

COTTON TALES

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Saturday, April 21, 1945

ITALY

LIB FOOLS FORMATION AND RETURNS SAFELY

A potential flying torch amidst the formation, Lt. Jim Hanna and his courageous crew doggedly persisted in staying with their plane, despite the fact that the formation was pulling away from them in fear of being knocked down by an imminent explosion.

The silver Liberator, "Molto Buono," with gas splashing from its holed fuel tanks and escaping through the bombay, left a 1000 foot vapor trail behind its flak riddled tail.

The air over Brenner Pass was dense with black puffs of flak and burning planes. Lt. Hanna's plane sustained a flak hit in the canopy of the flight cabin. Co-pilot Lt. John Hamlin was taking off his flak helmet so that he could wipe the frost off his goggles when flak bounced off his helmet and landed on his glove. Nonchalantly picking the piece of shrapnel off his hand, he handed it to the pilot.

"A present for you, Jim," he remarked.

A few seconds later, realizing his close call, Lt. Hamlin glared at the jagged piece of steel which almost penetrated his protective cover, and wiped the perspiration off his forehead.

Another chunk crashed through the fuel pump housing and pierced two fuel cells. Gasoline splashed on the bombays and sent dangerous fumes throughout the entire plane.

T/Sgt. Wayne Reynolds, engineer-gunner, attempted to fix the jagged hole which was providing an outlet for the gas. His parachute drenched with fuel, he had to remove it and take his chances without any means of escape if the plane caught on fire.

The only thing that could be done was to transfer the fuel from the punctured tanks into the good ones. Meanwhile the rest of the planes broke from the formation, fearing that the Liberator might explode at any moment. Despite the pierced fuel tanks and oil

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Many In Group Decorated

At ceremonies held last week, the following D. F. C. s, Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts were presented to 450th personnel: D. F. C.

D. F. C.

Capt. George J. Caselli, bombardier	---HQ
Capt. Ralph W. Chabb, pilot	722
Capt. Thomas R. Gregory, pilot	723
Capt. Carl A. Kluender, pilot	721
Capt. Warren F. Maust, pilot	721
Capt. Doris B. Robertson, pilot	723
Capt. Leo F. Rogers, pilot	721
Capt. Lloyd F. White, pilot	721
1st Lt. Edwin B. Gallagher, pilot	721
1st Lt. Robert J. Graber, navigator	722
1st Lt. George A. Hesse, Jr., pilot	720
1st Lt. Hart A. Mark, Jr., pilot	720
1st Lt. Paul M. Llewellyn, pilot	721
1st Lt. John H. McCoubrie, bom-naw.	722
1st Lt. Lawrence F. Rorer, pilot	723
1st Lt. Claude W. Summers, pilot	721
1st Lt. Gene R. Wilkinson, naw.	720
2nd Lt. John J. Townsend, navigator	720
T-Sgt. Bruce J. Griffith, engineer	720
Sgt. Charles A. Markert, engineer	723
Sgt. James M. Tornquist, engineer	720
BRONZE STAR	
Capt. James S. Why'el, Jr.	722
M-Sgt. Wilbert J. Eggers	721

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USO Show Tonight

A USO Variety Show, "Light Fantastic," Will Play at the Cotton-tail theatre tonight. There will be two Performances, at 6:30 and 8:30 P. M.

722nd Armament Wins Invitation Tournament

Trailing by 7 points in the last quarter of the Invitation Tournament Championships, a fighting 721st Combat EM team couldn't match the determined 722nd Armament's onslaught and went down to defeat by a 38-20 score.

Al though the 722nd quinted was a big underdog, it made no bones about who was going to win the contest and ran up an 8-1 score when Vanetter ripped the cords with two long shorts. Beaman and Swank quickly followed with two more sinkers.

The last quarter saw the 721st boys fighting desperately but the shooting of Beaman and Swank put the clinchers on the game for the go-getting 722nd Armament.

In the Consolation Championship, the 720th EMs led by Mintz's 31 point scoring spree, routed the Group Radar quintet by a 67-45 tally.

JOKER II BREAKS RECORD

M/Sgt. Homer Wilson's "Joker II", sister ship of the original "Joker" which fought against the best that the Luftwaffe had to offer, has broken the Group record when it flew its 11th mission recently.

The 720th plane had only three early returns in its lengthy combat career. Badly shot up on its 102nd mission, the Joker II went through an extensive overhauling in the Service Squadron. So badly was the plane damaged that it was doubtful whether it would ever drop bombs again on enemy targets.

The ship was of stout heart though, and with the excellent job done by the Service Squadron, Sgt. Wilson and his assistants, T/Sgt. Vincent Stretch, Cpl. Harold Whipke and S/Sgt. Jim Berg, it was once again winging its way over some of the most heavily defended targets the 15th Air Force has yet tackled.

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Good-But No Strip!

Scores of outsiders crashed a 721st Squadron show Thursday night in the hope of seeing a strip-tease-but came away dissatisfied. Higher Headquarters had ruled out this form of entertainment. The show, however, had a rewarding Juggler act and an attractive Neapolitan Songstress.



450th Headquarters Area in Manduria, Italy