

THE TOWER

464th BOMB
GROUP

Chaplain Eastwood, Editor



SCROOGE OR SANTA CLAUS



Meet Chaplain McCahey

Ever since the men of the 464th put down their bags on the side of a barren hill in Italy last spring, the one important job that remained unfilled was that of Catholic Chaplain.

A little over a month ago, news spread that we were going to have our Catholic Chaplain. The services of a priest were assured. A few days later, Father Eugene Francis McCahey arrived to take up his duties, and was assigned quarters in the 465th Bomb Group.

Born in Chicago in May of 1908, Fr. McCahey studied at Quigley Seminary and at St. Mary's Seminary in Mundelein, Ill., where he was ordained in 1934. Then followed two years of post-graduate work in philosophy at Loyola University. His first assignment was at St. Nicholas Parish, where he served for seven years. Father was later transferred to St. Columbanus Church, where he remained as senior curate until entering the service in October, 1942.

He graduated from the Army Chaplains School at Harvard University in December of the same year, and was immediately sent to the San Angelo Army Air Field Bombardiers School in Texas.

Fr. McCahey is right at home in the Air Corps. He holds a private pilot's license, and has almost 100 flying hours to his credit as a civilian in Chicago. Father had his first bomber ride at San Angelo, where he put on an AAF parachute for the first time.

Italy holds no secrets from Fr. McCahey, who visited this country in 1938 when the world was at peace. He toured Western Europe, Egypt and the Holy Land.

His only comment upon his arrival at this base, was, "Glad to see you". Like the majority of the fellows, his objective is to get back home. His present hobby is winterizing his "casa". Fr. McCahey said that his main purpose over here is to bring the Catholic personnel closer to the Mass and to the Sacraments of their Church.

Fr. McCahey celebrates Mass five times a week at the 464th Bomb Group Chapel. Sunday Masses are at 9:30am and at 5:30pm, with confessions preceding. Weekday Masses are on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 4:30pm. Catholic Devotions are held every Tuesday evening at 6 o'clock in our chapel.

Cpl. Albert G. SALMON

*"Suffer little Children to
come unto me
For of such is the kingdom
of heaven"*

The approach of the Christmas season carries me back in memory over twenty-seven long years to a tiny village in the Vosges Mountains of France — a village of the very old and the very young — with the men and women in their physical prime drained away into the army or war services. These children, within their memory, had known nothing but war and the conditions which war imposes - limited rations and the lack of common every day things which help to ease each day's labors.

The winter had been a hard one of extreme cold and heavy snow. Our battalion had been stationed there for training and we were billeted on the people. Their vacant rooms, their stables, their outbuildings had all been used to house us, and, in living there, we had come close to these people and to the children especially.

A few of us decided to see what we could do for the children at Christmas; the response of the Battalion was tremendous. Money poured in (we had just been paid for the first time in five months) so we were able to elaborate on our first plans. With the all-out-help of the schoolmaster and padre we secured the sizes of clothing, shoes, etc., for each child; sent a committee into Paris to do the purchasing and secured a complete outfit for each, two hundred sixteen of them.

Some of the men went up into the woods and cut a huge tree; others busied themselves with a multitude of other details including dipping light bulbs into improvised dyes to make tree ornaments.

and I have sweat and I shall work and sweat some more. I do not wish to rob anyone. I want to be given a chance to do something useful, to work and sweat for a worthy purpose, for the good of my country, for the good of all men, who are my brothers. I want to feel a part of something good, but I cannot. For who eats in Italy, who is well off in Italy? It is not I, Uncle, or men like me. No, until an honest man, a man whose only wish is to be given a chance to build and to be allowed to reap a decent reward for his effort, can be given his heart's desire, Italy is dead and the talk of hope and faith is like the emptiness of the wind caressing the trees with sweet sounds in the broad valleys."

He got to his feet and resignedly, slowly went out into the street where he became indistinguishable in a motley crowd. He was Paul Mani acting in a play by Maxwell Anderson, only it was the real thing. He was playing high drama — the soul of one man in an unintelligible world. He was Emile Zola hurling a bleak and chilling "J'accuse" against the universe. He was a single human soul crying out in the void, seeking to break the shell of his single existence in the realization of Christian brotherhood.

"It is true," said the old man, "there is none to help him, none to call him brother." And then, with the finality of abysmal resignation, he breathed, "I Thank thee, O Lord, that I am old and my life is soon done."

The other American soldier woke up, paid his bill, and walked out. A little brown and white dog followed him.

T U F A

G. H. MERRIAM

The old saying goes that "There are sermons in stone". Be that as it may, there is quite a story in the local limestone formations found near our base.

