

GAB

FROM GI's... FOR GI's



VOL. 1, NUMBER 12

449th BOMB GROUP (H)

6 MAY, 1945

Col. Blase Temporary Commander 47th Wing

Colonel George H. Blase, long remembered for his outstanding qualities as a 449th staff officer, this week assumed command of the 47th Wing, in the temporary absence of Brigadier General Hugo P. Rush, on assignment elsewhere.

Col. Blase, who served the 449th as Deputy Group Commander, Air Inspector, and Operations Officer, before going to the Wing as A-3 officer, first joined the Flying Horsemen in late March, 1944. His qualities as a pilot and leader endeared him to the entire group personnel, who grieved to see him return to the States after he completed his tour of duty.

After a short stay at home in St. Louis, Col. Blase returned to his familiar Italian surroundings, and was called to Wing to assume the important A-3 post.

His fond admirers in the Group rejoice in his new assignment and take pride in recalling when they were able to serve under his brilliant leadership.

THREE ADDITIONAL GERMAN ARMIES THROW DOWN ARMS

Thousands of Nazi Troops from Saxony to the Swiss Border Surrender to Allies Effective Today at Noon

CORNZAPOPPIN

The USO show titled "Cornzapoppin" will have one showing in the 449th Outdoor Theatre on Sunday, May 6th, at 1900 hours. The line-up of talent includes Sigrid Lasson, sentimental songstress, Duke McHale, tap dancer, Billy Berry, comedy singer, Pat Moran, Hollywood Stunt Man (who may or may not be the Hollywood Stunt Man seen in the Patsy Moran USO show last year), and Elaine Zold, acrobatic dancer. Musical backgrounds and solo work of accordionist Larry Hickerson will be featured throughout. This is the second USO show presented at the 449th within a period of three days.

The second mass surrender of German troops since the passing of the last few hours has occurred again. All German troops including three armies of the once crack troops of Hitler, from Saxony to the Swiss borders have laid down their arms. The BBC announced the terms of surrender would be effective as of 1200 hours today. This second mass surrender results in the remaining bulk of the German Army being stationed in Austria and Czechoslovakia who are being pressed hard from all angles by advancing powerful allied units that are apparently meeting little resistance. The end of hostilities in the European theater is now only a matter of hours.

The Swedish Radio broadcast a program late yesterday afternoon that the Commander of German Forces in Norway had decided to capitulate. There has been no official confirmation of this report. Although this indicates that the Germans in Norway realize the hopelessness of continuing the struggle. In Norway the Germans apparently had the best chance of holding out for a time, and in case of resistance on their part, an amphibious operation of considerable weight would be required to free this country.

All German Forces in Northwest Germany, Holland and Denmark

including Heligoland and the Frisian Islands have surrendered. The mass surrender was announced by General Eisenhower, Supreme Allied commander and completes the dissolution of German Armies that number more than million men. A Reuter correspondent commented: "The war in Europe is folding up fast. It is clearly shown by the enormous droves of beaten Germans in the fields and woods. Sullen and defeated, they are burning their rifles and changing into civilian clothes when they can. Whole divisions are trudging unescorted into prison camps.

High ranking German field commanders who once defied any power in the world are now asking to be taken prisoner. We are now standing by for historic news."

VICTORY IN ITALY CANCELS BRENNER PASS FLAK RUN

The news of the capitulation of the Nazi armies in Italy, was received with great rejoicing throughout the group, to the combat men it brought back memories of rough, heavy flaked missions to the former northern Italy stronghold. And to many of the ground men, it recalled their long and tedious hours in the repair and conditioning of planes that came back from the North with visible testimony of the strength of the anti-aircraft emplacements in that sector.

AIR BASE ONCE MUSSOLINI'S OWN

The timely and bloody death of Mussolini, his mistress and some of his leading, ill-guided satellites at the hands of a vengeful group of partisans at Como was good news to all members of the 449th for many reasons. Primarily, of course, it meant that the world was rid of without the drawn out ceremony of a trial one of the world's most hated men, and that Fascism had lost what it mistakenly considered its leader.

However, to those of us long stationed at this base, it also meant the loss of the individual mainly responsible for the construction of our home for so many months. G.A.B. was long Benito's pride and joy and here it was that his air-minded sons, Victor and Bruno received their training. Perhaps that is why the base had a swimming pool, tennis court and other luxuries which we were able to enjoy occasionally.

Members of the group to a man rejoiced in the news, although some of us thought his death too merciful in its suddenness that a "sweeting out" period would better give him his due. The partisans did not take the time to do any thing but write "Finito" to the career of their former high and mighty "Benito."

The 449th recalled with pride its part in softening up the enemy with their attacks on supply and troop concentrations on both the 5th and 8th Army fronts. These missions were history making in character, for they not only served as preludes to the victorious drive of General Clark's 15th Army Group, but also demonstrated that heavy bombardment has its uses for tactical as well as strategic purposes. These missions were inspirational to the combat men, who had ample views of the damage they were causing to the enemy.

Italy's fall, pointing to the general breakdown of the German war machine, also meant the end of the hazardous trips to the Brenner Pass sector, which many fliers dreaded more than they did Vienna and other difficult targets. The heavy flak barrages at the Ferrara River railroad bridge, Bologna and environs are well remembered in the group, as well as are the ceded sectors in Austria.

In their constant softening up of the enemy and direct attacks, the 449th played a vital part in the fall of the former vaunted Northern Italy stronghold and, while paying due credit to the courageous 5th and 8th Armies, which forced the surrender of the enemy, felt that in this epochal capitulation the Group again made a valuable contribution.

Battle Happy "Shirley Jean" Completes Hundred Missions

Toulon, Ploesti, Vienna and Linz—wherever the going was rough Shirley Jean made the team. Crewed by M/Sgt. John E. Dacy, T/Sgt. Mannasmith, S/Sgt. Dunaway and Pfc. Woods, with Sgt. Altenbrandt as armorer, Shirley has taken to the air to strike over one hundred blows against the axis with crews of the 716th squadron aboard.

In addition to passing the century mark on combat flights, the Liberator has flown 4 or 5 sorties not credited and over eighty practice missions. Since June tenth of last year, when Shirley Jean joined the 716th squadron, she has burned about one quarter of a million gallons of gasoline.

Although no one has been injured or has had to bail out, the ship has come through numerous raids with a great amount of damage inflicted. On a recent mission to Vienna, with Lt. Eisenhardt at the controls, flak struck the propeller dome on number 3 engine over the target. Soon after, number 1 cylinder was shot up. Staggering along on two engines the plane reached a friendly field, when the damage was surveyed over forty holes were counted. One shell sent fragments through the floor of the flight deck, another damaged the tail turret and trim

tab controls. A box of ammunition in the nose was also hit and several rounds went off.

Sgt. Dacy, recounting the outstanding incidents, tells of the longest mission his charge has attempted. It seems that Shirley made a late start on one mission and missed the entire wing formation. Spotting another group heading towards enemy territory the pilot decided to tag along. Time went by and the navigator ran out of maps. Finally the target was reached and the bombs dropped on an oil refinery. Two days later Shirley returned— from Poland.

On another flight the old gal was attacked by enemy aircraft and thus received credit for a couple of Me 109's. Other items of interest are: around the fiftieth mission the ship decided to indulge in excessive amounts of fuel. This went on for about five missions. On other occasions she has crash landed and many times landings have been made at alternate fields. In fact, hardly a field in Yugoslavia, Italy or Corsica hasn't felt the impact of the ship's tires as grateful crews have landed. Shirley Jean's outstanding record is a tribute to her maintenance men and may she continue to chalk up a winning score.

GAB

Published for and by the GI's of the 449th

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GAB IS RESTRICTED AND CANNOT BE MAILED



EDUCATION

With the crumbling of Nazi Germany and the constant pounding at Jap forces in the Pacific, the end of the war is coming a little closer. It isn't won yet, of course, but progress is being made toward that end.

