SECOND ANNIVERSARY

340TH

BOMB GROUP

XII AIR FORCE
COLUMBIA
SOUTH CAROLINA

August 26, 1942 saw the birth of another infant, to Uncle Sam's prolific Air Force family. No announcements were sent to overseas; but the chances are that if he had learned of it, his numerous cousins merely rippled a bit—the usual infant excitement not even stirring a good healthy belly-laugh of disdain.

As a matter of fact, no particular attention was paid to the event at Columbia, S.C., the birthplace. The birth certificate—CAB 20 G. Ro. 29—was filed, Col. Vella, appointed guardian and 20th was on its way.

At Columbia, the original cadre was quickly brought to practically T/O strength. Officers with newly forsaken and swapping sheets momentarily showed the ropes to the new arrivals—newer—by a few hours. Relaxation? Men popped in from all over but squadron first sergeant's were not too busy to drop their seeing (they got a new stripe every other day) and help the new boys pick out the best trucks and make sure they were supplied with all the home comforts. Things hustled from early morning to late at night—well, the Officers' Club was open until midnight.

Squadron 2's were busy planning next missions in the best Harrisburg style and detail and squadron operations were running each other up and down the hilly graphs of the efficiency charts. September merged with October, October with November and before we realized it, our original unit Thanksgiving was behind us.

Dane November 30th, with orders to move to California for third phase training. The first day of December dawned at 0600 for the 30th—cold and overcast. The barracks were all stripped, men and baggage loaded on trucks for an early start—and six hours later the convoy rolled its way down the white sand road between the scrub pines, headed for another part of South Carolina where late that afternoon we stretched our legs in Walterboro.

The ships and Flight Ricardt did not arrive on schedule, since the night we left, Columbia was visited by a violent hail storm which did some damage in ten minutes than our flying cowboys would have accomplished in as many weeks. The group lost in all, fourteen planes.

It was the first of three occasions on which the 20th had been practically stripped of ships through no fault of its own. In the later disasters, we had the coordinated help of the month-long functioning units of the Twelfth Air Force to take care of replacements, but this time we were on our own. That "our own" was not too bad as evidenced by the fact that while first estimates of damage repair were up to a couple of months, actually the group was operating in a relatively few days, thanks to the untiring labor of the local ground crew. Maybe we did—maybe we didn't—have that old-time rivalry between individual squadrons (with everybody taking a shot at Group) but let anything or anybody touch THE GRUMP—watch out.

MAJ. GEN. J.H. CANNON
COMMANDING GENERAL
XII AIR FORCE

BRIG. GEN. R.D. KNAPP
COMMANDING GENERAL
57 TH WING
thought it advisable to intensify the school schedule and institute a bit of infantry drill to stamp oar minds and muscles. The classes were held and usually the instructor at least was there. We liked and carried on, sometimes almost as much as six ales in a day, and all of five ales with a gas mask on. The boys, however, seemed more or less to be indulging in fancy air raids, alarms and air-raid drills at least partly legally.

The latter were the delight of our jeep jockeys—total blankout, the windshields of the truck with frost but good onCLEAN for doing a bit better than the official "15 miles per hour on the post."

On January 20th, the Ground School climbed into the Wizard training area, headed for a secret destination which everyone knew was Pittsburgh, Cal. Camp Stoneman was a beautifully laid out, equipped and operated post with everything from comfort stations to movie houses. Following some days of stiff tests of physical fitness and endurance what with calisthenics in the cold, dark days, squares, debar- ration rates, an obstacle course and a never-to-be-forgotten twelve-mile hike.

The enlisted men were warned to put everything they would need for several weeks into their "9" bags. Each man sorted out his half-acre or so of belongings and found to his surprise that the jeep hadn't made 9 bags any large enough for the 19 bags of gear. Each man brought his 90 bags and officer and his 90 bag plus a new "90" bag. The jeep was loaded with equipment at Supply, and we had T-90 bags at Group Dispensary and the cart boys filled up on with pumps—positive information that we were going to Chinon, Italy, England, France and Scandinavia. -That's confidential, sure I got it from one who knows it.
EL KABRIT
EGYPT

