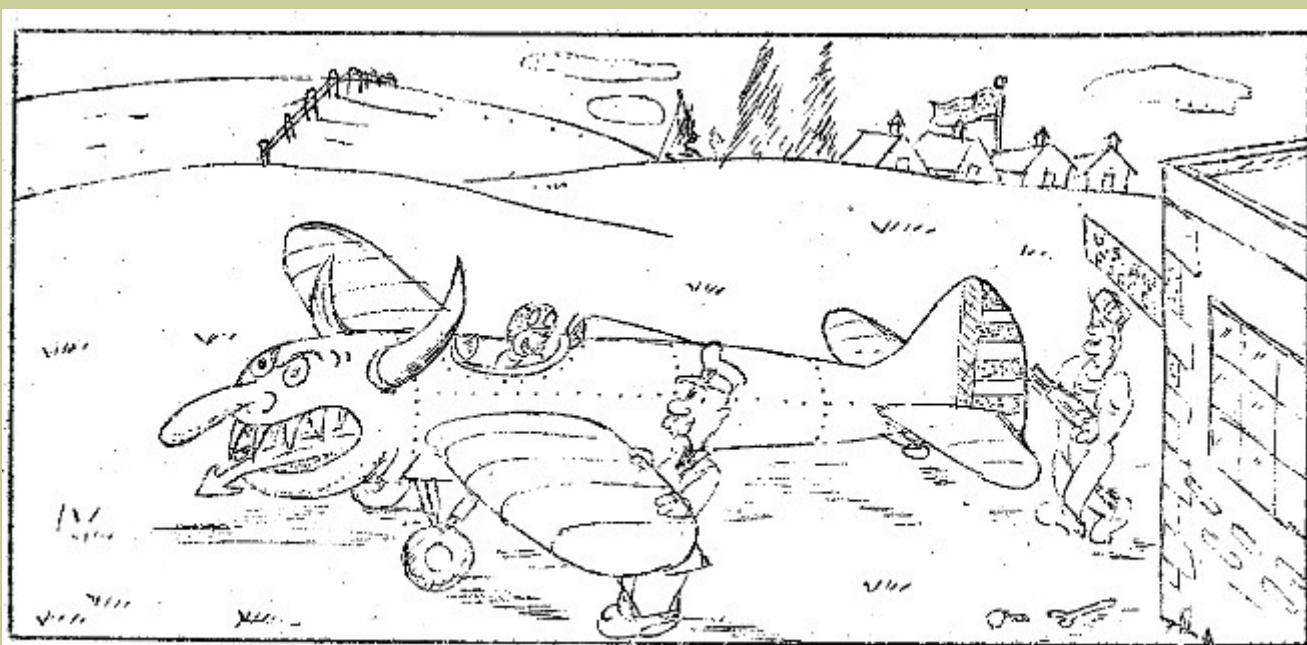
We hear "our boy" 'Mac' has more or less slipped back into the old routine again now that his little pigeon has gone back to mother.

More miscellaneous musings from the orderly room — we hear that a certain little G.I. is getting very chummy with the deputy sheriff's daughter down in the local hamlet. How 'boot' that T.G.?

Advice to all married men, shack pappies, bush bunnies, etc., don't ever miss role call and reveille. Not even 'one time,' because

Mac is exceedingly rough on the lads that do. Ask WCD, he knows, but definitely.

Lt. Fields, the Adjutant, had a brief respite from his duties and a short (shall we say rest), the other day when 'Sweetpea' came in from Alabama to see him. Sweet looking little gal too. Mmmm——



"I don't know if it's a good fighter or not, but we'll sure scare hell out of 'em!"

