

885 Bomb Sq. (H) (Special)  
"A Unique Squadron in the 15th Air Force"  
Becoming 2641 Special Group (Provisional)  
December 1944 On Arrival 859 Bomb Sq. (H)  
"Carpetbagger Sq." From The 8th Air Force.

No new names to add to our 122/885 Roster at this time but thanks to a good friend of our squadron - Bruce Clark - and his CD-ROM we shall see !! Bruce is looking for friends of his late father - Andrew H. Clark ASN 33786933 nickname "Andy" or by his middle name Hunter and he was from Philadelphia. He was a Sgt. and was in combat from March until May '45 in Italy - Group and Squadron and duties unknown. He returned to the states in June '45 and discharged as a member of 211th AAF Base Unit on 21 November '45 at Separation Center Sioux Falls, SD. Any ideas? Let me know.

Our 5th heavy bomber loss and the 3rd over enemy territory for the 122/885 was "Lady Irene". She was B-24D #42-40697 and departed our Brindisi base 4 October 1944 at 1845 hours. MACR #9444.

The crew were :

Charles R. Sloan	Capt.	Pilot
John R. Wilson	2nd Lt.	Co-Pilot
Irving B. Reider	2nd Lt.	Navigator
Bob H. Bookout	2nd Lt.	Bombardier
Francis J. Grochala	Cpl.	Engineer
Arthur E. Blackwell	Cpl.	Radio Operator
Isaac E. Carmack	Cpl.	Gunner
Carroll (NMI) Savage	Cpl.	Gunner
Aubrey F. Garrett	Cpl.	Gunner
James J. Ferguson	S/Sgt.	Dispatcher

Also 3 Agents (OSS Personnel)

Target was located at 45 45 30N - 09 57 42E which should be just NE of Milan a few miles. Code name Crosbey or Crosley. Course was : Sv. Andrija - Maestre Pt. to target. Not sure if there was an alternate target. There usually was.

I was working with 2 other operators that night out of our "299" transmitter truck located just west of the control tower and operations office. In the early hours of 5 October all the planes reported in with their ETA's and whether their drops were successful or not and eventually all landed safely - all except "Lady Irene". The other operators were relieved and I stayed on duty until later in the morning when my superior told me to shut down and go off duty knowing by that time that "Lady Irene" would be out of fuel. It was a bright and sunny day - but a sad one. Strange I guess, but that mission sticks in my mind !

FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS OF NOVEMBER 1944 :

Major Cox, of 2677 Hdq. Co., visited the Brindisi Headquarters in mid-November. With him were two American Captains whom the 885th had dropped into France in the early summer. Major Cox had conducted the training of the American O.G.'s that had gone into France and had gone in himself. He called to thank Colonel MacCloskey for the splendid support that the 885th had given to the American Units behind the lines. One of the Officers with Major Cox had been caught in Vecors Area when the Germans brought two Divisions up to stamp out resistance there. By the utmost courage and tenacity, this Officer had been one of the few to get through the German Lines. After forced marches, he and two companions were able to reach an agency through which an urgent message could be sent for necessary supplies. In response to this message, the 885th immediately dispatched a plane which dropped to the hard-pressed agents. This Captain added his commendation to that of Major Cox on the excellence of the Squadron's dropping in France.

Lieutenant General Eaker, Air Vice Marshal Elliot and their aids visited the Squadron on 18 November. As General Eaker stepped out of his shining C-53, the first 885th plane, on the day's mission, roared down the run-way for its take off. The General commented on the promptness and dispatch of the planes as they turned onto the runway at one minute intervals and pulled off. Escorted by Colonel MacCloskey, General Eaker made a personal visit to each of the sections and inspected the barracks area. General Eaker's party then went to 334 Wing where Colonel MacCloskey and Captain Van Tuil joined them at luncheon.

Note : 2677th Hdq. Co. as mentioned above was really Co. D. Station 13 2677th OSS (Prov.) which worked with us at Brindisi, Italy and I believe later at Rosignano with headquarters at Castiglioncello, Italy.

Also the term O.G. mentioned above refers to Operational Groups wearing uniforms and with about 30 men in each Group - as most of you probably know. It was also called "Guerilla Warfare Section".

Also there was a very nice write up and picture in the Nice-Matin, a French newspaper of 22 November 1994 telling about Philippe Castellano of Mandelieu-La Napoule and the book he wrote and published recently called "Liberator". It was also mentioned in the 15th Airforce Association "Sortie" Volume 10 No. 1 edition of their magazine. If anyway is interested in ordering a copy please let me know.

As you may know the 885th has ties going way back to July 1940 when the 122nd Observation Sq. of the Louisiana National Guard was called to active duty and it became part of the 68th Observation Group the following year in August. Heard from a former airplane mechanic of the 122nd the other day - John Freche of Terrytown, LA - and he gave me some early history on his squadron. They left from Newport News, VA and went ashore in landing crafts on the beach at Fidela, French Morocco 8 Nov. 1942 as reserve assault troops with the famed 3rd Infantry Divn. under General Patton. They wore the 3rd Divn. patch until they took the Casablanca airport and then they were able to return to the Air Corps after the Navy catapulted their P-40's from their carriers. So for a short time the Air Corps was also Infantry. Most Unusuai ! Some of the guys received the

**Silver Star and the Soldiers Medal during the early days of the North African Campaign.**

**So the 122nd Observation Sq. later became 122nd Liaison Sq. and then later the 122nd Bomb Sq. (H) and then on 12 May 1944 it became the 885th. A very interesting and very ful-filling period for those 5 years when the books finally closed on our squadron after V-E DAY. A GREAT DEAL TO BE MIGHTY PROUD OF, I WOULD SAY !!**

**Paula Konan of Vienna, VA is looking for anyone that knew her late father - Theodore Lazik ASN 7070441. Ted worked in the motor pool as a driver. Anyone remember him? Please let us know.**

**Am always mentioning our friend Philippe Castellano and the great work he and his team are doing in Southern France and Northwest Italy in locating many plane crashes and dedicating memorials in their honor. I keep forgetting to mention his nice family who supports him when he has to leave on these sometimes dangerous trips to the highest mountains in the area and sometimes to the deepest depths in the Mediterranean Sea. His wife's name is Dominique and children are daughter Laurence 12 years old, son Guillaume 9 years old and son Vincent 4 and one half years old. We salute them ! Philippe works in the hospital at Cannes as a technician engineer when he is not out looking for some plane crashes or looking after his nice family. By the way, he and his team are coming to the US next year but don't have the dates yet. Believe it will be the first part of October 1996.**

**Serge Blandin of Lyon France is another dedicated Frenchman that is looking for and documenting Allied crashes and helping to erect memorials in his area of central and northern France. Our thanks to him too !!**

**Also a special thanks for all the RAF chaps that sent me D-DAY, V-E DAY and V-J DAY newspapers from their areas. Very nice !**

**T.F.T. #9**

**11-11-95 VETERANS DAY \*\*\* A SALUTE TO ALL WW 2 VETERANS \*\*\*  
PEACE FINALLY CAME TO THE WORLD 50 YEARS AGO \*\*\*\*\*  
(at least for a few years anyhow !)**

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