

# 5

## **OPERATIONS: JULY/NOVEMBER 1943**

### **C** HILIVANI, SARDINIA - MISSION NO. 32 - JULY 3, 1943

Nineteen aircraft dropped 2,736, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Landing Ground at Chilivani. The target was well covered with 50 percent of the frags in the area. Flak was slight with the light flak coming from a destroyer off Cape Caccia. No injuries, no losses.

### **CATANIA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 33 - JULY 4, 1943**

Twenty-two aircraft dropped 3,168, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Heavy Bomber Airdrome three miles west of Catania. The target area was well covered. Fires were observed over target from 22,000 feet. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense. Fifty to 75 enemy aircraft attacked aggressively for one-half hour, just after the target. Some dropped aerial bombs. B-17 #42-29607, piloted by 1st Lt. Walter C. Laich, was apparently struck by aerial bombs, set afire and crashed.

S/Sgt. Norman Ferree, T/G, 96th Squadron, died of wounds from flak.

Receiving credit for destruction of Me-109s were: S/Sgt. Stanley J. Mikula, S/Sgt. John J. Hopkins, and T/Sgt. Eph F. King of the 20th Squadron; S/Sgt. Otis Wharton, S/Sgt. Rudolph E. Shields, T/Sgt. Bernard E. Doone, S/Sgt. William T. Brady, S/Sgt. Eugene R. Lehman, T/Sgt. Lee W. Anderson, and Sgt. Gilbert A. Kopenhefer of the 96th Squadron and Sgt. Wilbur Peterson and S/Sgt. John F. Kortright of the 429th Squadron.

Receiving a joint claim for destruction of an Me-109 were S/Sgt. William R. Carney, Jr. and T/Sgt. Randy W. Quinn of the 20th Squadron.

Credited with the destruction of a Ma-202 was S/Sgt. Chester C. Sumner, 20th Squadron.

Credited with destruction of FW-190s were S/Sgt. Robert T. Dennis, T/Sgt. Edward H. Curtis and S/Sgt. Edward J. Dumas of the 96th Squadron.

Credited with possible destruction of a Me-109 was S/Sgt. William J. Shearin, Jr., 96th Squadron and a joint claim of possible destruction of a Me-109 went to S/Sgt. Robert S. King and S/Sgt. Thomas F. McCaffery, 429th Squadron.

B-17 #42-3066, 96th Squadron, landed at Malta with No. 3 engine out.

B-17 #42-5427, 20th Squadron, heavily attacked by E/A made an emergency landing at Malta. Gunners claimed two E/A.

### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29607 - "STORMY WEATHER" - 20TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Walter C. Laich, 0-791454, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Chester R. Yeager, 0-729948, CP.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Samuel Jacobson, 0-670744, N.	(KIA)

2nd Lt. Charles H. Leighty, 0-729743, B.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Calton B. Grissom, Jr. 18046308, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Eugene R. Schojan, 12029342, L/T.	(KIA)
Sgt. Alexander Morrison, 39007416, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Harry C. Massey, 12081729, L/W.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Jack (NMI) Stacy, 18039870, T/B.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Franklin D. Crawford, 17015967, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of 2nd Lt. James I. MacKenzie, Bombardier on B-17 #42-29523, after the mission: "I first noticed plane #42-29607 on fire, and after it left the formation and had taken up a position to my left, slightly behind me. My altitude was about 18,000 feet. Flame was coming from behind No. 3 engine near the fuselage and trailing edge of the right wing. I could see the pilot, co-pilot, top turret gunner and two waist gunners were at their positions. The top turret gunner kept working the turret until I lost sight of #607. I saw five or six men go from the waist door. Two men hit the vertical stabilizer. The first man hitting the stabilizer got his chute open. I did not see the other man's chute open as he appeared unconscious in his fall. I followed the plane by sight for about five minutes. It started an angle, or diving glide, then the nose dropped and about halfway to the water, the plane broke into pieces near the radio room. I believe I saw five chutes open."

#### **GERBINI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 34 - JULY 5, 1943**

Twenty-four aircraft dropped 3,456, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Satellite #6 Airdrome at Gerbini. The target area was well covered with fires observed in the area for 40 miles from 22,000 feet. Flak was light to moderate. Accuracy, fair to good to altitude and deflection. Two E/A were destroyed. No injuries, no losses.

#### **GERBINI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 35 - JULY 6, 1943**

Twenty-five aircraft dropped 400, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Satellite #6 Airdrome at Gerbini. Flak was heavy, moderate, fair to good to altitude and deflection. The target area was fairly well covered. B-17 #342, piloted by 1st Lt. Newton Blackford made a crash landing at Montoalu. 1st Lt. Burton Thorman, 429th Squadron, was seriously wounded by flak.

#### **GERBINI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 36 - JULY 7, 1943**

Twenty aircraft dropped 320, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Satellite #6 Airdrome at Gerbini. Weather over the target was 9/10's at 9,000 feet and results could not be determined. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate and good to altitude, poor to deflection. No injuries, no losses. B-17 #082, piloted by Lt. Clarence Godecke, made an emergency landing at New Solomons due to shortage of gas and low oil pressure.

#### **GERBINI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 37 - JULY 8, 1943**

Eighteen aircraft dropped 288, 300-lb. GP bombs on the Satellite #4 and #6 Airdromes at Gerbini. The targets were well covered. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, poor to deflection and altitude.

B-17 #42-3083, piloted by 2nd Lt. Roy Kline, 429th Squadron, did not reach the target and is missing. No other losses, no injuries.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-3083 - 429TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. Roy S. Kline, 0-662802, P	(DED)
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2nd Lt. Patrick J. Maher, 0-730551, CP	(DED)
2nd Lt. Edwin G. Kocher, 0-664898, N	(RESCUED)
2nd Lt. Raymond W. Grace, 0-731954, B	(DED)
T/Sgt. Henry T. Wright, 16048625, U/T	(DED)
S/Sgt. John H. Brown, 32270028, L/T	(DED)
S/Sgt. Donald I. Kenyon, 12082241, R/W	(DED)
S/Sgt. Donald S. Rosenow, 16052096, L/W	(DED)
S/Sgt. Richard J. Bruso, 31078668, T/G	(DED)
T/Sgt. Leo M. Cawdry, Jr., 17040314, R/O	(DED)

Statement of 2nd Lt. Edwin G. Kocher after rescue: "I was the Navigator of B-17 #42-3083. The plane was lagging - couldn't put out to maintain position. Pilot called me and said, "If we can't catch up before hitting the coast of Sicily, we will turn back." We turned back approximately at the coast of Sicily at 1210 hours, 18,000 feet, on reciprocal course. All four engines were running. Nothing for a few minutes then a couple of Me-109s attacked us. I started firing at one on our left wing when a bullet must have hit the ball and socket of my gun, putting it out of commission. The next thing I noticed, No. 2 and 4 engines were feathered and we were losing altitude to 15,000 feet. I was wearing my steel helmet over my headset and didn't hear the "abandon ship" order. I saw a small amount of blood dripping from the upper turret and saw the bombardier go back. I thought he was going back to take over the top turret guns. When my gun was repaired, I resumed firing at the E/A. When I looked around again, I then noticed the escape hatch was open and the co-pilot going out. I hooked my parachute to the harness, which I was wearing, and jumped through the nose hatch, pulling my rip cord at once. Everything worked fine as I kicked my legs to straighten my shroud lines. I could see drifting chutes above me, with the E/A fighters circling around, but not firing at the chutes. I think I saw four chutes above me and a like number below. I think I was the last to leave the plane. I pulled my shroud lines, attempting to drift toward the fellows in the water.

"I was approximately 200 yards from the plane which had one wing sticking out of the water. When I struck the water, I swam toward the plane. I called to the others asking if they had a raft. Their reply was, "There is no raft." Upon reaching the plane, I found the raft with a large hole burned in one side. I opened the carbon dioxide bottle and it filled the good half of the raft. There were no paddles, so upon hearing Grace answer my call, I tied a piece of string around my neck and shoulder, from the raft, and swam to Lt. Grace. He passed out as I reached him and I pulled him aboard the raft. One-half hour later, a P-51, which I believe was attached to a Fighter Group at Telergma, was circling us. I tried artificial resuscitation on Lt. Grace and continued to work on him, calling to others of my crew, but heard no answer. Lt. Grace did not regain consciousness. I worked on him all Thursday night and by the next morning, Friday, July 9th, I could feel no pulse and his teeth were set. I let the air out of his vest and let him into the water. Friday, a north wind arose and the sea became very rough, waves reaching a height of 30 feet. I drifted until about 2100 hours Saturday night, July 10th, when I was picked up by a British destroyer and was told we would reach Malta in about three or four hours.

"In my opinion, the plane crashed at 36-12N - 13-32E."

#### **BISCARI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 38 - JULY 9, 1943**

Twenty-six aircraft dropped 307, 500-lb. GP bombs on the San Pietro Airdrome at Biscari. Fifty percent of the bombs were reported in the target area. No injuries, no losses.

### **GERBINI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 39 - JULY 10, 1943**

The invasion of Sicily began today. Twenty-eight aircraft took off and 26 dropped 302, 500-lb. bombs on the Satellite #9 Airdrome. One A/C dropped ten bombs in the water due to a malfunction and the other two bombs dropped on the target. Flak was heavy, slight, poor to deflection, good to altitude. All bombs were reported in the target area. Seven E/A attacked the formation. There were no claims, no injuries, no losses. One B-17 was an early return.

### **CATANIA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 40 - JULY 11, 1943**

The assigned target was the South Marshalling Yards at Catania. Twenty-six aircraft dropped 312, 500-lb. GP bombs on two targets. Three Squadrons bombed the South Yards and the fourth Squadron could not see the target due to fire and smoke so picked the Northern Yards, hitting the south end of the Northern Yards. The results of the bombing could not be determined due to the fire and smoke. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, fair to good as to altitude and deflection. Fourteen B-17s were damaged by flak. The formation was attacked by six Me-109s and Re-2001s. One Re-2001 was destroyed. No injuries, no losses.

### **MESSINA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 41 - JULY 12, 1943**

Two railroad bridges were the target for this mission. Nineteen aircraft dropped 228, 500-lb. GP bombs from an altitude of 21,000/24,500 feet. It was believed that the bridges were destroyed. The entire area was covered by dust and accurate results were not known. Flak was heavy, intense, accurate as to altitude and deflection. 2nd Lt. Raymond Erpelding, Navigator, slightly injured by flak.

### **TRAPANI, SICILY - MISSION NO. 42 - JULY 13, 1943**

Seventeen aircraft dropped 204, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Milo Airdrome at Trapani. All bombs were reported in the target area with post holes dug in the field. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, fair to good to deflection. Six Me-109s attacked with one gunner getting credit for destruction of one E/A.

### **MESSINA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 43 - JULY 14, 1943**

Twenty-five aircraft dropped 276, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Railroad Yards at Messina. The target area was well covered. Flak was heavy, intense, accurate. B-17 #42-29583, piloted by 1st Lt. Vincent J. McIntyre was hit by flak and went down. Nine chutes were seen.

### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29583 - "60-50" - 96TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Vincent J. McIntyre, 0-791314, P.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Richard M. Bentley, 0-730343, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Wayne M. Greathouse, 0-664884, N.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Vernon D. Morrow, 0-730605, B.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Otis W. Wharton, 37188611, U/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt. James D. Kingsland, 12024924, L/T.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Jacob M. Hauber 17040777, R/W.	(DED)
Sgt. Casimir C. Manka, 33346371, L/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. George H. Tucker, 37175260, T/G	(POW)
T/Sgt. Phillip E. Zimmerman, 17034035, R/O.	(POW)

Statement of 1st Lt. Harold L. Chrishmon, after the mission: "In turning off the target I noticed #583 throwing what looked to be gasoline vapors. I could see his left wing was shot full of holes, also



two or three holes in his right wing. The right side of the fuselage was without any holes. No. 583 seemed to be under control all this time. He was letting down about two or three hundred feet a minute and flying about 140 miles an hour. Smoke was coming out of his radio room. I saw his ball turret cranked up and smoke seemed to die down, and then billowed out of the radio room. I tried to contact #583 by radio and saw the pilot look my way but did not acknowledge my call. No. 583 turned out to sea a way. I followed his plane and thought he was trying to make Malta. They kicked all emergency doors out and I saw the tail gunner jump first, then three from the waist, then two from the nose. Then the plane started to dive to the left as it left my view..”

Statement of S/Sgt. George H. Tucker, July 9, 1944, after liberation: “We bombed Messina, Sicily. Our plane was hit hard by flak. We flew along the coast for about 40 miles. The order came to bail out. I counted 10 chutes in the air and then our plane crashed into the sea, all afire. Four of my buddies, and myself, swam for four hours and were captured by the Italians about six miles out to sea. The five of us were J. D. Kingsland, O. W. Wharton, P. E. Zimmerman, R. M. Bentley, and G. H. Tucker. I have never heard from the others on the crew and supposed they were drowned.”

#### **NAPLES, ITALY - MISSION NO. 44 - JULY 15, 1943**

Eighteen aircraft dropped 212, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Naples. All bombs were reported in the target area. Flak was heavy, intense, good to altitude and deflection. There was flak from two ships in the harbor. Eleven B-17s were slightly damaged from flak. Eight E/A attacked the formation. T/Sgt. Tandy Guinn, R/WG, was credited with a Me-109 and S/Sgt. Merlin S. McCloud was credited with a Ma-202. Captain Triggs, in #146, landed at Bizerte to hospitalize three wounded airmen. One gunner, on #427, piloted by Lt. R. F. Underwood, was slightly wounded by 20mm cannon fire.

#### **SAN GIOVANNI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 45 - JULY 16, 1943**

Twenty-six aircraft dropped 312, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Ferry Terminus and town of San Giovanni. Fifty percent of the bombs were in the target area with the others in a built-up area left of the target. Flak was heavy, intense, accurate, resulting in slight damage to 21 B-17s.

B-17 #42-3342, 429th Squadron, crashed shortly after take-off killing all ten men. The crew were: 1st Lt. Newton S. Blackford, P; 2nd Lt. George W. Poitrac, Co-pilot; 2nd Lt. Robert Istre, Navigator; 2nd Lt. Kenneth S. Kinnes, Bombardier; T/Sgt. Paul Pittman, Upper Turret; S/Sgt. Harold G. Neilson, Lower Turret; Sgt. Leroy Collins, Waist Gunner; S/Sgt. Robert Harrington, Waist Gunner; S/Sgt. Reginald S. Honour, Tail Gunner; and T/Sgt. William N. George, Radio Operator.

Sgt. Wechtenhiser and Pvt. Archie Ellis, 96th Squadron, witnessed the crash of this aircraft: “We were traveling toward Ain M’Lila in the 96th Squadron ambulance, when we noticed a plane from our Group, which was taking off, flying towards us at what seemed to be a very much reduced speed. We also noticed that the outside engine on the pilot’s left, and to our right, was not running. Plane seemed to be traveling very slowly, with its tail low. Sensing trouble, we stopped the ambulance and got out to see what the trouble was. The plane started to turn to the pilot’s left, at an altitude which we estimate of not over 200 feet. The left wing continued to go down and strike the ground. The wrecked plane was immediately enveloped in flames, which was followed immediately by a terrific explosion. Pieces of wreckage were scattered over an area of about 100 yards, or more. We were about 200 yards from the crash. Not having a watch, we estimate the time of the crash at 0900 hours, or a few minutes before.”

At Ain M’Lila, our tent area was close enough to the airstrip to see the planes take off.

This particular morning, I had just left my tent as they were taking off, and as I did so many times, stopped to watch. Several were already in the air when I noticed one plane, just above a small hill some distance from the field, seemingly "mushing" along, nose up, tail down. I thought to myself, "This plane is in trouble." Suddenly the plane made a turn to the left, the left wing dipped down and then the plane seemed to slide down and disappear from my sight behind the hills some miles from the field. Suddenly there was a huge billow of black smoke, and shortly thereafter, a tremendous explosion.

When I arrived at the scene, it was a sight of total destruction. The area was blackened from the fire and explosion of the bombs. The only recognizable parts of the plane were four mangled engines. It was hard to believe that only a short time before this had been a plane carrying a crew of ten, brave young men.

#### **NAPLES, ITALY -MISSION NO. 46 - JULY 17, 1943**

Twenty-six aircraft dropped 312, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Naples. All bombs were in the target area and large fires were visible from 20,000 feet. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, accuracy fair to good, resulting in slight damage to 11 aircraft. No injuries, no losses.

#### **ROME, ITALY - MISSION NO. 47 - JULY 19, 1943**

This was a history making day. The first Allied bombing of Rome. Target, the Marshalling Yards (South Lorenzo). Thirty-eight aircraft dropped 458, 500-lb. GP bombs with all reported in the target area.

