

WORLD WAR II DIARY

of

Donald J. Tolle

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PREFACE	1
 <u>Chapters</u>	
I THE START: STATESIDE	1
II OVERSEAS: TO ENGLAND ABOARD THE QUEEN MARY	4
III TO NORTH AFRICA FROM ENGLAND	5
IV THE REST OF THE WAR: MALTA, SICILY, ITALY, CORSICA, FRANCE, BACK TO ITALY-- THEN, HOME!	16
 APPENDIX	 48
Summary of my travels from New York Harbor (9-5-42) to England and then to Algeria	49
My "itinerary" after landing in Africa.	49
On board the Queen Mary	51
Aboard the British troopship, Derbyshire	52
Near Tafar Aoui, Algeria (12-8-42)	53
Lessons from war (Thelepte, 1-20-43).	54
About Thelepte "Second Time" (written at Canrobert, 4-8-43)	55
Hank's chat with German prisoners (Souk el Arba, 5-10-43)	56
Trip to Tunis (5-14-43)	57
Trip to Lentini and Syracuse, Sicily, 8-23-43	60
The "if's" of war	61
36th General Hospital, Caserta, Italy (12-1-43)	62
And last (perhaps least), the poetry section	63 - 68

PREFACE

This "unpublished publication" consists of the actual diary I kept (probably unlawfully) for the major part of the nearly three years I was overseas during World War II as a member of the 47th Bombardment Group (Light), 97th Bombardment Squadron. It also includes some other things I wrote at odd times overseas, such as poetry (many would not call it that) and descriptions of certain special events.

The diary entries themselves are usually quite brief because the pages in the initial diary were 2½" x 4" in size, with only six narrow lines allowed per date. These were penciled notes which faded badly over the years and in some cases could be read only with the help of a magnifying glass and a bright spotlight. This little diary ran from September 1942 to March 1944, at which time I was able to get a bigger book and make somewhat longer entries. However, there were many gaps in the diary over those years, and I'm sorry now that I didn't keep a better record.

Any reader of this account will have to remember that I was writing it mainly for myself (sometimes as a means of just keeping up with what day it was on the calendar). Since I was in the 97th Squadron, it is obvious that most (not all) of the references are to people and events in the 97th.

My main reason for starting to put these jottings in readable form was some pressure from my three children (principally my son) to make them available to the family. Then in 1982, when Joe McGahan of the 84th Bombardment Squadron put his notes and recollections into "A Letter to My Granddaughters" and made his account available to the reunion attendees, I felt that I could do no less than follow his generous example.

One last statement: This is an "expurgated" edition in the sense that I have in a few instances deleted certain descriptions and comments which might even now needlessly cause a bit of hurt. Those types of things were largely due to my own youth and naiveté at the time and should have no place in this "in-house" document. In some cases, an event might be referred to without names attached--for the same reason. My purpose is to provide some information, stir some memories, and perhaps present a fairly accurate (though sketchy) recollection of how we lived, what we faced, how we endured--according to this one person's written notes.

Peace.

May 1987

Donald J. Tolle
907 Skyline Drive
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

(618) 549-3446

I.

THE START: STATESIDE

Two of my brothers and I had decided during the Christmas vacation after the 12-7-41 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that we would go ahead and enlist rather than wait for the Draft. Carroll was 31 and a high school teacher, Junior ("Ed") was 18 and a freshman in college, and I was 23 and a secondary school teacher (junior/senior high). We enlisted in Tampa, Florida, on January 5, 1942, and left that night for Camp Blanding at Starke, Florida. We were there about three days, during which time we took the oath (1-6-42), were outfitted with clothing and equipment, and did a good day's work with shovels and wheelbarrows.

On about 1-8-42 we left by train for Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls, Texas. A lieutenant who was a "good Joe" was in charge of us on this trip. (He had fought in major battles in the other war.) We had fine food on the trip (dining cars and hotels), and in Shreveport, Louisiana, he took us to the best hotel in town and had a fine dinner and floor show for us. All this gave a wonderful impression of Army life. . . . Then we hit Sheppard Field! No time was wasted in putting us in our place--but definitely!!! A corporal at this field had about the authority of a master sergeant any place else. The noncoms in general seemed to be jerks who were just tasting the first delights of authority, and it must have tasted pretty good. . . . Everyone here had a cold and was constipated. The dust was terrible and spread the cold germs from one person to another. We were happy to leave after 2½ weeks of poor food and misery.

On about 1-26-42 we left by train for Fresno, California--Hammer Field. Fine place! We got a taste here of living in war conditions--tin hats, gas masks, and all of that. Carroll went into Hq. & Hq. Sqdn.; Junior and I went into the 97th Bombardment Sqdn. After two weeks here (and our first pay--\$20!), we left by train for destination unknown (which turned out to be Oklahoma City). At Sayre, Oklahoma, our train was wrecked by a loose rail. Sabotage was suspected, but there was no proof. We were lucky that no one was killed, although three were injured. All our trucks and airplane tugs on the flat cars were ruined. Jr. and I had been on guard in the caboose a day or two before the wreck. Anyway, we missed the roughest part of the accident.

We arrived at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at about 12:30 a.m. on February 15, 1942. (At the present writing--April 24, 1942, we have been here nearly 10 weeks, and the items immediately following were some miscellaneous notes made at Will Rogers Field.)

Our Supply Officer is Lt. Robert L. Campbell, an awfully nice fellow from Texas. He's the only pilot I've flown with so far. I've been up with him twice, once in the nose and once in the gunner's seat. He was transferred yesterday (4-24-42) to a tow-target detail in Texas, Ellington Field. I hope to see him again somewhere.

Lt. Sherman W. Long, our Assistant Supply Officer, from California, was killed in the crash of his A-20C while making a practice flight about 30 miles from Oklahoma City (4-23-42). I hated to see him go. He was a swell boy. Junior flew with him the day before he was killed. I was up with Lt. Campbell while Jr. was up with Lt. Long. I remember

saluting Long and speaking to him the evening before he was killed.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler Garrison of Oklahoma City had the three of us brothers out to Sunday dinner once, and we had a good time. He was in the last war--a sergeant. Fine people.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Tolbert of Oklahoma City had Harold Wright of Hq. & Hq. Sqdn. and Duane Morris and me of the 97th out to Sunday dinner once. He's a lawyer; was a captain (I believe) in the last war. Nice people.

April 25, 1942--I heard today that the 47th Group has been made a part of the 3rd Air Force with headquarters at Tampa, Fla. Boy! That sounds good to me--whether we stay in Tampa permanently or just pass through there on the way across. I surely hope we go.

May 3, 1942--Our Sqdn. Cmdr. (Lt. W. F. Duncan) told us yesterday that we are to go into desert maneuvers for three months in a few weeks, and then it will be overseas for us. That really knocks the props from under our Florida plan. I guess we'll be in one of three countries soon: Libya, Egypt, or Australia. I'd really like to go home just once before we go across, and then I don't care where they send me.

May 13, 1942--(I'm writing this on the 20th of May, so I'm not sure the date is correct.) Two planes collided today, and four were killed--John Pellish, S. W. Dye, and J. D. Davis (enlisted men), and Lt. Toler. Louis Killeen and Lt. Gualtiere were able to bail out safely, but Louis got a broken leg when he landed. Davis got out of the nose of his plane and got his 'chute open, but something from the wreckage hit him and killed him. (The man in the nose of an A-20 has very little chance of getting out alive, and the gunner doesn't have much more.) Louis was lucky--the tail of his ship was cut off about two feet behind him, so he had a relatively easy time getting out. Johnnie Pellish was a favorite of mine--a stocky, freckle-faced, pug-nosed kid of about 18 or 19 from Pennsylvania. He was really a swell boy, and it's hard to get used to losing boys like that. I guess we'll have to get used to it, though, because there will no doubt be many more before this thing is over. We've lost nine men and five planes out of our Group in about a month's time--besides several minor crack-ups. We'd better begin saving something for the Japs and Germans. Sometimes I think we have enemies in our midst--there are too many accidents taking place.

My brother Carroll left for O.C.S. at Miami while we were still at Will Rogers Field; and he made a career of the military service, retiring as a Lt. Col.. He was a bombardier/navigator on B-29's in the Pacific during the war. My oldest brother, Kendall, received a direct commission as a Lt.(jg) in the Navy a few months after the other three of us had enlisted. He became a Lt.Cmdr. but did not stay in the Navy after the war. Junior and I were Staff Sergeants the last two years of the war--he in the 47th Group Photo Section and I in 97th Squadron Operations.

The Group left Will Rogers Field after our approximately 5½ months in training there and spent the next few weeks on maneuvers in the woods near Greensboro, N.C., to get us used to tent life--we had been in barracks previously. While there, my parents and Mary Alice McNeill came up from Florida to see Junior and me. They stayed with friends in High Point, N.C., a few miles from Greensboro. Mary Alice and I had met in the summer of 1937 but had seen very little of each other during the intervening years. We had several dates in High Point, decided it was

"real," and agreed to consider ourselves engaged. I couldn't talk her into marrying me before I went overseas, which shows she was smarter than I was. I was a corporal making about \$36.00 a month and even had to borrow \$10.00 from her to have dates with her while she was there. (I paid her back!) She was willing to be engaged but not to stop dating other boys while I was away. So that was our agreement--and obviously it worked out well, because as of this writing (4-18-87) we have been married almost 42 years.

(From this point on, my regular diary begins, with some gaps in dates.)

Fri., Aug. 28, 1942--Arrived at Fort Dix, New Jersey, from Greensboro, North Carolina.

Tues., Sept. 1, 1942--At Fort Dix, drilling, etc., getting ready for overseas.

Wed., Sept. 2, 1942--Worked all night with Maj. Fletcher getting equipment packed and requisitioning more. (I had been assigned to the 97th Sqdn. Supply Section in the early days at Will Rogers Field and had stayed in it until leaving England in Nov., 1942, at which time I was able to transfer to the 97th Sqdn. Operations Section.)

Thurs., Sept. 3, 1942--Rifles and new equipment issued.

Fri., Sept. 4, 1942--Left Fort Dix tonight for Port of Embarkation. Hiked 3 or 4 miles to catch train for New York. Full packs.

II.

OVERSEAS: TO ENGLAND ABOARD THE QUEEN MARY

Sat., Sept. 5, 1942--Left New York harbor on the Queen Mary. Crowded conditions. No escort. When will we see the Statue of Liberty again?

Sun., Sept. 6, 1942--This is a fast ship (about 36 knots per hr.). We zigzag all the time and change course every nine minutes to confuse enemy submarines.

Mon., Sept. 7, 1942--It's reported that a German radio broadcast said this boat is now at the bottom of the sea. What does that make us?

Tues., Sept. 8, 1942--It's rumored that we turned off course a 1000 miles or so to escape a U-boat nest.

Wed., Sept. 9, 1942--Was on guard over our Sqdn. safe tonight (in the bowels of the ship), got a little seasick, and puked in my helmet. I would have been O.K. if my relief hadn't been 15 minutes late.

Thurs., Sept. 10, 1942--It gives one a lonely feeling to have nothing around but water. This boat is really crowded. We eat twice a day.

Fri., Sept. 11, 1942--Landed at Gourock, Scotland, on River Clyde near Loch Lomond. Left in blacked-out train for England.

Sat., Sept. 12, 1942--Disembarked from train at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk County, East Anglia. Stationed three miles away at Rougham.

Sun., Sept. 13, 1942--We're living in Nissan huts ("tin") with cement floors, coal stoves, and steel cots.

Mon., Sept. 14, 1942--A heavy guard is required by Group. That seems a bit odd when we see the British (who have been at war for years) may have one lone guy with a club as their only guard over a big area.

Wed., Sept. 16, 1942--Everybody in England seems to own a bicycle, and lots of our guys are buying them too.

Sun., Sept. 20, 1942--Bury St. Edmunds is an interesting old town. I go in every few days to see a show. Dave Frieze and I generally go around together.

Thurs., Oct. 1, 1942--I think it was this date we moved from Rougham to Horham (still in Suffolk).

Fri., Oct. 23, 1942--Frieze and I left Horham for a 3-day pass to London. Caught train at Diss. Arrived in London about 8:00 p.m. Registered at Washington Club (Red Cross hotel for service men).

Sat., Oct. 24, 1942--Saw "Yankee Doodle Dandy." Went to dance at Paramount Theatre. We dated two sisters. It's difficult not to woo war-time English gals. . . .Saw "Between Us Girls" at Leicester Square Theatre. Cokes and cookies at the Washington Club. Nice beds, clean sheets, and a bath--2⁵⁶P a night.

Sun., Oct. 25, 1942--Went to St. Paul's Cathedral this afternoon. Saw Eleanor Roosevelt this a.m. St. Paul's was beautiful anyway! (Later: that was mean of me; I learned to have a lot of respect for Eleanor Roosevelt.) . . .Saw "Venus Comes to Town"--not bad. Saw "Moontide." Saw Buckingham Palace this morning but missed the changing of the guard. Back to Horham!

III.

TO NORTH AFRICA FROM ENGLAND

Nov. 24, 1942--Left England (Liverpool harbor) on the Derbyshire (British troopship), headed for North Africa. (We had boarded the ship at least one or two days earlier.)

Thurs., Nov. 26, 1942--Thanksgiving service on Derbyshire somewhere between England and Africa.

Sun., Dec. 6, 1942--Left Gibraltar for dash to Africa. Three destroyers; two troopships.

Mon., Dec. 7, 1942--Landed near Oran, Algeria. Hiked a few miles with full field equipment. Trucks picked us up and took us to a mudhole-bivouac at Tafar-Aoui, Algeria.

Tues., Dec. 8, 1942--Rain and mud and C-rations.

Wed., Dec. 9, 1942--(Ditto)

Thurs., Dec. 10, 1942--(Ditto)

Fri., Dec. 11, 1942--Left in rain to catch train to Casablanca to join rest of Group.

Sat., Dec. 12, 1942--A slow, slow journey. Nice French girl named Violet on the train; speaks English. Very interesting to talk to.

Sun., Dec. 13, 1942--And still is slow, slow. Joined 97th Sq. this night at Mediouna, near Casablanca. With Jr. again. (He was with the part of the Group that went directly to Morocco from the States, about two months or so after the advance echelon had gone to England.)

Mon., Dec. 14, 1942--An officer found me sleeping-in today (I was tired from the trip). He said, "Corporal, what have you done for your country today?" I said, "Nothing, Sir!". . . My first bath today in three weeks. It was a salt water shower, but wonderful!

Thurs., Dec. 24, 1942--Left Mediouna, French Morocco, by C-47 (named "Quitchebitchin'") in the morning. Flew by the Strait of Gibraltar down the Mediterranean. Spent Xmas Eve in hangar at Blida, Algeria. (When we had left Casablanca, our plane flew too close to Spanish Morocco, which was "neutral," and a few warning bursts of flak were thrown up near us.)

Fri., Dec. 25, 1942--Ate Xmas dinner above the clouds between Blida and Youks. Dinner consisted of cheese and crackers. Two old-timers got air sick after telling us not to puke on them!

Sat., Dec. 26, 1942--My first bombing experience here at Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. One bomb fell fairly close. The plane was so high we never saw it.

Sun., Dec. 27, 1942--Dug down a little deeper today.

Mon., Dec. 28, 1942--Joined rest of Squadron at Thelepte, Tunisia. They beat us here by one day because our transport (C-47) lost a gas cap and had to land.

Wed., Dec. 30, 1942--Sqdn. ran first combat missions today (two of them). Timm and Georgia nearly got hit by flak.

Thurs., Dec. 31, 1942--Two more missions today.

(Gap in diary.)

Mon., Jan. 4, 1943--Field was bombed this morning (5 JU-88's). . . . Two of our planes were shot down on mission today. Three killed (missing, at least). Three wounded but safe. (Capt. Draper and S/Sgts. Holland and Gasser were killed. Capt. Martin and S/Sgts. Haller and Timm were wounded but safe.)

Tues., Jan. 5, 1943--I taught my last day of school in Palmetto, Fla., one year ago today, then enlisted in Tampa, Fla.

Wed., Jan. 6, 1943--Took oath one year ago today at Camp Blanding, Fla.

Thurs., Jan. 7, 1943--We were bombed at dusk by one JU-88. I was caught with my pants down (literally)--at the straddle trench (latrine).

(Gap in diary.)

Sat., Jan. 9, 1943--Junior caught up with me today from Casablanca by transport plane.

Notes for above week--Major Vincent Sheean (author) was in our Operations dugout this week. . . . (General note--During our time at Thelepte "First Time" the Germans had a habit of sending over us at night a JU-88, with its unsynchronized engines, in a kind of war of nerves. It was an effective way to force us into a tight blackout condition.)

Sun., Jan. 10, 1943--Field strafed by four ME-109's. We had a "Hogfight" to liven up breakfast.

Mon., Jan. 11, '43--Four ME's strafed field again. Another show for breakfast. A major across the field was killed.

Tues., Jan. 12, 1943--Seven JU's with ME cover bombed field this afternoon. Got two of our planes on the ground. Rhodes was hit by shrapnel but not seriously wounded. P-40's got a JU and an ME.

Wed., Jan. 13, 1943--Junior and I were caught in the open when several JU's bombed the field, but luckily we weren't hit. We should have hit the ground sooner instead of trying to get to a foxhole. There was a paratrooper scare during the bombing, causing some "anxiety."

(Gap in diary.)

Fri., Jan. 15, 1943--Three attacks today, two by ME's in the morning and one by 10 JU's in the afternoon. All of the JU's were shot down by P-40's. Two or three of the "Peashooters" were shot down in the morning.

(Gap in diary.)

Mon., Jan. 18, 1943--Margaret Bourke-White, Life Magazine photographer bummed a ride to Youks-les-Bain, Algeria. Lt. Brown was the pilot.

Tues., Jan. 19 - Tues., Feb. 2, 1943--(One general entry). Same old stuff every day--bad food, extremely cold nights, Sirocco by day, plenty of work to do, but no raids since the ten JU's were shot down.

Wed., Feb. 3, 1943--Photo-gunner Ed (Junior) Tolle went on his first mission over enemy territory today. He took about 40 pictures. . . . Our field was bombed and strafed by five ME's this afternoon. Damaged some planes; killed two pilots of the French Lafayette Escadrille on the ground. Two (and possibly a third) ME's were shot down by Spitfires.

(Gap in diary.)

Mon., Feb. 8, 1943--Junior went on his second bombing mission today. It was a hot one. One piece of flak missed his head by about 3 inches. About three or four of our planes were hit. Lt. Brown's plane was shot up, but he did a beautiful job of landing it with one wheel not down all the way. He and Thurman and Evans were lucky boys.

(Gap in diary.)

Sun., Feb. 14, 1943--Some planes of the 85th Sq. were shot up in the air by ME's. One crash-landed (1 killed). One exploded over our field (4 killed).

Mon., Feb. 15, 1943--Strafed this morning by about 6 ME's. Two of our planes were ruined on the ground. Five ME's were shot down by Spitfires. I was caught out in the open again by this strafing attack. Rudy Nerich jumped into the cook's slop pit--thought the top of the slop was the bottom of a foxhole; had slop up to his armpits. (That's one time I preferred being on top of the ground.) . . . EVACUATION--Our Sqdn. moved by truck convoy to Youks tonight, supposedly for a "rest." The truck I was in had an accident, and we had to change to another.

Tues., Feb. 16, 1943--Here we are at Youks for our "rest." Frieze and I were first bombed here. Junior got a bath this a.m.

Wed., Feb. 17, 1943--Snow today. . . Are we bait to suck Rommel into a trap this side of Thelepte? We'll see. (Later: We were not!!)

Thurs., Feb. 18, 1943--Jr., Tutt, Frieze, and I worked on our new "home." It will be a luxurious hole when we finish. . . The Sirocco blew all night, with rain toward morning.

Fri., Feb. 19, 1943--Rain & hail & wind today. We finished our shack (underground, naturally), and a lovely sack it is. Our first night in it tonight.

Sat., Feb. 20, 1943--Jerry gave poor exhibition of bombing us today. Missed us a mile. . . Sudden orders to evacuate to Canrobert (Algeria). Broke camp in rain, fog, and cold. Left about 1:00 a.m. in open trucks after waiting six hours.

Sun., Feb. 21, 1943--Arrived at air base at Canrobert at dawn after riding from 1:00 a.m. in open trucks (freezing cold). Dug in again. Leaving our lovely sack at Youks was hardest blow of the war. Visited Canrobert.

Mon., Feb. 22, 1943--Bathed in Ain Beida this a.m.--my fourth bath in three months. Saw a French girl in silk stockings walking down the street of Canrobert! What a sight for tired eyes!

Tues., Feb. 23, 1943--On guard from 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. My feet are still cold at 9:00 a.m.. British plane crashed and burned on our field early this a.m.. Ammunition went off for a long time. Washed all our dirty clothes (first time in three months).

- Wed., Feb. 24, 1943--Junior bought a goat kid from an Arab. Cute kid! It cried all night. Jr. puked tonight. Something he et.
- Thurs., Feb. 25, 1943--Rain today. I puked in my tin hat tonight. Something I et. Junior's goat (Oshit) ran away today. 200 francs gone with the wind.
- Fri., Feb. 26, 1943--Rain and mud. Nasty mud.
- Sat., Feb. 27, 1943--Rain & mud. & hail. Snow on the hill nearby that Jr. & Dave climbed Wednesday. More rain, more hail, much more mud. We are having a rest here as far as work goes, but this nasty mud is hard to enjoy.
- Sun., Feb. 28, 1943--Letter from Mary Alice saying she's in love with someone else. My only drunk this date.
- Mon., Mar. 1, 1943--Went to Ain Beida to look around.
-
- Wed., Mar. 3, 1943--Dug lovely new shack today. Better than the one at Youks (even!).
- Thurs., Mar. 4, 1943--Made a few improvements on our home, and now it's swell.
- Fri., Mar. 5, 1943--I'm on guard tonight. Wrote Mary Alice after I came off guard, in answer to her 3 letters today saying she's in love with me again. I'm through.
- Sat., Mar. 6, 1943--Cooked some lovely omelets on the stove Jr. made. Jr. on guard tonight.
- Sun., Mar. 7, 1943--Went to Ain Beida for bath.
- Mon., Mar. 8, 1943--Rain today. Jr. flew today (dry run).
- Tues., Mar. 9, 1943--Sqdn. doing a lot of flying these days preparing to go up to front again.
- Wed., Mar. 10, 1943--Adams and Donahoo bailed out today when they thought Lt. Smith (pilot) had passed out. They felt foolish.
- Thurs., Mar. 11, 1943--I made Sgt. today effective the 1st of March. Jr. sick tonight from headache he got on flight yesterday.
- Fri., Mar. 12, 1943--(Gap in diary.)
- Sat., Mar. 13, 1943--Junior taken off combat crew today as result of sinus trouble. I'm glad.
- Sun., Mar. 14, 1943--Got paid today (1225 francs).
- Mon., Mar. 15, 1943--Mail from home. Yesterday was Dave's birthday--he told us tonight!
- Tues., Mar. 16, 1943--Kendall's birthday (35). Jr., Mac, & I practiced some of Mac's songs which Jr. arranged.
- Wed., Mar. 17, 1943--The big push started just now when our planes took off. Mission not successful. I worked with Armament Section today loading bombs for a mission. Terrific hail, rain, and thunderstorm this afternoon. Mud!
- Thurs., Mar. 18, 1943--Rain again. We were flooded yesterday. Jr. & I on guard tonight. Mud so slippery we could hardly walk.
- Fri., Mar. 19, 1943--Jr. had to move to the line with the photo men. Should be able to move back to our shack in a few days.
- Sat., Mar. 20, 1943--On gravel-loading detail today besides Operations work.

