

454th True Stories

Hare Power



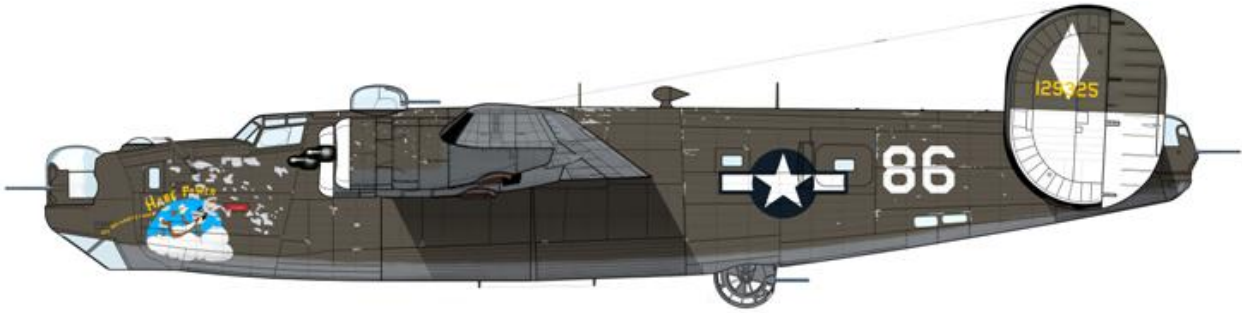
Memories

Lt. James Formby

B-24 sn 41-29325 739th sqd 454th BG

454th

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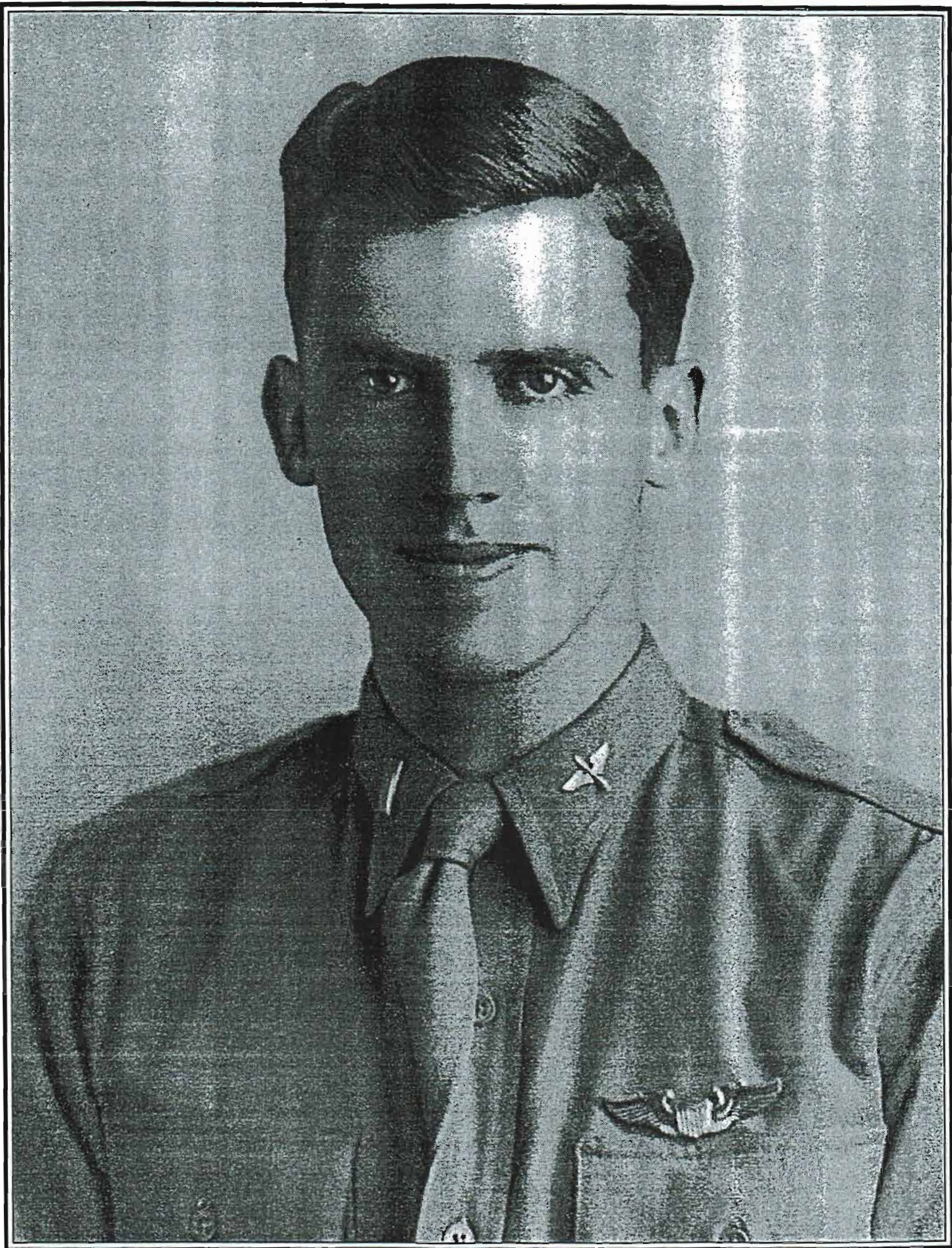


Lt James A. Formby receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross
for mission to Bleckhammer Germany

B-24 Bomber Pilot

by James A. Formby

SEPT 1942 -- March 1945



At 1 PM on Sunday, Dec 7, 1941, I met Bradley Burkhalter, Nub Veatch, and Jack Veatch at the Mountain View Golf Course in West Rome. It was a cool, sunny afternoon and we played a very pleasant 18 holes. A little after 4 PM, we finished and all went into the clubhouse. We were met by a large group of people all talking at the same time and a radio in the corner at rather high volume.

"The Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor" was what everyone was saying. "What is Pearl Harbor?" was our first comment. Gradually we got the story together and realized that it was war. That was our introduction to World War II and little did we realize how it was destined to affect us all.

Years later after the war, the Japanese Admiral who led the attack on Pearl Harbor is quoted as having said, "I think we have only awakened a sleeping giant and made him very angry." That was a very apt assessment from what we began to see around us. The draft board was set up and every male, age 18 or older registered and was classified after a physical exam. I was 1-A which meant 21 yrs old, single, and first in line to go. Jack Veatch had a fast

heart beat since birth and was classified 4-F.

They lost no time in rationing gasoline and each car owner had to take the car's registration papers down to the war office each month to get a ticket book for 10 to 15 gallons per week. We started double-dating and car pooling to save gas.

The Terpsi club consisted of 27 boys who had grown up together here in Rome and all had graduated from Rome High. We just formed a social club to have something to do. We had picnics, dances, golf tournaments and just had fun together. We finally rented a cabin at Radio Springs and used it constantly, especially on Friday nights and Saturday nights as a gathering place. We were very fortunate that there were no drugs or marijuana back then in 1940 and 41. Of the 27 boys, 2 were classified 4-F or physically unable and 25 went into all branches of service all around the world. Bradley was a navigator, Harry Lovelace a Navy pilot, Nub Veatch a navy medical seaman, Tim Austin, Navy and etc. The amazing thing is that all of us came home without even a serious wound.

Bradley and I decided that we had rather fly than walk through a war so we went to Atlanta and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Then, it was a matter

of getting our affairs in order and waiting. Bradley received his telegram first saying "Go!".

Finally in Dec 1942, I received my telegram to get on a train which would pass thru Rome. My family and Frances were there to see us off. There were Earl Lumpkin, Joe Mull, Gene Beard and I. Joe Mull was killed in 8th Air Force.

MIAMI BEACH

The troop train had only passenger coaches with one baggage car and another freight car converted into an army mess car. I do mean mess. I remember standing in line for hours trying to get some food. We stopped at every little town and picked up more boys for the air corp. After two days and nights, we arrived at Miami, Fla.

A big truck unloaded me at the Rendale Hotel which would be home for the next five weeks. We lined up and were assigned rooms alphabetically. My roommate was Gordon Flournoy from Columbus, GA. We were to continue as roommates for the next fourteen months till we graduated as 2nd Lieutenant pilots. We were issued army shoes, sox, underwear, pants, shirts, fatigue suits, and gym shorts. We put all our civilian belongings into the one suitcase we had



GORDON FLOURNOY

brought and put a name and address tag to home and that was the last we saw of it.

At 4:30 AM we awoke to reveille and ran down 10 flights of stairs from our assigned 10th floor room and lined up in the street out front. We carried the mess kit that had been assigned along with our uniforms. It consisted of cup, folding aluminum plate with knife, fork, and spoon. We marched in formation to the mess hall on the beach and lined up to receive powdered eggs, rare bacon, and huge biscuits. The smell and appearance completely took my appetite and I just ate the biscuit. We then lined up and dipped our mess kit in a soapy 55 gallon drum on the beach and then dipped it in boiling water to rinse. The drums were on the sandy beach with fires beneath and the oily smell of dirty dishes, soap, smoke, and fuel oil on the wood to make it burn was unforgettable.

After this auspicious beginning, we marched back home and put away our mess kits, ran back down 10 flights and lined up in the street again. We marched out to the parade ground and went through close order drill and marching in columns. After our mess kit lunch, we returned to the parade ground for one hour of calisthenics led by Barney Ross, the middle-weight

boxing champion. We marched till 4 PM, ran in formation back home, showered, dressed and marched to the mess hall at 5 PM.

They had huge jars of peanut butter on each table and I ate 5 peanut butter sandwiches for supper. I realized I couldn't live on no food so thereafter, I ate whatever landed in my mess kit. I suppose it was good training as I have been able to eat anything imaginable ever since. Just hold your breath and eat.

After the first week, we began to run in formation every where we went. The days were all just alike and it gradually became much easier. I was thankful that Frank Wooten and I had been running at home for several months before we left. Some of the boys who had never run at all had real trouble.

Near the end of our five weeks, we had to have a dress parade for the commanding General. It was around Feb 1st, 1943 and damp with 46 degree temp. The sea breeze made it seem much colder. I can't recall ever being that cold before or since as we were only dressed in our sun-tan summer shirts and pants.

The week before, we had to stand at attention for another review in the sun at about 75 degrees. We had all just had five different immunization shots for tetanus, typhoid, typhus, etc. A few passed out and keeled over and we just

looked on. One bright feature of the time was our singing while marching or running. We sang most every formation. Some of the favorites were "Bell Bottom Trousers, Coats of Navy Blue", the Air Corps song, "Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder", "Roll me Over in the Clover", "Be Kind to our Web-footed Friends, A Duck May Be Somebody's Mother", "Halls of Montezuma", "Caissons Go Rolling Along", "I Had Sixpence", and many more, some of which I had better not mention.

At last, it ended and we packed up and boarded a troop train. 50,000 boys headed for colleges all over the U. S. About 200 boys to 250 different colleges.

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

EASTON, PENNA.

It was a typical troop train and took a day and night and most of the second day. We arrived at Easton, Pa and marched through the town in formation in our tan summer uniforms in light, blowing snow. The whole town was out to see the parade and gave us a cheering welcome. We went straight to the dormitories at Lafayette and Gordon Flournoy and I were assigned a room. They immediately issued wool uniforms and wool coats.

We ate in the school dining room and food was immensely improved. We settled down to classes from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM every day except Sunday. We had physics, aerodynamics, navigation, use of slide rule, morse code, aircraft identification, et al. The only professor I remember was Dr. Danny Hatch who taught math. He was deaf and his hearing aid didn't work so when he turned his back to write on the blackboard, off-color remarks were made out loud with much merriment. He never seemed to notice.

When I reported to Miami, there were 50,000 boys all called at the same time. We took a 6 hour exam while there much like an SAT exam and an IQ test. I made 128 on the IQ test and scored in the top 20 percent along with Gordon on the big test. It covered math, geography, reading, and comprehending, spelling and a variety of other things. I had only had geometry and trigonometry in high school so I had to leave blank the portion above that level. Since I had studied Latin and French and read all the books I could find, I was able to score well without calculus, etc.

Our stay at Lafayette was determined by those tests so Gordon and I were in the first group to leave in 10 weeks. There was one variation from the daily study routine. There were 200 of us and on every 5th day, a bus would

take 40 of us to the local airfield. Over a 50 day period, we each received 10 hours instruction in the Piper Club single-engine airplane. There were 10 instructors and 10 planes so each instructor had 4 cadets. He showed us the plane, part by part, control by control, over every square inch including the engine. We flew every day and after 10 hours, we each had to solo to finish.

I took off routinely enough but I remember leveling at 1,500 feet to circle the field and I thought, "Well, you're on your own now. Nobody here to get this thing back on the ground in one piece but me". I really felt good when I made a good landing without bouncing. Some of the guys hit the runway too hard, bounced way up and a few damaged the plane. We never saw them after that. Off to gunnery school we heard.

