

MOLTO BUONO

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ITALY

PROP BLOWN LOOSE WRECKS A SECOND LIB

"Anything can happen in combat." but a 723rd Squadron crew never expected to have their bomb-bay wrecked, stabilizer almost chopped in two and the controls locked-all as a result of a whirling propeller.

When the Pilot, Lt. Mickey Rorer, sped the bomber down the runway on take-off, he was unaware of the fact that the plane just ahead of him had skidded to a halt, its engine afire. Suddenly, as he left the ground, Rorer spotted an object hurtling through the air, sensed it aiming toward him. It was the prop from the burning plane!

Reacting quickly, he tried to maneuver the Lib so that the unavoidable prop, whirling through space, might strike the least critical spot. He braked between the left landing gear and the bomb-bays, cracking the main spar, then bounded back and gashed a hole through the left horizontal stabilizer.

All were stunned at the disaster, but reassured, when the pilot, after
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QUICK THINKING SAVES FIVE

Quick, clear thinking and disregard for personal safety on the part of three 723rd men saved the lives of five of the crew whose plane exploded on take-off last Friday.

Col. Engstrom, 723rd C.O., was on the line close to the Engineering area at the time the mishap occurred. Spotting the burning engine, he dashed into the nearest tent for a fire extinguisher and informed Capt. Massey, Engineering Officer, of the situation.

The Captain climbed into a jeep, overtook the Colonel, and together they headed for the plane, which by this time was a raging inferno. Some of the crew had managed to escape from it, but they were on fire and burning badly. Col. Engstrom turned his extinguisher on the human torches.

Meanwhile, M/Sgt. Mervin Berkin, Ordnance Section Chief, who was also a witness to the disaster, realized that there was no suitable transportation to remove the stricken men, and acted swiftly. He ran off, returned with an Ordnance truck and the most severely burned were rushed to the Group Hospital. The bomber exploded seconds later.

"Bottoms Up" Disappears On 105th Mission

"Bottoms Up," the last plane of the original air echelon that left from Alamogordo, New Mexico, in the winter of 1943, was lost on its 105th sortie, a mission to Wiener-Neustadt.

Grounded after its 100th sortie, "Bottoms Up" was reconditioned by the 721st Squadron and put back on flying status by the 15th AAF Hq. on March 8th.

Beginning her record afresh after major overhauling, "Bottoms Up" made successive trips to Korman, Maribor, Vienna, Regensburg, Varadzin, and Wiener-Neustadt. She had over 1060 operational hours at the time she disappeared.

The plane was first received by the 721st Squadron on October 30, 1943 and M/Sgt. Lester J. Witte- spoon was appointed her crew chief. Developing mechanical difficulties on the trip over the pond, "Bottoms Up" was the last ship to arrive at her overseas station. She got here in time to participate on the ninth mission of the Group, a flight to Pisa, Italy on January 18, 1944.

Originally manned by Lt. Joseph P. Gallagher and his crew, (now all POWs) the plane knew many pilots and crew members. Captain Wood took her on her 100th mission over enemy-held territory.

723rd First in Parade

The following squadrons were rated as indicated by members of the Group Staff at the formation, Sunday, March 18.

- First 723rd Squadron
- Second 720th Squadron

Unique Record By Lt. Hall

A most unusual record was turned in by First Lieutenant Harold B. Hall, 722nd, Pilot, recently when he completed his fiftieth combat mission without an early return, without ever feathering an engine, without ever leaving a formation and without ever having to stop for gasoline or for any other reason upon his return from a mission. To the best of our knowledge, no other member, either past or present, of this group, has ever equalled this record.

Lt. Hall made his first mission over the Ora Rail Road Bridge on
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Donovan and Wells Up Another Notch

The Group Executive Officer and Group Adjutant were both elevated in rank last week. It is now Lt. Col. Clarence J. Donovan and Maj. John H. Wells Jr.

Col. Donovan was the original Adjutant of the Group and served in that capacity until several months ago when he succeeded to the post of Executive Officer. Moving up a notch at the same time, Maj. Wells left the 720th Squadron, where he held the positions of Squadron Adjutant and Executive Officer, and became the new Group Adjutant.

A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Col. Donovan was a lawyer in civilian life. His home town is Bedford, Indiana. Maj. Wells, North Hollywood, Calif. was a Pre-Med student at the University of Washington and a sales manager for a manufacturing concern.

Reese Heads Group Club Plans April 7 Dance

A Group Enlisted Men's Club was organized at a meeting held by the newly-formed Headquarters Squadron, last Monday afternoon. M/Sgt. Leo E. Reese was elected president; T/Sgt. Francis B. Marrer, vice-president; and S/Sgt. Howard Blaise, secretary.

A constitution has been proposed and the newly-elected officers intend to study and amend it before formal presentation at the next regular meeting. On adoption, the instrument will be sent forward to the 15th AAF Hq. to gain official recognition by higher headquarters.

S/Sgt. Earl Thomas, chairman of the dance committee, reported that arrangements have been completed for the coming dance on April 7th. American, English, New Zealand, and Polish girls have been invited as guests and the 98th Bomb Group's "Jive-Bombers" have been hired to furnish the music.

Plans for renovating the mess-hall and day-room are nearing completion. The proposed extensions will be ready for use about a week before the dance.

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MAMMOTH ATHLETIC PLANS UNDER WAY

Special Services has announced the opening of the new Group gymnasium behind the theater on or about May 1st. It will house both a basketball and badminton court. A complete set of ba-bells will be constructed by the Service Squadron and will be made available at the gym.

South of the new 723rd area, a huge athletic center is under construction. A separate baseball diamond, four volleyball courts, and four horse-shoe pits are planned for each squadron. The Headquarters Squadron will have its baseball field back of the theater. Three volleyball courts have already been completed for the Headquarters unit.

Though tennis equipment is difficult to obtain, Special Services is making every effort to secure some for the Group. Two full-sized tennis courts are planned for the new athletic area.

To facilitate the handling and drawing of athletic equipment, an office and store-room will be built in the new area. One man from the A & R office will be available on full duty to aid in planning and organizing competition in the Group.

As part of the new expansion program, a new boxing ring will be built and bouts will be held regularly once each week beginning April 4th. Prizes consisting of war bonds will be given to the winners. The conditioning program for aspiring pugilists will begin in a few days and those interested may obtain information from Lt. Walsh.

Easter Services

Several guest chaplains will participate in the Holy Week Services to be sponsored by the 450th Group Chaplain's Office.

Holy Week Services for the Protestant men of the 450th will be held at 1800 hours in the theater building from Monday through Friday, March 26-30.

The schedule is as follows: Monday, Chaplain Richard O. Flinn; Tuesday, Chaplain Guy W. Mayfield; Wednesday, Chaplain John H. Keefe.