Sun., Mar. 21, 1943--Loaded bombs today with Armament Section. Bombs I helped load the other day probably killed men today. I didn't realize this was Sunday until I saw the chaplain holding Mass.

Mon., Mar. 22, 1943--Bomb loading again today. Fred Bevis flew up in a P-38. First time I'd seen him since on the Queen Mary. He's at Algiers. I gave him our Lakeland Ledgers.

Tues., Mar. 23, 1943--"Hellfire" crashed tonight. Nobody hurt. Gave great blow to the Axis today--60 of us out of the Group were on trash-loading detail for Group Hq.

Wed., Mar. 24, 1943--On guard tonight from 11 to 3 in camp area. Jr. on from 3 to 7--plane guard.

Thurs., Mar. 25, 1943--Took bath tonight in Ain Beida. Mac and I sang belated Xmas carols on truck on the way home.

Fri., Mar. 26, 1943--Gen. Eisenhower landed on our field. He just now went by in a command car guarded by machine guns. Did my washing.

(Gap in diary.)

Sun., Mar. 28, 1943--Went to church service today for first time since Thanksgiving service on board the Derbyshire between England & Africa.

Mon., Mar. 29, 1943--On guard; graveyard shift again. Cold, but yes!

Tues., Mar. 30, 1943--Dental appt. at 2 p.m. One tooth filled. . . Jr. & most of Sq. moved up to Thelepte again. The C.O. wouldn't let me go. . . Saw "Pride of the Yankees" tonight at hangar.

Wed., Mar. 31, 1943--Two more teeth filled. . . With Jr., Dave, & Tommy gone, I'm left alone. Shirk, Mercer, & Klum moved in with me.

Thurs., Apr. 1, 1943--Pay day.

Fri., Apr. 2, 1943--Nasty weather today. Cold wind, rain, & light snow. Before that, dust was blowing all over. . . 86th lost plane, pilot, and gunners on mission. Shot down by an ME. "Georgia's" ship was hit by ME cannon but was not knocked down. (All this is rumor from Thelepte.)

Fri., Apr. 2, 1943--Nasty weather today. Cold wind, rain, & light snow. Before that, dust was blowing all over.

Sat., Apr. 3, 1943--Traded Arab for 40 eggs. Fixed stove so we can cook again. Kind of lonesome without Jr., Dave, & Tommy around.

Sun., Apr. 4, 1943--Heavy frost this a.m. but a lovely day since then.

Mon., Apr. 5, 1943--On M.P. duty in Canrobert last night. . . Richard Wenham killed in strafing at Thelepte today by FW-190. Gallahan seriously wounded; Sturgis, Laborde, & Statts wounded. One 86th boy was killed and two wounded. Colwell had leg blown off. Seven planes ruined by the strafing. A tough day.

Tues., Apr. 6, 1943--Saw "Gentleman Jim" at hangar tonight. Junior came up from Thelepte to spend night. Gave him his half of package from home which came today.

Wed., Apr. 7, 1943--Dental appt. 4:00 p.m. Another tooth filled. . . . Capt. Sharpless, Breining, and Roarke shot down by ME near Faid Pass. They may have escaped. Garrison and Shepard bailed out of Lt. Smith's plane when they thought he was crashing while trying to lose a German fighter. Elmer's chute opened just in time, but Shep's didn't. Elmer was injured; Shep was killed.

- Thurs., Apr. 8, 1943--Moved Ops. tent from line to Sqdn. area. Jr. went back to Thelepte. . . On yesterday's mission, Capt. Sharpless, Roarke, & Shepard were killed. Garrison bailed out safely; Breining missing.
- Fri., Apr. 9, 1943--Been awfully windy and cold for two or three days. I get to go to Thelepte tomorrow; I'm glad of that. . . Mary Alice and I are "that way" again--Bless her.
- Sat., Apr. 10, 1943--Some more of the Sqdn. and I moved up to Thelepte again, for first time since Feb. 15th. Pitched Ops. tent. Slept with Dave in Armament tent. Will dig a home tomorrow.
- Sun., Apr. 11, 1943--Dug foxhole by Ops. tent. Worked all day typing mission and enemy action reports. Saw Jr. for a few minutes this evening.
- Mon., Apr. 12, 1943--Dentist 3:30--couldn't keep appointment because I had moved (from Canrobert to Thelepte). Had three alerts today but no raids.
- Tues., Apr. 13, 1943--Still sleeping in Armament tent with Dave.
- Wed., Apr. 14, 1943--Lots of back work has been keeping me busy for several days.
- Thurs., Apr. 15, 1943--Moving to Souk el Arba tomorrow morning early (30 miles from the front). Have seen Junior only once since I've been here this time.
- Fri., Apr. 16, 1943--Found that Jr. had left for Souk el Arba 4 days ago. I left Thelepte in British truck packed with our officers and men. Arrived at Souk el Arba (1930) ~~right~~ after a bombing. Slept in open this p.m.
- Sat., Apr. 17, 1943--Much warmer here--500 ft. above sea level. 30 or forty miles from enemy. Set up Operations. Got two letters from home. Couple of alerts. Enemy planes overhead tonight. Sky was alight with tracers and flak 3 times. . . Young, Chester, and I are sleeping in Ops. tent here at Souk el Arba. The weather these days reminds me of Florida.
- Sun., Apr. 18, 1943--Couple of alerts today. Bombs dropped on field next to ours. I've been doing lots of work since Klum was transferred out. Work about 12 hrs. a day usually.
- Mon., Apr. 19, 1943--Two or three alerts today; no raids. Weather very warm here with nice, cool evenings.
- Tues., Apr. 20, 1943--Went into Souk el Arba to take a steam bath. . . Had a couple of alerts. No raids.
- Wed., Apr. 21, 1943--Rain poured down. Sticky mud. . . Working as hard as I ever want to these days.
- Thurs., Apr. 22, 1943--The big and final (we hope) push in Africa started last night. Lt. Gualtiere was shot down by flak today but crash-landed in friendly territory.
- Fri., Apr. 23, 1943--A British officer, F/L D. G. Hatchard, was killed in Lt. Gualtiere's crash-landing yesterday. Sgt. Limoges (RCAF) and Lt. Gualtiere were wounded by flak before the crash.
- Sat., Apr. 24, 1943--Alerts; no raids today. Jerry must be "pooping out."

- Sun. Apr. 25, 1943--Easter Sunday; and I went on a bombing mission over enemy tanks & trucks. Rode in nose as "observer." Couldn't see much because half of nose was painted. They say there were enemy fighters and flak, but I couldn't see them. Our bombs covered the target area. (Lt. Deaton, pilot; Haller & Easterling, gunners.)
- Mon., Apr. 26, 1943--Made a wooden bunk to get up out of the dust & bugs.
- Tues., Apr. 27, 1943--Round-Boy Adams killed on mission today by a piece of flak. He was a swell kid. Everybody liked him. . . . I was sick and vomited tonight.
- Wed., Apr. 28, 1943--Our Sqdn. was the only one out of five to hit the target today. B-25's accidentally bombed American troops.
- Thurs., Apr. 29, 1943--86th ship burning on the ground right now (14:00). Ammunition going off in all directions. Bombs will go off soon. Don't know how fire started.
- Fri., Apr. 30, 1943--Stood down for whole day (no operations). I caught up on some work and did some reading. Rain last night.
- Sat., May 1, 1943--Stood down again today! Saw Burns Yates for first time since I left the States. Lightning, thunder, wind, and rain tonight.
- Sun., May 2, 1943--Another busy day for me. Only one bombing mission today for Sqdn.
- Mon., May 3, 1943--On guard tonight (graveyard shift); heard some bombs drop quite a distance off.
- Tues., May 4, 1943--Going to see "Footlight Serenade" tonight (Betty Grable).
- Wed., May 5, 1943--Three ammunition dumps blew up today and were going off spasmodically all afternoon. We hit the dirt several times as bombs and shells exploded. Heard one piece of shrapnel sing by the tent. (Sabotage was probable cause.)
- Thurs., May 6, 1943--Was up at 3:00 a.m. to get combat crews off on early mission, which started the last big drive for Africa. Three missions by Sqdn.
- Fri., May 7, 1943--Letter from Mary Alice today.
- Sat., May 8, 1943--Sqdn. ran 4 missions today. Germans are about finished in Africa--and I'm glad!
- Sun., May 9, 1943--Mother's Day. Many Germans surrendered in Tunisia today. It can't be much longer. (30,000 surrendered.)
- Mon., May 10, 1943--Train load of German prisoners went through Souk el Arba today. Hank Pollock talked to some of them.
- Tues., May 11, 1943--Eddie Rickenbacker flew in and talked to us this evening. Very interesting.
- Wed., May 12, 1943--Group stood down today. African campaign over today except for mopping up some scattered troops. Lovely letter from Mary Alice.

- Thurs., May 13, 1943--The African Campaign is ended. Thousands of prisoners have been going by all day. One truck broke down loaded with Italian officers. I stopped and gave the Italians the once over. They don't seem sad about being captured. One British boy not even wearing a gun was their guard. One Brig. Gen. was in the truck.
- Fri., May 14, 1943--Went to Tunis in command car. Saw thousands of prisoners on the way, dozens of destroyed American light tanks. At Tunis airport there were dozens of destroyed Nazi planes.
- Sat., May 15, 1943--Got stranded in Tunis; spent night in Hotel Nacional last night. Met Junior on street this morning. He was stranded too. We spent night at same hotel tonight.
- Sun., May 16, 1943--No amusement in Tunis at all. No water or light in hotel. We finally got a ride back to camp with an Ordnance capt. in a command car.
- Mon., May 17, 1943--I expected to be busted, but nobody seemed to miss me except Collins.
- Tues., May 18, 1943--Jr., Mac, and I did a little harmonizing this morning on Mac's "The Girls Back Home" which Jr. arranged this morning.
- Wed., May 19, 1943--Went to Constantine today; long truck ride over mountains all the way. Lovely country. Eight-hour ride.
- Thurs., May 20, 1943--Staying at Air Force Transient "flophouse". Lovely ladies to look at here in Constantine but nothing to do but go to movies at Red Cross.
- Fri., May 21, 1943--Walked across suspension bridge--2nd largest in world. Quite a gorge for a bridge to span.
- Sat., May 22, 1943--Left at noon to go back to Souk el Arba. Arrived at 9:00 p.m.
- Sun., May 23, 1943--Caught up on some back work. Didn't realize it was Sunday till this evening.
- Mon., May 24, 1943--Several letters from home today.
- Tues., May 25, 1943--Will almost be glad when we get back to combat duty. This quiet is getting me down.
- Wed., May 26, 1943--Dust storms & flies.
- Thurs., May 27, 1943--More dust. Flies and bugs are getting bad. Puked this afternoon.
- Fri., May 28, 1943--Chills on guard last night. "G.I.'s" (dysentery) today. Weakest I've ever been. Missed four straight meals.
- Sat., May 29, 1943--Birthday today. Feel much better today.
- Sun., May 30, 1943--Group moving by bits to Soliman. Dusty and hot.
- Mon., May 31, 1943--Very hot today. Took bath in my "tub." Moving tomorrow.
- Tues., June 1, 1943--We moved up to an olive grove near Grombalia & Soliman today. About 20 or 25 miles from Tunis.

Wed., June 2, 1943--Got set up in our new camp. Saw and heard Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secy. Anthony Eden speak today at Grombalia airdrome (from rear end of a British lorry).

Thurs., June 3, 1943--Where is the mail?

Fri., June 4, 1943--Took two "shots" and a vaccination today.

Sat., June 5, 1943--Lovely fried steak for dinner! Also ice cold orange juice. Lovely! Lovely!

Sun., June 6, 1943--Helped load bombs today for mission tomorrow. Flies are terrible these days. Letter from Mary Alice.

Mon., June 7, 1943--Mission today over Pantelleria for Sqdn. Two of our planes hit by flak.

Tues., June 8, 1943--Mission over Pantelleria again.

Wed., June 9, 1943--Darn the flies!

Thurs., June 10, 1943--Dysentery is still hitting half the men in camp. I haven't had it again (yet), thank Goodness.

Fri., June 11, 1943--Mission over Lampedusa today. Pantelleria gave up. I'm toying with the idea of going on another mission.

Sat., June 12, 1943--One letter from Mary Alice (finally) and three from home. Mary Alice's birthday; Mama and Daddy's wedding anniversary.

Note for the above week: Dam the flies!!

Sun., June 13, 1943--I think our flying days in Africa are about over. Pantelleria & Lampedusa have both fallen & there's no place else to bomb.

Mon., June 14, 1943--Killed snake with Tommy gun.

Tues., June 15, 1943--Junior was around for awhile.

Wed., June 16, 1943--Went to Tunis on pass. Had pretty good time. Came back at dark. On guard from 0100 to 0400 this morning.

Thurs., June 17, 1943--Slept late. Worked in afternoon.

Fri., June 18, 1943--Work.

Sat., June 19, 1943--Review this morning by King George VI. Rode by us in jeep. . . I took over-water hop this afternoon--Capt. Willard, pilot, Lt. Tippins, navigator, "Shorty" Goodwin, gunner. I rode tunnel gun position. Low level over water at about 2 to 15 feet at 225 miles an hour.

Sun., June 20, 1943--Mail and pictures from folks. Two letters from Mary Alice.

Mon., June 21, 1943--More training flights every day. Calisthenics and drill in the mornings. Inspections by Col. Roberts (Gp. Hq.).

Tues., June 22, 1943--Nothing of interest. Usual stuff.

Wed., June 23, 1943--Work & flies.

Thurs., June 24, 1943--Spent day in Tunis. Saw stage show and double-feature movie. Talked to two or three French men and women who speak English. Interesting day.

Fri., June 25, 1943--Got bawled out for error on my part (forgetfulness). Sometimes it doesn't pay to get up. The C.O. made an even worse

error; so I hope that he understands humans are fallible.

- Sat., June 26, 1943--On guard tonight. Paratroopers reported in area. Maybe we'll have a little excitement for a change. Graveyard shift again--6 out of my last 7 guard duties have been that shift.
- Sun., June 27, 1943--Heard Jerry bombing Korba last night. On guard today from 1200 to 1400 on planes, in jeep.
- Mon., June 28, 1943--Paratroopers supposed to be dropped tonight here. Alert about 1:00 a.m. but nothing happened.
- Tues., June 29, 1943--Paratrooper alert again.
- Wed., June 30, 1943--Paratroopers on our field last night, but no damage done. They got away.
- Thurs., July 1, 1943--(Gap in diary.)
- Fri., July 2, 1943--Went to Tunis today on pass.
- Sat., July 3, 1943--On guard from 0400 to 0800 this morning and from 1600 to 2000 this evening.
- Sun., July 4, 1943--One plane from 85th and one from 86th shot down over Sicily today. Besides that, Hinkle was killed & Dodds wounded.
- Mon., July 5, 1943--(Gap in diary.)
- Tues., July 6, 1943--Lt. Beet, Lt. Gavalas, Cahill, & Carithers shot down in plane 390 over Sciacca Airdrome, Sicily. Crashed & exploded. All of them good guys.
- Wed., July 7, 1943--Went to Tunis today. Saw "Orchestra Wives" at Capitole. Ate supper with the DiPasquale family; rich Italian food.
- Thurs., July 8, 1943--Loaded bombs tonight for mission tomorrow.
- Fri., July 9, 1943--Lt. Artz, Stankiewicz, and Parenteau shot down over Sicily. Lt. Smith, Lt. Eastham, Donahoo, & Endthoff are missing. Some of our best fellows. (Endthoff's first mission.)
- Sat., July 10, 1943--Invasion started on Sicily this morning. We'll probably be moving over there soon.
- Sun., July 11, 1943--On guard in the morning from 0400 to 0800 a.m.
- Mon., July 12, 1943--On guard from 1200 to 1600.
- Tues., July 13, 1943--Went to Tunis today on over-night pass. Spent night at the DiPasquale's. . . Lt. Smith, Lt. Eastham, and Donahoo safe after being shot down Friday. Endthoff drowned when plane went down.
- Wed., July 14, 1943--Back to camp this evening. Saw stage show in Tunis before leaving.
- Thurs., July 15, 1943--Mail today.
- Fri., July 16, 1943--Hot weather is getting fierce.
- Sat., July 17, 1943--Up at 2:15 a.m. to get training flight off for night flying.
- Sun., July 18, 1943--Up at 1:30 a.m. to get night mission off to Sicily.
- Mon., July 19, 1943--I drove Capts. Young and Garside and Mac to Houaria for a 13-plane alert today. 53 miles of terrible road. Came back this evening in 1½ hours.

Tues., July 20, 1943--War seems to be going well in Sicily. I can't figure why we haven't moved there before now.

Wed., July 21, 1943--Flying to Malta tomorrow. Jr. isn't going. Will probably meet him later in Sicily or Italy.

IV.

THE REST OF THE WAR: MALTA, SICILY, ITALY, CORSICA, FRANCE, BACK TO ITALY-- THEN, HOME!

- Thurs., July 22, 1943--Flew to Malta this morning by C-47. Spent night on hill just off Takali Airdrome. Spent a couple of hours talking to Maltese nurses.
- Fri., July 23, 1943--Moved into tin hut (British) on Takali Airdrome right in among the planes. I'm sleeping on a cot for the first time in months.
- Sat., July 24, 1943--The planes send dust howling through this hut. Malta has had 3000 air raids. There are old bomb craters all around the hut.
- Sun., July 25, 1943--Raid tonight. Heavy ack-ack barrage. 5 Jerries shot down. I had to run for a bomb crater, in my underwear & bare feet.
- Mon., July 26, 1943--Two missions today.
- Tues., July 27, 1943--97th bombed Agira & Milazzo today. Went up hill last night to see the nurses.
- Wed., July 28, 1943--Got two sweet letters from Mary Alice today. . . Malta is a tremendously rocky, terrifically windy, terribly dusty little island.
- Thurs., July 29, 1943--Malta has more flies, ants, and mosquitoes than Africa--and that's something!!
- Fri., July 30, 1943--Air raid tonight. Lots of flak from ack-ack fell around me. Foxholes are no good for that, I see.
- Sat., July 31, 1943--On duty in Operations tonight.
- Sun., Aug. 1, 1943--Went to Rabat tonight with Dave.
- Mon., August 2, 1943--A hectic day in Operations.
- Tues., Aug. 3, 1943--Went to Rabat this evening. Saw Burns Yates & walked part way home with him.
- Wed., Aug. 4, 1943--I went on mission over Sicily this morning as bombardier ("toggleer"). (Lt. Grant, pilot; Stallings and Argentine, gunners.)
- Thurs., Aug. 5, 1943--Went to Rabat with Mac. Got doughnuts & cocoa, went to show ("A Night at Earl Carroll's"), stopped to hear Louie play piano, then walked home.
- Fri., Aug. 6, 1943--No mission today for 97th. 86th & 85th each had two planes shot down. There were 10 or more besides hit by flak.
- Sat., Aug. 7, 1943--I went on mission as bombardier over Randazzo, Sicily. I dropped 4 300-lb. bombs. There were about 75 bursts of flak, but we weren't hit. (Capt. Carlson, plt.; Vincent & Youmans, gunners.)
- Sun., Aug. 8, 1943--Loaded bombs last night. Moving to Sicily tomorrow or next day. Maj. Akers to Group Ops.; Capt. Willard to Sq. C.O.
- Mon., Aug. 9, 1943--Our move to Sicily is cancelled for 2 or 3 days. We'll probably have another mission tomorrow. Air raid alert tonight but nothing happened.

- Tues., Aug. 10, 1943--Went on mission as bombardier over Randazzo, Sicily. Flak hit close all around us & one piece went through the pilot's cockpit and peppered Lt. Smith's arm with glass. Close enough for me! (Lt. Smith, pilot; Anderson & Thurman, gunners.)
- Wed., Aug. 11, 1943--No mission today. We'll move soon. Went to Valleta with Mac. Noel Coward appeared in person at theater. We had to walk all the way back--6 miles.
- Thurs., Aug. 12, 1943--Flew by C-47 to Comunalì Airdrome, Sicily (near Gela). Our new home for awhile. Saw Junior today.
- Fri., Aug. 13, 1943--Got lots of mail & pictures from Mary Alice and the folks.
- Sat., Aug. 14, 1943--Two missions for Sqdn. today. Axis is about through in Sicily. Went to see Junior at photo trailer this evening. As of 8-14-43 our Sqdn. has run 119 missions (928 sorties).
- Sun., Aug. 15, 1943--Our mission was cancelled today because nearly all of the Germans have gotten out into Italy.
- Mon., Aug. 16, 1943--Just one small corner of Sicily is still holding out. Tomorrow should finish it.
- Tues., Aug. 17, 1943--I almost hit a drunk soldier today when he took a bottle of wine away from a Sicilian without paying him & had the man crying and kneeling down on the ground. I can't stand that.
- Wed., Aug. 18, 1943--Sick today with G.I.'s. Had to get up to puke tonight.
- Thurs., Aug. 19, 1943--Squadron moved by truck from Comunalì to Gerbini #10, south of Mt. Etna. Been sick all day and have a sore back & ribs.
- Fri., Aug. 20, 1943--Capt. McRae gave me some pills to take & sent me to bed. Mt. Etna, a few miles N. of here, is smoking.
- Sat., Aug. 21, 1943--Feel O.K. today. Jr. sent for Mac & me in jeep tonight, and we went over to photo trailer and sang.
- Note for Aug. 14, 1943: On Aug. 14, a 97th gunner accidentally shot another gunner in the leg with a .45. Very bad wound, but he'll recover.
- Sun., Aug. 22, 1943--Washed clothes today.
- Mon., Aug. 23, 1943--Mac, Don, Dave, & I hitchhiked to Lentini & Syracuse (Siracusa) & back today. Rough rides over rough roads. . . A jeep accident today killed boy in the 86th & injured Maj. Hughes & some others.
- Tues., Aug. 24, 1943--Mac & I went over to photo trailer tonight and sang with Junior. We had the 2 Red Cross girls for an audience. The 97th Enlisted Men's Club opened tonight; half the men drunk.
- Wed., Aug. 25, 1943--One of our pilots was cleaning his .45 in his tent this evening when it accidentally fired, went through another tent or two, and hit and killed one of our gunners. This gunner had been overseas a year and had 43 missions. He was a nice fellow. The pilot is as nice a man as I know. Poor guy had hysterics. I hope this doesn't affect him permanently. What a tragedy.