NASHVILLE, TENN.

In April 1943, we boarded another troop train and went thru Bethlehem, PA and Lehigh and on to Nashville. We were used to it by now and actually enjoyed it. We were assigned barracks in Nashville and this was my first experience at trying to sleep in a big room with 40 boys who all snored. It was funny at first.

We filled out questionnaires about what classification we wanted and

naturally nearly all wanted to be a pilot as did Gordon and I. We then spent a month taking tests and physical exams. I remember the eye test especially cause we had to hold two strings that ran thru a 40 foot box about 18 inches square. The strings were attached to two black sticks which were moveable on little tracks in front of a black velvet background 40 feet away. We had to align the sticks side by side to demonstrate our depth perception. This washed out lots of aspiring pilots but Gordon and I made it okay.

Finally, about May 1, we boarded the old train again classified as pilot trainees and headed for Maxwell Field at Montgomery, Ala.

MAXWELL FIELD - PRE FLIGHT TRAINING

MONTGOMERY, ALA

We thought we had been receiving pretty strict military training up to now but we hadn't seen anything yet. The minute we stepped off the train, the officers and upper-classmen had us racked up at attention - heads up, shoulders back, stomachs in, arms straight down with palms in, feet together, eyes front and center. That became a way of life with lots of watchful eyes watching for any deviation.

Gordon and I were assigned a room and issued athletic uniforms, running

shoes, and fatigue uniforms. Our regular army uniforms had Air Corp patches put on them.

In the mess hall, we sat at attention and ate robot-like. Fork to plate, straight out, up to mouth level and in. The knife blade always turned sharp edge toward plate. Woe to the cadet who took the last piece of bread without calling for more. (called "gunning" the bread)

When walking outside any time, we hugged the wall walking as close to it as possible and making square military turns at all corners. Any infraction was punished by walking a given number of tours on Sunday afternoon. This meant walking up and down the parade ground at attention for 1, 2, or 3 hours instead of our only free time.

We now began running any time we were in formation. To classes, to the airfield, to the mess hall, to the athletic field - anywhere. The physical exercise training greatly increased. One hour of side-straddle hops, push-ups, arm waving, body turns, etc during the morning. One hour running the obstacle course in the afternoon. This meant scaling walls, swinging on ropes over big mud holes, climbing ropes, running through long lines of auto tires, and many more that I have forgotten.

Our classwork intensified, especially in meteorology and aerodynamics and aircraft identification. We had to learn to look at a black silhouette of a plane for 2 seconds and identify it. This included all our U. S. planes plus German and Japanese.

We were only off duty on Sunday. Gordon went home one Sunday and brought his car back. It was a '39 Ford coupe and he offered to lend it to me for one Sunday. I left at 5:30 PM on Sat. and drove to Rome by 11 PM. I went to see Frances till 3 AM. Went home and slept 3 hours and visited family and Frances all day and left at 5 PM. On the way back on a 2 lane road, I went sound asleep at the wheel about 9 PM. I awoke when the tires hit a gravel driveway. I opened my eyes and saw an old country church in the headlights right in front of me. I slammed on the brakes and slid right up to within a few feet of the church in a shower of gravel.

I sat there for some time realizing how close I had come to hitting a tree or a culvert or anything. I stared at that old church and thanked God for taking care of me. It seemed like a miracle that the driverless car had gone into that driveway. The highway made a wide sweeping turn and the car had gone straight and the driveway just happened to be in front of me. That episode was

a great influence in strengthening my faith that God does take care of us in mysterious ways. I thought about it many times while flying.

Requisite to graduation, we had to run all the way around Maxwell Air Base, about 7 miles, without even slowing down. They said if we ever bailed out or crash-landed in enemy territory, our best chance was to run ten miles as fast as possible to try to escape capture.

The last month, July, was so hot that heat rash was a problem for everyone, especially on our backs. We were happy to throw everything in our barracks bag and climb on the trucks to head for the rail station.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI

PRIMARY TRAINING

About Aug 1, 1943, we arrived. A row of long, low barracks right at the edge of the airfield. The pace picked up and we began our routine of on duty 9 days and off 1 day whenever the 10th day happened to fall.

It was up at 5 AM and either in class or on the flight line till 5 PM. In class, we continued study of aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation, radio, and morse code. I completed the required sending and receiving speed in morse code in about 6 weeks and had that 45 minute period free for the last 2 weeks.

It seemed like a little vacation.

We met the Fairchild PT-19 single engine, single-wing, open cockpit, 195 horsepower airplane. We began with landings and take-offs on to acrobatics all with an instructor flying with us. As soon as we passed on all three, we began flying alone to build my flight time and just fly around getting used to it and familiar with flying. It was the most pleasant part of all the flying I ever did. I would have a whole hour to fly as I pleased. I loved to go find some big summer cumulus clouds and zoom down long twisting white canyons through the clouds just like bob-sledding. It was exhilarating to feel such wonderful freedom with just me and white clouds and blue sky. I twisted and turned and circled huge clouds just hugging their edge and slipping through white tunnels to see what the other side looked like. I began to feel the pressure of my body against the seat so that I could actually fly with my eyes closed and know exactly what the plane was doing. I suppose that was the purpose of it, for me to become a part of the machine.

It passed all too quickly and about Oct 1, it was time to throw all my stuff into my duffel bag and head for the train station.

MALDEN, MISSOURI

BASIC TRAINING

More long narrow barracks right on the flight line. Same forty boys in my barracks snoring all night only I was always too tired to hear them. Lights out at 9:30 PM and sound sleep till 5 AM.

Things now increased in complexity. Our plane was now a Vultee B-15 (nick-named the Vultee Vibrator). It had a 450 horsepower engine, a plexi-glass canopy that closed in the cockpit and lots more instruments and controls. The biggest change right off was having a variable-pitch propeller. The full low pitch of prop made it almost flat and could rev up to very high speed. This was always used for take-off or any time that required full power. After we reached the desired altitude, we changed it to a high pitch which took a bigger bite out of the air and maintained cruising speed with much less throttle.

We had a written check list in each cockpit naming every procedure for starting, taxiing, checking magnetos, check flaps and controls, prop pitch and many more. I only got too cocky one time and failed to go through the check list one item at a time. It was not a habit forming thing to forget to go through the list. There were just too many things to do to try to rely on memory. I did it all except check my prop pitch. I took off, or rather gave it full throttle on

the runway, and got about 20 feet off the ground. It was a big field but had a forest all around it. I passed the end of the runway and flew across the field with a line of trees in front of me. The trees were getting closer and I wasn't climbing. I looked at all the instruments and suddenly realized I was in high pitch. I slammed the pitch control into low pitch and roared up just clearing the tree tops. It was a permanent lesson and I lived by that check-list from that day. When I landed, some of my buddies said, "Man, that was a hot pilot take-off. You had us worried for a minute." I never told anyone how stupid I had been and how near I had come to dying young.

Another big thrill came when I was flying with my instructor and at about 6,000 ft, he rolled the plane upside down and said "okay, you take it." The nose was dipping slightly so I instinctively pulled back the stick to raise the nose only that put us into a completely vertical dive. The air speed indicator instantly moved up over 500 miles per hour into the red-lined danger zone which meant the plane wasn't built to withstand that much speed without beginning to disintegrate. He grabbed the controls and pulled us out and went straight in and landed. He began screaming at me before he even opened the canopy and kept at it for a good five minutes. When he finally ran out of breath, I

explained that I had never tried to fly upside down before and failed to realize that the controls worked backwards. He began again about showing me all that in a lesson the previous week. When he ran out of breath again, I just handed him my log book which showed no such thing. He eventually muttered something about confusing me with one of his other students and abruptly left.

He was the same instructor who later would fly about 30 miles away to a practice field and get out and tell me to practice landings and take-offs for 40 minutes and come back for him. From the air, I could see him sitting in a convertible with his blonde girl-friend who had arranged to meet him there. I used to wonder what eventually happened to Lt. Burns.

We became accustomed to the BT-15 though I missed wearing goggles with the wind in my face. The noise was far louder too but our radio ear-phones deadened most of it.

We still flew 9 days and off one and the only outside activity was to go by bus to Pine Bluff, Arkansas about 40 min away. We went to the main little cafe there and had a huge T-bone steak that covered the platter for \$1.00. Back to the field and lie on the bunk and write letters.

When I happened to wake during the night, it seemed I always heard a

train whistle far away. It was the saddest sound I ever heard, before or since. I had begun to realize that it would be a very long time before I could go home, if ever. Mail call every day with letters from Frances and home became more and more important.

Finally, Dec 1, 1943 arrived and we left Malden gladly.

STUTTGART, ARKANSAS

ADVANCED TRAINING

The old phrase, "seeing double", now became our way of life. Two of every instrument to watch. We would now fly the Cessna AT-10 twin-engine cabin plane. No more acrobatics, emphasis on navigation, radio contact, instrument flying, weather. The first big change was learning the importance of synchronizing the RPM of the two propellers. They had to turn at exactly the same speed or they developed vibration and a terrible sound. Also we learned to watch the fuel tanks and fuel transfer between tanks. We had no radar and depended on the radio compass. We could tune in 3 stations, draw vector lines and pinpoint our location. We began to take long (300 miles) trips to a check-point, on to another and return. Also same sort of trips at night. Gordon and I flew together a lot and enjoyed it.

We headed for Texarkana, Texas on one trip and as we approached Texas, two huge thunder heads built up in front of us. We first thought we could go on and fly between them but as we drew quite near, they merged into a solid dark wall of clouds. We were thankful we weren't between them and made a 180 degree turn to go back the way we came. One of our planes was lost in a big storm and we had been thoroughly briefed on the dangers of updrafts and down-drafts and severe turbulence inside such a cloud.

There was no town and no outside activity away from our field so mail was our only contact with the world.

In January, we had a blizzard one night and we all had to report to the flight line and hang on to ropes tied to the wings. The planes rocked and tried to lift but none were damaged. We wore wool uniforms, scarf, long wool overcoat and gloves and nearly froze anyway. The snow and sleet never seemed to hit the ground. It was all going sideways about 40 or 50 miles per hour. Next day was sunny and it seemed like a dream about snow.

We could hardly believe that the hard work was nearly over but on Feb 8, 1944, we were commissioned 2nd Lts. in The Army Air Corps.

We received the green officer uniforms with bars on the shoulders and

silver wings on the chest with pearl grey pants (we called them pinks).

Five days of leave to go home before reporting to Maxwell Field, Ala. The train just seemed to crawl along. Between seeing Frances and my family, I don't recall ever going to sleep during those 5 days.

MAXWELL FIELD, ALA

B-24 TRANSITION

From one extreme to the other! From the depths to the heights! We had been here at Maxwell the previous summer as aviation cadets being ordered around by everyone, officers, staff, and upper-classmen. We stood at attention around the clock. I think I even slept at attention, flat on my back with hands at sides. Now we were back as Lieutenants, with bars on our shoulders and silver wings on our chests. We were addressed as "sir" and we did the ordering. It was exhilarating! Gordon and I were room-mates once again. Two to a room with real beds instead of bunks. We could go to the officer's club and eat ice cream and just smile at the world.

We only had 2 months to master the B-24 Liberator and from then on, it was our baby. The plane had four Pratt and Whitney engines of 1800 horsepower each, 110 ft wingspread, twin rudders, tanks held 2700 gallons of

100 octane gasoline. We carried ten fifty caliber machine guns. Two in the nose turret, 2 in the tail turret, 2 in the top turret in the roof just behind the flight deck, 2 in the ball turret which was lowered in the belly behind the bomb bays after take-off and one each in the two waist windows. It all came to about 62,000 pounds.

Our instructor was a wiry little man who looked and sounded like Humphrey Bogart. Each instructor had 4 pilots. Ours were Gordon, me, Vic Grimes, and Vic Golat. We all flew together every day plus a master sergeant engineer who kept tabs on the fuel and the plane in general.

Take-offs and landings were first, of course. We took turns over and over going through the check-list every time. The plane landed, or touched down, at 130 miles per hour which has not changed since. Modern air-liners like the 737 still touch down at 130 MPH. Those huge tires were hanging still when they touched the concrete runway and that was the cause of the blue smoke at each landing when the concrete literally burned off a little rubber on contact. They averaged 16 to 20 landings and replaced the tires. They have tougher tires today.

The pilot concentrated on flying and direction and the co-pilot

concentrated on watching four sets of instruments, plus flaps, trim tabs, radio, etc.

Capt. Tibbs, our instructor, wanted to show us the limits of a B-24 so we took a plane that was completely stripped to lower the weight and climbed to 43,000 feet. We could see the curvature of the earth and it was our first experience at 30 (degrees) below zero.

