

HELLO ITALY

While we were still struggling to become adjusted to our new "desert way of life" we were informed that the joy of flying low level was ended. There were no dams to be bombed from this desert! Instead, all of the talk centered on the upcoming invasion of the continent's soft underbelly. The first step was to be Sicily. While waiting for the invasion to start, we would hit some targets that would hamper the enemy's ability to strike at an invasion fleet lying in the coastal waters.

The first selected target was an airfield at Lecce in Italy. On the morning of July 2nd (just two and one half days after the *Old Crow* landed at Benina Main) six aircraft from the 506th Squadron departed on a combat mission to destroy aircraft and other facilities in the boot of Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #307, Y, piloted by Austin; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C # 606, X, piloted by Bunce; and A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson.

The 506th aircraft joined with 18 other 44th ships and proceeded toward the target. Mark Morris, flying in *Old Crow*, wrote in his diary for that day:

We went on a raid to Lecce, Italy. We had engine trouble and turned back. The superchargers on #1 and #2 engines failed. Shortly before turning back we saw one Mc-202 at approximately 2,000 yards. There was no attack. It was a seven hour flight.

The remainder of the Squadron aircraft proceeded to the target and all returned after scoring excellent bomb hits. A number of parked aircraft were destroyed as well as some hangars. There was light antiaircraft fire and the few enemy fighters did not press home their attacks. However, the Group did claim two enemy aircraft destroyed.

Aboard the *Lynn Bari II*, Anderson's crew reported seeing five parachutes. Shortly thereafter, as they crossed the Italian coast, they saw five radial engine fighters believed to be Italian. None of them approached the *Lynn Bari*. They flew that day with a nine man crew with Major Beam as an observer.

The Bunce crew, aboard *Timba-a-ah*, had two Me-109's approach

them at 8 o'clock, but they made no attack. They also saw one Mc-200 about 1,000 yards away, going down in a tight spin. At 9:30 they saw a B-24 turn over on its back and go down in a tight spin.

The crew of *Mr. Five By Five*, flown by Rebich, also saw the B-24 going down. When it had fallen a few thousand feet the tail came off. As they crossed the coast of Italy they saw five Me-109's. One made an attack from 6 o'clock below. While it was at a considerable distance, Maury fired on it from the tail turret. It was believed that the enemy aircraft was struck. Kallal and Williams saw the fighter start to smoke and then burst into flames. Vincent from Stevens' crew reported he saw the pilot bail out and his chute opened.

Stevens' crew also came under attack. Three Me-109's came in singly at 6 o'clock level. No damage was sustained. There were no claims of enemy aircraft destroyed. The tail guns jammed after about 10 rounds had been fired.

On *Heaven Can Wait*, flown by Austin, they encountered 4 Me-109's after the bombing run. Three attacked from 7 o'clock level. They made three passes. Each time on the break away, one peeled off under and two went over the top. The fourth enemy aircraft made one attack from below at 6 o'clock. The tail turret was inoperative due to a firing solenoid being incorrectly adjusted.

The Group lost two aircraft, one before the target and one ditched in the Mediterranean.

Thomas Hobson knew Robert A. LaFleur who was killed in the ditching. Back in Shipdham they had become acquainted while playing volley ball outside the Officers Club. He also knew Thomas R. Cramer who was lost that day while flying as a Command pilot with the 68th Squadron. Hobson knew Cramer because he was the only officer living in the 506th BOQ that wasn't from the 506th. Cramer was a West Point Graduate.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

**YANKS SMASH THREE
ITALIAN AIRFIELDS**

**100 Liberators
Drop 400,000 Pounds
Of Bombs on Bases**

**Three American Planes Lost in Raids
Apparently Aimed at Reducing
Aerial Defenses Surrounding Taranto**

Nearly 100 United States Liberators smashed at three airfields in Southern Italy Friday in the biggest offensive action yet staged by these four-engine craft from the Middle East, dropping more than 400,000 pounds of bombs on the Italian bases at Lecce, Grottaglie and San Pancrazio.

All three raids apparently were aimed at reducing the aerial defenses of the Italian naval base at Taranto--at the inside of the jutting Italian "heel" on the Gulf of Taranto.

Grottaglie lies 10 miles northeast of Taranto, San Pancrazio 28 miles to the east and Lecce 42 miles to the east.

The lethal loads included high explosive, fragmentation and incendiary bombs, a United States communique from the Middle East headquarters announced.

Three American planes were lost in delivering the triple punch, this relatively small figure equaling the entire United States losses for the month of June in this area.

Twelve Axis planes were shot down out of clouds of Italian and German fighters that rose to challenge the Liberators.

At Lecce, bursts of smoke covered the field, indicating hits on dispersed aircraft. Other hits were observed on hangars and runways. Fires were left burning behind the hangars and in the dispersal area. A very large fuel fire was observed in the southeast section.

A couple of days later the 44th lost some men in a noncombat related accident. On July 4th Ray Warner wrote:

We got word from St Evals, England, that two men in the 68th were killed there while crossing a mine field. They were blown to bits when a mine exploded. A man from the 66th isn't expected to live. (Note: Will Lundy records do not show any 44th personnel killed at this time.)

The softening up process continued on July 5th when the 506th

dispatched six aircraft to the marshalling yards at Messina, Italy. The intent was to destroy the railroad switching and storage facilities. The facilities were critical to supply and other military movements for the defense of Sicily, which lay just across the Straits of Messina

Flying that day were A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson (Note: Anderson led the Group with Lt. Col. James Posey as Command Pilot); A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; and A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce.

These 506th ships joined with 17 other 44th aircraft and proceeded toward the target. Bunce encountered low fuel pressure in the #1 engine and returned to base.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary for that day:

We raided Messina, Italy. I saw Mt. Etna. There were no fighters. We were gone eight hours.

Mark failed to mention that the flak that day was rather intense. My notes show the guns from both Sicily and Italy were taking cracks at us as we tried to pick our way up the straits between the island and the mainland

Aboard *Baldy and His Brood*, Strong's crew saw 5 Me-109's at a considerable distance. The enemy aircraft broke off the attack when they were fired upon. With Strong that day was our Flight Surgeon, Doctor Allison.