When the whole mess is over we will all return to civilian life, and will try to take up where we left off. While in the army our educational background didn't count too much—Uncle Sam took us even if we didn't finish high school, BUT, civilian employers sometimes place a lot of emphasis on education, and require at least a high school background of all their employees. Some fellows ask what good education is if they can do the work without it. The answer is that if an employer has a choice of two skilled laborers, one with a high school diploma, and one without, he will always take the former.

POST WAR COMPETITION

Competition is going to be rough, and the more you have to offer an employer, the better off you will be. Those of you who do not have a high school diploma—those of you who were sick, or had to work, or who just tired of school—here is an opportunity for you to catch up without too much trouble. Before signing up for any courses, see the I & E officer and fill out USAFI form no. 47, Application For Credit For Educational Achievement During Military Service. By filling out this form you will be able to get credit for any schooling or training you have had since you entered the service. Some schools give from two to four credits for basic training alone, with additional credit for radio, photo, A. M., or gunnery school. High schools are cooperating wholeheartedly to help service men get their diplomas. Since a high school education is needed to get full benefit of the G.I. Bill of Rights, no time should be wasted in making use of the opportunities now available. Entrance qualifications for colleges and vocational schools start with a high school diploma, so if you are going on to college or trade school, get prepared now.

A. F. I.

Courses offered by the Armed Forces Institute are of two types... correspondence courses and self-teaching courses. If you take the former, you mail each completed lesson to the Institute, where it is corrected and graded. If you take the self-teaching course, you check your own lessons with the answers in the back of the book. With this latter type, an end-of-the-course test is given if credit is desired. Courses are further classified into high school, college, and industrial or technical school levels.

Enlisted men pay no tuition charge for USAFI courses. There is a two dollar registration fee for the first course, but after that there is no other charge. Officers pay the full tuition fee for all courses.

In addition to the courses, the Institute also offers a testing service, which is recognized by most high schools and colleges. You may be tested for your proficiency in any one of several subjects, at high school or college level; or you may take a general educational test, to see how much you have learned (or forgotten) since you left school. There is a two dollar testing fee for officers, but no charge for enlisted men if they have already registered with the Institute.

These opportunities are here waiting for you—it's a lot more than the men in the last war had. The wise ones are signing up—HOW ABOUT YOU?

GROUP POST EXCHANGE

Group P. X. will cease operations the 12th of May 1945 at 1700 hours until further notice. All rations must be drawn from the P. X. by that time and it is anticipated that this ration draw will cover two weeks.

There has been such an increased demand for the Group Insignia Pins that Cpl. Mannering was forced to order another 200 pair. These are now on sale at the P-X Gift Bar.



GIBBERISH
By Sgt. Dan McNamee

THIS AND DATA

Move the headline news over, fellows. Here is the news flash of the war: Raddatz, for the first time in his Army career, actually refused seconds. Jim Furey, sterling Postal worker, recently saw a copy of "YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN" by Thomas Wolfe. Quipped Furey "It must have been written by an overage". Things that irritate us: The thirty minute gamblers who sit in a game for about thirty minutes or less, win some money and then quit. We have noticed that they are in a minority and eventually, if the fellows take the action they are contemplating, these GAMBLERS? will have to play among themselves. That should really be a fast game.

In our last issue we printed the name of a local character, to wit: Big Gut. Whether deliberately or not certain personnel assumed the title applied to Lt. Warrick, Group Crypto Officer. We wish to state here and now that the title Big Gut was not intended for Lt. Warrick—he has his own title. Is it true that Joe Wood and Bob Camarce are career men? It sure is strange to see all those S-2 boys in fatigues. We see where Hatfield of the 348th is now a Corporal. With the amount of work he does he deserves a higher rating than that. Since the Rock turned in his Tommy gun he doesn't leave for the outdoor movies unless accompanied by at least two GI's.

PEGASUS SPEAKS

Do officers have up to date pay cards? Do all officers know that it is their responsibility to make sure the data on their pay voucher is correct? Has everyone familiarized themselves with the penalties imposed for violation of censorship regulations?

GABABOUT

Lummy Lumsden, Group Pathfinder man, is noted for his tall tales. He must be preparing for some more because he has been asking for details about the battles represented by his battle stars. For a man his age, Joe Poli plays a nice game of ball. Schroeder and all the other beer lovers walking around with an ecstatic look on their faces since

they heard that each man is going to get a case of beer. Says Sure Thing Schroeder "I'll believe it when I see it." Speaking of Sure Thing Schroeder, the other night he bid 360 with 390 meld in a pinocle game. Ace Kaley received a telephone call the other night and the caller claimed he was a General. Ace thought he was being ribbed and started joking. After the call was finished Ace decided to double check and was he surprised when he found out it really was a General. A bouquet to Bob Riffle and Dennis Morrissey for the excellent job they've been doing at the Group Post Office. The sixty-four dollar question—Is CHINA on the T. O. or is he an overage?

LETTER RECEIVED
ACKNOWLEDGING
GUNNER'S FATE

"Much has been said and done since we got that fateful telegram the night of Aug. 28th — You see we always knew that things could happen — but of everything the card that came to us from the AAF Aid Society Washington, saying from you boys over there, had been received" a gift in memory of S/Sgt John Ronsheim, seemed to get nearest home —"

The above excerpts are taken from a letter received by the men of the 718th and sent by Edward J. Ronsheim, father of John Ronsheim — Johnny perished along with the entire crew of old 33, or "Bucket of Bolts", the morning of August 15th and the day Southern France was invaded by the Allies — This also marked another day when the 449th went all out in maximum effort to add another stone to the foundation of the enviable record we now enjoy —

On this ill fated morning a gallant and brave crew gave their lives for their country and freedom — It was on the take-off that 33 ran into a high tension line and "Dropped Her Last Bucket Of Bolts", instantly killing all of the crew with the exception of Ronsheim who died a few hours later. —

With Ronsheim on this ill fated mission were the following officers and enlisted men, Lieutenants, Leo A. Betzen, Oscar J. Block, Robert K. Peck, Charles L. Carlson, James G. Allen, Harold F. Schmitt — Sergeants, Jack A. Lang, George H. Doelfel, Alex S. Montgomery, Ernest J. Yaksh and Lawrence E. Zieman. —

Original Gunner
Completes Fifty

S/Sgt. Angelo P. Gervasi of the 716th Squadron has accomplished the unusual feat of completing a tour of duty spanning two hundred and fifty-three missions. He flew on the Group's first mission over Mostar on 8 January 1944 and finished his fiftieth on the Group's next to last mission over Linz on 25 April 1945.

S/Sgt. Gervasi hails from Scranton, Pa., which produced such other 716th personages as S/Sgt. Harold B. Fisher (spelled without a "c") and "Kenny the Coal Miner." He came overseas with the Group and was in the 719th Squadron on Major (then 2nd Lt.) Shelby MacArthur's crew. When Major MacArthur moved over to the 716th to become Operations Officer, he brought most of his crew with him.

"Flying on a lead crew is a slow way of putting in your missions", he says, "but it's enabled me to watch our Group grow from a frail infant into a towering giant of air power and finally complete the job it was fashioned to perform."

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GROUP HISTORY

FROM TUCSON MAY 1943 TO ITALY MAY 1945

By Lt. Damon Turner - Group Historian

Following the disastrous German defeat in North Africa the evil, club-footed little German Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, adopted a new twist to his propaganda line. So we evacuated North Africa? Well, no matter, said Dr. Goebbels, for our mighty armies will stand off the Russians in the East and we defy the Anglo-Americans to penetrate our defenses anywhere in Europe. Germany, he said, has made of Europe an impregnable fortress able to withstand all blows, a FESTUNG EUROPA. Scarcely had Dr. Goebbels uttered these ill considered words when smashing blows in the South rolled German troops out of Sicily and southern Italy.