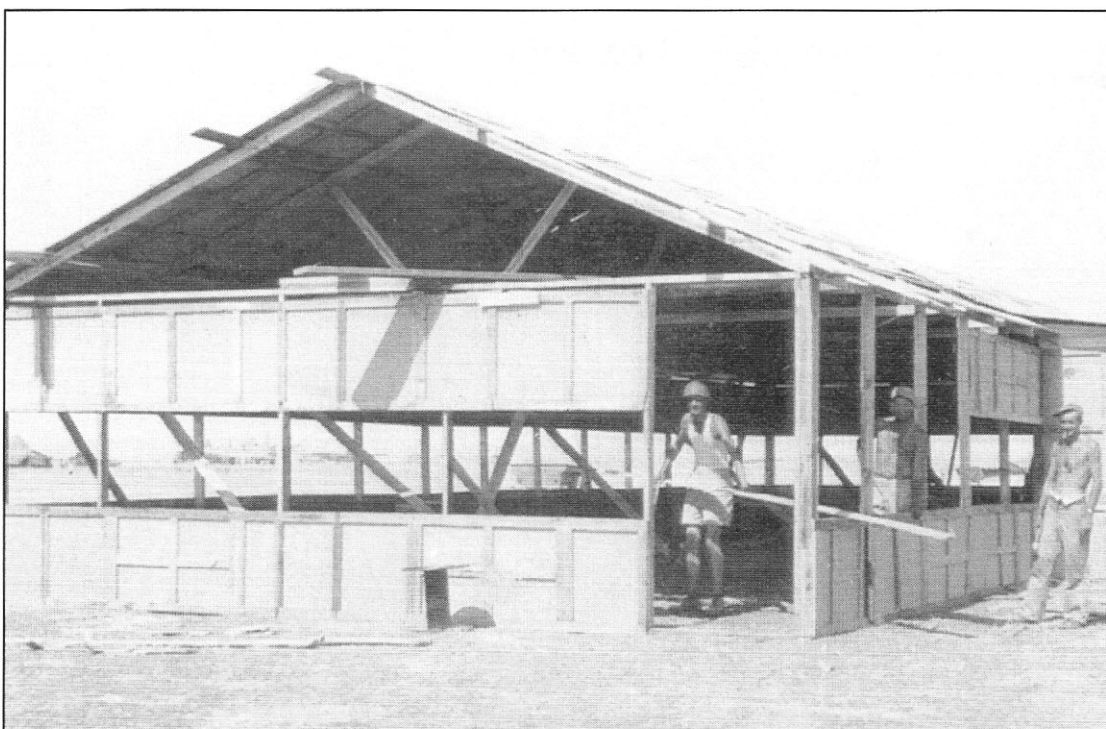
Six E/A attacked the formation after leaving the target. One E/A was claimed as probably destroyed. There were no injuries and no losses. Leaflets were dropped prior to the mission to warn civilians of the attack.



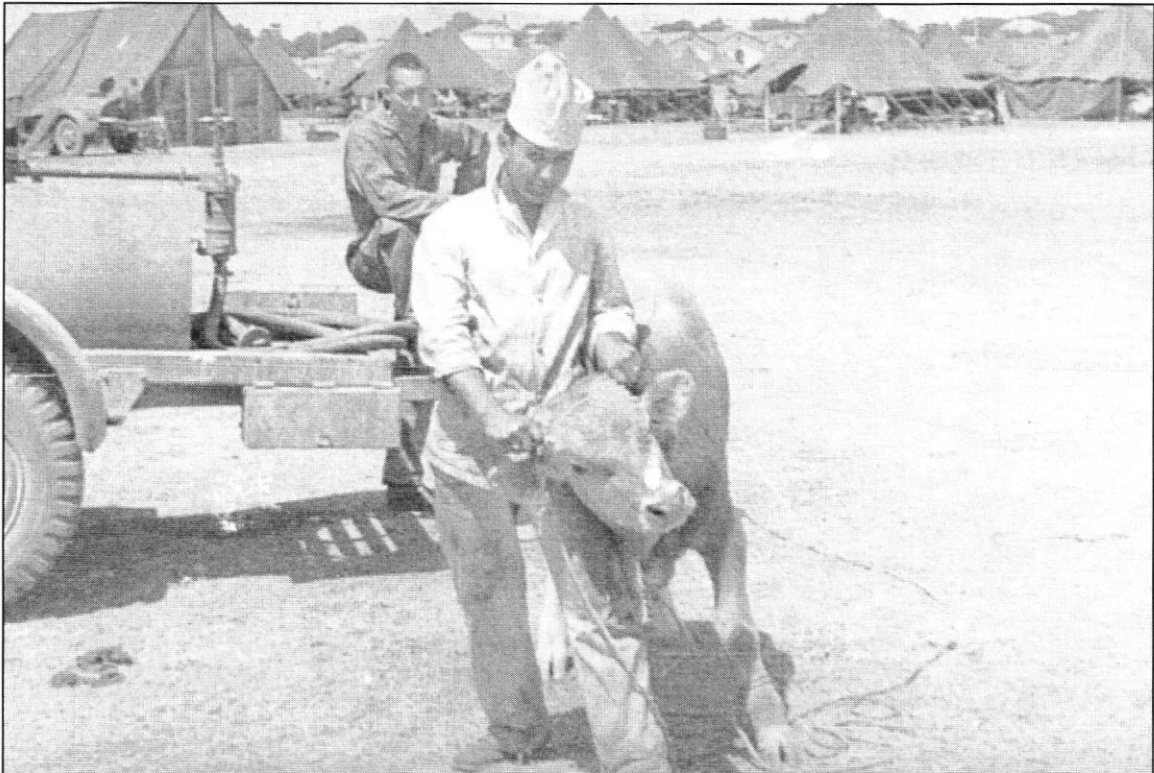
Wheels up - no flaps - plane and crew unknown - North Africa  
(Courtesy - C. Richards)



A/C #42-3342 - July 16, 1943 - Crashed on take-off - exploded - all killed  
(Courtesy -C. Richards)



96th Enlisted Men's Club - Thomas McGurk in doorway - North Africa  
(Courtesy - C. Richards)



96th - Howard Fox, background, Raphael Chappie with steer Hamburger on the hoof for dinner.  
North Africa (Courtesy - H. Fox)

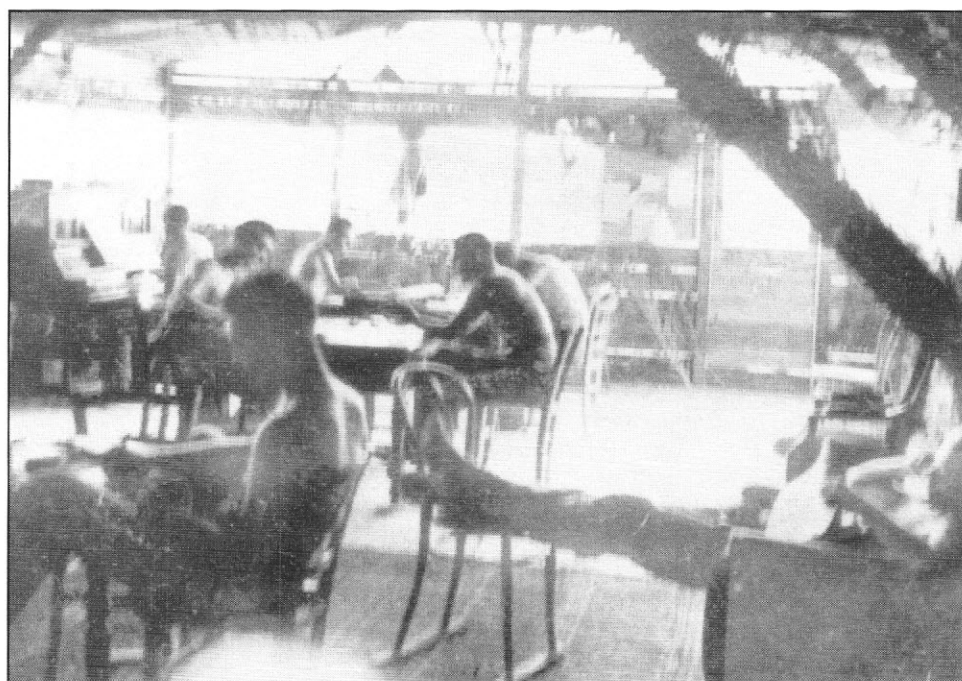


96th - Moving to Massicault - Hurry up and wait (Courtesy - C. Richards)





96th - And the band played on - Massicult, North Africa (Courtesy - C. Richards)



96th Squadron Officers Club - Massicult, North Africa - (Courtesy - Lloyd Haefs)





Top Row - L/R - D. Mayfield, W. Bigham, J. Krannichfeld,  
V. Dunkelberger, C. Gabbert, and L. Meek  
Bottom Row - L/R - J. Clemons, S. Ayo, R. Johnson,  
and W. Payne - Massicult, North Africa  
(Courtesy - Lloyd Haefs)

#### **GROSETTO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 48 - JULY 21, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 156, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Airdrome at Grosseto. Results of the mission were doubtful due to heavy cloud coverage over the target. Seven A/C returned their bombs because they could not see the target. Flak was heavy, slight, poor. No losses and no injuries.

#### **LAVERANO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 49 - JULY 23, 1943**

Thirty-one aircraft dropped 102 tons of 500-lb. GP bombs on the Landing Ground located one and one-quarter miles west of Laverano. Photos showed at least 40 single engine A/C on the field and destruction, or damage, to 36. Many fires were seen in hangars and other buildings. The 301st Bomb Group accompanied the 2nd on the raid. There was no flak, but the formation was heavily attacked, resulting in the death of two men and injury to six; all from the 429th Squadron.

Twenty to 30 E/A attacked the formation between Gallipoli and Cape Trento. Sgt. George Hopper, L/TG, was instantly killed from 20mm cannon fire. Sgt. Joseph S. Wojcik, L/TG, died from numerous shrapnel wounds at 2300 hours, July 23, 1943. Sgt. Everett E. Eye suffered a compound fracture of the left elbow. S/Sgt. Raymond D. Foster suffered wounds in left knee. S/Sgt. Gene T. Pilgrim wounded in the right buttocks. T/Sgt. Henry R. Petroski wounded in the left buttocks, and T/Sgt. William J. Mayers wounded in right knee and right arm. E/A claims were: Each credited with destruction of an Me-109 were S/Sgt. Leland Waldie, T/G; S/Sgt. Byrle L. Spillers, T/G; Sgt. Edward F. Teague, L/T; S/Sgt. Gene T. Pilgrim, T/G; S/Sgt. George R. Roberts, L/T; and S/Sgt. Albert L. Nash, T/G. Credited with the destruction of a Ma-202 was S/Sgt. Orville A. Walton. A joint claim for a Ma-202 went to S/Sgt. Conrad G. Adams, L/T, and Sgt. Buster Andeel, L/T. A joint claim for destruction

of a Me-109 went to 1st Lt. Milton Y. Ashley, N, and Sgt. William E. Brousseau, R/W. Credited with destruction of a Re-2001 was 2nd Lt. Edward H. Lombard, N. Credit for the destruction of a FW-190 went to T/Sgt. George W. Hess, L/W. Credited with the possible destruction of one each Me-190 were T/Sgt. Robert H. Eaton, U/T; S/Sgt. Howard W. Eddleman, T/G; and S/Sgt. Stanley L. Palmer, T/G. Credit for the damage to a Me-109 went to Victor (NMI) Garcia, L/T, and credited for damage to a FW-190 was S/Sgt. Arthur (NMI) Schiffer, L/W.

#### **FOGGIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 50 - JULY 27, 1943**

Twenty-nine aircraft, each loaded with 12, 500-lb. GP bombs, took off to bomb the Nicole Landing Ground at Foggia. There was a 9/10 overcast from 3,000 to 25,000 feet and the planes returned to Base. No flak and no encounters with E/A.

#### **GROTTAGLIE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 51 - JULY 30, 1943**

Twenty-seven aircraft dropped 324, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Airdrome at Grottaglie. The target was well covered with several fires reported. Flak was slight, heavy, accuracy poor. S/Sgt. George R. Roberts L/T, 429th Squadron was slightly wounded by flak. There were no encounters with E/A.

On July 31, 1943, all the ground personnel departed Ain M'Lila, Algeria between 0200 and 0500 hours, by truck convoy, and arrived at Massicault, Tunisia between 1600 and 1900 hours. The air echelon departed Ain M'Lila, August 1 and arrived at Massicault the same day.

The 96th Squadron history recorded that the entire ground echelon had their tents down, waiting for trucks to come on July 28th, but they did not arrive. The men slept out in the open this night. Service trucks finally arrived on the 29th and the Squadron trucks were loaded, ready for the trek to Tunisia. When all the trucks were loaded and lined up in formation, they had to wait until the small hours of the 30th before starting out. No one had much sleep, and it was cold and damp riding on top of the luggage.

The trip was long, the road had many curves and the steep mountains slowed the movement of the convoy. Arriving at Massicault about 1700 hours, the men were tired and hungry. Tents were not pitched this night and the men slept out in the open. The following day was spent pitching the personal tents and getting setup for operations.

#### **ROME, ITALY - MISSION NO. 52 - AUGUST 4, 1943**

Forty aircraft dropped 480, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Lorenzo Marshalling Yards. Flak was heavy, intense and accurate resulting in the loss of A/C #42-29594, 429th Squadron.

Approximately 30 fighters attacked the formation causing the loss of A/C #42-5873 after it had initially been damaged by flak. Three Me-109s and one Re-2001 were claimed destroyed and eight Me-109s and one FW-190 were probably destroyed by Fortress gunners.

1st. Lt. O'Neill, S/Sgt. Bonovich, and S/Sgt. Konieczny, all of the 49th Squadron, received injuries.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT - A/C #42-5873 - 96TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Harold L. Chrishmon, 0-663853, P.	(RESCUED)
2nd Lt. Robert L. Kurz, 0-734104, CP.	(RESCUED)
2nd Lt. Ronald E. Beck, 0-735970, N.	(RESCUED)
2nd Lt. William B. Mahood, 0-733338, B.	(RESCUED)
T/Sgt. Bernard E. Doone, 13040591, U/T.	(RESCUED)
S/Sgt. John B. Haffner, 16093775, L/T.	(RESCUED)

S/Sgt. Rudolph E. Shields, 33120022, R/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Herbert D. Borders, 19075432, L/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. William T. Brady, 17127147, T/G.	(DED)
T/Sgt. Wells A. Macoy, 31085779, R/O.	(RESCUED)

Statement of 2nd Lt. Ronald E. Beck, after his rescue: "Our bombs were away when we received a hit by flak immediately after coming off the target. It apparently was just forward of the bomb bay doors and probably hit our oxygen bottles because there was a loud explosion, and it blew things around in the nose. There were holes in various pieces of my navigational equipment. Shortly after that I heard Lt. Chrishmon talk over the interphone to the waist gunner as to how bad the fire was in the No. 1 engine. There were a lot of fighters coming at us from all directions. My gun was useless, as the engineer had taken the extractor from it to be used on the top gun as he had broken its extractor while test firing. I heard Lt. Chrishmon call out over the interphone to prepare to bail out, and I immediately took off my oxygen mask. I crawled back and released the escape hatch door and had to kick it out. Then I looked out and saw two opened parachutes about 2,000 feet back and below us. Lt. Mahood told me that Lt. Chrishmon was putting on his chute, so I bailed out head first. I waited intentionally to pull the ripcord as I wanted to get to a lower altitude quickly. There were enemy fighters in the vicinity. I was about 1,000 feet above the water when I pulled the ripcord. It gave me an abrupt jerk and my head popped back. I think I blacked out for a few seconds, then realized that the chute had opened all right. I looked around for the plane and it was in a wide circling descent. I was swinging back and forth and saw one chute a half mile away and above me. I also clocked the time when the plane hit the water, and it was six minutes and 20 seconds after 2 o'clock. Just before it hit the water, all of the left wing and part of the fuselage was burning strongly, and there was a loud crash when it hit the water and big billows of smoke.

"Shortly after that, about 1407, I hit the water. I had tried to unfasten the straps, but, because I was watching the plane and trying to spot other chutes, hadn't allowed enough time for it. The chute fell in the water behind me and I was clear of the shroud lines. I went four or five feet under and came up immediately. I then unfastened my leg and shoulder straps and pulled the two cords of my life vest. It inflated all right, and the strap around my waist and crotch was broken, probably when I jumped, and it would just dangle on the surface. I had to hold it down with one hand and paddle with the other. Finally I made a rigging to strap it down with my belt and it helped quite a bit.

"I tore open my jungle kit, which was on my parachute harness, took out my machete, matches, D-rations and compass and put them in my pants and jacket pockets. Then I started swimming in an easterly direction. I had been swimming about five minutes when I heard a splash, turned and saw a big fish about five feet from me. I pulled out my machete, waved it in the air, kicked my feet and yelled. The shark left only to return with another one. I waved my machete again, thrashed about in the water and they left. I didn't see anymore sharks until the next night.