Kabrit was an immense camp with many buildings housing the post office, PX, the cantonment area and the hospital. There was a movie theatre where "For Whom the Bell Tolls" was shown weekly. The town was divided into sections: the main street, which ran from north to south, and several smaller streets that intersected it. The streets were narrow and winding, and the buildings were mostly made of brick and wood. There were several shops and stores in the town, including a bakery, a general store, and a hardware store. The main attraction of Kabrit was its proximity to the desert, which was a popular destination for locals and military personnel alike. The air force was based in Kabrit and frequently flew missions over the desert, providing a constant presence in the area.
HERGLA
TUNISIA

Herlga was and probably still is a barren expanse of sand and shrubbery. It was close to the sea and in the background we had the mountain range at the foot of which lies Cap Raphia. The last holocaust of the 90th Light which we like to think we had a hand in blasting out, there were also cool breezes from the sea when they weren't alone hot breezes from the desert.

Life at Herlga wasn't too dull. In the mornings the nurses drove us crazy driving the donkey, filling jugs, giant grasshopper, tarantula, scorpions and mice contented for every inch of space and at night, calisthenics occupied gave close support to desert rats on patrol.

After supper one night, the group softened up Lupemadan and the next day, the news came in and took over. With some help from the RAF and the rest of the AF, we had cleaned up Africa and Pantelleria right on the button and now Lampedusa. It was time for a breather. For the next few weeks, we worked hard at eating watermelons at a hunt a throw, putting in each task and listening to rumors of the great concentration of ships and men all up and down the coast.

On July 2nd, the IDF let us in on the secret—were going to break in working again, with Sicily as the target. So on the third, we inaugurated the Sicilian shuttle service and on successive days, staged a Roman holiday over Comacchio airforce, excising hideous skeletons of the buildings and bowling us the runaways. Nobody told us that a month later, we have to clean up the mess we might have been less enthusiastic.

While we rustled eggs and salami and cursed the blooming sand and lack of water, our hosts lived on acorns, cider and bread, and they turned around to Sicily and promulgated another campaign at Tunis. So to be nearer our targets as well as to the foods we knew, we packed up and moved again.

**COMISO**

Comiso had been a regular field for the Italian air and was well-equipped with permanent buildings. That is why it had been designed as permanent.
We found more than a scoop of ice cream to enjoy on our return to the ship. The crew was entertained with a show put on by the Italian and German ladies on board. The shows were quite enjoyable, with music and dance routines that were very entertaining.

After the show, we enjoyed a delicious dinner served on board. The food was excellently prepared, and the atmosphere was very social. We spent the evening chatting with other passengers and enjoying the experience.

On our last day in port, we went ashore to explore the city. We visited various shops and learned about the local culture. We also had the opportunity to try some of the local cuisine, which was delicious.

The day ended with a fireworks display that was truly spectacular. The colors and lights were stunning, and it was a fitting end to our memorable trip.

Overall, our cruise was wonderful. We had the opportunity to visit some amazing places and experience different cultures. The service on board was excellent, and the food was superb. We would definitely recommend this cruise to anyone looking for a relaxing and enjoyable vacation.
For a week, the 310th was scattered all over southern Italy. Bala and some rain grounded the air attack and greased the roads. Troops with felled logboms scattered across the roads, others vanished into the bushes. Nobody wanted to talk or be seen. It was too much. Then came the stories of the war.

With the first sunshine, a few hardy souls struggled through Foggia. Leaving the hills way was like stepping off a deck at low tide. And near half way up the radiator of heavily loaded jeeps and trucks of water surrounded us to which one hoped there was a bottom.

Some lucky ones found quarters in a former farm buildings where the refueled. One was as good as the next and the next as bad as the last and so on. The heat was the same, the water was the same, and the air was the same.

The front looked a long way off on the map but at night, the boom of guns on the Adriatic sector still heard from coast to coast. Our planes finally got in after some days and the boys went sight-seeing over Sillaces, Yugoslavia; Fort Chius, Albania and Munich, Italy.

Christmas packages were filled in, Thanksgiving came and went. As stories of folks broke out as makeshift stoves balanced fireplace in Foggia wintry.

New Year's Eve--yep, you guessed it, it rained. At midnight every gun and rifle let loose in honor of the new year, but plenty of folks didn't hear them. We rifled them out of the trenches next morning. And what a morning! Just a gasoline stove was safe in the cafe which swept in off the sea. Our tents were down or on the way so the smoking coals fell in the wet fighting playful colors. Mess tents threatened to take off momentarily and night as well as here since the water and the inside wouldn't have been much better, but I don't count the Christmas trees a quarter of a mile long walled and multideep in mud.