On the *Old Crow*, flown by McAtee, the crew saw six fighters make attacks from 2 o'clock on the lead ships in this formation. They were Me-109's and a Fiat G-50. There were no attacks on the *Old Crow*.

Slough's crew, flying in *Ruth Less*, saw 8 Me-109's. There were no attacks on this ship. However, they did come home with a flak hole in the vertical stabilizer

Stevens' crew saw 4 Me-109's making attacks from 4 and 6 o'clock on other ships in the formation. However, once again this ship was not attacked.

Anderson, in *Lynn Bari II*, did come under attack. About seven Me-109's came up from below at 2 o'clock. They broke off the attack at about 500 yards and peeled off to the rear.

One of our newspapers reported the raid as follows:

**MESSINA GETS ANOTHER
FIERCE BATTERING**

Attacking in three waves, more than 60 Middle East-based Liberator heavy bombers of the Ninth U.S. Air Force struck at the Sicilian ferry terminal of Messina during daylight on Monday

Nearly 375,000 pounds of high explosives were dropped blanketing the important terminal installations with hits which caused extensive damage.

Bombs landed along the whole length of the railway tracks, and an explosion at the roundhouse was followed by fire. Other large fires were observed at the central railway station, in the engine sheds, in a large warehouse and in the rolling stock maintenance yard at the southwest end of the railway tracks. Hits were scored in the marshalling yards and on railway oil tanks and barracks. One string of bombs fell across the Lazaretto mole.

Defense smoke clouds arising from the target area made pinpointing difficult, but the entire area was exceedingly well covered with bursts, fires and explosions.

Formations of enemy fighters attacked our bombers, three of these being destroyed with one other listed as probably destroyed and five as damaged.

From this operation, all of our aircraft returned.

The following day, July 6th, the 506th returned to the attack by striking against enemy airfields. This time seven ships went to the target at Gerbini Satellite Number Six.

Flying that day were A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #787, B, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; A/C #234, U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #201, Bar 0, piloted by Strong and A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce.

These seven 506th ships joined with 21 other ships from the 44th and proceeded toward the target. There was a haze in the area and there was moderate flak that inflicted minor damage. Enemy aircraft caused no problems. All of the 506th ships made it to the target and returned home safely.

Aboard *Southern Comfort*, Austin's aiming point was the west end of field. They believed their bombs struck in the target area. Flak was intense and heavy with both aimed and barrage being used. There was fair accuracy. The greatest concentration of flak was believed to be northeast of target. Flak opened up three minutes before bomb run and lasted for 10 minutes. They observed five enemy aircraft too far away to identify. On the return trip, they attempted to work Benina radio, but results were unsatisfactory. When challenged by the letter N from the ground, they fired a recognition cartridge at 1805 hours and landed.

At the left waist window of *Timba-a-ah*, flown by Bunce, Tommy Davis was bruised by ricocheting flak. The ship returned to base with three flak holes.

The crew of *Heaven Can Wait*, flown by Whitlock, reported 10 enemy aircraft that were too far away to identify. They did see another group shoot down an enemy aircraft.

Mr. Five By Five, flown by Rebich, received a number of small flak holes.

The records of Mark Morris show that the *Old Crow* took off that morning, but returned home because of engine trouble.

This was the first combat mission for the Whitlock crew. Donald V. Chase, radio operator, wrote the following about that day.

So there I was, on our first mission, poised in the belly of our ship, *Heaven Can Wait*, waiting for our load of twelve 500-pound bombs to drop. Then I noticed the bombs of our sister ships plummeting earthward. But not ours! Could it be my fault? Did the bomb doors creep in? I pushed the anti-creep lever as hard as I could. No, there was no creepage. There was nothing more I could do in the bomb bay, so I returned to the cabin area and plugged in my headset and tuned into intercom.

"Use the backup release, Whit", Bombardier Harold Schwab said on the intercom. Pilot Charles Whitlock nodded to his copilot, William Phipps. Phipps reached down to the console between the pilot and the copilot seats and grabbed hold of the T-shaped handle and began pulling upward.

I looked back into the bomb bay. The bombs were still

cradled in the racks. Phipps, seated as he was and using his left hand, his arm at an awkward angle, apparently didn't have enough pulling leverage to activate the release handle.

Standing between the pilot and copilot, I tapped Phipps' arm and pointed to myself then to the handle. When he moved his hand away, I squatted, grabbed the handle with both hands and pulled straight up with all my strength.

Immediately, the plane lurched upward as 6,000 pounds of metal left the ship. The bombs, of course landed far from the target area and splintered hundreds of trees.

It took all the next day to track down and repair the bomb release malfunction. We were more or less on stand down till *Heaven Can Wait* was again serviceable. We six enlisted crew members took advantage of the stand down by boarding a supply truck that was making a trip to the nearby city of Benghazi, Libya.

Field Marshall Rommel and his Afrika Korps had only recently been forced out of N. Africa by the Allied Forces and it was still thought necessary to be armed while away from base. Consequently, we roamed the bazaars of Benghazi with 45-caliber pistols holstered at our hips. One of our crewmen, tunnel gunner Ralph Knox of Chicago, appeared to be no more than 17. He was small of frame and sparse of beard. We called him "Billy the Kid" as he swaggered through the fetid smelling bazaar section, his gun hanging low and forward of his hip, the holster slapping his thigh with each step.

A few of the vendors cried out, "Viva Roosevelt, Viva Roosevelt." Prior to our arrival, I'm sure, as battles raged back and forth across the top of Africa for four years, the cries must have changed with the flow of battle: "Viva Mussolini....Viva Churchill....Viva Hitler....Viva Churchill....and now, Viva Roosevelt."

We trucked back to base, almost gladly, leaving the ragtag, alms-seeking children and impoverished merchants to their dismal, war scarred surroundings.

What Chase and most other 44th members did not know was the delicate relations between the British, who were responsible for governing the area, and the local population. Just a few days before, at the request of the British Administrator,

three 44th ships made a low level flight over the city. The intent was to quell the discontent and demonstrations by the local population. Yes, "Viva Roosevelt" was probably a recognition of our low level display of power.