**You knock 'em out—
We'll knock 'em down**



MORE PRODUCTION

Interview with George Wells - 488th Bomb Squadron

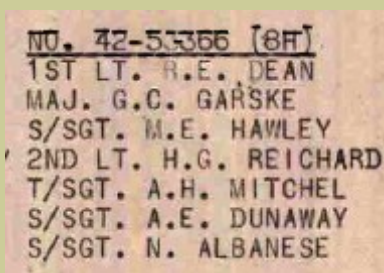
Collected and transcribed by Jo Ann Carlson

(Information from George: 488th logo = girl on bomb, “Hell from Heaven Men.” This was modeled after the comic strip *Flash Gordon*. She was Flash’s girlfriend, Dale Arden)

Dominique Taddei was a boy of 4-5 years old living in Corsica during WWII. The U.S. soldiers would give him candy and “he has never forgotten the U.S.” He has come to the U. S. a couple of times and has gone to the Air University library at Maxwell AFB and looked up B25 information. Corsica has a museum with WWII history in it, including a reproduction of a B25 tail section.

George joined the 488th when they were moving into Southern Italy. He took his crew over with him. George’s first crew of six consisted of three married and three unmarried members: three officers and three enlisted. The unmarried guys were standing apart from the married as they said “goodbye” to their crying wives. The bombardier, Red [Howard G. “Red” Reichard], walked over to George after saying his goodbye and said, “I’m not coming back.”

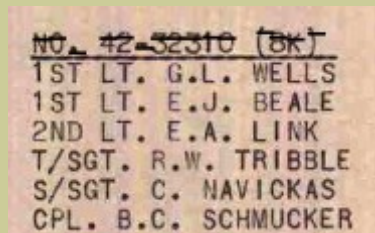
Red suffered from terrible fright, and he would not sleep all night before a mission that he was scheduled for. Despite this horrible fright, Red went on to become the lead bombardier in the Squadron’s lead flight of six planes. During the Anzio beachhead mission in Italy, Red’s plane got hit dead-on by anti-aircraft fire. It burst into flames and spiraled downward. All were killed.



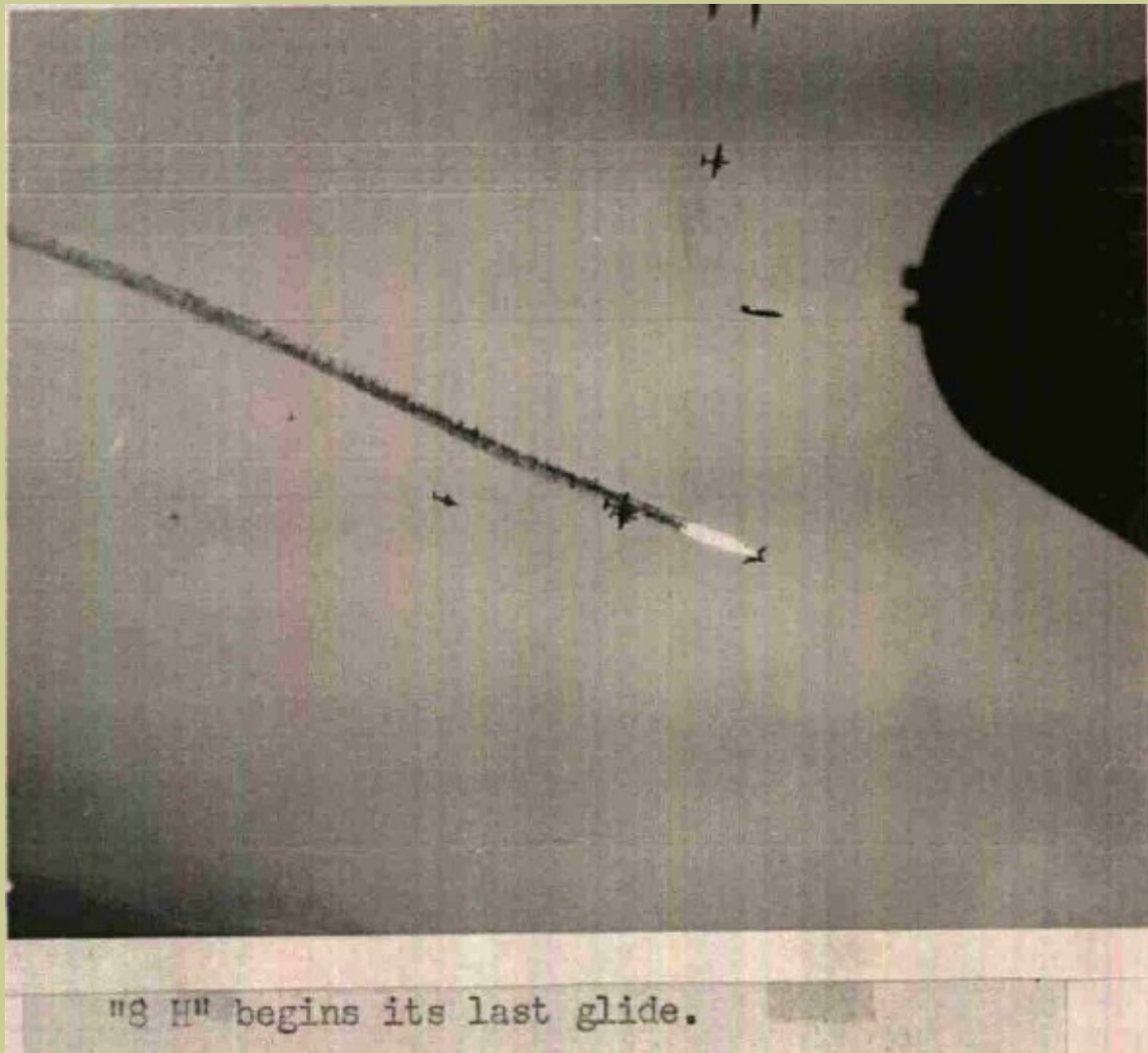
NO. 42-53366 (8H)
1ST LT. R.E. DEAN
MAJ. G.C. GARSKE
S/SGT. M.E. HAWLEY
2ND LT. H.G. REICHARD
T/SGT. A.H. MITCHEL
S/SGT. A.E. DUNAWAY
S/SGT. N. ALBANESE