A few days later good weather set in, the abstract ground quickly dried, the various clubs were doing a thriving business and we were more or less comfortably settled for the winter. So, we got orders to move. Next stop, Pompei. 1/6.

Pompei 1/6 was a brand new field cut out the grass coast and the vegetable farms of Tarsigni at the base of Vesuvius and completely surrounded by hills. The group advance party had commandeered one whole street of the town, turned out the occupants after having cleaned up the place for us. The buildings were of volcanic stone and concrete with walls nearly three feet thick. In most cases the quarters of one farm family were one large room perhaps twenty feet square with coved ceil ing fifteen to eighteen feet high. Most of these had probably been built by their occupants and had the usual industrials of elaborate decorations in colorful motifs. Some had large fireplaces.

However you lived, you had to step outside your door to view old Vesuvius, the world's most publicized volcano. There was always a blast of smoke over it at night, the bubbling lava sent orange sparks skyward to illuminate the overhang ing clouds and smoke. But we felt safer from Vesuvius than from the threat of German bombs which several times fell in Naples twenty miles away.

Then the Fifth Army opened up the Ancona beaches and immediately the boys at Foggia soared high in glee and joy. None of the combat crews will ever forget the heavy, intense and accurate fire over the "wooded area" or practically any part of the sector. All of us were eager to visit.

At this period of operations, the 80th as a whole lost better than a dozen planes on the beachhead operations.

After such hatchet because of political and religious complications, Monte Cassino Abbey was then given to us as a target because the Germans were entrenched there and it was causing the loss of too many American lives. We went out with the barges and shelling. It was a couple of hours with a couple of boats which by mid-morning were help out by shelling, just as the mid-morning by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling. It was a couple of hours with a couple of boats which by mid-morning were help out by shelling, just as the mid-morning by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling, just as the shelling by shelling. It was a couple of hours with a couple of boats which by mid-morning were help out by shelling.
PAESTUM
ITALY

With our move to Paestum, Italy we changed weather as well as location. Instead of continual rain and cold, we now had sunny, spring days, plenty of sunshine, and small sprouts began to grow. The hills were dragged outdoors and the growth of our vegetable patch became evident.

An impressive presentation ceremony was held in the ruins of the ancient Greek colonnades where several ceremonies were probably staged for the helmeted warriors of the fourth century B.C.

We finally had found "Henny Penny," the goose was gone for good, and even our wary nerves, eggs were plentiful, the food was looking up and we seemed to have the best possible location we'd ever had.

The crew was probably the most correct when on the dock, they told us we'd stay put indefinitely but on the 15th, it became definite and on the 16th, after a 0300 breakfast, everybody awoke with a few of the ground personnel and the combat crew left for a 2 o'clock LSF for a test run.

For fourteen months we had looked for it and here it was—the best place to be. Everyone had found what he was looking for. The ocean bathed in a calm, sunny beach, mountains and seashore, hunting and fishing. When the Colonel came back with some farmer's fattened cow he'd been hunting, I was sure.

The low-level volunteers who started their regular hunting at Paestum, were housed in the whole group. Now that a new, beautifully perfect section of the whole group formation comes over low enough to blow the dust off the American Red Cross donations, we know without listening to the radio that they're coming. "Hesston completed, bridge finished!"

And while we're on the subject, let's give the Red Cross a big hand. We got our first regular installation at Prosper and it has been a permanent Institution ever since.

With bombs away, it's a long, chilly, hard and dirty business and one that we'll have to do again for the next group. It's hard work but it's worth it.
Second Birthday Celebration
25 August, 1944

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1430 Formation for Presentation of Awards
   Major General J. H. Cannon
   Brig-General E. H. Knapp

1600 Baseball Game
   48th Enlisted Men vs 48th

1900 USO Gala Show

2000 Dance at the Officers' Club

2000 Informal Party at EM Club
DRAWINGS AND LETTERING BY
S/Sgt Caracciolo.....Gp Hq
S/Sgt Stevenson.....th Sq
Lieut Nrvinec.....th Sq
S/Sgt Willock.....th Sq
S/Sgt Horry........th Sq
Sgt Moore.........th Sq

PHOTOGRAPHIC ENLARGEMENTS BY
Corp Schneider.......th Sq

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