

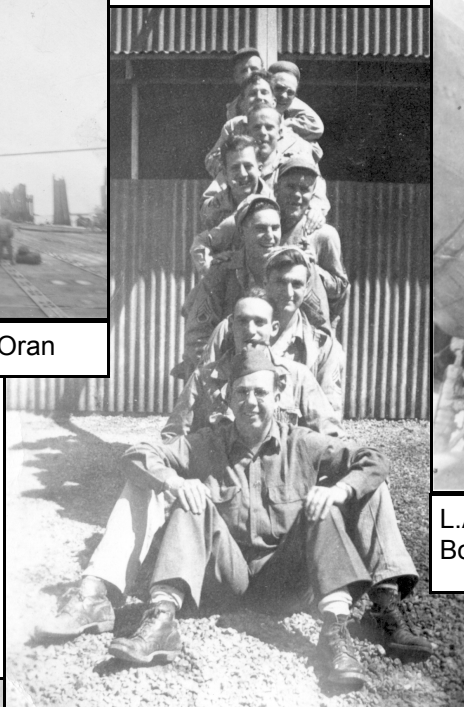
417th Night Fighter Squadron

Section 4

Official Squadron History — Illustrated



Troop Ship "Durbin Castle" to Oran



Radar Mechs at Tafaroui



L.A. Miller oiling-up a Beau in Borgo, Corsica



Beaufighters on flight to Italy



P-61 "Markey" with "Hade's Lady" nose cone, Fritzlar.

417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON
A.P.O. 374
U.S. ARMY
A BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON WAS ACTIVATED 20 FEBRUARY 1943, THE FOURTH UNIT OF ITS KIND IN THE HISTORY OF THE U.S. ARMY. THUS A NEW UNIT WAS BORN AND STARTED ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING AT KISSIMMEE AIR BASE NEAR ORLANDO, FLORIDA. AFTER FOUR AND ON-HALF MONTHS OF ORGANIZING AND TRAINING, THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON DEPARTED FOR THE P.O.E. AT CAMP KILMER, NEW JERSEY ON THE 26 APRIL 1943. AFTER MORE ORGANIZING AT CAMP KILMER, THE 417TH DEPARTED FOR OVERSEAS DUTY ON 5 MAY 1943 ON THE FORMER LINER, "QUEEN ELIZABETH"; ARRIVING IN SCOTLAND SIX DAYS LATER ON 11 MAY 1943.

THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON HAS THEN SENT TO ENGLAND AND STATIONED AT TWINWOOD, AN R.A.F. BASE, WHERE THE PILOTS EXPERIENCED FLYING A NEW TYPE AIRCRAFT, THE BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER. THIS AIRCRAFT WAS VERY UNLIKE THE P-70'S WHICH THE PILOTS HAD TRAINED IN AT FLORIDA. FROM TWINWOOD, THE SQUADRON MOVED TO SCORTON, ENGLAND WHERE TWELVE NEW BEAUFIGHTERS WERE RECEIVED.

ON THE MORNING OF 7 AUGUST 1943, ELEVEN BEAUFIGHTERS OF THE 417TH TOOK OFF FOR THEIR NEW STATION IN ALGERIA WHERE COMBAT OPERATIONS WERE STARTED CONSISTING OF CONVOY PATROLS AND FIGHTER SWEEPS.

IN THE LATTER PART OF APRIL 1944 THE 417TH MOVED FROM ALGERIA TO CORSICA WHERE OPERATIONS WERE AGAIN RESUMED CONSISTING OF NIGHT PATROLS OFF THE COASTS OF CORSICA, SPAIN, AND FRANCE. ALSO THE FIRST INTRUDER MISSIONS WERE FLOWN FROM CORSICA AGAINST AIRDROMES IN SOUTHERN FRANCE AND NORTHERN ITALY. DURING THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE, THE SQUADRON SUPPLIED COVER FOR THE INVASION FLEET.

AFTER THE INVASION WAS WELL UNDER WAY, THE SQUADRON MOVED FROM CORSICA TO SOUTHERN FRANCE WHERE INTRUDER AND PATROL MISSIONS WERE RESUMED. THE SQUADRON RECEIVED THE PRESIDENTIAL CITATION FOR THIS COMBAT WORK DONE IN THIS SECTION.

IN MARCH 1945 THE SQUADRON CONVERTED FROM THE BRITISH BEAUFIGHTER TO THE NEW P-61 "BLACKWIDOW". THREE WEEKS WERE SPENT IN TRAINING ON THIS NEW AIRCRAFT.

THE 417TH N.F.S. MOVED FROM FRANCE TO GERMANY FLYING INTRUDER AND PATROL MISSIONS IN THE NEW P-61'S, PROTECTING THE BRIDGEHEADS AT ULM, DILLINGEN, AND DONAUWORTH. INTRUDER AND PATROL MISSIONS WERE FLOWN UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR AND THEN A TRAINING PROGRAM WAS STARTED. THE ORGANIZATION WAS MADE AN OCCUPATIONAL UNIT IN JUNE 1945. THE PRESENT STATION OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON IS AIR DROME R-12 AT KASSEL/ROTHWESTERM, GERMANY. THE UNIT IS UNDER THE 64TH FIGHTER WING, XII TACTICAL AIR COMMAND, NINTH AIR FORCE.

RALPH C. JAUCH,
1ST LT., AIR CORPS,
INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON
OFFICE OF THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
A.P.O. 525 U.S. ARMY

3 November, 1943

SQUADRON HISTORY OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON

1. ACTIVATION:

- A. MORNING REPORT, COMPANY: STATISTICAL RECORD FOR ALL UNITS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.
- B. FEBRUARY 20TH TO MARCH 4TH, 1943: ACTIVATION OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, PER AUTHORITY GENERAL ORDER #15, HQ AAFSAT, DATED FEBRUARY 20TH/43. FROM FEBRUARY 20/43 TO MARCH 4/43: NO PERSONNEL.

2. FROM THE HEADQUARTERS OF AAFSAT (ARMY AIR FORCE SCHOOL OF APPLIED TACTICS) AT ORLANDO, FLORIDA, ON FEBRUARY 20, 1943, A GENERAL ORDER WAS ISSUED AND A NEW SQUADRON WAS BORN. THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, FOURTH UNIT OF ITS KIND IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY: THE 416TH AS WELL AS THE 414TH, AND 415TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRONS HAD ALL BEEN JUST CREATED WITHIN THE PRECEDING TWO MONTHS. WE WERE THUS AMONGST THE ORIGINAL OFFICIAL "NIGHT FIGHTERS" IN AMERICAN AIR FORCE HISTORY.

3. CONCEIVED ON FEBRUARY 20/43; BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN AN ORDER TO MAKE A SQUADRON. TIL MARCH 4/43, WE WERE LIFELESS - "NO PERSONNEL" WAS THE MORNING REPORT ENTRY. THEN ON MARCH 5TH, PURSUANT TO ORDERS, THE INFUSION OF LIFE-BLOOD BEGAN. TO KISSIMMEE AIR BASE FLORIDA, SATELLITE BASE, JUST 20 MILES SOUTH-WEST OF ORLANDO, AND HOME OF THE 349TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, THEY CAME. 1ST SGT "DOC" HOCKMAN WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO BE "JOINED UP", AND WITH HIM FROM THE 337TH FIGHTER GROUP AT SARASOTA, FLA, CAME T/SGT MOORE AND RICE, S/SGTS SARTIN, THOMPSON, HOVERSON, GONZALES, MOSER, CHRISTENSEN AND BECK. SGTS ZAPAHTIS, HURTA, CARL AND SOBCZAK, CPLS ZENGE AND MCNULTY. PFC'S JONES, SOUZA AND BETTENCOURT, AND PVTS MILLER, OROPOLLO, RODLAND, SCHMITT, ROSSMAN, STEINER, ANDERTON, ARENDS AND ANFRONAK, (PAR 3, SO #64, DREW FIELD, MARCH 5/43). ON THE SAME DAY, MARCH 5/43, FROM GUNNERY SCHOOL AT TYNDALL FIELD, FLA, CAME S/SGTS LOWRY, MORAN, NILES, METCALF, MUNSEY AND OWEN, (PAR 6, SO #61, TYNDALL FIELD, MARCH 2/43).

4. THUS IN ONE DAY, WITH THE ASSIGNMENT AND ARRIVAL OF 38 ENLISTED MEN, WE HAD THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR SQUADRON. JUST A FEW MEN, BUT AMONG THEM A "TOP-KICK" AND CLERKS, ORDNANCE AND ARMAMENT MEN, 'TECH' AND SQUADRON SUPPLY, COOKS AND COOKS HELPERS, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, MEDICS AND INTELLIGENCE, MECHANICS AND CHEMICAL WARFARE EXPERTS, AERIAL GUNNERS AND TURRET MEN! A LITTLE BIT OF ALMOST EVERYTHING!

5. EVERYTHING, BUT NOT QUITE. A COMMANDING OFFICER WAS LACKING, AND ON THE VERY NEXT DAY, MARCH 6, 1943, CAPTAIN JOSEPH T. EHLINGER, ACR. ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE BRAND-NEW SQUADRON. (VOCO, AAFSAT, PER TWX, CONFISQ 349, 3/6/43). COMMANDING OFFICER, AND PILOT, CAPTAIN EHLINGER, (NOW MAJOR) CAME FROM THE 349TH NIGHT FIGHTER (TRAINING) SQUADRON, AND UNDERTOOK A JOB THAT WAS (AND IS) A JOB! A BRAND NEW SQUADRON IN A BRAND NEW FIELD OF MILITARY AVIATION. HIS IS THE AUTHORITY AND HIS IS THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY. THAT HE HAS CARRIED US SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH THE DIFFICULT PERIOD OF ACTIVATION, ATTESTS TO HOW WELL HE HAS CARRIED OUT HIS RESPONSIBILITY. AT PRESENT WRITING, OCTOBER, 1943, MAJOR JOSEPH T. EHLINGER,

417th Night Fighter Squadron History from February 20, 1943 through December 1, 1946 as recorded in the official records of War Diary (DECLASSIFIED) in Atlanta, Georgia.

A.C.R. CARRIES ON HIS COMMAND.

6. KISSIMMEE AIR BASE, BIRTHPLACE OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, WAS AT BEST A PRIMITIVE, OUTLYING CAMP BUILT IN THE HEART OF FLORIDA SAND AND SCRUB, AND IT PRESENTED ITS ROUGHEST ASPECT TO THE NEWBORN OUTFIT! NO PREPARED GROUNDS OR BARRACKS FOR THEM! JUST A FLAT SANDY SPOT BESIDE THE AIRPLANE DISPERSAL AREA WHERE THEY COULD START FROM SCRATCH AND PITCH THEIR TENTS. PITCH THEIR TENTS THEY DID, FIVE EVEN ROWS OF THEM, WITH THE ORDERLY TENT HEADING THEM TO THE EAST, SURROUNDED BY OTHER TENTS FOR SUPPLY, ORDNANCE, ARMAMENT, ETC. DIRECTLY BEHIND THE ORDERLY TENT NOT 200 YARDS AWAY WERE DISPERSAL POINTS FOR THE P-70'S. BLACK NIGHT FIGHTER VERSIONS OF THE DOUGLAS A-20, AND TRAINING SHIP IN THE STATES FOR AMERICAN NIGHT FIGHTERS. THE FREQUENT ROARING OF THEIR WRIGHT-CYCLONES MADE SQUADRON ADMINISTRATION NONE THE EASIER!



Most of the Douglas P-70 airplanes available for training Night Fighters were converted A-20 attack bombers, fitted with a US built SCR 540 radar, a version of the British Mark IV airborne radar. This is P-70 #39-0736 equipped with the external antennas that distinguish the Mk IV AI.

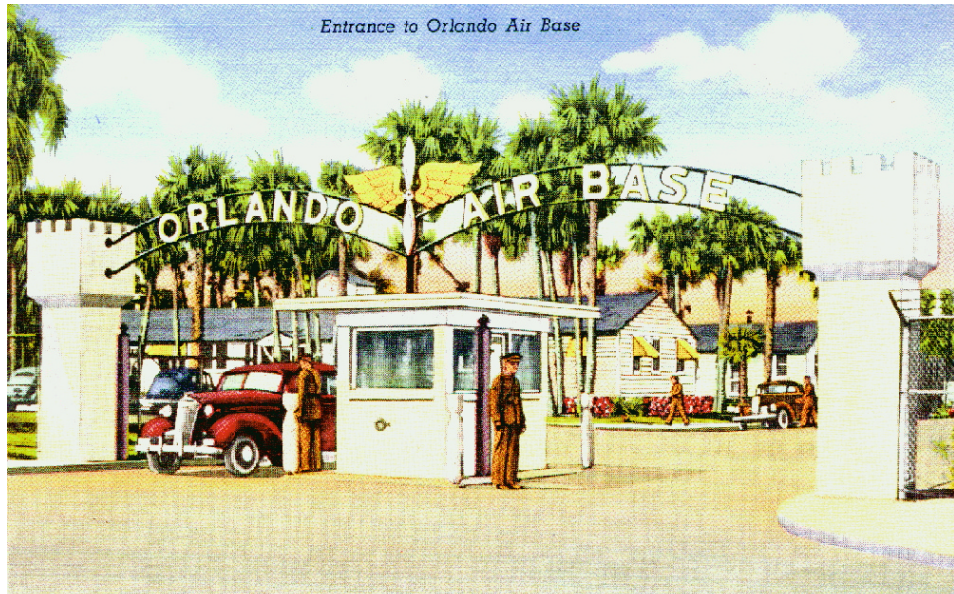
7. FROM MARCH 7TH, SQUADRON PERSONNEL FILLED IN. T/SGT MIDDOUR FROM THE 124TH OBSERVATION SQDN AT NEW ORLEANS, T/SGT SWAIN, S/SGTS ROBINSON, HEDRICK AND BLANKENSHIP, SGTS HERBERT & WOJTKOWSKI, PFT POEKERT, PVTS ALBERT, ARANOWSKI, BELL, ENGLAND, DYER, CERVO, MORTON, BARRY, GILLICK, BRODIE AND BRILES FROM THE 46TH BOMBAREMENT GROUP, WILL ROGERS FIELD, OKLAHOMA.

8. A TOTAL OF 55! ON THE 9TH (MARCH), CAME M/SGT WETHERALD, CPLS PRESTON, KOCSIS, KOSICK, PETERS, IVES, PFC'S MAHONE, MILLER, PEYRON, PVTS NEEL AND RESNICK FROM WILL ROGERS FLD, OKLA. PVTS BALLOW, HODUL, HANCOCK, & HUTCHINSON FROM MIAMI BEACH, FLA. ALSO ON THE 9TH OF MARCH CAME THE FIRST OF THE SQUADRON'S RADIO OBSERVERS, "NUMBER TWO" MEN OF THE NIGHT FIGHTERS 2-MAN FIGHTING CREWS! PVTS (THAT'S RIGHT) CORDELL, POTTER AND HAMILTON FROM THE 348TH AT ORLANDO. BY THE 10TH (MARCH), WE WERE A SQUADRON OF 1 OFFICE AND 83 ENLISTED MEN! BUT, ON THAT DAY, CAPTAIN DAUGHERTY (FORMER GROUP S-2 OF THE 337TH FIGHTER GROUP AT SARASOTA, FLA.) WAS TRANSFERRED, AT HIS OWN REQUEST, TO THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, FROM THE 415 N.F.S., AND ALSO THE FIRST INFLUX OF PILOTS BEGAN. 2ND LTS MALLORY, MCRAI, LABSEN, LEONARD, AND MURRAY

FROM THE 348TH NIGHT FIGHTER (TRNG) SQUADRON, ORLANDO, AND 2ND LT LEE FROM THE 349TH AT KISSIMMEE.

9. 9 OFFICERS (7 PILOTS) AND 83 ENLISTED MEN, AND ON MARCH 11TH, FROM THE 1156TH SCHOOL SQDN AT ORLANDO, CAME PVTS CLARK, BAKER, FILIPOWICZ, PEERY, REED, WILLIE, MCINTYRE, POND, POOLE, RAFUANO, GATHRIGHT, CROSS, KEANE AM) ANDERSON. BY THE SAME ORDER, FROM THE 348TH N.F.S. CAME PFC HASSLER & PVT BEENE AND FROM THE 124TH OBS SQDN AT NEW ORLEANS, T/SGT MCMINIMENT. ON THE 12TH, WE WERE JOINED BY 2ND LT. DOESCHER (ARMAMENT) FROM THE 414TH N.F.S. AND 1ST LT KATZBERG, (FLIGHT SURGEON) FROM MAXWELL FIELD, ALA. ALSO PVT MCGARRAHAM FROM THE 1156TH SCHOOL SQ AT ORLANDO. ON THE 13TH PFC'S MUSICARO, BERNARD, BERNSTEIN, PAVLIK, FRANCIS, PACKARD AND PROCTOR FROM SCOTT FIELD, ILL. PVTS JOHNSON, MCKENZIE, DICAPRIO, CAMERON, BLOCKSOM, BRYAN, BOYLE, BAUER AND TRACY FROM MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ALSO PVTS STOLLER, COLVILLE, DONNER, GURA, BRECHUN AND BRENNAN FROM MIAMI BEACH, FLA. ON THE 14TH PVTS STOECKEL, TATUM, WITTWER, ZAJONC, STUERZEL, TOMFKINS AND WRAY FROM THE CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION, GMC, DETROIT, MICH.

10. STILL ONLY 128 ENLISTED MEN. WE NEEDED WELL OVER 100 MORE! ON THE 15TH PVTS BAUBLIS, O'NEILL, BRIGDEN, AKIKIE AND BOSSHART CAME FROM THE FORD PLANT AT DEARBORN MICH, AND CPLS BALLARD, MARTH, PRATT, SPORN, CARRIGAN, JANKOWSKI, VAN VALKENBERG AND SNEDDEN FROM THE 1000TH T.S.S. AT TOMAH, WISC. STILL AT SCHOOL, BUT ASSIGNED ON THE SAME ORDER WERE CPLS PLUTH AND COFFY. PFC



Army Command Head Quarters for the 417th NFS forming at Kissimmee were at the nearby Orlando Air Base.

SMITH JOINED FROM CHANUTE FLD, ILL. ON THE 16TH CAME PFC BETON AND MCGIE FROM THE CHILLICOTHE BUSINESS COLLEGE, AND PVT HANNA FROM FT. COLLINS, COLORADO.

11. EACH DAY, MORE TO COME, WITH "DOC" HOCKAN, 1ST SGT, AND WHAT STAFF HE HAD THERE TO "ENROLL" AND WELCOME THEM. WELCOME TO KISSIMMEE. COW CAPITOL OF FLORIDA! ON MARCH 17TH CAME PVT GENESSE FROM FT. COLLINS, COLORADO, ALSO ON THE LAST MENTIONED ORDER, AND PVTS DAVIS AND DONOVAN FROM CHANUTE FIELD, ILL. FROM THE 770TH T.S.S. AT BUCKLEY FLD, COLO. CAME 29 MORE "G.I."S. PFC BARNEY, BURRIER, ENGLEHARDT, FOSTER, GUNDERSEN, HARRIS, HILL, KNOPP, LANDY, O'BRIEN, BATTISTONI, CHOOIJIAN, FANNING, GRAPPONE, HAFF, HIBNER, JENSEN, KONTER, LAWVER, MONTBRIAND, OLSEN, RASBACH, REISS, WILKE, RIDGEWAY, WAYNE, ZUCKERMAN, PEARSON, AND CPL SAMSON.

12. BY MARCH 18TH WE HAD AT KISSIMMEE 11 OFFICERS AND 175 E.M. ON THAT DAY ARRIVED 1ST LT WILLIAMS (SUPPLY) FROM THE 54TH FIGHTER CONTROL SQUADRON AT ORLANDO. ALSO PFC LEVY, MEDVED, AND KIPKIN FROM SCOTT FIELD, ILL. PVTS

FAHRBACH AND KOFSKI CAME FROM LOWRY FLD, COLO. PFC'S TUCKER, BADGERO, BAKER, BASS, BOYD, BROWN, BROWN, GAST, GOERES AND GRIFFITH FROM THE COOKS AND BAKERS SCHOOL AT MIAMI BEACH, FLA. ON THE 19TH PVTS COTTRESS, BELCASTRO, GOPSHES, HEANEY, HISSETT, CURNUTT, DARRELL, HALCOMB AND HALL FROM ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (BASIC TRNG SCHOOL). AND FROM THE 898TH GUARD SQDN AT ORLANDO, 2ND LT. BROWN (ADJUTANT).