"I had been swimming for about six hours, calling at 20 minute intervals to see if anyone was in hearing distance and had laid back to rest a little. I heard two voices, not far away, so I called and started swimming towards them. After an hour and a half, or so, I caught up with Lt. Mahood and Sgt. Doone, and within five minutes, Sgt. Haffner appeared. We tied ourselves together and started paddling east. We seemed to be caught in a S.W. current and our paddling was doing us no good and decided we should save our strength.

"We spent the night resting and the next morning started swimming towards Italy. We didn't make much progress. The compass which we tried to use would stick and wasn't of much use. By evening we were pretty tired and about sundown, we saw a B-26 with British markings on it fly close by without seeing us. It circled in the distance for about 30 minutes and then circled in our direction and

spotted us. He dropped four life rafts and some articles. Only two of the rafts were usable and four of us got into the two rafts. Lt. Mahood, previous to the B-26's arrival, had been holding me up and I hardly remember what was happening. I was almost out of my head. The raft with Sgt. Doone and I in it tipped over once and we had a hard time getting in it again. We arranged ourselves as comfortably as possible but the valve was leaking and there was a small hole in the raft. We had to hold a hand on the valve and one in the hole and pump it occasionally. Shortly after sunrise the next morning, we saw three men coming towards us in a raft and they turned out to be Lts. Chrishmon and Kurz and Sgt. Macoy. We tied the three rafts together.

"Several hours later, I heard planes overhead. I was not taking much in and didn't know what was going on until a PBY landed and picked us up. They took us aboard the PBY, undressed us, and flew us back to Bizerte, where they took us to the 56th Station Hospital. The following evening they took us back to the 96th Squadron Base."

Statement of T/Sgt. Wells A. Macoy, R/O, after his rescue: "My earphones had pulled loose, just after bombs away, and the first I knew the ship was in trouble was when the engineer came out and grabbed his parachute. I had been busy shooting at enemy fighters. I didn't have a heated suit so I had on all my winter flying clothes and a heavy sweater, my flying coveralls, OD pants, and heavy shirt with heavy underwear. I wasn't wearing my parachute (chest pack) and as a result, when I started to put my harness on, I couldn't strap it. I ran out to the emergency waist door and started to take off my winter flying jacket. Just then, Lt. Chrishmon and Lt. Kurz came out and they got one strap around my leg buckled. That was the only one fastened but it was the only choice I had. I jumped right after Lt. Kurz. I jumped out feet first and pulled the ripcord after about five seconds. I had a little trouble finding and pulling the ripcord. The parachute opened immediately and there was no jerk at all. I grabbed something, probably a shoulder strap, and pulled myself up on the seat and had a feeling of relief, because I hadn't expected to make it. I started shedding my clothes until two, Me-109s started circling me. I laid still and they did no shooting. I hit the water flat on my back and it didn't hurt and I didn't sink at all. I didn't unstrap my one strap before hitting the water and so I slid out of it without unstrapping it. Then I took off my shoes, winter coat and pants, coveralls and OD pants. I didn't have my Mae West of course. On the way down I had seen the plane crash and at that time I thought I was going to land on it. As it turned out, I was about a fourth of a mile from it. At first, I lost direction but then spotted a yellow life raft, which must have been blown from the plane. I slowly swam over to it on my back. It was only half inflated and I found there was a hole in the other half. I climbed into it, looked around and heard Lt. Chrishmon calling. I tried to paddle toward him and we finally got together. While he was swimming toward me, he got the other raft from the plane but it was ready to sink and he got a couple of cans of water from it.

"After awhile we heard Lt. Kurz whistling and we paddled over to him and pulled him into the raft. Lt. Chrishmon and I took turns holding our finger over a hole in the side of the raft and had to jump off at intervals to blow it up again by mouth. After awhile we found some chocolate bars and a pump. Sharks bothered us all night.

"The next day we tried to paddle east but didn't make much headway. Nothing happened until evening when a B-25 showed up. We attracted his attention with our flares but Me-109s scared it away.

"The next night wasn't too bad and the following morning I saw a black spot in the distance with two little bumps in it. We thought it best to investigate and pulled toward it. When we got close we recognized Lt. Mahood first. After we had been together awhile, a British plane showed up. A little later, five P-38s appeared, and the PBY which rescued us. They took us to Bizerte to the 56th Base Hospital. Next day we returned to the 96th."



# **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29594 - "LITTLE BUTCH" - 429TH SQUADRON**

Captain William H. Mayer, 0-406284, P.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Paul W. Wernich, 0-729939, CP.	(KIA)
1st Lt. Aldo (NMI) Angiolini, 0-726971, N.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Elmo F. McClain, 0-666289, B.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Joseph D. Samora, 39242886, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Clifton O. Wade, 37803450, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Edward C. Lamont, 13032533, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Harry Lavine, 32289282, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Albert L. Nash, 31077925, T/G.	(POW)
T/Sgt. William E. Doebele, 35318768, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of Captain Bradford A. Evans, P, and 2nd Lt. John C. Goodfellow, Co-pilot, 429th Squadron, after the mission: "Immediately after bombs away, we noticed a direct hit on Captain Mayer's plane, which seemed to strike in the radio room and bomb bay. Partitions between life raft compartment and radio hatch were blown off leaving a hole three to four feet square. Immediately after, A/C #594 went into a 30 degree dive from the level, then straight down. We continued to turn and our view was concluded by our wing."

Statement of Captain William H. Mayer after liberation: "We were hit directly over the target just after release of bombs. I bailed out and Lt. Elmo F. McClain bailed out also from the bombardier's escape hatch. Lt. McClain said that Lt. Angiolini also went out the hatch after I had given orders to bail out.

"At a hospital in Naples, I saw Lt. Angiolini dead. It was believed that he was killed upon hitting the ground, or by the enemy. I believe that S/Sgt. Lamont, S/Sgt. Wade, and S/Sgt. Lavine were killed by a burst of flak in the plane.

"2nd Lt. Paul Wernich, Co-pilot, was slumped forward in his seat and believed dead. A report stated that T/Sgt. Samora was found dead, in Naples and believed to have died while parachuting down, or after hitting the ground. I heard that T/Sgt. Doebele's body was found in Naples and he died from flak wounds.

"S/Sgt. Albert E. Nash was captured by the Germans in Naples. He was liberated in April, 1945, and is now in the United States."

## **MESSINA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 53 - AUGUST 6, 1943**

Twenty-six aircraft dropped 306, 500-lb. GP bombs on Railway Bridges at Messina. No. 837 returned six bombs that failed to release. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, fair to good as to altitude and deflection. The target was well covered. There was slight damage to some aircraft. No losses, no injuries.

## **MESSINA, SICILY - MISSION NO. 54 - AUGUST 9, 1943**

The intended target was a Highway Bridge north of Messina. Twenty-six aircraft dropped 312, 500-lb. GP bombs through a 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover without successfully destroying the target. Flak was heavy, moderate, with fair accuracy resulting in slight damage to some aircraft. No losses, no injuries.

Lt. Dahir, pilot of A/C #617, hit an irrigation ditch at the south end of the field, damaging the landing gear, circled the field and made a "wheels up" crash landing with no injuries to the crew.



### **ROME, ITALY - MISSION NO. 55 - AUGUST 13, 1943**

Thirty-eight aircraft dropped 456, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Lorenzo Marshalling Yards. Bombs were in the target area with some fires seen. Heavy smoke around the city limited visibility. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, good as to altitude, poor to deflection. No losses, no injuries.

B-24s from Groups located at Benghasi landed at this base after bombing a target at Wiener Neustadt. After refueling, they returned to their base.

August 14, 1943. The USO Tour, conducted by Bob Hope, was seen by the troops in this area. Of most interest to the men was the beautiful, talented Frances Langford.

August 15, 1943. The Officers Club of the 96th Squadron opened. It was named the "60-50" after Lt. McIntyre's plane in honor of Lt. McIntyre and his crew, who were the first crew lost by the 96th Squadron.

August 17, 1943. Axis forces on the Island of Sicily surrendered.

### **MARSEILLE, FRANCE - MISSION NO. 56 - AUGUST 17, 1943**

This was the Group's first mission to France. Forty-nine aircraft dropped 69 tons of 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Istre LeTube and Group I Airdromes. Seventy-eight E/A were destroyed, 20 damaged, 40 gliders destroyed and 16 damaged at the LeTube Field. There were direct hits on hangars, service facilities and other buildings with many fires started. At the Group I Airdrome, direct hits were made on installations, many fires started and four E/A destroyed.

Flak was moderate to intense and fairly accurate damaging fourteen B-17s and causing the loss of B-17 #42-30388 of the 429th Squadron. This aircraft was hit by flak about five minutes before bombs away, caught fire and disintegrated in the air.

S/Sgt. Arthur (NMI) Schiffer, LWG, in A/C #42-3096, was wounded by flak.

Approximately six E/A attacked the formation. S/Sgt. Stanley L. Palmer, T/G, 429th Squadron was credited with destruction of a Me-109.

### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-30388 - "DANNY BOY" - 429TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt.	Carroll L. Fisher, 0-795935, P.	(RET)
2nd Lt.	Henry W. Kinnen, 0-743032, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt.	Henry M. Ochocki, 0-798860, N.	(RET)
2nd Lt.	Orville H. Taylor, 0-669393, B.	(RET)
T/Sgt.	Henry R. Petroski, 35335037, U/T.	(POW)
Sgt.	Donald R. Turner, 39020070, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Warren C. Ziegler, 13125326, R/W.	(KIA)
Sgt.	Edward J. Kasper, 16125080, L/W	(POW)
S/Sgt.	Harry S. Barratt, 33252009, T/G.	(RET)
S/Sgt.	Dominic L. Karcich, 37349353, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of 1st Lt. Henry W. Kinnen after liberation: "It was at about 1400 hours and at 21,000 feet when we left the formation, approximately 100 miles south of Marseille, near the Rhone Valley, I bailed out and all but three others bailed out also. They were S/Sgt. Karcich, S/Sgt. Zeigler, and Sgt. Turner.

"Lts. Ochocki and Taylor went out the front hatch. T/Sgt Petroski and I went out the nose hatch. 1st Lt. Fisher went out the still open bomb bay. S/Sgt. Barratt bailed out the tail hatch. Sgt. Kasper went out the waist gun port.

"I have reason to believe that we came down near a small village in the Avignon area with the name of Eygaliers, or name very similar. I was once afforded a brief glance at my POW file card and remembered the odd name of the village, particularly since I had never been sure before, just where we had come down. It was listed as the place of my capture.

"I did not see any of our crew members after landing until I saw T/Sgt. Petroski. He and I were in a German Army Hospital at Arles, France together. He had a badly twisted knee and front teeth knocked loose. I had two bad flak wounds on the left knee, badly sprained back, and not able to walk. I was captured within ten minutes after landing by Luftwaffe troopers. I saw Sgt. Kasper in the hands of the Germans, not injured, en route to the hospital. T/Sgt. Petroski said he saw Lt. Fisher, Lt. Ochocki, Lt. Taylor, and S/Sgt. Barratt on the ground and they were going to try to evade. T/Sgt. Petroski was helpless on the ground and could not join them.

"Sgt. Kasper was a POW and liberated in late April, 1945. I talked several times with him and T/Sgt. Petroski at Camp Lucky Strike in May, 1945 while waiting processing to return to the United States. It was from Sgt. Kasper that I learned of the fate of the other three men that went down with the ship.

"Sgt. Turner, S/Sgt. Ziegler, and S/Sgt. Karcich did not bail out to my knowledge. Sgt. Kasper said the three men were at the waist door. The jettison control was jammed and evidently they waited too long in taking the alternate escape out the waist gun port. They were still trying to force the jammed waist hatch when Sgt. Kasper went out the waist gun port. Lt. Fisher gave ample bail-out time over the interphone. Sgt. Kasper said that the gun mount had been an obstacle but he was able to clear it in jumping. The ship had already begun to roll when I bailed out and they were probably pinned by the force of the spinning plane."

In a letter from Henry Petroski in August, 1998, he stated that Lt. Fisher, Lt. Ochocki, Lt. Taylor and S/Sgt. Barratt escaped through France and that S/Sgt. Barratt returned to finish his missions. The Missing Air Crew Report did not reflect their evading and also said the name of their ship was "DANNY BOY," not "SUNNY BOY" as earlier reported.

#### **FOGGIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 57 - AUGUST 19, 1943**

Forty-two aircraft dropped 504, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Electric Sub Station and Marshalling Yards. The bombing was reported as successful. The target was well covered with large explosions seen at the transformer station. Smoke and dust covered the target area.

Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, accurate to altitude and deflection resulting in fatal facial injuries to Sgt. Buster Andeel, 20th Squadron and slight injuries to the following: From the 20th Squadron were 1st Lt. D. S. Hornbeck, S/Sgt. F. G. Thometz, and S/Sgt. P. A. Simmons. Slightly wounded from the 49th Squadron were S/Sgt. W. E. Dempsey, T/Sgt. F. Gibson, and S/Sgt. W. H. Plunkett. Slightly wounded from the 96th Squadron was 2nd Lt. L. E. Dixon.

Thirty-five to 50 enemy aircraft attacked the formation firing machine guns, 20mm cannons and dropping aerial bombs. Five aircraft were lost to flak and enemy aircraft action. Those lost were #42-30502, 20th Squadron, piloted by 2nd Lt. John Bradley; #42-5837, piloted by 1st Lt. Bernard B. Pasero, 20th Squadron; #42-20467, piloted by 1st Lt. Richard E. Rozzelle, 20th Squadron; #42-29523, piloted by 2nd Lt. Herbert D. Thomas, 20th Squadron; and #42-29760, piloted by 1st Lt. John T. Carter, 49th Squadron.

Credited with destruction of Me-109s: S/Sgt. Thomas F. McCaffrey, S/Sgt. Joseph J. Mahan, T/Sgt. Clyde A. Dent, S/Sgt. Willis H. Plunkett, S/Sgt. Frank S. Konieczny, S/Sgt. Gene C. Anderson, T/Sgt. Robert J. Harrison, S/Sgt. John R. McGrane, with a joint claim with T/Sgt. Dennie L. Lauer, S/Sgt. Frank Culligan, S/Sgt. Charles DeVito with a joint claim with S/Sgt. John H. Clepper, S/Sgt. Robert W. Tunstall, S/Sgt. Maxon O. Case, T/Sgt. Fred L. Green, S/Sgt. Wallis L. Higgins, 2nd Lt. John J. Barron, S/Sgt. Francis A. Clark. S/Sgt. William K. Guilfoil was credited with destruction of a FW-190. S/Sgt. Captain B. Williams was credited with destruction of a Me-210. Sgt. Felix A. Dalessio was credited with possible destruction of a Me-109 and S/Sgt. Richard C. Latshaw was credited with possible destruction of a FW-190.

B-17s #42-29595, piloted by 1st Lt. A. L. Nelson and #42-229613, piloted by Captain C. H. Knaggs, made an emergency landing at Bocco Di Falco, Airdrome, Palermo, Sicily due to injuries to crewmen on both ships.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29760 - 49TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. John T. Carter, 0-793394, P.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Robert H. Quesnal, 0-738025, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt. William J. Galligan, 0-797116, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Charles A. Jacobson, 0-734700, B.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Michael R. Tegge, 35326779, U/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt. David F. Shea, 31128439, L/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Harry R. Swartwood, 15103235, R/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Russell (NMI) Hayes, 39828075, L/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Emmitt L. Adams, 18037333, T/G.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Walter G. Frei, 19127334, R/O.	(POW)

This A/C was reported to have been last seen about 30 miles from the Italian coast with the No. 3 engine on fire and descending rapidly. Seven chutes were reportedly seen opening before crashing in the water.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-30502 - 20TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. John (NMI) Bradley, 0-730356, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. James D. McPhee, 0-743192, CP.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Robert E. Lee, 0-801137, N.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. William A. Peters, 0-735339, B.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Albert S. Kirby, 33093704, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Eugene P. O'Brien, 37374817, L/T.	(KIA)
Sgt. John T. Westmorland, 38208443, R/W.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. James J. Bradley, 12095706, L/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Thomas G. Hausler, 12149119, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Maynard T. Rogers, 37361638, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of T/Sgt. James J. Bradley, March 13, 1944, after liberation: "My ship was hit by flak and attacked by enemy fighters. I was hit in the knee by 20mm cannon fire and went to the radio room and saw the radio operator on the floor. The ball turret gunner had fired a few bursts and then stopped firing. I also saw the right waist gunner go down. I then bailed out at 13,000 feet. The plane was badly shot up but the engines were still running. The pilot and co-pilot had been shot and the plane was out of control. I was the only one of the crew that left the ship. The others went down with it.

