

826 Sq Crews Flying The First Mission on April 29, 1944

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Plane</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Nose</u>	<u>Crew Chief</u>
Capt	Paine	42-52689	Sa Wrong Girl	51	S/Sgt Price
Capt	Mc Clung	42-52675	Miss Fire	5	Sgt Mc Niel
Capt.	Trotter	42-52684	Umbriago	54	S/Sgt Mc Intyre
Ist Lt	Fairchild	42-52671	Dream Girl	1	S/Sgt Tessalone
1st Lt.	W. Dowd	42-124741	Vivacious Lady	22	T/Sgt Walker
Ist Lt.	Creasman	42-52697	Salvo Sally		Sgt Tullius
2nd Lt	Remington	42-52632	Flaming Mamie	55	S/Sgt Yates
2nd Lt	Lovett	42-94739	Sleepy Time Gal	60	T/Sgt Herrmann
2nd Lt	O' Oshea	42-52705	Toggle Annie	52	S/Sgt Collins
2nd Lt	Nash	42-9414?	Novetta Maria	57	Sgt Tullier

full pack, the squadron left Camp Patrick Henry, ferried across Hampton Roads and boarded the converted liberty ship, the "Lucretia Mott" at Newport News enroute to an unknown overseas station.

Edged into a huge convoy, the crossing of the Atlantic chronicled rough weather, sunny days, alert drills, days of seasickness, and one authentic enemy submarine alert. On 30 March 44 land was first sighted - the coast of Africa. Several hours later the Rock of Gibraltar appeared and increased in size until the "Lucretia Mott" knifed its way through the Strait and into the blue water of the Mediterranean.

On 1 April during the night and early morn, the convoy was attacked by enemy aircraft; our baptismal of enemy fire and the army jargon of "sweating it out" became factual, on the morning of 6 April 44, the convoy anchored outside the mined and netted, and peasoup fogged harbor of Augusta, Sicily, and proceeded inside when the fog lifted.

Augusta, Sicily with a canopy of barrage balloons, shore based anti-aircraft gun placements, semi-tropical-palm trees, darting British harbor craft, rowboat vendors of oranges, wine and cognac and the black market offer of four dollars for a carton of American cigarettes was our first studied overseas port. Captain Hogan lead a swimming procession in the chilled water of the bay, and for an hour or two the water splashed with the voluntary divers and the thrown bodies of non- volunteers.

On 8 April 44, the "Lucretia Mott" anchored in the harbor of Brindisi, Italy where the squadron debarked onto land and proceeded to entrain in a long string of Italian box cars which soon acquired the name of "30 & 4", for reason that thirty-four men were assigned to a car and thirty men suffered while four rested with destination unknown. The train headed north. It was mid-day and the poverty of the people, the dirty streets and homes, and the battle marred scenes, and the ragged and dirty countless begging children presented a preview picture of Italy.

At 0200 o'clock the train pulled into the yards of Bari, Italy on the Adriatic, which was undergoing an enemy bombing attack, and together with the frenzied explosional chatter of anti-aircraft guns, awakened even those sleeping off the lethal vino on the bottom of the human pile. At 0800 o'clock on Easter Sunday, 9 April 44, the squadron transferred from train to waiting trucks on the outside of Cerignola and were moved up to the Torretta Air Field. A desolate a place as could be imagined. There, in a light falling rain, the sheep were chased off the field and tents

were pitched. It was "C" rations for Easter, and a wet Italian sheep-dung smelling ground for a bed that night,

With the camp site established, the weeds chopped and the 'snakes St. Patrick'd', the organization began to function. On 14 April the first of the squadron planes and men arrived from Djedeida, Tunisia and by the 20th all had arrived and the 826th bomb squadron set up for conflict with the enemy. The total strength of the squadron was 95 officers and 403 enlisted men at the time, including both ground and air echelons.

The air echelon started leaving Harvard on 13 Mar 44 and were all out by the 19th. The 18 fly away B-24-Hs of the squadron flew from Harvard to Lincoln, Nebraska and from there to Morrison Field, Florida where the ships were prepared and the crews briefed for the trans-oceanic hop. On 24 Mar 44 at 0200 and at two minute intervals, the planes took off from Morrison Field and some landed at Waller Field, Trinidad, and the others at Brinquin Field, Puerto Rico and joined up the following day at Belem, Brazil. From Belem, the planes flew to Forta Liza, and Natal, Brazil, the jumping off place, and took off across the blacked out waters of the Atlantic and landed at Dakar, West Africa.

From Dakar the planes flew to Marrakech, French Morocco and from there to Djedeida, Tunisia, where in the face of the necessary secrecy the group and the squadrons, they were welcomed over the radio by Axis Sally from Berlin, even mentioning the Group Commander by name. At Djedeida, the squadron lost two planes by transfer to the 461st Bomb Group; and both crews headed by Lt Morgana and Lt Ray were transferred out of the squadron. The other sixteen ships and crews joined with the ground echelon at the newly established camp at Torretta Field, Italy, officially designated as APO 520 Us Army Air Corps.

In the week following the 20th of April, the line was set up with engineering, armament, ordnance, communications, and bombsight repair and storage. The planes were given a thorough inspection and prepared for their first combat mission. On 29 April 44, the 826th Bombardment Squadron (H), a component of the 484th Bombardment Group (H) of the 49th Wing of the 15th Air Force flew its maiden combat mission. The primary target being the marshalling yards at Drnis, Yugoslavia. At ETR time the entire squadron sweated out the return of the group, and all ten of the squadron ships came back in good shape.

In May 44, nineteen sorties were made, starting with the harbor installations of Parma, Italy on 2 May and finishing with an attack on the Ploesti Rumania oil and refinery installations on 31 May.