The same day that Whitlock's enlisted men went into Benghazi, Lt. Bunker left Shipdham for an unknown destination. He was carrying with him secret maps and a civilian who once lived in a place called Ploesti. When he arrived at Benina Main a few days later, the 506th once again had its full complement of aircraft and crews.

Also on the 7th, I wrote to my wife:

How would you like to have a few grasshoppers (locust)? We have a million of them here. Everywhere you look it is one creeping mass of them. We also have big spiders, scorpions, lizards, centipedes and thistles to live and sleep with us.

The one day of rest was all that the 506th combat men were to have. On the morning of July 8th six aircraft departed on a mission to Catania, on the eastern coast line of Sicily.

Taking off that morning were A/C #370, V, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Austin; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson and A/C #234, V, piloted by Rebich. They joined 18 other 44th aircraft on the way to the target.

Rebich aborted when a cylinder head was blown on Mr. Five. By Five's #1 engine and an oil leak developed in the #4 engine. Austin also aborted when Ruth Less developed many malfunctions.

I recall that the target was a communications center in the middle of the city. The telephone and telegraph buildings were located in a park. Smoke from exploding bombs actually obscured the target area. My combat record reported there was very little flak and a few enemy fighters.

A newspaper account of the raid follows:

Cairo bulletins announced United States Ninth Air force Liberators dumped 250,000 pounds of high explosives on Catania in a two-wave attack Thursday, this following up a flame setting raid upon Axis barracks at that city by RAF

heavy bombers the preceding night.

Many hits were observed in the vicinity of the telephone and telegraph buildings, while other bombs fell in the railroad marshalling yards. The railway tracks were completely covered by bursts. The central railroad station was hit and set afire, as were also the freight depot and a large warehouse. An enormous fire was started among oil storage tanks and the whole industrial area was solidly covered by bursts.

Eight enemy fighters were destroyed in this action and five others were damaged, four probably fatally, it was announced.

(The Italian high command said in a Rome-broadcast communique that 81 persons were killed and 208 injured at Catania, in repeated raids which ruined buildings and started fires in the heart of the city. It declared 26 raiders were shot down over Sicily.)

In a number of places reference is made to a hit that resulted in a huge fire "where railroad lines reach to the breakwater, believed to be oil storage tanks." The newspaper accounts also tell of oil fires. The author's notes refer to "A huge yellow cloud that could be seen for miles after we left the target area. It must have been a sulfur storage area that was hit."

When *Heaven Can Wait* returned, Don Chase found:

Upon landing and parking at our improvised hardstand, two or three ground men--mechanics and armorers--gave us the thumbs-up greeting and hastily removed canteens of water from the bomb bay section. The water, still frozen from its five mile high ride, would soon be savored by the men in the late afternoon desert heat.

Potable water was tanked into base and very little was allowed for personal use. Each man, however did receive an allotment of one can of beer a day. We often carried many canteens of water and several men's hoarded beer, festooned to bomb bay struts, on missions, secure in the knowledge that, back at base, men were prayerfully awaiting our safe return.

There was little variation of food at base: pancakes, spam, powered milk and eggs, vienna sausages. The worst

of all was a congealed, wax-like, butter substitute called desert butter. Even under a punishing African sun it retained the viscosity of axle grease. Our waist gunner Edwin Stewart, a Californian, dubbed it a medicate for loose bowels.

The night of July 9th Norm Kiefer went to a movie. The theater was sort of an open air affair. A solid screen mounted on a stage-like platform out in the middle of nowhere. A series of benches planted in the ground served as seats for the men who wished to see the out-of-date shows. (This was also the site where religious services were conducted.)

Getting to the theater area was no trick. However, getting back to your tent after dark took real skill. There were few buildings on this base. There were few geographic features. There were no lights.

We knew if we walked a few yards straight out from the theater benches we should find a telephone line lying on the ground. If we followed the telephone line to the left for about a hundred yards, we should come to a Y. If we followed the left hand branch for a few hundred feet more, we should come to our Squadron Orderly tent. If we stood in the doorway of the tent and walked straight ahead, in about fifty feet we should be at our tent. If not, scream for help.

It was about this time that the *Old Crow's* enlisted men made a modification to their tent. Someone suggested that we needed a front porch. We rummaged around until we found a piece of canvas, some poles and rope. The resulting awning may not have been a porch, but it did provide a means of getting out of the sun.

After the sun was down, we soon learned that we could expect to hear the drone of multi-engine aircraft as a number of British planes headed out on their nightly flights. At first we thought that they were on bombing missions. However, we learned that theirs was a supply assignment. They were dropping food and equipment to Mikhailovich and his Yugoslav resistance forces, the Cetniks.

Occasionally, there was other night activity when high flying German reconnaissance aircraft came over. There were reports that in the past, the Germans had parachuted agents into the mountains which lay behind us.

One night, while we were watching a movie, the sky along the Mediterranean shoreline, some 18 miles away, was suddenly lit up with searchlights and gunfire. Then an alert was sounded. A few minutes later the movie was interrupted with the announcement that an enemy landing party had just been detected off shore. It was not considered a serious threat and the movie would continue. After about 15 minutes, everything was quiet.

The objective of the landing parties and the parachuted agents was to blow up aircraft. In the past, some of these attempts had been reported as successful. To offset these night threats, there were Gurkha guards assigned to each of our aircraft.

There were also rumors that these landing parties had attacked sleeping airmen. This was never proven.

The 506th once again became actively engaged in warfare on July 10th. We were to go back to Catania, which we had visited two days earlier. This day, the 506th aircraft took the long way around. By so doing, we did not fly directly over the invasion armada that was assembled off the coast of Sicily. This was D-Day for Sicily. The flight today took eight hours compared with five hours two days before.

The attacking force consisted of A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Austin; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson; and A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong. They joined 22 other 44th aircraft on the way to the target.

McAtee, flying in the *Old Crow*, also went that day. However, he flew with the 67th Squadron. The author recalls, while in the target area, McCash pointed out that the sulfur fires we set two days before was still burning.

This time our specific target was the marshalling yards. We had good hits in clear weather. There were a few not overly ambitious enemy fighters in the area and the flak was light. All of our aircraft returned.