Crew of 8H February 16, 1944

Crew of 8K February 16, 1944



NO. 42-52310 (8K)
1ST LT. G.L. WELLS
1ST LT. E.J. BEALE
2ND LT. E.A. LINK
T/SGT. R.W. TRIBBLE
S/SGT. C. NAVICKAS
CPL. B.C. SCHMUCKER



Then an AA round went right through George's plane from side to side. Impact did not detonate it, but the timed fuse set it off seconds later.

George said that he has pictures of Red's plane going down and also of his AA survival incident.



S/Sgt. Navickas, turret gunner, in "8 K", points to the flak hole. (The tail gunner was not injured due to the fact that he was operating the camera).

George said, "I never had fright. I said, 'It's never going to happen to me.'"

Mt. Vesuvius erupted, necessitating their moving from mainland Italy to Corsica.

George and Fred Dyer became good friends, and both became Group ops officers. The two of them worked side by side.

Before this, George and Fred were in different squadrons and didn't know each other, but the group commander liked their performance.

George's group became known as "The Bridge Busters" as they bombed about every bridge in Italy. Their job was to ready the ground, so the troops could move forward safely.

Most targets had an AA "fence" around them. The targets were bridges, R.R. yards, and enemy troops getting ready to make an advance. The recon planes would scout out the area. They could go fast and get away quite easily. The tactical B-25's came next. They would take out the immediate bridges and troops. The heavy bombers followed to hit the factories etc.

On one mission, our B-25's bombed and destroyed an abbey. The enemy troops were so entrenched there that our troops couldn't get past this point. To this day, the people say that there were only old women and children there. The US rebuilt the church after the war.