Near the end of our stay, we had a sort of farewell fun trip. Capt Tibbs, four pilots and two engineers took off early one morning and flew to Casper, Wyoming. The mid-west looked like a checker-board since most roads ran either north and south or east and west. We spent the night at Casper, on to Salt Lake City next day. We arrived at Salt Lake and found clouds completely covering it. We circled for about an hour and Capt Tibbs saw a hole in the clouds and down we went. There are mountains all around it so we had to stay visual. We had flown with a black hood over the cockpit in training, flying completely on instruments but that was strictly a no-no with mountains all around.

We had a good meal and went over and had a look at the Mormon Tabernacle but no one was there.

Left early next morn and down to Arizona and Capt Tibbs took the pilots seat and actually buzzed the Grand Canyon. We went down it from one end to the other sometimes looking out the window at the rim.

WESTOVER FIELD, MASS

About mid-April, 1944, we packed up and boarded a DC-3 and flew to Westover Field, Mass. This was a gathering place where crews were assigned. Almost at once, I received orders listing my whole crew and we boarded a train for Charleston, S. C.

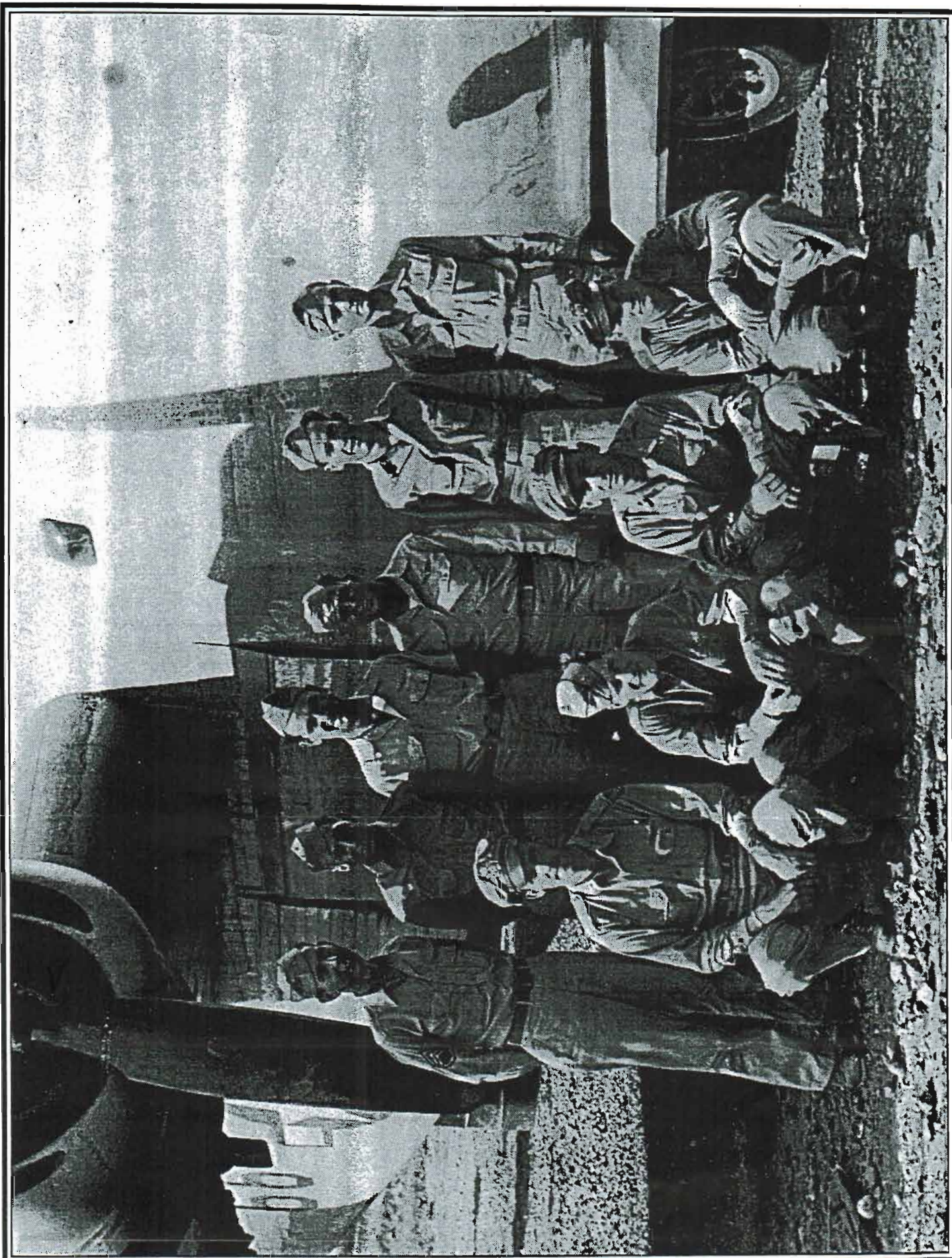
CHARLESTON ARMY AIR BASE, S. C.

OPERATIONAL TRAINING

Flight training was finished and I was now an airplane commander of a crew of ten. We only needed to practice bombing, formation flying, navigation over water, and air-to-air machine gun firing and then overseas.

Our crew was:

Pilot	James A. Formby	Rome, GA
Co-pilot	Dan Sweeney	Pittsburgh, PA
Navigator	Lewis Weinberg	Bronx, NY
Bombardier	Winfield C. Llewellyn	Johnstown, PA
Engineer	Hogan	Tennessee
Asst-Engineer	T J Hall	DeFuniak Springs, FL
Nose gunner	Nick Lopez	Erie, PA
Tail gunner	Robt L Marker	Detroit Mich



FORMBY

**Waist gunner/ Norman Raio
Radioman
Ball turret John DeLaMar
gunner**

Hartford, Conn

Reno, Nevada

It was my responsibility to awaken all at 4:45 AM, go to breakfast, attend briefing on the flight plans for the day, go over the weather report and get to the flight line at 6:30. We did a complete pre-flight check on the plane, controls, fuel equipment, ammo, fluid, oxygen, etc. Take-off was usually 7:30 AM

For bombing practice, we carried small black-powder bombs of about 200 lbs. each. We usually dropped from about 18,000 to 20,000 feet and the targets were large circles painted on the sand of Myrtle Beach. That area was closed off for several miles. I would fly into position heading north or south along the beach, put the controls into auto-pilot, and Llewellyn, our bombardier, would take over control by means of the Norden Bomb-sight which was connected to the auto-pilot and could make small corrections as needed to pin-point the target. Photos were made of the smoke from the bomb strikes and scored accordingly.

Formation flying was a new experience keeping our wing-tip about 50 feet from the adjoining plane. It took lots more control and concentration than any

previous flying. We flew in the standard ten-plane box of 3, 3, 3, and 1. The pilots were constantly reminded to never let a wing tip get into the prop-wash of a leading plane. It could flip one plane into another in a second. We later saw it happen once over the Adriatic Sea. We practiced level flying, wide sweeping turns, climbing and descending and peeling off to land. We flew quite a bit at 15,000 ft to become accustomed to our oxygen masks.

For machine gun target practice, a tow plane would pull a big sleeve on a long cable and I would move our plane over it, under it, and parallel so they could fire from different angles. I didn't see much of it as I was busy keeping the plane in proper position relative to the tow plane. The ammo belts had a tracer as every fifth bullet so they could see where their shots were going. Then they examined the sleeve on the ground and counted holes.

The navigation over water was to give experience flying over water with no land in sight and also to let our navigator test his skill in getting us to the proper check points and back. We flew from Charleston down the Atlantic to the Bahamas, over to the Florida coast and back home. We circled over the Bahamas at 2,500 feet for about 15 minutes looking at the most beautiful water I had ever seen. The coral sand beneath the sea made every shade of blue and

green with the brilliant white sand as a border. We checked in with the tower and enjoyed their British accent. We were hoping for engine trouble or some excuse to land but couldn't think of a way. Near the end of our duty at Charleston, one of our planes failed to return and we left before we heard any more. It was some years later that I realized we had been in the Bermuda Triangle.

In walking from the barracks to the mess hall, or anywhere, we would pass German prisoners working on the base, cutting grass or shrubbery or something. Big blond boys with a universal surly, sullen look like they deeply resented manual labor after being the Master Race.

About this time, things came to a head with our engineer, Hogan. It had become apparent that he didn't know his job and didn't care. Also his personal hygiene was appalling and the whole crew asked me to get rid of him. James E. Robinette of Conover, N.C. worked in the supply room and was an engineer who had been in the hospital when his crew went overseas without him so by mutual agreement, he became our engineer. A vast improvement. I felt better about the exchange than anyone as I depended a lot on my engineer.

I had two visits from home. Frances rode the train by herself all the way

from Rome and spent a week-end at the St. Francis Hotel. Win and Mary Anne were there and Lew Weinberg and wife Gladys. It was the last time to see Frances before we went overseas and we had a great week-end. Very hard to say goodbye. My sister, Irene, came the week-end before and I really appreciated it. It was a long, hard trip for both of them. On one practice cross-country navigational training trip, we flew to Rome, GA and flew up and down Broad St and I could see Frances out on the sidewalk in front of the bank waving. Also saw Ethelene and Mama in the yard at home waving. I knew of one crew who buzzed the pilot's house and got too low and crashed killing the whole crew. I promised my crew that I would get no lower than 1,500 feet which met with their hearty approval. We did run the prop pitch up and down over Broad St and must have rattled a lot of windows.

On one night practice navigational trip, we passed over Lookout Mt. at Chattanooga and must have flown through a large thunderstorm. We had no radar and at night, the only warning of bad weather was seeing lightning. We dropped vertically about 300 ft and stopped with a jolt and flew out of it. The blood rushed to my head and then to my feet and I nearly blacked out. It was a thrilling few minutes. No one was hurt but it scared hell out of us all.

Suddenly, all training was finished and we left by train headed for the real thing.

MITCHELL FIELD, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

EMBARKATION

As airplane commander, I was handed sealed, confidential orders to proceed to the 15th Air Force in Italy to join the 454th Bomb Squadron in the 304th Wing. Our route would be to Gander, Newfoundland, Azores Island, North Africa to Italy. I signed a receipt for a brand new, shiny, silver, 4 engine bomber, the B-24 Liberator. We were to fly it to Cerignola, Italy, San Giovanni Air Base which would be our home for the next year. The serial number on the tail was 569 which was Frances' post office box number in Rome, GA. I thought that was a good omen.

We had no supervision and no schedule to meet except reveille every morning at 6:30 AM for roll call. We arrived at 10 AM and left 3 days later. We went straight to New York City on the commuter train and caught the last train back to the field every morning at 3 AM. We arrived at the barracks about 4 AM, lay down in our clothes till 6:30 AM reveille sounded. After roll call, we showered, changed clothes, ate breakfast and left. It was our last

contact with civilian life and 2 1/2 hours sleep seemed plenty. We were all in the peak of physical condition and couldn't sit still. I did learn to take naps sitting straight up on the train.

We went to the top of the Empire State Building and all over New York. We went to the two biggest night clubs, Stage Door Canteen and the Latin Quarter. One evening, Sweeney, Llewellyn, and I were invited with Lew Weinberg to dinner at his mother's in the Bronx. After reveille the second day, they asked us to take our plane up for a shake-down cruise for about an hour and a half. We actually flew all around the Empire State Building and had a good long look at New York harbor and up the Hudson River a way. It was first class sight seeing of the whole area.

All too soon, we were scheduled to leave. They gave us a sack with about 50 paper-back books to read in Italy.

There were 23 planes with our same orders in our squadron and we all left on the third for Gander, Newfoundland. We flew up the New England coast and there seemed to be dozens and dozens of tree-covered islands along the coast. There was an unending stream of planes like us enroute and had become backed up at Gander so we were all told by radio to land at Presque Isle,

Maine. We spent the night and caught up on our sleep.

Next afternoon, on to Gander. A big storm had blown up in the Atlantic and we had to wait a whole week on the weather.

Gander was a bleak, rocky place with no beach, just rocks. The one PX and recreation room was always packed. They had two pool tables and we had to take a number and wait a couple of hours. I saw a red-haired lieutenant across the room and commented that he looked exactly like an old friend from Rome, Ga named Harry Fisher. About an hour later, I happened to be near him and he grinned at me! It was Harry.

We really got rested up during that week. Too rested, we thought. Everyone wanted to get going. It was tough just waiting.

At last, good weather and on July 15, 1944, we left. Our 23 planes took off at ten minute intervals, strung out in a long line headed out over the Atlantic Ocean. Our plane took off at 15 minutes past midnight heading for the Azores Island to stop for fuel. We had 2,700 gallons of 100 octane gasoline but we would be in the air for ten hours before getting to the Azores. Our navigator knew that he had a heavy responsibility because if we missed the Azores, we would run out of gas on the way to Africa.