And while Dr. Goebbels ranted at the Master Race, America was proposing an answer in the only language which Germans understand—force, force and force to the utmost. The answer would come in a mighty surge would overwhelm and crush the arrogant, guilty Supermen. America's Armed Forces are a united team and who is to say which branch of service has done the most to speed victory? And within the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Army and the Air Forces who will presume to boast of his own small part in the great catastrophe which over took America on December 7, 1941? Yet, we are justly proud of our organization. It has played its honored part in the great drama of victorious allied might and its part has by no means been small.

And so we write of the 449th Bombardment Group quietly engaged in training, for a while at Alamogordo, New Mexico and later at Bruning, Nebraska, in the year 1943. American air power had not yet been felt in the south of Europe.

The 449th Bombardment Group was activated May 1, 1943 under authority of a Second Air Force General Order. The four squadrons comprising the group were designated as the 716th, 717th, 718th and 719th Bombardment Squadrons and were to operate B-24 type airplanes in heavy bombardment. The composition of the group has not changed since its activation. The organization was activated at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona.

We pass over the training period of the group briefly. There were the usual problems, the normal fears, and the American intention to do the best job possible under adverse conditions. The job was done.



Col. Darr H. Alkire

We cannot pass over one individual associated with the group in those days for he was its commanding officer and his personality left an imprint on the group, obvious to this day. Colonel Darr H. Alkire was a regular army officer, long a flyer, and the type of individual who could inspire respect while insisting upon the utmost in effort. Some officers and men of the 449th have gone far since they were commanded first by Darr Alkire but none have forgotten the first "Old Man". The legends concerning him are a part of the traditions of this group. Not a single man lost his life during the course of flying training. The group passed its POM inspection and was ordered overseas. These accomplishments were due in large mea-

sure to the experience, wisdom and able leadership of Colonel Alkire and his carefully selected Staff.

GROUP MOVES OVERSEAS

The group moved overseas in November, December and January of 1943 and 1944. The air echelon staged at Topeka, Kansas and then flew from there to Morrison Field, Florida. Under the command of the Air Transport Command, planes of the group flew varied routes overseas. In general their routes took them to Porto Rico, thence to various airfields in Brazil, to Dakar and to various airfields in Africa including Casablanca, Marrakech and Tindouf, thence to Chateau d'Un or Tunis and from there to Italy. During the air movement, tragedy struck at the group for the first time when three airplanes were lost. All came from the 719th squadron.

Meanwhile the ground echelon had staged at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia and came overseas in a huge convoy. In the Mediterranean, ships of the convoy put in at various ports and when the group was at last together the men talked of the Liberty ships, "William S. Young," "Benjamin S. Milam," "John Harvard" and the "Henry Baldwin". They had visited Oran, Bizerte, Palermo, Naples and Bari.

BASE WAS ONCE DUCE'S PRIDE

An Italian airfield, once the pride of the bombastic Duce, presented a bedraggled and miserable appearance to the newly arrived group. Other groups of the recently created

Fifteenth Army Air Force, had ably accomplished their mission with the result that this group found a cluster of bombed out buildings, debris, mud, dirt and chilling, penetrating cold. But on closer examination the base was found to have possibilities. There were other units on the field and they seemed to be living comfortably. Several of the buildings were pitted but habitable and the men of the group concluded it would merely take time to transform the shattered Italian field into a first class air base.

But the necessary tools, equipment and supplies did not arrive and progress was slow. Gradually, however, the squadrons moved out to tent areas, messing slowly improved and some equipment put in a belated appearance thanks to the efforts of some men who had been placed on detached service for weeks at the large Italian ports of debarkation to watch for 449th equipment. Scrounging was the order of the day and the men of this group learned fast.

PLANES FLY AAF RECORD

But the war could not be delayed while the group made itself comfortable. In fact it could hardly wait until the men unpacked and those who had anticipated two or three missions a week during the month of January 1944, received a rude shock. During that month alone this group completed nineteen effective missions in a period of twenty three days. Together with its sister group, the 450th, its missions represented the Fifteenth Air Force B-24 effort. At a meeting of commanding officers toward the close of the month the statement was made that the two groups had flown more sorties single or together than had been flown by any group in the same time or period during the entire history of the Army Air Forces to that date.

The group's first mission was an assault against the enemy fighter airfield at Mostar, Yugoslavia. Eighteen B-24's were over the target that memorable day. It was a gala occasion when the big bombers returned "Buzzing" the field in formation.

Although part of a strategic air force the 449th devoted its first nineteen missions to tactical and ground support work. Its targets were marshalling yards, airdromes and

landing grounds. They were scattered over Yugoslavia and Central and Northern Italy.

ENEMY BLASTED AT ANZIO

On January 22nd there occurred an operation of which the group is justly proud. That was the date when the United States Fifth Army ground forces established a beachhead in the Anzio-Nettuno sector south of Rome. Between the beachhead and the battle line a coastal road touches the very edge of the Tyrrhenian sea at the town of Terracina and the 449th was charged with the task of bombing and blocking the road. So successfully was this done that the enemy was unable to use the road to bring up reinforcements against the debarking Fifth Army.

MISSING IN ACTION

That war is not all glory the group soon learned. On the group's fourth mission Lieutenant Harold E. Pickard and his crew went down in flames over Yugoslavia. This 718th crew was the first crew lost in combat. Many others were missing in action. To work and live with men is to become more than mere friends. Suddenly to find them missing from their customary life and to know that some have made the supreme sacrifice for their country is a saddening realization. Colonel Alkire himself led his last formation on January 31st, 1944. Over an Italian Air Base in northern Italy his plane was hit by flak, it lost altitude rapidly and finally crashed to earth. He was an officer, a gentleman and a real soldier and he realized the soldier's wish. He went down hitting the enemy. Many weeks later it was learned that Colonel Alkire was a prisoner of war in Germany but an era in 449th history ended when his plane crashed to earth.

COL. GENT NEW GROUP CO

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Gent, Jr., new commander of the group, quietly took charge on the third day of February 1944. Colonel Gent was a new type of commanding officer. A younger man, and a West Pointer, he had a long record as an Army administrator, of service in Panama, in England, and with Army Air Forces headquarters in Washington. His first words to the men

of his group on assuming command were these: "You are a good group. I know you are, and I ask nothing more than the same spirit and co-operation you have given your former commander." Morale was low. The weather was foul. The skies were overcast and it was bitterly cold for days on end. No one was comfortable. It was not an enviable spot for a new commander but Colonel Gent



Col. Thomas J. Gent Jr.

soon proved that he was not only a good flyer but a good leader of men. It was to be his fate to lead the group in many of its great days including two occasions when results obtained justified the award of Distinguished Unit Citations to the 449th Bombardment Group.

LT. COL. FLEISCHER NEW EXEC

Shortly before the arrival of Colonel Gent, Lieutenant Colonel Wade M. Fleischer was assigned to the group as its executive officer. Coming from the veteran 376th Bombardment Group Fleischer brought experience and a steady hand to the 449th when it was most needed. Colonel Fleischer, a hard worker, devoted long hours to the many pressing tasks incident to organization. He gave the group continuity and smooth administration without which no organization can fight.

LUFTWAFFE PLUS REGENSBURG

In the closing days of the month 449th participated in a stirring drama as a mighty air offensive began against the German aircraft industry where the airplanes of the then powerful Luftwaffe were hatched.

Even now it is too early to assess accurately the results of this attack but it is assumed that the decline of the Luftwaffe as an offensive force began following these operations not only by Fifteenth Air Force bombers but by the Eighth Air Force and the Royal Air Force. For men of this group the attack was personalized in the Austrian city of Steyr and the Bavarian city of Regensburg.

February 25, 1944, the day of the second Regensburg attack will live long in the memory of those who participated in that attack against the factories turning out the crack German fighter, the ME 109. Group losses were heavy from a combination of enemy flak and aggressive fighters.

NO GREATER LOVE

February 25th 1944 was the day when two gallant men gave their lives for their crew and their country. Lieutenants Robert J. Knapp and Henry L. Allen were flying in the attack group against Regensburg as pilot and co-pilot respectively. They bombed the target successfully but their plane was damaged and set on fire. Enemy fighters attacked the stricken plane and soon it was a sheet of flame. Gallantly the two brave men held the plane level until most of the crew bailed out successfully and then the mortally wounded plane exploded into countless pieces. Greater love hath no man might be the epitaphs of Robert Knapp and Henry Allen.

"PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA"

That was also the day when Lieutenant Gilbert Bradley and his crew performed their legendary feat. Two engines were shot out over Regensburg and the crippled plane attacked by scores of enemy fighters. A tremendous aerial battle took place over Germany as the battered plane, old "Pistol Packin' Mama", lost altitude. Before the crew at last parachuted to safety fifteen enemy planes were shot out of the sky. Deep in hostile territory the crew evaded capture and made their way to safety, all that is, except Staff Sergeant Paul S. Biggart. Paul personally accounted for four of the enemy planes before he was killed by an enemy bullet.

GROUP RANGES NAZI SKIES

There were other missions flown in February and March of that year. Many planes went to the Anzio beachhead where the ground forces were hard pressed by the enemy. These missions the men liked to fly for they could see the immediate effect of their bombing in the aid it gave to the ground forces.

March was key-noted for the group by bad weather. Rain, cold and cloud not only covered the field but prevented attacks in the many target areas which for the group at that time ranged in a great arc over southern Europe from the Black Sea to the French port of Marseilles.

It was in April 1944, however, that the group truly entered the big leagues.

With the rapid advance of the Soviet Armies into Bessarabia and across the river Prut into pre-war Roumania the time had come when the Air Force and its component wings and groups could do tactical support work the Red Army. Among the notable missions of the group were assaults on the marshalling yards at Budapest, Cluj, Brasov and Ploesti. Smashing blows were delivered at enemy rolling stock, rail lines, switching facilities and warehouses.

Of equal significance was the continuation of attacks designed to destroy Germany's capacity for aerial warfare. Steyer and Schwechat are included in the jobs well done.

4-4-44 AIR BATTLE REWARDED

Yet April 4, 1944 is the day that lives in the memory of the 449th. Now known as "4-4-44" that day marked the group's celebrated single handed, unescorted attack upon the great marshalling yards of Bucharest, Roumania's capital. So tremendous was the damage inflicted upon those yards that months after Roumania was out of the war only two through rail lines allowed trains to enter and leave. It was a piece of bombing that ranks with the best ever accomplished by the Army Air Forces. The attack did not go unchallenged. Over the skies of Roumania there raged that day one of the great aerial battles of this war. Over one

hundred enemy fighters attacked the twenty-eight 449th B-24's. Forty of the enemy planes were destroyed. Nineteen others were claimed as probabilities for the loss of seven B-24's. Months later the group was to learn that the force which attacked that day had been the entire Roumanian fighter force and after the battle the Roumanians buried sixty pilots. Never again did Roumania's Air Force effectively attack any Fifteenth Air Force formation. Its back had been broken on "4-4-44".

Many months later the 449th Bombardment Group was awarded its first distinguished unit citation for the achievements of that terrible day.

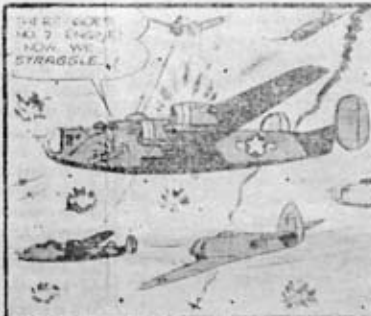
PEGASUS GROUP INSIGNIA

It was about this time that the group's insignia was adopted. The 449th Bombardment Group insignia is a blue shield edged in gold. On the shield is a winged horse and a crossed bomb. The horse and bomb are also in gold. The bomb, of course, signifies heavy bombardment, this organization's specialized contribution to the defeat of Germany. The Winged Horse, Pegasus, symbolizes Italy the scene of the group's operational career, for Pegasus arose in the mythology of ancient Rome. But today's Flying Horse is no myth as German industry mutely testifies. Although many contributed their ideas to the group insignia as it finally was adopted, Captain Joseph Barclay may be credited with fathering the idea and with its final development and adoption.

EUROPE OUR BACKYARD

With the coming of good weather in May the Group began widespread operations against Axis-occupied Europe. The Group's targets ranged from France to Roumania and they included marshalling yards at Ploesti, Bucharest and Brasov; assaults on marshalling yards, harbors and oil storage facilities in Italy; communication targets in Southern France; and counter air force operations in southern Germany with the Messerschmidt factories at Weiner-Neustadt twice coming in for a pounding. All over Europe Hitler's Supermen felt the heavy blows of allied air power.

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The death knell of fascism was sounding.

OIL AND COMMUNICATIONS HIT

The month of June 1944 will always be celebrated as the time the Western Allies made their historic landing in Normandy. It was also the month when the Fifteenth Air Force settled upon a fixed policy aimed at the destruction of all Axis oil resources. There were enemy oil refineries in many parts of southwestern and southern Europe. This group's targets included refineries at such widely scattered points as Porto Marghera and Trieste, Italy, Costanza, Romania and Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. On June 16 the Group dealt a devastating blow to the enemy refinery system at Bratislava. Prior to that attack Bratislava had been the one unbombed Axis capital in all of Europe. That distinction no longer remained after the rain of bombs which fell on June 16th. The city's oil refineries were left a flaming, smoking, shattered, tangled ruin.

PLOESTI PRIMARY TARGET

Yet these were not the principal oil targets within the group's range. After the attempt to reach the Russian oil fields in the Caucasus had failed the Germans were forced to conserve their use of petroleum products, particularly gasoline. However, by drastic measures the enemy high command could insure and adequate supply for the Wehrmacht so long as they held the oil fields of Roumania and the modern, concentrated refining facilities at Ploesti. Ploesti had been attacked earlier by the 449th but the targets had been immediate rail storage rather than the refineries themselves. Damage had been done in the April and May attacks. Now the Ploesti refineries were to be the number one target of the 449th until they were captured by the Red Army in August, 1944. So long as Ploesti was held by the enemy his ability to make war would be very good indeed. It is hard to overestimate the importance of this complex to the enemy. Only the considered judgement of history will assess properly its value. And so Ploesti had to be destroyed.

A very stout defense of this vital area was made by the Germans as the men who dropped bombs on it will testify. Other targets have been stoutly defended by the enemy. None were so strongly defended as "Big P" as it came to be known by the men who attacked it. A solid wall of flak greeted attacking formations. There was no way to go in to minimize the flak. What was left of the Roumanian air force after "4-4-44", added to some German fighters, hovered about the target waiting for straggling bombers. The enemy did not intend that the attacks against Ploesti should succeed. But the attacks against Ploesti had to go on until it was destroyed and at last the Red Army captured the ruins in August. Meanwhile the men of the 449th attacked "Big P" eleven times with varying results.

CITATION CLUSTER WON

On one of these attacks the group won its second distinguished Unit Citation. The date was July 9, 1944. The target was the Concordia Vega Oil Refinery at Ploesti. Twenty-eight B-24's loaded with maximum tonnage of bombs were airborne and set course for their destination. The intense, heavy, accurate barrage of flak hit the group with deadly accuracy and three of our bombers were

destroyed yet the gallant crews, remaining fought their way on to the target. The defensive measures employed by the enemy were overcome and the group succeeded in inflicting grave damage to vital enemy installations at a time when they were of the utmost importance to him. The heavy damage revealed later both by photographs and by ground examination following the fall of Ploesti revealed the extent of the heavy damage which this group had inflicted on the enemy. That it hastened his collapse in the Balkans can hardly be questioned.

REST CAMPS WITH SUNSHINE

With the coming of summer, Sunny Italy, long the butt of jokes from members of the group, began to live up to the reputation established for it by the enterprising but inaccurate members of the ad-

France. Submarine pens, docks, shipping, marshalling yards and bridges were the objects of the attacks.