- Thurs., Aug. 26, 1943--97th had mission today on Italy. Strangely enough, although they hit gun positions, there was no flak.
- Fri., Aug. 27, 1943--A DB-7 burst into flames over us last night & crashed about a mile away. Don't know what caused it. We have air raid alerts nearly every day, but nothing's happened so far.
- Sat., Aug. 28, 1943--Catania & Augusta evidently had raids this morning. There was beaucoup flak thrown up. One big bomb fell fairly close to this field. We may be getting it again soon.
- Sun., Aug. 29, 1943--The "G.I.'s" have me bad. I've messed my drawers twice in three days because I couldn't make it to the latrine. . . Heavy enemy raids on Catania & Augusta last night. Flares, flak, tracers, & bombs lit up the sky a big part of the night.
- Mon., Aug. 30, 1943--More raids on Catania & Augusta today. Enemy planes over us at various times but no bombs dropped on us. I'm on guard tonight--graveyard shift.
- Tues., Aug. 31, 1943--Got tooth filled this morning. Another engagement with dentist next Tuesday.
- Wed., Sept. 1, 1943--Mission today on Italy (by 97th). I'd like to go on some more missions, but Jr. delivered an ultimatum.
- Thurs., Sept. 2, 1943--Sqdn. had two missions on Italy today. Italian invasion starts tomorrow.
- Fri., Sept. 3, 1943--Invasion started this morning. 97th had one mission on gun positions.
- Sat., Sept. 4, 1943--No missions today. I went to photo lab and printed pictures.
- Sun., Sept. 5, 1943--Pay day. Went to church this evening. One year overseas today.
- Mon., Sept. 6, 1943--Took bath today. Mac, C.B., and I took turns pumping and squirting the water. Cold!!
- Tues., Sept. 7, 1943--One mission on Italy today by 97th. The Sqdn. now has 1015 sorties. . . Had tooth filled at dentist's today.
- Wed., Sept. 8, 1943--Italy surrendered this afternoon. Enemy planes are supposed to land here tomorrow and the crews surrender.
- Thurs., Sept. 9, 1943--Dental appt., 11:00. One tooth filled. The 97th had one mission today over Italy.
- Fri., Sept. 10, 1943--Junior sent to hospital today with trench mouth infection of tonsils. Mail from Mary Alice.
- Sat., Sept. 11, 1943--Mail from the folks today.
- Sun., Sept. 12, 1943--Went to see Jr. at 4th Field Hospital. Red Cross girls took me. He's feeling better.
- Mon., Sept. 13, 1943--Worked on flight certificates today. The darned flies around here nearly drive you crazy.
- Tues., Sept. 14, 1943--Abie was in a jeep wreck tonight. He came into camp cut up around the face and almost incoherent. Chester and I took him over to the Medics. (Later: It turned out that "P.H." Hale was with him in the jeep, had been knocked unconscious in the crash, and was put in the hospital, where he died later.) (Abrahamson is an enlisted bombardier; Hale, an engineer.)

- Wed., Sept. 15, 1943--Dental appointment at 9:30. One tooth filled.
- Thurs., Sept. 16, 1943--We'll move to Italy probably tomorrow or next day.
- Fri., Sept. 17, 1943--Junior and Collins came back from hospital today.
- Sat., Sept. 18, 1943--Saw Jack Benny, Larry Adler, and Winnie Shaw in person at show held in the open at 12th A.S.C. Hq. near Lentini. It was really a good show.
- Note to Thurs., Sept. 16, entry: Move to Italy cancelled indefinitely (unofficially).
- Sun., Sept. 19, 1943--Orders to move at 6:00 tomorrow. We packed tents & equipment on trucks tonight.
- Mon., Sept. 20, 1943--Rode to Messina, crossed Straits on landing barges (trucks and all), landed in Italy at about 1:10. Swam in Mediterranean & spent night NW of Reggio.
- Tues., Sept. 21, 1943--Dental appt. at 9:30 couldn't be kept because of being on the road. Spent a nice night in an olive grove.
- Wed., Sept. 22, 1943--Up before light and ready to leave at 6:30. . . Camped near beach in the night and were able to swim in Mediterranean after the dustiest ride we've ever had.
- Thurs., Sept. 23, 1943--Swam again this morning. Started out again on road about 1330 hrs. Thick, blinding dust all the way. Heavy fog soaked us tonight.
- Fri., Sept. 24, 1943--Arrived at new base about 15 mi. from Taranto. We have nice set-up--boards for flooring the tents, building benches, etc. Don't know name of new field yet.
- Sat., Sept. 25, 1943--Italians guard our area with machine gun nests. It seems funny to see them going around with guns so soon after fighting us. . . We won't be at this base long.
- Note relating to Monday, Sept. 20--Junior had to sleep with me Monday night (Sept. 20) because his stuff didn't catch up to him.
- Sun., Sept. 26, 1943--Worked around tent today making benches, etc. . . Meredith ("P.H.") Hale died day before yesterday as result of his and Abie's accident in the jeep on Sept. 14.
- Mon., Sept. 27, 1943--Packages came from home today at last. It was really a help.
- Tues., Sept. 28, 1943--Junior dropped by this evening and got his half of the packages.
- Wed., Sept. 29, 1943--Went to Taranto today & looked around. Bought some olives, mustard, and stuff to enhance the chow we get. Got some good ice cream.
- Thurs., Sept. 30, 1943--Fred Bevis flew up in B-25 & we got together for a few minutes. Jr. was in Taranto and didn't get to see him. Chaplain gave talk tonight.

- Fri., Oct. 1, 1943--Wrote home today for first time in a couple of weeks.
- Sat., Oct. 2, 1943--Photo Freddie over us today; a few bursts of flak were thrown at him. We can expect a raid soon, I imagine. Jr. spent part of day over here.
- Note relating to Thurs., Sept. 30: Chaplain's talk on Thursday night was in reference to our conduct when we go back home. I hope that means we're going soon.
- Sun., Oct. 3, 1943--Dave came back from hospital in Africa this evening. We're going to Taranto tomorrow. Rain today.
- Mon., Oct. 4, 1943--Dave & I went to Taranto today. Ate lots of ice cream and candy & bought some trinkets. Got wet in rain on ride back in open truck.
- Tues., Oct. 5, 1943--Made me a bed (of sorts) today. Put clothes out to dry that had gotten wet in rain, so naturally it started to rain again.
- Wed., Oct. 6, 1943--Got sudden orders tonight for advance echelon of 50 men to leave early in the morning for Foggia Main.
- Thurs., Oct. 7, 1943--Loaded trucks with Ops. & Intelligence equipment in a driving rain. All of us got soaked. I'm to stay here till main bunch moves up. . . . Pay day.
- Fri., Oct. 8, 1943--Rain has stopped & we're having nice weather again.
- Sat., Oct. 9, 1943--Frieze & I went to Grottaglie & Francavilla today in a jeep and bought some bedspreads & stuff. . . . Photo Freddie was over today & a few bursts were thrown up at him.
- Sun., Oct. 10, 1943--Went to church at Gp. Hq. tonight. . . . Mail from home.
- Mon., Oct. 11, 1943--Went to dentist today & got filling replaced. Jr. brought me back in the Photo jeep & we talked awhile.
- Tues., Oct. 12, 1943--Italian pilot in a Macchi buzzed the field too low & killed an Italian soldier out on the airdrome. No sense in that kind of flying.
- Wed., Oct. 13, 1943--Went over to see Jr. a little while this morning. . . . Got some mail this evening.
- Thurs., Oct. 14, 1943--Went to Grottaglie this morning with Frieze & Altman & bought a few things such as scissors, stationery, etc. Ate dinner in town.
- Fri., Oct. 15, 1943--Moving to Foggia tomorrow. . . . Move called off for two or three days. Jr. moved up though.
- Sat., Oct. 16, 1943--We move early in the morning for Foggia. I'm driving Capt. Young up in the Ops. jeep.
- Sun., Oct. 17, 1943--Drove Capt. Young to our new base at Vicenzo (Foggia satellite). Roads awfully slippery & lots of convoys to pass, but I made it in five hours (160 miles).
- Mon., Oct. 18, 1943--Sqdn. ran mission today for first time in quite awhile. They got a lot of flak. . . . We set up new Ops. today.
- Tues., Oct. 19, 1943--Two missions for Sqdn. today. . . . I'm busy enough now that I feel as if I'm earning my money again.
- Wed., Oct. 20, 1943--One mission for Sqdn. . . . P-40 crashed & burned

- killing the pilot as he tried to land just at dark tonight on our field.
- Thurs., Oct. 21, 1943--Ten of our planes were hit by flak over Cassio. Capt. Gualtiere had to crash-land on our field & Abie was killed. We had to watch the whole thing & couldn't do anything.
- Fri., Oct. 22, 1943--Lt. Simmons of 86th, who was shot down over Kasserine Pass in Feb. & taken prisoner, escaped and got back to the Group today. He walked all the way from Rome through enemy lines.
- Sat., Oct. 23, 1943--Bombing near here last night. . . One mission for 97th today. . . Heard bombing near here this evening.
- Sun., Oct. 24, 1943--No operations today. Worked hard all day. Got new field jacket this evening. It's getting pretty cool in the evenings.
- Note for Friday's entry: Lt. Block had to belly in Friday after his hydraulic system was shot out by flak. (This probably refers to Thursday's mission, but the diary entry said Friday.)
- Mon., Oct. 25, 1943--Jr. was over today. Mail today. One mission for Sqdn. Put stove up in our tent this evening. Thigpen in kitchen cooked up our turkey tonight. (See note below Oct. 30 entry.)
- Tues., Oct. 26, 1943--No ops. today. Carlo & some of the others of us took a jeep, went into a little town near here (Troy, I think), & bought some chickens. (The town was Troia.)
- Wed., Oct. 27, 1943--No ops. today. Killed a chicken, fried and ate part of it.
- Thurs., Oct. 28, 1943--Fried & ate more chicken tonight. Lts. Smith & Dowling were in to help eat it.
- Fri., Oct. 29, 1943--Rain most of the afternoon. Cold weather is coming on. One mission today for Sqdn.
- Sat., Oct. 30, 1943--Got flooring at Foggia Main this morning & put a floor in our tents. It's really nice now.
- Note completing Monday's entry above: Capt. Young, Lt. Dowling, Lt. Block, & F/O Gaskins came in and helped us eat it. It was darned good.
- Sun., Oct. 31, 1943--"Georgia," Billy Tell, "Shorty," Ernst, Hoaglund, & Youmans left for home this morning because they've completed their combat tour.
- Mon., Nov. 1, 1943--On mission today Lt. Bruce's plane blew up over target. Two men (Albers & Manzie) bailed out, but only one chute opened. Flak either exploded in a wing tank or hit the fuse of a bomb.
- Tues., Nov. 2, 1943--Two missions for Sqdn. today. Total sorties for Sqdn. to date: 1171; total missions: 142.
- Wed., Nov. 3, 1943--Two missions today for Sqdn.
- Thurs., Nov. 4, 1943--Winter is here. It's getting colder every night.
- Fri., Nov. 5, 1943--Albers came back today after bailing out in enemy territory when Lt. Bruce's plane exploded on Monday. He was burned in the face but otherwise is O.K.

- Sat., Nov. 6, 1943--A bomb fell near Foggia last night, but I think a British plane accidentally dropped it.
- Sun., Nov. 7, 1943--I nearly froze last night. We're going to board up the sides of the tent to keep the cold air out.
- Mon., Nov. 8, 1943--Rain & hail today. Got new typewriter for Ops. Took bath by fire tonight. May go to town tomorrow with Dave.
- Tues., Nov. 9, 1943--Dave & I went to Cerignola today on the pass truck. A very cold ride. Bought a couple of chairs (90¢ each) & some scarves. Had spaghetti & roast beef for dinner.
- Wed., Nov. 10, 1943--We built sides out of wood and frag tins in our tent today to help keep out the cold air. We've been hearing a lot of artillery fire these days (and nights).
- Thurs., Nov. 11, 1943--One Sqdn. mission today. Armistice Day this year is just like any other day of the year--except that the guns we hear are real.
- Fri., Nov. 12, 1943--Capt. Gualtiere, Hart, Thurman, & Tuttle left for home. . . . Part of Manzie's chute with blood on it was brought in today. He's definitely dead.
- Sat., Nov. 13, 1943--Collins finally got back from hospital today. Another plane came in with one feathered prop today but made it O.K. An 84th plane bellied in after Friday's mission. One engine was feathered, but they made it all right.
- Sun., Nov. 14, 1943--Terrific wind has been blowing for a couple of days. It's almost as bad as the African Sirocco.
- Mon., Nov. 15, 1943--Went to SAF stage show in Foggia this afternoon. It was very good. Windy, rainy ride back in open truck. Wind ripped our tent this evening.
- Tues., Nov. 16, 1943--Rain and wind.
- Wed., Nov. 17, 1943--Going to Naples on 3-day pass tomorrow morning.
- Thurs., Nov. 18, 1943--Left for Naples on pass truck at 7:00; got there at 1200. Frieze, Coldren, & I staying at Washington Boarding House.
- Fri., Nov. 19, 1943--Clear day today (mostly). The town is O.K., but I dislike the people very much. Every hotel and private home seems to offer women's bodies as their chief attraction.
- Sat., Nov. 20, 1943--Stayed at a different hotel tonight. Prices are high everywhere, and the people are a thieving, lying bunch. (Later note: I was too harsh; I later learned to like many of them.)
- Sun., Nov. 21, 1943--we're all ready to go back, & none of us care to see Naples again. Left at 1230; got to camp at 1730.
- Mon., Nov. 22, 1943--Stood down today. Went into Foggia to stage show. Package from home today.
- Tues., Nov. 23, 1943--Rain & sloppy mud have stopped operations in Italy.
- Wed., Nov. 24, 1943--97th mistakenly bombed 8th Army troops today. I feel sorry for today's lead bombardier; he really felt terrible about that. Just one of the fortunes of war.
- Thurs., Nov. 25, 1943--Thanksgiving Day. One mission for Sqdn. Lovely dinner of turkey, cranberry sauce, & all the "fixings."

- Fri., Nov. 26, 1943--Rumor today of big meeting sometime soon in Cairo of Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, & German leaders. I'm on guard tonight from 0200 to 0600.
- Sat., Nov. 27, 1943--Two missions for Sqdn. today. I was sick this afternoon. Got letter from Kendall. Worked on mission records tonight.
- Sun., Nov. 28, 1943--Two missions for Sqdn. today.
- Mon., Nov. 29, 1943--Chills and fever today. Capt. McRae is sending me to a hospital in Naples tomorrow.
- Tues., Nov. 30, 1943--Started for Naples in ambulance but, due to an accident on road, I wound up in hospital at Caserta.
- Wed., Dec. 1, 1943--This is 36th Gen. Hosp. Some pretty nurses here. Spam for dinner but had a good supper.
- Thurs., Dec. 2, 1943--The meals have been good so far. I'm feeling fine except that I've got fever blisters on my mouth.
- Fri., Dec. 3, 1943--Can take bath tomorrow. Start walking downstairs to meals tonight. Have had no pills since I've been here.
- Sat., Dec. 4, 1943--Walked over to lab. for blood smear. Took bath. Restless. Very little to read.
- Sun., Dec. 5, 1943--Ham for dinner. Nurse just told me I'll be released soon.
- Mon., Dec. 6, 1943--Still in hospital sweating out discharge. Took another shower this morning. Fried chicken for supper.
- Tues., Dec. 7, 1943--Beef for supper tonight. I think I'm leaving tomorrow--I hope.
- Wed., Dec. 8, 1943--Discharged from 36th Gen. Hosp. & sent by truck to 6th Personnel Center outside of Naples. Sleeping (?) in pup tent on wet ground. Air raid alert tonight.
- Thurs., Dec. 9, 1943--I'm in "D" Co. of 29th Replacement Battalion here. My chances of getting out soon seem very slim. It's very cold in this little valley.
- Fri., Dec. 10, 1943--Several thousand new guys have come in, & this place is a long way over-crowded. It would make a lovely bombing or strafing target.
- Sat., Dec. 11, 1943--Green from the 97th came in last night. We may get to leave soon. Heavy rain tonight. I got mixed up with a "queer" & almost had to hit him.
- Note relating to Thursday, Dec. 9: Sat down next to a kid from Lakeland Thursday night at a show. His name is John Harrison. . . This place here used to be a big race track.
- Sun., Dec. 12, 1943--Terrific rain & hail storms today. The fellow I was sharing a pup tent with was moved out last night & of course took his shelter-half with him. There's nothing here but mud.
- Mon., Dec. 13, 1943--Moving out tomorrow by plane for Foggia (I hope). I'll be very happy to leave this place.
- Tues., Dec. 14, 1943--Ride on C-47 is cancelled till tomorrow. Green & I spending night at Albergo Centrale in Naples.

- Wed., Dec. 15, 1943--Caught C-47 from Naples to Foggia & finally arrived once again at the 97th Sq. area. It's good to be back.
- Thurs., Dec. 16, 1943--Had lots of mail & some packages awaiting me when I got back.
- Fri., Dec. 17, 1943--Had to go to bed this afternoon because I suddenly got awfully weak.
- Sat., Dec. 18, 1943--Went to Foggia to picture show, Bob Hope in "They've Got Me Covered." I got weak again and went to bed as soon as I got back.
- Sun., Dec. 19, 1943--Terrific malarial chill this morning. Capt. McRae is going to keep me here this time, thank Goodness!
- Mon., Dec. 20, 1943--I'm afraid I'm getting yellow jaundice on top of my malaria. I'm about the weakest I've ever been.
- Tues., Dec. 21, 1943--Sat up and read awhile today but had to go back to bed. Mail from Mary Alice.
- Wed., Dec. 22, 1943--Sat up quite awhile today & read. Hope to get up tomorrow. Took a bath in here inside the tent tonight.
- Thurs., Dec. 23, 1943--Got up and went back to work today. Feeling pretty good but am still a little wobbly.
- Fri., Dec. 24, 1943--Christmas Eve. Spent evening with Junior. Started taking quinine again. Have to do it for 8 days.
- Sat., Dec. 25, 1943--Xmas Day. Good turkey dinner. Fred Bevis came over & we visited. We went over to Photo trailer & saw a movie, "Tennessee Johnson." Chester gave Mac & me each a coca-cola tonight. But wonderful!
- Sun., Dec. 26, 1943--Rain & mud & cold. On guard tonight.
- Mon., Dec. 27, 1943--Cold wind & rain. Planes haven't been able to take off for several days because of mud. I've been doing a lot of reading.
- Tues., Dec. 28, 1943--Sqdn. ran a mission today for first time in several days. There's been too much mud.
- Wed., Dec. 29, 1943--Went to Foggia to picture show this afternoon. Got some lovely letters from Mary Alice this evening.
- Thurs., Dec. 30, 1943--Sqdn. mission today. Osendott of Transportation was killed last night on a motorcycle. He was a quiet, nice boy. It's too bad.
- Fri., Dec. 31, 1943--Sqdn. mission was a dry run today--clouds too thick over target. New Year's Eve; lots of drunks firing guns at midnight tonight.
- Sat., Jan., 1, 1944--Rain & mud. New Year's Day.
- Sun., Jan. 2, 1944--Lousy weather. Rain & mud every day.
- Mon., Jan. 3, 1944--Rain & mud. Lousy, nasty weather. Kissed Mary Alice goodbye two years ago before joining Army.
- Tues., Jan. 4, 1944--One mission for Sqdn. today. Cold wind. Went over to Photo trailer to see a picture show this afternoon.
- Wed., Jan. 5, 1944--Rain & mud & terribly cold wind. 16 months overseas today. Moving up near Vesuvius soon. Taught last day of school 2 years ago today.

- Thurs., Jan. 6, 1944--Two years in Army today. Several flurries of snow today. Cold wind.
- Fri., Jan. 7, 1944--Nicer weather today, but it's cold.
- Sat., Jan. 8, 1944--Mud is drying up somewhat, but it stays cold all the time. Sqdn. ran mission today. Lots of snow on surrounding mountains now. Ice on ground every morning.
- Sun., Jan. 9, 1944--Burns Yates & Jansen Davenport from Lakeland came over with Jr. this evening.
- Mon., Jan. 10, 1944--(No diary entry this date.)
- Tues., Jan. 11, 1944--(No diary entry this date.)
- Wed., Jan. 12, 1944--We're moving tomorrow to our new base by Mt. Vesuvius.
- Thurs., Jan. 13, 1944--Moved by truck to Vesuvius Air Field. I had a slight chill on the trip. I hope my malaria isn't coming back.
- Fri., Jan. 14, 1944--Put up Operations & Intelligence tents today & fixed up our living tent. I built a door for our tent.
- Sat., Jan. 15, 1944--Had severe chills & fever this morning & Capt. McRae sent me to 70th Station Hospital in Naples.
- Sun., Jan. 16, 1944--Had chill at noon which lasted for over an hour, then had high fever & felt awful. Couldn't eat much today.
- Mon., Jan. 17, 1944--Had another chill this morning and then a temperature of 105.2. They moved me to a better bed in another ward. I feel a lot better this evening.
- Tues., Jan. 18, 1944--Feel much better today. Ate well.
- Wed., Jan. 19, 1944--A red letter day. The medics from camp brought me mail from Mary Alice & home.
- Thurs., Jan. 20, 1944--Still feel good. Had turkey for supper; & after I ate in bed, I slipped downstairs for "seconds." The walk back up tired me out, though.
- Fri., Jan. 21, 1944--Just another day in the hospital.
- Sat., Jan. 22, 1944--Nothing happens, except I'm bored.
- Sun., Jan. 23, 1944--Nothing.
- Mon., Jan. 24, 1944--Nothing.
- Tues., Jan. 25, 1944--The doctor here wouldn't make a good pfc.
- Wed., Jan. 26, 1944--I've developed a very bad cough & cold.
- Thurs., Jan. 27, 1944--Cough & cold still bad.
- Fri., Jan. 28, 1944--Cold still bad. Can't taste food, but had a good dinner today.
- Sat., Jan. 29, 1944--Junior came in to see me today & brought mail from home.
- Sun., Jan. 30, 1944--Letters from Mary Alice.
- Mon., Jan. 31, 1944--Cold still bad.
- Tues., Feb. 1, 1944--Took shower today.
- Wed., Feb. 2, 1944--Read all day.