They gave us ten big box lunches of sandwiches and stuff and we put the plane on auto-pilot and had a picnic about 3:30 A. M. Then the crew started a big crap game on the floor of the flight deck behind my seat. Everyone stopped to watch the beautiful sunrise over the ocean. We flew at 9,000 feet and the view was spectacular.

At 10 AM, someone spotted a dark speck on the horizon dead ahead and sure enough, it was the Azores! First leg completed. Lew had really worked non-stop while the rest of us were enjoying the ride. He kept plotting our position on the big map and checking on the stars and the sun with his navigational equipment.

We couldn't set foot off the base cause they said the water was dangerous and there was lots of disease on the island. Also the natives seemed to resent our being there. I guess the noise of so many planes was not pleasant either.

Next morning, off again to Marrakech, Morocco. The sight of the Atlas mountains on the coast and then the desert was like another world. The landing field was made of steel mats linked together and stretched out over the sand to form a runway. No one had warned us of the noise and when we landed, the crew thought we had crashed. The steel mats vibrated, the whole plane

vibrated, my teeth vibrated, and the noise was deafening. We turned off the end of the runway and there was about a one foot dip in the mat that was not apparent. As our front wheel came up, the tail struck the mat causing a small tear in the skin around the tail skid. Instead of re-fueling and going on with the others, we had to stay overnight while they fixed the plane.

We had been cool and comfortable at 9,000 feet and suddenly we stepped out into white-hot sun and 140 degrees temperature. This was the moment of my introduction to the famous Lister Bag. I said "where is the water?". They just pointed to a canvas bag about four feet long and 18 inches wide suspended in a tri-pod of poles. It had a little spigot on the side so I filled my canteen cup and took a huge drink. I thought I had been poisoned and coughed and sputtered and choked. It must have been 3 parts water and one part chlorine. There was no other safe way to drink the available water. We had some powdered lemonade envelopes in our departure packets and that saved us. At least it toned down the chlorine enough to enable us to get it past our noses.

About an hour before sundown, the ocean and the desert began cooling at different rates which caused a strong wind to blow from the desert. We saw this huge sandstorm coming and the man I was talking to said "Here, step under

this shower with me". He pulled the rope and we stood under the shower for several minutes and the sand was gone. I was soaking wet from head to foot but five minutes later, I was bone dry. The humidity must have been zero.

The native quarter was off limits but someone pointed out the officers club on the base. It was a beautiful old building that the Air Corps had taken over. We went in and asked for a cold drink. The man smiled and said "How about a cool drink?". We had canned fruit juice and cognac with no ice. They didn't know what ice was. We tried to pay but were told they could only accept bar chits which were issued to those stationed there. Since we couldn't pay, we decided to have another.

Next morning we left. Our squadron was long gone by now. North to Algiers and east to Tunisia. We were flying across the huge expanse of sand of the Sahara Desert when one engine just quit. My eyes flew over the instrument panel without seeing anything abnormal and then I spotted the ignition switch for that engine in "OFF" position. I spoke on intercom, "Sweeney, you had your foot up there on the instrument panel and kicked the ignition switch off". He flicked it on and I said no more but the minute we landed, the crew rode him hard. We had enough to worry about without internal goof-ups. Landed at

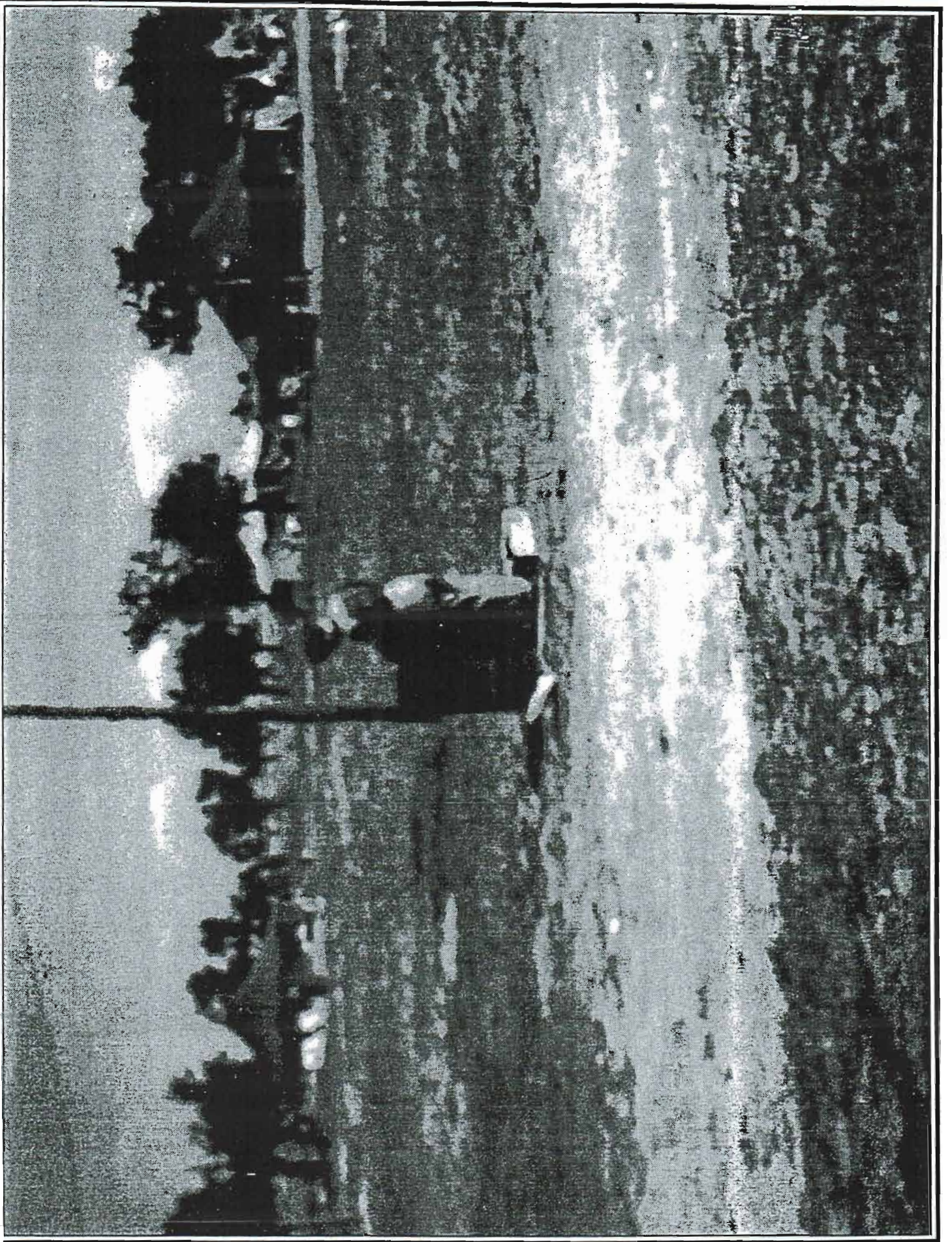
Tunis, refueled and off again. We flew right alongside Sicily and saw all the debris of war for the first time. Shot-up landing craft all down the beach. A few crashed aircraft and bomb craters. It must have been a whale of a fight. We reached the boot of Italy and north to Cerignola about due west of the spur of the boot.

San Giovanni Air Base

Cerignola, Italy

San Giovanni army Air Base was the home of the 454th Bomb Group of the 304th Wing. The field had 2 unpaved runways with steel link mats and a squadron based at each of the four corners. We were assigned to the 739th Squadron and since the other squadrons were over a mile away with no transportation, we only saw them in the air.

The squadron headquarters, supply room, and mess hall were in a low stone building on the flight line. The building must have been a barn at one time. A one-lane dirt road led to an olive orchard about 200 yards away. We were directed to a four-man tent with a central pole and a cot in each corner. Our six enlisted men of the crew were similarly quartered in another olive orchard about 200 yards further on.



TENT AREA

The Group Officers Club was another stone building a short distance behind the olive orchard. It had a huge living room with a fireplace and a bar on one side. Any crews who were not scheduled to fly next day usually dropped in. The fireplace was especially nice when it was raining or snowing. We were there when our co-pilot, Dan Sweeney, received a telegram that his brother had been killed at St. Lo, France.

T. J. Hall built a wooden door to our tent with a trap door at the top so we could look out without opening the door. We cut a 55 gallon metal drum in half with a little door in the bottom edge. We put a 55 gallon drum of 100 octane gasoline outside the tent and ran a little copper tube to our half drum stove. It dripped onto a small pile of sandstone rocks and made a cozy fire. A cut-off valve adjusted the amount of drip. The stove would get quite hot and made the tent comfortable in the coldest weather. We also swapped cigarette packages for eggs from Italians and boiled eggs on our stove.

One of our crews thought their stove was off but it was still dripping a tiny bit. They came back from a mission and when the co-pilot turned on the valve and struck a match, a big flash put him in the hospital for quite a while.

When we arrived in August, we were issued a canvas mattress cover in the



GROUP OFFICERS CLUB

shape of a cot but no mattress. We just slid down in them and used them as sheets. Someone had the bright idea of filling them with hay to make a mattress. It was soft and comfortable but about 2 A.M. we all woke up scratching all over since the hay was full of mites, fleas, and we didn't know what else.

When the crew in the tent next to ours blew up over the target about a month later, I took the air mattress that their pilot had obtained and I slept much better. Only their personal effects such as pictures, letters, etc were sent home.

We rigged up a shelf on an olive tree and affixed a mirror above it. We used a helmet liner to warm a little water in and that was where we shaved. To save time shaving, I grew a mustache which grew way out and curled up at the ends. Our Italian cook called me Lieutenant Mustachio.

Every night soon after dusk, someone walked past our tent whistling "walking my baby back home." We would say "there goes Dave Thorn". Been down to see if the bulletin board had anything new.

We had a rather informal chain of command. I only reported to our squadron commander who scheduled which planes and crews would go on the

next mission. My crew was responsible only to me. My primary responsibility was to be constantly aware of the welfare of my crew and their whereabouts at all times. If one was sick or couldn't fly for any reason, I needed to know in time to line up a replacement. This was seldom as no one wanted to get behind in number of missions flown.

The grill in the mess hall had been rubbed with garlic cloves so much and so long that everything tasted like garlic. We finally got used to garlic-flavored flapjacks. The garlic seemed to improve the dried, powdered eggs and potatoes. One morning, we carried some fresh eggs which we bought with cigarettes and had the cook serve us fried eggs with our flapjacks. The squadron commander, Major Swanson, came in, saw our eggs and ordered some for himself. The Italian cook explained that he didn't have any as we had brought our own. Next day, notice went up that no more eggs would be allowed in mess hall as it was bad for morale. Dog in the manger.

Mail call was at least once a week and sometimes twice. Amazing how fast the word spread when the mail arrived. We mostly wrote home asking for a box of food. I received catsup and mustard and cookies. Weinberg received salami, sardines, and kippers. Llewellyn received a box of soap. We nearly

made him eat it. I tried to write Frances and my family every night but I missed a lot of nights after we flew. Mail call was everyone's high point of the week.

They would occasionally bring in a film and projector and we would have a movie in a big tent. One night we were watching a movie and Dinah Shore was singing "I'll Walk Alone." They were loading 2,700 gallons of 100 octane gasoline into a plane when a spark caused an explosion. The concussion blew the tent down on top of us. I was near one edge and crawled out between the benches. The two ground crew with the gas were killed but no one in the tent was hurt.

We were walking back to our tent one night when a machine gun being loaded with belts of ammo on a plane ran away and began firing just over our area. The tracers lit up the sky and we dived into the nearest fox-hole. No one was hurt but we got mud all over us.

We had an eight-hole latrine built over a big hole to serve our area. One night, the dinner was spaghetti with meat sauce. It was much tastier than our usual fare and everyone ate a lot. About 2 AM, over 200 men were lined up at the latrine yelling "hurry up in there!". The next morning, the snow all around

there was pock-marked with dark holes where people just couldn't wait.

The ground crew worked most of the night getting the planes ready. They filled fuel tanks, loaded bombs, loaded ammo belts into all ten machine guns on each plane and had ten planes ready to roll by dawn.

When it snowed, it was usually big wet flakes and heavy. We had to take turns getting up every hour or two to knock the snow off the tent. The tent would begin sagging down on all four sides of the center pole till we knocked it off by pushing up the tent from inside.

Snow was only a problem for those who were posted on the bulletin board as next to fly. We were so listed for one period of three weeks and every morning at 5 AM we were awakened by an orderly in a jeep saying "5 AM. Time to go!". We ate breakfast, went to briefing, down to the flight line and cleaned all the snow off the plane. We warmed up the engines and as soon as all was ready, a red flare would go up meaning "stand-down" meaning mission canceled. We had to go through the entire routine very carefully because there was always the chance that we would actually go. Those scheduled not to fly, slept late and enjoyed a vacation. Same at night, we were in bed by 9 PM and the rest stayed up late at the club or playing cards or whatever.