Whitlock's crew, flying in *Heaven Can Wait*, observed what they believed to be sulphur refineries at Catania, that were still burning.

Austin, flying in *Ruth Less*, observed a B-24 with #4 engine

smoking, losing altitude and going south southeast. Antiaircraft fire was aimed from heavy caliber guns, but was light in intensity and inaccurate. We were subject to antiaircraft fire at the bombing point and for two minutes after the target. There were no enemy fighters. They observed a large fire and black smoke at Cape Santa Croce and at Messina.

That day Don Chase wrote:

While en route to the target and over the Mediterranean, all ten of our 50-caliber guns were test fired. Flight engineer Charlton Holtz, a Minnesota lad, manned the top turret. When he test fired, spent shells cascaded out of the turret onto the cabin floor next to my radio position. Occasionally a shell or two would bounce off his leg and land on me. The casings were hot. One landed on my neck and left a burn welt. However, I preferred ducking hot shells to flying in a ship with a malfunctioning turret.

The combat men of the 506th began to think that they were in a rut of every other day missions when on July 12th they were routed out of their beds. This time they were going to Reggio Di Calabria, on the mainland of Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #283, Z, piloted by Bunker; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Austin; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #370, V, piloted by Whitlock; and A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Rebich. They joined 20 other 44th aircraft to make the raid.

Our specific target that day was the marshalling yards. The target area was clear with little opposition offered from enemy ground or air defense. The target area was well covered with bomb bursts and fires were seen in the target area. All of our ships returned.

Colonel Leon W. Johnson and Major Beam flew that morning, as Command Pilot and Observer, with George Rebich. Before reaching the target area, Lynn Bari II lost its #1 engine and they aborted.

Thomas Hobson recalls:

I don't know why we aborted since I was not in my customary seat. Col. Johnson ranked me out of my seat. Naturally, I was upset, but I went along anyway. I rode

in the back as an extra gunner. I damn near froze to death. We aborted as we crossed Italian soil.

Slough, flying in Ruth Less, became concerned about the gasoline fumes that filled the ship. He turned back. However, when the odor disappeared, he resumed the flight and caught up with the formation. He assumed position #4, in element #2 of the 2nd flight and dropped his bombs. It was later determined that the fumes were from the overflow vent.

Aboard *Timba-a-ah*, Austin's crew reported they dropped their bombs in train at 100 foot intervals. They observed big explosions and fires in target area, two big explosions at Messina, fires were still burning at Catania. Also, on the way out, they saw small vessels running south from Giovanni and two large fires burning on northeast tip of Sicily.

Upon his return, Donald Chase:

After we parked our ship one of the ground crew went into the bomb bay to retrieve his cache of beer. He came out of the plane with his prize. Looking grieved and speaking with false sternness, he pointed to several small flak holes in the bomb bay doors and said--as close as I can remember--"Damn it, fella, you got to be more careful; they almost shot my beer." Banter and levity helped relieve the strain of missions, especially when all crewmen returned unharmed.

That day, July 12, I wrote to my wife:

Did I ever wake up quickly this morning. I had a pet in bed with me. The ungrateful cuss bit me. It was a centipede. It hurt for a while, but it is okay now. Incidentally, it didn't live long after I found it.

Thomas Hobson recalls:

The pattern of flying every other day resulted from a decision to keep our aircraft over the Italian mainland every day. Units from the Eighth Air Force went one day and the Ninth Air Force went the next.

The next morning the author received another rude awakening. The pattern of a raid every other day was over. Seven 506th ships were scheduled to go to the Crotone Airdrome on the bottom of the boot in Italy.

Taking off that July 13th morning were A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Anderson; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #370, Y, piloted by Rebich; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; and A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough.

Our ships joined 22 other 44th ships. The weather was clear and there was no enemy opposition. Bomb coverage was good and oil fires were seen in the target area. All of our aircraft returned to base.

That day Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

July 13--We started to Crotone, Italy, but turned back with a broken oil line in #3 engine and an oil leak in #2. We were gone nine hours.

The poor performance record of the *Old Crow* was indicative of the maintenance problems that all of our aircraft were experiencing. The rate of abortions were high. The blowing sand was clogging the engines. I remember how upset McAtee was when they returned that day. Striking his fist into the palm of his other hand he said, "BY GOLLY WE'VE GOT TO GET THIS SHIP FIXED! NEXT TIME WE GO REGARDLESS OF THE PROBLEMS!"

It was about this time I wrote to my wife:

Gee, did Father ever have a hard time saying Mass this morning. The wind just about blew him and everyone else away. We came home last night and found our tent had blown down. We were glad that the moon was bright.

To relieve the boredom of living in the desert, it was about this time that the crew of the *Old Crow* created a little excitement of their own.

Some of the Group personnel had taken to wandering in the desert on the days that they were not scheduled to fly. They would take their rifles with them. If they happened to find an unexploded bomb, it was standard procedure to stand back and fire at it until it exploded.

As a variation on this entertainment:

The *Old Crow* enlisted men decided to build their own bomb. The bomb casing was an oxygen bottle removed from a wrecked German Ju-88 dive bomber. The Germans used a high

compression oxygen system on these aircraft. The oxygen bottle was about the size of and looked like the inside tubing of a thermos bottle. The neck of the bottle was a good deal smaller than a thermos bottle and it was made of heavy metal.

The ignition system of the bomb was provided by tearing apart a German 88-mm antiaircraft shell. The gun powder of this ordnance was long spaghetti like strands. A couple inserted into the bottle would insure rapid ignition all the way to the bottom.

The explosive force was obtained by tearing apart German 20-mm cannon shells. The gun power in this weapon was standard black gun powder. It flowed into the neck of the bottle readily and could be firmly packed.

After these assembly operations had been carried out, it was necessary to seal the neck of the bottle. A little water, when mixed with the red soil, provided a mud seal that quickly dried in the desert heat.

Now that the bomb was built, it was only logical to see if it worked. Where could we explode it. It was too hot to walk out into the desert. Why not put it into that slit trench over there? Why not?