13. ON THE 20TH WE GOT PFC COSPER, PVTS CULP, COLEMAN, DELLINGER, GARMISE AND HASTINGS FROM KEESLER FLD, MISS., AND ON THE 21ST CAME THE REST OF OUR PILOTS! FROM DETACHED SERVICE WITH THE 348TH AT ORLANDO, WHERE THEY HAD BEEN TRAINING, DOWN TO KTSSIMMEE CAME 2ND LTS GROOM, HUGHES, MACQUEEN, STIRNUS, WATSON, HOOTON, AND F/O'S FULLER, JEFFREY, LEEMAN, MCCLAIN AND WILLIAMSON. THAT FILLED OUR QUOTA OF PILOTS (18), BUT ON THE SAME DAY, 2ND LT. MURRAY (PILOT) WAS TRANSFERRED BACK TO THE 348TH AT ORLANDO, LEAVING US STILL ONE SHORT. 2ND LT JUSTIN (ADM) JOINED US FROM ORLANDO, AS DID CPLS ATKINSON AND CHMIELEWSKI AND PFC RUNOWSKI FROM CHANUTE FLD, ILL.

14. ON THE 22ND, 2ND LT TUSCHER (ORD) JOINED US AND CPLS BAUMGARDNER AND KAPLAN FROM CHANUTE FLD, ILL. ON THE 23RD, 2ND LT BROWN WAS APPOINTED SQUADRON ADJUTANT AND 2ND LT DOESCHER, SQ ARMAMENT OFFICER. 1ST LT WILLIAMS WAS APPOINTED ASS'T SUPPLY OFFICER.

15. 2ND LTS WHEELER AND PALMER (RADAR CONTROLLERS) JOINED US ON THE 24th FROM AAFSAT, AND CPLS BALLARD, MARTH, PRATT, SPORN, CARRIGAN, JANKOWSKI, VAN VALKENBERG, SNEDDEN, COFFEY AND PLUTH TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE 417 TO THE 54TH FIGHTER CONTROL SQUADRON. THE INEVITABLE JUGGLING OF MEN BEFORE A SQUADRON IS FINALLY COMPLETED. 2ND LT TUSCHER ALSO LEFT US THAT DAY, GOING TO THE 81ST FIGHTER SQUADRON, AAFSAT. FROM THE LATTER SQUADRON, WE IN TURN GOT 2ND LT MOESER (ORD). PFC'S BETON AND MCGHIE WENT TO ORLANDO ON DETACHED SERVICE AND PFC MILLER JOINED US FROM BUCKLEY FLD, COLO.

16. ON THE 25TH 2ND LT LODGE (ADM) JOINED US FR 3AF, TAMPA, FLA, AND OUR PILOT QUOTA WAS FILLED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF 2ND LT KIRWAN FROM THE 1156TH SCHOOL SQDN AT ORLANDO. 1ST LT WITHERS (RADAR CONTROLLER) JOINED US ON THE 26TH FROM AAFSAT, AS DID 2ND LT SIMPSON (COMMUNICATIONS) (THE LATTER FROM J. B. MISSOURI). ON THE SAME DAY, WE GOT PVTS DYKSTRA, GOLDSTEIN, LEWIS, JACKSON, MARSH, AND YERICO (VOCO 50TH FTR GP AT ORLANDO).

17. 2ND LT LONG (RADAR CONTROLLER) REPORTED FOR DUTY ON THE 28TH AS DID PFC HALL FROM THE CHICAGO SCHOOL, AAP TTC. ON THE 30TH CAME 2ND LT FRAZEE (WX OFFICER) FROM MAXWELL FIELD, ALA. SGTS KEGLOVITS, MAZUR, PENNYPACKER, SMITH, THOMPSON TRANSFERRED IN (VOCO 50TH FTR GP AT ORLANDO). PVT TAYLOR, BY THE SAME AUTHORITY, AND CPLS CROUCH, BASSOW, MOODY, BENEFIELD, LINDSAY, GOLD, GRACHEN, AND HOLLAND. ON THE 31ST PFC'S MCGHIE AND BETON CAME BACK FOR DUTY FROM ORLANDO, AND THE MONTH OF MARCH WAS OVER!

18. NOW CAME PERSONNEL SHUFFLING IN EARNEST! GOVERNED BY THE OFFICIAL T/O, (TABLES OF ORGANIZATION), WE WERE OVER-STRENGTH IN CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS, AND UNDER-STRENGTH IN OTHER! DAILY, AND MORE FREQUENTLY, SEVERAL TIMES A DAY, 1ST SERGEANT "DOC" HOCKMAN WAS CALLED UPON BY HEADQUARTERS IN ORLANDO, TO SUBMIT NEW AND REVISED LISTS OF SQUADRON PERSONNEL AND STRENGTH REPORTS. THESE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY OUR REQUISITIONS FOR MEN, AND OUR REQUESTS FOR ORDERS TO RE-TRANSFER OTHER MEN. BACK AND FORTH, INTO THE SQUADRON, OUT OF THE SQUADRON, MEN CAME AND WENT. ASK FOR MORE OPERATIONS CLERKS, GET MORE COOKS' A MAN ASSIGNED TO THE SQUADRON, THEN OLD, AND THE 1ST SGT GROW GREY! 34 OFFICERS AND 236 MEN, ALMOST FULL SQUADRON STRENGTH, BUT NOT YET THE PROPER MEN, NOR THE PROPER STRENGTH.

19. FROM THE 1ST TO THE 30TH OF APRIL, CHANGES, IN PERSONNEL, ADDITIONS AND

TRANSFERS OUT, WERE THE BUSINESS OF THE DAY. OFFICERS AS WELL AS MEN CAME AND WENT, SOME NEVER EVEN ARRIVING, MERELY HAVING THEIR ORDERS CHANGED!

20. ON THE 1ST OF APRIL, CAME EIGHT MORE RADIO OBSERVERS FROM THE RADAR SCHOOL AT BOCA RATON, FLORIDA. S/SGTS HALL, CHRISTENSEN, HENDERSON, CPLS DE SANTIS, DRAPER, HENDERSHOTT, FENIMORE, AND VAN LAECKEN, ALSO PVT MCCAIN FROM THE 438 TH SIGNAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION, ORLANDO. ON THE SAME DAY, REAPING THE BENEFITS OF BEING FIRST MEN IN A NEW SQUADRON FOUR T/SGT AND ONE S/SGT WERE MADE M/SGTS; NINE S/SGTS AND TWO SGTS PROMOTED TO T/SGTS; FOUR SGTS AND TWO CPLS TO S/SGTS; TEN CPLS AND NINE PFC'S AND 23 PVTS TO SGT; 89 PFC'S TO CPL; FOUR PVTS TO PFC. 157 PROMOTIONS IN A SINGLE DAY! AGAIN THANKS TO A WISE C.O. AND THE OFFICIAL T/O. NOTHING LIKE A PAT ON THE BACK AND A BOOST IN PAY FOR INSTILLING SPIRIT AND A WILL TO WORK.

21. ON APRIL 2ND, LT MACQUEEN (PILOT) WAS GRANTED AN EMERGENCY LEAVE OF EIGHT DAYS DUE TO THE ILLNESS OF HIS FATHER; AND ON THE 5TH, FROM THE ARMY SCHOOL AT YALE UNIVERSITY, CAME OUR SQUADRON ENGINEERING OFFICER, 2ND LT CAMPBELL. STRANGE WAR, SENDING A WHOLESOME YOUNG SOUTHERNER TO YALE, OF ALL PLACES. ALSO ON THE 5TH CAME FOUR MORE RADIO OBSERVERS FROM SIGNAL HILL AT ORLANDO, PVTS CLEMMENS, KOHRMAN, BRIGHT AND ROTH. (FIRST OF THE NEW CROP FROM RADAR SCHOOL AT BOCA RATON, FLA, YET LAST TO BE ASSIGNED TO A SQUADRON!! THE GOOD OLD ARMY WAY!) PFC HARRAH, PVT MULLEN, AND CPL VERSTOPPEN (ORD), JOINED ON THE SAME DAY.



Radio Operator "RO" class at Boca Raton, FL. Radar School "Aircraft to Surface Vessels". Included: Pvts Arthur F. Miller, J.G. Walker (middle-front row), Shelton N. Green, William R. DeMay, Walter Sterkel, John F. Logan, Daniel W. Manosh, Joseph R. Veslany, Joseph J. Hendershott (3rd from left, back row), William F. Maxwell Jo., James T. Irwin, Robert Smith, and back row, 5th from left, Joseph M. Van Laecken.

22. THE 6TH OF APRIL SAW THE FILLING UP OF THE MEDICS WITH SGT FINNERTY, PVTS NEWTON, TUTTLE, AND CONSIGLIO TRANSFERRED FROM THE 414TH NI FTR SQ. ON THE 7TH WE SWAPPED A FEW MEN WITH OUR SISTER SQUADRONS, THE 414TH AND 416TH AND WELCOMED PVT SPEIER, LAST OF OUR RADIO OBSERVERS. (HE HAD TO SEE THAT GIRL IN BOCA RATON). THOUGH THE T/O AND A.R.'S CALLED FOR FLIGHT OFFICER RATINGS OR BETTER FOR ALL RADIO OBSERVERS, AS YET OUR 16 ENLISTED OBSERVERS WERE "SWEATING THEIRS OUT"! ONE APPOINTMENT CAME THRU IN FLORIDA, TWO IN NEW JERSEY AND 11 IN ENGLAND. BUT THAT'S A LATER STORY.

23. THE 10TH SAW SEVERAL MORE MEN JOINING UP, ONLY TO BE TRANSFERRED OUT

AGAIN IN A FEW DAYS. ON THE 13TH CAME PFC'S ANDREWS, CRANDALL, JAMESON, AND REYNOLDS FROM THE 2060TH ORDNANCE AT ORLANDO, AND ON THE 14TH PVT BRIGHT, ONE OF OUR RADIO OBSERVERS RECEIVED WORD OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS AVIATION CADET, AND WAS TAKEN OFF DUTY, TO BE LATER TRANSFERRED TO THE 349TH N.F.S., AWAITING FURTHER ASSIGNMENT. (AT PRESENT WRITING, OCTOBER 1943, HE IS AN ENROLLED CADET AT WITTENBERG COLLEGE, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO). SOME MORE TRANSFERRING BACK AND FORTH ON THE 15TH WITH SGT GAST (COOK) BEING FOUND UNFIT FOR OVERSEAS DUTY DUE TO CHRONIC BACK TROUBLE.

24. LT MACQUEEN (PILOT) RETURNED FROM HIS EMERGENCY LEAVE ON THE 16TH. ON THE 18TH PFC ERNST WAS ADDED TO THE ROSTER FROM AAFSAT. ON THE 19TH, CPL DEMEDA, AND ON THE 20TH, CPL VAN VALKENBERG, WHO THO' HE WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO CAME IN, WENT OUT, AND THEN CAME IN AGAIN, IS STILL WITH US! LT KATZBERG (FLIGHT SURGEON) WAS ALLOWED 5 DAYS LEAVE, AS OF THE 18TH AND CPL GUNDERSON, ALLOWED A 10 DAY EMERGENCY FURLOUGH (TO BE LATER TRANSFERRED TO THE 349TH N. F.S.)

25. CPL CHRISTINE JOINED UP ON THE 21ST (PER AAFSAT) AND ON THE 22ND OUT OF THE CONTINUOUS TRANSFERS BACK AND FORTH, PFC SWAIN AND BALDWIN WERE ENROLLED TO STAY. ON THE 23RD LT KATZBERG REPORTED BACK TO DUTY AND ON THE 24TH OUR 12 AERIAL GUNNERS WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE THEN JUST BEGINNING 419TH N.F.S. HOW THE BOYS HATED TO LEAVE, JUST ON THE EVE OF OUR DEPARTURE FOR POINTS AND ADVENTURES UNKNOWN! BUT IT HAD TO BE, FOR AS YET, NIGHT FIGHTERS, AMERICAN AND ENGLISH, CARRIED BUT A CREW OF TWO, PILOT AND OBSERVER. IF WE EVER GET TO THAT LONG PROMISED DREAM-SHIP THE P-61, WE MAY SEE YOU BOYS, "WHISKEY", AND PENNYPACKER AND ALL THE OTHERS.

26. ALSO ON THE 24TH ARRIVED CPL ALLEN, RADIO OBSERVER, TO FILL THE VACANCY CAUSED BY BILL BRIGHT'S GOING, AND CPL KAPLAN, PFC BLOCK, PVT LEONARD, AS WELL AS PVT HUFFMAN FROM ORLANDO.

27. IT'S GETTING CLOSE TO THE END NOW! WE'RE TO ENTRAIN ON MONDAY, APRIL THE 26, UNDER SECRET ORDERS, YET ON SUNDAY, THE 25TH, WE WERE STILL SHIPPING MEN! LAST MINUTE PAPERWORK, REVISION OF STRENGTH LISTS, TO ADD TO THE NORMAL BUSTLE OF A SQUADRON ABOUT TO MOVE. PVT OEHRMAN, NOW ONE OF THE MAINSTAYS OF OUR KITCHEN, GOT LAST MINUTE NOTICE OF HIS ORDER TO JOIN US, AND THE CASE OF THE MISSING PVT TUTTLE WAS TAKING SERIOUS PROPORTIONS! HE HAD BEEN SENT TO A SCHOOL UP AT ORLANDO SOME TIME BACK, AND STILL HADN'T BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE. WITH THE SQUADRON ABOUT TO LEAVE, AND NO TUTTLE, HE WAS AWOL, AND HIS DESERTION PAPERS WERE ALL MADE OUT. POOR TUTTLE, (AND POOR SGT SOBCZAK WHO HAD TO FILL OUT THE COUNTLESS FORMS). HOW WERE WE TO KNOW THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD TO RETURN AFTER COMPLETING HIS COURSE (MEDICS), SO HAD JUST BEEN AROUND ORLANDO! LUCKY FOR HIM, SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY BECAME AWARE OF HIS EXISTENCE AND HE WAS RUSHED TO JOIN US WHILE IN NEW JERSEY BEFORE SERIOUS ACTION WAS TAKEN.

28. THERE WE WERE, ON THE EVE OF LEAVING KISSIMMEE, SUNDAY, APRIL 25TH, IN FULL STRENGTH. 33 OFFICERS AND 235 ENLISTED MEN. OUR HEAVY FREIGHT AND ENLISTED MEN'S "B" BAGS, ALL MARKED WITH 6226BB HAD LEFT FOR THE PORT OF EMBARKATION OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, ON THE 17TH ACCOMPANIED BY 1ST LT WILLIAMS, M/SGT MOORE AND SGT BELL. THE LATTER TWO SLEEPING RIGHT IN ONE OF THE FREIGHT CARS, WITH ONLY THEIR "TOMMY" GUNS FOR COMPANY! THE SQUADRON WAS READY. WE HAD PRACTICED OUR EMBARKATION AND MARCHING ORDER FOR DAYS, AND 1ST SGT HOCKMAN HAD THE ROLL-CALL WHERE EVERYONE ANSWERED TO THE CALL OF HIS LAST NAME WITH THE SNAPPY REPLY OF HIS FIRST NAME AND MIDDLE INITIAL. OFFICERS AND MEN CARRIED BED-ROLLS, GASK MASKS, CANTEEN, FIELD-BAG, CARBINE OR SIDE-ARM AND THE LATTER THEIR "A" BAGS.

29. WE HAD HAD SECURITY LECTURES BY CAPT DAUGHERTY (INTELLIGENCE) AND

COUNTLESS IMMUNIZATION SHOTS AND IN OVERSEAS PHYSICAL BY 1ST LT KATZBERG AND HIS STAFF. EVERY MAN AND OFFICER HAD BEEN "CHECKED OUT" ON THE PARTICULAR WEAPON HE CARRIED, RIFLE (CARBINE) OR SIDE-ARM, OR BOTH. THE MEN ISSUED SUB-MACHINE GUNS WERE TESTED ON THEM. 2ND LTS MOESER AND DOESCHER HAD PERSONALLY EXAMINED EACH AND EVERY PIECE FOR CLEANLINESS. THEY WERE CLEAN, OR ELSE! EACH AND EVERY MAN AND OFFICER HAD BEEN CHECKED FOR A FULL ISSUE OF CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT BY 1ST LT WILLIAMS (SUPPLY). NO "HOLY" SOCKS, NO WORN-OUT SHOES. GAS-MASK DRILL HAD BEEN PRACTICED AND EVERY MASK CHECKED. PAY ALLOTMENTS AND GOVERNMENT INSURANCE HAD BEEN MADE OUT, THE LATTER BY EVERY MAN IN THE OUTFIT.

30. WE WERE READY! FOR 4-1/2 MONTHS AT ORLANDO AND KISSIMMEE, OUR PILOTS HAD PRACTICED AT NIGHT FLYING. ANYWHERE FROM 140 TO 30 HOURS IN THE P-70, TWIN-ENGINED FIGHTER-BOMBER, AMERICA'S VERSION OF THE NIGHT-FIGHTER. TRANSITION FLIGHTS, NAVIGATION PROBLEMS, TARGET MISSIONS WITH FIGHTER PLANES, GCI, AI, CALIBRATION FLIGHTS, AND SOME PLAIN AND FANCY FLYING MIXED IN. THEIR COURSE INCLUDED ABOUT 25 HOURS LINK TRAINER TIME, FOR INSTRUMENT FLYING MUST BE SECOND NATURE TO THE NIGHT-FIGHTER. "SEAT OF THE PANTS" STUFF DOESN'T WORK WITH A SEVEN OR ELEVEN TON SHIP ON A PITCH BLACK NIGHT! PALM BEACH, MIAMI BEACH, DAYTONA BEACH, LEESEBURG, TITUSVILLE, TAMPA, MELBOURNE, GAINSVILLE, EVEN THE BAHAMAS, KEY WEST, ALL OF FLORIDA AND SURROUNDING WATERS, FAMILIAR NAMES TO THE MEN IN THE BLACK P-70'S WITH THE BIG YELLOW NUMBERS. LOTS OF FLYING AND LOTS OF FUN! JOE LEONARD OPENING HIS TOP-HATCH TO HELP FULL OUT OF A SPIN, THEN FIGHTING TO CLOSE THE HATCH THE REST OF THE WAY IN! NICE COOL WORK THERE, JOE! "CHICK" HOOTON DECIDING HE WANTED TO STOP IN A HURRY, AND FINDING OUT THAT THE EMERGENCY BRAKE APPARATUS REALLY DID WORK! THOSE POOR TIRES. THE TWO P-70'S (PILOTS STILL OFFICIALLY UNKNOWN) WHO GOT CAUGHT BUZZING, ALMOST DRIVING A POOR MRS. O'DONNEL AND HER CAR OFF THE ROAD, RESULTING IN THE BANANA RIVER NAVAL AIR STATION REPORTING: "TWO ARMY P-70 TYPE PLANES MADE STRAFFING RUNS ON THIS STATION AND THROUGH SEA-PLANE LANDING AREA AT 1920 AND 1938 AT AN AVERAGE ALTITUDE OF 40 FEET. PLANES VERY DARK COLOR, OBSERVED FROM AIR LEAVING IN DIRECTION OF ORLANDO".

31. LTS MCCRAY, LARSEN, KING (416 N.F.S.), AND MACQUEEN CAN ARGUE OVER CREDIT FOR THAT ONE. LT. KATZBERG'S SPANIEL, "BOURBON", THE SQUADRON PARTY AT THE ROADSIDE WINTERGARDEN, THE MASCOT "JOE", THE GOAT, S/SGT BY OFFICIAL SQUADRON ORDER, ALL THESE ARE MEMORIES OF KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA. AS TO THE PARTY, IT WAS THOROUGHLY ENJOYED BY EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF



Here are four Privates at the Radio/Radar school in Boca Raton, standing in front of the prolific Tar Paper Palace that the Army constructed around the world during the war. Joe Van Laecken, who joined the 417th upon graduation from Boca is 3rd from the left, J.G. Walker is at the far right.

THE SQUADRON WHO WAS PRESENT. BOY, DID THE FELLOWS STOMP AND CHEER WHEN THE C.O. CAME IN.

32. AN AIR FORCE SQUADRON IS A GROUP OF SPECIALISTS, AND OUR MEN HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO US AFTER BEING TRAINED IN ARMY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS THROUGH THE COUNTRY. THE RADIO OBSERVERS HAD ALL BEEN GRADUATED FROM A REGULAR AIR FORCE RADIO SCHOOL, AS WELL AS FROM THE RADAR SCHOOL AT BOCA RATON, FLA. LEARNING THE THEORY AND OPERATION OF THE SCR 540 (US COUNTERPART OF THE ENGLISH MARK IV) THEY RECEIVED THEIR BASIC FLIGHT TRAINING AT BOCA RATON, IN A-20'S, P-70'S, AND B-18'S. SOME HAD EVEN STUDIED AND OPERATED THE EXPERIMENTAL SCR 520, FROM WHICH SCR 720, MOST ADVANCED EQUIPMENT OF ITS KIND (NOT YET OPERATIONAL) WAS DEVELOPED. IN VARYING AMOUNTS, THEY RECEIVED FURTHER FLIGHT TRAINING AT ORLANDO AND KISSIMMEE. CORDELL, HAMILTON AND POTTER (ROBLE TOO, WHO JOINED OUR SQUADRON IN ENGLAND), GOT MANY HOURS IN THE AIR AT KISSIMMEE: CLEMMENS, KOHRMAN, ROTH AND SPEIER PARTICIPATED AN INTENSIFIED FLIGHT COURSE AT BOCA RATON: AND ALLEN, CHRISTENSEN, DESANTIS, DRAPER FENIMORE, HALL, HENDERSHOTT, HENDERSON AND VAN LAECKEN WERE A.S.V. (Aircraft to Surface Vessels) GRADUATES WHO WERE TRANSFERRED INTO AI WORK AT BOCA. ALL WERE GRADUATE RADIO OBSERVERS WHEN THEY LEFT BOCA RATON TO COME TO ORLANDO.