The bombing of the Abbey at Monte Cassino March 1944

Photo credit: 57th Bomb Wing Archives

DEFYING AUTHORITY

On about George's 50th mission, Col. Willis Chapman, a West Pointer and a new Squadron arrival, was the formation commander. They were getting close to the IP (initial point) and Chapman told George to turn right when reaching the IP, as the target was "over there." George checked with Chief [Vincent Myers], his bombardier and he said, "No, the target is over this way." Of course, since the Colonel was the highest-ranking officer, they were supposed to follow his command. After flying some distance, it became apparent the Colonel was wrong. George turned his squadron around and proceeded to go directly to the target as per Chief's" directions. (When a plane is at the target area, the pilot relies on the bombardier to guide him as the pilot no longer can see the area below.) George instructed the Colonel that when they arrived at the target "Chief" was in charge. The Colonel remained quiet and after the bomb run, he got out and never said a word. George thought, "Oh, Oh, I'm in trouble now." However, the Colonel realized his mistake and recognized the skill of George and Chief. Instead of making things rough for George and Chief, the Colonel subsequently solicited their advice.

(George was very uncomfortable while flying in the direction insisted upon by the Colonel, as he knew the whole squadron's safety was in jeopardy.)

Chief's father was German. As a very small child, he was captured by the Comanches. When he was about twenty-one years old, his parents found him; but he didn't want to return home as the Indian life was what he knew. His father married a full-blooded Comanche. Chief was born and raised in Apache, Oklahoma. Chief married a white lady. I went to visit him and his family. I thought I would see "tow head" descendants, instead of all dark haired, or do I have this backwards? I never had a closer friend than Chief Myers.



"Chief" Vincent Myers

Poem

By John D. Rovick

Reprinted from the Winter 1992 edition of the Men of the 57th

WHEN I RETURN

*When I return, -
I want no blare of trumpets,
Cheering, shouting, noise,
I want no wild acclaim, -
People shrieking, "HATS OFF, HERE COME OUR BOYS!"*

*When I return, -
Just make it quiet and calmly grip my hand,
And look into my eyes once more,
Oh yes, I'll understand.*

*Let me see the beauty of home, trees and valleys,
And places I once knew.
The things I took for granted,
"Til war hid them from view.*

*The smell of damp green forests,
The sounds of birds on high,
The feel of winds against my face
White clouds against the sky.*

*I want no blare of trumpets, Cheering, shouting, noise.
Just let me see you smile, -
Forgotten is the war.
Dearest, even now I need these things:
When I return, much more.*

T/Sgt John D. Rovick
Africa
22 June 1943

[More about John Rovick on the following page]

JOHN D. ROVICK

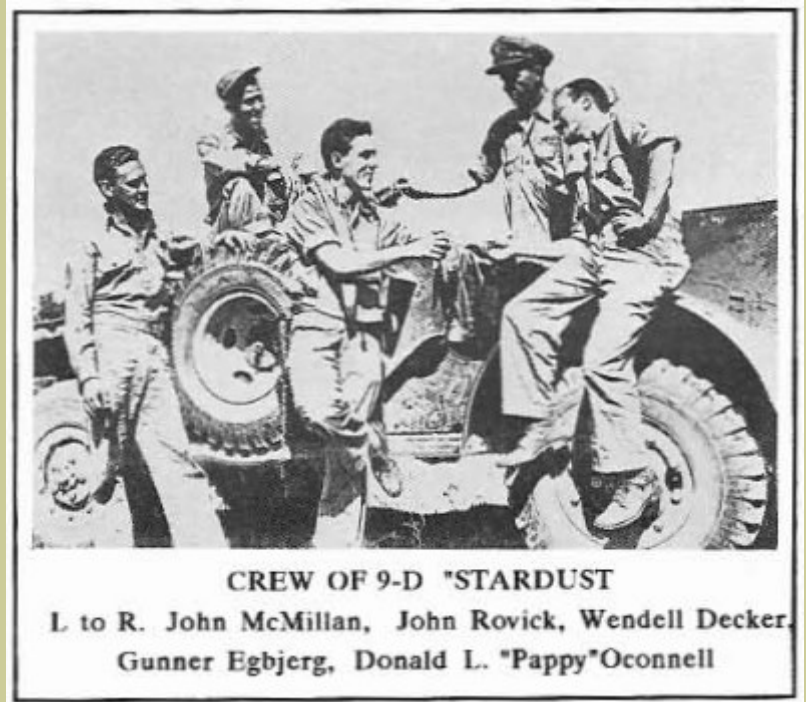
John Rovick served in the 340th Bombardment Group, 489th Bomb Squadron as a radio/gunner. He completed 50 missions.