The men could not help but note the change of units moving through surrounding areas. One day great numbers of French soldiers arrived. They were the men who had fought against the Germans from the beginning. They had moved from Lake Chad across the burning wastes of the Sahara, through Tunisia and thence to Italy. United States Navy men appeared in large numbers at a seaport. They had been in on the big Normandy show and many tales to tell of that operation. Some of them came to visit the air base and went for non-operational rides on the big bombers. It was very odd to see sailors aboard heavy bombers of the Air Force and yet it was pleasant, too.



Direct Hits on the Boja River Bridge

vertising trade. The heat at times was oppressive. Dust swirled across the air base and the occasional drops of rain which fell were almost non-existent. The men sweltered in the heat both day and night.

Many men went to rest camp. Some rested at a small Italian coastal town called Santa Cesarea while others went to Villaggio Mancuso, a mountain resort on the Calabrian peninsula. Others found the Isle of Capri as charming a spot as the words of the song. But the bright spot for those so fortunate to go, and in time nearly all would, was Rome, the Eternal City. After the nondescript drabness of most of Italy which they had seen, the men of the 449th found Rome like a city from another world. Not least among the pleasures of the Italian capital were the beautiful signorine who seemed quite willing to be charmed with the glamour of a uniform. Or was it the meals served in Army requisitioned hotels?

SOUTHERN FRANCE POUNDED

The coast of France had come in for the attention of the 449th. The great port of Marseilles was within bombing range of this group's airplanes; so was the erstwhile base of the French Mediterranean fleet at Toulon. An important railway line ran along the French Riviera and into Italy. To the harassed enemy these points were vital if he intended to defend the southern coast of France. For the Air Force and the 449th these points were of equal importance for a second great invasion was in the making. And so the 449th varied from day to day in its targets. Sometimes the attack would be into the Balkans, then it would move to Germany and Austria, and then the men who "fly the big ones", would attack the coast of southern

D-DAY OF SOUTHERN FRANCE

At last the great day arrived and brought with it the invasion of southern France. All was tense in the big group war room as the flyers assembled at twelve thirty in the morning for briefing. It was August 15, 1944. Attacks on enemy gun positions along the Riviera in the days immediately preceding had offered further clues concerning coming events. The airplanes took off in the middle of the night, loaded with their cargoes of death and destruction which they plastered on to the beaches a scant half hour before H-Hour of D-Day. It was a small part the group played in the invasion of southern France yet it was a vital one. The men who took part were proud that day.

FAMOUS PLANES OF THE GROUP

The 449th has had many outstanding planes in its long history of overseas achievements. Perhaps the most illustrious one is "Classy Chassis," a ship which first landed in Bruning and came overseas to establish a mark of eighty-seven missions with only one early return for mechanical failures. No. 37 was the last for the famed 717th ship, which succumbed to a heavy flak barrage while on a flight to Northern Italy.

Other planes which were a credit to their hard working ground crews and the pride of their combat personnel are legion. The star performer of the 716th squadron was No. 63, Shirley Jean, which rolled up 101 missions with but four early returns. The 717th squadron also has reason to be proud of No. 54, Umbriago, with a score of 94 and only 3 ERs; No. 54, Kayo, 86 and no early returns; and 56, with a tally of 75 and 1.

In the 718th, where the planes oft carry no names, the leaders were

No. 37 with a count of 98 and 1, and No. 34 with a record of 77 and 1.

The 719th squadron has a quartette of Liberators with impressive logs. Two had spotless records, No. 5, Heading Home, 96 times a menace to the Nazis without an early return, and No. 6, Darling VI, with a 78-0 score. Not far behind with only one early return apiece are No. 10, with 105 and 1, and No. 16, with 86 and 1.

ENEMY HARASSED

With Ploesti crossed off the list of targets and with the Red Army surging through the Balkans, with allied armies driving through France the 449th devoted its attention more and more to targets in northern Italy, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Strategic bombing had not ended. It was merely concentrated on a smaller area.

The campaign against oil was increasing in vigor and the effect upon the enemy was becoming apparent as reports arrived disclosing the heroic measures he employed to minimize dependence upon this Achilles heel. The establishment of road and rail blocks behind the retreating German armies in the Balkans absorbed the attention of the group. The enemy was being forced out of Greece and the group assisted his disorderly withdrawal with attacks upon marshalling yards at Larissa and Salonika. The thundering, crashing symphony of bombs and droning motors was rising to the crescendo which was to precede the great finale marking the end of the war which the German madmen had decreed.

SETTLED GROUP SLAMS VIENNA

Fall saw the group ready for the expected arrival of the miserable Italian winter. This time the group was well settled. All squadrons and headquarters had their own officers' and service clubs. Men lived in tufa huts. They ate well, knew the surrounding country, enjoyed themselves as best one can in a foreign land. There were worse lives in a war torn world.

The approaching bad weather had its effect upon bombing operations. Fewer missions could be flown and those which could had to battle bad weather and poor visibility. Nevertheless the group went on. New methods had been developed for bombing through the clouds and sometimes amazing results were achieved.

Many of the targets were now centered about Vienna. The onetime capital of free Austria, Vienna, the home of good music and of the easy living, charming Viennese people, had become the southern industrial fortress of the power drunk Nazis. With the loss of Ploesti the oil resources of Germany were now concentrated in part at the Austrian city. There were other huge armaments works there and a complicated transportation system whose destruction would cripple the enemy.

Vienna was heavily defended. In some ways it was Ploesti all over again. Attack after attack was launched from the air against the city and its surrounding industry as the avenging ground armies closed in.

HEROES AWARDED DSC

Only four men in the history of the group have won the DSC. Lt. Witt was the first and his was a posthumous award. The flak at the target battered two engines and an

hour later the propeller on one engine fell off and the other one burst into flames. Lt. Witt then maneuvered the plane to provide a stable bailing out level, enabling seven of his crew to escape. The plane then went into a vertical dive and exploded, carrying him to his death.

T/Sgt. James A. O'Neal, 719th aerial photographer, holds the distinction of being the only enlisted man to win the DSC. His award was for his heroism on the Group's memorable Bucharest mission of 4-4-44. His ship was riddled with cannon shells, and O'Neal was flak hit in the left foot, his heel and ankle being shattered. He continued to take pictures until his camera was blown from the hatch, and then he went to the waist and fired away at the enemy. On the "Abandon Ship" signal, O'Neal noticed that the left waist gunner was unable to leave because of severe wounds. Despite his own agony and weakened condition, he adjusted his companion's harness, dragged him to the camera hatch and leaped with him from the burning ship. He only released his hold and pulled his own rip cord when he was sure his friend was safe.

A DSC recipient from the 717th was Capt. John B. Wright, who distinguished himself in one of the group's many missions to Vienna. A flak barrage played havoc with his plane, killed the co-pilot and punctured Wright's left arm and side. Despite his suffering he continued on the bomb run and then headed the badly hit plane for home. He refused all medical aid and, not knowing his co-pilot was dead, landed the unworthy plane at a friendly field in an effort to secure medical services. On alighting from the plane he collapsed himself and was hospitalized for weeks.

The group's fourth winner of the DSC was 1st Lt. Richard J. Slade of the 718th. Flak over Yugoslavia rendered his plane unworthy and orders were given to abandon the ship. Fire had broken out in the bomb bay and the waist, and Lt. Slade went through the plane with a fire extinguisher, smothering the blaze and checking to see that his crew mates had parachuted. An explosion rocked the bomb bay and buckled the doors in such a way that the escape route was blocked. Slade then hacked away at the obstruction with his legs and, although seriously burned, finally succeeded in clearing the way for the escape of the pilot, the engineer and himself.



Col. Jack L. Randolph

Colonel Jack L. Randolph took over the command of the 449th on October 26, 1944 as the third overseas commander of this group. Colonel Randolph, a regular army officer and a flyer, had served during the war as commanding officer of a flexible gunnery school in Florida.