33. MEN FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, FROM COMPARATIVE OLD TIMERS TO A FEW ROOKIES BARELY OUT OF BASIC TRAINING, YET ALL EQUIPPED FOR OUR JOBS. 266 MEN MADE UP THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON. ON FEBRUARY 20, 1943 WE WERE ACTIVATED. ON APRIL 26, 1943 AT 8:30 AM, WE LEFT KISSIMMEE AIR BASE FOR CAMP KILMER, NEW JERSEY, STAGING AREA FOR U.S. ARMY UNITS GOING OVERSEAS.

34. G.I. TRUCKS TOOK US FROM KISSIMMEE AIR BASE TO THE RAILROAD STATION AND WAITING TROOP-TRAIN IN TOWN. IN ORDERLY FASHION, 1ST SGT HOCKMAN LOADED THE COACHES ALPHABETICALLY BY RANK, AS PREPARED ORDER. THE COOKS, UNDER SGT. HOVERSON, HAD PREPARED A FIELD KITCHEN, ARMY STYLE, IN A BOX CAR, AND WE WERE READY TO GO! CITIZENS OF KISSIMMEE, AND NOT A FEW OF THE LOCAL GIRLS WHO IN TWO MONTHS HAD LEARNED TO LOVE US, WERE THERE TO SAY GOODBYE. THE WIVES OF NEWLY WEDS 2ND LT LARSEN AND F/O FULLER WERE THERE, AS WELL AS THE LITTLE BLOND GIRL WHO "CHIEF", COLORFUL INDIAN PRIVATE IN THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT HAD CAPTIVATED! THE TRAIN TOOK US THE FEW MILES TO ORLANDO WHERE WE WERE TO PICK UP THE 416TH N.F.S. UNDER MAJOR DAVIS. THEY WERE NOT THERE, SO WE WAITED UNTIL THEY DID ARRIVE, AND LARSEN AND FULLER, WHOSE WIVES HAD RACED THE TRAIN UP FROM KISSIMMEE HAD A FEW MORE PRECIOUS MINUTES.

35. FINALLY, OFF WE WENT, NEAR NOON, FOR THE OVERNIGHT TRIP UP NORTH. FEW WILL EVER FORGET THE MARVEL OF THOSE HOT MEALS ABOARD THE TRAIN. SGT HOVERSON AND HIS STAFF ENTRENCHED THEMSELVES IN THE ESTEEM OF THE SQUADRON RIGHT THEN. OFFICERS AS WELL AS MEN HAD ONLY COACH ACCOMODATIONS, BUT WITH THE MARVELOUS MEALS, ROAST HAM, ICE CREAM AND ALL, AND THE CIGARS, CIGARETTES, ETC, PROVIDED OUT OF THE SQUADRON SLUSH FUND, THE MORALE OF ALL WAS AT HIGH PITCH. A NIGHT OF SLEEPING SITTING-UP, OR SPRAWLED ACROSS A BUDDY WASN'T ENOUGH TO SPOIL IT. ON THE SECOND DAY THE OFFICERS TOOK OVER THE JOB OF K.P. FOR A MEAL AND CARRIED THE STEAMING CONTAINERS THRU THE AISLES, SERVING THE MEN. "P.P. PUSHER" LT JOE LEONARD WAS RIGHT ON THE BALL!

36. WE ARRIVED AT THE STAGING AREA AT 3:45 PM THE NEXT DAY, APRIL 27TH. THE MORNING REPORT SAYS "WEATHER POOR, MORALE EXCELLENT". WE WERE TO BE AT KILMER FOR EIGHT BUSY DAYS! WE HAD THOUGHT WE WERE READY FOR OVERSEAS DUTY, AND WE WERE, BUT WE HAD TO PROVE IT TO THE EAGLE-EYED STAGING OFFICERS FIRST! THAT TOOK A BIT OF DOING! A LAST MINUTE DENTAL INSPECTION FOR EVERYONE AND A GOOD BIT OF REPAIR WORK IN A HUGE WHOLESALE ACTION DENTAL CLINIC. SEEMINGLY INNUMERABLE CLOTHING AND FULL GEAR INSPECTIONS. FIRST BY SQUADRON OFFICERS AND THEN BY THE STAGING AREA AUTHORITIES HAVING THE FINAL SAY. ALL GUNS TURNED IN AND RECHECKED. ALL SHORTAGES FILLED AND MISFITS REPLACED. SOME MEN

GOT ADDITIONAL IMMUNIZATION SHOTS, EVERY MAN, FROM THE C.O. DOWN HAD HIS GEAR AND HIMSELF CHECKED AND RECHECKED.

37. NO ONE WAS PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE CAMP. OFFICERS OR ENLISTED MEN. FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS, EVEN THE TELEPHONES LEADING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD WERE DISCONNECTED AND NO LETTERS COULD GO OUT. FINALLY WE WERE ASSIGNED A TEMPORARY APO AND THE TELEPHONES WERE RE-OPENED. BUT OUR LOCATION AND EXPECTATIONS OF MOVING WERE TABOO.

38. ON THE 28TH, PVT TUTTLE FINALLY ARRIVED, SENT UP FROM ORLANDO. 1ST LT WILLIAMS, M/SGT MOORE AND SGT BELL REPORTED BACK FROM THEIR FREIGHT LOADING AND GUARDING DETAIL. PVT LANATA ALSO WAS SENT UP FROM ORLANDO TO JOIN US, AND 1ST LT GARDNER (EXECUTIVE OFFICER) JOINED THE SQUADRON AT THIS TIME. AS ASSISTANT INTELLIGENCE OFFICER. HE WAS TRANSFERRED FROM THE 418TH N.F.S., THEN JUST FORMING AT ORLANDO.

39. ON THE 30TH, DAN CORDELL (RADIO OBSERVER) WAS DISCHARGED FROM HIS STATUS AS PVT IN THE U.S. ARMY, AND ACCEPTED AN APPOINTMENT AS FLIGHT OFFICER, AS OF APRIL 23RD. HE WAS THE FIRST OF OUR R/O'S TO GET HIS LONG AWAITED RATING. CONGRATULATIONS, DANNY, AND GOOD LUCK. HE BOUGHT HIS UNIFORM THERE AT KILMER AND MOVED INTO OFFICERS QUARTERS. HIS G.I. DAYS (18 LONG MONTHS AS A PVT) WERE OVER.

40. ALSO, ON THE 30TH, THE SQUADRON GOT A PARTIAL PAY FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, AND THE MEN FLOODED THE ELABORATE AND WELL STOCKED P.X. 'S AT KILMER TO MAKE LAST MINUTE PURCHASES OF THINGS THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GET WHERE THEY WERE GOING. THOUGH WHERE THAT WAS NO ONE KNEW FOR SURE.

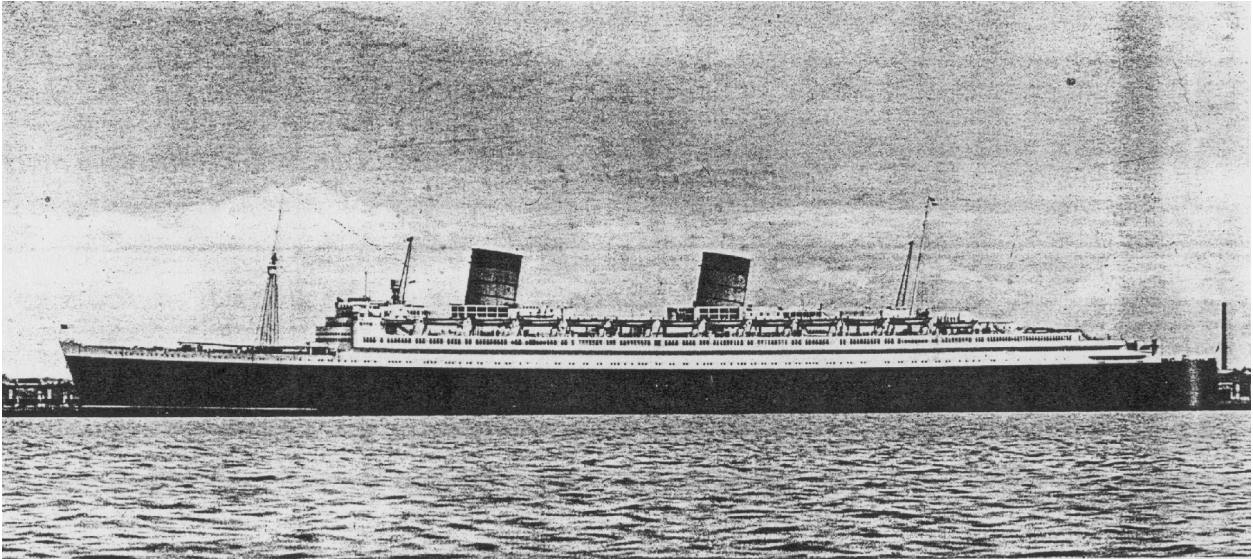
41. THE MORNING OF THE FOURTH, TUESDAY, WORD WAS PASSED THROUGH THE THREE OR FOUR HUGE BARRACKS WHICH HOUSED US ALL, TO GET READY. AT ABOUT 5:00 PM, WE LINED UP IN RANKS OF THREES, "FORWARD MARCH" WAS GIVEN AND OFF WE MARCHED THE ENLISTED MEN THEIR "B" BAGS. THE OTHER HALF (PURELY AN ARBITRARY FREIGHT ARRANGEMENT) HAD HAD THEIRS TAKEN UP TO BE STOWED WITH THEIR "A" BAGS. THE UNIFORM WAS O.D. SHIRT, TROUSERS, AND BLOUSE, OVERCOAT AND LEGGINGS, STEEL-HELMUT AND GLOVES.

42. THE 416TH N.F.S. BOARDED THE TRAIN WITH US, AS WELL AS THE GROUND ECHELONS OF TWO BOMBARDMENT SQUADRONS, AND AN ENGINEERING OUTFIT. THE LOADING WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND ORDERLY, A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ENTIRE STAGING AREA SET-UP. WE WERE IN ORDINARY COACHES, BUT THE RIDE TOOK UNDER TWO HOURS, FROM NEW JERSEY TO BROOKLYN, AND WE RODE UP A BLACK-OUT SEA-BOARD WITH CURTAINS DRAWN. A "CANNED" BAND PLAYING MARTIAL MUSIC SAW US OFF. (AND THIS SCRIBE FOR ONE RECALLS A LUMP IN HIS THROAT AS WELL AS A THRILL OF EXCITEMENT.)

43. WE UNLOADED ON THE WESTERN SHORE OF THE HUDSON RIVER AND BOARDED A FERRY TO CARRY US ACROSS. IT WAS DARK BY THIS TIME, AND AS WE RODE UP THE BEAUTIFUL HUDSON, THE NEW YORK SKYLINE, THOUGH DIMMED-OUT, WAS NONETHELESS IMPRESSIVE. MANY WERE SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME. TO OTHERS, THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING AND WOOLWORTHS WERE OLD FRIENDS AND FAMILIAR LAND-MARKS. THE RAILS WERE CROWDED AND AS WE PASSED PIER AFTER PIER OF NEW YORK HARBOR, ON ONE OF THEM THE YET LOPSIDED HULL OF THE FRENCH LINER NORMANDIE COULD BE SEEN.

44. THE FERRY, SLOWLY PUFFING ITS WAY, TOOK ABOUT AN HOUR TO GET US TO OUR PROPER PIER (ABOUT 70TH STREET), AND THE MEN SANG AND JOKED WITH THE SMALL DETACHMENT OF ARMY NURSES ABOARD, ALL AS HEAVILY LADEN AS OURSELVES. AS WE PULLED INTO OUR PIER, A TINNY BRASS BAND (RED CROSS?) GREETED US. WE MARCHED RIGHT FROM THE FERRY INTO THE ADJOINING LOADING SHED, AND IN A STEADY SINGLE FILE UP A GANG PLANK INTO THE GREY SHIPS AWAITING US. WE MARCHED FIRST BUT

THEN STOOD IN LINE, RED CROSS WORKERS PASSED OUT STEAMING COFFEE, AND HOT DOUGHNUTS, CIGARETTES AND CANDY. FURTHER ALONG, WE GOT BERTH ASSIGNMENTS AND MESSING CARDS, AND HAD OUR NAMES CHECKED OFF ONCE AGAIN, THE LAST TIME FOR A LONG TIME, ON AMERICAN SOIL. ALL WAS SYSTEMATIC, CALM AND ORDERLY. AN EFFICIENT JOB.



The 417th NFS traveled from New York to wartime England in the world's largest ship, the luxury liner "Queen Elizabeth", which had been stripped of all comforts and fitted for transporting 20,000 troops at a time. Because of her speed she crossed the submarine infested Atlantic without escort, or the protection of a convoy.

45. THE INSIDE OF THE SHIP WAS SPACIOUS AND WELL-LIT. THE BRITISH NAVAL AUXILIARY "QUEEN ELIZABETH". LARGEST SHIP AFLOAT. SOMEBODY MUST HAVE THOUGHT WE WERE IMPORTANT TO GIVE US THIS CHOICE ASSIGNMENT. UP AND UP TO THE TOP-DECK WE WENT, AND EVEN THAT WAS CROWDED WITH MEN AND EQUIPMENT. PACKS, GUNS, MEN, ALL LYING ABOUT ON EVERY INCH OF AVAILABLE DECK SPACE, 'TILL AT LAST THEY WERE FINALLY LED DOWN TO THEIR ASSIGNED QUARTERS. THAT FIRST NIGHT IN HARBOR MANY OF THE MEN CURLED UP ON THE OPEN DECK, AND SLEPT, COLD AND FITFULLY 'TIL DAWN. EACH STATEROOM, WE WERE FINALLY BILLETED ON MAIN DECK, STARBOARD SIDE, CONTAINED 5 TRIPEL-DECKER BUNKS. 30 ENLISTED MEN TO A STATEROOM, 15 OFFICERS TO A STATEROOM. EACH ENLISTED MAN ALTERNATED, 24 HOURS IN THE STATEROOM, 24 HOURS ON DECK. ONE NIGHTS SLEEP IN A BERTH, THE NEXT ON DECK, OR IN A HALLWAY OR OTHER SHELTERED CORNER. NOT TOO BAD, BUT NOT TOO GOOD. THE AMERICAN SOLDIER HAS AN ADAPTABILITY AND WAY OF MANAGING IN A PINCH THAT ARE AMAZING.

46. THE OFFICERS ATE IN THE SPACIOUS, STILL BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED SHIPS DINING SALON. THE MEN IN ONE OF THE MANY GALLIES. IT WAS A BRITISH SHIP. THE ORGANIZATION WAS ADMIRABLE AND THE SERVICE AND FOOD IN THE DINING SALON VERY GOOD. IN THE ENLISTED MENS MESS, WELL, LET'S FORGET IT. IT WAS ADEQUATE AND THE MEN SURVIVED. (TRY WASHING YOUR MESS-KIT IN LUKE WARM SEA-WATER SOMETIME).

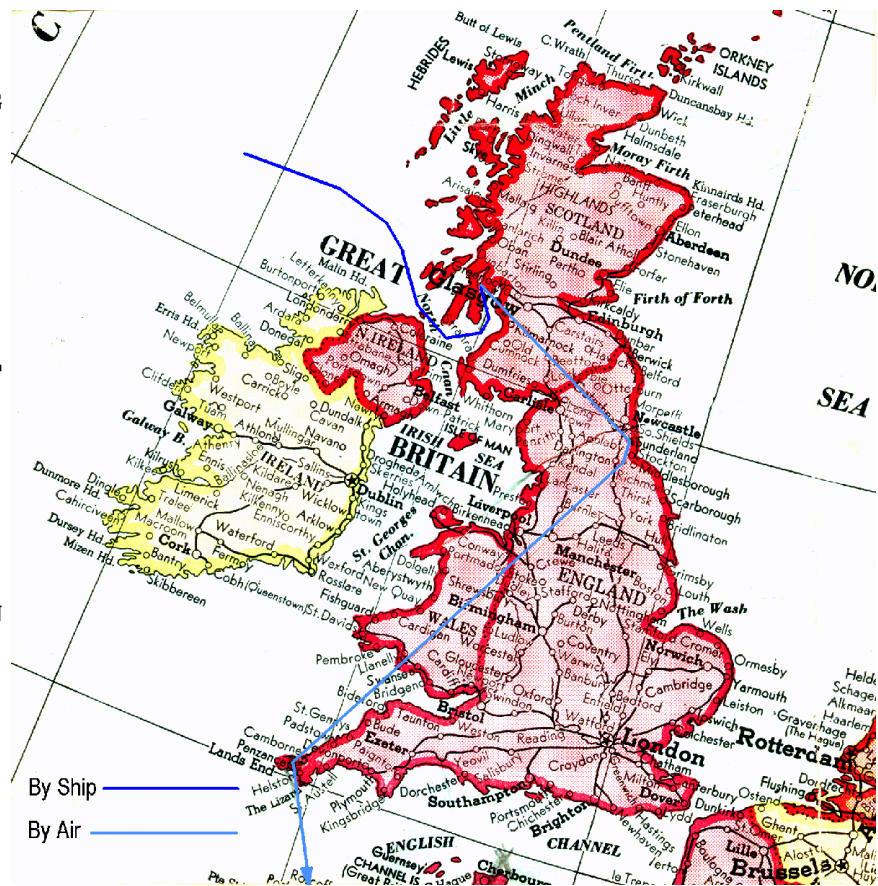
47. WE PULLED OUT OF NEW YORK HARBOR AT ABOUT 8:00 AM THE NEXT MORNING, MAY THE 5/43. SOME 17,000 ASSORTED AMERICAN, ENGLISH AND CANADIAN SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIR-FORCE, RED CROSS WORKERS, NURSES, CIVILIANS. MOSTLY US AIR FORCE UNITS, BUT A GOOD NUMBER OF RAF PERSONEL WHO HAD COMPLETED TRAINING IN CANADA OR THE STATES, ENGLISH SAILORS REJOINING SHIPS, RCAF PERSONNEL GOING OVER TO JOIN SQUADRONS, MOVIE STARS ON TOUR AND OTHER WORLD PERSONAGES. ALONE AND

UNESCORTED SHE TRAVELED THIS QUEEN OF THE SEAS. HER GREAT SPEED AND LATEST RADAR EQUIPMENT WERE PROTECTION ENOUGH. SHE (REPUTEDLY) MOUNTED 72 GUN POSITIONS: 20 AND 40 MM CANNONS, POM-POMS, AND A SINGLE 6 INCHER AFT. (NOTE: FIGURES, ETC, CONCERNING THE QUEEN ELIZABETH ARE COMPLETELY UNOFFICIAL, MERELY GATHERED BY THIS SCRIBE ON THE SCENE, AND THEREFORE, THOUGH INTERESTING, QUITE UNRELIABLE). THE GUN-CREWS WERE PARTIALLY REGULAR BRITISH NAVY, AND PARTIALLY PICK-UP AMERICANS FROM THE MANY GUNNERS ABOARD. MAKING A REGULAR ZIG A ZAG PATTERN, CHANGING COURSE ALMOST CONSTANTLY, WE NEVERTHELESS CRUISED ALONG AT ABOUT 25 KNOTS. (AT NIGHT IT OFTEN GOT TO 30 KNOTS AND ABOVE). AN AMAZING SHIP.

48. FOR US MERE PASSENGERS ABOARD, THERE WERE RATING (TWICE DAILY), SLEEPING (CATCH AS CATCH CAN) AND GAMBLING. CRAP GAMES, POKER GAMES, BLACK-JACK GAMES, EVERYWHERE. IN THE STATEROOMS, IN THE HALL-WAYS, ON THE DECK, IN THE LOUNGES, NIGHT AND DAY, THE GAMES WENT ON. HUNDREDS (LITERALLY) OF DOLLARS CHANGED HANDS, SMALL FORTUNES WERE MADE, LOST AND MADE AGAIN, AND MONEY IN ITSELF LOST ITS SIGNIFICANCE. ENGLISH MONEY, AMERICAN MONEY, CANADIAN MONEY. IT ALL FLOWED IN, CHANGED HANDS, AND FLOWED OUT AGAIN. CAPTAIN JOE DAUGHERTY TAUGHT THE OFFICERS A FEW THINGS ABOUT ARMY POKER. AND POOR LT PALMER LOST AND BORROWED AND LOST AGAIN.