He passed away in 2012.

In addition to flying combat missions, he was also a member of the 489th Troubadours providing the vocals for the group.



The 489th Troubadours, Egeboerg, Rovick, Buckley, Demas, and Cutler, warriors and musicians.

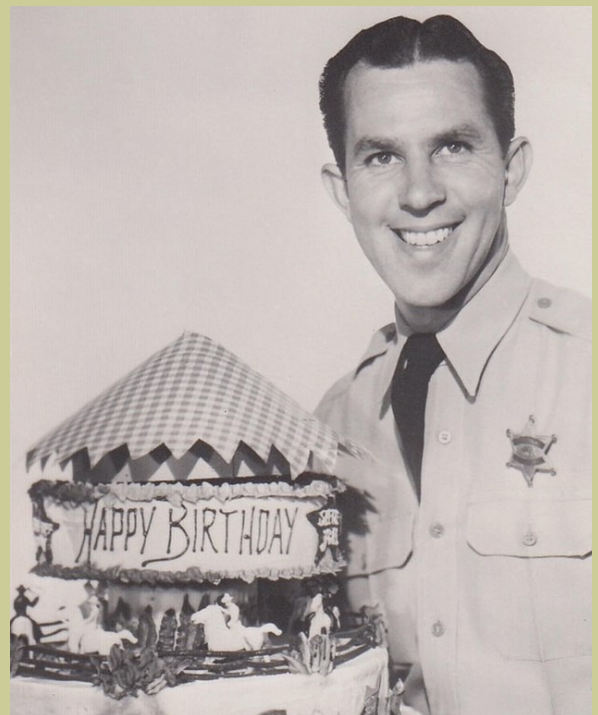


Rovick went on to have a career in television! He hosted children's programs for 18 years in LA, most of that time as "Sheriff John" on *Sheriff John's Lunch Brigade*.



Here is with the Daily Planet Reporter Clark Kent. Do you think he knew Kent's true identity?

Photo credit: imdb



Sheriff John

Photo credit imdb

SWITCH ON! CONTACTS!

We received an email from Ben Tigyer, Grandson of Raymond E. Neil. Neil was a pilot in the 488th Bomb Squadron serving from December 1944 to the end of the war. He passed away in 2005 and his grandson inherited his uniform and his footlocker chock full of photos and documents.

Ben recollected his Grandfather telling him about receiving an award for bringing his B-25 back from a mission with a badly shot-up plane and a wounded tail gunner.

Here are some of the photos he shared with us:



On reverse of photo: [L to R] Raymond E Neil; George W Hallback; Al B Courtis; Robert L Saunders; Jack C Clinton; K. G. Bryant. 116 Missions for 8A. March

CONTACTS! (cont'd)

The Day Room for the 340th BG on Corsica. All the comforts, radio, table tennis, pool table, cozy fireplace.



CONTACTS! (cont'd)

Another view of the Day Room:



*Parachute Room
On Remini*



CONTACTS! (cont'd)

Raymond Neil awarded the Air Medal.



Air Medal

Right: Victor Ramirez, pilot. Shot down over enemy territory March 1945. Was captured and remained a POW until liberated at the end of hostilities.