Later he was to serve with another group in the 15th Air Force. He came to the 449th in June of 1944 as deputy commanding officer and served in that capacity until October when the former commander completed his tour of duty. It was to be "Little Jack's" fortune to lead the group as it dealt its share of the final shattering blows to the crumbling German Reich. An able, fair officer he fitted in well with the tradition of 449th commanders.

Meanwhile the efforts of the group were directed at maintaining constant pressure on Germany and Austria and at the same time harrying the Germans retreating through Yugoslavia. Planes went to Munich, Sarajevo, Verona and Innsbruck among the many places attacked.

THE BIG FIRE

In November there occurred the great 716th Sqd fire. The barracks were of flimsy wood construction and although all normal fire precautions were taken under the circumstances a fire probably was inevitable. One morning the inevitable happened when a guard left his stove unattended while he went to breakfast. In forty five minutes four barracks went up in flames. That night the 716th squadron, once the envy of all the others, slept on the ground under tents. Fortunately no one was injured although many of the men lost much personal property.

NORTHERN TARGETS HASTEN END

There were many attacks through the winter on the Brenner Pass, that route through the Alps by which Italy is connected to Austria. Vienna and its neighboring industry continued to feel the weight of the group's bomb loads and towns unknown to any man in the group before he came to Italy. Places like Rosenheim, Wels and St. Polten will not be forgotten by those who were there.

MEN WORK LIKE BEAVERS

For the first time in several months weather ceased to be a contributing factor in causing non-effective sorties. In contrast to the February of 1944 February 1945 was in general a month of excellent flying weather. Like an over trained athlete the 449th Bombardment Group went into action. Ton after ton of high explosivs fell from the bomb bays of the group airplanes in the small area where the Germans still were free to operate. Vienna, Graz, Linz, Zagreb and Verona again and yet again were among the places to feel the weight of the 449th's effort. There would be no halt now for rest. The enemy was reeling. Now was the time for the last great blows to fall. Every section of every squadron worked day and night loading bombs, planning missions, changing engines and flying airplanes to achieve the mission of heavy bombardment - placing bombs on the target. Marshalling yards were the principal targets for throughout Europe oil as a profitable target had ceased to be important. Having denied the enemy oil the next step in the inexorable process was to so concentrate upon his communications system as to prevent him from making use of the great rail system of Europe.

The pace of the air war over Europe mounted in fury as the avenging armies of the United Nations closed upon the German fascists. Almond trees about the base burst into bloom, pale white blossoms reminding one of cherry trees in the

never, never land, America, and the almond trees seemed to herald the dawn of a brighter day for the people of Europe! Indeed one could hope that when the olive trees bore their fruit they might look down upon a Europe at peace after six years of the greatest catastrophe ever to fall upon mankind.

GROUP RAIDS DESTRUCTION

With the advent of improved weather the group's bombing accuracy mounted. Visual bombing resulted in many excellent attacks. At Landshut, Austria the group aided in wiping out that city's marshalling yards with as concentrated a pattern of bombs as once fell on Bucharest. Regensburg, once a city of which men spoke with awe, was attacked with splendid results. Where a year previously hundreds of fighters opposed the bombers, this time there

and that successful attack marked the two hundred fiftieth mission for the 449th Bombardment Group. Much history had been made since the attack on Mostar on January 8, 1944. It was a record that one could view with honest pride.

AWARDS

The men of the 449th have won many battle awards. Four men have won the Distinguished Service Cross. Many have won Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legions of Merit and Bronze Stars. Purple Hearts have not been rare ribbons in this group.

All men are entitled to wear the European-African-Middle East Ribbon. Those who were assigned to the group on April 4, 1944 and July 9, 1944 are entitled to permanently wear the distinguished unit badge and one cluster. Others may



Ship 63 raining down frags on German front lines in direct support of the 8th Army's all out final push.

was no opposition and Regensburg's marshalling yards were left a tangled mass of wreckage. One day the group attacked an airfield at Eger, Czechoslovakia in its deepest penetration of German held territory in this war.

ALLIES READY FOR FINAL PUSH

Great events were occurring in the west and the east of Europe. The allied armies in the west had struck deep into the heart of Germany. American and British armies stood on the river Elbe. The Red Army began its last great offensive aimed at the German capital, the city of Berlin. It was time for the British Eighth and the United States Fifth Armies, closest of all allied armies to the hearts of the men of the 449th, to open the campaign to clean the enemy out of Italy. The campaign of both these two armies began in April. The entire Air Force gave the armies air support and the 449th dropped tons on enemy front-line positions before Bologna. The war had now assumed a tactical character for the group as strategic targets all but disappeared.

GROUP ACHIEVES TACTICAL SUCCESS

Day after day the big planes of the 449th attacked rail and road bridges ahead of the advancing allied armies in Italy. One such attack took the group to southern Austria

wear it during such periods as they may be assigned to the group.

Men of the 449th are entitled to add eight battle stars to the EAME ribbon if they were with the group in the theater during the dates indicated:

Naples-Foggia -- 9 September 1943 to 21 January 1944.

Air Combat Balkans -- 1 November 1943 to 31 December 1944.

Rome - Arno -- 22 January 1944 to a final date not yet decided.

Normandy -- 6 June 1944 to 24 July 1944.

Air Offensive Over Europe -- 4 July 1942 to 5 June 1944.

Southern France -- 15 August 1944 to 14 September 1944.

Germany -- 15 September 1944 to a final date not yet decided.

Northern France -- 25 July 1944 to 14 Sept. 1944.

SEASONED VETERANS

However we do feel solid, genuine satisfaction and pride in the outfit to which we belong. It is a good one and its achievements are known not only to us but to the enemy. In the days yet to come wherever a man may go he may say with pride: "I WAS WITH THE 449TH IN ITALY!"

DRY CLEANING FINITO

Dry Cleaning Service at the Group Post Exchange is FINITO. All clothes are available and should be picked up immediately. There are a number of articles still on the racks. These articles will be delivered to Squadron Supplies on the 7th of May for disposition.



CADET CAPERS

Old Timers of the 716th Bomb Squadron probably know the following accounts by heart. However, many new faces have recently appeared among us so it seems fitting to retell a few of the outstanding incidents that have occurred since the assemblance of the outfit in May of 1943.

After the usual activation, movement and settling the 716th Squadron, as a part of the 449 Bomb Group, first entered combat during January of 1944. For the next few months missions were flown and, per usual, missions were cancelled. According to the squadron history Lt. V. K. Isgrigg, at the controls of 'Miss Lee' was one of the first to bring a multibattered ship home. After four men had bailed out the Pilot and engineer returned the ship safely.

LOW LEVEL

On another occasion a formation left to hit a target in Bulgaria. One plane, with an engine out because of a mechanical failure, dropped back after hitting the target with the rest of the squadron. Half way from the base the crew spotted a group of four train engines, twenty five freight cars and ten oil tankers. This made an excellent target for a strafing attack so, at an altitude of about 1500 feet the gunners opened up. Two of the oil tankers blew up and the remainder appeared to be well hit.

On other missions the squadron encountered numerous fighters in addition to the inevitable flak. Among the more well known air battles was the clash between 'Pistol Packin' Mamma' and a sky full of enemy aircraft.

For those who have been wondering we also mention that the squadron motto 'Sapientium Ferimus' means "we will make sense."

AFFECTION

A real-life "Lassie Come Home" story was enacted recently in the 716th Squadron, revolving around Cpl. Joseph M. Watson was a member of the 376th Bomb Group and when he was transferred to the 449th, he was forced to leave his pet behind. His buddies noticed that "Daisy" was pining for her master, but the best they could do was to bring the animal with them into Taranto. From there on she was on her own. Only "Daisy" herself will ever know just how she was able to find her way to her master's side and thereby bring about a joyful reconciliation.

717th



RAMBLINGS

It was with a feeling of loss that we saw M/Sgt. Turner, Sgt. Cecil, Sgt. Brandt, Sgt. Buffkin, Cpl. Drawdy, Cpl. Littlejohn and Cpl. Nute, and Pfc. Kramarczyk, take the high road while we are still taking the low road. The squadron feels that with these particular men gone we have lost a swell bunch of fellows.