49. WE COULD BUY AMERICAN CIGARETTES ABOARD AT BUT FIVE CENTS A PACKAGE, AND EVERYONE BOUGHT WHOLE CARTONS OF HERSHEY AND NESTLE BARS, OF WHICH THERE SEEMED LIMITLESS SUPPLY. (WE HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE, HOWEVER). NO LIQUOR OR BEER FOR SALE, AND BUT AN OCCASIONAL SOFT DRINK FOR THOSE WHO WOULD SWEAT OUT THE LINE. A FEW OF THE MORE FAR-SIGHTED OFFICERS HAD COME PREPARED, HOWEVER, AND EVEN SHARED WHAT THEY HAD WITH SOME LUCKY ARMY NURSES AND RED CROSS WORKERS. A DULL TIME WAS NOT HAD BY ALL.

50. THE VOYAGE ITSELF WAS SMOOTH AND UNEVENTFUL. ON ONLY ONE DAY WAS THE SEA A BIT ROUGH, WITH VERY FEW CASES OF "MAL DE MAR" AT THAT. IT TOOK BUT 6



The route at the end of the 417th NFS six day voyage on the "Queen Elizabeth" is plotted to near Glasgow, Scotland, where they docked on May 11, 1943. The men were soon spread across England for training on Beaufighters and the specifics learned by the British in nearly four years of war on how to operate the Beau's, use the radar, and operate under British ground control. The Squadron came together at RAF Scorton and completed training in their assigned Beaufighters. The flight contingent departed on August 6, 1943 for North Africa.

DAYS TO CROSS. (COMPARE THAT TO THE 20 DAYS OR MORE THAT MANY A CONVOY TAKES!) ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 11TH, IN THE CLEAR SUNSHINE, WE SIGHTED THE BEAUTIFUL SHORE-LINE OF SCOTLAND. WE HAD COME UP AROUND THE WEST AND NORTH OF IRELAND AND DOWN INTO ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST NATURAL HARBORS, THE FIRTH OF CLYDE. THE GREEN, HILLY SCOTTISH COAST WAS A WELCOME AND LOVELY SIGHT! THE BOOM, PROTECTIVE GATEWAY OF MINES, WAS SWUNG OPEN FOR US BY THE ATTENDING TUGS, AND IN WE WENT. THE HUGE HARBOR CONTAINED WARSHIPS AND MERCHANT VESSELS OF ALL SIZES AND KINDS. AS WE WENT IN, A SLICK, BLACK BRITISH SUBMARINE PASSED US, HEADING OUT TO SEA.

51. THE QUEEN ELIZABETH FULLED INTO THE FIRTH 'TIL IT LAY JUST OFF THE TOWN OF GRENNOCK, SCOTLAND, AND DROPPED ANCHOR. AT NOON, THE DISEMBARKING, BY MEANS OF TUGS COMING ALONGSIDE, BEGAN. BY THE PREARRANGED SCHEDULE, HOWEVER, THE 417TH DIDN'T DISEMBARK UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING, SO WE SPENT ONE NIGHT MORE IN THE HARBOR. TUGS TOOK US OFF AT 9:00 AM ON THE 12TH AND WE ENTRAINED IMMEDIATELY, AT GRENNOCK, FOR AYR, SCOTLAND, WHERE WE ARRIVED AT 4:00 PM. "MORALE, EXCELLENT, WEATHER, FAIR". THE LATTER IS TOO RESTRAINED! IT RAINED ALL THE TIME WE WERE IN SCOTLAND.

52. AT AYR, THERE WAS AN RAF STATION, AN RAF O.T.U. (OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT) FOR NIGHT FIGHTERS, AS WELL AS AN OPERATIONAL DROME FOR RAF DAY AND

WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 1943

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron, VIII Fighter Command arrives at Ayr, Scotland from the US and begins training with Beaufighters. COMBAT CHRONOLOGY OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCES DECEMBER 1941-1945

NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRONS. THE AMERICAN 415 N.F.S. WITH MARK IV EQUIPPED BEAUFIGHTERS WAS JUST FINISHING ITS TRAINING THERE. MANY A PERSONAL REUNION WITH OLD FRIENDS WAS HAD, BUT THEY WERE OF SHORT DURATION. WE HAD ARRIVED AT AYR, TIRED AND DIRTY, AT ABOUT 4:00 PM. AT 6:30 PM, THAT VERY EVENING, AN ORDER CAME FROM OUT OF THE BLUE FOR ALL RADIO OBSERVERS TO BE READY TO ENTRAIN AGAIN, BY 7:00 PM. THEY HAD BARELY FOUND A BILLET AND HAD HAD SOME HARD-TACK AND FISH! THANK GOODNESS, THEY HADN'T HAD TIME TO UNPACK. SO THEY RUSHED TO GET READY. THEN MORE ORDERS CAME THROUGH! (POOR CAPT EHLINGER). THE ENTIRE AIR ECHELON, INTELLIGENCE, ENGINEERS, COMMUNICATIONS MEN, PILOTS AND R.O.'S HAD TO BE ON THE TRAIN AT SEVEN. M/SGT WETHERALD (MAINTENANCE CHIEF) WAS MARCHING THE MEN OFF TO CHOW BY THIS TIME AND ON THE C.O.'S ORDER, THEY WERE RECALLED TO THE BILLETING AREA.

53. MEN AND BAGGAGE, THE AIR ECHELON PILED ONTO TRUCKS AND RACED FOR THE STATION. ALL THEIR FIELD EQUIPMENT, BED-ROLLS, ETC, THEY LEFT BEHIND IN A HUGE UNASSORTED PILE. THEY ARRIVED AT THE STATION IN AYR A MINUTE OR TWO BEFORE SEVEN, AND STARTED TO PILE ONTO THE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY EXPEDITIONARY FORCES:

You are a soldier of the United States Army.

You have embarked for distant places where the war is being fought.

Upon the outcome depends the freedom of your lives: the freedom of the lives of those you love—your fellow-citizens—your people.

Never were the enemies of freedom more tyrannical, more arrogant, more brutal.

Yours is a God-fearing, proud, courageous people, which, throughout its history, has put its freedom under God before all other purposes.

We who stay at home have our duties to perform—duties owed in many parts to you. You will be supported by the whole force and power of this Nation. The victory you win will be a victory of all the people—common to them all.

You bear with you the hope, the confidence, the gratitude and the prayers of your family, your fellow-citizens, and your President—

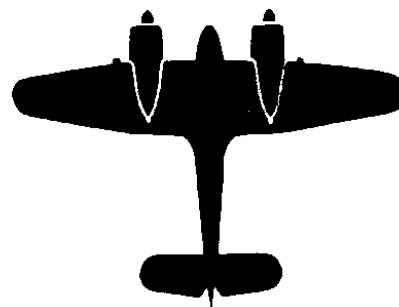
Franklin D. Roosevelt

FRIDAY, 14 MAY 1943

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron, VIII Fighter Command transfers from Ayr, Scotland to Cranfield, England. The squadron is training on Beaufighters with the RAF and has detachments at Ayr, Uxbridge, Coltishall and Bristol, England. COMBAT CHRONOLOGY OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCES DECEMBER 1941-1945

TRAIN. BUT IT TAKES TIME TO GET RAILROAD TICKETS ON A GOVERNMENT WARRANT FOR A HUNDRED MEN OR MORE. CAPTAIN EHLINGER AND THE TICKETS AGENTS HURRIED, BUT ENGLISH TRAINS DON'T WAIT, NOT FOR ANYONE; NOT FOR ONE MINUTE. "WELL, IF THE _____ FOOLS WON'T WAIT, WE _____ WELL CAN'T GO." AND CAPTAIN EHLINGER ORDERED US ALL OFF, AN ANGRY, DISGUSTED MAN! THE NEXT TRAIN WASN'T SCHEDULED 'TIL 5:00 PM THE NEXT DAY.

54. IT MIGHT BE WELL TO RECORD AT THIS TIME WHY IMMEDIATELY UPON DEBARKATION, THE SQUADRON WAS SPLITTING UP, AND TO WHAT DESTINATION, AND WHY THE AIR ECHELON WAS BEING THUS HURRIED. IN THE STATES, AT ORLANDO AND KESSIMMEE, WE HAD FLOWN AND TRAINED ON DOUGLAS P-70'S AND THE AMERICAN SCR 540 SET (RADAR). BUT THE ALLIED AMERICAN AND ENGLISH COMMAND HAD DECIDED THAT THE ABOVE PLANES AND EQUIPMENT WERE NOT ON PAR WITH THAT THEN BEING USED BY THE MUCH MORE EXPERIENCED BRITISH NIGHT FIGHTING OUTFITS, THE BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER AIR CRAFT, AND THE ENGLISH MARK IV RADAR SET. THE ENGLISH HAD BEEN DOING RADAR-DIRECTED NIGHT FIGHTING SINCE BEFORE THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN, HENCE, IT WAS DECIDED TO START OFF THE FIRST FOUR AMERICAN OUTFITS WITH TRIED AND TESTED PLANES AND EQUIPMENT, ALL OF THEM THUS FAR ENGLISH. THE MARK IV RADAR IS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE AMERICAN SCR-540, AND FLYING A BEAUFIGHTER IS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM FLYING A P-70. OUR PILOTS WILL ATTEST TO THAT. THUS A PERIOD OF TRANSITION WAS REQUIRED, NOT ONLY FOR PILOTS AND R.O.'S BUT THE ENTIRE AIR ECHELON WHICH HAD TO FAMILIARIZE ITSELF WITH NEW EQUIPMENT.



BRISTOL
"BEAUFIGHTER"
FIGHTER

55. SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS MOVED WITH THE C.O. AND THE PILOTS TO TWINWOOD, A SMALL TOWN NEAR THE RAF STATION AT CRANFIELD, BEDFORDSHIRE. LT BROWN, ADJUTANT, WAS ALSO THERE. THE R.O.'S WENT TO THE RAF STATION AT USWORTH OR SUNDERLAND, DURHAM. OUR RADAR CONTROLLERS, LTS WITHERS, LONG, PALMER AND WHEELER TO UXBRIDGE, ENGLAND, AND THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, CAPT DAUGHERTY AND LT GARDNER TO THE 8TH FIGHTER COMMAND HEADQUARTERS NEAR LONDON. CAPTAIN DAUGHERTY, DURING HIS DETACHED SERVICE AT RAF OPERATIONAL SQUADRONS LOCATED AT COLTISHALL, LEARNED MUCH ABOUT THE ACTUAL OPERATIONS. THIS WAS A HOT SPOT FROM WHICH MANY DAILY MISSIONS WENT OUT TO STRAFE AND BOMB, ETC, THE ENEMY INSTALLATIONS. THE IMMEDIATE AREA WAS SUBJECT TO INTENSIVE BOMBING BY THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE. LT CAMPBELL, ENGINEERING OFFICER, WENT TO THE HOME OF THE BEAUFIGHTER, BRISTOL. THE ENTIRE AIR ECHELON TO VARIOUS SCHOOLS TO LEARN ABOUT RAF EQUIPMENT AND RAF METHODS. THE REST OF THE SQUADRON, UNDER LTS WILLIAM (SUPPLY) AND LODGE (ADM), AND 1ST SGT HOCKMAN REMAINED ON DETACHED SERVICE AT AYR, SCOTLAND. THE 417TH WAS CERTAINLY SPREAD ALL OVER ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND, ALL WITHIN TWO DAYS OF REACHING BRITISH SOIL.

56. FROM MAY 14 TO JUNE 10, THE PILOTS MADE THE TRANSITION FROM P-70'S TO

BEAUFIGHTERS, CHECKING OUT FIRST ON BLENHEIMS AND BISLEYS. IN ALL, THEY AVERAGED ABOUT 20 HOURS ON ALL THREE TYPES. THEIR INSTRUCTORS WERE OF COURSE FROM THE RAF, AND THUS BEGAN OUR CONSTANT ASSOCIATION WITH THE RAF WHICH CONTINUES TO THIS DATE. ON THE 28TH OF MAY, 2ND LT ROBERT C. SWIFT JOINED THE OUTFIT AS PILOT, TO REPLACE 2ND LT MALLORY WHO DIDN'T FROM THE START, LIKE NIGHT FLYING. LT SWIFT HAD BEEN WITH THE U.S. AIR FORCE FOR A YEAR, PRIOR TO BEING WITH THE RCAF FOR TWO YEARS, MOST OF THE TIME BEING SPENT IN ENGLAND.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	WESTERN UNION (20) A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	SYMBOLS DL=Day Letter NL=Night Letter LC=Deferred Cable NLT=Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
The time shown in the date line on telegrams and dayletters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.		
WMK79 VIA RCA=CD AMGAHO 20 MAY 15 NLT MRS JOSEPH VANLAECKEN= 604 WESTKOENIT GRANDISLAND NEBR= ARRIVED SAFELY LOVE AND KISSES= JOSEPH VANLAECKEN APO 637 C/O POSTMASTER NEWYORK.		

A telegram home, received there ten days after arrival in England, but because of wartime censorship, no mention of where he "arrived".

57. WHILE THE PILOTS WERE TRAINING AT TWINWOOD, THE 16 RADIO OBSERVERS WERE GOING THROUGH THE REGULAR RAF AI OBSERVERS SCHOOL AT USWORTH, ENGLAND. THE OBSERVERS FROM BOTH THE 416 AND 417 SQUADRONS WERE IN THE COURSE, WHICH LASTED FROM MAY 14 TO JUNE 10. IN THAT TIME THE MEN UNDER THEIR RAF INSTRUCTORS TOTALLED ABOUT 35 FLYING HOURS EACH IN "BLOODY ANSONS", TOGETHER WITH THE REGULAR CLASSROOM WORK. THE AMERICANS AS A WHOLE, HAVING ALREADY BEEN THROUGH SIMILAR TRAINING IN THE STATES, DID FAR BETTER THAN THE AVERAGE ENGLISH COURSES. IN THE INTER-SQUADRON COMPETITION, IT WAS THE OBSERVERS FROM 417 WHO WON THE SILVER-PLATED TROPHY! LONG LIVE F/O JOHN GRANT, P/O BOB LANDYMORE (RAF), TWO OF THE BEST FELLOWS WE EVER MET, OUR INSTRUCTORS AT USWORTH! ALSO WITH US AT USWORTH WERE F/O WILLIMEN AND HASSELTINE, OUR RAF LIAISON OFFICERS WHO STAYED WITH US FOR THE REST OF OUR STAY IN ENGLAND.

SUNDAY, 23 MAY 1943

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron, VIII Fighter Command based at Cranfield, England sends a detachment to Scorton, England to train with the RAF on Beaufighters. COMBAT CHRONOLOGY OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCES DECEMBER 1941-1945

58. ON THE 23RD OF MAY, LT DOESCHER AND A SMALL DETAIL OF MEN WENT FROM AYR TO SCORTON, ENGLAND, TO LOOK OVER OUR NEW HOME. THE ENTIRE SQUADRON MOVED IN ON THE RAF STATION AT SCORTON ON JUNE 10TH, CONVERGING FROM ALL POINTS, AND ONCE AGAIN THE SQUADRON WAS TOGETHER. SCORTON WAS AN OPERATIONAL RAF AIRBASE, HOME OF THE RAF 604 SQUADRON, WITH MARK VIII AI EQUIPPED NIGHT FIGHTERS, FLYING BEAU

VI'S. WE SHARED THE AIR-BASE WITH THEM, EATING IN THE RAF MESS, ETC. SCORTON SERVED AS AN OTU FOR OUR SQUADRON, AND IT WAS HERE WE GOT OUR 12 BEAU VI'S, MARK

THURSDAY, 10 JUNE 1943

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron, VIII Fighter Command transfers from Cranfield, England to Scorton, England. The detachments at Ayr, Scotland and Uxbridge, Coltishall and Bristol, England transfer to Scorton. The squadron is attached to the RAF for training on Beaufighters. COMBAT CHRONOLOGY OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCES DECEMBER 1941-1945

IV AI, AND THE PILOTS TEAMED UP WITH THE R.O.'S. THE C.O., AND DANNY CORDELL, LTS STIRNUS AND LARSEN, BEING OPERATIONS OFFICERS, HAD NO PARTICULAR R.O.; LT LEE AND LEN POTTER, LT MCCRAY AND BOB HAMILTON; LT LEONARD AND "CHRIS" CHRISTENSEN; LT HOOTON AND JOHNNTE FENIMORE; LT WATSON AND TELLO DESANTIS; LT MACQUEEN AND BOY HALL; LT KIRWAN AND "VAN" VAN LAECKEN; LT SWIFT AND HOWARD KOHRMAN; LT GROOM AND HAROLD ROTH; LT HUGHES AND JOHNNIE CLEMMENS; F/O JEFFREY AND "WILLIE" HENDERSON; F/O MCCLAIN AND JOS HENDERSHOTT; F/O

FULLER AND "TONY" SPEIER; F/O WILLIAMSON AND GEORGE ALLEN, F/O LEEMAN AND JOE DRAPER. TWO MEN AND AN AIRPLANE, A FIGHTING TEAM.

59. THE SQUADRON STAYED AT SCORTON FROM JUNE 10 TO AUGUST 10, THOUGH THE AIRCREWS AND CERTAIN OTHER MEN LEFT EARLIER. DURING THIS TIME, THE CREWS AVERAGED FROM 70 TO 80 HOURS EACH FLYING TIME. NIGHT AND DAY DOING PRACTICE INTERCEPTIONS. THE AVERAGE NIGHT TIME WAS ABOUT 25 HOURS. THE R.O.'S STUDIED NAVIGATION UNDER F/O HASSELTINE AND ALL CREWS TOOK ONE OR MORE NON-STOP CROSS COUNTRIES OF FROM 500 TO 1,000 MILES.

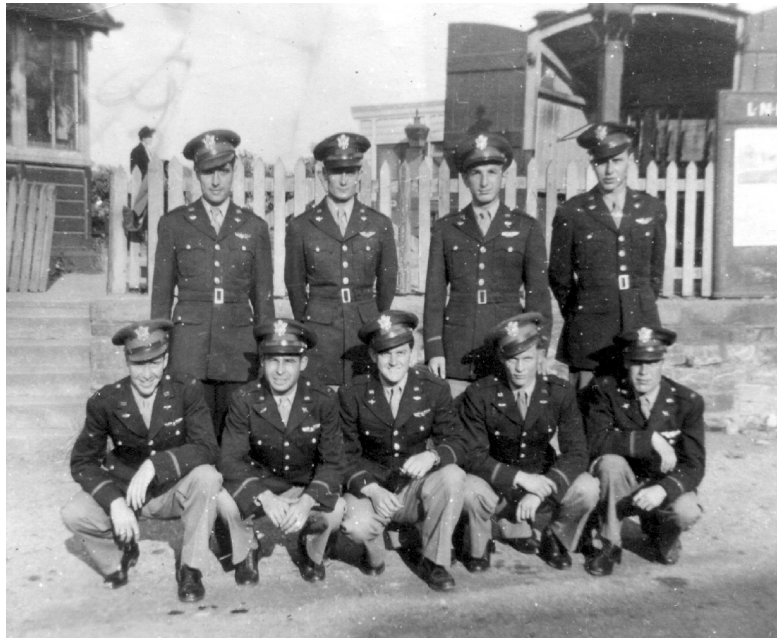
60. ON MAY 22, 417 SQUADRON HAD ITS FIRST FATAL ACCIDENT. F/O MCCLAIN, HIS OBSERVER, JOE HENDERSHOTT, AND A MECHANIC, CPL DYER, CRACKED UP ON THE COAST WHEN COMING BACK FROM SOME AIR TO SEA FIRING. MCCLAIN AND DYER WERE KILLED, HENDERSHOTT MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED WITH A BAD BACK WHICH THOUGH NOT SERIOUS, RESULTING IN HOSPITALIZATION AND HIS TRANSFER OUT OF THE SQUADRON.

61. ON THE 17TH OF MAY, PILOTS LEONARD, LARSEN, MACQUEEN AND MCCRAY WERE APPOINTED 1ST LTS, AND A FEW DAYS LATER, LTS LEE AND STIRNUS. TWO MORE OBSERVERS GOT THEIR RATING AS FLIGHT OFFICERS, LEN POTTER AND ROBT HAMILTON. LTS BROWN, MOESER AND SIMPSON WERE PROMOTED TO 1ST LT AROUND THE 1ST OF JULY.

