



DAY EVENTS

1. We had a beautiful day for a mission, but the higher ups did not see fit to give us one, so we had a practice formation with six ships instead. Our Officers Club is due to open tomorrow, and as a result, today has been a day of feverish activity in order to have everything in readiness for that momentous occasion. By night fall it was all ready with the exception of a few minor touches to be applied in the morning. Since only six ships were up, there was plenty of able help. Capt. Sims received his Majority today and Lt. Barrett was handed his Captaincy at the same time. Lt. "Dusty" Rhoads went on D.S. to Wing for a few days. Corporal Holmes was sent to the hospital, Strength of the Squadron today is: Officers -- sixty-six (66); Enlisted Men - two hundred seventy-four (274), present for duty.
2. Another day "sans" mission and also no practice, which made it a totally inoperational day. The grand opening of the Officers Club was held this evening, and it seemed as if, at one time or another, in the course of the evening, everyone in the Group dropped in to see what all the bragging was about. The drinks were excellent, and what was more important, they were plentiful enough for all to drink to capacity. We swapped the hospital a man for a man as Corporal Fronti left for the hospital and Corporal Zilbauer returned.
3. No mission - no practice - no nothin! The only noteworthy event of the day was that Capt. John E. Morris joined the Squadron as Engineering Officer.
4. Out with the old and in with the new. The rabbit has given way to voracious shark as the Squadron insignia on all of our ships. Since we had no flying today, the crew-chiefs took advantage of the lull and began the painting of shark teeth on the noses of the planes. It looks pretty good and is quite distinctive.
5. Surprise! A mission today after a long lay-off as nine of our planes took part in bombing Grazzinise Satellite #2, Italy, with fragmentation and three hundred pound bombs. They did a good job of spreading the bombs over the field. Slight, inaccurate flak was encountered and Me-109's were seen in a dogfight with the escorting P-38's. Our formation was not attacked however. Sgt. Patten, S/Sgt. Mikles, S/Sgt. Connelly were promoted to T/Sgt. Ten men were promoted to S/Sgt. per par 5, S.O. 171.
6. We enjoyed the trip to Grazzinise #1 so much yesterday, that we went back to get the rest of it today. Nine of our ships left again. They laid a good pattern of bombs in their assigned target area again, destroying some more of the Luftwaff's rapidly decreasing number of fighter planes in this area. Again they encountered slight, inaccurate flak. Me-109's made a few passes and on the whole, were not particularly aggressive. A few however, were, to their sorrow, too eager, and two were shot down, three probably destroyed and four were damaged. The gunners from our Squadron did not claim any as destroyed, but they did have two as probably destroyed and two damaged. We were treated to a show tonight. The Jerries visited Bizerte harbor and the Ack-Ack boys were on hand to give them a rousing welcome. From here the curtains of flak and tracer were easily seen and resembled fireworks display usually seen at fairs at home. Cones of lights from the searchlights were all over the sky and there was great excitement as one plane was seen to go down in flames, for of course it was assumed to be German. It was.
7. The 444th, with nine ships, led the Group today in bombing the Railroad Bridge South of Sapri, Italy. Lt. Brown, whose pilot was Captain Eddie K. Harris, dropped the first of an excellent pattern of bombs in the target area. Several hits were seen on the bridge. There were no Enemy fighters, but several ships were damaged by the moderate, accurate flak.