- Thurs., Feb. 3, 1944--Read all day.
- Fri., Feb. 4, 1944--Collins & Bova came in to see me.
- Sat., Feb. 5, 1944--Read all day.
- Sun., Feb. 6, 1944--Soldier went crazy tonight & ran around with a butcher knife. A little nurse jumped on him & took it away from him.
- Mon., Feb. 7, 1944--Read all day.
- Tues., Feb. 8, 1944--Read all day.
- Wed., Feb. 9, 1944--Got beaucoup mail from Mary Alice today. We're officially engaged at last, & I'm happy.
- Thurs., Feb. 10, 1944--Transferred to 300th General Hospital just outside of Naples. It's a lovely building.
- Fri., Feb. 11, 1944--I think I've talked the doctor here into sending me back to camp.
- Sat., Feb. 12, 1944--There's nothing the matter with me now but a cold. Going back to camp tomorrow.
- Sun., Feb. 13, 1944--Back to camp this afternoon in Group ambulance. It's good to be back.
- Mon., Feb. 14, 1944--Cold all night. Was miserable all last night because I had to breathe through my mouth.
- Tues., Feb. 15, 1944--Vesuvius smokes all the time now. It gets very cold at night here.
- Wed., Feb. 16, 1944--Did some Ops. work for first time in a month.
- Thurs., Feb. 17, 1944--Cold & cough still bad. Vesuvius is still covered with snow.
- Fri., Feb. 18, 1944--Have never been so blue & lonesome & homesick as I am today.
- Sat., Feb. 19, 1944--Stood down all day. . .Actually, Mt. Summo is next to us & Vesuvius is just on the other side of it. We can see Vesuvius smoking most of the time.
- Sun., Feb. 20, 1944--Dentist, 9:30. Filled 5 teeth.
- Mon., Feb. 21, 1944--Jr. was over for awhile this a.m.
- Tues., Feb. 22, 1944--Letter from Mary Alice.
- Wed., Feb. 23, 1944--Snow has melted on Summo & it's maybe warmer now.
- Thurs., Feb. 24, 1944--Dave & I walked into Ottaviano to look around; ate dinner, had shave & haircut.
- Fri., Feb. 25, 1944--Built addition on tent today. Makes it much roomier.
- Sat., Feb. 26, 1944--Cooked steak & french fries in tent tonight. I was sick last night but am O.K. tonight.
- Sun., Feb. 27, 1944--Dentist, 9:30. One tooth filled. Grady Washabeau called up Jr. tonight. He knows the folks.
- Mon., Feb. 28, 1944--Got popcorn from home today. It tastes good for a change. Ack-ack test-firing tonight was pretty.

- Tues., Feb. 29, 1944--Pay day. Lt. Doughty, Rowe, & Nigro were shot down on mission today near Cisterno. Their plane exploded. Several other planes were shot up. Two had to crashland, & one crew had to bail out over our field after dark.
- Wed., March 1, 1944--Worked on reports all day.
- Thurs., Mar. 2, 1944--One gunner from 97th (Morgan) wounded on mission today. One gunner from 85th killed & one or two others wounded.
- Fri., Mar. 3, 1944--We went over this evening & traded with Italians for eggs--2 eggs for a pack of cigarettes. We did all right.
- Sat., Mar. 4, 1944--Coca-colas in ration today. Wonderful! We also bought meat, ground it up, & had hamburgers tonight with catsup & onions.
- Sun., Mar. 5, 1944--1½ years overseas today. Rain all the time these days.
- Mon., Mar. 6, 1944--More snow on Vesuvius.
- Tues., Mar. 7, 1944--Started on new Operations set-up today.
- Wed., Mar. 8, 1944--Traded for 45 eggs this evening. Went to Bob Hope picture in Ottaviano.
- Thurs., Mar. 9, 1944--Fried eggs tonight. On guard from 08:30 to 12:00.
- Fri., Mar. 10, 1944--We finished building our new Ops. shack yesterday.
- Sat., Mar. 11, 1944--Flew to Foggia with F/O Knapp this morning & spent day with Fred Bevis. Met Grady Washabeau. Got records from home & played them at Junior's tonight.
- Sun., Mar. 12, 1944--Jr. is sick tonight. Almost has pneumonia.
- Mon., Mar. 13, 1944--Junior better this a.m. Frieze, Beetem, & I went to Pompeii today to see the ruins.
- Tues., Mar. 14, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Mar. 15, 1944--Enemy raid on Naples tonight killed several. Some of the planes were over our camp but didn't drop on us. Quite a barrage went up from Naples.
- Thurs., Mar. 16, 1944--I'm feeling fine these days.
- Fri., Mar. 17, 1944--Got a slight chill this afternoon & Capt. Mac sent me to 58th Field Hospital at Pomigliano. I'm about ready to give up.
- Sat., Mar. 18, 1944--Feel O.K. except I'm weak. Almost fainted once today.
- Sun., Mar. 19, 1944--Vesuvius has kicked up a fuss for the last two nights and is really something to see. A red glow is all over that part of the sky.
- Mon., Mar. 20, 1944--Am so light-headed & deaf from quinine I can hardly hear.
- Tues., Mar. 21, 1944--Rain & hail today. Got haircut; took shower.
- Wed., Mar. 22, 1944--Collins & Clayton dropped by & said our planes are having to move to another field because of Vesuvius's eruption. Some B-25's near Pompeii were torn up by stones thrown by Vesuvius.
- Thurs., Mar. 23, 1944--Saw movie tonight. It's getting cold again. It's funny to see snow on the volcano & see fire & smoke shooting up in the air.

- Fri., Mar. 24, 1944--Vesuvius still kicking up a fuss. Andre came by & said 47th has moved to Capodichino. Air raids near here tonight.
- Sat., Mar. 25, 1944--Vesuvius very quiet today. . . Turned awfully cold.
- Sun., Mar. 26, 1944--I'm to go back to outfit tomorrow. Kissed one of this tent-hospital's nurses tonight. First girl I've kissed in over 20 months.
- Mon., Mar. 27, 1944--Two 97th planes shot down on mission today: Lt. Cockrill, Bartlett, Frankhouser, & Love in #40; and Lt. Hardy, Murphy, & Kuckenbecker in #56. Pimentel & Gearen in #41 were wounded by flak. One chute was seen to open from each plane. I'm back with outfit at new base, Capodichino near Naples.
- Tues., Mar. 28, 1944--A very busy day taking down & putting up tents for Ops.
- Wed., Mar. 29, 1944--Drove Clayton to Pomigliano to catch plane for Foggia. He missed it. Went to Naples with Frieze in Armament truck to see Pimentel & Gearen who were wounded Monday. Pimentel lost half a finger but is O.K. Gearen looks bad but will probably be O.K. They took out a kidney but left the flak in. . . Air raid tonight, but nothing happened.
- Thurs., Mar. 30, 1944--Fred Bevis was up to see Jr. & me today. He flew on back to Foggia in his B-25, but may come back tomorrow.
- Fri., Mar. 31, 1944--We fixed up our tent today for more commodious living; so I guess we'll be moving again soon.
- Sat., April 1, 1944--On guard tonight over planes. Ack-ack opened up a couple of times, but no bombs were dropped.
- Sun., Apr. 2, 1944--We started moving over to new bivouac area on other side of this airfield. Will finish tomorrow.
- Mon., Apr. 3, 1944--Worked hard all day on Ops. shack. Am pooped out tonight.
- Tues., Apr. 4, 1944--Finished Ops. & set up our own tent tonight. Took shower. Were set up in Company streets again. That's about the last straw. That Co. officer doesn't have much to do if he can't think of anything more worthwhile than making us set up camp the way we have to.
- Wed., Apr. 5, 1944--Back into swing of Ops. work again.
- Thurs., Apr. 6, 1944--Went to see "This Is the Army" at San Carlo Opera House in Naples. It's an Irving Berlin show & is really good.
- Fri., Apr. 7, 1944--We built door in tent tonight. One of us has to sleep in Ops. each night now as C.Q.
- Sat., Apr. 8, 1944--Inspection today. Mailed flowers to Mama for Mother's Day.
- Sun., Apr. 9, 1944--Easter Sunday. Lots of paper work. Rain. Went on my first combat mission a year ago today (Easter Sunday, Apr. 25, 1943).
- Mon., Apr. 10, 1944--Ack-ack opened up twice last night after we were in bed.
- Tues., Apr. 11, 1944--(No diary entry this date--that is, for general distribution.)

- Wed., Apr. 12, 1944--Mission today caused tremendous explosion, fire, & smoke at a German ammunition dump. The explosion made all the planes (up 11,000 feet) jump around in the sky. The fire leaped up to 300 feet or more, and the smoke was up to 8,000 feet before the planes had completed their turn away from the target.
- Thurs., Apr. 13, 1944--This outfit sometimes makes me wonder. We're going to have all kinds of inspections now. I wish we were back in the good old days of action at Thelepte.
- Fri., Apr. 14, 1944--Jr., Dave, Mac, Sexton, & I went to town today. Went to Red Cross & sang some of our trios (to ourselves). Walked around town. Ate a dinner that cost the five of us \$13.54 plus a dollar tip--and I was still hungry!!
- Sat., Apr. 15, 1944--Ack-ack opened up in full force around here early this morning. I didn't get out of the sack but was sweating out the flak falling. I don't think any bombs were dropped.
- Sun., Apr. 16, 1944--Gen. Saville flew on mission today. Our Sqdn. was the only one to hit target. The General really raised Cain with Group Hq.
- Mon., Apr. 17, 1944--Col. Green went on mission with 97th today in the nose of one of the planes.
- Tues., Apr. 18, 1944--Stood down.
- Wed., Apr. 19, 1944--Stood down.
- Thurs., Apr. 20, 1944--Jr., Mac, & I went to Naples for the day. Sang for awhile with Ann, the Red Cross girl, practicing an arrangement by Jr. & Mac. We may sing over her Naples radio program next week.
- Fri., Apr. 21, 1944--Going to Capri tomorrow for 3-day pass. I don't want to go, but they more or less twisted my arm. . . . Jerry was over last night & ack-ack opened up a couple or three times. He must have dropped some around Naples.
- Sat., Apr. 22, 1944--Came to Capri on boat. Arrived about 1800 hrs. Staying at Windsor Hotel with Andre, Vissing, & Blaesing. A nice deal.
- Sun., Apr. 23, 1944--Went to church this a.m. here on Capri. We all hired car & visited Anacapri; Piccola Marina; Red, White, & Green Grottoes (went swimming in Pic. Mar. in underwear; was freezing cold); drove up to top of island, saw Casa Ciano. Also saw house where Goering slept once. Went to picture show at Parco Augusto theater.
- Mon., Apr. 24, 1944--Bought some souvenirs today. Went to show at Parco Augusto tonight.
- Tues., Apr. 25, 1944--Bought more souvenirs. Andre and I went riding in horse-drawn carriage this afternoon; saw Gracie Fields' house. Blaesing, Andre, & I went on boat trip all the way around Capri--a nice trip. Went to show at Parco Augusto tonight.
- Wed., Apr. 26, 1944--Came back from Capri on boat; poured down rain, & I got soaked. Found that 47th moved from Capodichino back to Vesuvius yesterday. Got back to Vesuvius a little after dinner, helped put up Ops. tent (all wet), made up my bed (all wet). Everything is wet. We're supposed to move to Cercola in 10 days.

- Thurs., Apr. 27, 1944--While I was on Capri, there was a raid on our field at Capodichino and a few bombs were dropped (the night of Apr. 24th). . . Bad weather for the last couple of days. Maj. Young and Paul went home today for a 30-day furlough in the States. I am glad Maj. Young got to go, but I'm sorry to lose him even that long.
- Fri., Apr. 28, 1944--Pitched other Ops. tent this a.m. Lt. Barr & Entrikin are going back to States tomorrow or next day. Good deal.
- Sat., Apr. 29, 1944--Made my blankets & mattress cover into a kind of bedroll today. Lt. Barr & Entrikin left for home today.
- Sun., Apr. 30, 1944--Went over to Jr.'s tonight and printed up the pictures that Vissing, Andre, Blaesing, & I took on Capri.
- Mon., May 1, 1944--It's been pretty cold at night lately & they've taken our stoves away. Vesuvius has hardly smoked since the eruption about Mar. 20th. I got two shots & a vaccination today.
- Sun., May 2, 1944--Went to show tonight--Deanna Durbin in "His Butler's Sister." Sissy's birthday today; I must write her.
- Wed., May 3, 1944--An 84th plane blew up on our field today from some undetermined cause and killed either two or three fellows (armorers). . . I went out and traded for eggs this p.m.
- Thurs., May 4, 1944--On plane guard tonight.
- Fri., May 5, 1944--We built Operations shack again. Really tired out tonight.
- Sat., May 6, 1944--Tom Hendrix flew up in a "cub" to see Jr. & me today. He's a captain and is on the beachhead at Nettuno. It was nice seeing him. We took pictures & I'm to send them to his mother (Mrs. T. L. Hendrix, 115 Marshall, Petersburg, Virginia). Smokey is 13 yrs. old today.
- Sun., May 7, 1944--Four new crews came in yesterday & day before. Some of these new guys gripe me--they thought we lived in hotels & had showers & stuff like that. One of them told about the terrible night he had spent in Africa in the mud--& we lived in it for weeks! Another one talked as if travelling in boats was some horrible new torture for troops coming overseas. I don't know what he thought we came over in.
- Mon., May 8, 1944--We're having really nice weather now, though it gets too hot during the day. The evenings are lovely.
- Tues., May 9, 1944--The 85th dropped short on target today & laid a few bombs in the front yard of the Pope's summer home on Lake Albano.
- Wed., May 10, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., May 11, 1944--Jr. flew to Foggia today & spent night with Jack Tompkins.
- Fri., May 12, 1944--Two missions today. Big drive started on the front from north of Cassino south to the sea. . . Fred Bevis flew Jr. back to Pomigliano this a.m. . . Clayton left for home.
- Sat., May 13, 1944--Several enemy planes overhead tonight on way to bomb Naples. Ack-ack opened up & either a dud shell or a dud bomb whistled down & landed near here. We all hit the dirt. I cracked my head on some wood when I went down.

- Sun., May 14, 1944--Mother's Day. . . . One of our gunners accidentally shot himself in the hand this morning with a .45 pistol. . . . An 85th plane landed with wheels only partly down this morning. It knocked down a stone building & tore up the plane, but no one was hurt.
- Mon., May 15, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Tues., May 16, 1944--Front is moving up pretty well now. I wish the invasion would start.
- Wed., May 17, 1944--Each Sqdn. dropped food to the French (Goums) today from low levels. On one food mission a wrong turn put them over enemy territory & they were shot at with all kinds of weapons-- .50 cal., 20 & 40 mm., & flak guns.
- Thurs., May 18, 1944---(No diary entry.)
- Fri., May 19, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., May 20, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., May 21, 1944--I whipped up a batch of mayonnaise today out of olive oil & it was very good. Jr. ate dinner over here today.
- Mon., May 22, 1944--Drive from beachhead started today with our mission on Cisterna.
- Tues., May 23, 1944--Drive going pretty well.
- Wed., May 24, 1944--Been working hard lately.
- Thurs., May 25, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., May 26, 1944--I helped the armorers load bombs for mission today.
- Sat., May 27, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., May 28, 1944--Letter from Mary Alice.
- Mon., May 29, 1944--I'm 26 today.
- Tues., May 30, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., May 31, 1944--Pay day.
- Thurs., June 1, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., June 2, 1944--Got some letters at long last.
- Sat., June 3, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., June 4, 1944--3 new combat crews came into Sqdn. today.
- Mon., June 5, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Tues., June 6, 1944--Invasion of France started this morning early.
- Wed., June 7, 1944--Clarence Roach, Tommy Blake, and Fred Bevis came up to see Jr. & me this morning in a DC-3. Tommy is going home soon. . . . Marlene Dietrich put on a performance for the Group this evening. . . . I'm on guard tonight.
- Thurs., June 8, 1944--Mail from Mary Alice & the folks. . . . Outfit is moving to Santa Maria tomorrow.

- Fri., June 9, 1944--Moved up to Santa Maria this afternoon by command car, got tent up and was ready for the night when they sent up for me and brought me back to Vesuvius because we're going to operate for a few more days. The ones at Santa Maria now move up to Rome (Galeria) in the morning.
- Sat., June 10, 1944--Junior flew over Rome this morning with Capt. Vance and took pictures of the city & of our new field.
- Sun., June 11, 1944--Will leave for field outside Rome tomorrow. . . Letter to Group said Love is a prisoner of war.
- Mon., June 12, 1944--Flew up to Galeria (Rome) with Capt. Block in #41. Bad weather caused us nearly to crack up when we landed.
- Tues., June 13, 1944--Fixed up our tent again with floors & sides (at Galeria). Started night flying tonight. Collins, Young, & I had to stay up till 02:30 hrs. getting flights off & back. . . Frankhouser is prisoner of war.
- Wed., June 14, 1944--Built up Ops. building again. (I'm getting tired of doing it, too.) Gordon Grant, a war correspondent from the Tampa Tribune, stopped by to see Junior & then me today. He wanted a "story" but got none. (Jr. got here this morning from Vesuvius.)
- Thurs., June 15, 1944--On night duty all night sending off night flights. Got in bed about 0515 in the morning.
- Fri., June 16, 1944--Collins, Young, Lt. Underwood, & I went into Rome this afternoon & looked the town over.
- Sat., June 17, 1944--Worked all day on back paper work.
- Sun., June 18, 1944--Terrific rain & lightning storm last night. Rained most of the day today.
- Mon., June 19, 1944--Rain again. Mail at last.
- Tues., June 20, 1944--Signs went up around Officers' area today: "Officers' Area Only; Off Limits to E. M."
- Wed., June 21, 1944--On night duty tonight till 0400 a.m. sending off night training flights.
- Thurs., June 22, 1944--Jr. came over this evening. Col. Akers flew him over our proposed new field today to photograph it (Grosseto). At the present time it's about 15 miles from the front.
- Fri., June 23, 1944--Junior flew in a "cub" to see Tom Hendrix yesterday up about halfway between here & Grosseto. Tom is in Gen. Clark's Hdqs. now in charge of the "cubs."
- Sat., June 24, 1944--Flew to Foggia this afternoon to see Fred, but he was on Sardinia. Rode back in nose. That was about the roughest plane ride I ever had, I believe. . . Advance echelon moved up to new field today (Grosseto).
- Sun., June 25, 1944--On night duty tonight till 0345.

- Mon., June 26, 1944--Worked hard all day on paper work, then we tore down the Ops. shack & loaded it on a truck. We're going up to Grosseto in the morning. Junior's birthday today. Three pilots & six gunners left for the States today.
- Tues., June 27, 1944--Moved up by truck to new field at Ombrone (Grosseto). We're living in nice pine woods, but the bugs are terrible. Set up our living tent.
- Wed., June 28, 1944--Put up Ops. shack this a.m. I hope it won't stand another move.
- Thurs., June 29, 1944--On night duty in Opns. tonight till 0300 a.m.
- Fri., June 30, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., July 1, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., July 2, 1944--We're supposed to go to Corsica beginning on the 9th. Worked all night in Opns. tonight.
- Mon., July 3, 1944--Note: This area we're living in is mined. Three Group officers were seriously injured when their jeep ran over a mine just before the main part of the Group moved up here.
- Tues., July 4, 1944--I'm getting highly "browned off" with the situation here because we can hardly keep enough transportation available to take care of our business. Officers are continually making off with the jeeps.
- Wed., July 5, 1944--On duty all night. . . .Last night one of our planes didn't come back from the mission--reason unknown. Crew was Lt. Graves (pilot); Adams & Eden (gunners); Dunn (bomb.); and Dr. Browder J. Thompson (observer), an expert consultant from the War Dept. He is also supposed to be an Under-Secretary of War, traveling about with Secy. of War Stimson who is in Naples now, I believe. Quite an investigation is being made, but there is no clue as to why the plane didn't return. It probably got in bad weather and ran into a mountain.
- Thurs., July 6, 1944--On duty till midnight because C.B. Young didn't get back from 2-day pass to Rome. I'm leaving in the morning on advance echelon to Corsica.
- Fri., July 7, 1944--Convoy moved to Civita Vecchia and bivouacked outside of town for the night. Beetem, Storsberg, & I are in a command car for the trip.
- Sat., July 8, 1944--We loaded on an LST (vehicles & all) & it's really crowded.
- Sun., July 9, 1944--This Navy chow is good! We pulled out for Corsica in the evening. Hit some very rough, wet weather. Sailors on here are very young & have been overseas only since June 2 (this year). Some of them got sick when the rough weather hit.
- Mon., July 10, 1944--When we got up this morning, we saw Corsica ahead. We docked in the evening at Porte Vecchio & bivouacked for the night just outside of town. (When we left the boat around supper time, we left the sailors eating fresh fried ham! We got cold C-rations.)
- Tues., July 11, 1944--Convoy moved up east coast of Corsica to a field about 10 or 12 miles south of Bastia. Name of field is Poretta, & it is really dusty. We're camped next to a river (Golo) which is good for swimming, & I've already been in twice.

Wed., July 12, 1944--Went in swimming six times today. Collins, Chester, & Young flew up today.

Thurs., July 13, 1944--We got 20 Italian prisoners to work here today & tomorrow. They are just young, underfed kids who surrendered to the French on Elba. I was looking after six of them who were clearing off a place for Operations. At first I carried a gun, but when I saw what kids they were I took it off. The French are in charge of their prison camp & practically starve them--one small loaf of bread for eight boys, plus some "hot water" (probably weak soup). These kids went wild over C-rations. . .I'm on duty tonight to take care of the night flying.

Fri., July 14, 1944--Rumor today that Stalin said over the radio that the war would be over in 1000 hours (41 days). Ha! . . .Corsicans celebrated Bastille Day today.

Sat., July 15, 1944--This swimming (in the Golo River) is buona.

Sun., July 16, 1944--On duty tonight in Ops. About 2200 hrs. I had the surprise of my life. Murphy, a gunner who was shot down on March 27th, walked in very much alive. He had escaped a German prison camp and after some harrowing experiences made his way back through the lines. We all had believed that the whole crew of that plane was dead, but Murphy told us that all three of them had gotten out. He also confirmed the report that Frankhouser and Love were prisoners of war and that Bartlett & Cockrill were definitely killed.

Mon., July 17, 1944--My day off, & Mac & I went into Bastia. At the Red Cross we ran into Richert & Klum (who used to be in the 97th), & we rode around in the command car Klum had. Then we came back to camp. The ice cream at the Red Cross was good.

Tues., July 18, 1944--Worked all day trying to catch up on back paper work which the last move occasioned. Our meals have been good the past few days for some strange reason. I just found out today that Bryant (one of our new gunners) is from Lakeland. He's Tom Bryant's brother & is 37 years old.

Wed., July 19, 1944--Worked hard all day on back paper work and got almost caught up.

Thurs., July 20, 1944--Day off. Spent afternoon at Gp. Photo printing pictures with Junior. On duty tonight, but we got stood down.

Fri., July 21, 1944--Got three teeth filled today.

Sat., July 22, 1944--Italian "K.P." drowned in the river today. He fell in while washing clothes & couldn't swim. Chapman (an engineer) finally dived down deep enough to get him several hours later.