We all know the rock as "tufa" stone. One man I know wrote home to his folks that he was making a cottage of 24 blocks. This rock has for centuries been the basic building material for all southern Italy. It is used not only for all kinds of construction, but to make cement and fertilizers as well.

When you consider the history of a "tufa" block you find a long chain of events. Geologists tell us that millions of years ago the section of the earth known today as Italy was submerged beneath a warm, shallow sea. During the ages that passed hundreds of feet of lime deposits accumulated on the ocean floor. These deposits were the skeletons of billions on billions of tiny sea animals. Look at any "tufa" block carefully, and you will generally find quite a few shells.

After a long period of time the seas subsided, and Italy came out of the water. A great chain of volcanoes became active, in fact the dead cone of one may be seen at the end of our valley.

The lime beds dried off, hardened, and were covered with an accumulation of dirt, vegetable matter, and in some cases, lava. Near a volcano like Vesuvius the extreme heat and pressure turned the lime rock into a beautiful stone which we call marble.

But in the section of Italy where are the rise of the land was very gradual, so much so that day you may see the beds of stone just as they were laid down. We have different kinds of "tufa" due to the fact that the type of deposits varied with the depth and warmth of the sea.

Anyone who has ever seen an American quarry in operations has to smile when he watches the Italians. You never see the chain saws, the power drills, or the mechanical hoists which we use. It is a back breaking business over here, with all chizeling, hammering, and hoisting done by hand in many localities

the quarries look like mines, due to the tunnels which were built to follow choice beds of rock.

I was surprised to find when I went to Rome that "tufa" was even important to the early Christians. The Catacombs where they held meetings, and hid to avoid persecution were actually long forgotten limestone quarries. These wandering galleries total nearly a thousand miles.

My allowance of words is used up, and I must stop. Just one more thing concerning "tufa" ... Don't ask me how to get some onto the base. I'm trying to find a way myself.

THE 778th SPOTLIGHT

That exclusive group of little deals, the Brotherhood of the Mallet Heads convened last night and what a night. I'll tell you a little about this group. There are only eight members. M/Sgt's Chadwick, Kumm, Pritzel, Libuda, Kleinschmidt, Courtright, T/Sgt Griek and Cpl Carr and new members join by invitation only. Last night's meeting came up sort of sudden like and was to pay tribute to Brother Kumm who is expected to leave for a short time. They had a few guests last night. Lts. Klimpel, Russ and Knovich who not only entered into the business but it seems as tho they did the business. I imagine it is rather fortunate there was transportation handy or some of these members and guests would have had a most embarrassing time.

Congratulations to Lt. Colonel Poff and Capt. Fowler on the completion of their fifty missions. If you do happen to tackle another fifty in another theater we wish you another fifty successful ones. M/Sgt Schwenneker received a letter, he then sat down and wrote a letter, this letter went to France and then went home to the local paper. Now a clipping is on the way back. Wonder if M/Sgt Schwenneker will ever go back home. S/Sgt Baird who has had forty-eight missions to his credit is now studying engineering, should be able to tell us what happened to that landing gear on White "Y" now. Nails Jr. is the first night C. Q. who could wake a guy and still make him smile. What's the secret Nails or are we to be referred to Dale Carnegie. S/Sgt Shields has been sent to the hospital; hope nothing is serious with that chest.

Congratulations Pvt. Morehead on your second child. We understand a girl, tell her in years to come that the squadron wishes her the best of luck. Understand that Sgt. Butler believes the war is lasting a bit too long. Didn't you ever hear that "Patience is a virtue". Epl. Williams "What, more gas? I gotta pay these taxes after the war". They tell me that easy going Alabama boy, Baughn, had a rough day after a visit to the club. Do we think new resolutions were made? but definitely. Pappy Sheck is carrying home comforts a bit too far when he starts to receive a store boughten drip o later so his coffee can be made to specifications. Our hats go off to Lt. Lane and his crew for the good work they have been doing. The harmonica is a wonderful instrument if it is well played, this isn't a hint, Sgt. Patashus.

The Service Club has instituted a new policy by reducing the price of drinks to twenty cents. This is not so that you will drink more but that you

will save on the purse strings. Everybody is sweating out the opening of the coffee bar at the club. Should be very soon from all reports. Maybe then we get doughnuts, maybe.

So you think your wife or sweetheart is beautiful and possibly the most beautiful. Well, if you do, bring her picture along to the Service Club where it will be put on display and possibly chosen as the pin up of the 778th. Closing date of the contest will be December 13th and the selection will be made on the evening of the 15th. All pictures will be returned to the EM who enter them.

Since communications is now becoming a Squadron function instead of Group, it seems as tho Engineering will have another neighbor on the line. Communications is building their abode between Armament and Welding. Seems as tho the Imp and Ward should have lots of fun now. Wonder if Tech Supply will like having Sgt. Black that close. Don't get excited Black, you're a good guy, but oh those fingers.