LLEWELLYN

FORMBY

WEINBERG

The Lord worked in mysterious ways to bring us home. I only got sick once while there. I couldn't eat breakfast one morning and stuck a pancake in my pocket hoping I would feel like eating it before we took off. I made it to briefing and then just collapsed. They put me in the quonset-hut infirmary for three days with a high fever. Our operations officer, Capt. Dunlap, took my place and our crew went ahead on the mission. Just after take-off, the plane lost an engine and Capt. Dunlap immediately jettisoned the bomb load which didn't explode cause we didn't arm them till on the way. He made a sharp left turn down a valley that he knew about from circling our field during the day while we were on a mission. He would take up a plane with a new engine and slow-time it by flying around the field for an hour. I didn't know about the valley and would have flown straight ahead into the hills trying to gain altitude on three engines which is next to impossible. I didn't tell our crew that I thought it was a miracle that they were alive but I sure thought about it a lot.

COMBAT

The big moment finally arrived on Aug 15. Our squadron commander, Capt Unger, said he wanted me to fly my first mission with him as his co-pilot to learn the procedures of assembling in formation, flying to the target in

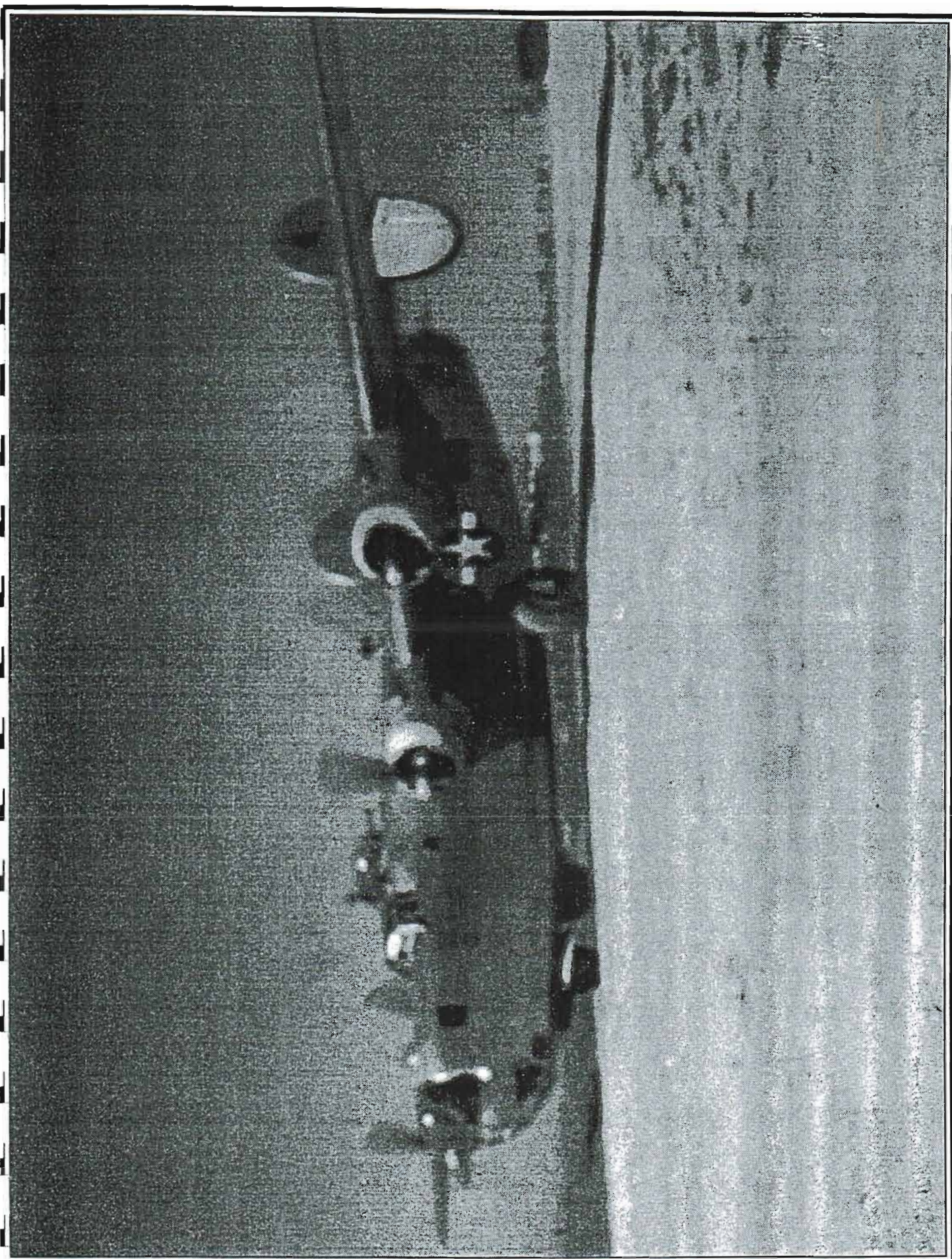


BACK ROW: LEWELLYN, WEINBERG, SWENEY, FORMBY, ROBINETTE, MARKER
FRONT ROW: RAIO, LOPEZ, HA

formation, bomb run, rally, trip home, peeling off to land, etc. We went to briefing and the target was Ploesti, Romania. The oil fields we needed to knock out. As briefing dismissed, a full colonel came roaring up in a jeep and told Capt. Unger that he would fly with him as co-pilot. They just went off and left me standing there. That afternoon, the squadron came back and reported that Capt. Unger's plane went down over the target. It was a strange feeling to realize how close I had come to ending my tour on the first trip.

Aug. 18, I flew as co-pilot with a Capt. Jenkins and it was Ploesti again. The Campina Oil Refinery. We could see a huge column of black smoke from 50 miles as we approached and knew that the planes ahead had sure hit some oil. It only took a minute or two to fly right through that smoke and drop our bombs but it seemed a long time. We lost two planes and Drozan was flying one. We had flown together a lot and I hurt for him.

Aug. 22, I flew as co-pilot with Lt. Willfinger to Bleckhammer, Germany. We had seen some flak at Ploesti but nothing like this time. The flashes and puffs of smoke seemed to be all around us. Shortly after we left the target, German fighter planes, ME109's attacked us. A hole about the size of a half dollar appeared in the wind-shield right in front of me. I asked Willfinger what



"OFF WE GO!"

happened and he pointed to a similar hole above my head to the right. He said later that it was a shell from a 20 millimeter cannon fired by a fighter plane and was supposed to explode on contact. It had been a dud and failed to explode coming in or going out. The object had been to kill the pilot and co-pilot and down the plane. Two missions later, Willfinger had to ditch his plane in the Adriatic Sea.

Aug. 27. At last, I took my whole crew on our first trip together. Back to Bleckhammer, Germany again. The flak was even more intense and got so close we could hear a "whump" when one exploded. We dropped bombs as scheduled and peeled left and down as planned but the waist gunners called on the intercom and said engine #2 and #4 were both spewing smoke and black oil out the back. The instrument panel showed rapidly falling oil pressure and manifold pressure on both engines, so we got both shut down and feathered before all pressure was lost.

We were immediately aware of two major problems. One was the height of the Alps in front of us like an enormous fence between Germany and home. We had to remain high enough to clear the Alps or else. We opened the two remaining engines wide open with full throttle and full manifold pressure and

watched the squadron gradually fade from sight as they left us. Our airspeed was greatly diminished and we were losing altitude very slowly. All my training had taught me that an engine running wide open would get so hot that it would either seize up or explode. We had no choice. We cleared the Alps with less than a thousand feet to spare and throttled back slightly to start a slow descent heading south down the Adriatic Sea.

To digress for a moment, our other major problem was our vulnerability to German fighters. They loved to spot a lone, crippled plane and easily shoot it down. Two P-38 planes appeared as our squadron flew on away and stayed with us till well away from the target. We were going so slow that they had to fly lazy eights above us to stay near. They saved our bacon.

As we headed south, we knew that we might lose another engine at any minute. Our navigator gave me a heading for the nearest sanctuary, a little 3,500 foot British landing strip at Vis, Yugoslavia. We headed straight for it, very slowly losing altitude. We were in sight of it when another engine suddenly quit. As we started dropping, I yelled at the engineer who had been standing behind me to do something quick. He leaped back to the flight deck and the engine started up. Twenty years later, Frances and I visited him in Conover,

NC and he confessed that he had not bothered to transfer any fuel from the dead engines to the good ones because he didn't think we had a chance anyway. If that engine had failed to restart at once, we would all have been killed on that rocky coast because of his lack of faith. We went down the coast on our downwind leg at 4,000 ft which was way too high but I figured if another engine quit, I would still have a chance. The little strip paralleled the rocky coast with more big rocks at each end. I completely cut the throttle and lowered 10 degrees of flaps and made a diving turn to line up with the runway. We were still doing 140 miles per hour and it wouldn't touch down over 130. I said "Lord, it's up to you. I can't make it." Then I heard my old instructor's voice, Capt. Tibbs, saying, "try a high-speed stall, Jim". I put one foot on the panel and pulled the wheel tight against my chest. The plane shuddered and touched ground. I yelled "pop'em" on the intercom and the two waist gunners pulled the rip cord on their parachutes which they had hooked to the gun mounts in the waist windows. We had two parachutes and one last application of hydraulic brakes (red hydraulic fluid was all over the flight deck from flak holes in the lines) and we stopped at the end of the strip looking at the boulders in front of us. Our intercom was usually full of chatter and banter by all and I had not realized how

eerily quiet the plane had been until someone said, "Well, a B-24 makes a pretty good church, doesn't it." I agreed.

We gathered up our gear and started toward a little town nearby. We were hot and steamed up and there was the harbor in the beautiful blue Adriatic. As a spontaneous reaction, everyone stripped to his shorts and plunged in. It was short-lived fun though as we realized that raw sewage was floating all around us. We couldn't get out fast enough and then had to put our clothes on over the scummy water on our bodies.

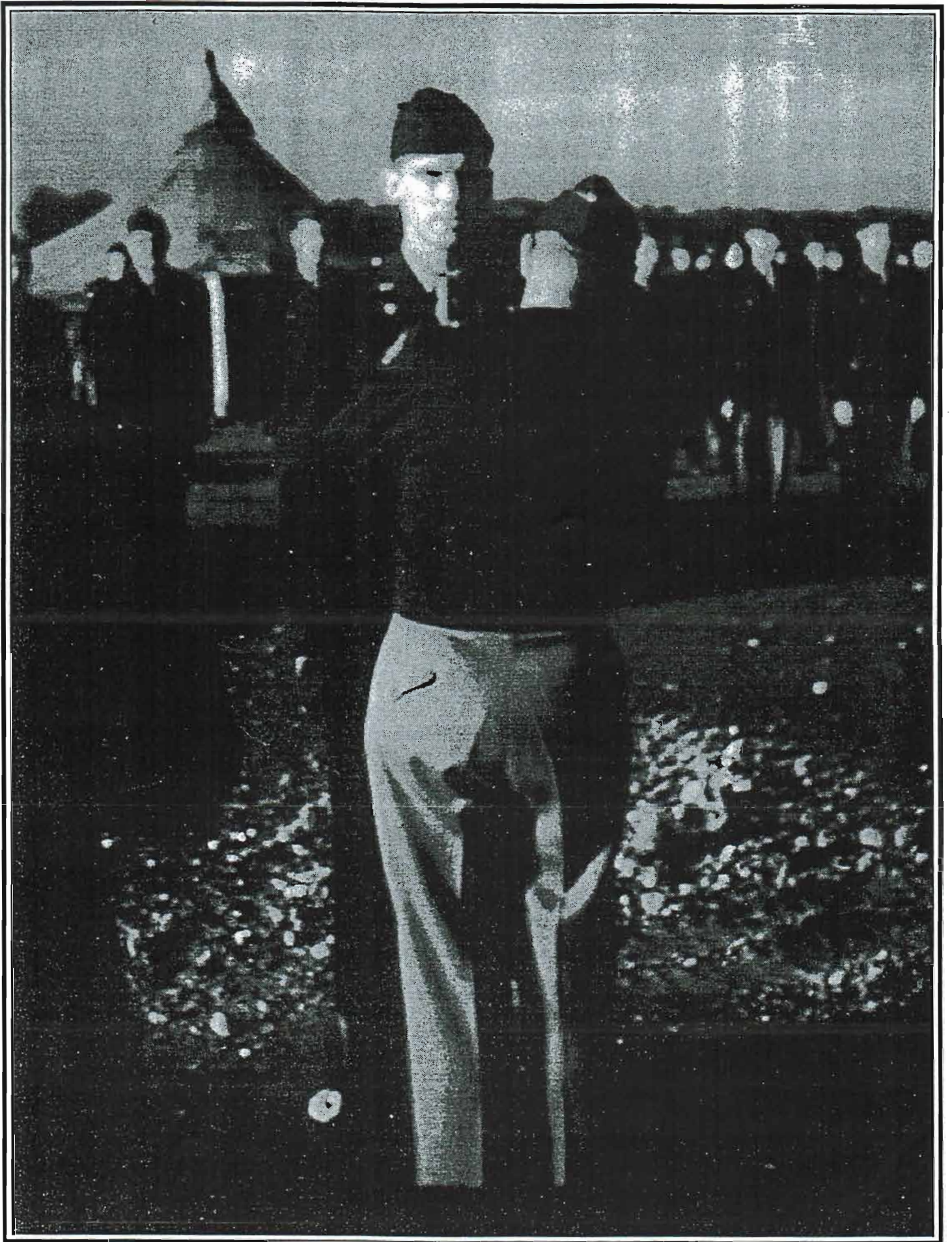
It had been pre-arranged that the Serbs, known as the Partisans, would be paid for returning downed airmen to Italy. All 10 of us climbed aboard a little 2 masted boat with two Partisans who couldn't speak anything except their own language. We could fly across the Adriatic Sea in 20 minutes but the boat took 3 days. Twice a day, we received a thick slice of black bread and a cup of white wine. Every time I dozed off, I would dream about huge mounds of Krystal hamburgers.