Sun., July 23, 1944--Junior's infected finger may send him to hospital tomorrow.

Mon., July 24, 1944--Junior went to hospital today. I'm on duty tonight.

Tues., July 25, 1944--I don't know what's the matter with me. I can't sleep half the time, yet I'm tired. I roll & toss at night & talk in my sleep. I think I need a wife.

Wed., July 26, 1944--Mail situation is getting bad again.

- Thurs., July 27, 1944--Saw show at Gp. Hq. tonight, "Going My Way" with Bing Crosby & Rise Stevens. Very good.
- Fri., July 28, 1944--On duty tonight. Sqdn. stood down, so I got to bed about midnight.
- Sat., July 29, 1944--Inspection by Gp. officer this morning (of equipment).
- Sun., July 30, 1944--Going to Capri tomorrow. I don't know how I rate, but they asked me.
- Mon., July 31, 1944--Flew from Borgo to Capodichino in A-20 (#76)--Lt. Surber, pilot; Lt. Brannan in nose; & Frieze, Carroll, Zipkis, & I in back. We had a gasoline leak in left wing tank, but it stopped. Left Borgo at 11:30, got to Capodichino at 13:15. Left on boat at 14:45 & got to Capri at 16:45. Frieze, Zipkis, & I staying in one room at Albergo Splendido (Splendid Hotel).
- Tues., August 1, 1944--Walked around; visited Red Cross E.M. Club; had ice cream. Saw show last night.
- Wed., Aug. 2, 1944--Frieze & I rode in horse carriage to Anacapri & ate dinner at Bella Vista. Dance at Red Cross this afternoon. I tried one dance. Saw stinky show tonight.
- Thurs., Aug., 3, 1944--Walked a couple of WAC's home from Valentino Club tonight.
- Fri., Aug. 4, 1944--Dave & I had a supper prepared for four at the Windsor, & he & Almena (Red Cross girl), & "Torkey" (a WAC) & I had supper together. . . . We leave in the morning.
- Sat., Aug. 5, 1944--Went back to Naples by boat & flew back to Corsica in #76. . . . Found out that Davis of Gp. Hq. drowned in the river (while I was on Capri).
- Sun., Aug. 6, 1944--Back to work with a bang--all day & most of the night.
- Mon., Aug. 7, 1944--Beaucoup mail & a package were awaiting me when I got back from Capri. Buona!
- Tues., Aug. 8, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Aug. 9, 1944--Maj. Young flew up this a.m. to tell us goodbye. He's going back home.
- Thurs., Aug. 10, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., Aug. 11, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., Aug. 12, 1944--Several more combat crew members left for the States today.
- Sun., Aug. 13, 1944--Frieze & several others left to join a B-29 outfit today. They're probably going back to the States. . . . Ten people bailed out of B-24 over our field today.
- Mon., Aug. 14, 1944--Invasion of southern France to start early in the morning. I'm glad things are going to break at last.
- Tues., Aug. 15, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Aug. 16, 1944--(No diary entry.)

- Thurs., Aug. 17, 1944--On mission last night one plane turned up missing--Lt. "Stumpy" Underwood, Lt. Moran, Chapman, & D.A. Johnson.
I hate that. . . .I hear that I'm on the list to go home next. Maybe.
- Fri., Aug. 18, 1944--Keeping very busy these days.
- Sat., Aug. 19, 1944--Worked tonight.
- Sun., Aug. 20, 1944--Went to picture show tonight at Gp. Hq.
- Mon., Aug. 21, 1944--Mail today. . .Collins, etc. got back today from a week's trip to Casablanca & Algiers.
- Tues., Aug. 22, 1944--Two funny things have happened recently. The other night a P-47 crashed on Poretta Airdrome and burst into flames. The pilot didn't have a chance. A few minutes later a fellow walked into Base Ops. & asked if there was a doctor around. Somebody asked him who was hurt, and he said he had sprained his wrist. When they asked him how he had hurt himself, he said, "Oh, I was flying that P-47 that crashed."Two or three nights later a P-47 spun in near Poretta, and when the pilot bailed out his chute didn't open. Searchers were looking through a marsh trying to find the wreckage when someone called out. They yelled and asked the caller if he had seen a plane crash. He said, "No, I didn't see it, but I'm the pilot." He was sitting in soft mud up to his neck!
- Wed., Aug. 23, 1944--Paris was freed today. . . .I worked tonight.
- Thurs., Aug. 24, 1944--Took day off & built a seat & washstand.
Saw British stage show tonight.
- Fri., Aug. 25, 1944--Saw interesting picture show tonight, "It Happened Tomorrow."
- Sat., Aug. 26, 1944--Worked like a B - - - all day.
- Sun., Aug. 27, 1944--Worked tonight.
- Mon., Aug. 28, 1944--Washed clothes.
- Tues., Aug. 29, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Aug. 30, 1944--Advance echelon left for France. Collins, Amick, & McLaughlin went from our sections.
- Thurs., Aug. 31, 1944--Working all the time now.
- Fri., September 1, 1944--Worked today & tonight. Jr. flew over enemy territory today with Maj. Marsha.
- Sat., Sept. 2, 1944--Worked all day. Went to show tonight.
- Sun., Sept. 3, 1944--Jr. flew to France & back again today with Col. Akers. . . .Worked tonight.
- Mon., Sept. 4, 1944--Worked all day. Went to show tonight.
- Tues., Sept. 5, 1944--Overseas two years today. . .Flew over to France today on our B-25. France is very nice compared to Italy or Corsica. People are friendly.
- Wed., Sept. 6, 1944--Flew back to Corsica from France in our B-25.
Flew in a solid overcast for a long time & I was scared.
- Thurs., Sept. 7, 1944--Flew back to France this afternoon to stay.
- Fri., Sept. 8, 1944--Went to Salon this morning with Mac. . . . Set up Ops. & Intelligence this afternoon. . .Went into Eyguieres tonight.

- Sat., Sept. 9, 1944--We're not doing any bombing now. The planes are hauling rations, gas, & bombs because of transportation shortage. . . Went into Eyguierés & ate supper tonight.
- Sun., Sept. 10, 1944--Work.
- Mon., Sept. 11, 1944--Work.
- Tues., Sept. 12, 1944--Work.
- Wed., Sept. 13, 1944--Work.
- Thurs., Sept. 14, 1944--Work.
- Fri., Sept. 15, 1944--Went to Marseilles on pass. Met a nice lady and her daughter & another nice girl, and we had a drink together. Gen. DeGaulle is in town today.
- Sat., Sept. 16, 1944--Saw General Charles DeGaulle this morning. Had dinner with Madame Mommens and her daughter. Got back to camp just before dark.
- Sun., Sept. 17, 1944--We're starting to move back to Italy tomorrow.
- Mon., Sept. 18, 1944--Part of Sqdn. went back to Italy by plane today. We'll be south of Leghorn (Livorno) somewhere. Typical 47th Gp. weather for moving--rain.
- Tues., Sept. 19, 1944--Flew in B-25 from LaJasse, France, to Fallonica, Italy, our new base. Poured down rain all night & there were strong winds. . . .Some new guys from the States coming into the Group as replacements.
- Wed., Sept. 20, 1944--Yesterday after I had taken off, an 84th plane crashed and killed the pilot & bombardier. The pilot (Ankrom) was a friend of C.B.'s.
- Thurs., Sept. 21, 1944--Ops. & Intelligence moved into a house for the first time since England.
- Fri., Sept. 22, 1944--Lots of rain practically every day.
- Sat., Sept. 23, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., Sept. 24, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Sept. 25, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Tues., Sept. 26, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Sept. 27, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., Sept. 28, 1944--Cold weather coming.
- Fri., Sept. 29, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., Sept. 30, 1944--Went to show in Fallonica.
- Sun., Oct. 1, 1944--Sqdn. ran two day missions & one night mission. Lt. Surber was wounded in shoulder by flak.
- Mon., Oct. 2, 1944--Put up stove in tent tonight. It really helps. Lots of rain today; no flying.
- Tues., Oct. 3, 1944--Worked all day and night.
- Wed., Oct. 4, 1944--Group started moving to Rosignano today.
- Thurs., Oct. 5, 1944--Jr. left for Rosignano today. I leave tomorrow. Ate supper with the Grossis & Bulleris tonight.

Fri., Oct. 6, 1944--Rain is holding up the move.

Sat., Oct. 7, 1944--More rain; no move. Got a pretty good ration today.

Sun., Oct. 8, 1944--Poured down last night. Moved to Rosignano today in a truck. Much rain. On the way here today we almost had a serious accident. Swollen torrents washed out the base of a road connected to a bridge we crossed. We got across just before the road gave way. A horse fell in the gap between the road & the bridge; there was no way of getting it out; its hind legs were probably broken; and only its head was above water. I asked the old Italian who owned the horse if he wanted me to shoot the horse. He finally decided that it was the only thing to do; so I shot it, although I hated to do it and was shaking pretty badly.

Mon., Oct. 9, 1944--Rain & mud. Went over to see Jr. today.

Tues., Oct. 10, 1944--Rain & mud. Opns. is set up in a building about three blocks from the camp.

Wed., Oct. 11, 1944--Took much needed bath out of my helmet.

Thurs., Oct. 12, 1944--(No diary entry.)

Fri., Oct. 13, 1944--Jr. & I went on two-day pass to Fallonica to visit the Bulleris, Grossis, & Contis.

Sat., Oct. 14, 1944--Went into town to eat dinner with Caesarina & her two kids, and Giusipine, Angela, & Juliano (in Scarlino).

Sun., Oct. 15, 1944--Got a ride back to Sqdn. today in 86th truck.

Mon., Oct. 16, 1944--Picked up the two drunkest men I've ever seen & brought them to camp to sleep it off. They were both passed out on the street across from Ops., & Sennette & I bundled them into a jeep and brought them back to camp.

Tues., Oct. 17, 1944--Worked till 0330 this Wed. morning.

Wed., Oct. 18, 1944--Wrote several letters today.

Thurs., Oct. 19, 1944--A truck backed into a bomb on the field today. It exploded & wounded four men--Waits, Abrahams, Fantaccione, & a boy from the Service Group who was driving the truck. Abrahams was hurt the worst, but all of them will recover. Brown, a gunner, was standing between two of the ones who were hit. He was knocked down but not hit.

Fri., Oct. 20, 1944--Went to show tonight, "Broadway Rhythm." It was good.

Sat., Oct. 21, 1944--On duty in Ops. tonight.

Sun., Oct. 22, 1944--Didn't work today. Straightened up my barracks bags, etc. Took a bath.

Mon., Oct. 23, 1944--Col. Willard sent Jr. to Grosseto today to do some special photography of some kind.

Tues., Oct. 24, 1944--Rained most of the day. Probably no flying possible for two or three days. Slept in Ops. tonight.

Wed., Oct. 25, 1944--Rained most of the day.

Thurs., Oct. 26, 1944--Have a bad head cold.

Fri., Oct. 27, 1944--Inspection this morning. Cold is worse. Collins got back from Foggia. Went to show tonight. Pouring down rain tonight.

- Sat., Oct. 28, 1944--Slept in Opns. tonight but couldn't sleep much because of my cold.
- Sun., Oct. 29, 1944--Got stuck in mud in jeep over at Gp. Hq. this morning, & when I got out of the jeep I stepped in mud up over my overshoes. More rain today & tonight.
- Mon., Oct. 30, 1944--Poured down rain today; the mud is terrible.
Went to show tonight, "Guadalcanal Diary."
- Tues., Oct. 31, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., November 1, 1944--Last night was Halloween, & I didn't even think of it. All days look alike these times. On duty in Opns. tonight.
- Thurs., Nov. 2, 1944--Gp. Hq. was flooded again last night. A dam broke & water covered their area up to three & four feet. Went to show tonight.
- Fri., Nov. 3, 1944--Went to good show tonight--"As Thousands Cheer."
- Sat., Nov. 4, 1944--We got candy ration today.
- Sun., Nov. 5, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Nov. 6, 1944--Went to show tonight--"Till We Meet Again."
- Tues., Nov. 7, 1944--We've been stood down now for about 2 weeks (except for 4 or 5 strafing sorties). I've done less work in that time than in any other similar period since I've been in the Army. Weather is getting very cold now.
- Wed., Nov. 8, 1944--David Schofield dropped in on me this afternoon. He used to be one of my little Boy Scouts several years ago in Lakeland. He's a 2nd Lt., has been wounded twice (got Purple Heart & cluster), was reclassified & put in Air Corps from the Infantry. He's in a C.M. Trucking Co. now. It was nice seeing him. I am on C.Q. in Opns. tonight.
- Thurs., Nov. 9, 1944--Went to show tonight.
- Fri., Nov. 10, 1944--We moved upstairs above Operations on Nov. 8th--that is, all of us except Mac and C.B. It's much nicer living in a building (for the first time in a couple of years).
- Sat., Nov. 11, 1944--Had a busy day in Opns. for first time since our long stand-down. Stayed in and wrote to Mary Alice tonight instead of going to the show.
- Sun., Nov. 12, 1944--Last night an 84th ship crashed offshore from here when both engines cut out. Nobody got out. An 86th plane failed to come back from the mission last night.
- Mon., Nov. 13, 1944--I was on duty in Opns. last night till 0520 this morning due to a mission.
- Tues., Nov. 14, 1944--Has turned really cold. Junior came back from Grosseto.
- Wed., Nov. 15, 1944--Terrific wind all day. Cold as all get out.
- Thurs., Nov. 16, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., Nov. 17, 1944--I think my nerves are getting the better of me.
- Sat., Nov. 18, 1944--Tonight Lt. Surber, Lt. Snyder, Grissom, & Albrecht are missing in action. Albrecht's first mission. I worked tonight; got in bed at 0400 a.m.

- Sun., Nov. 19, 1944--Went to show tonight.
- Mon., Nov. 20, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Tues., Nov. 21, 1944--Missed chance today of going home soon on 30-day furlough.
- Wed., Nov. 22, 1944--On duty tonight until 0445 in the morning.
- Thurs., Nov. 23, 1944--Sqdn. C.Q. tonight. O.D. nearly burned down the Colonel's trailer. I had to bring a drunk back to camp who was disturbing an Italian family. We had a good dinner for Thanksgiving today.
- Fri., Nov. 24, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., Nov. 25, 1944--Went to a party tonight at a villa Gen. Clark uses when he's around here.
- Sun., Nov. 26, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Nov. 27, 1944--C.Q. in Ops. tonight. No flying.
- Tues., Nov. 28, 1944--Went to Leghorn & Pisa today in jeep with Collins, Chester, & McLaughlin. Climbed the Leaning Tower. Went to a good show tonight--"Gaslight."
- Wed., Nov. 29, 1944--We're going to move to Grosseto for the winter, I guess. "A" echelon moves out in the morning.
- Thurs., Nov. 30, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., December 1, 1944--Worked all night.
- Sat., Dec. 2, 1944--Got to bed at 0900 a.m. after working all night.
- Sun., Dec. 3, 1944--Saw show tonight--"Impatient Years" with Jean Arthur.
- Mon., Dec. 4, 1944--Hardly slept at all last night due to terrific head cold which came on suddenly.
- Tues., Dec. 5, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Dec. 6, 1944--Moved from Vada to Grosseto. Had flat tire on the way. We had to change it in the rain without a jack.
- Thurs., Dec. 7, 1944--This is the worst set-up we've ever had for efficient operating--officers' quarters & Ops. in one place, the Sqdn. area $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, and the airfield 9 miles away.
- Fri., Dec. 8, 1944--Living in a tent with no floor but mud & grass. My cold never will get well.
- Sat., Dec. 9, 1944--Worked tonight.
- Sun., Dec. 10, 1944--Took sulphur bath today.
- Mon., Dec. 11, 1944--Molta rain.
- Tues., Dec. 12, 1944--Worked all day & am on duty tonight.
- Wed., Dec. 13, 1944--Built floors for the two tents today.
- Thurs., Dec. 14, 1944--Lost plane tonight--Lt. MacMullin, Lt. Christian, S/Sgt. Johnson, & Cpl. Mastroleo. We don't know what happened. . . . Went to "Rhapsody in Blue" tonight. Was really good.

- Fri., Dec. 15, 1944--I'm going nuts. I'm not meant for this kind of "details" work.
- Sat., Dec. 16, 1944--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., Dec. 17, 1944--C.Q. in Ops. tonight.
- Mon., Dec. 18, 1944--Saw USO show tonight. Was really funny.
- Tues., Dec. 19, 1944--Took another sulphur bath today. Rations today.
- Wed., Dec. 20, 1944--Another hectic day in Ops. . . .Clare Booth Luce is in the vicinity. One of our planes spent almost a day flying around looking for her baggage. Some stuff.
- Thurs., Dec. 21, 1944--Worked tonight.
- Fri., Dec. 22, 1944--Took sulphur bath today. It's getting really cold now. Got package from Mary Alice. Had fried chicken for supper.
- Sat., Dec. 23, 1944--Bitterly cold all day.
- Sun., Dec. 24, 1944--On C.Q. in Ops. tonight. Much Xmas cheer floating around all night.
- Mon., Dec. 25, 1944--Good turkey dinner today. Officers had party for Italian kids this afternoon.
- Tues., Dec. 26, 1944--Amick had to go to hospital tonight with a bad throat. Extra guards on planes due to rumored civilian uprising.
- Wed., Dec. 27, 1944--Sgt. of Guard at Sqdn. tonight. Had to post guards on airfield & over some bombs which were expected to blow up. Cold tonight. Didn't get much sleep.
- Thurs., Dec. 28, 1944--On duty in Ops. all night. Didn't get to bed till 0600 a.m. Got mail today for a change.
- Fri., Dec. 29, 1944--A windy, cold day, as usual.
- Sat., Dec. 30, 1944--Photo boys told me Junior went to Rome on pass.
- Sun., Dec. 31, 1944--On duty all day & night in Ops. Got to bed at 0400 a.m. in the morning of Jan. 1, 1945.
- Monday, January 1, 1945--Took bath today. Saw U.S.O. production of "Panama Hattie" tonight.
- Tues., Jan. 2, 1945--Amick came back from hospital today. Maybe I'll be able to take a pass now.
- Wed., Jan. 3, 1945--More delayed-action bombs accidentally dropped on field last night, but they didn't go off.
- Thurs., Jan. 4, 1945--Rain tonight. Only 3 planes flew.
- Fri., Jan. 5, 1945--I'm going nuts in Operations.
- Sat., Jan. 6, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., Jan. 7, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Jan. 8, 1945--Left on 5-day pass. Hitch-hiked to the Bulleri's at Fallonica (Casone). Everyone seemed glad to see me.
- Tues., Jan. 9, 1945--The Italians have a clever arrangement for warming a bed with a bucket of coals.

- Wed., Jan. 10, 1945--Hitch-hiked from Fallonica to Livorno (Leghorn) after telling all my Italian friends at the Casone goodbye. (One of them drove me in a horse & buggy to the main highway.) . . .Bad icing conditions on road to Leghorn. Saw four or five trucks go over in ditch, & my truck just missed a time or two. . . .Found room in civilian home--no lights; only one quilt as cover. Spent cold night.
- Thurs., Jan. 11, 1945--Walked down to the port (about 2 miles or more). It is about decimated. I have no place to eat except Red Cross & can get only coffee & cookies there. I'm really hungry. Spent another cold night.
- Fri., Jan. 12, 1945--Hitch-hiked back to outfit & arrived half-frozen, half-starved.
- Sat., Jan. 13, 1945--Worked in Ops. all day. Lot of rain today.
- Sun., Jan. 14, 1945--Worked all day & all night in Ops. Got off duty at 0830 on Jan. 15th.
- Mon., Jan. 15, 1945--Couldn't sleep more than 2 or 3 hours today. Dead tired tonight.
- Tues., Jan. 16, 1945--Went to show tonight, "Animal Kingdom" with Ann Sheridan.
- Wed., Jan. 17, 1945--Had bad day in the office--difference of opinion with adjutant.
- Thurs., Jan. 18, 1945--Capt. Neuer told me tonight that Junior would start work with me tomorrow.
- Fri., Jan. 19, 1945--Junior came over to work in Sqdn. Ops. Moved into my tent. We went to show tonight.
- Sat., Jan. 20, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., Jan. 21, 1945--On duty in Sqdn. Ops. tonight. Sqdn. stood down. Snow & hail today & tonight.
- Mon., Jan. 22, 1945--Ice all over ground today. Jr. on duty in Ops. tonight.
- Tues., Jan. 23, 1945--I was cold in bed last night. Rain today. Stand down.
- Wed., Jan. 24, 1945--Have bad cough; don't feel good.
- Thurs., Jan. 25, 1945--Bad cold & cough.
- Fri., Jan. 26, 1945-- (No diary entry--i.e., for general distribution.)
- Sat., Jan. 27, 1945--Can't seem to get over this cold.
- Sun., Jan. 28, 1945--Ice all over the ground again.
- Mon., Jan. 29, 1945--Worked half the day & all night in Ops. Got to bed at 0630 a.m. for 2 hours. . . .Maj. Tilton MIA tonight from 84th Sq. Used to be in 97th.
- Tues., Jan. 30, 1945--Ice all over the ground. Could sleep only about 2 hours this afternoon. Got a sweet letter from Mary Alice. 86th lost another plane tonight.
- Wed., Jan. 31, 1945--I guess we're going to move closer to the Sqdn. area soon.

- Thursday, February 1, 1945--Junior will go back to Gp. Photo soon because they're getting night photo equipment.
- Fri., Feb. 2, 1945--Went to show tonight.
- Sat., Feb. 3, 1945--Mac & I went to Siena today. Had a very nice sightseeing trip.
- Sun., Feb. 4, 1945--Saw Juliano Bulleri this morning. He's going to school in Grosseto. Jr. & I are going in to see him & Signora Grossi one of these nights.
- Mon., Feb. 5, 1945--Worked all day & till three o'clock in the morning (Tuesday). Lt. Ritchie, Lt. Hackett, Mull, & Hancock missing from mission tonight. Ritchie was heard telling them to bail out.
- Tues., Feb. 6, 1945--Worked all morning & part of the afternoon. Then had to go to bed for awhile as I was dead tired. We've got to have some help in Operations soon.
- Wed., Feb. 7, 1945--Worked all day. Went into Grosseto tonight & visited Signora Grossi & Juliano Bulleri .
- Thurs., Feb. 8, 1945--Worked all day & night. Got to bed at 4:30 a.m., Friday morning.
- Fri., Feb. 9, 1945--Worked till about 1400 hrs. after getting up at 0300. Took helmet bath tonight.
- Sat., Feb. 10, 1945--Worked all day in Ops.
- Sun., Feb. 11, 1945--On duty today & tonight in Ops. We're moving tomorrow.
- Mon., Feb. 12, 1945--Moved to new place about 3/4 mile from the Squadron. Pitched tent and put floor in. Went to "Cover Girl" tonight.
- Tues., Feb. 13, 1945--Straightened up office in new building. Got new pair of shoes from salvage.
- Wed., Feb. 14, 1945--Took bath. Stood down again today. Brought Collins back from hospital this morning.
- Thurs., Feb. 15, 1945--Sergeant of the Guard in Sqdn. tonight. Somebody fired across the area, but I couldn't find who it was.
- Fri., Feb. 16, 1945--Got bad head cold. Took bath this morning.
- Sat., Feb. 17, 1945--Worked all day in Ops. Went over to Junior's place tonight & took some pictures & printed some. Jr. moved back to his photo work today.
- Sun., Feb. 18, 1945--Rations today. Stood down tonight.
- Mon., Feb. 19, 1945--Mac left for 30-day furlough in the States.
- Tues., Feb. 20, 1945--Worked all day in Ops.
- Wed., Feb. 21, 1945--Message came in today that Hancock is in "proper hands"--probably Partisans behind German lines. . . .I worked all night in Ops. . . .84th Sqdn. lost a plane; at least some of crew bailed out.
- Thurs., Feb. 22, 1945--Took bath today. Went to poor show tonight.