The fuse, consisting of the 88-mm powder, ran from the slit trench back to the front of our tent. At each joint, a little black powder was spread to ensure uninterrupted ignition. When it was ignited, the powder quickly burned and disappeared into the slit trench.

Then nothing! Minutes passed. Davis and Edwards were about to go over to the trench when there was a sudden explosion. Dirt flew and the side of the slit trench disappeared.

We were all surprised at the force of the explosion. In spite of the use of wet mud, it really worked! There were others who were also surprised! No one knew what we were doing. Fellows came running from all directions! One of them was Major Beam. He wanted to know what had happened. I think that it was Edwards that replied, "Oh nothing. We just built a little bomb." Major Beam replied, "The next time you do that go out into the desert! Way out in the desert! You may want to risk injury or your life, but I don't want you hurting anyone else."

Mike Davis didn't quickly forget that experimental toy. One of the 20-mm shells that he tore apart was a percussion shell. They had an aluminum cap that had to be removed in order to render the shell inoperative. He had unscrewed the cap and had it away from the shell casing and explosive projectile when the cap exploded in his hand. The explosive force was sufficient to drive many pieces of aluminum into his hand. Doctor Allison removed as many splinters as possible, but was not able to get them all. On the next few raids, this was extremely painful for Mike as he handled the top turret.

Mike had his first opportunity to experience this pain on July 15 when eight 506th ships went to Airdrome Number One at Foggia.

Taking off that morning were A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #787, E, piloted by Anderson; and A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce.

On the way to the target the 506th ships joined 21 other 44th ships. Weather was clear in the target area.

Anderson, flying in E, aborted when a fire developed after blowing a cylinder head.

Mr. Five By Five, flown by Rebich, was attacked by 2 enemy aircraft that made four passes from 6 o'clock level. The ship sustained no damage.

Mark Morris recorded in his diary:

Today it was Foggia, Italy. We saw 12 fighters and the flak was not bad.

I (Kiefer) recall in the briefings for this raid:

They stressed that a number of dummy runways had been built in the area. Our bombardier, Joe Young, came out of the target area cussing. He had aimed at what he was certain was a dummy runway. He was pretty down in the dumps all the way home. When the strike photos were read and interpreted, the intelligence people complimented Joe for spotting a new runway that they didn't know existed. It was loaded with aircraft. Joe didn't tell them that it

was an accident.

Donald Chase wrote:

The flak, somewhat heavier on this mission, was inaccurate. Aimed flak, as it suggests, is fired at a particular target, usually a lead group or squadron A/C. Barrage flak, however is not targeted on a selected plane. Rather, it is a boxed pattern of antiaircraft fire into which, the enemy hopes, the B-24's will fly.

At our base were several British-manned antiaircraft units, one fairly close to our tent area. Theirs was a boring task. For the two months of our stay no enemy aircraft came within range of their low to intermediate range of fire. Instead, only stripped down, extreme-altitude German photo reconnaissance aircraft penetrated the desert air space.

Occasionally, one or two of us would visit the two-man antiaircraft units, exchanging small talk and cigarettes and flicking ever-present locust off our clothes.

The base was devoid of mosquitos in this parched area, but we used netting to keep the five and six inch long locusts from our canvas cots. One of the crewmen, waist gunner Hugo Dunajecz of New York City, got so irritated with the invasive locusts that he fired his 45-caliber pistol at one, scaring the hell out of the rest of us and punching a half-inch hole in our tent.

Desist or move out, we told him. From then on, Hugo shot at crashed German and Italian fighters and light bombers that lay broken on the desert, the losers of earlier shoot outs.

Hugo was not the only one that tried to shoot at the locusts. Butler relates how:

Newbolt lay on his cot one day and took aim at some locust that were clustered at the very peak of the tent, where all the ropes come together. When he shot, it was not certain if he hit any locusts, but he hit the ropes and the tent came crashing down.

Steve Bugyie was one our desert hunters.

I would take my 30.06 Springfield rifle and go up in the

rocks hunting. I didn't kill anything, but snakes and rats. The foxes were too smart for Klinge and I.

Late one evening the officers dropped by our tent. They used to kid me about my shooting. Bunce said, "Bogyie, I just saw a couple of jumping rats outside your tent." I said "No problem". I took my rifle and shot off both their heads. When I came back into the tent, holding the rats by their tails, there was no more kidding."

Earnest Cutshall also went out in the desert to hone his shooting skills:

On one of these trips I saw nothing to shoot at and so I picked a rock as a target. The dust hadn't settled before I saw an Arab running for his dear life with his long robe streaming behind him. When I aimed the Arab was not in view. After the shot, he was quickly in view. I never went out shooting again.

On the morning of July 17, the 506th went hunting for the marshalling yards adjacent to the Breta Armament factories at Naples, Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #201, X, piloted by Strong; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Stevens; A/C #172, N, piloted by Anderson (Major Beam was aboard as Command Pilot); A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; and A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee.

On the way to Naples, the 506th joined 22 other ships from the 44th. Weather in the target area was clear with few clouds.

Austin's crew, flying in Southern Comfort, reported that after they salvoed their bombs, there was considerable fire and smoke in the target area. Flak was intense and heavy, both aimed and barrage, for a period of five minutes after the run. However it was inaccurate. Approximately 15 fighters were seen (Me-109's, Fw-190's and Ju-88's). There were about 20 attacks on our aircraft. They were all from 5 or 6 o'clock, level. They broke away in a split "S". A few three-plane formation attacks were made. One Me-210 came in between 5 and 6 o'clock and was caught in cross fire between the tail guns of this aircraft and Y. It started down in smoke. The top turret of this aircraft is believed to have damaged one Ju-88.

This was probably the day that Dale Lee recalls:

The #1 cylinder on our #2 engine was hit. Our instruments were reading okay and we still had plenty of power. However we were losing oil like crazy. Needless to say, there was concern on the flight deck. Austin feathered the #2 engine and we flew back on the remaining three. This caused us to arrive back to our base late.

This was one time that the combat tactics adopted by our crew did not work. You see, most German fighters would attack from above and behind. As a matter of practice, Lt. Austin would carry 2 degree flaps on our ship. When the fighters came in, Glen Hickerson (tail gunner) would yell, "Move!". Austin would then pull the flaps up. The plane would drop about 20 feet and the fighters 20-mm's would burst above us.