This week was strictly party week, we understand that the officers threw a pip. The Club Umbriago threw the drinkingest, jolliest, and the fightingest party to be seen in the area. The fellow that wished to get rid of surplus energy could have gotten rid of same by looking askance at anyone and it would have been "Lefts and Rights away".

The Ordnance section threw a two year party that was the highlight of the week. Capt. Dunn and his men celebrated twenty four months together. Beer, scotch and Bourbon American style flowed freely. It was with pride that the ordnance section toasted the fact that they were the only section in the group that had been together as a complete unit for twenty four months.

MUMBLINGS

Here's hoping that Tom the Chinese lad who suffered the ball turret's nightmare is in the soldier's Valhalla... The time that Major Yandle took Lasky's gun, and marched the Eyette across the area yelling at him to double time, and the dago saying, "No eomoris"... The officer of the squadron who makes the signorinis shriek not with pain but with delight.

The orderly room and their touchiness about bitches. The engineering department the time that they flew "Dry Run" on a practice mission so that all ships would be air borne... The time that a certain section chief decided that as long as a river was flowing through his tent it would take care of sanitary conditions... Those trips back from Grottag loaded with vino and two feet of mud as soft as any feather mattress... The time we lost three ships with all veteran crews 'cept one man and all the salt of the earth... The time that Helmantoler proved his affection for old Roscoe by putting on the best crying jag to be seen... The fellow that ran fifty cents to several hundred proving us sad sacks.

The circulation of GAB has been increased for this issue in order that every man in the Group may have a copy of this Special Issue of GAB to add to his collection of souvenirs. CHECK with your Orderly Room for your copy today. It is the desire of the Editor to point out to GAB readers that all copies of GAB are restricted and cannot be mailed home. This also includes the Group History which is part of this issue.

APO EXTENDS CLOSING DATE

The closing date of the Group Army post Office has been extended until 14 May 1945. It was previously announced that the APO would close the 5th of May. Rushing business for money orders and mailing of packages is the reason for the extension.

718th



EAGLE TALK

It's ten, two and even that Johnny Wynne pulled the prize laugh of 718th's entire history the other night... Wynne said he knew damn well the drinks at The Eagles Nest DID taste better when he had to pay for 'em but just to keep his head in he might as well toss a few... While we're talking about "Fast ones"... Did you guys like the NIFTIES Col. Jordan and Major Ogden split the plate with at the Sqdn meeting.

THINGS YOU WILL NEVER SEE

Hudgens without a pencil... Persion without a boo... Saffa without a bitch handy... Sam Adams talking with his hands tied... Jim Wade out of Boom-Boom... Joe Schwartz with a permanent... Johnny Jeck or Hull out of Hypos... Doc Schultz with his hair combed... O'Donnell up for breakfast... Dragoo coming in without using A5... Heffernan begging for a mission... Frank Hodges refusing a drink... Luke Wade running the 100 yard dash in ten flat... Lt. Crowe Frowning... Dan Murnane dipping snuff instead of cigar chewing... Bill Moscher with his sons' picture anywhere but underneath someone's nose... Kempson with his mouth closed... Nisdeley and Fischer refusing a drink of Pops SKUNK WATER... Claude Schultz with only a ten Lire note in his pocket... Honey Chile without a Jeep... (Trick-Knee) Kessler giving a Bombardier the benefit of the doubt... Dover working... Hoope stating MERELY the bare facts... Locating Shack when there is work to do... Dybas and Levy refusing to fade a bet... Hogsett & Holipeter paying Taxi fare...

MEMORY LANE

Jones and his cow-hand boots... Strip-Tease Promoter Gooney... Tent roster McIntyre... Lt. Levandowski with the latest thing in mens clothing (deep olive drab a specialty)... Amsterdam doing the fitting the hard way... (Three drink) Pappy Thomas and Moustache... Siler & Webster rebuilding Engines... The "two devine" hairdo Jack FINGERS-UP... GOAT HILL with Clark, Del Plato, Killpalla, Feary, O'Toole and the other FRENCH TALKING GTS that made the famous run... Kocher giving us lights... The time the Creek took over Tech Supply and the boys chased the flying apparel a country mile... Flagg's latest thing in Casa Heaters.

719th



BUT DEFINITELY

Advertising rumors slowly dwindling down to "NIENT... E"... T/Sgt Basonik of Communications and Cpl Wilcox of the EM's bar association departez via the Adjusted Service Predicament-Pfc William Grey wailing in the Squadron Orderly Room informing them that he will no longer do business with Personnel Supply because of the simple fact that his excess blankets were taken away while he was shopping... A clever M/Sgt of Engineering scribbled 16 months under the title "MOS" figuring that it referred to "Months Overseas"... Wheeee... Sgt Breit-kreutz visualizing white women already-Pfc Rischard (OH! RRREALLY) Kelly smiling with happiness because of his new Snow-white GEE-AYEE teeth Almond Grove Society swooning continuously as the Red Crossette Debutante femininely drops them some doughnuts in Kit-Messes-Sgt Strayer referring to S-Sgt Eates as "Permanent Party 2-T/Sgt Gentry of Armament accusing the umpire of "CHEATING" and furthermore collaborating with the opposition and furthermore he had a dollar on the game-New faces staring at each other at your breakfast reunion-Sgt Patrik O'Hara convinced that the Government got you by the... when confronted by that Adjusted Service Decision-Cpl Joseph (Whats The Latest) Stephens giving advice as the soldier concerned grabs for a shovel-S/Sgt Kinman rolling dice with feeling-Sgt Zanski betting three dollars on NO SIX.

YOUNG AND GAY

Lt. Copping feeling young AND gay-S/Sgt Senatore looking excited as he reads the bulletin board-M/Sgt Crabbe bringing his own mustard to spray Hamburgers, Almond Grove kinda quieto lately... On-Edge characters stimulated-Sgt Murtha is now a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization-Cpl Ferraro of Armament seeking a match for fumare-Cpl Schlegel looking extra interested in his hamburgers-rather than listening to Amico's slanguage-S/Sgt Koutson and Cpl Rupert rushing to town after dining in the Mess Hall.

MUSIC

M/Sgt Kullman and M/Sgt Baker visiting neighbors throughout the night singing Love Songs-Echos from EM Club-"One for Momma"- "Just Give Me one Lick"- "I'll Break Your Neck"- "Get Your Hands OFF ME BUDDY"- "Ya Want That Stool Ovah Your Head"- Daily broken-up toons from a trumpet spreading throughout the vicinity-Sgt Frank stating a fact-"American Legion is run by men with two months overseas"-S/Sgt Pope convinced that its "Area" and NOT "AREE"-Cpl Leesman-Sgt Hamlin and Cpl HO giggling over a softball-Cpl Novotny resting on the Mess Room-Pfc Walter Remus parlari-"Its the slow pitching that struck me out"-Pfc Maurice Sullivan managing the Group Post Officer every Friday-Pfc Malandre at Vertorano similia-chasing foreigners.

THEY TELL ME

Now comes the report that Hitler is dead. This news might mean any one of several things until it is strongly and irrevocably confirmed which may not be for some time yet. First of all, and a lot of people will think the most likely, it may be a cover up for his disappearance to escape the punishment due his crimes. Second, which seems the most likely to us, his enemies in his own party have finally caught up with him but too late as his death now can hardly benefit any other Nazi leader because all Nazidom is crumbling in front of the English, American and Russian armies.

Also it is possible that his death, if it is true may mean that someone is getting ready to ask for a peace for Germany. We hope that the last is true because it would save lives, American as well as German. If his body is not found and identified however we may have to put up with various alleged discoveries of Hitler, for many years in different places and we hope that this does not happen because it will attach an importance to the possibility that he is still alive that his existence will not warrant.

If Hitler has really been bumped off it means that two of the three heads of the axis powers have met their inglorious ends. The only remaining one is Hirohito, we doubt that the little man on the white horse had much to do with Japan's becoming an aggressor but he stands for Japan's nauseating fanatic imperialism and must meet his fate when the rising sun goes down.