- Fri., Feb. 23, 1945--F/O Naylor, F/O Johns, Taylor, & Walker crashed into sea last night when an engine caught fire just after take-off.
- Sat., Feb. 24, 1945--Hancock got back today. . . .I worked tonight. Got to bed at 0245.
- Sun., Feb. 25, 1945--Spent day with Junior.
- Mon., Feb. 26, 1945--Worked today. Went to U.S.O. show tonight. Very good.
- Tues., Feb. 27, 1945--Worked till 1600 hrs. Went to bed for an hour or so; then on duty all night. (Got to bed at 0200 a.m.)
- Wed., Feb. 28, 1945--Took sulphur bath today.
- Thursday, March 1, 1945--Worked all day. Went over to see Jr. tonight with Collins & Lt. Wagenhals. Developed & printed some film.
- Fri., Mar. 2, 1945--On duty in Ops. tonight. 85th lost plane & crew tonight; crashed just after take-off. (Probably carburetor ice.)
- Sat., Mar. 3, 1945--Have another bad cold. Worked in Ops. all day. 85th lost another plane & crew on mission tonight.
- Sun., Mar. 4, 1945--Coughed all night last night. Went to see doctor this a.m. Jr. & I ate with Giuliano & Signora Grossi tonight.
- Mon., Mar. 5, 1945--Worked all day & night. Have been overseas 2½ years today.
- Tues., Mar. 6, 1945--I feel terrible.
- Wed., Mar. 7, 1945--Have abscessed tooth that's driving me crazy--along with my cold.
- Thurs., Mar. 8, 1945--Had tooth pulled this morning by Gp. dentist. I fainted. On duty in Ops. all night. Feel terrible.
- Fri., Mar. 9, 1945--Feel much better this morning. Took bath. Went to see Jr. Went into Grosseto & got haircut & shave.
- Sat., Mar. 10, 1945--Tooth (or rather lack of it) hurt me worse than ever today. Worked all day in Ops. Capt. Klauber & Lt. Wagenhals went home today.
- Sun., Mar. 11, 1945--Started new system in Ops. whereby each man works at night for 4 nights in a row. Went to U.S.O. show in Grosseto tonight. D'Artega's All-Girl Band. Was really good.
- Mon., Mar. 12, 12, 1945--Steve (Collins' friend) came up today. . . My gum where the tooth was pulled is giving me fits.
- Tues., Mar. 13, 1945--Jaw is killing me. Went to have gums packed again.
- Wed., Mar. 14, 1945--Had dentist pack gum again. It's about to drive me crazy. On duty in Ops. tonight.
- Thurs., Mar. 15, 1945--Went to dentist again. On duty tonight.
- Fri., Mar. 16, 1945--Jr. flew to Cairo, Egypt, this a.m. I'm on duty tonight. Kendall's birthday & I forgot it.
- Sat., Mar. 17, 1945--Went to dentist again. On duty in Ops. tonight.
- Sun., Mar. 18, 1945--Took bath. Went to dentist again. Am having terrible pains & headaches every day.

- Mon., Mar. 19, 1945--Went to dentist; got X-ray. No infection. Dentist thinks I have sinusitis, & I believe he's right.
- Tues., Mar. 20, 1945--Schnathorst bailed out over target tonight when plane went into spin. Plane came back safely.
- Wed., Mar. 21, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., Mar. 22, 1945--The work in Opns. these days is driving me crazy.
- Fri., Mar. 23, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., Mar. 24, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., Mar. 25, 1945--Went to show tonight. Someone mentioned that this is Palm Sunday. I didn't even know it was Sunday.
- Mon., Mar. 26, 1945--On duty tonight. Stood down. Rain.
- Tues., Mar. 27, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Mar. 28, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., Mar. 29, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., Mar. 30, 1945--Moved by truck to Pisa. Unloaded equipment. Walked over to Pisa Red Cross tonight. We're living in a building close to the Leaning Tower (Leonardo da Vinci Scuola).
- Sat., Mar. 31, 1945--Planes flew up today. Ran mission tonight.
- Sunday, April 1, 1945--Easter Sunday & April Fools Day. Worked all day.
- Mon., Apr. 2, 1945--Worked all day.
- Tues., Apr. 3, 1945--Ditto.
- Wed., Apr. 4, 1945--Ditto.
- Thurs., Apr. 5, 1945--Ditto.
- Fri., Apr. 6, 1945--Ditto. Went to see "The Thin Man Goes Home" tonight.
- Sat., Apr. 7, 1945--Worked all day.
- Sun., Apr. 8, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Apr. 9, 1945--((No diary entry.)
- Tues., Apr. 10, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Apr. 11, 1945--Night duty.
- Thurs., Apr. 12, 1945--Night duty.
- Fri., Apr. 13, 1945--Just heard that Pres. Roosevelt died yesterday. Night duty.
- Sat., Apr. 14, 1945--Night duty.
- Sun., Apr. 15, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., Apr. 16, 1945--Went to Florence (Firenze) for the day.
- Tues., Apr. 17, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Apr. 18, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., Apr. 19, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Fri., Apr. 20, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., Apr. 21, 1945--(No diary entry.)

- Sun., Apr. 22, 1945--Flew down to Grosseto this afternoon in B-25 to see Jr. for a few minutes.
- Mon., Apr. 23, 1945--The war in Italy is really going now & we've been flying both day & night for about three days. Plane & crew missing on mission tonight--Fassett (pilot); Ferree (bomb.); & LeNoir (gunner).
- Tues., Apr. 24, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Wed., Apr. 25, 1945--War over here is doing fine.
- Thurs., Apr. 26, 1945--Collins & Chester are going home soon.
- Fri., Apr. 27, 1945--Mussolini captured today by Partisans near Lake Como.
- Sat., Apr. 28, 1945--Mussolini shot today by Partisans. It looks as if the war can't last much longer.
- Sun., Apr. 29, 1945--Went to Lucca today with Beetem. Nice town. Clean streets. Big crowd of Italians tried to storm a house where some Fascists & Germans were prisoners. Police turned fire hose on them.
- Mon., Apr. 30, 1945--All Germans in western Po Valley surrendered last night. Truck loads of prisoners going by today.
- Tues., May 1, 1945--Hitler reported dead, by German radio. Sqdn. dance tonight.
- Wed., May 2, 1945--Over a million Germans laid down their arms today. No more bombing in Italy. It shouldn't be long now. . . Sissy's 32nd birthday today.
- Thurs., May 3, 1945--Berlin finally captured, as reported by the radio today.
- Fri., May 4, 1945--I sleep in Ops. tonight.
- Sat., May 5, 1945--Went to Lucca on pass.
- Sun., May 6, 1945--Collins went home on TDY. Schnathorst got back after having bailed out over target about 1½ months ago.
- Mon., May 7, 1945--Radio just announced (1600 hrs.) that the war is over in Europe.
- Tues., May 8, 1945--War officially over at one minute after midnight tonight.
- Wed., May 9, 1945--V-E day.
- Thurs., May 10, 1945--Went to Lucca to a dance. A pilot (F/O) & I took two sisters (Lilia & Lolita) to a restaurant for supper.
- Fri., May 11, 1945--Beginning cleaning out files, etc., getting ready to leave this theater for home (I hope!).
- Sat., May 12, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sun., May 13, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Mon., May 14, 1945 through Tues., May 22, 1945--(No diary entries.)
- Wed., May 23, 1945--Lots of work for past several days in preparation to leave for the States.
- Thurs., May 24, 1945 through Mon., May 28, 1945--(No diary entries.)

- Tues., May 29, 1945--I'm 27 today.
- Wed., May 30, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Thurs., May 31, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Friday, June 1, 1945--(No diary entry.)
- Sat., June 2, 1945 through Mon., June 11, 1945--(No diary entries.)
- Tues., June 12, 1945--Mary Alice is 26 today. Mama & Daddy's 38th wedding anniversary.
- Wed., June 13, 1945 through Saturday, June 16, 1945--(No diary entries.)
- Sun., June 17, 1945--Moved to staging area about 2 miles away. Junior is in same tent with me.
- Mon., June 18, 1945--Staging area is very dusty and hot, but it's not so bad.
- Tues., June 19, 1945 through Sat., June 23, 1945--(No diary entries.)
- Sun., June 20, 1945--Junior left today to board boat. I leave tomorrow. Went to church twice today.
- Mon., June 25, 1945--Boarded S.S. William Cushing (Liberty ship) in Leghorn (Livorno) harbor.
- Tues., June 26, 1945--Sailed early this morning from Leghorn.
- Wed., June 27, 1945--Food is good on this ship. Bunks are crowded too close together, but, all in all, living conditions aren't too bad.
- Thurs., June 28, 1945--So far the trip has been very smooth.
- Fri., June 29, 1945--Put in at Oran, Algeria, for water today.
- Sat., June 30, 1945--Boat is rolling quite a bit today.
- Sun., July 1, 1945--Pretty rough today. Several guys are sick. I got nauseated at dinner & had to go lie down.
- Mon., July 2, 1945--Read David Copperfield today.
- Tues., July 3, 1945--Read Wuthering Heights.
- Wed., July 4, 1945--The ship's guns were fired today (4th of July). Extra-good dinner.
- Thurs., July 5, 1945 through Wed., July 11, 1945--(No diary entries.)
- Thursday, July 12, 1945--Landed in U.S.A. (New York Harbor) after nearly 3 yrs. overseas.

END OF DIARY

A P P E N D I X

Written on Dec. 7, 1942, a few miles from Oran, Algeria:

SUMMARY OF MY TRAVELS FROM NEW YORK HARBOR (9-5-42) TO ENGLAND
AND THEN ALGERIA

Left New York harbor on board the "Queen Mary" at about 3:00 p.m., Sept. 5, 1942 (Saturday). Landed at Gourock, Scotland, (on the River Clyde) on the night of Sept. 11, 1942; immediately boarded blacked-out train. Left train on afternoon of Sept. 12 at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England. Went by truck three miles out of Bury to Rougham Air Base. Left Rougham on October 5, 1942 and went to RAF Horham Station about three miles from Eye, about 8 miles from Diss, 22 from Norwich, and 20 from Ipswich. (Some day after the war maybe I can locate myself!) (About the middle of October, 1942, 60 of us flew by C-47 transport to Warrington and drove "jeeps" back.) Left Horham on Tuesday night, Nov. 22, 1942 for Liverpool, by truck & train. Went on board the Derbyshire (troop transport) & sailed two days later. Went around Northern Ireland, then south. Dec. 5th we spent most of the day anchored off Gibraltar, then sailed for Algeria. I'm writing this on the evening of Dec. 7, 1942, lying in my pup tent in a field a few miles from Oran, Algeria (where we landed today).

MY "ITINERARY" AFTER LANDING IN AFRICA

Landed at Oran, Algeria, Monday, December 7, 1942.
Caught train to Casablanca, Morocco, on Friday, Dec. 11, 1942.
Arrived Casablanca, Sunday night, Dec. 13, 1942.
Left Mediouna Air Base (Casablanca) on C-47, Thursday, Dec. 24, 1942.
Spent Xmas Eve in hangar at Blida, Algeria. Landed at Youks Les Bain, Algeria, Friday, Dec. 25, 1942. (First bombing raid at Youks, Saturday, Dec. 26, 1942.)
Moved by truck to Thelepte, Tunisia, Monday, Dec. 28, 1942.
Moved by truck to Youks, Monday, February 15, 1943.
Moved by truck to Canrobert, Algeria, Saturday, Feb. 20, 1943.
Moved back to Thelepte, Saturday, April 10, 1943. (Most moved back, Mar. 30, 1943.)
Moved to Souk el Arba, Tunisia, by British lorry (truck), Fri., Apr. 16, 1943.
North African campaign ended Thursday, May 13, 1943.
Went into Tunis, Friday, May 14, 1943.
Moved to Grombalia (Soliman) in olive grove 20 - 25 miles from Tunis, Tuesday, June 1, 1943.
Sicilian invasion started Saturday, July 10, 1943.
Flew to Malta in C-47 on Thursday, July 22, 1943.
Flew by C-47 to Comunali (Gela), Sicily, Thurs., Aug. 12, 1943.
Moved by truck to Gerbini #10 (near Catania), Thurs., Aug. 19, 1943.
Italian invasion started on Friday, Sept. 3, 1943.
Italy surrendered on Wed., Sept. 8, 1943.
Moved by truck & landing craft across Straits of Messina to Italy on Monday, Sept. 19, 1943.
Got to new (temporary) base five miles from Taranto (Grottaglie), Friday, Sept. 24, 1943.

ITINERARY (continued):

Moved to Foggia (Vicenza) on Sunday, October 17, 1943.
Moved by truck to Vesuvius, Thursday, January 13, 1944.
The Group moved to Capodichino Airdrome (near Naples) while I was in hospital during the time that Vesuvius erupted, Mar. 22 - 25, 1944.
Invasion of France, Tuesday, June 6, 1944.
Flew to new base at Galeria (Rome), Monday, June 12, 1944.
Moved by truck to Grosseto (Ombrone), Tues., June 27, 1944.
Moved by truck to board LST for Corsica, Friday, July 7, 1944.
Arrived at Corsica by LST on July 10, 1944, and reached base at Poretta, July 11, 1944.
Invasion of Southern France, Aug. 15, 1944 (?).
Flew to France, Thursday, Sept. 7, 1944.
Flew back to Italy (Fallonica), Tuesday, Sept. 19, 1944.
Moved by truck to Rosignano (Vada), Sunday, October 8, 1944.
Moved to Grosseto, Wed., Dec. 6, 1944.
Moved by truck to Pisa, Fri., Mar. 30, 1945.
War ended in Europe, Wednesday, May 9, 1945--V-E Day.
Moved to staging area near Pisa on Sunday, June 17, 1945.
Boarded Liberty Ship "S.S. William Cushing" in Leghorn (Livorno) harbor, on Monday, June 25, 1945.
Sailed for home on Tuesday, June 26, 1945.
Landed in New York harbor on Thursday, July 12, 1945.

ON BOARD THE QUEEN MARY

September 6, 1942:

This boat is really crowded. In fact, there's only one difference between us and sardines--sardines smell better.

I found early in the trip that there are two ways to get into your bunk--one of them doesn't scrape all the hide off your back.

At first I hated not being able to wash up often; but one morning, after finally fighting my way to the wash trough, I saw my face in the mirror. I decided that washing wasn't worth the lowering of morale that came from looking in the mirror.

There's such a variety of things to do that I can't decide what to do with myself. Shall I fight through to the rail and look at the water, or shall I crawl back into my bunk?

From my spot behind these liferafts I can see in almost any direction--if it's up.

One old sergeant in my outfit has finally been reduced to talking to himself. One of his favorite observations seems to be, "What I like about this boat is that it's not crowded."

One nice thing about our bunks--if you lie on your side, you won't stick over the edge and be in danger of being hit by equipment falling down from the bunks above. I didn't mind so much being hit in the head by that steel helmet and canteen full of water last night; but when that pair of dirty socks came down, my food almost came up. I guess that soldier had had his on as long as I have had mine.

Sept. 7, 1942, aboard the Queen Mary:

When someone asked M/Sgt. McMahon today why he didn't give his face a break by shaving it, he said, "Why should I do anything for my face? It's never done anything for me." If you could see his face, you'd know that he wasn't kidding.

Sept. 9, 1942, aboard the Queen Mary:

If you could have seen me tonight, my Love, you wouldn't have thought me a very romantic sight. The boat was rolling quite a bit while I was on guard over our Sqdn. safe, and I became rather miserable--finally up-chunking in the only thing available, my steel helmet.

Tuesday
December 8, 1942

(Written near Oran,
Algeria)

ABOARD THE BRITISH TROOPSHIP, "DERBYSHIRE"

When we sailed from Liverpool, England, on Nov. 24, 1942, on the "Derbyshire," we experienced the most crowded conditions it has been our lot to meet thus far in the war. Hammocks slung so close together they touched others on every side, were our bunks. Keeping clean was impossible, and at the present writing it has been nearly two weeks since I've had a bath. (We landed in Algeria on Dec. 7, 1942.)

Our boat was in a large convoy until we reached Gibraltar; then two destroyers, another troopship, and our own made the dash from the Rock to Algeria.

One night after leaving England we ran into a storm that tossed the boat around a good deal. It seemed that half the men were vomiting all night. (I was glad that I didn't.) A trail of "slime" led from our area to the deck--an unpleasant situation.

(Note added later: During the day we slung our hammocks up high so the tables below them could be used for eating and "sitting around" purposes. The food had to be carried from the ship's galley through the stinking latrine to the mess tables--an unappetizing experience.

One day in the Mediterranean a German submarine attempted to attack our little convoy, but the two destroyers scurried around, dropped depth charges, and forced the sub to surface, where it was captured. The rumor went around the ship that one torpedo went between our ship and the one behind us, although I didn't see it. At any rate, my evaluation of the British navy went up several points as a result of that experience.)

- - - - -

(Also written in Algeria on 12-8-42 about an event in England)

On the trip to Warrington (south of Liverpool) on Sunday, Oct. 18, 1942 (I believe), we were in rough weather, and the plane (C-47) was bumping around a lot. One of the boys got sick and was about to vomit when an old M/Sgt. asked him how he'd like a nice fat pork chop. That finished him off! A little pup (mascot of the plane) got sick and puked on one of the men asleep on the floor of the plane. That gave us a good laugh--perhaps a comment on the quality of our humor.

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1942, in Algeria (near Tafar Aoui) about 24 kilometers from Oran:

It poured down rain last night, and even with our pup tents we got somewhat wet. Several fellows didn't even have tents, and they got soaked.

The ground is sticky mud today, and so much of it sticks to the shoes that everyone looks as if he had snowshoes on.

Natives are all over this temporary (I hope!) camp selling oranges and tangerines. I paid 50¢ for seven oranges, but they were nice, big navel oranges.

Most of the natives speak both French & Spanish, and I find that I can make some use of my college Spanish.

The little kids hang around, "sweating out" candy and food. One little boy stood and watched me eat hash out of a can today at dinner. His nose was running freely down to his lips. I stood it as long as I could, then gave him a piece of candy to "scram." (I couldn't finish the hash.)

After leaving the boat (Derbyshire) two days ago, we marched through a little village; then trucks picked us up and carried us through a large town out into the country to our present bivouac area. The town had very modern buildings and roads. We were much surprised. It was interesting to see people in Arab clothing and modern clothing walking through the streets. Out here where we're camped, the only people we see are natives (Arabs).

Thelepte, Tunisia
Tuesday Afternoon
January 20, 1943

Lessons from War

It's funny what little things it would take to bring me enjoyment after being away from the U.S. less than five months. I've learned appreciation of things I'd always taken for granted--now that I can't get them.

I'll never take a hot fudge sundae for granted again! And some good old chocolate candy!! (not that English stuff!). What I wouldn't give for a bar of Nestlé's almond and milk chocolate! When I get back, I'll never walk into a drug store without a feeling akin to reverence, or into a Kress's without thinking that here, indeed, repose the treasures of the world behind a candy counter.

I would hate to think that all this is just the first reaction to doing without the ordinary pleasures of life and that a week or two back home will see me resume the same complacent attitude of expecting and accepting these little luxuries as my natural right. (Lord, keep me appreciative!)

A soft bed and clean, white sheets, and a bath! How could I wait to mention a bath? And to think that I used to hate to bathe! What a prig I've been!

And, if I can hope for a bed again, may I humbly hope also for a wife to go with it? There was a time when I would have regarded the fact that I would have a wife as more or less a matter of course. But now I approach that desire fearfully and hopefully and with uncertainty. How dare I have the temerity to even hope for a soft bed and a soft, warm wife--and love!

Of this I'm sure--I'll never lack appreciation for life's ordinary little joys ever again. (And, Lord, make me stick to that!)

April 8, 1943
Near Canrobert, Algeria

Men are dying--men of my outfit whom I know well--and I must stay here "policing" the area to win a blue ribbon.

Yesterday on a mission Capt. Sharpless's ship was shot down by M.E.'s. Capt. Sharpless & Roarke, a new gunner, were killed. Breining's body was not found in or around the plane; so we have the hope that he bailed out and is either a prisoner or is making his way back somehow.

Lt. Artz's plane was riddled by flak and E.A. Sheppard was hit twice, though not fatally. When starting to land, Lt. Artz couldn't get his wheels down (the hydraulic was shot out), and he ordered the gunners to hit the silk. Sheppard did and landed O.K. Stankiewicz preferred to chance a crash-landing. As it happened, Lt. Artz finally was able to pump his wheels down by hand and made a beautiful landing.

Lt. Smith went into a steep dive (420 mph!) to escape some M.E.'s, and Garrison and Kenneth Shepard thought he was crashing. They called on the inter-phone; but as Lt. Smith was trying to answer that everything was all right, the inter-phone went out. The two boys bailed out, but Shep's chute didn't open in time. He was a good kid. Elmer (Garrison) landed O.K., and I'm awfully glad. He's a swell fellow.

That's what's going on at Thelepte while we sit here doing nothing for the war effort but picking up paper in the area, in response to orders from on high. We may lose the war or at least lose a lot of our friends, but we'll have the cleanest area! That is extremely important just now, you see.

I'm doing Operations paper work here that I could do just as easily up there. Besides that I could load bombs up there if they needed men for that in a hurry (and five armament men have just been knocked off duty by FW-190's.) Poor Wenham got killed by the bombing. Gallahan was seriously wounded. I hope he makes out O.K. Sturgis was wounded in the leg, Statts on the scalp, and Laborde in the hand or finger. And here I am. (Of course, I can always do my bit to win the blue ribbon here!)

Don't misunderstand. I'm not peeved--I'm just mad as hell!!

(Note: Two days after the above out-pouring, I was moved back to Thelepte. But that eleven-day interval from the time most of the Sqdn. had moved back to Thelepte and the time I was allowed to--with all that was happening at Thelepte--was one of the most frustrating periods of the war for me.)