In my position I could not see the fighters because they flew by so fast. I would listen for Hickerson's guns to quit firing. Half a second after his guns stopped firing, I would fire mine. That way I knew when the fighters would appear flying through and underneath. We got a lot of hits using this teamwork.

Aboard the *Old Crow*, McAtee's crew spotted 15-to-20 enemy aircraft. There were Ju-88's, Me-109's, Fw-190's and Me-110's. As we were leaving the target area, one Me-110 approached us from 12 o'clock high. It was fired on by the top turret gunner, Mike Davis. The enemy aircraft was observed to burst into flames and head down.

While leaving the target area there was a terrific explosion. We guessed at the time that a store of naval torpedoes had been struck.

Earthquake McGoon, piloted by Bunker, also came under attack at about this time. Six enemy aircraft made individual almost simultaneous passes at the ship. Three came in at the nose, two from 3 o'clock and one from 7 o'clock. They were all level or slightly above. Clem Boulanger, in the tail turret, fired on the Me-110 coming in at 7 o'clock. The enemy fighter broke away at 500 yards with its left engine smoking. Another ship saw it go into a dive with both engines smoking. Meanwhile, in the nose, Navigator Newbolt fired at one Me-110 approaching from dead ahead. At about 200 yards the enemy aircraft burst into flames and went into a steep dive.

Enemy fighters were also picking on Baldy and His Brood, flown by Strong. There were eight or nine attacks on this aircraft. Top turret gunner, Edgar Hamel, fired on an enemy aircraft attacking from 3 o'clock and saw him peel underneath. Lonny Ackerman, at the right waist position, watched the enemy fighter go down and strike the water. The left waist gunner, Vernon Haas, picked up an enemy aircraft coming in at 8 o'clock. It broke off at about 500 yards and went down spinning. Not to be left out of it, Oliver Germann in the tail turret, zeroed in on one Me-110 that broke off at 500 yards and headed down toward the water.

Aboard Ruth Less, flown by Stevens, they were also taking a beating. Right waist gunner Frank Rodriguez was hit in the head and knocked down. However, he quickly got up and was glad that he was wearing a helmet. He was not injured. The loop antenna did not fare so well. There were other hits in the fuselage and a large hole in the horizontal stabilizer.

Anderson, flying in Lynn Bari II, had to jettison his bombs at Cape Stillo because of bomb bay door failure.

Mark Morris wrote that day:

July 17--We went to Naples and encountered nine fighters. There was lots of flak. We made two runs. I wonder why?

Ron Allen answered that question a number of years later:

As usual Anderson was leading the 506th formation. After we dropped our bombs we were supposed to take a compass heading that would take us out to sea. I gave Anderson a heading of 270 degrees. I intended that he would turn to the left and take up the heading. He repeated the heading and I said "Right". I intended to indicate that he had repeated the heading correctly. Instead, he thought that I wanted him to turn to the right. He turned to the right. As we made the turn I knew that a mistake had been made. If we continued on this turn we would go back over Naples. I immediately called him and once again gave him the 270 degree heading. Once again he repeated it and I said "Right". He didn't change the turn. On the third try I realized what was happening and substituted "Correct". By then it was too late and we were over the city once again. We later defined the terms we would use in the future.

On one of those passes over Naples Lawrence Kallal, on Mr.

Five by Five, had a close call. Thomas Hobson relates:

Lawrence was flying one of the waist guns. He was wearing one of the British chest parachutes. The buckle was a quick release type for use over water. The buckle was two or three inches in diameter and about an inch thick. That is the point that all of the parachute straps fasten. When fastened, the buckle is in the front at about the belt line.

Suddenly, something hit Kallal and completely turned him around. He thought that he had been hit. However, there was no wound and no blood. Then he saw his parachute buckle. A 20-mm German cannon armor piercing projectile had entered the buckle at the side and underneath the face of the buckle. It made a clean hole and came out the other side. Aside from being a little sore, Kallal was all right. There was no wound.

That was not the only hit we took that day. The props looked like a honeycomb. One rudder was shot off. Maury took two direct hits on the glass protecting the tail gunner. There were other hits all over the plane, but no one was hurt and we made it back home. Technicians came from Washington to look at the plane. The ship was repaired and made ready to fly once again.

Radio operator, Richard Tuttle, remembers:

We were straggling when I looked out of that little window into the #3 engine prop. There were tracers going through it. That was the first and only time that I believed I had to control the ship. I yelled "MOVE!" into the intercom just as my radio transmitter took a 20 MM cannon shell. I gave that shell to George Rebich.

Earnest Cutshall recalls the hits on the tail turret:

The tail suddenly kicked to the right. I looked back and saw tail gunner Dale Maury rolling down the catwalk toward me. When he stopped rolling he got up and looked at me. Since he was all right I sort of grinned at him. He put on a chute and went back to the tail turret.

Richard Williams was one of the crewmen on Mr. Five By Five. On the morning after the Naples raid, July 18th, "Little Willy" and I went for a walk in the desert:

We took our rifles and went out to get away from it all. We walked for quite a distance and didn't really find anything to shoot at. We were a little ways apart when "Willy" called for me to come see what he had found.

When I went over to him, he was holding in his hand a little red aluminum can that was slightly larger than a Gerber baby food bottle. It had a screw on cap that had the word BRETA inscribed in raised letters across the top.

He said, "I wonder what it is?" I replied, "I don't know, but I don't like the looks of it." Williams then asked if he should take the cap off and see what was inside. I said, "You Breta not. Don't forget where we were yesterday."

Williams then said, "You're making me nervous. What should I do with it?" I replied, "I don't know about you, but if it were me I would throw it as far away as possible. If you do, throw it like a hand grenade, overhand. Throw it toward that hill."

When he threw it and it struck the hill there was a loud explosion and a cloud of dust. We hadn't really recovered from the noise when some British soldiers came running down the side of the hill. Their antiaircraft gun was located at the bottom of the other side of that hill.

