

Manduria, Italy
September 30, 2003



We left Positano at 7:00 a.m. and drove east along the Amalfi coast, stopping briefly for breakfast in Salerno. From there we covered the same ancient route many of the US replacements had taken sixty years earlier as they were transported from the seaport of Naples to the air base in Manduria, only we were cruising along at a brisk 85 miles per hour much of the way. At 12:30 p.m. we were standing in front of the MUNICIPO, Manduria's City Hall, as we sought directions to the old air base.



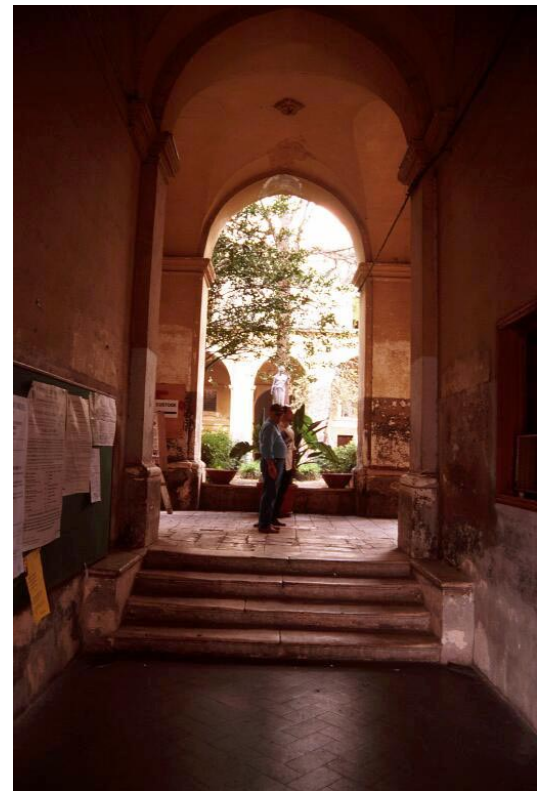
Map of Italy from 1944

Base locations courtesy of Joe Shuster, 15th Army Air Force, 456th Bombardment Group

Manduria



City Hall





Manduria Air Base

Home of the 450th Bombardment Group

At the entrance to the old air base is a monument to our involvement in its past. The grounds are now restricted and used as a training facility by the Italian equivalent of our Navy Seals. These trainees, however, have had one week of military life when they arrive here.

Base entrance. Our driver and translator, Gaetano Casola at left.



IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED WITH THE
450th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

ITALY 1943 - 45 WORLD WAR II

SQUADRONS
720th 721st 722nd 723rd
"THE COTTONTAILS"

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATIONS
REGENSBURG FEB 25th 1944
PLOESTI APR 5th 1944

1505 MEN OF THE 450th GROUP WERE
KILLED OR MISSING IN ACTION



FROM THIS AIR BASE AT MANDURIA, ITALY,
MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AIR
FORCE 450th BOMB GROUP (HEAVY) FLYING
B24 LIBERATOR BOMBERS FLEW 265 BOMBING
MISSIONS AGAINST THE AXIS, BETWEEN
JANUARY 8, 1944 AND APRIL 26, 1945. MAY
OUR COMRADES WHO MADE THE SUPREME
SACRIFICE REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

OCTOBER 1989



DA QUESTO AEROPORTO DI MANDURIA, NEL
PERIODO TRA L'8 GENNAIO 1944 ED IL 26
APRILE 1945 EQUIPAGGI DEL 450th GRUPPO DA
BOMBARDAMENTO PESANTE DELLA "ARMY AIR
FORCE" DEGLI STATI UNITI D'AMERICA,
EFFETTUARONO, CON I BOMBARDIERI B24
LIBERATOR, 265 MISSIONI DI GUERRA CONTRO
LE FORZE DELL'ASSE. POSSANO I NOSTRI
COLLEGHI CHE FECERO IL SUPREMO
SACRIFICIO RIPOSARE NELLA PACE ETERNA.















Photographs by Jack & Randy Amos