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7. (Cont'd) S/Sgt. Bush received a flak wound and was awarded the Purple Heart. Pvt. Le Brecque was promoted to Sergeant.
8. Again the target was repeated. Nine of our ships participated in finishing up the job on the Railroad Bridge at Sapri, Italy. A few more of our ships were damaged by the flak, but none were lost and no Enemy fighters were seen. The day began as normally as any other, but before it was far gone, it put in its bid for a prominent spot in history and our memories. The Allies accepted the Unconditional Surrender of General Badoglio, acting for the Italian people. We were, and naturally so, excited and quite happy to hear the news, and immediately we began to speculate as to how long it would be until we were sent home. Wishful thinking. 2nd Lt. Jack Kisler, English, and Meyer were promoted to 1st Lt's. Corporal Hallmark and S/Sgt. Heron went to the hospital.
9. Today was non-operational, as we waited to hear more about the surrender of Italy. While we were waiting, others were not. The Americans of the Fifth Army successfully established a beach-head at, or just South of, Salerno, Italy. More speculation. S/Sgt. Essig, S/Sgt. Peters, Corporal Steffanapoulas went to the hospital. 2nd Lt. Benjamin J. Sylvester was assigned to and joined the Squadron.
10. Here we go again. Nine of our ships up, we bombed successfully, the Road Junction East of Formia, Italy. It was a "Milk-Run", that is to say, No flak-No fighters.
11. No mission or practice today. Corporal Floyd E. Holmes, who was sent to the hospital with Malaria, which developed into Cardiac and Kidney failure, died today at the Third General Hospital. Sgt. Marcotte went to the hospital. Pvt's. Anderson, Nelson, Nevius, Streeter, and Tackett were promoted to Pfc..
12. Back again to the Road Junction East of Formia, Italy, with nine of our ships up. The mission was a successful one and also a "Milk-Run", encountering no flak and no fighters. Lt. "Face" Phinisey was sent on D.S. to 42nd Wing and Lt. Andrews took over the Mess in addition to his duties as Adjutant.
13. No mission today. Captain Arnold Booth was transferred to HQ, as Group Training Officer. Sgt. Virgil McCutchen was assigned to and joined the Squadron today. 1st Sgt. Hamlett Harmon and Cpl. Hadaway went to the hospital.
14. This was quite a busy day. We went on two missions - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The first mission, in which nine of our ships took part, was the road junction and defile at Anlette, Italy. Both targets were missed and the formation encountered no enemy aircraft and moderate, accurate flak. The second mission, with six of our planes up, was troop concentrations SW of Eboli, Italy. The assigned area was covered with an excellent pattern. Moderate, inaccurate flak was encountered, but no enemy aircraft were seen. Major Sims went on his fortieth and last mission, and as it turned out, it was not an eventful one. His ship, which incidentally carried Major Herb Macia, Group S-2, and who was also on his last mission, was sufficiently damaged by flak to force them to try for Sicily instead of Africa. They made it and caught a ride back home, leaving the plane there to be repaired.

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14. (Cont'd) Major Sims is now automatically taken off of combat flying and for the next week or two will "sweat out" his papers home. S/Sgt. Peters returned to duty from the hospital as Sgt. Halferty was sent to the hospital.
15. Another two mission day, with the first being the stretch of road between Battapaglia and Eboli, Italy, four of our planes participating. The bombing was excellent and the mission was a milk run. The second mission, which was also successful, was the road Southeast of Eboli, with four of our ships again. Corporal Wakely and Corporal Hallmark returned from the hospital and S/Sgt. Roy Vallesky was sent to replace them. Lt. Carter and fourteen of his Ordinance Enlisted Men were transferred to the 6636th Ordinance Company.
16. Six of our aircraft took part today in the bombing of the road junction East of Formia, Italy. The junction was well hit and neither flak nor fighters were encountered. The Officers soft-ball team came through with a decisive win over the Officers of the 443rd today, leaving them with the distinction of still being undefeated and untied. The final score was 7-0. Twenty-four Enlisted Men were promoted per par. 1, S.O. 179.
17. We lead the Group today in the bombing of the landing ground at Practia di Mare, Italy. Lt. Brown with Capt. Harris as co-pilot dropped the first of an excellent pattern on the field. No enemy aircraft, but several ships were damaged by flak.
18. Yesterdays mission was repeated today as another excellent pattern was dropped on the Practica di Mare, L/G. Six of our ships were along, and in one of them a very tragic incident took place. Capt. Harold Dieter, who was riding as Observer, was killed by flak, while peering out the bomb-bay as the bombs fell. Capt. Dieter was one of our original, and certainly one of the best liked men. His loss hit the Squadron very hard as he was counted by all as a good pal, and he was a very efficient and hard-working Engineering Officer. 2nd Lt. Weier was sent to the hospital and Cpl. Moore returned to duty. 2nd Lt. Sylvester was transferred to the 441st Squadron. Lt. Rhoads returned from D.S. to Wing. M/Sgt. Quentin Davidson returned to the Squadron to take his old job of 1st. Sgt.. T/Sgt. Paul Ingram was transferred to Headquarters to await his commission. The following men left for the rest camp at Algiers. 1st Lt's Goodson, and Towns; 2nd Lt's Jasinowsky; F/O Hicks, T/Sgt's Desantis, Strong, Tucker, Higgins, and S/Sgt. Hansen. 1st Lt. Otto Hausner received the Purple Heart for flak injuries sustained over the target.
19. There was no flying-today and Funeral Services for Capt. Dieter were held. S/Sgt. Porter, Dicke, and Sgt. Szewczyk went on a Secret D.S. per Voco. Cpl. Steffanapoulas returned from the hospital, giving up his place to Cpl. Nevius.
20. The Squadron was non-operational today. Screwy a ball game as hasever been played here, was the one played this afternoon between our Officers and the Headquarters Officers. Capt. O'Toole, pitching for HQ's. so antagonized the umpire, Capt. Al George, our Sq., that he walked out and we were forced to find a new strike caller. The game developed into such a farce, that Lt. Hackeenan, our pitcher, quit and Lt. Robinson substituted. With two of our best men out, the pitcher and the umpire, we were not weakened enough to be placed on a level with the Hq's, team and won, 9-6. 1st. Lt. Douglas N. Taylor was assigned to and joined the Squadron.