Monday, May 10, 1943, Souk el Arba, Tunisia

A train load of German prisoners came through town this morning. They were probably some of those which surrendered yesterday in the Bizerte area after one of our raids (30,000 of them surrendered).

Hank Pollock, our mess sergeant, who speaks German, went down to the train and talked with them. This is the dialogue (roughly) which was carried on between Hank and some of the Nazis:

German: "Where are we being taken?"

Hank: "I don't know--perhaps to Casablanca."

German: "You know that we hold Casablanca. You may beat us in Tunisia, but you'll never drive us out of Constantine or Casablanca."

Hank: "Casablanca is where we started our drive in North Africa, and we've taken all of it from there to Tunis. I landed at Casablanca myself several months ago."

German: "American propaganda! Nothing but American propaganda! But do you think we'll be taken to England or Canada?"

Hank: "I don't know. But why do you want to go to Canada?"

German: "Because we'll be safe there for the rest of the war."

Hank: "Well, wherever you go you'll have to work."

German (showing his arm muscles): "That's all right; we'll work."

Hank: "What do you think of our airplanes?"

German: "Oh, those Flying Fortresses (B-17's) and Bostons (A-20's) have done us terrible damage! Those Fortresses really carry a lot of bombs."

Hank: "What do you think about the war in Russia?"

German: "The Russians will collapse in three months."

Hank: "The Allies will be in Berlin before the year's out!"

German: "You're a jackass for even thinking such a thing!"

Hank: "The Russians are pushing you farther back all the time."

German: "Nothing but some more American propaganda."

. . . .and so on and on. . . .

D. Tolle
(recorded from what
Hank told me)

T U N I S

May 14-16, 1943

On Friday, May 14, 1943, one of our pilots asked if I wanted to go to Tunis with him, as he was taking his gunners for a day off to see the sights and had room for three other people. Naturally I wanted to go. So the six of us started early in the morning in a command car.

Approaching Beja, a small town a few miles from Souk el Arba, from the top of a hill going down into a valley we saw one of the loveliest sights of the whole trip. Of course, the closer we got the less different it seemed from any other African town, but from the distance it presented a picturesque setting which might have been a scene from a Fitzpatrick Traveltalk. "Round-boy" Adams, one of the best-liked boys in the Squadron, is buried in the American Cemetery at Beja.

As we went through the innocent-looking village of Massicault, I thought of Capt. Willard who had a particular dislike for the place because of the heavy flak the Germans put into the air from there. That was where Capt. Gualtiere's plane was hit so badly that he had to crash-land near Le Kef, killing the British photographer riding in the rear with the RCAF gunner. The only man who wasn't wounded on that trip was the British bombardier-navigator riding in the most vulnerable spot on the plane--the glass nose.

The road on in to Tunis gave plentiful evidence of the terrific battles that had raged around the different hills the Germans had attempted to hold only a few days before. In fact, from the Medjez el Bab area on to Tunis, wrecked vehicles--German, Italian, British, and American--tanks (mostly American light tanks--10 or 15 tons) blasted to bits by artillery and by the 60-ton Mark VI of the Germans, tremendous piles of expended ammunition boxes and cans, bomb craters and shellholes--all of these mutely told a story of death. Hospital tents covering acres of land showed where the fortunate--and unfortunate--living lay. Silent, wooden crosses, some with the black cross of Germany, some painted white, some of bare, unpainted wood, told the story of those who had died for their ideals--or the lack of them. Row upon row of these quiet symbols of death forced their message upon all passers-by.

Farther on, barbed wire entanglements surrounded the thousands of captured Germans and Italians. Few guards were in evidence, but escape was not what these men wanted. Most of them--Italians and Germans--were glad they were through with fighting and that now they would be comparatively well fed and safe till the war is over.

All of the villages along the way showed destroyed or at least pock-marked buildings on all sides, giving evidence of the brutal power of our bombs. Bridges were often blown up; and hastily-built, temporary drive-ways over them have to serve till they can be more permanently replaced.

As soon as we reached Tunis and drove around to locate the center of town, we went on out to the airdrome (El Aouina) a few miles from the city proper. There we saw dozens of German and Italian planes destroyed by our bombs a few days before. The Nazi swastika looked rather forlorn on the dragging tails of planes that would never carry them again. Hundreds of postcards and letters which had never reached their intended Italian recipients were blowing about the landing ground, giving another of the many pathetic sides of war. I picked up some of these letters as souvenirs, but I felt rather guilty doing it.

(Trip to Tunis, continued:)

Back in town, we separated to wander about as we pleased till about four o'clock, when we met again where the command car was parked. There I was informed that the others, except one, had plans to be in Mateur for the night; so the choice for the other two of us was to either stay in Tunis or--stay in Tunis. We stayed in Tunis.

The Hotel Nacional on the Rue de Holland was the only place we could find rooms for the night, and we each got a room (50 francs each), because the other guy intended to have a companion (female) for the night. Thinking of Mary Alice, I couldn't talk myself into doing that (even in my delicate sexual condition); so I spent the night alone in a double bed with one blanket which was not air-tight. Did I say alone? Several assorted varieties of mosquitoes kept me from getting too lonesome.

(Incidentally, there were no lights, no water, and no food available at this hostelry which was managed (?) by a native in a sport coat and draped trousers.)

In the morning, my hotel-mate (who never had lured a woman into his room) and I went to the Twelfth Air Force Base and got a piece of bread and butter and a cup of synthetic coffee which served as breakfast. Then we roamed the streets until time to meet the others at 11:00 a.m. In our wanderings we saw some American nurses dressed in coveralls; so I went up to two of them and asked them to please speak to me in English. They did; and I was very much pleased to hear both of them speak with a good Georgia accent. We showed them where they could buy some postcards of Tunis, and then we parted because they had to catch their truck back to Mateur.

After haunting our agreed-upon meeting place for several hours, we decided that our transportation had forsaken us. By this time I was beginning to have visions of a sudden and complete reduction in rank upon my return to camp, and my feelings for one each 97th pilot were far from kindly. I had no desire whatsoever to start hitch-hiking back and get stranded in the middle of nowhere at night. So. . . we arranged for another night at the Hotel Nacional.

I met Junior on the street, and he, too, was lost (with Webber) from his mode of transportation (Hypo Joe, the Photo jeep). So we all got rooms at the Hotel Nacional. Then we began wandering in earnest about the streets of Tunis. Coming upon a particularly infeasible-looking section of the city, we started down one of the narrow, winding, ill-smelling alley-ways to see what sort of condition the people lived in. Just as we started in, we met two British soldiers staggering out, evidently in somewhat of a drunken condition. One of them asked us what day it was, and when we told him, he said, "My God! It took us four days to find our way out of there!" We went on with slightly less-eager feet.

Filth and stench and a mass of winding alleys met us on every hand; and as dusk began to settle upon us, we began our return trip back through the throngs of dirty but pretty little French, Italian, Arab, and mongrel children who clung to us with cries of "Bonbon! Bonbon! American camarade!" Having already given away all of our gum and candy, we could only answer, "Fini; fini." And so into fresh air and light again.

(Trip to Tunis, ended:)

While we were resting on cathedral steps, a British soldier came up and sold Junior an Italian automatic for 1000 francs, thereby making a neat profit of 1000 francs. But it will make a nice souvenir for after the war--even for \$20.

As we rounded a corner near our hotel, an old, distinguished-looking, well-dressed French gentleman saluted us, shook our respective hands and asked for a cigarette. He was given three or four, and he went into raptures--finally taking his leave with another handshake, a kiss on the left cheek of each of us, and a final salute.

We spent the night, arose, ate (?), and departed--all saying, "I'm glad I saw Tunis, but I'm coming back no more." We got a ride up to our very tents in a command car driven by an Ordnance T/Sgt. and a Captain, who were on their way back to Algiers.

Tunie, fini.

August 24, 1943
Malaventano (Gerbini #10), Sicily

McLaughlin, Beetem, Frieze, and I hitch-hiked to Lentini and Syracuse and back yesterday. It was easy enough to catch rides, but the roads were the roughest, most patched-up affairs I've seen in quite awhile. Convoys of landing barges and trucks moving up toward Messina didn't facilitate matters much. (I imagine the Italian landing is not far off.)

All of these towns are filthy, and most of the people seem to be living in at least as poor conditions as the Arabs in Tunisia. Of course, some parts of most of the towns have better living conditions, but slum districts are prevalent in all of them. Going into Syracuse (Siracusa) we saw many caves in the sides of rocky hills with people living in them. Wandering down the side streets of Syracuse we looked right into the houses, which seemed to consist of one room in which the whole family slept on beds and pallets on the floor, and saw tired, stolid-looking people sitting around their room, with dirty, naked babies playing on the floor about them. They lived, ate, and slept in the one room evidently.

Public urinals for men (I don't know what the women do) are one of the interesting sights in Sicilian towns (they're prominent in Africa, too). These institutions are very open affairs at both top and bottom and the entrances. Even the casual observer of the users of these public facilities could pick out the various colors of water let--if he were so inclined--they are that open to public view.

Along the road between here and Syracuse were many "pillboxes," most of them horribly smashed into bits by artillery and bombs. One large one which had controlled a sharp turn in the main road was nothing but bits of stone. It took three days to dig out all the bodies for burial.

We got back too late for supper, and that ended the trip to Syracuse.

- - - - -

Some of the boys who have been to the airdrome this side of Catania say it is one of the worst sights they've seen yet. Dead bodies are still in many of the ruined planes, and the stench is terrible. The Germans booby-trapped the bodies (according to the British stationed near there); so, rather than get themselves killed by the German dead, the British are just leaving the bodies there. Preventing burial of their own dead seems to me to be one of the most inhumane tricks in this war.

- - - - -

Another item noted in our wanderings yesterday: We saw several Italian soldiers wandering around carrying rifles. These same men had been shooting at our forces a few days before. Of all the screwy wars, this one takes the cake! I think these guys had been turned loose because they are Sicilians, but I still don't get the point--their guns still shoot. If I wander about this island any more, I'm going armed.

- - - - -

D. Tolle

10-21-43

The "If's" of War

On the mission today Captain Gualtiere's plane was shot up by flak, putting his hydraulic system out of commission. When he came in for the landing, he found that his nose wheel wouldn't lock; so he circled again, trying to force the wheel to lock by diving and throwing it forward. Abie (Carroll Abrahamson) was in the nose, and he decided he'd rather risk a crash-landing than to bail out. So Capt. Gualtiere brought the plane in to try to land it successfully.

As soon as he touched ground, he eased the plane back on the tail and let it skid in order to protect Abie. Everything was going fine until the left landing gear folded, causing the plane to crash into a parked plane. Abie was instantly killed. The other three got out with minor cuts and bruises.

The little "if's" of this war are what make it so hard to take sometimes. "If" that landing gear hadn't folded; "if" that plane hadn't been parked at just that spot; "if" Abie could have gotten in only three more missions, he would have been automatically grounded for having 50 missions. I guess that's just war or fate or something, but it's pretty hard to comprehend.

Abie plastered the target on his last bomb run.

11-1-43

On the mission today there wasn't much flak near the 97th formation, but one of those freak disasters happened anyway. Either an ack-ack shell exploded in a wing tank or a piece of flak hit a fuse on a bomb before it cleared the plane; but, whatever the reason, Lt. Bruce's plane exploded in mid-air and went into a spin. Two people tried to bail out, but only one chute opened; the other trailed out behind without opening. The wing had folded over the cockpit, so Lt. Bruce could hardly have bailed out. Either Albers or Manzie probably landed safely and became a prisoner of war--the other fell to his death trailing a useless parachute.

Correction: Nov. 5, 1943

Albers came in this evening after having landed safely behind enemy lines. His face was burned painfully but not seriously. He'll be O.K. The other two were definitely killed.

December 1, 1943

36th General Hospital
Caserta, Italy

Capt. McRae sent me to the hospital yesterday morning with malaria. I started out on a litter in our ambulance because I was pretty weak. Lt. Moore was on the other litter, and two other lieutenants and two other enlisted men were on the bench.

On the way to Naples there was an accident right in front of us due to the wet road. A large British truck hauling a cannon skidded, and the front end of the truck ran over the edge of a high cliff. One of the Canadian soldiers, thinking it was going on over, jumped and fractured his skull on the road. There was no first aid equipment in our ambulance, but we put the boy in on my stretcher and drove into the next town looking for a hospital.

We finally found an Italian doctor who started working on the Canadian. Then the Canadian Medical Officer came along and did his bit. They put the injured boy back in our ambulance (he had never regained consciousness), and the M.O. got in too.

So Dillon and I had to ride in the Canadian medical truck. They were supposed to take us on in to Naples to the hospital where our ambulance had gone, but it seemed that that wasn't the way things were going to work out.

The road was terribly rough, and it was pretty cool riding in the truck. I had another malarial chill; so they covered me up with blankets on the litter, and I got all right (except that the bumps nearly knocked me out of the thing every few feet). Finally we stopped at an American First Aid Station, and they turned us over to them.

We were then taken to this hospital at Caserta. Dillon and I were put in different wards because he has yellow jaundice and I have malaria. Dillon's field bag (containing everything he brought with him) and my overcoat went on with our ambulance. So everything is just lovely; nobody knows where we are, and we can't get in touch with anybody.

I wanna go home!!!

12-6-43

Ode to a Nurse

Sweet Angel of Mercy and soft tenderness,
Spreading sunshine with smiles that are like a caress,
You're really a wonderful institution;
But someone should write in the Constitution
A law that would make it a major infraction
To wear dresses that drive patients like me to distraction!

Saturday Morning
 April Third
 1943

S I R O C C O

Out of the hills, from the Arab haunts,
 With a rush and a roar through the African grass
 Comes Sirocco on one of his merciless jaunts
 Spreading power, bruising power over mountain and pass.

The thundering surge of a murderous sea
 Transformed to invisible, unleashed T.N.T.--
 A maniacal, goading Sirocco is he
 As he shrieks at man's misery in devilish glee.

This demonian, dour devil of dire destiny
 Deals destruction and death despite dervishes' dancing.
 Proud people past praying are pale, pleading piteously
 While pounded to powder by Pan's playful prancing.

(And a little after-bit:

You're walking along with a peaceful mien,
 No trouble of any description foreseen,
 When, socko! Sirocco appears on the scene.)

(Souk el Arba, Tunisia)

4-19-43

Monday Evening in the Cool

How lovely it is in the evening to sit--
 In the cool of the After-the-Sunset to sit,
 With your Love by your side--there to sit.

How lovely it is to have nothing to do
 In the cool of the dusk when the long day is through
 But to sit with your Loved One--just sit, bill, and coo.
 (Oh, to have nothing to do but to sit, bill, and coo!)

Such was the Time of the Time before this,
 In the cool of the night with my Sweet Little Miss
 There to sit, hold her hand, and to bill, coo, and kiss.
 (Oh, how lovely 'twill be in the Time after This 'un
 Returning to 'billin', to cooin', and kissin'!)

Variations on a Theme

The sweetest smell is that of ground
When Jerry spreads his bombs around.

The man with nothing left but soul
Is he who didn't reach his hole
When Jerry laid his eggs.

The man whose bones have lost their dash
Is he whose foxhole's filled with trash.

The sweetest scent I know is earth
When Jerry's bomb-bay doors give birth.

Now some might think that I'm afraid,
Just judging by the hole I've made.
But really now, I'm not so fearful--
Just, my Dear, exceeding 'keerful'.

(Un-dated, un-placed, un-finished, and
better left un-said to begin with)

Here in the dark of night,
With neither moon- nor star-light
To break the gloom,
I stand on guard.

Not long ago this same dark night
Would have found me bathed in light
Of some bright party room.

A war has caused this change of life
.....

(Another one better left to obscurity)

I've been gloomy, I've been blue;
Had the sniffles, had the flu.
Lice have had a go at me,
And fleas are something hard to flee.
Food's monotonous, tastes the same.
Lost my dough in a poker game.
But as misery givers, they're all a dud
Compared to this damned African mud!

I've seen it hail, I've seen it snow,
But this mud beats them from the go.
It's slick and slimy, sticky stuff
That makes you want to yell, "Enough!"
'Twon't let you run--go snail's pace in it.
I've tried to hurry--slid my face in it.
But at the end--to summarize:
This mud's the antonym to paradise.

June 13, 1943
Soliman, Tunisia

I feel like poeming some tonight,
But Captain C. wants to typewrite;
So poesy waits on his Might!

- - - - -

Spring Love

Ah, Spring, ah, Love, L'amour and stuff,
My love is like a powderpuff,
Which, lightly touching here and there,
Dissolves its content into air.

Caressing cheeks with loving touch
But harkening passion not too much;
For passion, when too soon aborning,
Makes me hate me in the morning!

Some day my love will surely light
and tarry longer than a night;
But ere that happens, let me speak--
I'm sure it wouldn't last a week!

- - - - -

(And a little after-bit, forty-two years later:

Now I confess, amidst your jeers,
To date it's lasted forty years.)

- - - - -

G E R M S

If I were wrapped in cellophane
And saturated in champagne,
I still would feel no less immune
To germs of all descriptions.
Call me hypochondriac;
Say I'm too much on my back--
You still can't shake my firm belief
In doctors and prescriptions.
Germs cause a multitude of ills,
And so, I'm sure, without my pills
I'd shake with aches and pains and chills
And catch one finally that kills.

- - - - -

June 22, 1943
(Grombalia--Soliman,
Tunisia)

I Need Love!

I'm feeling in a devilish vein.
Some pious mind I'd like to pain
With some Khayyamish, ribald quatrain--
Something slightly lewd and profane.

For I'm fed up with things mundane;
If I don't get love, I'll blow a brain.
O, Kindly Friend, lend me a Jane
Just for tonight till the moon does wane.
I'll send her back on the midnight train
Wrapped up in perfumed cellophane
(And as added thanks, some good champagne).

Yes, to taste of love I now would fain;
All else besides is surely inane.
My lips have known no lipstick stain
Since last I saw homeland terrain.

This be my sad and last refrain:
I'm not insane, insane, insane.

- - - - -

Rain on Canvas

Outside it's cold and wet, uncomfortable drizzle
Permeating, penetrating through to shrinking skin.
Gray overcast with promises of snow and hail with rain.
Gloomy, silent hills surrounding, cupping Heaven's weeping
Into streaming rivulets and clinging mud.

But that's outside.
In here the nastiness of the rain's transformed
Into something soothing as it beats upon the canvas--outside.
The turbulence of my soul grows tranquil with the rain.

D. Tolle
March 29th
1943
Canrobert, Algeria

36th General Hospital, Caserta, Italy

12-7-43

Ward SE 2

When Nurse Dunham walks by,
They turn every eye,
The boys in Ward SE 2;
For her walk is the kind
That puts them in mind
Of each one's own Sally and Sue.

Now it's really a shame,
But still it's life's game
(At least in Ward SE 2)
That nurses can't mingle
With us whose nerves tingle
For love, here in Ward SE 2.

- - - - -

The Patient in Cot Sixty-one

I'm the patient in Cot Sixty-one.
Up to now I've had my share of fun.
But I sit here and huddle
Small fish in big puddle,
No longer Dame Fortune's own son.

I've lost all distinction of name;
To doctor and nurse I'm the same
As a serial number.
Awake or in slumber
I'm nothing in this little game.

But to me the worst of this curse
Is this: To the pretty night nurse
I have no identity,
I'm just a nonentity.
Could anything be any worse?

- - - - -

70th Station Hospital, Naples, Italy

Jan. 28, 1944

The nurse just came in and asked, "Did you have a B.M. today?"
I said, "What do you mean, 'B.M.'?" She said impatiently, "Bowel
movement; bowel movement." I said, "Yes, I defecated thoroughly today."
Then I said, "How old are you, Nurse?" She said, "Don't get personal,
Soldier."

2-18-44
 Vesuvius, A/D, Italy
 D. Tolle

Vesuvius and I

Vesuvius sits there in peace,
 It seems to casual eye,
 Like an old watchman smoking his pipe,
 Tranquilly watching the frantic antics of men at war.

But underneath that outward mien of calm
 Vesuvius seethes and writhes in agony of suppressed emotion,
 Burning, bursting to explode upon the world and thus be free.
 As cow gone long unmilked, in mortal pain,
 So is Vesuvius.

I am like Vesuvius.
 A turbulence and thunderhead of hot, unknowing passions
 Have grown within me as irritating pus within a boil.
 As one violently straining against restraining strait-jacket,
 So strain my emotions within me.

Some day Vesuvius shall erupt,
 And as the molten lava leaves that burning bosom,
 Be free.

-----and so shall I.

* * * * *

(Note: One month and three days after I wrote the above, Vesuvius
did erupt--violently. You don't suppose my poetry
 caused it, do you?)

October 1988

A D D E N D U M T O A P P E N D I X

of

World War II Diary

of

Donald J. Tolle
(May 1987 edition)

The following items are brief expansions or vignettes relating to some of the entries in the diary. In each case, I will give an actual diary entry to locate the approximate place and time of an event and then go on to add information not included in the original account. These new notations are based upon my own recollections and in some few instances upon something one or another 47th Bomb. Group veteran has said to me since copies of the diary were given out in Long Beach, California, in May 1987. Forgive any disparities between fact and fiction which may have occurred because of faulty memory. And remember that I am writing this in major part for my children and other family members. (The items below are frequently not in chronological order.)

- - - - -

Fri., Dec. 25, 1942--Ate Xmas dinner above the clouds between Blida and Youks. Dinner consisted of cheese and crackers. Two old-timers got air sick after telling us not to puke on them!

J. Owen ("Mother") Howard contacted me after reading the diary and asked why I hadn't gone ahead and named the two "old-timers," whom he identified as himself and Dick Gallup. The truth was that I didn't remember exactly who the two were after all these years, and also I didn't know whether they would have appreciated being labeled in that way. But J. Owen even went a step farther: He admitted that he had drunk a large quantity of the local vino ("P.D."--"Purple Death") the previous night (Christmas Eve) and that that was the reason for his digestive upheaval on the plane. (Dick Gallup, no doubt, had his upset stomach because of the sumptuous C-ration lunch we had in the air!)

Sun., Jan. 10, 1943 (Thelepte)--Field strafed by four ME-109's. We had a "dogfight" to liven up breakfast.

Mon., Jan. 11, 1943--Four ME's strafed field again. Another show for breakfast. A major across the field was killed.

Using descriptive terms such as "a 'dogfight' to liven up breakfast" and "another show for breakfast" sounds to me now like youthful bravado to cover up the fact that I was scared during the bombing and strafing raids we had at Thelepte and later. I was scared; but let me

confess that after the first couple of raids I felt almost a sense of exhilaration in discovering that I was deeply afraid only during the attacks, much less so between them. I think that none of us really knew how we would react to someone's trying hard to kill us, until we faced the reality directly. That's the reason I had such a sense of relief to find that I didn't have to spend an undue amount of time after a raid worrying about the next one ("Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof" and all that). But enough of philosophy and psychology.