62. TO REPLACE MCCLAIN, F/O THEODORE DEAKYNE JOINED THE SQUADRON ON JULY 5TH. "DEKE" HAD FORMERLY BEEN WITH THE RCAF IN ACTIVE OPERATIONS, WHICH INCLUDED INTRUDER SWEEPS OVER FRANCE IN A-20'S AND MOSQUITOS. SGT PETTINGILL, OBSERVER, ALSO JOINED US AT THIS TIME, SO HE



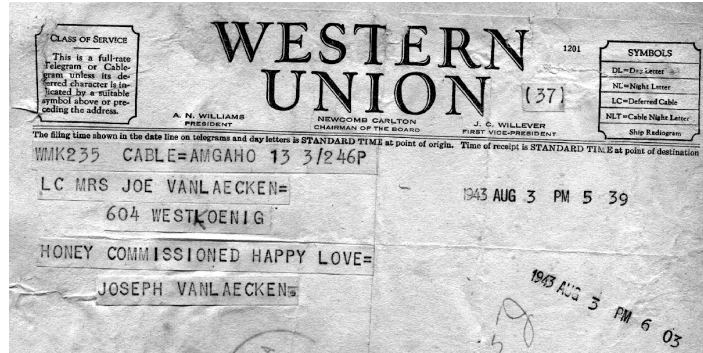
417th NFS RO's on their way to London to get their Flight Officers Kit. Standing, from left: Cpl John J.F. Fenimore, S/Sgt Ray W. Hall, Pvt Howard A. Kohrman, Cpl. Joe Van Laecken, S/Sgt Ray Christensen, Cpl Tello De Santis, front row-left, Pvt. Harold L. Roth, Cpl Joe F. Draper, Pvt Antony A. Speier Jr, Pvt. John F. Clemmens, Cpl George F. Allen.



417th NFS newly Commissioned RO's ready to leave London, fitted out in their new Flight Officer uniforms and ready to take on the world. Standing from Left, Joe M. Van Laecken, John F. Clemmens, Howard A. Kohrman, Tello De Santis. Front from left: Joe F. Draper, George F. Allen, Antony A. Speier, John J. F. Fenimore, Harold L. Roth.

AND "DEKE" TEAMED UP. PETTINGILL HAD BEEN WITH THE 415TH N.F.S. BUT HAD BEEN LEFT BEHIND DUE TO ILLNESS.

63. ON THE 12TH OF JULY, OUR C. O., CAPT JOS. T. EHLINGER, WAS APPOINTED MAJOR AND EVERY MAN-JACK OF US WAS SINCERELY PLEASED. CONGRATULATIONS MAJOR! ON THE SAME DAY, PVT WILLIAM ROBLE, OBSERVER LEFT BEHIND BY THE 414TH N.F.S. DUE TO ILLNESS WAS ATTACHED TO US, AND MET SOME OLD FRIENDS. BILL IS ONE OF THE VERY FIRST RADIO OBSERVERS IN THE U.S. ARMY, AND ONLY MILES OF MISDIRECTED RED-TAPE AND MISCHANCE KEEPS HIM STILL IN THE ENLISTED RANKS.



Finally, after months of training and waiting the Commission as a Flight Officer comes through!

64. ON JULY 29TH, AT LONG LAST, AND WE REALLY MEAN LONG, THE REST OF THE OBSERVERS RECEIVED THEIR FLIGHT OFFICER RATINGS, EFFECTIVE JULY 30, 1943. S/SGTS HALL AND CHRISTENSEN, CPLS DESANTIS, ALLEN, VAN LAECKEN, DRAPER AND FENIMORE, PVTS KOHRMAN, ROTH, CLEMMENS AND SPEIER. ALL EXCEPT S/SGT "WILLIE" HENDERSON, THE RESULTS OF WHOSE PHYSICAL EXAM TAKEN TO LONDON HAD SOMEHOW BEEN DELAYED. THE MEN HAD ALL JOURNEYED DOWN TO AJAX NEAR LONDON TO GET THEIR RATINGS, AND IN AN HOURS TIME IN THE LONDON PX, BOUGHT THEIR UNIFORMS. NO TIME MORE COULD BE SPARED. THE SQUADRON WAS GETTING READY TO MOVE.

65. ON THE 28TH, LTS HOOTON, WATSON, AND PALMER WERE MADE 1ST LTS, AND F/O THADDEUS KULPINSKI, RADIO OBSERVER, RECENT TRANSFER FROM THE (POLISH) RAF, AND IN THE CLASS BEHIND OUR OTHER OBSERVERS, AT USWORTH, JOINED US.

66. BY THIS TIME, WE ALL KNEW WE WERE GOING TO AFRICA, FLYING OUR 12 BEAUFIGHTERS DOWN AND THE REST OF THE SQUADRON FOLLOWING BY AIR TRANSPORT, BOAT OR BOTH. THE 12 LUCKY CREWS (WE HAD 18 FULL CREWS IN ALL) TOOK OFF FROM SCORTON TO ENGLAND'S JUMPING OFF PLACE, AT PORTREATH, CORNWALL, ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 31ST. THAT IS, ALL BUT F/O LEEMAN, WHOSE PLANE WAS ACTING UP. THE 6

The following Aircrew and support staff flew the eleven Beaufighters to North Africa. Arrangement does not indicate crew assignments.

Major Joseph T. Ehlinger, Pilot	F/O Joe F. Draper, R/O
1 st Lt. William A. Larsen, Pilot	F/O Dan B. Cordell, R/O
1 st Lt. Herman A. Stimus, Pilot	F/O Anthony A. Speier, R/O
1 st Lt. Clarence R. McCray, Pilot	F/O Joseph M. Van Laecken, R/O
1 st Lt. John S.M. Lee, Pilot	F/O Robert D. Hamilton, R/O
1 st Lt. Alexander L. MacQueen, Pilot	F/O Harold L. Roth, R/O
1 st Lt. Samuel B. Hooten, Pilot	F/O Leonard R. Potter, R/O
2 nd Lt. Walter G. Groom, Pilot	F/O Roy W. Hall, R/O
F/O Rayford W. Jeffrey, Pilot	F/O John J.F. Fenimore, R/O
F/O William R. Williamson, Pilot	F/O George F. Allen, R/O
F/O Roland O. Leeman, Pilot	Sgt. William (NMI) Pettingill

REMAINING CREWS STILL HAD HOPES OF GETTING SOME PLANES TO FLY DOWN, AND ON AUG. 4, 1ST LTS LEONARD, 2ND LTS HUGHES, KIRWAN, AND SWIFT, F/O'S DEAKYNE, FULLER, KULPINSKI, CHRISTENSEN, CLEMMENS, KOHRMAN, S/SGT HENDERSON AND PVT ROBLE, PILOTS AND OBSERVERS, TOOK THE TRAIN WITH ALL THEIR FLYING CLOTHES, PARACHUTES, DINGHIES AND REGULAR BAGGAGE FOR THE LONG RIDE TO PORTREATH.

67. THE 6 CREWS ABOVE ARRIVED AT PORTREATH TO FIND, TO THEIR AMAZEMENT, THAT THE REST OF OUR CREWS WERE STILL THERE. THE 416 SQUADRON WITH WHOM THEY WERE FLYING WITH DOWN TO GIBRALTER AND AFRICA HAD HAD WEATHER TROUBLE IN GETTING DOWN TO PORTREATH, AND WERE STILL DRIFTING IN, ONE BY ONE. OUR OWN F/O LEEMAN AND JOE DRAPER DIDN'T GET THERE IN THEIR PLANE 'TIL THE 5TH EITHER, DUE TO MOTOR TROUBLE.

Night Fighters—1943

'Tis the dead of night and round the room
Where lie the sleeping men
Resounds the snore of half a score,
All sleeping sound. But then--

From out of operations comes
The tinkle of a bell.
And from the clerk--poor startled jerk--
There bursts a lusty yell.

"It's a scramble, boys!" is what he shouts,
And from their rocky beds
The aircrews rise, blinking sleepy eyes,
Shaking their tired heads.

It's a scramble right, as they rush around, Grabbing helmets, chutes and gear.
Then from the door pours the half a score,
And these are the words you hear:

"Where the hell is that pick-up wagon?
Where's the driver? Damn his soul?
Hey! Shake your rear--Let's get out of here--Come on, boy! Make this damned thing
roll!"

On the line the mechs have gathered--
Likewise wrested from their-dreams.
And they turn the props for the coming hops
'Midst the many flashlight beams.

Here're the flyers now; from the truck they jump;
Hurriedly don their kit;
Then into the ship for their aerial trip--
Damn! It's an awful tight fit!

A lightning check and the engines roar--
Makes echoes through the night.
See them taxi out--watch them turn about--
Now! They're ready for the flight!

"But wait! Who's this that is coming near
And waving his arms about?
It's the line chief. Hey, he's coming this way--Throttle down--What's he trying
to shout?

What? It's all a mistake? There's no Jerries up?
Well, I'll be damned." And a
Back to their nest, to their ruptured rest,
The cursing airmen go.

Well-maybe some day it won't be a mistake,
And we'll actually shoot one down!
Yeah! Maybe some day, when we're old and gray--
'Cause there just ain't no Jerries around!

An anonymous poem written by a member of the 417th NFS while in Onan, Africa

THIS IS
 NORTH AFRICA. THIS
 IS THE LAND ABOVE WHICH
 STRETCHES THE BLUE MEDITERANEAN AND BELOW
 KNOWN AS THE DARK CONTINENT. DOWN THERE STAN-
 LEY'S SAFARI FOUND DR. LIVINGSTONE, LIVING STILL.
 UP HERE, HOPE, CROSBY, AND PARAMOUNT FOUND DOROTHY
 LAMOUR. THIS IS NORTH AFRICA -- LAND OF BUM-BUM, SWING
 GUM AND VINO -- THE HOME OF AUTUMN-COLORED, TATOOED
 SPHINXES WHO REVEAL THEIR SEX MAINLY BY SNICKERING BE-
 HIND VEILS AT THE BOLDNESS OF JOHNNY DOUGHBOY -- THE HOME
 OF RUSTY-SKINNED MEN WHO, FRANC-LY SPEAKING, CARRY EVERYTHING
 FROM A DOZEN "HORNAJUZ" TO AN UNWASHED THREE-YEAR-OLD BEGGAR
 IN THEIR FULL-FIELD PANTS. THIS IS THE LAND OF MYSTERY, IN-
 TRIGUE, ADVENTURE AND KILOMETERS; OF ROADS ON WHICH WHEEZE CHAR-
 COALED BUSSES, SARDINED, AND ROOFED WITH ENOUGH HUMANITY TO ELECT
 A GOVERNOR FOR NEBRASKA... THIS IS WHERE THE WEATHER IS PUT
 TOGETHER -- AND TORN APART. HERE ARE
 PASTURES FOR COUNTLESS SHEEP,
 GOATS, DONKEYS, AND DISCONTENTED,
 UNYIELDING COWS WHO NIBBLE FOR
 NOURISHMENT THRU A SOLDIER'S
 PALACE OF A PUP-TENT, DE-
 POSITING TRACES OF THEIR
 NOURISHMENT. THIS IS
 NORTH AFRICA -- SPRAWLING
 AND SMELLING -- COATED
 WITH SAND SHIEKS -- HUMPED
 WITH MOUNTAINS AND CAMELS --
 DRY WITH CRACKLING
 HEAT -- WET WITH UN-
 SEASONAL RAINS AND
 SQUATTING FIGURES --
 EMPTY WITHOUT DOR-
 OTHY LAMOUR --
 OR A REASONABLE
 FACSIMILE
 THERE
 OF.

"This is a little story of North Africa made in the shape of Africa by one of our boys," wrote Joe Van
 Laecken in a letter home, along with the note "It isn't real good, but it isn't too bad", 1943.

68. VARIOUS PLANES OF 417 SQUADRON, TOGETHER WITH RAF COASTAL COMMAND ESCORTS (ALSO IN BEAUFIGHTERS) TOOK OFF FROM PORTREATH, ENGLAND, TO GIBRALTER EARLY ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 7TH. A 1200 MILE JAUNT WAS BEFORE THEM. THE TRIP PROVED WITHOUT INCIDENT AND IN 6 HOURS TIME, ALL LANDED SAFELY AT GIBRALTER. AT 2:00 PM, THEY TOOK OFF ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN (ALL EXCEPT LT LARSEN AND F/O SPEIER WHO CAME A DAY LATER DUE TO ENGINE TROUBLE), AND LANDED AT 4:00 PM AT RAS-EL-MA, FRENCH MOROCCO. THERE THEY SPENT THE NIGHT AND THE NEXT AFTERNOON TOOK OFF FOR TAFABAQUI, ALGERIA, LANDING IN TIME FOR SUPPER, AUGUST 8TH/43. WE SHARE THE FIELD WITH BRITISH AND FREE FRENCH IN P-39s.

SUNDAY, 8 AUGUST 1943

The 416th Night Fighter Squadron, Twelfth Air Force, arrives at Algiers, Algeria from England where it trained with Beaufighters.

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron, Twelfth Air Force, arrives at Tafaraoui, Algeria from England where it trained with Beaufighters.

The squadron flies it's first combat mission today. COMBAT CHRONOLOGY OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCES DECEMBER 1941-1945

70. THE SIX REMAINING CREWS HUNG AROUND PORTREATH, MOMENTARILY AWAITING ORDERS FROM THE 5TH 'TIL THE 13TH. 8 DAYS OF NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN LEISURE AND ALL AROUND ENJOYMENT. GREAT COUNTRY, CORNWALL. ON THE 13TH, THEY WERE HUSTLED INTO TRUCKS AND CARRIED TO THE AMERICAN BASE AT ST MAWGANS, SOME 30 MILES AWAY. THERE A C-47 AWAITED THEM, AND THEY AND THEIR BAGGAGE FITTED IN EASILY. GONE WERE THEIR HOPES OF GETTING BEAUS OF THEIR OWN TO FLY DOWN. LOOKED LIKE AIR TRANSPORTATION FOR THEM. IN A DRIVING RAIN THEY TOOK OFF AND HEADED NORTH. 2-1/2 HOURS LATER THEY LANDED AT PRESTWICK, SCOTLAND, HEADQUARTERS OF THE AMERICAN TRANSPORT COMMAND, AND SOME 400 MILES FARTHER AWAY FROM AFRICA THAN PORTREATH.

71. BUT WORSE WAS YET TO COME. "YOUR SHIP AWAITS, YOU'LL SPEND THE NIGHT ABOARD", SAID THE TRANSPORTATION CAPTAIN IN CHARGE.

"SPEND THE NIGHT ABOARD" ROARED LT JOE LEONARD, "WHAT KIND OF SHIP ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?" "YOU MEAN A WATER SHIP DO YOU" QUERIED F/O KOHRMAN. TO THEIR HORROR, DISGUST AND UTTER DISAPPOINTMENT, THAT WAS JUST WHAT HE MEANT. AIR CREW, NIGHT FIGHTERS, TRAVELING BY BOAT! IT WAS SEVERAL MILES TO GLASGOW AND THE DISGRUNTLED DOZEN WERE PUT ABOARD THE BRITISH S.S. ORMONDE AT ABOUT 10:00 PM, AUGUST 13TH. ON BOARD, WE MET 8 MORE PILOTS AND OBSERVERS FROM 416TH N.F.S. THAT MADE 20 AMERICANS ON A BOAT LOADED WITH SOME 3,000 BRITISH ARMY OFFICERS AND MEN.



Troop Ship "Durbin Castle" carried most of the 417th non flight contingent from England to Oran, N. Africa in 30 days. "Doc" Katzberg in charge.

72. IN THE SAME CONVOY, THOUGH NEITHER GROUP KNEW IT AT THE TIME, ON THE S. S. DURBAN CASTLE, ANCHORED AT GRENNOCK, WAS THE REST OF THE SQUADRON, GROUND

PERSONNEL, ETC. THEY HAD LEFT SCORTON ON THE 10TH, AND BOARDED SHIP AT GLASGLOW ON THE 11TH. FROM THE, 'TIL THE CONVOY MOVED OUT ON THE EVENING OF THE 16TH THEY HAD JUST IDLED AWAY TIME IN THE HARBOR.

73. THERE WERE ABOUT 32 SHIPS IN THE CONVOY, ALL IN THE 15,000 TON CLASS, WITH THE USUAL DESTROYER AND CORVETTER ESCORT. AFTER 7 DAYS AT SEA WE WENT BY GIBRALTER ON THE 23RD. THE TRIP HAD BEEN QUIET AND UNEVENTFUL, THOUGH MANY INSIST THAT ONE OF THE DESTROYERS GOT A GERMAN SUBMARINE. ON THE 24TH OF AUGUST, SEVERAL OF THE SHIPS, THE S.S. ORMONDE INCLUDED, PULLED INTO ALGIERS HARBOR, ALGERIA. 8 DAYS AT SEA, 9 ON BOARD SHIP. THE 12 PILOTS AND OBSERVERS WITH THE OTHER 8 DISEMBARKED THE NEXT AFTERNOON, WERE MET BY CAPTAIN PECKHAM (INTELLIGENCE) OF 416TH N.F.S., SPENT THE NIGHT IN ALGIERS AND WERE OFF BY ARMY TRANSPORT PLANE TO ORAN THE AFTERNOON OF THE 26TH.

74. THE S.S. DURBAN CASTLE, CARRYING THE REST OF THE SQUADRON STEAMED SOME 200 MILES FURTHER EAST TO PHILLIPVILLE (HEAVEN KNOWS WHY), AND THEN BACK WEST TO ALGIERS, THEN ON TO ORAN, WHERE THEY PUT INTO HARBOR ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE 27TH. 11 DAYS AT SEA, 16 DAYS ON BOARD SHIP! THE NEXT MORNING THEY PROCEEDED BY G.I. TRUCK TO TAFARAOU. AUGUST 28/43, THE ENTIRE SQUADRON WAS UNITED ONCE AGAIN. A MONTH SPENT IN GETTING US ALL FROM SCORTON, ENGLAND TO TAFARAOU, ALGERIA, NO. AFRICA. GOOD? BAD?

75. SINCE ARRIVING AT TAFARAOU ON AUGUST 8, THE 12 AIRCREWS, WITH BUT A HANDFUL OF CREW SHIP CHIEFS AND MAINTENANCE MEN, HAD BEEN ON ACTIVE OPERATIONS, DOING CONVOY PATROL BOTH DAY AND NIGHT. THEY ATE IN THE RAF MESS AND BORROWED RAF BLANKETS, AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE SQUADRON. WHEN THE OTHER 6 CREWS ARRIVED, AND THE REST OF THE SQUADRON, OUR OWN MESS WAS SET UP, AND THE TERRIFIC STRAIN ON AIR CREWS, AIRPLANES AND MAINTENANCE MEN WAS EASED. CONSTANTLY PLAGUED BY DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING MEN WAS EASED.



"Roll Call" at Tafariou

CONSTANTLY PLAGUED BY DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING SPARE PARTS FOR OUR BEAUFIGHTERS, MAINTAINING NEVERTHELESS ROSE IMMEDIATELY WHEN THE ENTIRE SQUADRON WAS FINALLY ASSEMBLED.

76. THE SQUADRON'S SECOND FATAL CRASH IN ITS 7 MONTHS OF EXISTENCE OCCURED ON THE MORNING AFTER THE SQUADRON ASSEMBLED. 1ST LT CHESTER K. WATSON AND HIS OBSERVER F/O TELLO DESANTIS, COMING BACK FOR LANDING FROM A DAWN PATROL WITH THE FIELD CLOSED IN CRASHED INTO A MOUNTAIN TOP SEVERAL MILES FROM THE BASE. BOTH WERE KILLED. THEY HAD BEEN AMONG THE FIRST CREWS DOWN HERE. WE MISS YOU, "WATTY AND...

77. S/SGT "WILLIE" HENDERSON, OBSERVER, HAD RECEIVED WORD OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS FLIGHT OFFICER WHILE STILL AT PORTREATH, BUT ON THE 30TH ALL THE PAPERS CAME THROUGH, AND HE WAS OFFICIALLY IN! DON'T KNOW WHO WAS MORE PLEASED, "WILLIE" OR HIS PILOT, JEFF. (F/O JEFFREYS).

78. NOW COMES TWO MONTHS, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, OF REGULAR SQUADRON DUTY. FOR THE 3 FLIGHTS OF AIR-CREWS, ONE DAY ON ALERT, ONE DAY STAND-BY AND ONE DAY OFF DUTY. 1ST LT MCCRAY, FLIGHT COMMANDER OF "A" FLIGHT, 1ST LT LEE, "B" FLIGHT, AND 1ST LT MACQUEEN, "C" FLIGHT. TWO OPERATIONS OFFICERS, 1ST LT LARSEN AND STIRNUS, AND 5 AIR-CREWS IN EACH FLIGHT. 18 CREWS IN ALL COUNTING THE C.O. AND THE OPERATIONS OFFICER.