T A P S

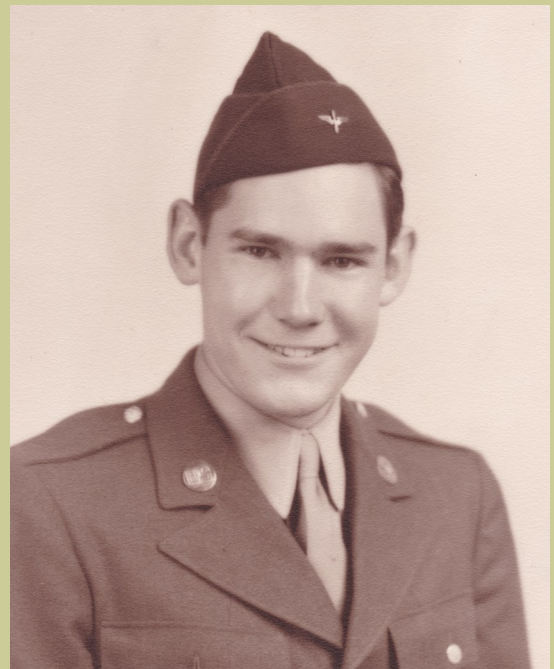


James N. Nelson

310th Bombardment Group, 428th Bomb Squadron

James Nelson passed away on March 20, 2025, three days shy of his 100th birthday at his home with his family at his side. He is now reunited with his beloved wife, June Oakford Nelson, who died in November 2023. June and Jim's love for one another was celebrated across 73 years of marriage. Their affection was evident in their playful eye contact and banter. Their consideration for one another illustrated a partnership of respect, trust and admiration.

Jim Nelson was born in Los Angeles and his career as a CalTrans engineer contributed to the growth of this region. Jim was a varsity athlete at Beverly Hills High School, and in 1943 he was sent to Army boot camp instead of his graduation ceremony. He served in the Army Air Corps in Europe and survived a harrowing crash during a mission over Italy. He and his B25 crewmates reconvened at many events in the ensuing decades. Jim also maintained lifelong friendships with buddies from his youth, attending USC sporting events, playing tennis, hiking and road-tripping.



June Nelson graced the lives of friends and family with her kindness and happiness for 94 years. She attended Beverly Hills High, too, class of 1947 and swam with the Aquabelles. Her chief loves were her husband, Jim, and her children, Diane and Tim; her grandchildren; and her crafts of quilting and doll-making. June's beautiful smile, warmth and humility welcomed family and neighbors into her home, and she took a sincere interest in the lives of everyone in her orbit. As "Rosie" the Girl Scout leader for ten years she gamely led her troops on camping trips and more genteel adventures.

Jim and June Nelson left us with a world that was made richer by their legacy of kindness, faithfulness, love and joy that will sustain their family forever.

On the March 10, 1945 mission to Ora, Jim Nelson's aircraft, #524, was shot down over enemy territory.

This is his account of that event.

Narrative by James M. Nelson, S/Sgt
Waist gunner on B-25 Mitchell, based in Corsica
2005

The following series of incidents and occurrences happened from March 10, 1945 until March 24, plus or minus.

On March 10, our aircraft was hit by flak over Ora in Northern Italy (RR bridge) and was so badly damaged that we were forced to bail out when the left engine burst into flame. Lt. Anderson, the pilot, gave the order to abandon the plane when we were south of Parma and north of La Spezia.

I landed near a village and a couple of friendly Italians led me to a church where a couple of Nuns tried to give me a pain killer with a needle. I was not hurt and not in pain so I refused the offer. Then I was led to another village (Sivizzo) where I met up with the rest of the crew: Lt. Anderson, and Sgts. McKinsey and Gallagher were hurt in landing.

The next day or shortly thereafter it was agreed that Lt. Norris (copilot), Sgt. Patterson and myself should be led back to allied lines by the partisans. I cannot recall too many of the things that we experienced nor the order in which they occurred, but here is what I remember.

We were taken to a village where some British soldiers (similar to the OSS) were. One member of the group happened to be from Holland and when he came back from some dangerous work in the area, the British soldier in charge laughingly said "we British will fight to the last Dutchman." He gave us each a hat and some cigarettes and sent us on our way.

Another time we heard some loud explosions not

too far away and learned from someone that Russian soldiers had escaped from the Germans and were blowing off the top of a mountain. We asked why and nobody knew.