Needless to say, they were unhappy gunners. They told us that what Williams found was the charge that was used in antipersonnel bombs and in booby traps. They verified that if Williams had tried to unscrew the cap that we both probably would be dead. We went back to camp without picking anything else from the desert floor.

The next day, July 19th, the 506th airmen went out again to support the invasion of Sicily. This time they flew to Rome, Italy.

Rome was a transportation hub for all of Italy. The Italian Government claimed it was an open city that would not be used for purposes of war. In order to preserve the country's art and architectural treasures, the Government also called on the Allies not to bomb the city. They felt somewhat secure with the knowledge that any aerial attack would run the risk of having errant bombs strike in the Vatican, an independent religious center for the world's Roman Catholics.

The Allied commanders, on the other hand, knew from aerial

photography and logic that the railroads were being used to transport German men and equipment down to the battle front in Sicily.

When the decision was made to stop this flow, the 44th was selected to make the risky strike on the marshalling yards at Littorio. Briefings that morning were very detailed. The crews were admonished to be certain of their targets. Bring home the bombs if you are at all in doubt! Don't bomb the Vatican! Don't hit any churches! Many of the crewmen in the back of the ships were given leaflets to drop on the city. These leaflets explained why we were bombing and appealed to the Italians to abandon the war.

Because of the international, political, religious and propaganda implications of this raid, it was decided that the President of the United States would announce the bombing as soon as possible after the bombs struck the ground. To enable this immediate announcement, Allie T. Hearne, radio operator on the *Lynn Bari II*, and Norm Kiefer, radio operator on the *Old Crow*, were designated to send strike messages over separate monitored frequencies. The messages were coded to convey the message that all bombs were on target or that some had gone astray.

After the regular briefing that morning, all combat men of the Catholic faith were requested to report to the theater area. The Catholic chaplain was there and addressed the group. His message was that this was war and the raid that day was necessary to save lives of our ground forces. Any crewman that did not feel right about making the mission would be excused.

Taking off that morning of July 19 were A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson (Major Beam was aboard as Command Pilot); A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; and A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich.

On the way to Rome these nine ships joined 21 other 44th aircraft. Just before arriving in the vicinity of Palermo, Sicily, *Ruth Less* developed a problem with gas leaks and the #3 engine was cutting out. Slough decided to return to base. He selected a target of opportunity about 10 miles east of Palermo and dropped his bombs.

Austin's crew, aboard *Southern Comfort*, found the weather was clear in the target area. Bombing results were excellent. All bombs were observed to be in the target area, which was well covered. Large explosions and flames were seen. Prior to bombing, there was a large column of smoke in the marshalling yards. Heavy caliber antiaircraft guns put up intense, aimed, but inaccurate opposition. We were subjected to antiaircraft fire for 30 seconds before and three minutes after the bombing run. Enemy aircraft consisted of 5-to-8 Mc-202's, colored black. They made one attack from three directions, a little below and breaking away at 6 o'clock. This aircraft claimed one enemy aircraft damaged by right wing gunner T. Q. Purcell and bombardier, P. S. Singer. They observed five ships heading south just below the mouth of the Tiber River. About 15 miles out over water, just after the fighters left, they saw a parachute at about 5 o'clock and about 3,000 feet below. More than 10 seaplanes were sighted on Lake Braccianoo. There were plenty of ships heading for Sicily.

Aboard the *Old Crow*, everybody was craning their necks as we banked and swung out of the target area. The big question was did any bombs go astray? With great relief we decided that the bombing was perfect. I sent my message back to the Allied Command monitoring station.

Shortly after that, the *Old Crow* came under attack from six Me-109's that came in singly at 6 o'clock level. They made three passes and seemed to be using all explosive shells. They all broke away above. The *Old Crow* sustained no damage.

Neither did *Timba-a-ah* have any damage when 4-to-6 Mc-202's made one pass from 11 o'clock below and broke away at 1 o'clock down.

Before we were back to base, a successful attack was announced to the world. We were all happy that we had played a role in this history making event and that all of our ships returned to base.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

July 19--We went to the Rome marshalling yards. This was an "Open City"? Where did the flak and fighters come from?

Back in England, Ray Marner wrote:

Rome was raided and we know our planes took part. There was a piece in the paper about Allie T. Hearne on the raid.

Donald Chase wrote:

Airmen of Catholic faith were given the choice of flying this mission or remaining at base. The Littorio rail yards were approximate to Vatican City. An errant bomb conceivably could inflict damage to the home of the Pope. Therefore, stringent bomb drop precautions were invoked. Fortunately, the bombing was effected as planned. We heard that not one Catholic in our Group declined to fly the mission.

But the Catholic's decision to fly the Rome mission was not unexpected. All combat flying seemed to be voluntary. From the beginning, each man received specialized training to prepare him for combat. Even the gunners, for the most part, attended four weeks of gunnery school prior to assignment to a stateside combat training group. And whenever possible, airmen trained together as a ten-man unit for three months before entering combat. Somewhere along the line of progression, in school or training, each man had the opportunity to fail a course, feign a disabling ailment, or perform so inefficiently as to render himself unsuited for flying combat. Of course, some did. Those who did fly combat, however, did so with a self-determination, an unspoken pride in contributing to the effectiveness of the ten-man unit that each B-24 carried. I'm sure men of the 44th were not unique in this respect, but it did make a unit of cohesion that was not equalled in civilian life.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

AMERICANS BOMB ROME

MILITARY TARGETS HIT BY U.S. BOMBERS IN DARING DAYLIGHT RAID

Drop Leaflets Beforehand to Discount
Expected Axis Clamor That Religious
Shrines Were Being Desecrated

Striking home a grim ultimatum for surrender, American bombers smashed military targets in Rome by daylight today

in a daring, significant raid.

An all-American force of Flying Fortresses, Liberators, Mitchells and Marauders carried out the war's first bombing of Rome, concentrating on targets in the Eternal City. Liberators bombed the Littorio railway freight yards.

The carefully-instructed bombardiers rained explosives upon railway yards that had poured German troops to Sicily. Leaflets were dropped beforehand to discount anticipated Axis clamor that religious shrines in the Eternal City were being desecrated.