417th NFS, Oran, No. Africa 1943/44

417th NFS, Original Flight Crews: Maj Joe Ehlinger, CO; **FRONT ROW:** John Clemens-RO, John S.M. Lee-Pilot, Joe Leonard-Pilot, Samuel "Chick" Hooten-Pilot, Bob Swift-Pilot, John Femmimore-RO, George Allen-RO; **2nd ROW:** Rayford Jeffries-Pilot, Clarence Fuller-Pilot, Walter "Grumpy" Groom-Pilot, Joe Ehlinger-Pilot, Kenneth K. Nelson-Pilot, Herold Roth-RO, Tony Speier-RO; **3rd ROW:** Howard Kohrman-RO, Roy Hall-RO, Bill Henderson-RO, Hank Stirnus-Pilot, Joe Draper-RO, Willie Roble-RO, Alex McQueen-Pilot, Danny Cordell-RO, Ray Christianson-RO, Ted Kulpinski-RO, Joe Van Laecken-RO, Ted Deakyn-Pilot, Jack Kirwan-Pilot, Larry Potter-RO, Bill Larsen-Pilot, Dick McCray-Pilot

79. AT FIRST WE DID CONVOY AND HARBOR PATROLS DAY AND NIGHT, THOUGH THERE IS A FRENCH SQUADRON OF P-39'S ON THE FIELD. NOT SO GOOD FOR NIGHT FIGHTER'S WHO NEED THEIR DAYS FOR N.F.T.'S AND NIGHTS FOR P.I.'S WITH GCI AND COL STATIONS. BUT IT WAS FINALLY STRAIGHTENED OUT, WITH NO MORE OPERATIONAL DUTY FOR US FROM DAWN TO DUSK. OUR AIRPLANES WERE BUILDING UP HOURS ON THE ENGINES FAST ENOUGH, AND WE HAVE MORE OPERATIONAL HOURS TO THE SQUADRON'S CREDIT PER TIME SPENT IN THIS THEATER THAN OTHER AMERICAN (AND QUITE PROBABLY ENGLISH) NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON OVER HERE.

80. ON THE 9TH OF SEPT, F/O ROLAND O. LEEMAN, PILOT, WAS TRANSFERRED OUT, ON HIS OWN REQUEST. HE FIGURED HE LIKED DAY-FIGHTERS BETTER, AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY STATED. ON THE 19TH, GOOD OLD DEACON (F/O DEAKYNE) WAS DEFINITELY ASSIGNED TO US, MUCH TO OUR RELIEF, FOR HE'D ONLY BEEN ATTACHED SINCE JOINING US AT SCORTON, ENGLAND. HOWEVER, WE DEFINITELY LOST SGT. PETTINGILL, OBSERVER, TO THE 414TH. "DEKE" NOW FLIES WITH PVT ROBLE. (HIS PAPERS FOR F/O RATING ARE NOW IN. GOOD LUCK, BILL).

81. IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPT, **THE SQUADRON GOT ITS FIRST AND TO DATE ONLY TASTE OF JERRY.** 2ND LT. JACK KIRWAN AND HIS OBSERVER, F/O VAN LAECKEN SIGHTED A LONE JU88 RECCO SHIP IN THE EARLY DAYLIGHT HOURS, AND DAMAGED IT. 700 YARDS WAS THE NEAREST THEY COULD GET, AND THEY WERE GOING "ALL OUT" ON THE DECK. IN HIS INITIAL DIVE DOWN, JACK'S BEAUFIGHTER HAD LOST A PIECE OF

~~SECRET~~

~~7633~~

TABLE I - STATUS OF AIRCRAFT

[illegible]

TABLE II - STATUS OF PERSONNEL

TABLE II (See Instructions)												
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ONE BRAIN. IT OUT WITH TAIL WHEEL SHIMMY
TWO " " FOR 180 MP INSPECTION
ONE " " " 120 MP
ONE " " AWAITING BOOST GAUGE.
YOUR GCI CONTROLLERS ON DETAINED
SERVICE.
GROUND ECHOLON HAS NOT ARRIVED
FROM ENGLAND.

WEEKLY STATUS AND OPERATIONS REPORT
(REPORT FOR PERIOD 5/17/43 TO 5/17/43 INCLUSIVE)

[illegible][illegible]

TABLE IV
DAILY CONSUMPTION

	Qty	Unit
Includes Training, Conduit and All Others		
1. Total Hours Placed <u>70 HR 50 MIN</u>		
2. Total Cables Connected <u>6127 GAL</u>		
3. Total Burials and Amputations Used <u>NIL</u>		

Code to TABLE III (Class Instructions)													
Column 3		Column 4		Column 11		Column 12		Column 18		Column 24-25		Column 30	
Type of Measure	Code	Type of Objective	Code	Measure of Achievement	Code	Type of Activities	Code	Measure of A.B.	Code	Contents of A.B.	Code	Days or Weeks	Code
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
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15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
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118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118</

TABLE V- REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

① Remarks	1. Supply Information ② Recommendations	2. Training Personnel ① Remarks	3. Technical Personnel ① Remarks	4. Field Conditions, Weather, Communications ① Remarks	5. Technical, Subject, Remarks or Remarks ② Recommendations	6. Remarks
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Mr. Carl T. Higgins

SECRET

May 1948 T. S. Sullivan
Signature of Commanding Officer

ITS STARBOARD WING PLATING, SO WE CONSIDER HE WAS LUCKY TO GET THAT CLOSE. JERRY MAY HAVE GOT AWAY, BUT HE WAS HURT BAD.

82. ON THE 24TH OF SEPT. CAPT K.K. NELSON AND HIS OBS, F/O PERKINS, JOINED THE SQUADRON WHICH WAS AT THAT TIME, AND STILL IS, UNDER STRENGTH IN PILOTS. CAPT NELSON, FORMERLY OF THE 414TH N.F.S. WAS MADE OPERATIONS OFFICER AND LT. STIRNUS, ASSISTANT OPERATIONS OFFICER. LT. LARSEN NOW HEADS "A" FLIGHT, LT LEE "B" FLIGHT, AND LT



Radar Group, sitting on empty cans, Tafaroui, 1943

MCCRAY "C" FLIGHT. CAPTAIN NELSON CAME IN, BRAND-NEW TO THE SQUADRON, WITH A LOT OF IDEAS. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF OPINION IS THAT HE'S DONE A DARNED GOOD JOB, AND BESIDES, HE'S A PRETTY GOOD SOFTBALL PITCHER.

83. THE USUAL SQUADRON ACTIVITIES GO ON, THROUGH SEPTEMBER AND INTO OCTOBER. PROMOTIONS AMONG THE ENLISTED MEN, HOPES AMONG THE OFFICERS. ON OCTOBER 8TH, 2ND LT. HUGHES WAS TRANSFERRED OUT FROM NIGHT FLYING TO DAY, ALSO AT HIS OWN REQUEST, LEAVING HIS OBSERVER, F/O CLEMENS AS SPARE-CREW. SOMEWHERE ABOUT THIS TIME, LT STIRNUS WENT INTO SICKBAY WITH A TOUCH OF MALARIA, ON THE VERY DAY OF HIS OBSERVER F/O KULPINSKI WAS RELEASED. NOTHING SERIOUS, AND "DOC" KATZBERG LOADED HIM WITH QUININE AND FIXED HIM UP.

84. ON THE 19TH, PVT ROBLE WAS DEFINITELY ASSIGNED TO US, WHICH IS A GOOD THING. OUR AIRPLANE ENGINES ARE RAPIDLY BEING GROUNDED WITH 250 HOURS ON THEM, AND NO REPLACEMENTS TO BE HAD. THE MAJOR HAS BEEN TO ALGIERS BEGGING. NO LUCK! WE'RE SLATED TO GET NEW BEAUFIGHTER MK VI'S WITH MARK VIII RADAR.

BUT WHERE ARE THEY? WE'RE READY AND WAITING. THE MAJOR AND DANNY CORDELL, AND LT. SWIFT, AND F/O KOHRMAN WERE UP ON DUSK PATROL ON OCTOBER 22ND OFF CAPE TENES. 30 MILES NORTH OF THE CONVOY, AT 8,000 FEET THEY SIGHTED 20 PLUS JERRIES COMING IN ON THE DECK. THEY TURNED AND DOVE ON THEM, BUT LOST THEM IN THE MURKY GLOOM IN THE EAST. MARK IV RADAR COULDN'T HOLD THEM, AND THEY HAD TO STAND BY AS THE CONVOY WAS ATTACKED AND THE RAF WITH MARK VIII BEAUS GOT ALL THE PICKINGS.



85. THE FOLLOWING IS THE SQUADRON HISTORY OF THIS ORGANIZATION FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, Tatum and Gathright with Beaufighter, note the Mk IV radar antenna on nose.

1-30 INCLUSIVE.

"GROUNDED", THE SQUADRON NEWSPAPER WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 13. FROM THE VERY FIRST, THE PAPER WAS A SUCCESS, IN AS MUCH AS IT GAVE SOME OF THE VERY LATEST, REGARDING SQUADRON ACTIVITIES, PLUS ADDING A LITTLE SPICE TO VARIOUS HAPPENINGS.

86. JUST PRIOR TO THE PAPER'S BIRTH, TWO ORDNANCE MEN DECIDED TO CONDUCT A LITTLE RESEARCH IN EXPLOSIVES, AND ARRIVED AT THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU CAN'T CAP BOTH ENDS OF A PIPE LOADED WITH IGNITED GUN POWDER.



87. ON NOVEMBER 24, THE SQUADRON RECEIVED A VISIT OF THE RED CROSS CLUB-MOBILE, AND RECEIVED AN ISSUE OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES. AT SUPPER, DOUGHNUTS WERE PASSED OUT, AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE MEN PROVIDED BY A VISITING WAC AND TWO ENLISTED MEN.

The armor group in North Africa taking a five minute break. They are: Adam Darrell, Charles Hancock, Clarence Jensen, "Tex" Joe Bell, Ed Mahon, John Sobczak, and Warren Barney.

88. THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 25. ON THIS GALA OCCASION, TROOPS WERE FED IN THE STYLE APPROVED BY KINGS, EMPERORS, SULTANS, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, PRESIDENTS. TURKEY, (LIGHT AND DARK MEAT), CRANBERRY SAUCE, MASHED POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES, PEAS AND CARROTS, ONIONS, FRUIT SALAD, PUMPKIN PIE AND COFFEE. (THE FOREGOING IS BUT A SAMPLE OF THE REPAST ENJOYED BY THE 417TH).

89. TALENT, GLEAMED FROM THE INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF THE SQUADRON GAVE FORTH IT'S BEST PERFORMANCE OF THE FOLLOWING EVENING "MINSTREL SHOW", WITH LT JOHN S.M. LEE OFFICIATING AS M.C. T/SGT HEDRICK, S/SGTS ANDERTON, ATKINSON AND COLVILLE AS "END-MEN", AND A CHORUS COMPOSED OF 15 MEN. SO SUCCESSFUL WAS THE SHOW, THAT IT IS NOW SCHEDULED TO GO "ON THE ROAD".



Life in Tifariti, note the movie screen, tent city in the background, and men in meal line.

ORAN LAMENT

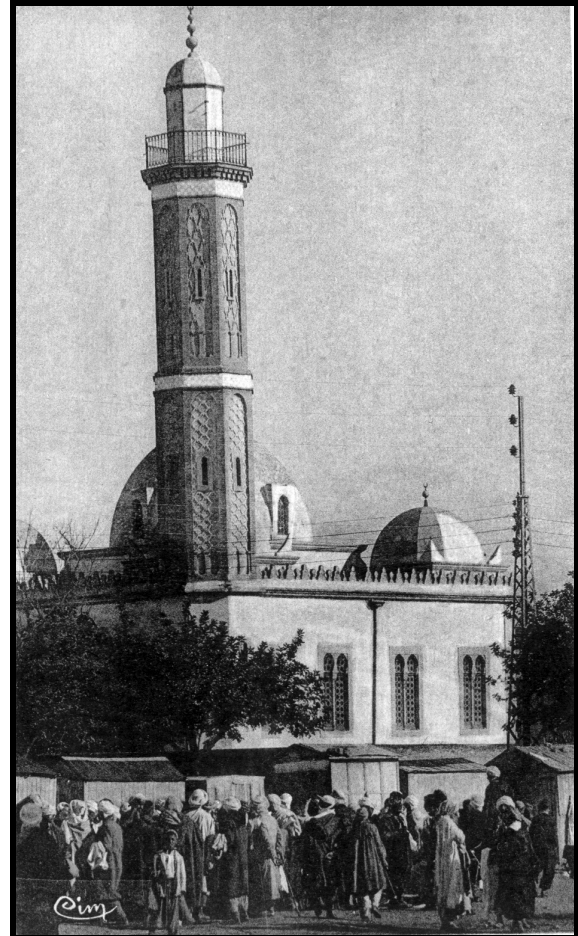
Somewhere near Oran,
Where the sun is like a curse,
And each day is usually followed
By another slightly worse;
Where the brick-red dust blows thicker
Than the shifting desert sands;
Were a Yank man dreams and wishes
For greener, fairer lands.

Somewhere near Oran,
Where women are never seen;
Where the sky is never cloudy
And the grass is never green;
Where the jackal's nightly howl
Robs a man of blessed sleep;
Where there isn't any whisky,
And the beer is never cheap.

Somewhere near Oran,
Where the mail is always late;
Where a Christmas card in April
Is considered up-to-date;
Where we never have a pay-day,
And we never have a cent,
But we never miss the money,
Because we never have it spent.

Somewhere near Oran,
Where the snakes and lizards play;
Where a thousand more flies
Replace the ones you slay.
Please, take me to my hometown,
And let me hear a church bell;
For this God-forsaken outpost
Is a substitute for hell.

—Pvt. LESTER O. H...



Oran Market, Algeria, North Africa while the

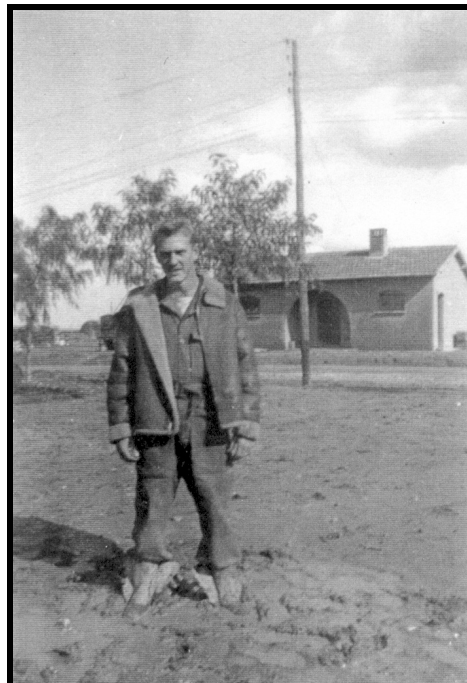


417th NFS Flight crew members, including R. Christensen-RO,
Joe Van Laecken-RO; Lt. Herman A. Stirnus-Pilot

Life at Tafarioui



Tafarioui Ball Team: (Front L-R) Pfc. Earl Bryan, Cpl. Roland Lawver, Umpire S/Sgt. Steve Perry, Sgt. Henry Konter, Cpl. Jack Chooljian. (Rear L-R) Manager T/Sgt Phil Sartin, Cpl. Regis Landy, Cpl. Wm. Ernst, S/Sgt. Allan Samson, S/Sgt. Jim Belcastro,



Mart Zenge standing in deep mud at



Wally Rodland, Dave Miller, Matty Zajonc, Eddie O'Neil



"Shorty" Gathright with Beaufighters, North Africa



Home was a Tent at Tafarioui, 1943

90. BUT ALL WAS NOT IN FUN. PILOTS AND RADIO OBSERVERS WERE GIVEN A TEST IN NAVIGATION BY SQUADRON INTELLIGENCE. TO PROVE THAT THEY HAD PAID ATTENTION TO LESSONS, HIGH MARKS WERE SCORED, AND NOT WITH SCARCITY. THIS, WITH ONE MONTHS INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION.



Earl Wetherald, 417th Line Chief, and natives at Tafaroui, North Africa

91. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED EVENTS, SEVERAL ACCIDENTS OCCURRED IN THE SQUADRON. AMONG THEM, A SMASHED AIRPLANE, A WRECKED AMBULANCE, WEAPONS CARRIER AND THREE JEEPS. A SHIP SUNK BY THE GERMANS IN ORAN HAD OUR MAIL ON IT!

92. DURING THE PERIOD DEC 1/43 TO DEC 13/43, NO SPECIAL EVENTS OCCURRED. ON DEC 14, 1943, LT R. A. WILLIAMS DEPARTED FROM TAFARAOU I FOR CORSICA TO MAKE ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR ARRIVAL THERE, AND ON DEC 26, LT C.S. FRAZEE LEFT FOR BIZERTE TO ARRANGE FOR EMBARKATION. ON DECEMBER 27, TWO SECTIONS LEFT FOR BIZERTE, ONE SECTION CONSISTING OF 86 ENLISTED MEN AND CAPTAIN GARDNER TRAVELLED BY TRUCK, THE OTHER SECTION CONSISTING OF 29 ENLISTED MEN AND THREE OFFICERS BROUGHT 15 OF THE SQUADRON VEHICLES.

93. ON THIS SAME DATE, DEC 27, LT R. C. SWIFT AND F/O H.A. KOHRMAN FAILED TO RETURN FROM AN OPERATIONAL MISSION. NO CAUSE IS KNOWN FOR THEIR FAILURE TO RETURN. THE EXACT POINT OF THEIR DISAPPEARANCE IS STILL UNKNOWN. WHETHER IN MID-MEDITERRANEAN, OR JUST OFF THE COAST OF NORTH AFRICA.

94. THE ENTIRE GROUND ECHELON ARRIVED AT THE BIZERTE STAGING AREA ON DEC 30, BOARDED LST 409 (BRITISH) ON DEC 31, LEAVING BEHIND THE 385TH SERVICE SQUADRON (WHICH HAD TRAVELLED WITH THEM), TWO OF THE SQUADRON VEHICLES AND FOUR ENLISTED MEN. NEW YEARS DAY WAS SPENT ABOARD SHIP IN THE HARBOR. (FOR THE GREATER PART OF THE SQUADRON (TAFARAOU I), NEW YEARS NIGHT (AS WELL AS CHRISTMAS) WAS NOISY AND RIOTOUS, WITH DISORGANIZED CAROL SINGING AND FALLING IN DITCHES.



L.A. Miller, Washinger, Swain, Memphis, Fred Pond with Jeep at Le Senia, North Africa

95. ON THE NIGHT OF JAN 3, 1944, THE GROUND ECHELON LEFT BIZERTE AND SPENT THE NIGHT OF THE 5TH IN THE HARBOR AT MADDELENA, SARDINIA, AND ARRIVED AT AJACCIO AT 1530 HRS ON THE 6TH OF JANUARY. THE NEXT

DAY, THE TRUCK CONVOY CROSSED THE ISLAND TO GHISONACCIA AND IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT CLEARING THE AREA AND SETTING UP TENTS, MID MUCH KIDDING BY BOYS OF NEIGHBORING SQUADRONS CALLING OUR BOYS "BOY SCOUTS" AND THE CAMP "HOLLYWOOD GARDEN". ON THE 9TH, THE REMAINDER OF THE MEN CAME IN AND THEY TOO WERE IN FOR MUCH KIBITZING, I.E., BEING KIDDED ABOUT THEIR DRILLING. A STANDING JOKE WAS, "OH! 417TH IS GETTING O.T.U. TRAINING, HUH?"

96. THOUGH NONE OF 417'S PLANES ARE THERE, ASSISTANCE WAS BEING GIVEN TO AN OCCASIONAL FLIGHT FROM THE 414TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON AND TO THE 310TH BOMB GROUP.

97. FROM JAN 9 TO 10, 417TH MOVED TO LA SENIA, ATTACHED TO THE RAF No. 337 WING.

ON THE EVENING OF JAN 20TH, F/O G.K. FULLER AND F/O J.F. CLEMMENS WERE BOTH KILLED WHILE TAKING OFF ON AN OPERATIONAL FLIGHT FROM LA SENIA. THEY CRASHED INTO THE SALT LAKE AT THE WESTERN END OF THE RUNWAY. DEATH WAS INSTANTANEOUS IN THE CASE OF P/O FULLER (PILOT) AND ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS IN THE CASE OF F/O CLEMMENS, (R.O.). F/O FULLER WAS TAKING LT STIRNUS' PLACE AND F/O CLEMMENS REPLACING F/O SPEIER. WELL, THOSE ARE THE BREAKS.



Worship Service at Ghisonaccia, Corsica, Jan 1944

THE REMAINDER OF JANUARY PASSED RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL.

98. FEBRUARY 2ND, WHILE ON CONVOY COVER OF CORSICA F/O RAYFORD W. JEFFREY, WITH HIS NAVIGATOR, F/O W.R. HENDERSON, ENGAGED A JU 88 IN COMBAT. AFTER F/O JEFFREY HAD MADE SEVERAL PASSES AT THE JERRY, FIRING AND SEEING HIS HITS REGISTER, CAPT K.K. NELSON (NAVIGATOR F/O R.E. PERKINS), CAME DOWN, JOINED IN AND ALSO MADE A PASS AT THE HUN; HAVING ARRIVED A MINUTE OR SO AFTER THE JERRY WAS FIRST SIGHTED BY F/O JEFFREY. F/O JEFFREY THEN MADE A FINAL RUN ON THE JERRY, FIRED AGAIN AND THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT WAS SEEN TO CRASH INTO THE SEA. ON THE WAY HOME, CAPT NELSON SIGHTED OTHER ENEMY AIRCRAFT.