We docked at Bari, Italy and saw a British Red Cross stand. They gave us each a slab of corned beef in a hard roll and I have never enjoyed food so much. We were taken straight to the hospital, stripped to the skin and all our

clothes were burned. We showered for nearly an hour with some sort of lye soap and finally felt clean. A truck was waiting to bounce us over 60 miles to base. They had given us clean clothes.

I was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission.

Sept 2. We flew the next day due to a shortage of crews. On Aug 27, 43 planes failed to return of which we were one. This was a short and easy trip to bomb a railroad marshalling yard at Nis, Yugoslavia and we felt much better about the whole thing. This time though, we only had 9 men and had to carry a substitute ball gunner. When we returned to base from Bari, our ball gunner, John DeLaMar, announced that he would never fly again. At first, I thought he was joking but he wasn't. I said "You can't do that. Nobody has ever just quit!" He said "they can do whatever they want to but I won't fly". He had been a staff sergeant but they broke him to a buck private, transferred him to the infantry, and sent him to the Fifth Army at the battle of Casino. We never heard from him again. Two years later, I wrote him at his home address in Nevada but my letter was returned marked "Addressee Unknown". He just disappeared. In my letter, I told him that we had all come home safely after flying all our missions and hoped he had made it okay to. His lack of faith had



D. F. C. AWARD

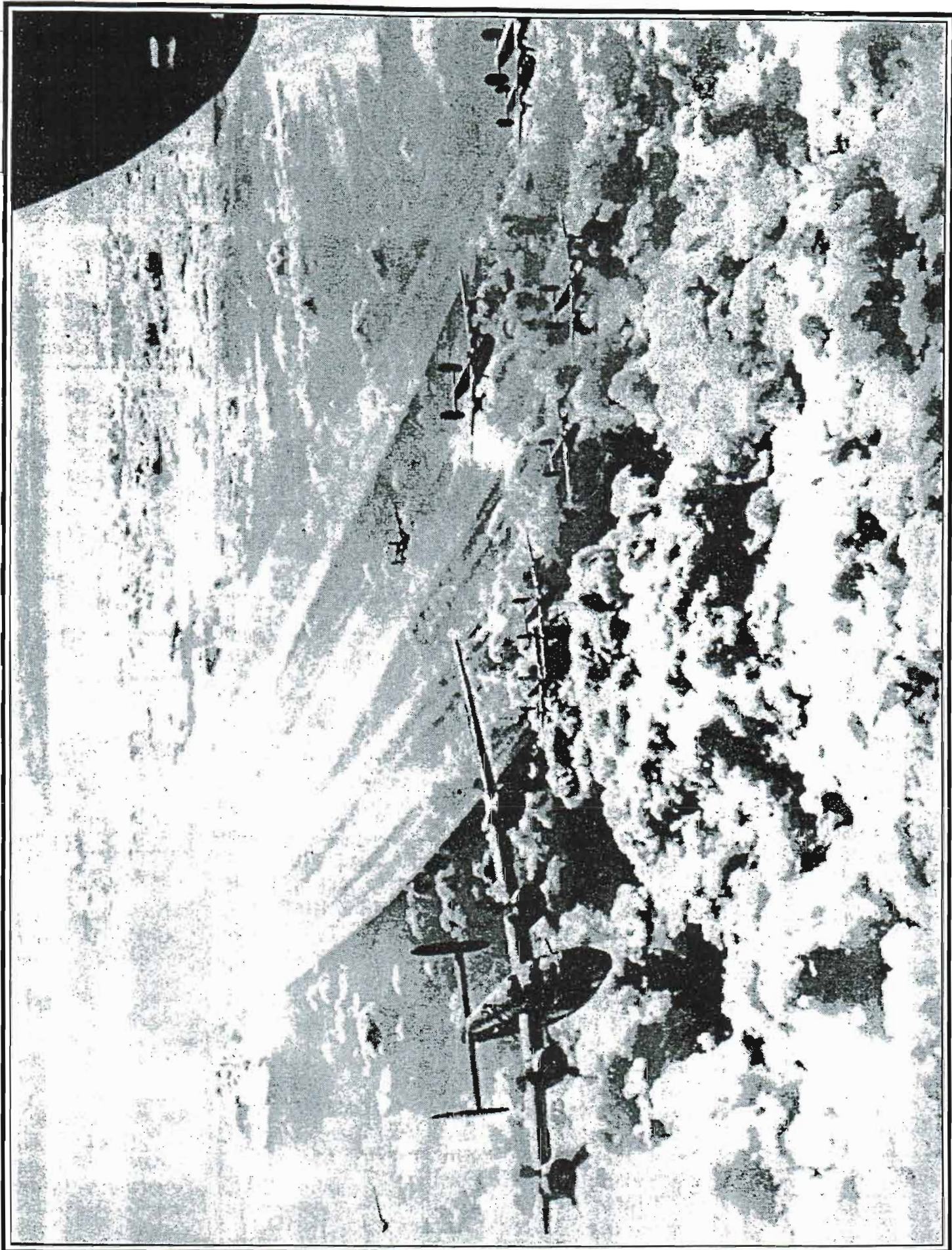
made a great difference.

Sept 4. Latisana Railroad Bridge in Northern Italy. This was another short mission of only 5 ½ hours with a little flak and no fighters. Every time we returned, a truck met our plane and took us to group headquarters for debriefing. They asked each one what we saw concerning enemy action, anything concerning damage to any of our planes, etc. They always gave us a shot of liquor and two doughnuts and it was like a party when everyone had returned.

Sept 6, 1944, Novi Sad Marshalling Yard, Yugoslavia. Another short 5 hour trip. We hit a railroad yard which had many parallel switching tracks where train cars were accumulated and loaded out. Our photos showed a lot of damage both to trains and tracks. Little flak and no fighters. We had lots of P-51 fighter cover anyway.

Sept 8, Savo Railway Bridge, Yugoslavia. A long bridge over a very deep gorge which would be very difficult to replace or even repair. The photos showed bomb bursts and smoke all around the area but we didn't know for sure if the bridge had been made unusable or not.

Sept 17, Kobanya marshalling yard, Budapest. Hungary. A large concentration of trains loaded with military supplies. We hit a few cars loaded



26,000 FT. OMER GERMANY

with ammunition and they caused huge explosions. Must have really torn up some railroad tracks. Flak was heavier and we got quite a few holes in the plane but all were small.

Sept 20. Gyor Marshalling yard, Hungary. This was 6 hours and forty minutes with heavy flak. We lost 2 planes but hit our target dead center.

Sept 21, Kiskore Railroad Bridge, Hungary. A seven hour mission. We were flying number 2 spot in the formation as deputy squadron leader. Our lead plane developed trouble about 30 minutes from the target so we took over as squadron leader. This meant that our bombardier would make the bomb run and all other planes would drop their bombs when they saw ours fall. Our bombardier, Win Llewellyn, failed to line up the bridge with his bomb-sight so, since we had very little flak and no fighters, we took the whole squadron around in a big sweeping 360 degree circle and made another run. This time we got it and the photos showed bomb hits on both ends of the bridge. That was the longest we ever stayed over any target.

Sept 22 Munich Airdrome, Germany. The objective was to make the airfield unusable for a while, putting bomb craters in the runways and to hit the hangers if possible. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy, intense, and accurate.

We had to fly straight and level on the bomb run for two minutes and that was the longest 2 minutes so far. As soon as we left the target, German ME-109 fighters attacked us and one came in about 11 o'clock high. Our top turret gunner swung his turret around and began firing. This put the barrels of his twin fifty caliber machine guns right over my head. Even though I was wearing ear-phones and helmet, the concussion and vibration threw my eyes out of focus for a few seconds. It was a helpless feeling.

We had seen a spectacular sight as we approached the out-skirts of Munich. The Eighth Air Force from England was hitting the same target as this was really a maximum effort mission. Off to our left, the 8th was coming in over the other side of the city and there were formations of bombers as far as I could see in that direction plus all our planes in front and behind us. I felt like the whole sky was full of planes.

Sept 23 Venzone Viaduct, Italy. This should have been no more than 5 hours but was six hours and forty minutes due to clouds and having to make such huge sweeping turns back out over the Adriatic to prevent taking the formation through a cloud. It was absolutely imperative that no formation should ever enter a cloud that would cause the planes to lose sight of each other.

We were flying as close as 50 feet apart at times and to lose sight of each other was unthinkable. It was rather nerve-wreaking but we made it.

Sept 26 Bucharest Barracks, Romania. There was a huge troop concentration of the Germans and we carried fragmentation bombs made to kill people instead of destroying property. The bombs were about the size of baseball bats and tied in clusters of 15 or so. When dropped the ties fell loose and all these sticks fell separately. When they hit, each one became 50 or more pieces of shrapnel flying in all directions. If they hit in a wooded area, they would strip every leaf from the forest. We sure laid it on the German barracks but I didn't feel at all good about it. It was quite different from bombing a bridge or airfield or rail yard.

Oct 14, 1944 to Odertal, Germany. This was only an eight hour trip but it was one of our most stressful. The anti-aircraft gunners protecting Odertal had a reputation as being experts and they lived up to it. The flak was rated as heavy, accurate, and intense. Instead of saturation firing covering a broad segment of sky, they actually aimed and tracked individual planes. The flak bursts would start and gradually move closer till we could hear (or feel) the "whump" of the explosions. We took a lot of holes in the plane but no one was

hurt and no equipment knocked out. One plane in front of us took a hit apparently in the cockpit as the plane suddenly pulled straight nose-up and then fell off to the side and plunged straight down nose first. All the calm nerves we had were gone. Three planes failed to return but one crew showed up later.

Oct 20 Innsbruck, Austria. Our target was the railway marshalling yard which was a central point for trains connecting the German lines. We flew at 26,000 feet but were not nearly as far above the target due to its own high altitude. It was a crystal clear day and the black bursts of flak looked more ominous than usual. At least, we weren't hit by German fighters. They were a little farther north.

Oct 23 Trieste Harbor, Italy. This was supposed to be a fairly short trip but ended up lasting 9 ½ hours. Trieste Harbor had a lot of German traffic and offered a chance to really cripple their supply chain. The weather reconnaissance planes reported it clear early that morning but by the time we arrived, it had clouded over. We circled over the Adriatic Sea most all day dodging clouds and each other. The clouds finally broke and we made our bomb run but we sure worked for it.

ISLE OF CAPRI

Nov 4 We had flown 10 missions in September and 3 in October, so it was wonderful to take vacation for a week. We went to Naples and boarded a noisy old ferry (I can still smell the heavy diesel smoke) and out to the Isle of Capri for a whole week.

The officers hotel was the Quisisana. The room has a real bed with white sheets and we had a real bathroom. The commode was a real antique with a long pull chain from the tank way up high. We took our first hot bath since July and really soaked.

All scrubbed and in clean clothes, we went down to the dining room. White linen table cloths with silver and crystal! The perfect added touch was a strolling violinist playing the hauntingly beautiful melodies of Old Italy plus Clare de Lune, La Vie en Rose, and Sorrento. It was truly a happy moment for all.

We spent some time in a little boat going into the Blue Grotto and seeing the beautiful colors produced by the sunlight shining through the water in the Grotto and reflected by the white sand on the bottom.