All the crews were carefully instructed to avoid historical and religious points by means of large aerial photographs on which such places as Vatican City, St John Lateran and others were outlined in red with the legend nearby: "Must on no account be damaged".

The raid meant war in earnest to Italians, who long have regarded Rome as a bomb refuge, and backed up the Allied demand of last week that Italians quit this war.

The Allied Command disclosed the raid within 15 minutes after the bombs tumbled from the planes--an unprecedented step taken to forestall Axis propaganda by presenting first a full explanation of necessity of the attack and its targets.

The article continued with commentary about the raid.

Another newspaper reported:

Three Planes Lost In Rome Raid; Crew of One Rescued.

Only three planes, one crew of which was rescued, were lost in the raid on Rome in which 272 heavy bombers and 249 medium bombers dropped 1,101 tons of bombs, the War Department revealed today.

The department described it as the heaviest daylight bombing attack of the war to date and reported photographs revealed "extremely successful results with excellent concentrations in the target areas."

Details of the Rome raid were included in a War Department review of the air war over Sicily and Italy in

July during which American and British air forces, collaborating with ground and naval forces, "cleared the Sicilian sky of the enemy's planes, blasted his airfields to the point of uselessness and pulverized his lines of communication." The article continued with a review of what had happened during July.

Of interest to the 44th were the newspaper comments on the rail yards at Littorio. They were "rendered unserviceable with at least 50 percent blocked or destroyed.

Mark Morris believes that it was on this raid that:

Jack Edwards suddenly realized, after we had gotten to altitude, that he had not used our convenient barrels on the African desert before take off. He came up to my position and dumped a spare ammunition box that I had. He then used it to relieve himself. Then he threw it all out the left waist window. Frank Slough was on our left wing, but quite a way below and behind. He used evasive action to keep from getting his windshield hit. When we landed Slough complained about that unauthorized attack.

The airmen of the 44th were surprised to learn upon their arrival back in Africa that they were no longer on combat operations status. Rumor has it that we will start flying at low level once again.

On July 22 I had thoughts of how lucky the 506th Squadron had been. We had been flying combat for four months. We had engaged in 20 officially recognized operations against the enemy. We had lost only two crews. This was a record that no other squadron could match.

Back in England, Ray Marner wrote on July 28th:

About 4 A.M. a Halifax cracked up on our field. The tail gunner was already dead from flak. The rest are only slightly injured.

Norm Kiefer remembers a couple of interesting experiences that occurred about this time:

One morning the breakfast line seemed to be moving slowly. One of our best known Sergeants was near the door of the mess shed. With him was another Sergeant from the other Group that shared the field with us, three Military Police enlisted men and an Officer. One of the two Sergeants

spoke to each man as he entered the mess shed. The police personnel just stood back and watched. When it was my turn, our Sergeant simply said, "Hi Norm." I then went on in. The rumor over breakfast that morning was that they were looking for an enemy agent.

On another occasion we were returning to our tent from a movie. As we walked along the telephone line, there was a lot of chatter. Suddenly, out of the darkness a voice called out and asked instructions for getting to Group Headquarters. Since it was commonplace to become lost after dark, we did not hesitate to render assistance. Afterward, Edwards became concerned because he believed that the voice in the dark had an accent. A German accent! Besides, who would want to go to Group at this hour of the night? When we arrived at our Squadron Orderly Room, Edwards called the Military Police Detachment and reported the incident. The next day we inquired about what happened. The Police indicated that there had been someone in the vicinity of Headquarters, but he had escaped in the darkness.

These incidents may seem to have been based on figments of imagination and rumor. However, James Dugan and Carrol Stewart writing in the *AIR POWER HISTORIAN*, published by The Air Force Historical Foundation, may provide a hint of what was happening. They indicated that a number of months after we had left Africa, three German radio operators who had been left behind by Rommel, were apprehended in the area. They were wearing parts of American uniforms, eating C-rations and smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes.

It was about this time that Lt. Richard A. Larson arrived. With him were Lts. C. S. Satterlund, A. H. Green and Robert E. Gutnecht. Also with him were Sgts. C. H. Hockensmith, A. C. Woods, Hosea E. Denley, Robert A. Orr, Gerald E. Porter, and Charles H. Dugan.

The following are excerpts from letters to my wife during the month:

"We went swimming in the great Italian lake last night."..."The mail plane came in night before last. I had 33 letters. About 10 of them were mailed last January to Morrison Field in Florida."..."I just tore up my Income Tax blank and threw it to the winds."..."You ought to see my writing table (Bomb fin cases piled on top of each

other)."..."Do you remember seeing pictures of camel caravans? Right now I can see one going over a hill."..."The boys are practicing tying each other up."..."What do you think of the paper that I am writing on? It is all I have this morning. I am writing when my mind should be on something else. There is still a little time." (Note: the date of this letter was July 17. That morning we raided Naples. It was written on the plane and handed to a ground crewman as we started to taxi.)..."Did I ever tell you how the jackals wake us up at night with their yelping?"..."Mornings when we wake up the ground inside the tent is covered with all kinds of tracks."..."You folks at home aren't the only ones that are fixing up the house. We went to chow the other day and found that the walls and ceiling had been white washed."..."Dog gone that wind! I just got an eye full of sand."..."I have a little pet. No, I can't tell you what he looks like. You see I have never seen him. He comes around at night while I am asleep. In the morning when I put on my shoes I find them filled with nuts that he has stolen from one of the other tents. There are also stones and twigs in my shoes. He has been chewing on my stockings. Mark has also been having the same problem."..."Look at page 21 of the June 21st issue of *Life Magazine*. The *Old Crow* is in the last flight of three planes, the one closest to the middle right hand side of the page." (This was the picture of 6 Liberators flying over Kiel on May 14, 1943.)..."Ag picked up a slip of paper with the words to a song called *Coming In On A Wing And A Prayer*. I wonder what the music is like?"..."Mail call was a pretty important event last night. From one tent came a yell 'It's a boy.' From another tent came 'No, It's a girl'."..."Gee! I wish that I would stop dreaming. I have had more dreams in the last month than ever before in my life. Sometimes they are good and other times not so good." (Note: This letter was dated July 29th. By then we knew we were headed to the Rumanian oil fields.)