99. FEBRUARY 11, LT JOHN S.M. LEE, WHILE PRACTICING SINGLE ENGINE OPERATION, ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTY IN COMPLETING A CYCLE OF OPERATION IN FEATHERING THE PROPELLER ON HIS STARBOARD ENGINE. SINCE HE HAD LOST ALTITUDE IN ATTEMPTING TO COMPLETE SAME, HE ABANDONED THE IDEA AND DECIDED THAT AN IMMEDIATE ONE ENGINE LANDING WAS IN ORDER. AT THIS TIME, HE WAS FLYING FROM EAST TO WEST, AND IN-AS-MUCH AS HE HAD JUST PASSED OVER THE SOUTH END OF THE FIELD, AND LANDINGS WERE FROM EAST TO WEST, HE COMPLETED A 180 DEGREE TURN. IN TRYING TO MAINTAIN HIS ALTITUDE, APPROXIMATELY 800 FEET, HIS AIR SPEED DROPPED OFF CONSIDERABLY AND THE SHIP WAS BELLIED IN ABOUT THREE MILES WEST OF THE FIELD IN THE LAKE BED. NEITHER HE, NOR HIS NAVIGATOR, F/O L.R. POTTER WERE INJURED.

100. ENLISTED MEN OF THIS ORGANIZATION ORGANIZED A BASKETBALL TEAM AMONG

THEMSELVES AND PROCEEDED TO TAKE ON ALL COMERS. TO DATE, TWO GAMES HAVE BEEN PLAYED, BOTH OF THEM VICTORIES. GAME NUMBER ONE WAS A WALK-A-WAY, OR, A MASSACRE. HOWEVER, GAME NUMBER TWO WAS WON BY THE SKIN OF THEIR TEETH. A MATTER OF THREE POINTS. BOTH OF THE GAMES WERE PLAYED ON THE TEAM'S HOME GROUND IN THE LARGE HANGAR AVAILABLE FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION.



The Old Swimming Hole in Corsica

101. DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, THE GROUND ECHELON IN CORSICA MOVED FROM GHISONACCIA TO BORGO WHERE THEY ARE HELPING OUT OTHER OPERATIONAL UNITS BY FURNISHING MEN AS NEEDED. THE MEN AND OFFICERS ESPECIALLY ENJOYED THE HOT BATHS FROM THE NATURAL HOT SULPHUR SPRINGS WHICH WERE SITUATED ABOUT 10 MILES FROM THE OLD CAMP SITE.

102. THE AIR ECHELON MAINTAINS IT'S PERIODICAL FLIGHTS TO CARRY MAIL AND PERSONNEL TO AND FROM CORSICA. ON ONE OCCASION, THE FLIGHT STOPPED OVER NIGHT AND MADE THE TRIP BY CAR TO AJACCIO. IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT THE PERSONNEL MAKING THE FLIGHT DISCOVERED THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO PAY UPWARDS FROM \$1.80 PER SHOT OF RUM, WHICH WAS NOT VERY DAMNED BIG EITHER, BUT OTHERWISE ALRIGHT. PROBABLY THE CHIEF REASONS THE MEN LOOKED FORWARD TO THESE FLIGHTS ARE FOR INCOMING MAIL AND OTHER SUPPLIES SENT UP TO THEM. DUE TO THEIR DIET CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF "C" RATIONS, BOYS HERE WITH THE COOKS ARE SENDING THEM FRESH MEAT, WHEN IT CAN BE HAD, TOGETHER WITH OTHER STAPLES, WHICH ARE CONSIDERED GOODIES THERE.

103. THE FOLLOWING IS THE WAR DIARY OF THIS ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 1, 1944 TO 31/44, INCLUSIVE.

MARCH 10TH: F/O W.R. WILLIAMSON AND F/O T.A. DEAKYNE RECEIVED THEIR COMMISSIONS AS 2ND LTS.

104. MARCH 23RD: THE 416TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, AS A RESULT OF SICKNESS AND OPERATIONAL FATIGUE, REQUESTED THAT WE "LOAN" THEM TWO (2) CREW. LT S.B. HOOTON, LT T.A. DEAKYNE, F/O A.A. SPEIER AND S/SGT W.M. ROBLE WERE SENT TO ASSIST THEM AND TO ENJOY THE BEAUTY AND RUBBLE OF NAPLES, ITALY.

105. MARCH 28TH: WHILE ON A SWEEP OFF THE EAST COAST OF SPAIN, TWO OF OUR AIRCRAFT, LT. R.J. GEBLER, NAVIGATOR F/O E.F. PACKHAM, AND LT. W.A. LARSEN, NAVIGATOR F/O J.F. DRAPER, ENCOUNTERED AND ENGAGED IN COMBAT A JU 88. PASSES WERE MADE UNTIL ALL AMMUNITION WAS EXPENDED, WITH NUMEROUS STRIKES OBSERVED, A FEW MINUTES LATER, F/O R.W. JEFFREY, NAVIGATOR F/O HENDERSON, ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. THEY FIRED ONE LONG BURST AND THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT ROLLED ON IT'S BACK AND CRASHED INTO THE SEA. F/O JEFFREY'S SHIP WAS DAMAGED BY RETURN FIRE FROM E/A, NECESSITATING A CRASH LANDING ON RETURN TO BASE. A



Lts. Jeffery, Hill and Williamson on Corsica, 1944

SUCCESSFUL CRASH LANDING WAS MADE WITH NO INJURY TO PERSONNEL.

106. MARCH 31ST: AT 2245 HRS, F/O R.W. JEFFREY, NAVIGATOR F/O W.A. HENDERSON WERE SCRAMBLED AND AFTER ABOUT AN HOURS CHASE OBTAINED A VISUAL ON A JU 88. TWO BURSTS WERE FIRED FROM CLOSE RANGE AND MANY STRIKES WERE OBSERVED. E/A WAS EAST IN LOW HANGING CLOUDS. ALTHOUGH A DAMAGE HAS SO FAR BEEN CLAIMED, IT IS BELIEVED THAT E/A DID NOT REACH ITS BASE. THIS BELIEF IS BASED ON "Y" SERVICE REPORTS.

107. A SOFTBALL LEAGUE WAS FORMED ON THE POST DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE MONTH. WE ARE REPRESENTED BY TWO TEAMS, ONE COMPOSED OF OFFICERS AND THE OTHER OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL. SO FAR, THE E.M. HAVE PLAYED TWO GAMES, WINNING ONE AND LOSING ONE. THE OFFICERS OBTAINED A TIE IN THEIR ONLY GAME TO DATE. THE GAME BEING CALLED OFF ON ACCOUNT OF DARKNESS.

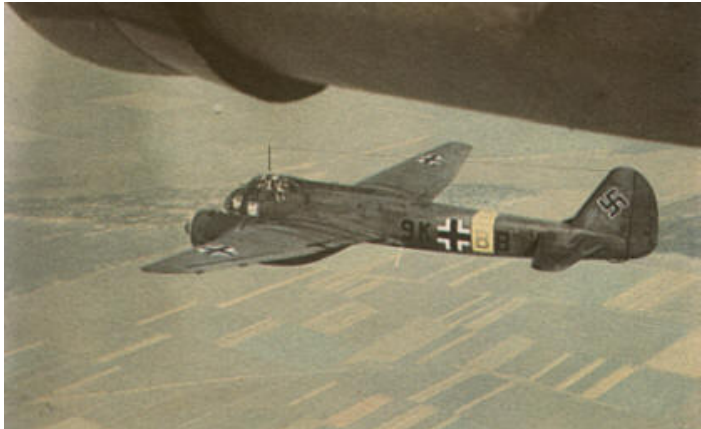
108. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 1ST TO 31ST, 1944:

- A. 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, XII FIGHTER COMMAND.
- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION: NO CHANGE.
- C. STRENGTH, COMMISSIONED AND ENLISTED.
 - (1) MONTH OF MARCH, 1944
 - (A) 25 OFFICERS, 19 FLT O'S, 209 ENL MEN.
 - (B) 0 " 0 " " 0 " "
 - (C) 0 " 2 " " 1 " "
 - (D) 25 OFFICERS, 17 FLT O'S 208 ENL MEN.
- D. STATIONS OF UNITS OR ECHELONS: LA SENIA A/D.
- E. MOVEMENTS OF UNIT ON ECHELONS: NONE.
- F. CAMPAIGNS: NONE
- G. OPERATIONS:
 - (1) CAMPAIGN: NONE
 - (2) NATURE OF OPERATIONS: CONSISTED OF PATROLLING CONVOYS AND ORAN HARBOR AND VICINITY AND FIGHTER SWEEPS OFF COAST OF SPAIN.
 - (3) NUMBER OF MISSIONS & SORTIES FOR PERIOD: 40 MISSIONS WERE FLOWN, CONSISTING OF 128 INDIVIDUAL PATROLS.
 - (4) RESULTS OF MOST IMPORTANT MISSIONS: ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 26TH, F/O R.W. JEFFREY INTERCEPTED AND DESTROYED A JU 88 APPROXIMATELY 40 MILES N-E OF CAPE PALOS, SPAIN. ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 31ST, THIS SAME PILOT DAMAGED ANOTHER JU 88 APPROXIMATELY 55 MILES N-W OF CAPE TENES.

INCLOSED IS WAR DIARY, 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 1ST TO 31ST, 1944.

109. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1ST TO 30TH, 1944.

- A. 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQ. 63RD FTR WING, XII FIGHTER COMMAND.



The Junkers Ju 88 was one of the most versatile German aircraft, approximately 15,000 were built. The 417th usually encountered single Ju 88s, probably on intruder, transport, or night fighter missions.

- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION: NO CHANGE.
- C. STRENGTH, COMMISSIONED & ENLISTED.
 - (1) MONTH OF APRIL, 1944.
 - (A) 26 OFFICERS, 17 F/O, 208 EM
 - (B) 1 " , 0 " , 0
 - (C) 0 " , 0 " , 1
 - (D) 27 OFFICERS, 17 F/O, 207 EM
- D. STATIONS OF UNIT OR ECHELONS:
 - (1) BORGO AIR BASE, CORSICA.
- E. MOVEMENTS OF UNIT OR ECHELONS:
 - (1) FROM LA SENIA, ALGERIA, TO BORGO, CORSICA.
 - (A) CHANGE OF STATION.
 - (B) 7 O'S & 61 EM LEFT BY C-47 ON THE 20TH.
15 O'S, 15 F/O'S & 17 EM BROUGHT UP A/C ON 25TH.
 - (C) BOTH ECHELONS TRAVELLED BY AIR.
 - (D) WEATHER, FAVORABLE.
- F. CAMPAIGNS: NONE.
- G. OPERATIONS:
 - (1) CAMPAIGN: NONE.
 - (2) NATURE OF OPERATIONS: DURING THE FIRST PART OF MONTH, WHEN STATIONED AT LA SENIA, OUR OPERATIONS CONSISTED OF CONVOY PATROLS AT DUSK & DURING THE NIGHT, PROTECTION OF ORAN HARBOR AND VICINITY, AND DEFENSIVE FIGHTER SWEEPS OFF THE EAST COAST OF SPAIN. FROM BORGO, OUR A/C PATROL THE EAST COAST OF CORSICA.
 - (3) NUMBER OF MISSIONS & SORTIES: 87 SORTIES WERE FLOWN DURING THE MONTH.

110. THE FOLLOWING IS THE WAR DIARY FOR THIS ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERIOD, APRIL 1ST TO 30TH, 1944.

111. APRIL 4TH: F/O R.W. JEFFREY RECEIVED HIS COMMISSION AS 2ND LT.

112. APRIL 9TH: LT. GROOM AND F/O ROTH WERE PLACED ON DETACHED DUTY WITH THE 416TH N.F.S. ON THEIR FIRST OPERATIONAL FLIGHT WITH THIS SQUADRON, THEY DESTROYED A JU 88 OVER THE ANZIO BEACH-HEAD.

113. APRIL 10TH: LT. S. B. HOOTON WAS TRANSFERRED TO XII AF TRNG AND RE COMMAND, WHERE HE IS BEING CHECKED OUT IN P-47'S.

114. S/SGT ROBLE AT LONG LAST WAS APPOINTED FLIGHT OFFICER HE HAS BEEN "SWEATING IT OUT" SINCE THE SQDN LEFT THE STATES. HE WAS THE LAST OF THE R/O'S TO LEAVE THE NON-COMMISSIONED R/O'S.

115. APRIL 16TH: CPL E. A. GRIFFITH, ONE OF THE COOKS, WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE HOSPITAL WITH AN INCUREABLE ILLNESS. IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT HE DIED ENROUTE HOME.



417th NFS Beaufighters on flight to Italy, 1944

116. APRIL 20TH: 7 OFFICERS AND 61 EM LEFT LA SENIA FOR OUR NEW HOME AT BORGO BY C-47. THE TRIP WAS UNEVENTFUL EXCEPT FOR ONE PLANE WHICH WAS FORCED BY DARKNESS TO STAY OVER NIGHT IN ALGIERS.

117. APRIL 24TH: THE SQUADRON WENT OFF OPERATIONS TODAY. THE MAJOR ORDERED 2 KEGS OF BEER AND A REAL "BUST" WAS HAD.

118. APRIL 25TH: ALL PLANES TOOK OFF FOR BORGO IN THE EARLY MORNING NO MISHAPS OCCURRED, ALTHOUGH THE WEATHER WAS NOT TOO GOOD. AFTER A 4:15 HR FLIGHT THE ENTIRE AIR ECHELON ARRIVED IN TIME FOR LUNCH.

119. APRIL 28TH: CAPT. K.K. NELSON, THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE SQDN, MADE MAJOR AND LEFT FOR 30 DAYS IN THE STATES.

120. APRIL 29TH: OPERATIONS RESUMED. MAJOR EHLINGER HAS NOW ASSUMED THE ADDITIONAL DUTIES AS BASE COMMANDER.

121. THE SQUADRON REMAINS ATTACHED TO RAF No. 337 WING, FOLLOWING IS THE WAR DIARY OF THIS ORGANIZATION FOR THE PERIOD.

MAY 1ST TO 31ST, 1944.

1ST: LT. J.F. KIRWAN AND F/O J.M. VAN LAECKEN CAUGHT "BED CHECK CHARLIE" (JU88) AND SENT HIM HOME WITH QUITE A FEW HOLES. "CHARLIE" ACQUIRED THIS NAME BECAUSE OF HIS NIGHTLY TRIPS DOWN THE COAST.

122. 2ND: CAPT. K.K. NELSON AND F.O PERKINS ARE THE FIRST CREW TO GO BACK TO THE STATES FOR 30 DAYS LEAVE UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN INAUGURATED. CAPT. NELSON ALSO LEARNED THE DAY BEFORE HE LEFT THAT HIS MAJORITY HAD COME THROUGH.

123. 5TH: TODAY MARKS THE SQUADRON'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY OVERSEAS. THE COMMENT HEARD FROM ALMOST EVERYONE, "HOPE THIS IS ALSO THE LAST ONE."

124. 9TH: CAPT. C.R. MCCRAY AND F/O R.D. HAMILTON GAVE CHASE TO "BED CHECK CHARLIE" AND CLAIM A DAMAGED. THE COMPETITION IS GROWING QUITE KEEN TO SEE WHO WILL GET HIM. THE CREWS HAVE AGREED TO DONATE \$5.00 TO THE "KITTY" EACH TIME THEY CHASE "CHARLIE" AND FAIL TO GET HIM. THE ENTIRE "KITTY" IS TO GO TO THE CREW THAT CLAIMS A DESTROYED.

125. 12TH. THE REAR ECHELON ARRIVED TODAY BY LIBERTY SHIP FROM LA SENIA. ALL THE SQUADRON IS TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL MONTHS. TWO NEW AIRCREWS ALSO CAME IN TODAY. LTS MOLDREM AND WILSON, F/O'S BOWMANN AND BERRY.

ALSO ON THE 12TH: CAPTAIN LEE TOOK THE B-25 AND SEVERAL OF THE SQUADRON FLIGHT CREW MEMBERS ON A SEVEN DAY TDY AT THE XII FIGHTER COMMAND REST CAMP, CARDUCCI, NAPLES, THE ISLE OF CAPRI. F/O JOE VAN LAECKEN, ONE OF THE MEN ON THE TRIP, OFTEN REFLECTS AS HOW THIS WAS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE.

126. NIGHT OF 12/13TH: JERRY CAME OVER IN STRENGTH FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHEN THE ALERT WAS SOUNDED EVERYONE DOVE INTO TRENCHES. MAJOR EHLINGER DOVE INTO A HOLE ALREADY FILLED WITH MEN, AND THEY THREW HIM OUT, YELLING "GET THE HELL OUT OF



The Heinkel He 177 was the main German heavy bomber. Paired Daimler-Benz V-12 engines drove each propeller, so it performed as a 4-engine aircraft. Because the engines were "inverted" any leaking oil would cause fires on the hot exhaust manifolds.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

117TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON

DESTINATION OF UNIT: **GROUP (Or Separate Sqdn)**

1. a. 24 hr. period ending 1800 hrs. **2 MAY 1944** b. Mission No. **306**

2. a. Number & type of a/c airborne: **3 BEAU VI MK VIII** b. No. of take-off: **1945-0330**

Time of landing: **2215-0605** Time over target: **NO TARGET**

3. a. No. a/c not reaching enemy lines (indicate reason) _____

For VII-33 and VII-330 only: c. No. a/c crossing enemy lines but failing to attack (indicate reason) _____

For VII-33 Command only: d. No. a/c not completing mission (indicate reason) _____

4. TARGET: a. Name and location _____

b. Pinpoint of precise aiming point _____

5. MISSION: a. Type: **NORTH PATROL**

b. Reported by: **NIL** (Unit, no. & type a/c) c. Escorting: **NIL** (Unit, no. & type a/c)

d. (For fighter-bombers only) No. of a/c carrying bombs _____ Duty of a/c carrying bombs _____

6. ENEMY RESISTANCE: TYPE _____ INTENSITY _____ ACCURACY _____

a. A/A over target _____

b. A/A enroute _____

c. No. a/c type E/A encountered (indicate where) **ONE JU-88 N.W. OF ELBA.**

7. WEATHER: (over target) _____ (enroute) _____

8. ALTITUDE & RANGE OF TARGET: **100FT AND 600FT.**

9. TOTAL FLYING HOURS: (To nearest quarter hour) **3:45**

10. ALLOCATION: Rounds Carried _____ Rounds Expended _____ Rounds lost on missing _____

Caliber _____ 20MM _____ 3000 EA _____ 600 _____ 200 _____

11. BOMBS, TORPEDOS, DEPTH CHARGES AND PYROTECHNICS: _____

Type _____ Number _____ Number _____ Lost or missing _____

Carried _____ Expended _____ Jettisoned and destroyed a/c _____

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11. VICTORIES: (Indicate gun-pot, credit with victory, not individuals name)

a. Destroyed - Credit _____ b. Probable - Credit _____ c. Damaged _____

12. OWN AIRCRAFT LOSSES: Destroyed _____ Missing _____ Cat. 1 _____ Cat. 2 _____

(Indicate cause) **NIL**

a. By enemy action (indicate cause) **NIL**

b. Not by enemy action (indicate cause) **NIL**

c. Returned from missing: **NIL** Reported missing on mission _____ (Date) _____

13. CREW CASUALTIES: **NIL** Status _____ Cause _____

a. Specialty _____ Crew Position _____ (K, MIA, SW, or IW)

b. Returned, previously reported missing: **NIL** Specialty _____ Crew Position _____ Reported missing on Mission No. & Date _____ Wounded (SW or IW) _____

14. SHORT NARRATIVE, INCLUDING RESULTS, SIGHTINGS, AND FACTS OF INTEREST: **3 BEAU VI MK VIII ON NORTH PATROL FROM 1945 HRS TO 2215 HRS. & 1 BEAU FROM 0330 HRS TO 0605 HRS. 1 BEAU CONTACTED JU-88 AT ABOUT 130 FT N.W. OF ELBA AT 2119 HRS, CLOSED IN TO 600 FT AND GAVE TWO SHORT BURSTS OBSERVING STRIKES ON PORT ENGINE AND PORT WING. 1 JU-88 DAMAGED.**

15. Any other a/c losses (destroyed on ground, on training flights, etc.) Explain: **NIL**

17. CONSUMPTION TABLE, week ending _____ (To be submitted only each Saturday, as of 1800 hours. Include expenditure for all purposes).

a. Total hours flown _____ b. Total Gas Consumed _____

c. No. & type of long range tanks jettisoned, lost or destroyed: _____

d. BOMBS, TORPEDOS, DEPTH CHARGES, PYROTECHNICS: a. ALLOCATION: _____

Type _____ Number _____ Caliber _____ Rounds _____

Signature: *John F. Kirwan* Capt RC

Combat Report filed by Lt. John F. Kirwan on the May 1, 1944 mission with F/O Joseph M. Van Laecken-RO, when they damaged the Ju 88 "Bed Check Charlie".