"The Italians told me that the ship had burst into flames upon striking the ground. I believe that the Italians had a list of the crew casualties as I was shown a list containing the names of the two crew members that I recognized, the radio operator, T/Sgt. Maynard T. Rogers, and the belly gunner, S/Sgt. Albert S. Kirby.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29523 - "PRECIOUS" - 20TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. Herbert D. Thomas, 0-729921, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Herbert J. Schachsneider, 0-742939, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt. John E. Eberle, 0-797228, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Jack C. Green, 0-735864, B.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Stanley J. Mikula, 37316204, U/T.	(KIA)
Sgt. Robert I. Beasley, 18054330, L/T.	(KIA)
Sgt. William E. Brousseau, 11964008, R/W.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Eph F. King, Jr., 18089206, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. John J. Hopkins, 12037861, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Thomas W. Wilson, 16051666, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of T/Sgt. James C. Monroe, U/TG, on B-17 #403, after the mission: "Approximately five miles off Licosa Point, a Ma-202 came in between 8 and 9 o'clock and took up the same course as #523. It was then that I observed the E/A drop aerial bombs. He was no nearer than 40 feet above #523. It looked as if the cockpit of the E/A was directly over the wing of the bomber. The length of time that he remained above #523 was probably a minute, during which he dropped between 12 and 15 aerial bombs. The bombs looked like they were about the same size as our 20-lb. frag bombs, perhaps a little larger, and they exploded with a red flash with white smoke. Aerial bombs looked like they were dropping in trail, with approximately 10 to 15 feet between bombs. Since bombs were seen to drop on both sides of the A/C, it looked like the bombs were carried in racks attached to the A/C's wings.

"The upper turret gunner was busy firing at an E/A coming in at 6 o'clock and evidently didn't notice the E/A above him. The reason I didn't fire on the E/A was due to the fact that it was so close to #523 that I was afraid of hitting #523.

"Almost instantly #523 started to slip out of the formation and when it reached a point of approximately 15 miles off Licosa Point, it started to circle and dive. At that time the crew began to bail out. I counted nine chutes open. The A/C struck the water at approximately the same location as the crew.

"We were flying at 12,000 feet. I saw an E/A go down, circle the crew in the water and then pull away. I did not see any E/A fire at the men as they were floating down."

Statement of 2nd Lt. John E. Eberle after liberation: "We left the formation near Naples, Italy. I bailed out and am unable to remember clearly how many other members bailed out. One, S/Sgt. Stanley Mikula, bailed out over water with 20mm fragment wounds in his head. The other man, Lt. Schachsneider, was captured and later liberated along with myself. I never saw nor heard from any other member of the crew after I bailed out."

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-20467 - "BIG JEFF" - 20TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Richard E. Rozzelle, 0-661969, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Robert G. Kingsbury, 0-737697, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Alexander G. Mayberry, 0-798842, N.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Carmel F. Parsons, 0-732964, B.	(KIA)

T/Sgt.	Sebastian S. Hernandez, 38143402, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Robert E. Woods, 12162792, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	John E. Adams, 31159087, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	William E. Groot, 31190291, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Arthur P. Panini, 12127162, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt.	Earl H. Bjorklund, 31144713, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of Sgt. Bill Shuping, U/TG on B-17 #595, after the mission: "When I first noticed #467 on fire, it was coming from the underside of No. 3 engine, and it appeared to be a supercharger. The flames appeared to spread to the fuselage. Shortly after that, it veered to the left about 10 degrees and then straightened out. Then it peeled off on a long, gliding bank, then I counted five parachutes coming out. Then the plane fell off on a long diving bank. There were two enemy fighters followed it down for two or three minutes but they did not fire. I saw it hit the water with a big splash, skip, burst into flames. Seemed to smoke for five to ten minutes and sink."

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-5837 - "C-BATT" - 20TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt.	Bernard B. Pasero, 0-729363, P.	(POW) *
2nd Lt.	Donald H. Porter, 0-675282, CP.	(POW)
1st Lt.	Kemp F. Martin, 0-411265, N.	(POW) *
1st Lt.	Kelly H. Erwin, 0-727627, B.	(KIA)
T/Sgt.	Robert H. Eaton, 19059340, U/T.	(POW)
Sgt.	James J. Herzing, 31375241, L/T.	(POW)
Sgt.	Charles M. Stewart, 33937720, R/W.	(DED) **
S/Sgt.	Edgar N. MacDonald, 12088301, L/W.	(POW) ***
Sgt.	Raymond J. Farrell, 19059551, T/G.	(POW)
Sgt.	Harold O. Lee, 18061417, R/O.	(POW)
*	Escaped	
**	Died of wounds in enemy hospital	
***	Rescued by American Forces while in Italian Hospital	

Statement of 1st Lt. Bernard B. Pasero after escaping and return to Allied control: "It was about 1200 hours when we lost two engines over the target and fell behind the formation. All the crew bailed out.

"Lt. Kelly Erwin, Bombardier, was killed instantly upon impact with the ground due to either failure or malfunction of his backpack parachute. Information was given to me by Italian police, who informed me that Lt. Erwin was given a Catholic burial near Frigento or Avellino, Italy. The day following the accident, Lt. Erwin's steel helmet was taken to the jail where all the survivors, except Sgt. Neil MacDonald, were being held. Italian police asked me to examine the parachute and other personal equipment that had been worn by the crew in order to identify Lt. Erwin's equipment.

"The steel helmet worn by Lt. Erwin was not dented nor mis-shaped in any way that indicated that the parachute did fail to break the fall. Witnesses informed members of my crew that the parachute sort of oscillated while descending.

"As I landed about 30 miles from the place the other crew members landed, I did not see Sgt. Stewart. However, after talking to other crew members, that did talk to Sgt. Stewart on the day of the accident, the following should be a fair sequence of events.

"When we were attacked by the fighters, Sgt. Stewart was badly hit below the knees. Sgt. Stewart was thrown forward against the ball turret. Shortly after that, our elevator controls were



severed and I rang the abandon aircraft alarm due to the fact that the interphone had been put out of commission by gunfire. Sgt. MacDonald had been hit in both legs by machine gun fire at this time, but managed to assist Sgt. Stewart to the main exit.

"After reaching the ground, Sgt. Stewart was taken to a civilian doctor who informed Sgt. MacDonald that Sgt. Stewart's leg had to be amputated and that everything had been done to save his life, but he had passed away that morning. Sgt. MacDonald had a talk with Sgt. Stewart shortly before he passed away.

"From the information supplied by Sgt. MacDonald and other crew members, I believe Sgt. Stewart died from loss of blood while descending in his parachute.

"All the crew members, but the two deceased, have been returned to the United States after having spent from November 43 to VE day in German prisons, except Captain Martin (escaped and returned with me), and Sgt. Neil MacDonald who was in a civilian hospital near Salerno and was rescued by our ground forces early after the landings.

"While in custody, I met Sgt. James J. Bradley who was the lone survivor of Lt. Bradley's crew. He informed me that they left my wing shortly after leaving the target and were hit badly by fighters when the aircraft was set on fire. He bailed out before any signal, or alarm, was given by the pilot. He stated that the aircraft was burning badly and had been damaged by anti-aircraft fire. At the time I met Sgt. Bradley, he was suffering from injuries caused by the accident. If I recall correctly, he suffered a broken leg upon impact with the ground."

S/Sgt. Neil MacDonald, L/W on the crew of Lt. Bernard Pasero: April 2, 1992. "Your letter immediately brought back memories of the war years, and the times, both good and bad, with the 2nd Bomb Group. I can recall many of the missions as if they were yesterday.

"I had been one of the original crew members on the crew of Lt. Holger A. Selling. I trained with him and the others at Ephrata, Great Falls, Mt. Home, and other bases in the Northwest. After several combat sorties with Lt. Selling, I was transferred to Captain Ben Pasero's when he became commander of "C-Batt" and formed his own crew. If my memory serves me correctly, we were based at Massicutt, Tunisia, North Africa. I can't recall how many missions I had with Lt. Selling.

"August 19, 1943 was my 36th combat mission and I was flying with Captain Pasero on B-17 #42-5837. We were the lead aircraft of the second element of the 20th Squadron.

"It was the roughest bomb run, that I can recall, of all my missions. The flak was thick and the sky black with puffs of smoke from the exploding ack-ack. I can still hear the oomph-oomph of the flak as it exploded near us. This day, the 2nd Bomb Group was really getting hit, and very hard! It was moments after "bombs away" that our B-17 took a close hit, after which everything started to happen! No. 2 engine failed and then No. 4 engine failed. I recall a plane off to our right going down in flames. We began to lose formation fast because of the loss of No. 2 and No. 4 engines.

"As we left the formation and lost altitude, the fighters jumped us. Me-109s were all around like flies on honey. Taking hits from fighters, we lost No. 3 engine. This was it!

"The alarm bell sounded and everyone abandoned ship. Everyone got out of the plane but we lost two brave crewmen from the engagement. The parachute of Lt. Kelly Erwin, our Bombardier, did not open, and Sgt. Charles Stewart died from leg wounds. He survived until he reached the hospital and died while on the operating table.

"Let's go back to the moments after the Me-109s jumped us. I was flying waist gunner. The sky was full of "Bandits," Me-109s everywhere, coming at us from all angles. I could hear the bullets hitting all around us. I was hit in the right shoulder and fell to the floor of the plane. I got up and continued to fire my 50 caliber. At the same time, the other waist gunner and myself were hit in the legs.

I took a hit in my heel and also a bad hit in my right leg, just above the ankle. Sgt. Stewart's leg was shot off but hanging by flesh only. He somehow managed to bail out of the plane okay.

"Upon reaching the ground, I was surrounded by many civilians who fought over my parachute and flight boots. After arriving at the hospital, I was taken care of and my wounds cleaned and dressed. I remained in the hospital approximately 37 days and was liberated by the 45th Infantry Division when they liberated the town.

"After many weeks in evacuation hospitals, I finally arrived back at the 2nd Bomb Group and was assigned orders to go back to the States. While waiting for my orders to be cut, I learned that my Dad was looking for me.

"He was a Merchant Marine First Officer, decided to go over and look for me, and managed to ship on a boat for the Mediterranean area. Before he left, he received a telegram from my Mother that I had been taken a POW.

He decided that it was too late to stay home, so he sailed. The destination of the ship was Italy and when he landed, tried to locate the Group I had been in. The Red Cross said the Group had moved back to Africa. Actually, some of the Group was in Foggia but most of the ground forces were still in North Africa. My Dad went to North Africa and met a Captain who was in the 96th Squadron. The Captain returned to Italy, told me of my Dad, and I obtained permission to go to North Africa. Upon arriving there, I could not find my Dad but found the Captain who knew where my Dad was.

"We went to Naval Intelligence and found the location of the ship, anchored just off-shore. We received permission to go aboard. The Captain called my Father and said he had someone to visit him. "When Neil came up," said Chief MacDonald, "I would have fallen overboard if there hadn't been someone behind me." It was then he found that I had been seriously wounded but well enough to leave the hospital.

"I stayed aboard that night, the Air Force Captain, 96th Squadron Executive Officer, had orders cut so I could accompany my Father home on the freighter without going back to my unit. My combat days were over and I would have been sent home later anyway."

1st Lt. Robert G. Kingsbury was a first pilot assigned to the 20th Squadron. The loss of his aircraft in the Mediterranean was first published in 1953. April 23, 1994. "In May 1943, Rapid City, South Dakota, they handed me the keys to a stalwart B-17, assigned me a crew and we began intensive training. By July 1943, the crew was a solid precision team. B-17 #0467 was assigned to me in Rapid City and we promptly named her "BIG JEFF." It had a grand total of 11 hours on it. We were notified we were to ferry her to England.

"On the 10-hour flight from Newfoundland to Ayr, Scotland, Alexander Mayberry, our good natured but deadly serious navigator from Pittsburgh, proved his stuff. "BIG JEFF," roared out of Gander in a flight of 50, B-17s and B-24s, a sight I will never forget! Six of these ten hours we fought through a pea soup fog but Mayberry got us there, and guided us blind onto the Ayr airstrip. One of those B-17s never made it.

"We weren't in Scotland very long. Eight days later we flew to Casablanca and then on to a base near Tunis, a small town called Massicault. We were assigned to the 20th Bomb Squadron. The crew worked like beavers under the punishing North African sun, stripping the de-icers and installing new engines, preparing "BIG JEFF" for combat.

"Our damned third mission was a mess from beginning to end. The briefing officer informed us that intelligence estimated that 350-400 twin engine and single engine fighters were in the area now that Italy was in German hands. They were concentrated at air strips around Foggia and Salerno. That was bad enough but then the brass came up with another brainstorm. The P-38s assigned to cover us were

to escort us to the IP and then leave us and do low level strafing of the airfields. Our escort was outnumbered 20 to 1 as it was. The officer informed us we would have to get home as best we could.

"At dawn we swallowed a hurried breakfast, at 4 A.M., had our last minute briefing and were airborne. "BIG Jeff" was in the first wave, flying in the fourth position behind the leader in our six-bomber flight. The P-38s were with us until the IP and then took off to their strafing. We reached the target, dropped our bombs smack on the power station and started home without escort.

"Suddenly all hell broke loose. We spotted a swarm of black dots coming up from the Salerno area. They spread out as they approached, six, eight, a dozen German fighters to a bomber. They knocked us down like ducks in a shooting gallery. It was murder plain and simple!

"BIG JEFF" never had a chance. No other B-17 could have withstood the deadly cannon fire from those Me-109s and rocket throwing Ju-88s. Smoke filled the cockpit and behind me, 20mm shrapnel shredded through the bomb bay. Farther aft, the crew clung to their 50s, slamming steel at the fighters. Over the intercom, Panini, our tail gunner screamed, "I got one, I got one."

"Suddenly No. 1 engine caught fire. I glanced at the control panel and saw the rpm indicator slam over to "danger." The oil lines had severed and the prop was running wild. Tried feathering the engine but it wouldn't stop. An instant later we lost No. 2 engine. The crazy props were tearing the engines and mounts to pieces. All at once, we took a rocket hit amidship.

"There was a cry again from Panini, "Got another, I got ----." The words trailed off ominously. I called but got no answer, his guns were silent. Still our remaining 50s thundered. But I knew it was hopeless. "This is it," I said to myself, "This is the end and only my third mission."

"I pressed the alarm button three times, "abandon ship" and set her on automatic pilot. I broke radio silence, "This is No. 4, flight leader, am going down." Even as I spoke, I saw him, a mile ahead and a thousand feet above us, heel over and plummet into the void.

"The next instant I was yanking the forward escape hatch open and counting as Al Mayberry stepped through the hatch, then T/Sgt. Sabastian Hernandez, the finest crew chief a captain ever had. He forced a grin and said, "See you Captain." He never did. Parsons was the next, he waved a silent good-bye and dropped from sight. Then Rozzelle, new to us on the mission. They were all to die before sunset.

"Only I remained in the forward compartment. "BIG JEFF" was in a glide. Guns continued to bark intermittently from the rear and I hoped to God the others were dropping through the rear escape hatch.

"Tears streamed from my face, some from the acrid smoke that filled the cabin, some from my heart. I checked my gear; my escape kit strapped to my back, the oxygen mask strung to a bail-out bottle and my chute. I stepped into the void, counted to ten and pulled the ripcord. There was a rib-cracking jolt as the chute billowed. I counted 15, perhaps 18 chutes, from the three B-17s ditched from our flight of six. To the south the battle was still in full fury.

"I strained to pick out the other chutes, spot Parsons, Mayberry and others. They had drifted far to the south and were merely specks against the cloudless sky. As I hung there, watching the water coming up, I saw "BIG JEFF" gliding in tightening circles. She circled three times over the water, then a hundred feet above the water, she flipped over on her back and exploded. "BIG JEFF" simply disintegrated.

"Suddenly a couple of homecoming Me-109s headed my way. I thought they were going to shoot me. I clutched my shroud lines and tried to maneuver out of the way. In a second they were past, not 50 feet from me, so close that I could see one of the pilots, a sarcastic grin on his face.

"A thousand feet above the water, I remembered my GI shoes. I doubled over, removed one and then the other, tied the laces, hung them around my neck. A second later I was in the water. I released my harness, abandoned my chute, inflated my Mae West. Hitting the water, I tried to get my bearings.

To the east rose the mountains of Italy, perhaps 20 miles away. As I lifted my arm to swim, I glanced at my waterproof watch. It was 12:50.

"As I swam, my waterlogged shoes nearly strangled me. I slipped them from my neck and released them. I wiggled out of my flight pants, keeping only my undershorts and waterproof escape kit, with its knife, candy bars and matches with a flare. Then I began swimming.

"I headed shoreward, hoping to avoid capture, figuring to beach and make my way to a rendezvous where, the briefing officer announced, a PT boat would attempt to pick up survivors. Every few minutes, during those first few hours, I stopped and yelled. I screamed until seawater swelled my throat shut, until I became dizzy and nauseous. Never once was there an answer.

"I pressed forward, forcing one arm ahead of the other. It seemed I had swum for hours but when I looked at my watch, it was only mid-afternoon, and the shore appeared no closer. The merciless sun burned my face and shoulders black, until they were ringed with blisters. Only once did I rest. The shore was there somewhere and I knew I had to make it or die in the attempt. That one rest cost me my food supply. Just as I tore open my escape kit, a wave drenched it and ruined the candy, matches and flare.