Our kitchen at Thelepte was below ground-surface, like everything else, except the planes, which were partially protected on occasion by revetments made of dirt and gasoline cans ("flimsies") filled with dirt. The kitchen was a large head-high hole covered by canvas tarps and with dirt-filled flimsies stacked up around it for added protection. During the two attacks noted above, many of us were in the chow-line around the outside low wall of the kitchen. As the planes came in to strafe, we would run to the opposite side of the kitchen wall to keep it between us and the attacking planes. (There were few foxholes close to the kitchen, but their number grew and the depth increased in proportion to the frequency of the raids.)

Fri., Jan. 15, 1943 (Thelepte)--Three attacks today, two by ME's in the morning and one by 10 JU's in the afternoon. All of the JU's were shot down by P-40's. Two or three of the "pea-shooters" (P-40's) were shot down in the morning.

Our best early protection at Thelepte was provided by the P-40 outfit of Major (later Lt. Col.) Philip G. Cochran (who, because of his exploits, became the inspiration for Milt Caniff's comic strip "Flip Corkin," which was popular for a few years during and after the war.) One of Cochran's much talked-about feats (which I believe was true) was his taking a small bomb on his lap and dumping it out of his P-40 by hand on a nearby German headquarters, just to let the other side know that their raids had not knocked out the Thelepte field. (Cochran's P-40's had gotten to Thelepte a month or so before our own outfit got there.)

Our ground protection against air raids was in the hands of a Bofors(40mm) anti-aircraft outfit which set up gun-pits around the airfield. (The airfield was just a plain below the mountains.) In all honesty, I will have to say that I never saw an enemy plane shot down (or even hit) by the ack-ack crews, who were mainly young and inexperienced (as, of course, most of us were).

For example, one day during an air raid my brother Ed ("Junior") was near one of the gun-pits, and he hopped into it for protection, only to find that he was the only one in it. The gun crew, believing they were the target of the attack, had run for foxholes some distance away! I did see one plane hit one day by their anti-aircraft fire: a B-25! If any plane was ever easy to identify, it was the B-25. A flight of six or so came over our field at a fairly low level, and things were normal until they got right over us. Then the Bofors crews opened up in full force, to our collective horror. We needn't have been that concerned, though, because only one plane showed evidence of having been hit. It faltered for a few seconds and then began to pull back into formation as the flight distanced itself from the guns. (It would have been very interesting to hear the verbal reactions of those B-25 crew members!)

Mon., Feb. 8, 1943 (Thelepte)--Photo-gunner Ed ("Junior") Tolle went on his second bombing mission today. It was a hot one. One piece of flak missed his head by about 3 inches. About three or four of our planes were hit. Lt. Brown's plane was shot up, but he did a beautiful job of landing it with one wheel not down all the way. He and Thurman and Evans were lucky boys.

Tues., Aug 10, 1943 (Malta)--I went on mission as bombardier over Randazzo, Sicily. Flak hit close all around us & one piece went through the pilot's cockpit and peppered Lt. Smith's arm with glass. Close enough for me! (Lt. Smith, pilot; Anderson & Thurman, gunners.)

I cite the two diary items above for a reason. As I recall, there were only two pairs of brothers in the 97th: Harold and Kenneth Salsbury and Edgar and Donald Tolle. Harold was a gunner and Ken an engineer. Ed ("Junior") was a photo-gunner for awhile but was transferred from that to Group Photo sometime after Thelepte ("First Time"). I (Donald) was in 97th Sq. Operations. As nice as it was for brothers to be together (and a comfort to parents back home), I came to believe that the so-called Sullivan Rule was a good one. (Five Sullivan brothers on the same Navy ship were killed when the ship was sunk in action; and this resulted in a policy against family members being in the same outfit.) I know that the greatest stress I faced overseas was when Junior flew on the few missions he did. I really "sweated him out." He and I both had (and have) poor vision and couldn't physically qualify for any combat crew position. But there was great desire to have photos taken over target, so he was put on as a combat crew member. (Elmer Garrison was the other photo-gunner and completed a full combat tour.) I went to Capt. McRae, our Sq. Medical Officer, and told him that Junior's eyes were as bad as mine and that he should either ground Jr. or approve me for combat crew status. He felt that he couldn't do that, but fortunately (from my viewpoint) he did ground Jr. a few weeks later because of sinus problems which gave him severe headaches while in the air. Then when

I flew on a few missions (which I was able to arrange in Operations without being officially on a combat crew), Junior gave me an ultimatum never to go on another mission or he would somehow get back on combat crew status. So we had an impasse: I opposed his flying, and he opposed mine; so neither of us flew on combat missions again.

My point in all this is that having brothers together in combat situations may tend to make them both less effective because of worrying over the other one. I can't speak for the Salsbury brothers, but I don't know how Ken stood the stress of seeing Harold fly a full combat tour (not to mention Harold's stress while doing so!).

Fri., Nov. 10, 1944 (Vada/Rosignano)--We moved upstairs above Operations on Nov. 8th--that is, all of us except Mac and C.B. It's much nicer living in a building (for the first time in a couple of years).

W.D. ("Mac") McLaughlin has reminded me that in this building at Vada I did one of the dumbest things anyone could possibly do. The second floor of the building had restroom facilities of a sort--"squat toilets" which were really just round openings in the concrete floor, part of a system of ceramic or concrete pipes about 8" in diameter, leading downward (I know not to what final resting place). Apparently, the user of the facility was expected to pour water down the hole after using it, but there was no water available in the room. The stench was as bad as from an outdoor privy, and I had the impression that the pipes were impacted with human waste. So I thought I would clear up the problem by pouring gasoline down the hole and lighting it. When I threw the lighted match in after the gasoline, there was a heavy explosion, the building shuddered, and I thought it was coming down on our heads. Fortunately, it didn't collapse, and I didn't even get busted (perhaps because no one else knew what had happened). But what I did is known as dumb.

Wed., Nov. 24, 1943--97th mistakenly bombed 8th Army troops today. I feel really sorry for today's lead bombardier; he really felt terrible about that. Just one of the fortunes of war.

"Axis Sally" picked up on this unhappy incident and made some propaganda hay out of it while twitting the 47th. Sometime before that Christmas she said in one of her radio broadcasts something to this effect: "The other bases around Foggia can expect German bombing raids for Christmas. But our old friends in the 47th needn't worry--we have too much in common: We both bomb the British!"

Tues., May 4, 1943--Going to see "Footlight Serenade" tonight (Betty Grable).

In reading my diary straight through after getting it ready for the 1987 Long Beach reunion, I was impressed with how many movies were available to us (usually at

night, in the open, with the side of a building serving as movie screen). John Adair reminded me that at least once there was sniper fire at one of these outside showings. I had forgotten that and had not made any note of it, and I do not remember where or when this took place.

Tues., Mar. 30, 1943 (Canrobert)--Dental appt. at 2 p.m. One tooth filled. . . Jr. & most of Sq. moved up to Thelepte again. The C.O. wouldn't let me go. . . Saw "Pride of the Yankees" tonight at hangar.

Wed., Mar. 31, 1943--Two more teeth filled. . . With Jr., Dave, & Tommy gone, I'm left alone. Shirk, Mercer, & Klum moved in with me.

Another thing that impressed me when I read my diary in its entirety was how many teeth I had filled while overseas. At Canrobert I had the interesting experience of going to an American field dentist who set up his tents just across the road from our camp. The dental drills were powered by an enlisted man who simply worked his foot up and down on a treadle which mechanically turned the drill while the dental officer did his work on the teeth. Later, the Group apparently got a full-time dentist, who traveled about with the 47th Hq. (He was the same fellow who pulled a tooth of mine when I thought it was abscessed, then held it up and said, "There's nothing the matter with this tooth!")

Mon., Oct. 16, 1944 (Vada/Rosignano)--Picked up the two drunkest men I've ever seen & brought them to camp to sleep it off. They were both passed out on the street across from Ops., and Sennette & I bundled them into a jeep and brought them back to camp.

I'm happy to report that these were not members of the 47th. As I recall, they were in the infantry. They were absolutely unconscious, and we were afraid they might roll into the road at some point and be hit by a truck. We put them in cots in a pyramidal tent which was a "ready" tent for those scheduled for guard duty and left them alone. The next morning they had disappeared, leaving nothing behind but urine-soaked cots and blankets. (Thanks a lot, fellows, wherever you are!)

Tues., May 11, 1943 (Souk el Arba)--Eddie Rickenbacker flew in and talked to us this evening. Very interesting.

Apparently Eddie Rickenbacker (the World War I ace) was flown in for the purpose of conveying to us the fact that our "tour abroad" would be extended beyond the six months we had been told it would probably last. (And it was extended to nearly six times six months.) At any rate, he did a pretty good job of making his case by telling us how much better we had it than the ones slugging it out in the Pacific. He himself and some others had just recently had the experience of

crash-landing in a B-17 in the Pacific Ocean and spending 22 days on life rafts before they were rescued. And he told of the bird (sea swallow) which landed on his head when they were starving and thus provided them with some food and the bait to catch fish so they could survive. In the face of such stories, the men of the 47th could not gracefully complain about being kept overseas longer than originally expected; so Rickenbacker's mission paid off (and we "paid" with another two years overseas!).

Feb. 13, 1942 (approx.) (en route from Fresno to Oklahoma City)--
 . . . At Sayre, Oklahoma, our train was wrecked by a loose rail. Sabotage was suspected, but there was no proof. We were lucky that no one was killed, although three were injured. All our trucks and airplane tugs on the flat cars were ruined. . . .

Ampless Moore wrote to tell me that this wreck was definitely no accident--that there were enemy agents known to be in the area. Thus, my statement that there was no proof of sabotage was in error.

April 25, 1942 (Will Rogers Field)--Lt. Sherman W. Long, our Assistant Supply Officer, from California, was killed in the crash of his A-20C while making a practice flight about 30 miles from Oklahoma City. I hated to see him go. He was a swell boy. . . .

Mon., Nov. 1, 1943 (Vicenzo/Foggia)--On mission today Lt. Bruce's plane blew up over target. Two men (Albers & Manzie) bailed out, but only one chute opened. Flak either exploded in a wing tank or hit the fuse of a bomb.

These two items from the diary are included here because Ted Kuhlman wrote me in reference to them shortly after the Long Beach reunion (he had read my diary on the way back home while his wife drove the car). I learned from him that "Wally" Long was a close personal friend and how hard his death had hit him. Ted accompanied his body back to California, tried to comfort the parents in their grief, and then stayed in touch with them until their deaths. (Incidentally, Eddie Boyajian told me in Long Beach that he had been scheduled to fly with Lt. Long on that fateful day, but Lt. Long wouldn't let him go because he was going to practice feathering engines that day. Another example of how seemingly-small things can have big effects upon the lives of people.)

Concerning Lt. William Bruce, Ted told me that after returning to the States he received a call one day from Bruce's mother asking if he would be willing to meet with her husband and her to tell what he knew about their son's death. Ted had been on that same mission and knew the details of the tragedy but found it very difficult to tell them enough without telling them too much. Knowing him, I am sure that he handled that task as well as humanly possible, although he called it "a heart-rending affair." (I do hope that Ted doesn't mind my putting these things here for dis-

tribution, as I didn't ask his permission. But he wrote me such a fine letter that I wanted to share a little with you.)

Sat., June 5, 1943 (Soliman/Grombalia)--Lovely fried steak for dinner! Also ice cold orange juice. Lovely! Lovely!

Although I hadn't forgotten where the steak came from, W.D. ("Mac") McLaughlin asked me why I hadn't included that bit of information in my diary. So. . . .camped in an olive grove near Soliman (about 25 miles or so from Tunis), the war in North Africa over, we had a little time to take things a bit easier for awhile. (Except that the little islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa were not bombed into giving up until a few days after the above date.) But on this particular day, out on our airfield there were some African cattle roving among the planes. Seizing the bull by the horns, so to speak, either our C.O. or our Operations Officer ordered that one of the animals be shot "to keep it from damaging our planes." This was done, the sacrificial beast was butchered, and the Squadron ate "high on the water buffalo." (I do hope that the owner of the bovine was compensated at some time by the U.S. government for his loss.) But we did enjoy that feast!

Sat., Sept. 9, 1944 (LaJasse Airfield, France)--We're not doing any bombing now. The planes are hauling rations, gas, & bombs because of transportation shortage. . . . Went into Eyguierés & ate supper tonight.

The nearly three weeks spent in France were generally very interesting, but I'll mention only a couple of events. When some of us went into the nearby little town for supper (9-9-44), we ate at a restaurant which listed rabbit stew on the menu. That seemed like a nice gastronomic change of pace, so that's what we ate. Later, walking through town, we met a G.I. who told us, "Whatever you do, don't eat at that restaurant across the street; they list rabbit but actually make that stew out of alley cats." It seems that he had learned that fact from a local acquaintance, but too late for us!

Fri., Sept 15, 1944 (LaJasse Airfield, France)--Went to Marseilles on pass. Met a nice lady and her daughter and another nice girl, and we had a drink together. Gen. DeGaulle is in town today.

Sat., Sept. 16, 1944--Saw General Charles DeGaulle this morning. Had dinner with Madame Mommens and her daughter. Got back to camp just before dark.

The dinner on 9-16-44 turned out to be a severe embarrassment to me. I had invited Madame Mommens and her daughter to dinner at a restaurant, but I had greatly underestimated the cost for three of us. When the bill came, it was for far more francs than I had (and far higher cost for meals than I had previously exper-

perienced anywhere). At any rate, Madame Mommens (Bless her!) stepped into the breach and paid the large difference between what I had in my wallet and what the meal tab was. (I hope she discovered that they were trying to "stick a rich American" and that she got some of her money back.) C'est la vie!

One other event of that day: There was a parade in honor of Gen. DeGaulle. I was on the second floor of a partially bombed-out building, along with several French civilians. French soldiers searched the whole group (except me) to make sure that no one attempted to assassinate DeGaulle while he was riding in the parade. A feature of the parade was a group of German P.O.W.s being marched along under guard, while a lot of the on-lookers shouted obscenities at them, with some running into the street to spit on them. I could understand their feelings, but I thought that aspect of the parade was a sort of sorry spectacle. But (and I end with this), I guess my only comment can be:

C'est la guerre!

Donald J. Tolle
907 Skyline Dr.
Carbondale, IL 62901

(618) 549-3446

Wed., Jan. 13, 1943 (Thelepte)--Junior and I were caught in the open when several JU's bombed the field, but luckily we weren't hit. We should have hit the ground sooner instead of trying to get to a foxhole. There was a paratrooper scare during the bombing, causing some "anxiety."

I felt fear and other emotions during this experience at Thelepte, Tunisia. My brother Junior ("Ed") and I were crossing the field between the road and the dry river bottom (wadi) where we lived in pup tents pitched over our foxholes. It was about dusk, and several German bombers suddenly appeared and began scattering their bombs. Jr. and I started to run for a foxhole and then gave that up because a stick of bombs was starting toward us. We hit the dirt, and I tried to help Jr. get his helmet on because he had it strapped over his shoulder. (Later, it seemed laughable that we had had such concern over the puny protection of a tin hat; yet, having it on did provide a small sense of security.)

We hugged the ground in some trepidation, figuring that two more bombs from the plane heading toward us would see the second bomb land on us. But the bombs fell a little short, so we jumped up and ran again, trying to make it to the relative safety of our wadi before more were dropped. We had to hit the ground again two or three times before we got there, because bombs started coming down again.

We had nothing but a deep sense of relief when we reached our gully, because we didn't know that there had been a paratrooper alert during the bombing raid and that everyone in the squadron was jittery. As we made our way in the near-darkness along the dry river bottom, somebody hollered, "Halt!" And Jr. and I kept on walking, not knowing that anything was wrong. (We had a normally more relaxed style of guarding our camp than yelling "Halt!") The guy again yelled, "Halt!"; and this time he jerked a shell into the chamber of his rifle. That made me both angry and nervous, since he had the gun pointed at me; so I yelled, "Are you kidding?" He said, "No, I'm not kidding, and if you move again I'll shoot." Junior unslung his Tommy gun and was going to cut him down if he shot me.

I then recognized J. Owen Howard even though it was almost dark, and said, "Howard, it's the Tolle brothers," and we went up the slope and cussed him out. He felt a little foolish then but told us that was a good way to get shot, because we were under attack by paratroopers. Knowing that, I walked on to Junior's hole with him and then started back to my own. Somebody fired a rifle in the darkness in front of me, and I threw myself to the ground and yelled, "Don't shoot, you damned fool! It's Tolle."

There was an answering shot from across the gully, and I felt very uncomfortable, not knowing which way the bullets were heading. As I started on to my hole, somebody

whispered rather hoarsely, "Tolle, is that you?" I said it was; and he said, "This is John Pollock. Lend me some rifle ammunition. We're being attacked by paratroopers." So I handed him some .30 cal. ammo. and told him to be sure to return it in the morning. (By this time, I was about to believe the paratrooper story.)

As I got near my foxhole, I saw a large hulk squatting by it in the dark, with a rifle at the ready. I saw that it was my puptent-mate, Dave Frieze, and I called out (humorously, I thought), "Is it safe to come home?" Dave startled me by plunging down the slope, yelling, "Follow me!" I certainly didn't intend to go running aimlessly through the night with everyone in the state of nerves they were; so I stayed beside our hole and waited for him to come back.

After a bit, I saw his big shape coming up the slope from the wadi bottom, and he called, "Don, is that you?" I said, "Yeah; come on home. I knew you'd get lost." We crawled into our hole, and then I asked, "Whatever possessed you to go running off into the dark with those noble words, 'Follow me!'" He tried to bluster a bit at first, but I cut him short. Then he told me that he had been in our puptent when somebody ran through the gully yelling, "Paratroopers!" (It was Frank Crader, who had seen a parachute coming down during the German bombing raid; and he thought it was a German paratrooper, although it turned out later to have been a P-40 pilot whose plane had been disabled while trying to shoot down the German bombers. It is good that none of our guys tried to shoot that pilot while he was parachuting down.)

When Dave heard Frank yelling about a paratrooper attack, he got his rifle and squatted beside our foxhole-home. Our next-door neighbors were Red Crane and Frank Grimm, and Dave had softly called to them. But there was no answer, and he then realized that he was alone in our little sector of the wadi. And suddenly something akin to panic struck him for probably the first and last time in his life. He stayed there, afraid to move in an uncertain situation; and when I had called to him, the spell was broken, and he went plunging into the darkness with his finger on the trigger, determined to sell himself dearly. (J. Owen Howard was the only one who followed him!)

After he had told me his story, I said, "Dave, I'm surprised at you. Of all the people to get panic-stricken, you're the last one I would have suspected. Don't you feel a little bit silly?" He said, "I guess I do; but it didn't seem silly at the time." Then I began to laugh at him and told him how ridiculous he looked running into the night shouting, "Follow me!" Then it began to seem funny to him too; and in a few minutes we were having a case of laughing hysterics, which was the best thing that could have happened to relieve our

tension. I guess that the fellows across the gully thought we had cracked under the strain. (And maybe they were right!)

AFTERWORD: Of course, the reason I was relatively calm during the "paratrooper" scare was that I had missed the initial Crader warning and didn't know about it until later in the event. My major feeling throughout was one of relief that Junior and I had survived the bombing raid, when it seemed very doubtful for awhile that we would--hence, my ability to treat rather lightly the "paratrooper" part of that night. (I also was glad that J. Owen Howard had not pulled that trigger a little earlier in the evening!) At any rate, that night qualified as one of the most anxious, yet funniest, I've ever spent.

AFTERWORD II: An extension of the paratrooper story took place the next morning. I was in our Operations dugout and mentioned to one of my fellow enlisted men that I had nearly been shot during the confusion of the night before. Immediately ~~an officer~~ (who I didn't know had heard me) said, "What's that? Who nearly shot you?" I said, "I don't want to say, Sir." He looked me in the eye and said, "Corporal Tolle, I order you to tell me." That gave me a choice: Talk or take the consequences. So, knowing that J. Owen Howard was one of his favorite engineers, I said, "Sgt. Howard, Sir." And that's where it ended--except that I felt "chicken" over that for a long time (maybe even now!).

Actually, in one sense, J. Owen Howard could have been a hero of that nervous night if there really had been German paratroopers. And Frank Crader, the harbinger of the "attack," could have been another. And Dave Frieze, who led a charge against the "attackers," could surely have been in the heroic mold. (Ah, the "could-have-beens" of war!)

AFTERWORD III: Another possibly related story occurred when Junior and I got back home from overseas. Our father told me that one time he had had a terrible dream that Junior and I were in extreme peril, and he had awakened from that dream calling out to us. In trying to pin-point when he had that dream, we were able to get it pretty close to the date and time of the above-noted bombing raid. But we were not able to be absolutely certain that our father's dream occurred at the time Junior and I were fearing for our lives during that raid. But who knows?

(NOTE: This account was written up many years after the war, from brief notes and from rather clear memory.)

October 1988

C O R R E C T I O N S S H E E T

for

World War II Diary
of
Donald J. Tolle
(May 1987 edition)

- Page 5 (Sun., Dec. 6, 1942)--. . .Two destroyers; . . .
~~" " (" " ")--. . . Medouina (not Mediouna). (And the
same correction should be made in the Thurs., Dec. 24, 1942,
entry.)~~
- Page 17 (Wed., Aug. 11, 1943)--. . .Valletta (not Valleta).
- Page 21 (Thurs., Oct. 21, 1943--. . .Cassino (not Cassio). (At
least I think this mission was over Cassino; I don't remember
a Cassio.)
- Page 28 (Wed., Mar. 29, 1944)--. . .Air raid alert tonight, . . .
- ~~Page 49 (MY "ITINERARY" AFTER LANDING IN AFRICA--4th line down). . .
Left Medouina (not Mediouna).~~
- Page 50 (ITINERARY, continued)--Between the 4th and 5th lines, insert
the following:

The Group moved back to Vesuvius on
April 25, 1944.

- Page 65 (Appendix, poetry section)--Although I didn't know it when
I wrote the poem I called "Spring Love" in June 1943, I
think that I included a section for which someone else should
have credit. That is the part having to do with passion ("For
passion, when too soon aborning, Makes me hate me in the morn-
ing,"). Although I have been unsuccessful in checking it out
thus far, I suspect that Dorothy Parker, or someone like her,
had put that turn of phrase in my mind but that I had for-
gotten about it. I would be relieved (and proud!) if I
could find that it was original with me, but I doubt it.
Perhaps someone reading this can help me find the source.
I don't want to take credit for something somebody else did.

- Page 64 (Appendix, poetry section)--Replace the middle poem with this:

Here in the dark of night,
With neither moon- nor star-light
To break the gloom,
I stand on guard.

Not long ago this same dark night
Would have found me bathed in light
Of some bright party room.
Now I'm on guard.

A war has caused this change of life,
With all its stress and strain and strife.
In truth, I wish I had a wife
Instead of pulling guard.