Then in a village we came to in a rather high part of the mountains we came across an American P-47 pilot who broke his leg when he bailed out of his plane and hit the tail. I don't know how long he had been there. It was a very bad fracture, very close to the hip. He certainly was a courageous person. He was very glad to see us. He was flown out by an Italian Pilot in a German light plane called a Storch. It seems that when the Italian pilot landed the prop was broken, so another one was dropped in by parachute along with some other supplies for the partisans, and so he was able to make it back to friendly territory.

Another time we saw some Germans on a mountain road far below us.

We came to a rather large building that was a Spa of some sort and I believe was a resort in peacetime. We were able to take a bath and clean up a little. In one village that we came to the partisans showed us a poster that had a picture of what the Germans would do if they caught a partisan. It showed picture of a man hung up with a meat hook through his jaw. It was a gruesome sight and a reminder of how much we owed these people for helping us. Whether the Germans actually did this or not I don't know, but it shows the risk that was taken and the courage of these people when they led us back to our lines.

The territory that we were led across just before

reaching safety was, I believe, in the highest part of the mountains because the snow was quite deep and difficult to walk in. It seems that we were joined by a few refugees as we moved along so that when we came through the lines, we had collected quite a group. The Americans fed us and led us back farther from the front.

I think we went to 12th Air Force Headquarters in Florence next because we stayed in Florence for a couple of days and also a day or two in a town called Lucca and then were flown back to Corsica where everybody was packing up to move to the East coast of Italy. We were only there for a day or two and then sent to Naples and put on a ship for the return to the States.



Jim Nelson (standing left) with unidentified crew



WHAT'S NEW ONLINE

The illustrated transcriptions of the War Diaries of the 428th Bombardment Squadron have been posted on the 57th Bomb Wing website. This joins the transcriptions of the other three squadrons of the 310th Bombardment Group.

Our friend, Ken Breland, at the 12th Bombardment Group Facebook page alerted us to a book he had written about his father's experience in the 81st Bomb Squadron.

Missing Scrapbook

During the last Wing Reunion in Kansas City, a photo scrapbook belonging to Joan Heath went missing.

The scrapbook contained, among other items, photos of the men of the 57th meeting President George Bush at the Whitehouse in Washington, DC.

If you have any information about the missing scrapbook, please contact Joan at:

joanmarieheath@gmail.com



BIRTHDAY WISHES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY MAY 20TH
TO
PAUL YOUNG**

321st BG, 445th BS

Flew 75 combat missions.

104 YEARS OLD !!!



Paul Young with Cyd Setzer Kansas City Reunion 2023

WHAT'S NEW ONLINE (cont'd)

The 57th Bomb Wing website continues to be a very busy place. Here are the statistics for 2025:

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2025	1,042	1,837	3,480	23,144	20.66 GB
Feb 2025	1,586	2,076	5,920	22,390	17.26 GB
Mar 2025	1,425	2,226	3,577	16,479	16.16 GB
Apr 2025	1,114	1,807	3,234	18,411	35.62 GB
May 2025	929	1,231	1,986	12,132	8.56 GB
Jun 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Sep 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Oct 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Nov 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Dec 2025	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6,096	9,177	18,197	92,556	98.26 GB

And the top 10 downloads for the month of April 2025:

Downloads (Top 10) - Full list					
Downloads: 739		Hits	206 Hits	Bandwidth	Average size
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1944-02.pdf	227	1	465.73 MB	2.04 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1943-08.pdf	213	0	555.65 MB	2.61 MB
	/310thHistory/310_BG_1943-11.pdf	166	2	81.87 MB	499.00 KB
	/428th_History/History_4.pdf	164	0	508.74 MB	3.10 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1943-11.pdf	144	6	413.05 MB	2.75 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1943-12.pdf	139	0	336.72 MB	2.42 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1943-10.pdf	133	0	392.19 MB	2.95 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1943-04.pdf	132	0	218.68 MB	1.66 MB
	/321stHistory/321_BG_1944-11.pdf	115	0	421.88 MB	3.67 MB
	/310thHistory/310_BG_1944-01.pdf	110	0	112.66 MB	1.02 MB

On our Facebook page we now have 943 members!



LET'S KEEP 'EM FLYING



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