"As the night settled I was still going. Swimming had become automatic. I was numb, cold, almost hysterical, and half conscious. I had been in the water eight hours, wanted to sleep, wanted to sink and be done with it. Every time I dozed, I sank like a rock. All night long a strange phosphorescence played around me. Off in the distance I occasionally heard a slap, as some huge fish surfaced.

"Sometime during the night a Very pistol flared on the horizon. A submarine I thought. Perhaps one of ours searching for survivors. Most likely it was German. At that moment I would have welcomed capture. The sub, if that was what it was, was miles away.

"Dawn found me still swimming. It had been 18 hours since my ditching. Suddenly I saw a small sail on the horizon. My heart pounding, spirit rising, I stopped and shouted. I churned the water, bolt upright, paddled in a circle. Then I saw the sail, the protruding dorsal fin of a giant shark! The fin crested fully three feet above the water, or so it seemed, and not more than a hundred feet away.

"Terrified, I reached for my escape gear and rummaged for the jackknife. I opened the biggest blade, clutched the knife and waited. Nothing happened. The monster shark had halted too. Frantically, the knife clutched between my teeth, I struck out for shore. The shark followed, no closer, no more distant than before. Then as I looked up from a stroke, there appeared two sails! Another shark had joined the first. Terrified, I clutched the knife harder. Just then a wave smacked me full in the face. My arm slipped, twisted and the knife bored into my thigh. It was a superficial wound but blood was coloring the water. Horrified, I recalled stories about how blood maddened the smallest sharks to frenzied killers. I tried to stop the blood but it continued flowing. The sharks took no heed, following in perfect unison. When I stopped, they stopped. What was a period of about 20 minutes seemed like a lifetime. Suddenly they were gone.

"Toward noon, I heard the drone of an airplane. I stopped, treaded water, bobbed up and down, trying to hold myself as high out of the water as possible. A mile to the south, and not more than 20 feet above the waves, hovered a huge, three-engine seaplane. It was heading in my direction. I waved, screamed, vaulting and bobbing against the water. The plane was so close that I could see the insignia, the Britisher's huge bulls eye. With a shattering roar, the plane passed directly over me. Its slipstream lashed up waves, choking my frenzied shouting. Sick at heart and exhausted, I cried piteously. My last hope was a distant drone.

"Now it was 3 P.M., 27 hours since I abandoned "BIG JEFF." My heart pounded like a clubbed fist, my legs refused to move. I kept stroking feebly. I was slowly dying of exhaustion. Every



immersion of my face in the brine was a searing hurt where the blisters were festered and inflamed. My eyes were nearly frozen shut, but the shore loomed, now larger and blacker against the sea.

"Toward dusk, now 7 P.M. by my watch, I made out lights through the hazy mist. I knew I could go no farther. My feet, like concrete posts, pulled me down. My arms were dead things, and weak as rubber. Suddenly my feet sank and I went under. And then I touched something hard, slippery and solid. I couldn't believe it, not land, solid ground after 31 hours.

"Half an hour later I staggered ashore. I don't know what happened after that. When I came to, I was in an Italian fisherman's house, a great blur of a woman was forcing egg nogs down my swollen throat. I told them I was an American, they understood, and the crowded room echoed with friendliness.

"The joy was short lived. Minutes later an Italian soldier burst into the room and I was taken prisoner, but I was alive! I was taken to an Italian hospital and treated. Upon release, I was taken prisoner of the Germans and spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft III, 80 miles southwest of Berlin.

"But, I will never forget those 31 terrible hours in the Mediterranean."

#### **AVERSA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 58 - AUGUST 21, 1943**

Thirty-three aircraft dropped 396, 500-lb. GP bombs on Marshalling Yards and Installations at Aversa. Hits on Target #1 were at the north end of the Marshalling Yards along tracks and on stores depot, starting two fires. About five A/C placed direct hits in Marshalling Yards, target #1A. About half the Group overran the target, some dropping their bombs on the outskirts of Naples. Flak at Target #1 was heavy, slight to moderate, good altitude, poor deflection. There was slight damage to some A/C but no injuries.

#### **FOGGIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 59 - AUGUST 25, 1943**

Thirty-four aircraft dropped 3,169, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs and 10, 500-lb. delayed action bombs on the No. 7 Satellite Airfield at Foggia. The target was fairly well covered. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, good altitude, poor deflection. Four B-17s were slightly damaged by flak. Four to six E/A attacked the formation. No losses, no injuries. One Me-109 was destroyed, a joint claim going to S/Sgt. George P. Durkee and S/Sgt. Clayton H. Kahler, 96th Squadron.

#### **CAPUA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 60 - AUGUST 26, 1943**

Brig. General Atkinson reported at briefing that a "Hostile P-38" had shot down one of our bombers, 80 miles at sea. Not far from the 2nd Bomb Group field.

Nineteen aircraft dropped 238, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Airdrome hangars at Capua. The north third of the hangars were well covered with several fires observed. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, poor deflection and altitude. No injuries, no losses.

Six to 12 E/A made one pass at the formation. No injuries, no losses, no claims. General Atkinson flew the mission.

#### **SALMONA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 61 - AUGUST 27, 1943**

Seventeen aircraft dropped 51 tons of 500-lb. GP bombs on Railroad Installations at Salmona. Direct hits were made on stores buildings, emitting black smoke. Several B-17s were slightly damaged. S/Sgt. Paul A. Smiley and S/Sgt. Robert T. Dennis, 96th Squadron, were slightly wounded.

A/C #42-30456, piloted by Captain William P. Koch, 96th Squadron, was hit by flak over Anzio and went down.

**MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-30456 - "CACTUS CLIPPER" - 96TH SQUADRON**  
Captain William P. Koch, 0-403376, P. (KIA)



2nd Lt. Charles A. Shuck, 0-733738, CP.	(POW)
Captain Frank W. Upton, 0-419276, N.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Walter H. Henderson, 0-728482, B.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. James F. Conway, 12044126, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Reed T. Chism, 39391170, L/T.	(KIA)
Sgt. Felix A. Dalessio, 32352692, R/W.	(KIA)
Sgt. James M. McDonald, 31126652, L/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Edgar M. Stuart, 16065363, T/G.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Raymond E. Ressler, 12044126, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of S/Sgt. Andrew T. McMurdo, L/TG, after the mission: "We were flying in a tight formation and had just crossed the coast of Italy, directly over the town of Anzio when I saw A/C #456, that had been flying on our left wing, pass in front of our aircraft and slightly below us. I noticed that their left wing was off and I saw the shadow of the wing pass over our left wing. While I was looking at #456, I saw a terrific explosion in the vicinity of the radio room and debris flew toward our rear. Then the fuselage folded like a knife near the position of the ball turret. After the wreckage had dropped, what I judge to be approximately 5,000 feet, I saw one parachute open, then when it fell another 5,000 feet, I saw one more parachute open out. The wing that was knocked off fell in the ocean at approximately 0-2 in target chart No. 138-NA and the other wreckage struck the ground at approximately N-0-35 and the bombs exploded. The man in the first parachute drifted out to sea. The second chute landed on the beach."

S/Sgt. Robert T. Dennis was a member of the 96th Squadron on the crew of Major Marion F. Caruthers. April 6, 1991: "I joined the outfit at Geiger Field, Washington, and was assigned to the crew of Lt. Gathercole and trained with him at Ephrata and Glasgow. Captain Caruthers (later Major) took over the crew and flew to Kearney, Nebraska, and then by train to Salina, Kansas, where we picked up A/C #42-5776. We named it "EAGER BEAVER." The crew was sorry to lose Lt. Gathercole but Captain Caruthers was a fine pilot with nerves of steel.

"We flew our first mission from Chateau Dun. I flew my 50 missions, 48 of them in "EAGER BEAVER" and two in "CACTUS CLIPPER." It was later crashed by Lt. Train.

"I believe we bombed Foggia, Italy three times as Goering had a squadron of his "Yellow Nose" FW-190 pilots stationed there and they were giving us trouble. It was decided to knock them out. We hit them one time with 20-lb. frag bombs.

"The day I was wounded in the left arm, August 27, 1943, we had heavy flak and fighters. I got credit for a FW-190. I also shot down an Italian fighter but didn't get it confirmed. I wasn't wounded bad. Dr. Lavine put on some sulfa powder, bandaged it and I flew the next day.

"S/Sgt. Norman Ferree, our tail gunner, was killed on July 4, 1943, on the Group's 33rd mission which was to Catania, Sicily. I finished my 50th mission on September 10, 1943, and returned to the States in October, 1943. I was awarded the Air Medal with 10 clusters and four battle stars to my European Campaign Medal."

"I stayed in the Air Force, retiring in September, 1964 as a Master Sergeant. I had 9,000 hours as a Flight Engineer, 345 hours in the Korean War."

1st Lt. Edmund A. J. Mroz was a member of the 96th Squadron and Navigator on B-17 #42-29639, piloted by Captain Douglas T. Metcalf. March 26, 1991: "SKYWORM" was the plane I signed-up for at Kearney, Nebraska. Early in April, 1944, I learned it had been shot down on its 110th mission over Steyr, Austria, the day that the 49th Squadron lost its entire Squadron and the 96th lost five of its

aircraft. Flight officer Levchak, the Aircraft Commander of one of our first replacement crews, informed me of that in the dining car of a train in the Midwest. He told me that the day before, he had visited the mother of Lt. Charles Shuck in Louisville, Kentucky. She had just received a letter, that day, from her son, from a POW camp. He informed her that the Italians had fished him out of the Mediterranean as the sole survivor in the B-17 he was shot down in, with two broken legs.

"That had to be a miracle! Major "Buck" Caruthers was leading the 2nd Bomb Group that day in #496, "DINA-MITE," the fourth of four Groups briefed to bomb a munitions factory at Salmona, in central Italy. That happened to be Friday, 27 August 1943. I happened to be his lead Navigator that day. My head was at the driftmeter, getting a drift reading as we crossed the shoreline at Anzio. We were hit by flak at that instant, and Captain "Willie" Koch's B-17, flying in the deputy lead position, on our right wing, was reported to have had his left wing blown off. We were at 22,000 feet altitude. That is why I call Chuck Shuck's survival a miracle.!

"Captain Metcalf, "SKYWORM'S" Airplane Commander and "B" Flight Leader, was sent back to the USA having completed 40 missions, my 41st, on Friday, 6 August 1943, over Messina, Sicily, as the leader of the 96th Squadron formation.

"On Monday, 9 August 1943, "SKYWORM" returned to Messina with General James Doolittle and the freshly appointed Major Caruthers in the pilot's seats, on my 42nd mission, to hit the Germans trying to escape from Sicily to the toe of Italy.

"I happened to be the very first member of the 2nd Bomb Group, in World War II, to have completed 50 bombing missions on Sunday, 5 September 1943. The target was the Viterbo Airfield, northeast of Rome. The target was covered by clouds, as was the alternate target. The other squadrons were able to bomb the Viterbo Airfield through the clouds. The 96th Squadron bombed Civitavecchia, which I found through a break in the clouds. We had blown an arsenal 15,000 feet in the air on 14 May 1943. That evening, I took over as 96th Duty Officer, when we heard the Germans come over and we watched the fireworks display over Bizerte on the horizon.

"On the train that I ran into F/O Levchak, I was returning to Peyote, Texas, after having attended the USAAF Intelligence School at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. After having first integrated freshly graduated navigators into 56 replacement crews each six weeks, then I was given the job of coordinating flying training with ground school, first with B-17 replacement crews and then B-29 replacement crews, destined for the Far East.

"After having responded to a TWX from General H. H. Arnold for intelligence officers having a knowledge of French or German, willing to take hazardous missions alone or in small company, I was accepted and transferred to Washington, D.C., in late August 1944, into the U.S. Office of Strategic Services. There I attended two schools and was shipped aboard the H.M.S. Aquitania to Greenock, Scotland. I was short stopped in London in the SI Branch of OSS as the Technical Reports Officer dealing with German secret weapons developments. I stayed there until 8 June 1945, when I was transferred to Wiesbaden-Biebrich, Germany.

"The last Sunday of the month, at breakfast in the mess hall at Biebrich, I was tapped on the shoulder by Major Richard F. Kuhn, formerly the 96th Squadron flight surgeon. That morning, Doc Kuhn and I were sent by G-2 of the 12th Army Group, General Sibert, to East Germany, to a place where the Soviets were to take over the next day, to move out about a million dollars worth of German Naval Research equipment that Doc Kuhn learned about while on a medical intelligence trip with former Luftwaffe physicians.

"Doc and I ended up spending about a week together, with the Doc acting as Commanding Officer of the US 102nd Division, and I, acting as his Chief of Staff. The following Sunday, I tangled with a Lt. Col., a West Pointer, in Kassal. The following day, I heard an upper classman at West Point,

of that Lt. Col. chew him out for half an hour over the telephone, thinking he would be busted down to his permanent rank of Second Lieutenant.

"A couple of days later, at ten hours notice, I was kicked out of Germany, persona non grata, at Wiesbaden-Bierbich. Three weeks later, in London, I learned that I had to return to Germany to face a court-martial. Lt. Col. Bowman of OSS/London arranged my return to Germany via Paris, where I spent the weekend. The day I returned to Germany, I was put in a hotel in Wiesbaden. That night I heard shooting downstairs, pulled on my trousers, took my Colt 32 out of my shoulder holster, and was prepared to shoot werewolves. It was VJ Day!

"The paper work caught up with me finally in a day or two. That Col. in Kassal had his adjutant prefer charges against me after I had chewed out the Lt. Col. in his officers club in front of his subordinate officers. I was still only a Captain. As I returned to Kassal with the investigating officer to confront the Lt. Col., Major Kuhn was flown from Caserta to Wiesbaden to convince me that I should agree to take punishment under the 104th Articles of War, in place of trial by court-martial.

"Because I figured that it would take about half a year before the court-martial would take place and the war was already over, I took the choice, and have kicked myself in the pants ever since. A General Brown, who had taken over for General Eisenhower as the Commanding General of the US Forces in the European Theater as he was visiting the States, wrote me that all was forgiven in view of my exemplary record, but to remember in the future I should have first obeyed a superior officer's order, and then have questioned it.

"Ironies of Fate. "Willie" Koch may well have saved my life, before sun-up, on the day he was killed. He blew the head off a snake with his 45, which I was about to step on, as I was talking to someone to the right of me as we were walking to the briefing tent.

"George Olds was the regular Bombardier on "Willie" Koch's crew and was recovering from an appendectomy. Doc Kuhn sent George from the "60-50" Club to the station hospital the evening of 21 August 1943 to have his appendix out. Lt. Walter Henderson took George's place with Captain Koch's crew. He had been Bill Propper's Bombardier. Doc Kuhn thus saved George's life twice. First by diagnosing his appendicitis, then hospitalizing him."

#### **TERNI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 62 - AUGUST 28, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 228, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Terni. The target was well covered with some bombs landing in the town area adjacent to the Marshalling Yards. Flak was heavy, moderate, good altitude, poor deflection. One B-17 was slightly damaged. No injuries, no losses.

#### **VITERBO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 63 - AUGUST 30, 1943**

Fifteen aircraft dropped 2,160, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Landing Ground at Viterbo. The results were described as "almost picture perfect" with fires observed to start in A/C area. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, fair to good altitude, good deflection. Ten to 20 E/A attacked the formation, some dropping aerial bombs. Ten A/C were slightly damaged by flak and one severely damaged by flak. No injuries, no losses.

S/Sgt. George L. Ross, L/TG, was credited with downing an Me-109.

#### **PISA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 64 - AUGUST 31, 1943**

Thirty-eight aircraft dropped 456, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Reggio Aircraft Factory at Pisa. The target area was well covered with many direct hits and damaging near misses. Flak was heavy, slight, poor to altitude and deflection. B-17s #109 and #670 landed in Sicily. Two E/A attacked these planes.

S/Sgt. John Kennedy, LWG on #109, was credited with the destruction of a Re-2001. No injuries, no losses.

#### **TRENTO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 65 - SEPTEMBER 2, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 152, 500-lb. bombs on a Highway Bridge at Trento. The target area was well covered, direct hits observed on highway. Other direct hits on adjoining bridge over River Aidge. Both bridges down. Flak was heavy, slight, fair to altitude and deflection. Two B-17s were slightly damaged by flak. Four to six E/A attacked the formation. No injuries, no losses.

#### **TERRACINA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 66 - SEPTEMBER 4, 1943**

The assigned target was Capua, Italy. Due to cloud coverage over the primary target, nineteen aircraft dropped 304, 500-lb. GP bombs on the town of Terracina and Landing Ground, three miles west of town. Bombing was described as "accurate hits" on target. There was no flak. Six Me-109s were seen but did not attack. No injuries, no losses.

#### **VITERBO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 67 - SEPTEMBER 5, 1943**

Thirty-four aircraft got over the target but because of heavy cloud cover, only 12 aircraft dropped 95, 500-lb. GP bombs on the target with unobserved results. Five aircraft dropped 50, 500-lb. GP bombs on the town of Civitavecchia with all bombs observed to hit in the city. Seventeen planes did not bomb.