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21. Lt. Danny Hallowell's ship was severely damaged by flak today on a mission over Cancelllo - Arnone highway and railway bridges, Italy. It was so badly hit that he did not attempt to make it home, but crash-landed in Italy. His crew having been ordered to bail out, he and Lt. Buckout, co-pilot, crash-landed on the beach South of Salerno. It was several days before all of the crew was able to regain the outfit, and they had some good stories to tell when they did get back. Capt. Bill Barrett, Capt. Danny Hallowell, Capt. Hank Nerone, Lt. Buckout, Sg/Sgt. Bourgault, S/Sgt. Etzel were awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in the action. Lt. Buckout received his at the hospital in Italy and had it with him when he arrived here.
22. No mission. Pvt. Edmond F. Henly was assigned to and joined the Squadron.
23. Capt. Barrett with Lt. Stephens as bombardier, led the Group and four of our ships on the Cancelllo highway bridges. The target was hit and the mission was a milk run. Pvt. Henly was promoted to Pfc. S/Sgt. Essig returned to duty from the hospital. Thirteen men were promoted per par. 1, S. O. 186.
24. Nine of our ships joined the other three Squadrons in bombing the Cancelllo R.R. bridge. Another milk-run, but the target was missed this time. Our Enlisted Men smashed out a 3-1 victory over the Hq. Enlisted Men today. The victory was won by a larger margin than the score indicated and had it not been for the excellent pitching of Sgt. Bowers of Hq., and the absentisms of a few of our key men, the score would have been raised to astronomical figures.
25. Mission today was the Cancelllo - Arnone R. R. Bridge, Italy. Nine of our planes participated in missing the bridge completely. Although no enemy fighters were seen, two ships were damaged by the moderate flak. Lt. Buckout went to the hospital to be repaired. Pvt. Zalweske, Cpl. Ridgeway, Cpl. Silva, Pvt. Wissner, Cpl. Faulbe, and Pvt. Barneman were assigned to and joined the Squadron. S/Sgt. Crass was transferred to the 441st Squadron.
26. Eight of our planes were in on the bombing of the Prato M/Y and Railroad Bridges, Italy, today. The mission was a milk run and the bombing was excellent. Major McKean was assigned to our Squadron today, supposedly for the purpose of taking over Command when Major Sims gets his orders and leaves for the States. 2nd Lt. Robinson went on D.S. to El Aouina to the Bombardier School. M/Sgt. Rasmussen was sent to the hospital.
27. The Viaduct of Zoagli, Italy, was the target for today and six of the "Sharks" were along. Target well hit - no enemy fighters - only a slight amount of flak. "And the Rains Came." The famed African rainy season seems to have jumped the gun this year and came early. We were nearly caught napping, but the tent flaps were quickly brought down and things were made ship shape. Several men were not so fortunate and were unable to get their flaps down, the result being soaked beds and clothes. The rain also disclosed several holes in the roof of our Officers Club.

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28. The rain hasn't ruined the runaway as yet, so the mission today was the South Bridge at Orvieto, Italy. The mission, with eight of our planes up, was successful and encountered moderate accurate flak, but no enemy fighters.  
The rain is still in complete control in the Squadron area, but things are now pegged down and under cover, so it is not too bad. The drawback being that the area is veritable sea of mud, and that makes for hard going. M/Sgt. Mayer and 2nd Lt. Banicki went to the hospital.  
Major McKean, who was assigned to the Squadron the other day, joined us today. Cpl's. Shernock and Fiske were promoted to the grade of Sgt.
29. The M/Y's and Railroad Bridge at Foligno, Italy, was the target for today with eight of our ships up. The M/Y's were well covered but the bridge was missed. Three ships were slightly damaged by the moderate accurate flak, but no enemy fighters were encountered. M/Sgt. Rasmussen and S/Sgt. Bourgault returned from the hospital to duty. Sgt. Fiske was transferred to M.B.S..
30. Six of our ships went along with the rest of the Group on a joy ride over Italy as they encountered a 10/10 cloud cover and were unable to drop. They encountered no flak or fighters.  
Another pay-day and this one was unique, in that we were paid in yellow-seal currency. This has proven to be right up to the rumor-mongers alley and they really went to town. It seems that the yellow-seal money could only mean that we were going to one of fifty different places. The predominate destinations being England or home, with the others being from Alaska to India. It was good to feel the good old American bills and silver again.