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SHEET NO. **306** OPER REF. NO. **306** DATE **5/1/44** SQDN **117 NFS**

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT **BEAU VI MK VIII** CAPTAIN **LT. J.F. KIRWAN**

AIRCRAFT NO. **151** CREW **F/O VAN LAECKEN**

AIRCRAFT LETTER **KW**

TIME UP **1945**

TIME DOWN **2215**

TOTAL **2:30** AIRCRAFT OR L.G. **BORGO A/D**

TYPE OF CLOUD **HIGH CIRRUS TO NORTH** 1A. CR ORANT

AMOUNT OF CLOUD **3/10** REFRACLOS

SIZE OF CLOUD **HIGH**

VISIBILITY **FAIR TO GOOD**

GENERAL WEATHER **GOOD**

TASK OR DUTY **NORTH PATROL**

FILE HEIGHT **100** PLACE **NARRATIVE**

APPROX. **2115** **100 FT. 15 MI N.W. OF ELBA.** OBTAINED VISUAL AND IDENTIFIED A/C AS JU-88, E/A CUT CLOSE IN FRONT OF OWN A/C'S NOSE, ACROSS FROM STARBOARD TO PORT. HOSTILE TRAVELLING SOUTH & IMMEDIATELY AFTER VISUAL E/A GAVE MODERATE EVASIVE ACTION, CLOSED IN TO 600 FT, GAVE SHORT BURST 5 DEG. DEFLECTION & OBSERVED HITS ON PORT ENGINE & PORT WING. CONTINUED TURNING GIVING ANOTHER BURST & OBSERVED NO HITS BUT RECEIVED RETURN FIRE. LOST VISUAL & AT CONTACT I CLAIM ONE JU-88 DAMAGED. E/A WAS TRAVELLING AT APPROX. 250 MPH.

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N.F.A. - **SPOTLIGHT & BANDBOX**

N.F.B. - (1) **SPOTLIGHT AT 2000 & BANDBOX AT 2130**

(2) **2149**

(3) **2155 APPROX.**

N.F.C. - **JU-88 AT 130 FT. & OWN A/C AT APPROX. 100 FT.**

N.F.D. - **APPROX. 100 FT.**

N.F.E. - (1) **VERY GOOD.**

(2) **FAIR**

N.F.F. - **TWO 1 SECOND BURSTS, 1ST BURST 5 DEG. DEFLECTION**

N.F.G. - **STRIKES ON PORT ENGINE & PORT WING.**

N.F.H. - (1) **GOOD**

(2) **GOOD**

(3) **FAIR**

(4) **VECTORED ON HOMING.**

N.F.J. - **NONE**

N.F.K. - **600 .303 & 200 20MM**

N.F.L. - (1) **1/2**

(2) **HAZY, MOONLIGHT**

(3) **HIGH CIRRUS, 3/10**

COMBAT REPORT: **SEE REVERSE SIDE.**

Signature: *John F. Kirwan* (PILLOT)

HERE", THEY HADN'T RECOGNIZED HIM AS THEIR COMMANDING OFFICER. THIS FIELD WAS NOT ONE OF THE TARGETS BUT HE DID GIVE US A SCARE. ONE STRING OF BOMBS HIT OFF THE SOUTH END OF THE RUNWAY BUT DID NO DAMAGE. THE MAIN TARGETS WERE TWO FIELDS SOUTH OF HERE. CAPT MCCRAY AND F/O HAMILTON CLAIM 1 PROBABLE AND 1 DAMAGED, BOTH OF THEM BEING HE 177'S.

127. 13TH: DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF SLIT TRENCHES.

128. 14TH. CAPT. J.S.M. LEE AND F/O L.R. POTTER DAMAGED "BED CHECK CHARLIE" AGAIN, AND WOULD PROBABLY HAVE DESTROYED HIM HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR A HYDRAULIC FAILURE CAUSING THE CHASE TO BE BROKEN OFF. UNDOUBTEDLY "CHARLIE" LEADS A CHARMED LIFE.

129. 18TH: LT. W.G. "GRUMPY" GROOM FINISHED HIS TOUR OF DUTY AND WAS SENT BACK TO THE STATES FOR REASSIGNMENT.



T.E. Luke at his Foxhole on Corsica

130. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH N.F.S. FOR THE PERIOD MAY 1ST TO MAY 31ST, 1944.

- A. PRESENT DESIGNATION: 417TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON, 63RD FIGHTER WING, XII FIGHTER COMMAND.
- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION: NO CHANGES.
- C. STRENGTH, COMMISSIONED & ENLISTED.
 - (1) MONTH OF MAY, 1944.
 - (A) 27 OFFICERS, 17 F/O'S, 26 EM.
 - (B) 0 " , 2 " , 0 ".
 - (C) 0 " , 0 " , 0 ".
 - (D) 27 OFFICERS, 20 F/O'S, 216 EM.
- D. STATIONS OF UNITS OR ECHELONS:
 - (1) BORGIO AIR BASE, CORSICA.
- E. MOVEMENTS OF UNITS OR ECHELONS:
 - (1) FROM LA SENIA, ALGERIA TO BORGIO AIR BASE, CORSICA.
 - (A) CHANGE OF STATION.
 - (B) REAR ECHELON, CONSISTING OF 2 OFFICERS AND 37 EM. BOARDED LIBERTY SHIP ON THE 4TH MAY AT ORAN, ARRIVING AT AJACCIO ON THE MORNING OF THE 12TH, MAY.
 - (C) TRAVEL WAS BY LIBERTY SHIP.
 - (D) THE WEATHER WAS NICE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FIRST DAY OUT WHEN THE SEA WAS QUITE ROUGH. THE TRIP WAS UNEVENTFUL.
- F. CAMPAIGNS: NONE
- G. OPERATIONS:
 - (1) CAMPAIGN: NONE.
 - (2) OPERATIONS CONSISTED OF NIGHT PATROLS OFF THE EAST COAST OF CORSICA. DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT, 124 SORTIES WERE FLOWN.

131. 25TH: OUR KITCHEN STAFF (ONE OF THE BEST IN THE ARMY) SUFFERED A SEVERE BLOW. SGT TUCKER WAS KILLED IMMEDIATELY AND 5 OTHERS, ALL COOKS WERE



Corsica, showing the Borgo Airdrome, Elba Island, and proximity to Italy.



Bob Perry by row of Beaufighters, reading his mail. Note how the crews had to keep covers on the tires to prevent leaking engine oil from damaging them.

SEVERELY INJURED WHEN A WEAPONS CARRIER IN WHICH THEY WERE RIDING OVER-TURNED.

132. NIGHT OF 31ST: LT KIRWAN AND F/O VAN LAECKEN WERE VECTORED ONTO A BOGEY AND CLOSED IN AFTER A 20 MINUTE CHASE. THEY WERE UNABLE AT FIRST TO IDENTIFY THE BOGEY AND WHILE INVESTIGATING, WERE FIRED AT BY THE TAIL GUNNER. BEFORE LT KIRWAN COULD MAKE A PASS, HE WAS INFORMED BY THE CONTROLLER THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS FRIENDLY. IT WAS LATER LEARNED THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS A B-25 AND UPON RETURNING TO BASE HAD CLAIMED A JU 88 DESTROYED, EVEN SAW ONE MAN BAIL OUT. LT. KIRWAN AND F/O VAN LAECKEN RETURNED TO BASE UNHARMED.



Squadron Day-Room built by the men of the 417th at Borgo, Corsica.

133. ON THE WHOLE THE PERSONNEL OF THE SQUADRON SEEM MUCH MORE PLEASED WITH CONDITIONS IN CORSICA THAN THOSE THAT EXISTED IN AFRICA. MANY EXPRESS THEIR RELIEF AT BEING AWAY FROM THE "DIRTY ARABS". THE MEN ARE HARD AT WORK BUILDING A DAY-ROOM WHICH SHOULD BE OPEN THE FIRST PART OF JUNE. OUR SOFTBALL TEAM WON THE SECOND PLACE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SCHEDULE AND HAVE HIGH HOPES OF WINNING THE SECOND HALF.

134. CLAIMS MADE BY OUR PILOTS ARE 1 PROBABLE AND 4 DAMAGED. ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 13TH, 1ST LT. J.E. LEONARD (PILOT) AND F/O R. CHRISTENSEN (RADIO OBSERVER) FAILED TO RETURN FROM A MISSION. WHEN CONTACT WAS LAST HAD WITH THEM, THEY WERE CHASING AN ENEMY AIRCRAFT NEAR THE ISLAND OF MONTECRISTO. LT. LEONARD'S BODY WASHED ASHORE AND WAS FOUND ON THE 26TH MAY. F/O CHRISTENSEN IS STILL LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION.

135. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH FTR SQ FOR THE PERIOD 1 JUNE TO 30TH JUNE, 1944.

- A. PRESENT DESIGNATION: 417TH FT. SQ. 63RD FTR WING, XII FTR COMD.
- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION:
 - (1) MAJOR J. T. EHLINGER (C.O.) RETURNED TO STATES 16 JUNE. CAPT. W.A. LARSEN ASSUMED COMMAND 20 JUNE. PER PAR. 5, SO #73, 63RD FTR WING.
 - (2) CAPT J.S.M. LEE REPLACED CAPT LARSEN AS S-5. LT. R.E. JACKSON REPLACED CAPT J.M. DOUGHERTY AS S-2. CAPT DAUGHERTY RETURNED TO U.S. 5 JUNE.
- C. STRENGTH:
 - (1) MONTH OF JUNE, 1944.

29	OFFICERS,	20	FLT	0'S,	216	EM
10	"	0	"		0	"
0	"	12	"		0	"
39	"	3	"		216	"
- D. STATIONS:
 - (1) BORGO A/D, CORSICA.
- E. NO CHANGE.
- F. NONE.
- G. OPERATIONS:
 - (1) NONE.
 - (2) OPERATIONS CONSISTED OF NIGHT PATROL AROUND THE ISLAND OF

CORSICA. DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT, 110 SORTIES WERE FLOWN.

136. JUNE 1ST: THERE WAS A MASS PROMOTION OF FLIGHT OFFICERS TODAY. TWELVE IN ALL RECEIVED THEIR COMMISSIONS AS 2ND LTS. F/O'S ALLEN, CORDELL, CHRISTENSEN, FENIMORE, HAMILTON, HENDERSON, KULPINSKI, PERKINS, POTTER, ROTH, SPEIER AND VAN LAECKEN. (ORDERS WERE LATER ISSUED BY HIGHER AUTHORITY REVOKING THE PROMOTION OF F/O CHRISTENSEN (DECEASED)). FOUR OTHER F/O'S HALL, DRAPER, PACKMAN AND HEINECKE RECEIVED THEIR COMMISSIONS LATER IN THE MONTH.

137. JUNE 3RD: THE EVENING OF SATURDAY, JUNE 3RD, OPENED THE ENLISTED MEN'S DAYROOM AND BAR. APPROPRIATELY, A LARGE SUPPLY OF "REFRESHMENTS" WAS ON HAND. THE BAR, CARD & DICE TABLES WERE THOROUGHLY INITIATED AS WERE THE WRITING TABLES. THE EFFORTS OF THE VOLUNTEER CARPENTERS AND PAINTERS HAVE BEEN MORE THAN APPRECIATED BY THE ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE SQUADRON.

138. JUNE 5TH: THE SQUADRON LOST ONE OF ITS "CHARACTERS" IN "CAPPY JOE". CAPTAIN DOUGHERTY, WHO HAS BEEN WITH THE SQUADRON SINCE ITS FORMATION RETURNED TO THE STATES TO BE DISCHARGED UNDER THE OVER-AGE RULING.

139. JUNE 10TH: GENERAL CRAIGIE AND SEVERAL OF HIS STAFF FROM THE 63RD FIGHTER WING MET HERE TODAY WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE 414TH, 416TH, AND 417TH N.F. S.'S TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE CONVERSION OF THE NIGHT FIGHTERS TO ROCKET CARRIERS.

140. JUNE 16TH: MAJOR J. T. EHLINGER, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THIS SQUADRON SINCE ITS FORMATION, LEFT TODAY FOR THE U.S. CAPTAIN LARSEN, PREVIOUSLY OPERATIONS OFFICER, HAS NOW ASSUMED COMMAND.

JUNE 17TH: 2ND LT. JOE "VAN" VAN LAECKEN-RO COMPLETED HIS TOUR WITH 366 FLIGHT HOURS WITH THE 417TH, OF WHICH 218:30 WERE CREDITED AS COMBAT TIME IN THE BEAUFIGHTER. HE WAS CREDITED WITH 28 "COMBAT MISSIONS", THOUGH PRIOR TO APRIL 30, 1944 THE MAAF CALCULATED MISSIONS ON THE BASIS OF FIVE "SORTIES" EQUALED ONE "MISSION". FROM MAY 1, 1944 ON XII FIGHTER COMMAND DEFINED ONE SORTIE AS ONE MISSION. PRIOR SORTIES WERE NOT RECLASSIFIED. ON THIS BASIS JOE FLEW SOME 125 COMBAT MISSIONS AND WAS CREDITED WITH 15 MONTHS, 6 DAYS OF FOREIGN SERVICE. ORDERS WERE TO RETURN TO US VIA SURFACE SHIP AND TAKE THREE WEEKS LEAVE PRIOR TO REASSIGNMENT TO THE NIGHT FIGHTER TRAINING PROGRAM. THIS WAS THE FIRST HOME LEAVE GRANTED SINCE INDUCTION, AUGUST 27, 1942, AND WOULD MARK THE FIRST TIME HE HAD SEEN HIS DAUGHTER, BORN SEPTEMBER 2, 1942.-
EDITOR



F/O Joe Van Laecken and Joe Gonzales while the 417th NFS was in Oran, North Africa. Note that Van's jacket sports the early 417th NFS badge.

141. JUNE 27TH: LT. GENERAL I.C. EAKER, ACCOMPANIED BY MAJ. GENERAL FECHET AND BRIG. GENERAL CRAIGIE MADE AN INSPECTION TOUR OF THE BASE.

142. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH NI FTR SQ FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY TO 30

JULY, 1944.

- A. PRESENT DESIGNATION: 417 NI FTR SQ, 63RD FTR WING, XII FTR COMD.
- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION: NO CHANGE.
- C. STRENGTH, COMMISSIONED AND ENLISTED: JULY/44
 - (A) 39 OFFICERS 8 FLIGHT 0'S 215 E.M.
 - (B) 0 " 0 " 0 "
 - (C) 0 " 0 " 0 "
 - (D) 39 OFFICERS 0 FLIGHT 0'S 215 E.M
- D. STATIONS:
 - (1) BORGO A/D, CORSICA.
- E. NO CHANGE.
- F. ITALIAN CAMPAIGN.
- G. OPERATIONS CONSISTED OF NIGHTLY PATROLS OFF THE ISLAND OF CORSICA AND OFF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF FRANCE. DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE MONTH THE SQUADRON FLEW IT'S FIRST INTRUDER MISSIONS. THE MISSIONS WERE TO AIRDROMES IN SOUTHERN FRANCE & NORTHERN ITALY. THE PRIMARY PURPOSES BEING TO DENY THE USE OF THESE AIRDROMES TO THE ENEMY. DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT 132 SORTIES WERE FLOWN.
- I. LOSSES IN ACTION:
 - (1) ON JULY 20TH, 2ND LT. R.W. INGLIS AND F/O T.E. HEARNE FAILED TO RETURN FROM PATROL OFF THE EAST COAST OF CORSICA.
- J. ON THE 18TH OF JULY, LT. R.W. JEFFREY WAS AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS. CAPTAINS W.A. LARSEN AND C.R. MCCRAY WERE AWARDED AIR MEDALS.

143. JULY 3RD: LT. JOHN FENIMORE RETURNED TO THE STATES TODAY. CAPT. H.A. STIRNUS HAD A TOUGH BREAK. AFTER A HARD CHASE HE CLOSED TO 100 FT ON A JERRY, HAD HIM LINED UP IN HIS SIGHTS FOR A PERFECT SHOT, PRESSED THE BUTTON AND NOT A GUN FIRED. CAUSES FOR GUN FAILURES COULD NOT BE DETERMINED AS THEY FUNCTIONED PROPERLY LATER.

144. JULY 5TH: A NEW PILOT REPORTED FOR DUTY TODAY, 2ND LT. ROBERT W. INGLIS.

145. JULY 6TH: ABOUT 20 MINUTES AFTER LT. WILSON AND F/O BERRY HAD BEEN AIRBORNE ON A PATROL, THE ENGINE EXPLODED. THEY WERE UNABLE TO MAINTAIN ALTITUDE SO WERE FORCED TO DITCH ABOUT 6 MILES

N/E OF BASTIA, CONDITIONS WERE GOOD AND AN EXCELLENT JOB OF DITCHING WAS EXECUTED. BOTH CREW MEMBERS ESCAPED WITHOUT INJURY AND ASR (AIR SEA RESCUT) UNITS WORKED WITH SUCH AMAZING SPEED THAT THE CREW WAS ABOARD AN HSL 34 MINUTES AFTER HITTING THE WATER.

146. JULY 8TH: LT. HILL AND F/O HEINECKE GOT A BURST AT A JERRY LAST NIGHT. MANY STRIKES WERE OBSERVED BUT JERRY WAS NOT SEEN TO GO IN. THE ENEMY PILOT FADED FROM THE CONTROLLER'S SCREEN BUT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET ANY OTHER CONFIRMATION. CAPT. STIRNUS AND LT. KULPINSKI LEFT FOR THE STATES. LT.



Bastia, Corsica the closest city to the Borgo Airdrome.

KULPINSKI TRANSFERRED FROM THE POLISH RAF TO THIS SQUADRON WHEN WE WERE IN ENGLAND. IT WILL BE HIS FIRST RETURN TO AMERICA SINCE LEAVING THERE IN 1941.

147. JULY 9TH: OUR SECOND AIRCREW, CAPT. LEE AND LT. POTTER WENT HOME UNDER THE 30 DAY LEAVE ARRANGEMENT.

148. JULY 16TH: COLONEL VISCELLIO, WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, AND LT. COL. KRATZ, COMMANDING OFFICER OF NIGHT FIGHTER TRAINING AT HAMMER FIELD, CALIF., ON A TOUR OF THIS THEATRE ARRIVED HERE. LT. COL. KRATZ FLEW THE DUSK PATROL AND HAD AN EXTREMELY LONG CHASE BUT UNFORTUNATELY HE WAS NOT ABLE TO CLOSE IN ENOUGH TO OBTAIN A VISUAL.

JULY 18TH: GENERAL CRAIGIE PRESENTED LT. R.W. JEFFREY THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND CAPTAINS W.A. LARSEN AND C.R. MCCRAY WERE AWARDED AIR MEDALS.

149. JULY 21ST: LT. INGLIS AND F/O HEARNE ON THEIR FOURTH OPERATIONAL FLIGHT CAUGHT "BED-CHECK CHARLIE" AND SHOT HIM DOWN. LT. INGLIS REPORTED OVER THE R/T THAT HE SAW THE E/A HIT THE WATER AND THAT HE WAS GOING DOWN TO LOOK AT THE WRECKAGE. NO FURTHER TRANSMISSIONS WERE RECEIVED AND LT. INGLIS AND F/O HEARNE FAILED TO RETURN. DEBRIS AND DINGHYS FROM BOTH AIRCRAFT WERE FOUND LATER.

150. JULY 22ND: M/SGT PERRY AND SGT BASS WERE SENT HOME ON ROTATION TODAY. THEY ARE THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE SQUADRON TO BE ROTATED.



General Craigie presenting the DFC to Lt. R.W. Jeffery, and Air Medals to Capt. W.A. Larsen and Capt. C.R. McCray (L-R) while at Borgo, Corsica.

151. JULY 24TH: THE INTER-SQUADRON SOFTBALL LEAGUE GOT UNDER WAY TODAY WITH COMMUNICATIONS NOSING OUT ENGINEERING BY A SCORE OF 7 TO 6.

152. JULY 28TH: THE FIRST INTRUDER MISSION FOR THIS SQUADRON WAS FLOWN LAST NIGHT BY LTS DEAKYNE AND KIRWAN. THEY WERE AIRBORNE FROM ALGHERO, SARDINIA, WHERE THEY WENT FOR BRIEFING. THE FLIGHTS WERE OVER AIRDROME IN THE LOWER RHONE VALLEY. AT PRESENT, IT IS PLANNED THAT THE SQUADRON FLY FROM 2 TO 4 SUCH MISSIONS.

152. EACH NIGHT, MOST OF THE AIRCREWS ARE ELATED AT THIS CHANCE TO BREAK THE MONOTONY OF ROUTINE PATROLS, ESPECIALLY LT. DEAKYNE TO WHOM INTRUDING IS NOTHING NEW, HE HAVING FLOWN WITH 23 SQUADRON (RAF) OUT OF ENGLAND.

153. OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE 417TH NI FTR SQ FOR THE PERIOD 1ST TO 31ST AUGUST 1944.

- A. PRESENT DESIGNATION: 417 NI FTR SQ, 63RD FTR WING, XII FTR COMD.
- B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION: NO CHANGE.
- C. STRENGTH, COMMISSION AND ENLISTED MEN:
 - (1) MONTH OF AUGUST, 1944