Flak at Viterbo was heavy, slight, fair to good altitude and deflection. Two B-17s were slightly damaged. Flak at Civitavecchia was heavy, slight, good altitude, poor deflection. Two E/A made one pass at the formation. No injuries, no losses.

#### **VILLA LITERNO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 68 - SEPTEMBER 6, 1943**

The assigned target was the Landing Ground at Capodichino but a 10/10 cloud cover prevented the 28 aircraft from dropping their bombs. Nine aircraft found a hole in the clouds over the Villa Literno Marshalling Yards, 12 miles from Naples, and dropped 144, 300-lb. bombs that appeared to be directly on target. No flak, no injuries, no losses.

#### **FOGGIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 69 - SEPTEMBER 7, 1943**

Thirty-one aircraft dropped 4,464, 20-lb. fragmentation bombs on the Satellite #2 Airdrome at Foggia. The landing and disposal areas at the Landing Ground were well covered and it was considered a successful mission. Flak was heavy, intense, accurate to altitude and deflection. Fifteen B-17s were slightly damaged by flak. Seriously wounded by flak were S/Sgt. F. G. Thometz and S/Sgt. L. W. Shively. Slightly wounded by flak were Captain L. G. Abelhof, 2nd Lt. B. J. Lewis, and 2nd Lt. Francis Perrett.

Fifteen to 20 E/A attacked the formation, and fortress gunners' claims were: one each Me-109 to S/Sgt. John H. Clepper, L/W; S/Sgt. James D. Crowley, U/T; S/Sgt. Donald C. Hamann, U/T; S/Sgt. Joseph J. Mahan, T/G; S/Sgt. William D. Martin, T/G; S/Sgt. Troy E. Moore, R/W; and S/Sgt. Harold A. Thomas, L/T. S/Sgt. Joseph M. Roche, L/T, was credited with destruction of a FW-190. There were no B-17s lost.

#### **FRASCATI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 70 - SEPTEMBER 8, 1943**

Twenty-eight aircraft dropped 336, 500-lb. GP bombs on the town of Frascati. The target area was well covered and the whole town was smoking. Flak was heavy, intense, accurate to altitude and deflection. Eighteen B-17s were slightly damaged.



Fifteen to 20 E/A attacked the formation, and fortress gunners' claims were: one each Me-109 to T/Sgt. Stanley J. Austin, U/T; T/Sgt. Joseph A. Chilek, R/O; S/Sgt. Donald G. Flicek, L/T; S/Sgt. William K. Guilfoil, T/G; S/Sgt. Joseph R. Hunt, R/W; S/Sgt. Homer H. Hutcheson, L/T; 2nd Lt. Ottie B. Jackson, N; S/Sgt. Robert S. King, T/G; S/Sgt. Merton B. Latshaw, R/W; S/Sgt. Thomas F. Reich, T/G; S/Sgt. Willis I. Sheldon, L/W; and S/Sgt. Monroe O. Sheldon, T/G. S/Sgt. Robert G. Moody, T/G, was credited with a Re-2001 and S/Sgt. Merlin S. McCloud, T/G, was credited with a Ma-202. Slightly wounded were 2nd Lt. W. Kopra and S/Sgt. H. W. Eddleman of the 20th Squadron.

Today, General Eisenhower announced the surrender of Italy to the Allies.

#### **CANCELLO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 71 - SEPTEMBER 9, 1943**

This mission was to support the Allied landings at Salerno. Twenty-seven aircraft dropped 324, 500-lb. GP bombs on Highway Bridges at Cannello. There were near misses on Bridge #1, and direct hits on tracks to the south side. Bridge #2 received direct hits and Bridge 2A was thought to have received direct hits. No flak, no injuries, no losses.

#### **VINCHIATURE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 72 - SEPTEMBER 10, 1943**

Thirty-five aircraft, each with a bomb load of 12, 500-lb. GP bombs, were to bomb Bridges at Vinchiature. Due to a cloud cover over the target, 16 aircraft dropped 45 tons of bombs in the vicinity of Botono, nine miles west of the principal target. Several bridges had possible direct hits. One aircraft dropped its bombs on a bridge over the Tiber River. The bombs missed the bridge but fell on the highway to the north. Nineteen aircraft did not bomb. No flak, no injuries, no losses.

The 6626th Ordnance Section was formed. Up to this time, each squadron had its own ordnance section. The 6626th camp was set up a few hundred yards from the 429th bivouac area. In command was 1st Lt. Raymond Siegrist, and the section had a strength of four officers and 110 enlisted men.

#### **BENEVENTO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 73 - SEPTEMBER 12, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 228, 500-lb. GP bombs on Highway Bridges at Benevento in support of the ground troops. Targets were reported to be well covered with several direct hits observed. There was no flak at the target but at 5/8's of a mile from Capua, heavy, slight to moderate flak was encountered resulting in slight damage to five B-17s. There were no losses, no injuries, and no encounters with E/A.

#### **BATTAPAGLIA/EBOLI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 74 - SEPTEMBER 14, 1943**

The mission was to bomb Highway Intersections, Troop Concentrations and Bridges along the highway from the eastern edge of the city of Battapaglia to the west edge of Eboli. Germans were reported retreating in this area. Forty-one aircraft dropped 1,556, 100-lb. GP bombs with reports of success in these assigned areas. No flak, no losses.

#### **BATTAPAGLIA/EBOLI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 75 - SEPTEMBER 15, 1943**

The mission again was to bomb the Highway between Battapaglia and Eboli. Thirty-nine aircraft dropped 608, 300-lb. GP bombs on the target. The mission was judged successful with the area well covered. Flak was heavy, moderate, good altitude and poor deflection.

B-17 #449, piloted by Lt. Patrick Train, 96th Squadron, crashed landed 15 miles from base with no injuries to crew.

#### **CASERTA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 76 - SEPTEMBER 16, 1943**

Thirty-eight aircraft dropped 144, 250-lb. GP bombs and 448, 300-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Caserta. Strike photos showed the main rail line east of Rome/Aversa Junctions cut by direct hits. There was extensive damage to freight yards and rolling stock with five tank cars exploding, starting fires. There was no damage to the overpass but the south approach was cratered. No flak was encountered over the target but flak north of the Capua Airdrome was heavy, moderate to intense, good altitude and deflection.

Plane #133 made an emergency landing at Boco di Falco Airdrome. No injuries, no losses.

#### **VITERBO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 77 - SEPTEMBER 18, 1944**

Thirty-four aircraft dropped 108, 500-lb. incendiary bombs and 950, 100-lb. GP bombs on the Airdrome at Viterbo. The target area was well covered with several fires reported in dispersal area. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, good altitude, poor deflection. Two B-17s were slightly damaged. No injuries, no losses.

#### **BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 78 - SEPTEMBER 25, 1943**

Thirty-six aircraft dropped 432, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Bologna. The target area was well covered. No flak was encountered over the target but the Group received heavy, intense flak with good altitude, poor deflection over Pecembino, Italy.

B-17 #42-30109, piloted by Lt. Harry Abel, 49th Squadron, was forced to ditch in the Mediterranean off Bizerte. S/Sgt. James A. Jesse, Jr. received a compound fracture of his left leg during landing. All of the crew were rescued.

#### **BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 79 - SEPTEMBER 28, 1943**

Thirty-five aircraft took off, each with a bomb load of 12, 500-lb. GP bombs to bomb the Marshalling Yards at Bologna. A 10/10 cloud cover prevented bombing of the target. No flak, and no encounters with E/A.

#### **BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 80 - OCTOBER 1, 1943**

Sixteen aircraft equipped with Tokyo tanks, each with a bomb load of 10, 500-lb. GP bombs, took off to bomb the Messerschmitt Factory at Augsburg, Germany. Four A/C were early returns. Because of adverse weather over the Alps, the planes turned back 30 miles north of Verona, Italy. They then proceeded to Bologna and three aircraft dropped 30, 500-lb. GP bombs on Marshalling Yards in that city. Hits were observed on warehouses to the right of the Marshalling Yards. Five to seven E/A attacked the formation for approximately 15 minutes. No claims were made, no injuries, no losses.

#### **PISA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 81A - OCTOBER 4, 1943**

On the second mission of the day, twenty-two other aircraft dropped 246, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Northwest Marshalling Yards in Pisa. Sixty B-17s of the 2nd, 97th, 99th, and 301st Bomb Groups participated in this attack and dropped 146 tons of 300-lb. GP bombs and 300 tons of 500-lb. GP bombs on the target. Combined strike photos showed direct hits on rail lines, cutting the Spezia line; heavy hits in the Marshalling Yards proper; direct hits on 400 ft. warehouse; direct hits on industrial groups causing large fires and explosions; direct hit on train causing a tremendous explosion, which was believed to be a munitions train; and direct hits on highway to Spezia.

Flak was heavy, moderate, fair to good for altitude and deflection. No injuries, no losses.

## **BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 82 - OCTOBER 5, 1943**

Thirty-two aircraft dropped 382, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Western Section of the Marshalling Yards at Bologna. The target area was well covered with direct hits and a large explosion was observed. Flak was heavy, intense, good to deflection and altitude resulting in the loss of B-17 #42-29907, piloted by 2nd Lt. Fitzpatrick, 49th Squadron.

The Group was attacked by 25 to 30 E/A resulting in claims of eight E/A destroyed. Twenty B-17s were damaged in this action and eight men wounded. Three from the 96th Squadron were S/Sgt. Merton Latshaw, S/Sgt. Frank Horner, and S/Sgt. Franklin W. Fitzgerald.

Receiving credit for one each Me-109 were: S/Sgt. Eugene H. Checkmain, R/W; S/Sgt. Cleo L. Corley, T/G; S/Sgt. Franklin W. Fitzgerald, L/W; 2nd Lt. James F. Harbin, B; S/Sgt. Harold H. Hauser, R/W; and T/Sgt. Allen C. Moore, U/T. Joint credit for one Me-109 went to S/Sgt. William F. Callahan, L/T, and Sgt. William H. Evans, R/W. Joint claim for one FW-190 went to 2nd Lt. L. E. Dixon and T/Sgt. James L. Hickey, U/T. Other records show eight Me-109s and one FW-190 destroyed and four Me-109s probably destroyed, without names being listed.

### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29907 - 49TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. Earl W. Fitzpatrick, 0-795036, P.	(EVADED)
2nd Lt. John W. Carlson, 0-674463, CP.	(RET)
2nd Lt. Thomas F. Berschig, 0-797246, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Robert D. McCain, 0-732873, B.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Stanley J. Austin, 37256308, U/T.	(RET)
S/Sgt. Homer H. Hutcheson, 14138383, L/T.	(RET)
S/Sgt. Joseph R. Hunt, 39523857, R/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Willis I. Sheldon, 37123872, L/W.	(EVADED)
S/Sgt. William K. Guilfoil, 16101069, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Joseph A. Chilek, 33349232, R/O.	(POW)

Casualty Information Statement of 1st Lt. Earl W. Fitzpatrick, 1 October 1944, after return to Allied control: "1st Lt. John W. Carlson, last seen by me December 1, 1943, at which time he was still at liberty. 2nd Lt. Thomas F. Berschig, wounded October 5, 1943, POW. 2nd Lt. Robert D. McCain, beaten by Fascists upon reaching ground October 5, 1943, POW. T/Sgt. Joseph A. Chilek, wounded October 5, 1943, POW. T/Sgt. Stanley J. Austin, last seen by me December 1, 1943, at which time he was still at liberty. S/Sgt. Joseph R. Hunt, wounded October 5, 1943, POW. S/Sgt. Homer H. Hutcheson, last seen by me on December 1, 1943, still at liberty. S/Sgt. William K. Guilfoil, killed by machine gun fire at his place in the plane. Examined by Italian MD, reported as such."

Note: No documents show just how many members of this crew were POWs, but does show that nine men eventually returned to Allied control. There were many airmen shot down behind enemy lines, in Northern Italy, that avoided capture and made their way back to the Allied lines. (RET) indicates RETURNED.

Statement of S/Sgt. Willis I. Sheldon and 1st Lt. Earl W. Fitzpatrick, October 7, 1944, one year and two days after being shot down: "On bombing mission to Marshalling Yards at Bologna on 5 October 1943, the plane received two direct hits by flak. No. 2 engine ran away and was feathered, then No. 4 did the same. No. 1 began to lose oil and caught fire and was feathered and No. 2 was brought back in. No. 3 caught fire and was feathered so No. 4 had to be brought in again. The plane was now flying with two runaway engines.

"About ten fighters attacked us about this time doing considerable damage to the plane so the order was given to bail out.

"All the crew, except one who was killed in the plane, landed near Pescia, Italy. Five of the crew members managed to get together but four others were taken prisoner immediately as they were wounded. One of these had been beaten by a local Fascist on landing so he had to be taken to a hospital.

"The party lived together about two months then had to split up as the Germans came into the area and began a search. One man went off with a British ex-POW. Two others left together and heard they had been captured.

"We stayed together and walked to (- - -), taking six days. We were taken in by an Italian farmer, in this village, who looked after us for ten months.

"On 24 May 1944, the Germans and Fascists began to search the area so we were taken into the hills. We built a small shelter and made this our home until the area was overrun by Allied troops. The family fed and looked after us while in the shelter."

#### **MESTRE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 83 - OCTOBER 6, 1943**

Thirteen aircraft, equipped with Tokyo tanks, took off and nine aircraft dropped 108, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Mestre. The bombing was unsuccessful as the bombs fell to the left of the assigned area. No flak, no E/A, no losses.

The planes had to land at the airfield at Djeida, Tunisia because of heavy rains and muddy field at home base.

#### **ATHENS, GREECE - MISSION NO. 84 - OCTOBER 9, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft took off and 14 aircraft dropped 167, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Eleusis Airdrome. Five A/C were early returns. The target area was well covered with some bombs over. Flak was heavy, slight to intense, poor to deflection, poor to good altitude. One B-17 was damaged by flak.

Ten to 15 E/A attacked the rear of the formation. Fortress gunners claiming one Me-109 each were: S/Sgt. Armen N. Minasian, T/G; S/Sgt. Conrad G. Adams, L/T; S/Sgt. Thomas E. Finnegan, T/G; and S/Sgt. Walter C. Beltzer, R/W. A joint claim of a FW-190 went to S/Sgt. Jack L. Barcalow, U/T, and T/Sgt. Dennie L. Lauer, R/W. There were no injuries.

#### **ARGOS, GREECE - MISSION NO. 84A - OCTOBER 9, 1943**

Fifteen aircraft dropped 180, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Airdrome at Argos. The target area was well covered with four to five E/A seen burning on the ground. Flak was heavy, slight to moderate, fair to good for altitude and deflection. Six B-17s were slightly damaged. All A/C of this mission landed at Gerbini A/D, Sicily to refuel. No losses, no injuries.

#### **ARAXAS, GREECE - MISSION NO. 85 - OCTOBER 10, 1943**

Seventeen aircraft bombed the Araxas Airdrome with the successful bombing of runways, barracks, and revetments. No injuries, no losses.

#### **TERNI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 86 - OCTOBER 14, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 228, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Terni. A number of fires were started and one large explosion was observed. There was no flak. The formation was attacked by 10 to 15 E/A consisting of Me-109s, FW-190s, Re-2001s, and one Me-202. The attacks were aggressive, coming as close as 150 yards.

B-17 #42-29581, piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCarty, was lost due to enemy fighter action. Slightly wounded were S/Sgt. Franklin G. Thometz and Pvt. Kester D. Matheny of the 429th Squadron.



Two Me-109s were destroyed with credit going to S/Sgt. Robert L. Thompson, T/G, and S/Sgt. Thomas A. Zelasko, L/T.

**MISSING AIR CREW REPORT - A/C #42-29581 - "SUGARPUSS" - 429TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. Robert T. McCarty, 0-730660, P.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Frederick G. Borgard, 0-736466, CP.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Richard B. Warner, 0-676187, N.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Leonard J. Elero, 0-739413, B.	(DED)
T/Sgt. James D. Wallace, 35457407, U/T.	(DED)
Sgt. William J. Cuba, 33248986, L/T.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Steve E. Szabo, 36325883, R/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Joseph E. Fales, 11110360, L/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Floyd N. Hileman, 13106029, T/G.	(DED)
T/Sgt. Norman T. Benster, 39253129, R/O.	(DED)

Statement of S/Sgt. Roy T. Lantz in B-17 #42-30133, 429th Squadron, after the mission: "I first saw plane #42-29581 when it was going under ours. I guess it was less than 100 feet below us when it passed and assumed a position about 4:30 o'clock, 500 to 600 yards to our rear. He flew straight and level for about two minutes and then apparently started to come back under our plane for protection from fighters. At this time, No. 3 engine was smoking badly, but not on fire, nor was it feathered. The smoke was white. On the way over to our plane, two fighters attacked #581, in trail from 8 o'clock high. No. 3 engine caught fire then, at which time the plane went into a vertical dive and soon thereafter completely disintegrated. I estimate the plane was about 2,000 feet below us when it went to pieces. I think I saw four or five parachutes open, none on fire. They opened about the time the plane went to pieces. Later, I saw four or five spots on the water that looked like parachutes. I saw the fragments of the plane hit the water. The fighters made no more attacks after they started down."