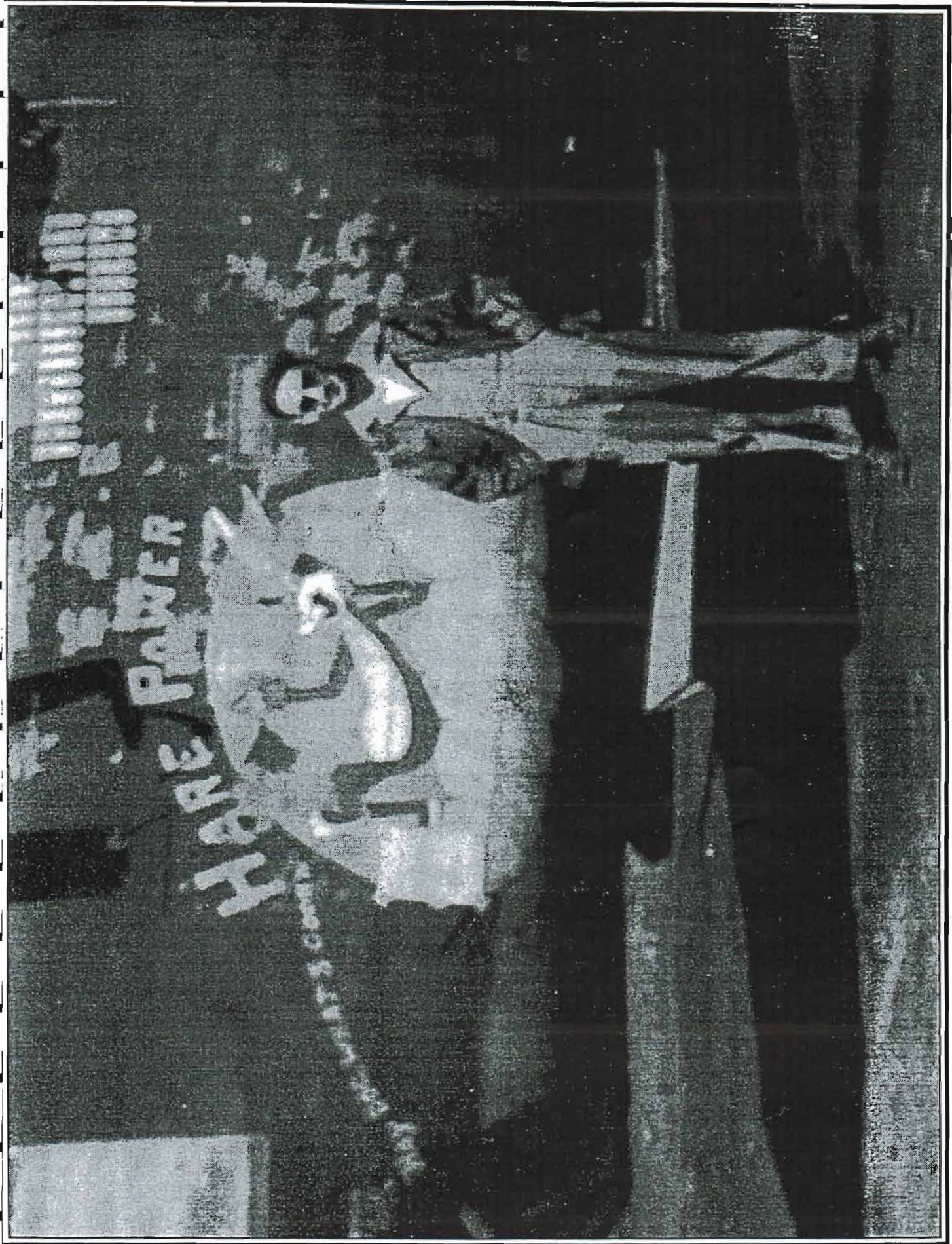
We walked up the mountain to see the Castle of Tiberius and were stopped on the path about half way up by a little old lady who wanted to dance

the Tarantella for us for a small donation. We obliged and she whirled and dipped and danced quite gracefully though her face made me think she must have been 80 years old or more. We bought some of the little silver bells with a small chain attached that were known as "Lucky Little Bells of San Michel". I still have one and considered it a good luck piece. The days flew by and we hated to have to leave.

Nov 18 to Vicenza Airdrome, Italy. We encountered broken cloud cover and took nearly seven hours to find a break in the weather and made our bomb run. Photos showed craters all over the airfield

Dec 9. After a long period of bad weather, we went to Linz, Austria to hit the industrial area which made many war materials. It was heavily fortified and the anti-aircraft gunners didn't use the barrage type flak covering large areas but tracked us instead. On the bomb run when we had to fly level at constant speed, they zeroed in. The flak bursts kept getting closer and when we began hearing the "whump" of the explosion I knew we were in real trouble. I was gritting my teeth at the thought of a direct hit but we dropped bombs and peeled off to the left and down. We had escaped the direct hit but had received a great many shrapnel hits. Once again, we had two engines spewing oil and

smoking with the instrument gauges going down rapidly. We feathered both and saw the squadron begin leaving us. Luckily we had lost one engine on each side and could maintain flight control. This time, the Alps weren't quite so dangerous to us as we were at 26,000 ft and much nearer the Alps than before. We crossed the beautiful snow covered peaks and went into a very shallow descent to pick up speed and also to throttle back just a little on the two remaining engines. We made a direct heading for the little dirt strip at Vis, Yugoslavia. Recalling my last landing there, I made my downwind leg much longer and 1000 ft lower so that we came into the approach in more normal fashion. Our plane was an old one with many missions to its credit and had its name on the nose "Hare Power" with a drawing of Bugs Bunny. A tractor pulled it off the runway and into a graveyard of many other downed planes. I felt quite sad as I watched it go while quite happy to be on the ground. I hadn't realized that my feet were without feeling till I tried to walk. The cord to my electric flying boots had been shot out and the 50 degree below zero cold had penetrated. Lopez had grown up in Erie, Penn in snow so he had me sit down in the snow and remove my boots and sox. He opened his very ample bosom and put my bare feet on his big, fat, warm belly and closed his jacket over



TAIL-GUNNER BOB MARKER AND "HARE POWER"

them. Two old ladies came up and handed me a large cup of clear liquid which I thought was water. Since I had been wearing my oxygen mask for over seven hours, I drank several huge gulps before realizing my entire throat and stomach were on fire. It was anise or anisette and about 100 proof alcohol. As soon as I recovered my breath, I immediately felt warmer all over including my feet. We spent the night in a building with a marble floor without heat. At least we were out of the wind and off the snow and were dressed in thermal underwear, heated suits (unplugged of course) and wool uniforms with our fur lined jackets and pants over all that. We weren't too cold and our parachute packs made firm pillows. Next morning, the air-sea rescue sent a DC-3 for us. It was the only plane that could land and take-off on that little strip. While there, Marshal Broz, son of Marshal Tito tried to sell us some Yugoslavia War Bonds and I wish now that I had bought one for a souvenir. We had now returned from a mission by boat, truck, and in a different plane. I began to wonder, what next?

I was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission.

Dec 13 Gordon Flournoy was stationed at an Air Base near Lecce, Italy. I learned that he had been carried to the hospital in Bari with hepatitis. We were able to borrow a scout car and Weinberg, Llewellyn, and I drove to the



D. F. C. AWARD

hospital in Bari. The road was partially paved and had a lot of traffic of all kinds including two-wheel carts drawn by a donkey and hauling hay. I walked into the hospital ward and saw Gordon. I could hardly believe it when I saw that he was as yellow as a lemon. I later learned that he had entered the hospital about Nov. 15 and was there for 10 weeks. I think his strong constitution pulled him through as his medical care didn't appear to be state of the art. I stayed with Gordon till bedtime and we spent the night at the Air Force Hotel. I saw Gordon again the next morning and we left right after lunch. We went by the American cemetery at Bari and saw Bill Waymouth's grave and several more we knew.

Dec 18 to Oswiecim, Poland oil refinery. It was a clear day and the German fighters were all out. We had P-51 escort to the Austrian Alps and then P-38's took over. The flak was moderate and we hit the target but a German ME-109 hit our tail gunner, Marker. It was a 50 cal bullet and went right through the calf of his leg without hitting the bone or the artery. If it had been flak shrapnel it would have made a jagged hole. We had ten first aid kits, one at each station. The waist gunners pulled Marker out of his turret and laid him on the floor. They were going to use the disposable morphine needle in his

first aid kit to help his pain but someone had slipped into the plane at night and had stolen all ten needles. This was a long trip of 9 hours and 15 minutes and Marker just had to tough it out.

Christmas Day was dark, windy, quiet, and thoughtful. It seemed that everyone's thoughts were turned inward and occupied with memories. The four inches of snow on top of the mud made walking an adventure. We went to the mess hall and had some kind of canned meat for our Christmas meal and all received two bottles of beer. We went to the Group Officers Club where they were trying to sing carols but a capella only seemed to come together on "Lili Marlene". We visited Marker in the quonset hut dispensary-hospital and he was immersed in a book. Said he would get out in another day or two. Would be out now but they didn't want him hobbling around in the snow.

Dec 27 to Bruck Marshalling Yard, Austria. Weather was now clear and cold and each engine of each plane left a long, white ribbon of ice crystals called a vapor trail. We figured anyone on the ground could look up at those vapor trails and figure right where we were headed. We were going up the Adriatic Sea headed north and another group was about ½ mile to our left and almost 2,000 ft lower flying parallel to us. I just happened to be looking down

at them with the blue sea below them when the number two plane got too close and let his left wing tip get behind the outboard engine of the lead plane. The prop-wash from the engine jerked his wing down and the number two plane forced into a sharp turn, just cut the tail section off the lead plane. Number two started down in a flat circle pattern but number one went down in a flat spin. We counted five parachutes before the plane hit the sea. This was the type of accident everyone dreaded. We had moderate flak and saw German fighters attacking another group but we had a good bomb run and went home.

Dec 28 to Pardubice Oil Refinery, Czechoslovakia. Moderate flak and no fighter attacks. The thermometer said 50 degrees below zero and our radio man, Raio, forgot and removed his glove to clear his machine gun and two fingers stuck to the metal. He pulled loose and left the skin and altered his fingerprints. He said it was so cold that it didn't hurt much till we were nearly home and then it was bad.

Dec 29 to Landshut Marshalling Yard, Germany. This was three missions in three days and we began talking about going home in a couple of weeks. Little did we realize that the weather would cause us to take three months to finish. This was another 8 hour trip in clear weather and the flak was heavier

than usual. At the target, we flew through lots of black smoke from previous flak bursts and saw a good bit in the area but took only minor hits. We got too close to Innsbruck on the way home and were quite surprised when they started taking pot shots at us. This was to be our last trip for over a month.

Clouds, snow, and fog seemed to take over the world. We went down to the plane everyday and cleaned off the snow and started the engines. Then we sat in the tent and thought, wrote letters, and read anything we could find. For thirty days, nothing changed and nothing happened. The waiting and the uncertainty began to weigh heavily. The bar at the Officer's Club became constantly crowded and tempers began to flare up at slight provocation.

Jan 31, 1945 Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria. Seemed like a long trip after such a long delay but only took 7 hours and 45 minutes. I had kept in shape with push-ups and pull-ups and hops but my stamina had suffered from 30 days of nothing. I felt really tired for the first time. We had heavy flak and were astonished to see the new German fighters we had heard about. They came down, three of them, and hit a squadron to our right. They only made the one pass but two bombers went down. They were faster than anything I had ever seen. At de-briefing when we got home, the intelligence officers asked

everyone unending questions about the new German planes.

Feb 5, 1945 Regensburg O/R, Germany. Another 8 ½ hour trip with flak that was heavy, accurate, and intense. From the amount of black smoke over the target, the groups in front of us had been successful. We dropped our bombs into the smoke but we couldn't see the target and our photos were blank. This was apparently a maximum effort as we had several groups in front of us and saw several more coming north as we headed south toward home. Saw a fighter dog-fight in the distance but we weren't attacked and flak holes were minimal. Small pieces of flak came through the side of the plane, hit something, and fell to the flight-deck floor. I picked them up and had a small collection. My best one is a section of aluminum tubing with a piece of flak embedded in it. A crew chief removed it from one of our dead engines and gave it to me. I still have it.

We always went to the flight line to welcome returning crews if we weren't flying. One day, the squadron returned and as we watched them land, one plane touched down on the runway and a 500 lb bomb fell out and skipped along the runway beneath the plane. We watched in shock and horror as the bomb exploded and the plane just completely disappeared in the flash and smoke. The

worst part was that it was their last mission and they would have been going home. It was the responsibility of the bombardier to inspect the bomb bay to ensure that it was clear and all bombs had been dropped. Apparently, on his last trip, he got careless.