A not so recent magazine article which we picked up just recently reminds us of a lot of things that men should know and do. The article was written for women and was titled, "What Every Woman Should Know About Her Husband", but it wasn't about what you think.

It reminded us that a lot of husbands probably don't keep their wives informed on a lot of things which the women should know about. It especially applies right now.

Here is the list of things that your wife should know as much about as you do. Insurance policies, YOUR social security card, bank accounts, safety deposit boxes you might have, your birth certificate, your marriage certificate, your will, war bonds, other securities and property, any debts that you have contracted, and your business.

You should give your wife the names of one or two men whom you trust and whom she could turn to for advice and counsel and above all be sure that your wife knows where all your papers, records, receipts and accounts are kept.

USO SHOWS OF THE PAST

Set. Melman

The stage of our unit's Allied Theatre has been used to advantage for almost a year, offering a wide variety of USO entertainers, from the famous to the unknown. In our minds there are a few stand-out attractions which have not been equalled, but on the whole, the entire stage policy has been a success.

One of the first entertainers the 449th saw was Joe E. Brown. Mr. Brown, aided only by an accompanist, created a mild sensation, while running through his familiar comedy. The theory that only a celebrated actor could interest a GI audience has long been abandoned; indeed some of the finest stage presentations were offered by compa-

rative unknowns. With all due respect to what has just been written one cannot neglect the majesty of Katherine Cornell in the "Barrets of Wimpole Street". When Miss Cornell made her appearance, it was



a dramatic moment completely unparalleled. One of the finest variety shows to have made its way to the group area

was a British program featuring the comedy of Cyril Wells, in addition to having a particularly acid tongue, also presented some of the most hilarious pantomime ever seen. Especially memorable in Mr. Wells' musical revue, was a sequence in which he, attired in baggy trousers and suspenders, was partaking of his evening meal while harrassing his wife about her lover, (with justification, it might be added).

Popular film favorites have appeared en masse, the files indicating the personal appearances of John Garfield, Brian Aherne, Jack Haley, Mary Brian, Eddie Foy, Jr., and Erin O'Brien Moore. Experimentally, we have seen a Ballet, which met with rather doubtful approval; we have seen Miss Erin O'Brien Moore in Ruth Gordon's "Over 21", a GI version of "Room Service", a best forgotten USO adaptation of Cole Porter's "Panama Hattie", featuring Diana Del Rio and the Diamond Brothers.

One of the surprisingly entertaining musical presentations was offered by Radio City Music Hall's Edwina Eustace. Many failed to see this show, apparently under the impression that Miss Eustace would apply a heavy hand to her vocal renditions of the classical and semi-classical. The musical program was informal and Miss Eustace sang with feeling, talked with humor. It seemed to us that each USO show before its completion must have had someone sing "I'll Be Seeing You", tearfully admitting that regardless of the clash of all heaven and earth someone would inevitably be around to sing, even, in an inverted position, "I'll Be Seeing You". In concluding let us all pay homage to that portable, if somewhat disconcerting musical instrument, the accordion; heaven knows there could be no USO show without one, or have I been misinformed?

Cinema Americana

Monday & Tuesday - CRIME BY NIGHT is the attraction.

Wednesday & Thursday - The feature is MELODY PARADE.

Friday & Saturday - Mr. WINKLE GOES TO WAR presents Edward G. Robinson in military garb in a pleasant enough little film. Supporting Mr. Robinson is Ruth Warrick and Ted (ONCE UPON A TIME) Donaldson.

COMMUNICATIONS SPONSOR PUPS

What ye sow so shall ye reap--

The sowing in this case was the breeding of Carly, the Communications pet, with Pot-Pot, the black monster of the 717th Communications.

On the fateful night of February 18 the stage was set in the room of Ray Shroeder, ole Ratch Davis, and "Guiding Hand" Meininger. Then on the morning of April 18, exactly two months later, at 0700, the reaping began, with Candy delivering 7 little chocolate drops, Russ Kelly acting as mid-wife. One look is all that you need to convince you that Pot-Pot's voltage was well regulated that fateful night of February 18th.

With the new litter of 7, plus Candy, plus Pat & Pam, the radar boys at Group can proudly boast of a fine family of 10.

League Nears End

This league will close on 8 May 1945, deciding the top two (2) teams as first and second place winners and will play two (2) out of three (3) games decision for championship of this league.

In case of a tie for second place the tied team will play one (1) game to decide a second place winner. If so, these teams will play their game off on Wednesday 9 May '45.

The championship game will be played off on Thursday 10 May '45, Saturday 12 May '45 and Sunday 13 May '45. All on diamond number one (1).

All postponed games should be made up before the 8 May 1945.

—Fury-Views—

Those first few weeks in Italy! Who could ever forget them!

New Years Day dinner was the proverbial turkey with all the trimmings, but the lads stood in an unending line for almost an hour in a violent downpour of Italian rain while the bread became soggy and the gravy turned to ice. The chow house was God's great outdoors, and mess kits occupied insecure positions on wagons, upturned benches and discarded shelves. Even washing one's face was a problem. Water was not instantly on tap, but you went out in search of it with your helmet, a spare towel and bar of soap. The latrine was an eight-hole affair, and this was the social leveler of the air base. Here you'd find majors, captains, lieutenants, privates and sergeants all intent on the same mission.

Italian KPs were still beyond the horizon, and everybody took turns in helping the mess personnel dish out the chow. One morning the Colonel set the pace, by himself serving food in the chow line, and everybody lined up irregardless of rank for his hot cakes, his C rations or his Vienna sausage.

Sleeping was likewise a problem. Of course there were no mosquitoes, but there was everything else. There were marble floors, hard and frigidly cold, and there was the ground just as hard and just as cold, and there were no windows or doors to shut out the merciless winter blasts. Wrapped snugly in your four blan-

CASPER PLANES MAKE HEADLINES

Of all the planes that have passed through the 716th Squadron, there are several that will long be remembered by all members of the Squadron.

The plane that has received the most publicity back in the States is "Pistol Packin' Mama" which made history on the second Regensburg raid. Stories of Lt. Gil Bradley's valiant crew have made home-front publications ranging from big-time newspapers to the "Air Force Comics Book". Another ship that has received a large share of publicity is "Draggin' Waggin'", the plane in which Captain Clabaugh made his now famous dead-stick landing at Ancona. An account of this feat was featured in a recent edition of *Pagant Magazine*.

And there were others: "Cowbo" Powers' beloved "Maw Strickline", the flackuit-lined "Devil's Henchmen", "Lady in the Dark" with her record of sixty-six missions without an early return due to mechanical failure, and the old jinx ship, "Miss Lee", to name only a few.

As operations came to a halt, M/Sgt. Dacy's "Shirley Jean" had just completed her hundredth mission, while the honor of being the operational ship which had been in the Squadron for the longest time belonged to "Hey Maci".

kets, you lay there on that uncomfortable floor trying to get a few winks before an early briefing on the next day. If you worked on the line, you stayed outdoors throughout the night and slept a little the next day while other fellows milled noisily about.

PX rations were meager, and a spare candy bar was a luxury. USO shows were most infrequent, and Joe E. Brown's appearance found all standing room taken even if his performance was given during one of Italy's heaviest rainy seasons. Light bulbs, brooms, typewriters were scarce articles indeed, and radio programs were just a pleasant memory.

Vino was to be found in great quantities, and since no one had seen it in the process of being manufactured yet, it was widely consumed. There were of course no officers or enlisted mens clubs, so all drinks were the native product. Oranges were plentiful as were nuts and tangerines, but everyone dreamed of milk shakes and ice cream sodas.

It was rumored that V-mail would be scarce, and everyone wrote home for a supply. The result was that packages for months thereafter contained bigger and better batches of this writing paper, but by that time we already had all we could use. Mail call was just as important then as now except that we seemed to get more then enough.

Yes, those first few months in Italy were rough!