**BASHI, ITALY - MISSION NO. 87 - OCTOBER 20, 1943**

Thirty-two aircraft dropped 192 tons of 1,000-lb. GP bombs on Railroad Bridges at Bashi. Cameras recorded the area well covered with direct hits. No flak, no E/A encounters.

**ALBINIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 88 - OCTOBER 21, 1943**

The assigned target was a Railroad Bridge six miles north of Orvieto. Due to a 10/10 cloud cover, 28 aircraft dropped 168, 1,000-lb. GP bombs on two bridges west of Albinia. One of the bridges was believed to have received a direct hit. Flak was received from one battery. No injuries, no losses.

**WIENER NEUSTADT, AUSTRIA - MISSION NO. 89 - OCTOBER 24, 1943**

Forty-two aircraft, each with a bomb load of 12, 500-lb. GP bombs took off on the previous day to land at bases in Italy and Sicily in preparation for the long flight to Wiener Neustadt.

Only 22 aircraft got over the target and a 10/10 cloud cover prevented bombing of the assigned target. Five B-17s dropped 60, 500-lb. GP bombs in the vicinity of the target area with unobserved results. One B-17 dropped 12, 500-lb. GP bombs on railroad tracks and bridges at Friedburg, Austria. Fourteen aircraft failed to take off from their base in Sicily due to poor gassing facilities. The mission was considered unsuccessful and the planes returned to their base on the 25th. No injuries, no losses.

### **GENOA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 90 - OCTOBER 29, 1943**

The primary target for this date was the Ball Bearing Works at Turin, Italy. Due to a cloud cover over the target, the Marshalling Yards at Genoa were bombed by 28 aircraft that dropped 345, 300-lb. GP bombs. Some hits were observed though cloud cover around the target hindering bombing and observation of results. Flak over the target was very heavy, good altitude, poor deflection.

B-17 #42-30398, piloted by 1st Lt. George R. Howell, was hit by flak just after dropping its bombs. The plane caught fire and disintegrated in mid-air.

### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-30398 - 429TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt.	George R. Howell, 0-793775, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt.	Edward E. Gray, 0-672346, CP.	(KIA)
2nd Lt.	John W. Cashore, 0-797262, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt.	Bernard J. Lewis, 0-738707, B.	(KIA)
T/Sgt.	Paul B. Cassingham, 38128441, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Francis X. Hughes, 3245746, L/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt.	Leland L. Dishong, 35417348, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Byron R. Drury, 33270793, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Robert L. Thompson, 3544688, T/G.	(POW)
T/Sgt.	Robert H. Bryson, 12088306, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of S/Sgt. Francis X. Hughes, after liberation: "About 30 seconds after dropping our bombs, our plane was hit by two bursts of flak. One burst hit in the radio room and the other hit at the tail wheel. As soon as our plane was hit, the pilot told us to bail out. I was flying in the ball turret position. I was watching the bombs go to the target when we were hit. After getting out of the turret and getting on my chute, I saw the front of the plane was broken off at the radio room and I bailed out through this opening.

"I did a delayed jump of about eight or ten thousand feet. At that time I also saw that the plane had broken off at the tail wheel, leaving only the waist of the plane floating.

"I landed in the water of Genoa Harbor and was shot in the shoulder while in the water, was given first aid and then taken to a hospital. After around ten days, in a private room, I was moved out and met Sgt. Thompson who told me Lt. Cashore had just left for prison camp.

"During this time, I did not see, nor hear, of any of the rest of those not mentioned above."

### **TURIN, ITALY - MISSION NO. 91 - OCTOBER 31, 1943**

The scheduled mission was the Ball Bearing Factory at Turin. At 0830 hours the planes took off, each with a bomb load of 12, 500-lb. GP bombs. Due to a 10/10 cloud cover over Turin, the formation split up. Some bombed the Imperia Marshalling Yards while others bombed Porto Maurizio, Italy with unobserved results. Due to rains and muddy field, the planes were forced to land at Djeida.

### **WIENER NEUSTADT, AUSTRIA - MISSION NO. 92 - NOVEMBER 2, 1943**

Fifteen aircraft dropped 90, 1,000-lb. GP bombs on the Messerschmitt Factory at Wiener Neustadt. The target was well covered with several large fires seen. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense and accurate.

Eighty to 100 FW-190s, Me-109s, Me-110s, Ju-87s, and Ju-88s attacked the formation starting about 10 minutes before reaching the target and continuing the attack after the bomb run. Flak and fighter opposition resulted in the death of S/Sgt. Joe D. Nickolson, R/W, 20th Squadron, and the loss of two B-17s. B-17 #42-30133, piloted by 1st Lt. Richard F. Eggers and #42-3341, piloted by 2nd Lt.

Lester L. Gillan, both of the 429th Squadron were shot down by enemy fighters. Fortress gunners' claims were: Each credited with the destruction of an Me-109 were S/Sgt. Thomas J. Ashe, L/T; S/Sgt. Robert W. Bosely, U/T; S/Sgt. Clair I. Carl, T/G; S/Sgt. Fred W. Counts, L/W; 2nd Lt. Charles E. Dehler, N; T/Sgt. James L. DeNight, U/T; S/Sgt. Charles C. Gervin, T/G; S/Sgt. Frederick R. Glor, L/W; S/Sgt. James F. Hallinan, T/G; 2nd Lt. Leonard X. Landsburg, B; 2nd Lt. John F. Miller, B; T/Sgt. Edward E. Nowak, L/T; Sgt. James H. Redick, Jr., T/G; and S/Sgt. Howard E. Richardson. Joint credit for destruction of an FW-190 went to T/Sgt. Clarence W. Mello, R/O, and T/Sgt. George F. Seimer, U/T. Credit for destruction of two FW-190s went to S/Sgt. Cleo L. Corley, T/G; and two FW-190s to 2nd Lt. L. E. Dixon, B. Credit for destruction of one each FW-190 went to S/Sgt. Walter E. Dempsey, R/W; S/Sgt. Jack C. Jones, T/G; T/Sgt. Russell Leonard, U/T; and T/Sgt. George A. McLauchlan, U/T. Credit for destruction of a Ju-88 went to T/Sgt. James L. DeNight, U/T. Credit for possible destruction of a Me-109 went to S/Sgt. John F. Ryan, L/W.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW: A/C #42-30133 - "RAGGEDY ANN" - 429TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt.	Richard F. Eggers, 0-661820, P.	(POW)
F/O	Donald E. Elder, T-120776, CP.	(POW)
2nd Lt.	William C. Thompson, 0-741872, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt.	Charles E. Major, 0-669360, B.	(POW)
T/Sgt.	Chester S. Ehredt, 13083502, U/T.	(POW)
Sgt.	Malcom R. Mathews, 12090848, L/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt.	Marion M. Bembrook, 16041090, L/W.	(POW)
Sgt.	George J. Brand, 19070965, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Thomas A. Zelasko, 36512947, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt.	Claude T. Roper, 14077762, R/O.	(POW)

Statement of F/O Donald E. Elder, Co-pilot, after liberation: "I bailed out just off the target with seven others. To my knowledge, Sgt. George Brand and S/Sgt. Tommy Zelasko were still in the plane when it hit the ground. S/Sgt. Zelasko was hit in the shoulder and chest. Sgt. Brand was hit in the chest. I saw the rest of the crew at Frankfurt, Germany, at Dulag Luft. T/Sgt. Ehredt had a head injury. The other three officers were with me at the same camp, Stalag Luft I, Barth Germany.

"While at Dulag Luft, Frankfurt, a German Sergeant asked me how many men were killed in our crew. I told him none. He informed me that two men were killed and showed me their identification tags and told me they were buried in some small town close to where the plane crashed, by the name of Walbach. I asked him what kind of burial they had and he said it was not a military one but they did get a decent burial.

"I was on the loose until November 4th and when captured, I estimate that I was approximately 30 miles south of Wiener Neustadt. The gendarme responsible for the capture took me to a little village (can't remember name). Here he showed me the dog tags of the two boys that he reported killed, also showed me a pair of baby shoes that belonged to Sgt. Zelasko and were always tied to the "Y" of the ball turret on our ship. The same day he took me to Vienna and on the way, drove up on a small hilltop which had a few houses on it. This was only a short distance from the town where he took me after capture. He stopped at one of the farmhouses to get information from them about our ship that crashed in their field, a short way from their house. I was not allowed to leave the automobile, and the weather was cloudy and foggy. Through the fog, to the best of my ability and memory, I thought I could distinguish what looked like the tail and part of a wing with one engine on it, not over 500 yards from the house and buildings."

1st Lt. Richard F. Eggers, pilot of A/C #42-30133, August 9, 1990: "My crew in Cut Bank, Montana were 1st Lt. M. V. Beckstrand, Co-pilot; 1st Lt. James Heaberg, Bombardier; 1st Lt. James McGehearty, Navigator; T/Sgt. Alfred Sereni, Engineer; S/Sgt. Olen "Woody" Wood, Ball Turret; T/Sgt. Paul Strate, Radio; Two Macs, S/Sgt. Lloyd MacNickol and S/Sgt. John McDonald, Waist Gunners; and "Joisy" Joe "Mo" Mahan, Tail Gunner.

"When we flew overseas, Robert Neal was made temporary CO and flew my plane until we arrived in North Africa where he was re-assigned to a fighter squadron. Captain Jack Bentley was our CO. He was not assigned an airplane and was sent by boat along with my Co-pilot, Lt. Beckstrand. I believe that the Operation Order 126, from Morrison Field, is incorrect as to the plane we flew. I recall it was #42-5782 and not #42-5178. We flew "HIGH TENSION" for about 20 missions before it was retired from combat because of mechanical problems. I flew a plane called "RAGGEDY ANN" until it was shot down.

"When we were stationed at Cut Bank, we were returning from a cross country flight when one of those "Chinook" windstorms came across Montana from the Rockies and all the airports were showing zero visibility. We decided to try to get to Great Falls. On final approach, with 90 miles west winds and very low visibility, we were blown east of the airport and flew through high tension wires feeding a copper mine in that area. We later landed at a restricted Air Force Base in the same area. When we picked up our new aircraft in Kearney, Nebraska, we decided to name it "HIGH TENSION."

"Our first mission was to Bizerte, a port city which Rommel's troops were using to evacuate from North Africa. Our later missions included railroad yards, industrial centers, airfields, troop support in Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, France and even one mission in Greece.

"For me, Wiener Neustadt was special. A first attempt to hit it was made the end of October, 1943. The range was too great to fly out of our base in Tunisia, so we flew to an advance base in Italy the day before. Unfortunately, heavy rains had made the advance base a mud hole and it was impossible to get a fully loaded plane off the ground. We returned to our base in Tunisia until the ground dried out.

"On the second attempt, we flew to the advance base on November 1st and took off for Austria on the 2nd. The weather was beautiful and the trip to the target was as planned. We even had fighter escort until they reached their return range limitation and returned to their base to refuel and meet us on the way back. Up until this mission, we had encountered very little fighter opposition; our chief concern was German flak. Our target this day was an Me-109 factory and they sent up what looked like every 109 they made since the war began! They also had German pilots instead of Italians, which made a big difference.

"The fighter attack began about the time we turned on our bomb run. As we approached the target, I noticed that the squadron ahead had lost a plane and we were under heavy attack. My plane was hit shortly after we turned off the target. I had lost one engine when my elevator and rudder controls went bad and I could not stay in formation. This made me a sitting duck for the German fighters. Realizing that the plane could not survive, I ordered the crew to bail out. I estimate my altitude was around 15,000 feet. After the navigator, bombardier, co-pilot, and gunners had gone and the engineer in the upper turret seemed to be dead, I prepared to leave myself. As I reached for the parachute pack strapped to the back of my seat, the twin fifties in the upper turret started firing again. Evidently my engineer had been knocked out when his plexiglass turret was shattered and came to, not knowing the rest of the crew had gone. He grabbed his guns and began firing again. I reached back, grabbed his flying suit and motioned him to get out. I grabbed my chest pack, clamped it to the body straps and started to drop through the trap door in the floor behind the navigator's compartment in the nose. As soon as I let go of the controls, the plane started to do a "wing over" to go into a spin. So I returned to the controls and managed to get the plane level again. I decided there was no choice but to get out and let the plane go. I cut the power off, dropped to the exit and bailed out. In the movies, you



bail out, count to three and pull the ripcord. That's what I did and it worked. I must have passed out from lack of oxygen. The next thing I remember was approaching the ground in a hurry.

"The chute caught in a tree and I was hanging a few feet from the ground as safe as a baby in a cradle. I found a reception committee of two armed soldiers and two civilians approaching. Errol Flynn I am not and accepted their invitation to lunch in a nearby town. I met some of my crew members there and learned that my tail gunner and waist gunner had been killed. My crew that day was Don Elder, Copilot; Bill Thompson, Navigator; Charles Major, Bombardier; C. S. Ehredt, M. M. Bembrook, M. R. Mathews, C. T. Roper, Tommy Zelasko (KIA) and G. J. Brand (KIA). This was my 50th mission.

"Later that day we were moved to a larger town where we were questioned by a German officer and confined in a local jail with crews of several other B-17s. The next day we were driven to Vienna, then by train to Frankfurt. After a couple of weeks of interrogation, we were sent by train to Stalag Luft I, outside of Barth, Germany. We remained there until the area was overrun by the Russian Army."

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-3341 - "LADY BE GOOD" - 429TH SQUADRON**

2nd Lt. Lester L. Gillan, 0-730452, P.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Frank D. Counihan, 0-735058, CP.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Peter H. Diglio, 0-800646, N.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Merideth D. Fink, 0-735300, B.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Louis C. Hazay, 31167401, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Claude H. Denton, 34348857, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Henry F. Reedy, 35350463, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Anthony J. DeLatte, 18134212, L/W.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Howard L. Rees, 20247716, T/G.	(POW)
T/Sgt. Joseph R. Hagerman, 19123924, R/O.	(KIA)

No statements were available in this report.

November 4 through November 6, 1943 was spent in moving to higher ground due to heavy swamping of the present camp site.

#### **GENOA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 93 - NOVEMBER 9, 1943**

The assigned target was the Marshalling Yards at Bolzano. Due to a 10/10 cloud cover over the target, 24 aircraft dropped 288, 500-lb. GP bombs on the Ansaldo Steel Works, Dock Area, and Marshalling Yards at Genoa. Flak was heavy and intense resulting in damage to 22 aircraft. No injuries, no losses.

A/C #42-23156, piloted by 2nd Lt. Richard C. Flournoy, 49th Squadron, crashed on take-off at the start of the mission due to mechanical failure. No one was injured.

#### **BOLZANO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 94 - NOVEMBER 10, 1943**

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Bolzano. Twenty-four aircraft took off but only eight got over the target and dropped 24 tons of 500-lb. GP bombs. The other planes got lost in heavy clouds and returned to base. Photos showed extensive damage to locomotive sheds, rolling stock, buildings and approach to a railroad bridge.

Flak was intense and fairly accurate resulting in the loss of A/C #42-29646, which was seen to crash off Cape Corse, Corsica. This A/C was piloted by Captain Kenneth Spinning.

Five to ten E/A attacked the formation resulting in the loss of A/C #42-29609 piloted by 1st Lt. Raymond J. Wika, 20th Squadron. His aircraft was attacked by fighters and was seen to blow up. One FW-190 was destroyed by S/Sgt. Thomas Moriarity, LT, 96th Squadron.

**MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29646 - "PEG O'MY HEART" - 49TH SQUADRON**

Captain Kenneth W. Spinning, Jr. 0-791350, P.	(DED)
2nd Lt. Jesse B. Crecelius, 0-731835, CP.	(DED)
2nd Lt. George (NMI) Carlson, 0-731262, N.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Scott R. Thompson, 34162771, B.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Ray L. Nichols, 18083473, U/T.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Wesley W. Knox, 19066511, L/T.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Harold W. Fohey, 17121960, R/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Joseph G. Clyburne, 13965859, L/W.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Walter P. Tront, 16065366, T/G.	(DED)
S/Sgt. Anthony A. Pankratz, 36241424, R/O.	(DED)

Statement of S/Sgt. Edward E. Nowak, L/TG, on B-17 #42-30319, after the mission: "I first noticed plane #646 when the tail gunner called our pilot and said that plane #646 had feathered No. 3 engine and was dropping behind. We were over land at the time, about 40 miles from the sea shore. I kept my eyes on him seeing as we were over land and apt to be jumped by fighters. As we got out to sea, #646 kept dropping farther behind. Our pilot called the tail gunner and asked how far he was and the tail gunner's reply was "Quite a ways," so our pilot circled and we put #646 in front of us. I heard him call the navigator to give him the shortest course to land so he could call #646 and give him the information. The pilot called me and asked if I could see #646 and I told him they were directly below us and losing altitude. As I was watching, #646 was getting closer and closer to the water. I knew he had feathered No. 3 engine but as I looked at the plane, I noticed all four engines were running. He must have unfeathered it. Next thing I saw him do was get very close to the water. I kept wondering what he was going to do and then I saw him crash into the sea. He brought the tail down first and then the nose just dropped. The plane sank instantly. The pilot of my plane, Major Richard T. Headrick, circled around the crashed plane and said to count the men in the water. I counted nine and am positive of the number. We circled again and the pilot told the crew to drop life rafts, which we did. One raft turned bottom up and the other looked half inflated. At this time, the men in the water were scattering all around, there were three men in one place and about 200 feet away was another one, and about 300 feet were the rest. I saw one man swim for the raft. It was the one half inflated. Then the pilot told us to drop the two big rafts we had. We dropped one but it never inflated so on the next circle we dropped the other one and this one inflated and was floating. I saw one man swim for it but the water was very rough and kept pushing away from him. We were running low on gas so we headed for the nearest field. There we refueled and took on more life rafts. We came back to where #646 had crashed and where we dropped the rafts. After spending some time searching, we could not see them or the rafts. The pilot decided we should return to the field where we refueled and continued the search the following morning.

"The next day we started out at nine o'clock to search for the life rafts and the men in the sea. When we reached the spot, there was a raft floating in the sea. The pilot told us to drop a smoke bomb near the raft as we came close to it. As he did, I dropped a bomb about 20 feet from the raft. The navigator took a bearing and I think they radioed it to Air-Sea-Rescue Station. As we left the location, we saw a boat on the way. We landed at the field, refueled and took off for Africa and our home base."

**MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-29609 - 20TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Raymond J. Wika, 0-741954, P.	(POW)
2nd Lt. Jeremiah F. Corcoran, 0-798978, CP.	(EVADED)
2nd Lt. Leonard C. McCully, 0-678382, N.	(KIA)
2nd Lt. Wallace B. Baldwin, 9-735242, B.	(EVADED)

S/Sgt. Merlin S. McCloud, 37282837, U/T.	(POW)
S/Sgt. Clarence L. Berlin, 19149873, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Merle E. Canfield, 36303908, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Luke H. Barga, 35474222, L/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt. Mack H. Kidd, 18124025, T/G.	(KIA)
T/Sgt. Jack (NMI) Reznick, 12156500, R/O.	(KIA)

Statement of Captain Jeremiah Corcoran, CP of A/C #42-29609, after return to Allied control: "Our aircraft left the formation over Brescia, Italy. Other crew members bailing out were the pilot, bombardier, and engineer. The pilot bailed out north of Brescia and was captured by Germans. The bombardier and I bailed out north of Brescia, met on the ground and escaped to Switzerland. The engineer was taken prisoner.

"The aircraft struck the ground 10 miles north of Brescia. I don't believe any members of the crew were in the aircraft according to Italian civilians. The ship came down in four sections. I attended the burial of the rest of the crew and believe the graves could best be located by contacting either the priest of Senora Benevenuto in San Giovanni, Provence Palarono, Brescia."

Statement of 1st Lt. Wallace Baldwin, B of A/C #42-29609, after return to Allied control: "I bailed out in addition to the Pilot, Lt. Wika; Co-pilot, Lt. Corcoran; and Engineer, S/Sgt. McCloud. Information regarding the other crew members is as follows: 2nd Lt. McCully did not bail out. I last saw him in the plane and told him to put on his parachute. He was thrown out of the plane while poised over the escape hatch. The airplane went into a spin while he did not have his parachute on. Lt. McCully was buried by a Catholic priest. Lt. Corcoran attended the funeral of Lt. McCully, Sgts. Canfield, Barga, Reznick, Kidd, and Berlin.

"S/Sgt. Merlin McCloud bailed out over Lake Issa. To my knowledge he was not injured in the aircraft. Corcoran claims that McCloud bailed out before he did. We believed he had been taken prisoner. He had flown 49 missions.

"S/Sgt. Merle Canfield was killed. He did not bail out. S/Sgt. Luke H. Barga was killed. He did not bail out. T/Sgt. Jack Reznick did not bail out. He was killed in the aircraft by machine gun fire from attacking fighters. S/Sgt. Mack H. Kidd did not bail out. Do not know how he died. Presume he could not get out of the plane."

Although Lt. Baldwin did not give a disposition regarding S/Sgt. Clarence Berlin, other documents show that he was killed and buried with the other deceased crew members.

November 13, 1943. We went into Tunis tonight to see a movie. Someone swiped the windshield off our Jeep. It was a cold, windy ride back to camp!

#### **ISTRES LE TUBE, FRANCE - MISSION NO. 95 - NOVEMBER 16, 1943**

Nineteen aircraft dropped 114 tons of 500-lb. GP bombs on the Istres LeTube Airdrome. General Atkinson, 5th Wing Commander, flew Co-pilot with Colonel Herbert E. Rice. Photos showed the bombing very successful. Several aircraft were damaged by flak and resulted in the injury to Lt. Clarence Kurz, group Bombardier. No losses.

#### **ELEUSIS, GREECE - MISSION NO. 96 - NOVEMBER 16, 1943**

Twenty-five aircraft dropped 3,600, 20-lb. incendiary bombs on the Eleusis airdrome. Flak was heavy, moderate to intense, good altitude, fair to good deflection. The target area was well covered.

Seventeen B-17s were damaged by flak and B-17 #42-5397, piloted by 1st Lt. Richard Flournoy, 49th Squadron, was lost due to flak. Lt. Nemor Warr, 96th Squadron, was slightly wounded by flak.

#### **MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-5397 - 49TH SQUADRON**

1st Lt. Richard C. Flournoy, 0-737394, P.	(EVADED)
2nd Lt. Joseph F. Cotton, 0-682986, CP.	(EVADED)
2nd Lt. James M. Wagner, 0-678697, N.	(EVADED)
2nd Lt. Ernest C. Schorheim, 0-739111, B.	(EVADED)
T/Sgt. Russell R. Leonard, 12137923, U/T.	(EVADED)
S/Sgt. Robert B. Steele, 39611928, L/T.	(EVADED)
S/Sgt. Edward E. Nowak, 36348021, R/W.	(EVADED)
S/Sgt. Frederick R. Glor, 32142683, L/W.	(EVADED)
S/Sgt. Thomas F. Reich, 32512021, T/G.	(EVADED)
T/Sgt. Jack Farley, 38131074, R/O.	(EVADED)

T/Sgt. Frederick R. Glor, WG on the crew of A/C #42-5397. March 23, 1993: "We crash landed on the Island of Corfu and a woman, about 21 years old, came to me and motioned for me to follow her. We came to a small river and she motioned me to take off my flying suit and boots, which she took, rolled rocks in them and sunk them in the river. She then guided me to a sheep and goat herder's hut in the mountains.

"It took the Germans about 15-20 minutes to find our plane. The only thing they got out of it was the high test gasoline, which they used for their jeeps and trucks.

"The next night I was taken to a village called Leftkimi on the south end of Corfu and into and small hotel where I was hidden for 30 days. They fed me and nursed me. I caught malaria and ran a high temperature. One night, one of the men came in with a straight razor. I knew it wasn't to shave me. They had planned to cut me in the mouth so that I would bleed. This was supposed to lower my temperature. I told them I did not want this and they later came with a pan of leeches which they put on my groin, under my arms, and on my neck. This did help, I guess.

"During this time, two German officers came and wanted to stay there during a bad storm. They stayed in a room next to mine. They wanted wine, women and food. They also asked if any American flyers were shot down there. They were told no. I cannot say enough about these Greek fighters. They took a great chance of being caught for hiding us.

"One night they got the whole crew together and said we were being moved to the mainland. We were given civilian clothes and taken by donkey cart down to the city of Corfu. During this trip, we came upon a German officer and soldiers who were cutting up a tree blocking the road. I happened to be in the first cart with our pilot. We were told not to say a word, let the driver talk. The driver told the Germans to get the tree out of the road so that he could take his olives to town. A German came around the back of the cart, looking us over. I looked at him and shrugged my shoulders and they let us go. Five carts did this and they never got wise to what we were doing.

"That night, a Greek rowed us to the mainland. There were boats patrolling the waters between the mainland and island but all five boats made it through.

"Before we made it to the mainland, we passed a German airfield where there were Me-109s and FW-190s. Joe Cotton wanted to try to grab one of these and make his escape. Flournoy told him we had better stick together. Joe had been a fighter pilot so did have experience.

"When we got to the mainland, we joined a large band of Greek fighters led by two OSS British Commandos, a Captain Phillips and Captain Eason. These two men were the most daring and courageous men I have ever met.



"For four months we went from village to village hiding out. I must tell one humorous story. While at a large camp in the mountains, I came across a toothbrush that was in a cup in a room where the women of the camp cooked the little food we had. I decided to brush my teeth. Using this, I did several times during our stay, telling no one of my find. Years later, at a reunion in Sacramento, California, I found that I was not the only one to find that toothbrush.

"Sometime we were awakened by guards telling us the Germans were coming. We would leave very quickly and climb the mountains and passes, crossing roads at night. We traveled through Greece, Albania and up to Yugoslavia, near Marshall Tito's Headquarters and then back. Our heated shoes wore out and our clothes were in shreds. Finally a British plane dropped us British uniforms, hobnail shoes, food, ammunition and explosives.

"I have to tell about a trip we made. Captain Phillips asked for three men to help on a trip to northern Greece. So Ernest Skorheim, Bob Steele, our ball gunner, and myself offered to go. We traveled by night, laid low during the day, until we came to bridges on one of the main roads going south. That second night, Captain Phillips and Captain Eason set charges, came and got us and we walked until daylight and hid again during the day, then made it back again the following night. Yes, we blew the bridges.

"We received nothing for this. However, before we left Greece we were offered commissions to stay and help Captains Phillips and Eason. I was the only one who was married and all I wanted was to get home and see my loved ones.

"They finally took us down to the coast one night, and with pre-arranged signals, we boarded an Italian sub-chaser that took us to Bari, Italy where we landed in the 22nd General Hospital. All of us had different things wrong with us. Malaria, frost bitten feet, jaundice. Joe Cotton got kicked in the ribs by a mule, etc. I finally made it home on Mothers Day, 1944, a day I will never forget!

"There is a sequel to this. I swore that I would go back there some day and thank these people. Forty-four years later I did. I met the people on the Island of Corfu. I went to the site where the plane had crashed. I also met the woman who first met me when the plane crashed. She is about 70 now. When the interpreter told her who I was, she couldn't believe it and neither could I. What a joyous reunion! I can't say enough about these people. They were threatened with execution if they didn't turn us over but that did not scare them one bit. God bless them!"

2nd Lt. Ernest C. Skorheim, Bombardier on the crew of A/C #42-5397. March 25, 1992: "I was the Bombardier on Richard Flournoy's crew and we were assigned to the 49th Squadron. Our first plane was unnamed but the second assigned to us was "THE STRIPPED ASS BURD," which we crashed on take-off and put out of commission. The crash was due to flap failure. We had a close one there!

"The next mission, the crews 32nd and my 33rd, we were on a mission to Eleusis Airdrome on 18 November 1943. We were shot up over the target and were able to glide, on one engine, to the Island of Corfu where we landed with only minor injuries.

"Twenty minutes after the landing, the German soldiers were at the plane looking for the crew. They were told we had stolen a boat and headed for Italy, when in fact we were hidden. Some were hidden in a church and others, as I and two others, were hidden in a small shed that had been used to store things and also as a drying shed for tobacco. We were all in mis-matched civilian clothes at this time. The underground had taken our flying gear and gave us civilian clothes as soon as we got out of the airplane.

"We spent about three days in hiding and then escorted to the village of Lefkimi and divided amongst the villagers. I hid with a wheelmaker and his wife (two wheel carts, hand drawn). The shop was on the first floor, living quarters on the second floor, and an open hearth, for cooking, on the third

floor. I was on the third floor for most of my stay with them. His name was Joseph Montegego and Tina was his wife. She was the boss.

"I had been bitten many times the nights I spent in the small shed on the hill, as others of the crew, and came down with malaria. I wasn't doing so well without medication, so, they used the old method of blood-letting leeches, hot cups of vinegar rags on the openings. That didn't improve things a bit, so they got a chemical and gave me a shot in the buttocks and that did the trick. I was also given 12 quinine pills and told to take two a day until gone. In about a week, I was decent again. Meals consisted of bean soup, corn bread, tea, no sugar. That was rare as hens teeth.

"Things were going pretty well until one of the Italians got word that an American was being hidden in the village. Thank goodness the underground got word of it too and hustled the entire crew into the hills again. We all lived in a small shed that only six could lie down in at one time. We were there two weeks and then walked up north, one night and a day, to the shortest point to cross the mainland to Albania. We left the Island about 7:30 at night and arrived in Albania at about 9:30 the next morning. Everyone but the oarsman laid flat in the boat so we wouldn't be detected by the German patrol.

"Nine days later, after landing in Albania and walking through some rugged country, we arrived at the headquarters of the Greek resistance forces, "LAM" I think they were called. There were two resistance forces and each fighting the Germans and killing the leftover Italians that were around, plus trying to take over command of all in Greece. Killing each other!

"After the first day there, we were separated and put in with different resistance groups. Several times we were to be taken to Albania for an aircraft pickup, a rendezvous with other resistance groups who were to take us to Yugoslavia and Michilovich's resistance group and air lifted to Britain. After about six attempts that failed because of the political situation in the country, we were finally loaded on a 60-foot Italian fishing boat and taken to Bari, Italy. We were taken to an Army Hospital there for medical checkup, and medication; a stay of about two weeks. Then to the Group in Foggia for orders, pay and flight to New York via C-54.

"All of the members had malaria and a few other things but nothing real serious. I've had about 25 re-occurrences of malaria since 1943. Nothing in the last 20 years, thank God.

"I spent 23 years in S.A.C., B-29s, 50s, 47s, and B-52s, Radar Navigator. Retired at Beal AFB, California, 1964."

#### **TOULON, FRANCE - MISSION NO. 97 - NOVEMBER 22, 1943**

The mission was to bomb the Naval Base at Toulon. At 0925 hours, 39 A/C took off, each plane carrying 12, 500-lb. GP bombs. Due to weather conditions, the planes did not reach the target. No E/A were encountered.

#### **TOULON, FRANCE - MISSION NO. 98 - NOVEMBER 24, 1943**

The mission was to return and bomb the Naval Base at Toulon. Thirty-six aircraft took off, each carrying 12, 500-lb. GP bombs. The first wave of 15 A/C did not bomb the primary target due to cloud cover and bombed the Antheor Viaduct near St. Raphael, France. The second wave of 16 A/C were below the cloud cover and did bomb the primary target. Excellent precision bombing was reported on this target. Several direct hits were reported on the secondary target. Five A/C were early returns.

Between 10 and 15 enemy fighters were encountered by the first wave near the Antheor Viaduct and flak damaged several of the B-17s. Sgt. George R. Hawk, LWG, was credited with the destruction of one Me-109. S/Sgt. John H. Chisholm, LWG, 20th Squadron, was slightly wounded by flak.

**RECCO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 99 - NOVEMBER 26, 1943**

At 0835 hours, 32 aircraft took off, each carrying 12, 500-lb. GP bombs, to bomb the Viaduct at Recco. Two A/C were early returns. The target area was well covered with several direct hits reported. Blue flashes were noted as the bombs hit the target, possibly due to electrically charged wires over the viaduct. No injuries, no losses.

**VERGATO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 100 - NOVEMBER 27, 1943**

Two bridges across the Reno River were the mission for today. One bridge was approximately 25 miles southwest of Bologna and the second, approximately 30 miles southwest of Bologna. Twenty-eight aircraft took off with ten as early returns due to weather. Ten aircraft dropped 30 tons of bombs on the bridge 25 miles from Bologna, and eight aircraft dropped 18 tons of bombs in the vicinity of the second bridge. Neither bridge was destroyed. Bombs destroyed tracks, buildings, and damaged highways. There was no flak, no injuries, no losses.

**FIANO ROMERO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 101 - NOVEMBER 29, 1943**

Thirty aircraft, each with a bomb load of 38, 100-lb. GP bombs, took off to bomb the Fiano Romero Landing Ground, just north of Rome. Upon reaching the target, the Group found a 10/10 cloud cover and, not having an alternate target assigned, returned to base with the bombs. No encounters, no injuries, no losses.

**MARSELLIE, FRANCE - MISSION NO. 102 - NOVEMBER 30, 1943**

Thirty-one aircraft, each with a load of 12, 500-lb. GP bombs, took off to bomb the Submarine Pens at Marsellie. At 1210 hours, the formation received word from 5th Wing Headquarters to return to base due to poor weather conditions over the target. All planes returned safely to base.