Our squadron, the 739th, had been designated the "Mickey Squadron" and we were equipped with radar navigational equipment. They asked me to fly a night mission with radar. It would be called a "nuisance raid" to keep everyone in a war material producing city awake all night to hinder their production. The idea was to drop 3 bombs of 2,000 lbs each, one to explode on impact, one with delayed-action fuse to explode an hour later and one for 2 hours later. If the workers spent most of the night in air-raid shelters, they wouldn't make as many ball-bearings or bullets the next day. I asked the crew "What about it?" and they said "Sure, it sounded better to go up there in dark and clouds than on a clear day".

Feb 14, 1945. Solo night mission to Vienna Florisdorf Oil Refinery, Austria. We took off alone at midnight with a radar navigator. He had a radar screen and could see the coastal outline of the Adriatic and gave me constantly changing headings. It was pitch dark and we entered clouds at about 6,000 ft

and I flew entirely on instruments concentrating on our compass directions. It seemed easy to fly alone and not in formation. It was also smoother at night but we had no weather information and no info on wind direction or velocity. Everything depended on our radar navigator and he seemed quite competent. We reached Vienna as planned and made our bomb run. Just before we dropped our bombs, a searchlight picked us up and it was bright as day. We dropped the bombs and peeled off left and down. We flew due east for 100 miles and then headed south for home. We hoped that any radar equipped night fighter who came up looking for us would assume we headed south from the target and wouldn't find us 100 miles to the left. At any rate, they didn't find us and we went home. It was still dark and our only point of reference was the volcano, Aetna, on Sicily. We had been flying for 6 hours and 45 minutes and arrived just after dawn.

Feb 17. We flew seven hours and went to three different targets but all were completely covered with clouds. We needed our radar man but this was a daylight visual trip. We finally gave up, dropped our unarmed bombs in the middle of the Adriatic and went home.

Feb 19. to Pola, Italy. Six hours and 45 minutes and bombed the harbor

and railways. They didn't have many 88 millimeter flak guns but they sure used what they had. We didn't lose any planes but we took quite a few hits.

Feb 21. Another solo night mission to Vienna, Austria for six hours and 45 minutes. Took off at midnight with the same radar navigator. Thick cloud cover till we crossed the Alps and then clear. Seemed like the stars were right above us. Our target was the central railway yard in Vienna and the navigator thought he hit it. Shortly after we headed home, there was an explosion and we lit up like a rocket. The light was from the super-charger on the number 2 inboard engine. It had a cover over it since it always got red-hot or white-hot and the cover was gone. We had no choice but feather the engine as we were advertising our presence like a shooting star. We really thought a night fighter would pick us up but it didn't. We came home on 3 engines and arrived shortly after dawn. The crew chief immediately checked the engine to see what happened and found that a mechanic had been using a live 50 cal. bullet to pop open the snaps on the cowl cover and had left a bullet inside the cover. The heat had finally cooked off the bullet and the explosion blew the cover completely off the engine. I still have the exploded shell casing. That was our last night mission.

Feb 23 to Udine Marshalling Yard, Italy. We flew 7 hours and 30 minutes and had P-51 escort all the time. The clouds were broken and on two levels but we finally got a clear shot and the photos showed major hits on the rail lines. It seemed that rail yards and oil refineries were our major focus.

Feb 27 to Augsburg Marshalling Yard, Germany for eight hours. There was not a cloud in the sky and our vapor trails were like white streamers. They knew we were coming and they were ready. Flak was heavy, intense, and accurate. We lost three planes and our plane had numerous small hits. One rudder had a six inch hole through it. This was one of the roughest trips of all.

March 1 to Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria. 7 ½ hours. Quite a bit of flak but none too close. We had good cover from our P-38 fighters. We threw out a lot of chaff which was thin ribbons of metal to confuse their radar. It worked unusually well judging from their poor aim.

March 8 to Kafenburg Steel Works, Austria for 8 hours. Flak was moderate and no fighters. We heard that the Germans were getting quite short on oil and gasoline. That might explain why their fighters stopped coming after us. Perhaps our bombing had really broken up their supply lines. At least we liked to think so. Coming home with all four engines running, I suddenly

appreciated the beauty of the snow-covered Austrian Alps. I hadn't noticed it before.

March 9 to Graz Marshaling Yard, Austria in six hours. Everything seemed to work like clock-work this trip and we were home early.

March 12 to Vienna Florisdorf Oil Refinery, Austria in 7 1/4 hours. Barrage type flak was tough on the group in front but we weren't hit. No fighters again. We came off the target and one 500 lb bomb was still hanging in its shackle in the bomb bay. Llewellyn went out on the cat-walk with a screwdriver and made it fall. Lew was watching and said it hit a large farm estate. We imagined all sorts of scenarios like maybe a secret meeting of spies was in the farm house and they always wondered how we knew to bomb it.

Somehow, I lost my little comb that I used to comb out the ice from my handle-bar mustache when I removed my oxygen mask on the way home. My breath would condense in the mask and the whole mustache was full of ice. Our planes were not pressurized and only served to protect us from the wind but not from the 50 degree below zero cold.

The next eight days were the longest days of my life. Our imaginations ran riot thinking about all the things we had seen happen. Finally, on March

20, 1945, we made a 7 hour trip to the Wels Marshalling Yard, Austria. I was as calm as a cat on a hot tin roof as I said "goodbye" to the Austrian Alps on the way home. I didn't relax till I stepped out of the plane at our field. The truck met us to go up to group headquarters for debriefing and I looked back at our B-24 thinking that I probably would not fly another one. I expected to go home and check out in a B-29 and go to the Pacific War.

I felt elated, happy, safe, exhausted, and a myriad of other emotions, but I was determined not to let any of it show since only the navigator, bombardier, and I had finished. The others still had anywhere from 2 to 5 missions left. They all felt rather grim about flying their remaining missions with strangers. We had been a close team and had been through so much together for so long that the thought of our crew breaking up hit us all pretty hard at that moment.

I wrote letters, packed my gear in my foot locker, gave away everything else I wouldn't be needing any more. I turned in my Thompson sub-machine gun, my Colt 45 pistol, and my 45 power binoculars.

At the end of March, we all flew to Rome in a B-26 that was going our way. The B-24 landed at 130 miles per hour which is pretty fast but the B-26 landed at 160 miles per hour. I was standing on the flight deck between the

pilot and co-pilot and I couldn't believe they would ever get stopped on the landing. It seemed we just flew right down to the runway with no glide at all. Oh well, they were used to it but I was glad I wasn't.

We visited the catacombs and all the famous landmarks. We went to St. Peter's Cathedral and the square. When we reached the Vatican, our waist gunner, Nick Lopez, was our spokesman. He had Italian parents and spoke Italian fluently. He went up to the Swiss guard and asked to see a priest. Two priests came out and talked with Lopez for several minutes. One priest went back in and finally returned to motion us all to follow him. We entered and I was immediately awed by the vastness of the interior. We didn't know right away but Lopez had asked to see the Pope. We went down a corridor and up some marble steps and down another corridor and up some more steps. Now we were flanked by four Swiss guards who were several inches taller than me. I was six feet three and I felt short. We stopped at a huge door and one priest went in. Again, he returned and motioned us to follow. We entered and there was the Pope. He spoke for a few minutes though I couldn't understand him and he smiled at us. I could understand that he was giving us a benediction with his hands raised and then we were dismissed. Lopez told us that he had



AMERICAN RED CROSS

Friday 3-23-45

Dearest Frances,

We are having a wonderful time sight-seeing and so getting lotsa sleep and good food for a change. I can't tell you about all this stuff now but it is just a whole lot more than I can write. I saw the pope and his swiss guard and St. Peter's Cathedral and the Coliseum and I went



AMERICAN RED CROSS

-2-

and saw more gold and silver and emeralds and topaz and stuff. Amazing! I spent a couple hours in the Royal Museum and I saw paintings and statues that I really expected to see. There are some beautiful things here for sure. I am going to the opera "Pagliacci" tonight and the pictures "Wilson" is in town. I can find time to get those I love you and miss you and I'll be seeing you. Love always

“wished us God-speed in our flying duties and that he prayed for our safe return home”. We realized even then that it had been a miraculous coincidence that we had been so quickly received in private audience by the Pope. We had just happened to be in the right place at the right time with everyone concerned in a receptive frame of mind.

They took us through the Vatican Treasury as we left. We saw fantastic gold, silver, emeralds, and jewels.

On April 2, a truck drove us to Naples and we had a room at the hotel. We walked all over Naples, went to the opera to see "Madame Butterfly" and took a few little tours in a taxi.

On April 10, 1945, we boarded the USS Wakefield and sailed out of Naples harbor. The first night, I remember standing at the bow and watching the water curl away from the ship. It seemed to have a million tiny lights in the water and they said it was plankton that was phosphorescent. We left Gibraltar and headed across the Atlantic. The sea was quite different from the smooth Mediterranean. The deep, heavy swells made walking tough. We were in line at the dining room buffet and a big fellow in front of us really loaded his tray like he was starving. He went over and sat at a table and watched his tray tilt

back and forth for a little while. He got up and left without taking a bite. We were lucky I suppose, that we felt no ill effects. The rolling ship was not too different from flying that we were completely accustomed to. About four days out, the alarms went off and call to battle stations and we could see a large dark shape about ½ mile out. It turned out to be a whale instead of a sub. Our ship zigzagged all the way home though as German U-boats were still in the area.

April 20, 1945, we sailed into Boston harbor and disembarked. Truly on home soil at last. We all boarded trains and on April 23, I arrived in Rome, GA for 21 days leave.

The above are just some of the high-lights as I remember them of how a young bank teller became a bomber pilot, went to war, and came home.

NAME FORNEY, JAMES A.

RANK 2nd Lt.

ORG 739th Bomb Sq.

DATE	TARGET	No.	T.M.'s	TIME	TOTAL TIME
1944 8-18	Campina O/R, Roumania	99	1	7:35	7:35
XX 22	Blechhammer South, Germany	101	2	8:00	15:35
XX 27	Blechhammer South O/R, Germany	106	3	7:45	23:20
9-2	Nis M/Y, Yugoslavia	110	4	5:40	29:00
H	Latisana RR Bridge, Italy	112	5 ✓	5:45	34:45
6	Nevi Sad M/Y, Yugoslavia	113	6	5:20	40:05
8	Savo RR Bridge, Yugoslavia	114	7	5:40	45:45
17	Kobanya M/Y, Budapest, Hungary	119	8	6:50	52:35
XX 20	Gyor M/Y, Hungary	121	9	6:40	59:15
21	Kiskore RR Bridge, Hungary	122	10	7:00	66:15
XX 22	Munich A/D Installations, Germany	123	11	7:00	73:15
23	Venzone Viaduct, Italy	124	12	6:40	79:55
8-26	Bucharest Barracks, Roumania	105	13	7:30	87:25
XX 10-14	Odertal O/R, Germany	135	14	8:00	95:25
XX 20	Innsbruck M/Y, Austria	137	15 ✓	7:45	103:10
XX 23	Trieste Harbor Inst., Italy	140	16	9:30	112:40
11-18	Vicenza A/D, Italy	154	17	6:45	119:25
12-9	Linz Industrial Area, Austria	164	18	7:30	126:55
18	Oswiecin O/R, Poland	170	19	9:15	136:10
27	Bruck M/Y, Austria	173	20	6:30	142:40
28	Pardubice O/R, Czechoslovakia	174	21	8:00	150:40
29	Landshut M/Y, Germany	175	22	8:00	158:40
1945 NIGHT 1-31	Moosbierbaum O/R, Austria	181	23	7:45	166:25
2-5	Hagensburg O/R, Germany	184	24	8:30	174:55
14	Vienna Florisdorf O/R, Austria	192	25 ✓	6:45	181:40
17	Target Abandoned	194-A	26	7:00	188:40
19	Pola, Italy	195	27	6:45	195:25
NIGHT 21	Vienna Central Yards, Austria	197	28	6:40	202:05
23	Udine M/Y, Italy	199	29	7:30	209:35
27	Augsburg M/Y, Germany	202	30	8:00	217:35
3-1	Moosbierbaum O/R, Austria	204	31	7:30	225:05
8	Kpafenburg Steel Works, Austria	207	32	8:00	233:05
9	Graz M/Y, Austria	208 B	33	6:00	239:05
12	Vienna Floridsdorf O/R, Austria	210	34	7:15	246:20
26	Wals M/Y, Austria	216	35 ✓	7:00	253:20

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Air Medal General Order #3789
 1st Cluster General Order #4342
 2nd Cluster General Order #924
 3rd Cluster General Order #
 DFC General Order #4766
 1st Cluster DFC General Order #1369

** (DENOTES DOUBLE CREDIT SORTIE)

NO MORE

No more hurried wake-up calls.
No more oxygen masks.
No more facial frost bite.

Massive bomber formations no longer group
to fly the flak-filled skies and the Luftwaffe
no longer hunts.

Continental air is quiet, the cold is but a
dream, contrails no longer mark us and can-
non shells no longer kill.

I have finished my quota.
I have flow my missions.
I have only my memories.