

ride and cold as hell.

Trucks took us from Bari to the farm at Torretta and on to tent 39. At first six men were assigned to a tent that was supposed to hold only 4. Our first job after raising the tent was to dig slit trenches. In ten days the planes and flight crews arrived, and the ground crews had the planes ready to fly their first combat mission on April 29, 1944. To get parts and tires, Master/Sgt Ray Juhl, Line Chief had the ground crews do some moonlight-

ing to obtain certain items. The first operation on the planes was to remove the deicer boots and other non essential parts to increase bomb load.

At first I was assigned to the crew on "War Weary". Later I transferred to to the Jessie Hogan crew on #700 "Abroad Abroad", a 827 squadron Mickey Ship (radar bombing equipped).

Tent 39 members were; Frank Simmons, Jay Lowry, Chuck Marrs, and Art Barkley. As the summer wore on, tent 39 put in a wood floor, side walls, and a stove. Cold weather came with snow, yes, snow the first of the year January 1945.

Franks Simmons told the 39 crew how he ran a movie house in his home town. He thought the 39 crew ought to develop films and print pictures. The thought interested me, Jan, and Chuck. I got on the horn and wrote to my mother for a developing tank and chemicals. In time we had the necessary equipment, Frank Simmons built a printer. Tent 39 was now a photo shop. One night we would develop 10 rolls of film, hang them up to dry in a loop around the center tent pole. A couple of days later, we would print them. Printing paper was one item we had to get here or from the States. But through channels we obtained it. Tent 39 developed a lot of film for flying crews.

I wish I could remember the Navigator or Bombardier who had his crew buzz his grandparents home in Sicily. I took pictures out through the nose turret, which I developed and printed for the crew members. Does anyone remember?

The 484th ended operations April 30, 1945. The war in Europe ended. We were all thinking about going home, but not for the ground crews of the 827 squadron. We were assigned to the clean-up crew, and were probably the last crew to fly out of Torretta.

The ground echelon 827th personnel were assigned to the 1252nd North Africa Division, ATC. We were transported by air to Casablanca, Camp DuShane. I was assigned to the ATC base at Oran, Algeria. At this base we did maintenance work on all C-47s in the North Africa Division. There were three shifts around the clock.

The war came to an end on August 8, 1945. We were sent back to Casablanca to join all of the high point men. Now the long wait for a ship to take us back home. September and October went by. We did odd jobs. I worked at Casablanca Air Base servicing C-47s and did my share of KP too. Chuck Marrs and myself spent many days touring around Casablanca.

At last November 6, 1945, the SS Frederick Lykes arrived. We departed with a 1200 man overload. The trip back took 16 days.

The End



827 Squadron Area looking west from the officers tent area. Photo was taken after VJ day as the tent tops have already been removed.



The responsibility of this clean-up crew was to restore the land in the manner in which it was found prior to to use by the 484th Bomb Group. They are from left: Richard Warrington, Charles Marrs, James Lowry, Art Aldene, Edgar Livingston, and James A Hart