What's wrong with the new combat crews? Never has this Squadron witnessed the arrival of such quiet inactive chaps. No one sees them around at all. Let you in on a secret boys even operations is going crazy as howling has been reduced to a minimum. Let's be up and doing and getting on the ball and enjoying ourselves while here.

The Orderly room extends its appreciation to Pvt. Wallace for letting them read at night. Sure is a keen job he is doing on that generator. Maybe they aren't so happy tho as this kills the alibi for not being able to work nights. The Medics are expanding their field. They now give out salts as well as aspirin. Congratulations boy.

The 778th Points With Pride

There are two of them and they work as a pair. The one was in the South Pacific for over twenty months when he had forty-eight missions as a gunner with four hundred combat hours. He returned to the States, received his commission as a pilot and came to this theater. The other was in the South Pacific as a gunner for a year, went to the States and then came to this theater as a gunner. The 778th point with pride to Lt. Klimpel and Sgt. Rollins. The former has received the Silver Star, the D. F. C. with Clusters and the Air Medal with numerous clusters. We are proud to have you with us and hope you both carry on with the good job you are doing.

Till next week then this is T/Sgt A. J. Griek saying "CHEERIO".

It was pitch dark by five each afternoon and the children were in bed by that time or shortly after but rose with the dawn which came out about five-thirty. On Christmas morning they were assembled at the School at five o'clock and soon after came filing out, in pairs, more or less graded as to size and age. The tree had been erected in the Place de Republique, the town-square. As the children, filled with wonderment filed toward the tree its lights were turned on. One of the men in an improvised but creditable Santa Claus costume took over and distributed the gifts. Each child received a bundle with his name on it containing a complete outfit, shoes, stockings, underwear, suit or dress, overcoat, hat, and gloves, together with a doll for each girl and at least one toy for each boy.

It was a day never to be forgotten; a heart warming episode in any man's life. The joy and happiness of these children simply cannot be described; suffice it to say that, unquestionably, it was a day that will never be erased from their memory. In the future if the universal desire for an end of all War is to be realized, the relation of the peoples of the Earth must necessarily be bettered; we must be brought together so that we may live together in peace and abundance. Consider then, if you will, how much simple acts on the part of each of us may do to speed the day when a common basis of understanding has been reached among all peoples. To those of us who have seen War, who have had the routine of our lives broken by it, it assumes the aspect of a duty to do all things in our power to bring about that understanding with its accompanying sanity and balance.

Remember, too, if you will, that innocent children do not start wars, yet no one class suffers more than

they from war. They are the men and women of tomorrow, the ones who will have to bear the heavy debt of this war. Among them we will have to have men and women of good will, of understanding, if we are ever to have or to reach an era of peace, universal peace.

Cannot we be broad enough, human enough and understanding enough, as Americans, to do what little we can, as individuals, for the ragged and vociferous urchins we

counter here in Italy? Cannot we give a little of our plenty to make Christmas at least a little more enjoyable for these little ones?

So, when we ask you for your donations at the end of the next pay line can't we expect your response, to be generous? And, as you go thru the PX line, is it too much to expect that you will likewise be generous?

J. A. HOWARD
776 Bomb Sq.

Viewed from the Hilltop

By MELVIN J. SYKES

There is nothing "romantic" about the towns of southern Italy, as far as I have been able to observe, although many have found them so in years past. Perhaps the war has buried their beauty as the dead are buried, perhaps it has killed in us the receptiveness to beauty when we find it set off in a frame of squalor, the smell of wineries, and the pallor of human misery. Certainly, the war has changed the towns of Italy and their once-proud inhabitants. But even now, my sister writes, judging from the picture post cards I have sent her, that a certain city seems "quaint, lovely and romantic".

I was walking along one of the little streets of this city the other day, wondering just what it had been in Italy that attracted men like Goethe and Robert Browning, and made my old Latin professor, as he said, a better man for having been there.

Presently I saw something that might really have qualified as "quaint, lovely and romantic". It was a barber shop, like most Italian buildings, just off the sidewalk. It had not been painted for several years. The luster had worn off the chrome-plated faucet shampoo hair-dryer device that was as complicated as an Italian land-mine. An American soldier was sleeping in one of the chairs.

My barber, as about seventy, although his firm hand belied it. He reminded me of the traditional caricatures of a beer hall proprietor in the 1890's. With the pomp and flourish of PT Barnum and the Chief Justice at the opening session of the Supreme Court all rolled into one, he slipped the cloth about me and proceeded to work. In the mirror

I saw two arresting figures in the waiting line behind the barbers' chairs. One was an old man, and the work of years was on his hands which were heavy and strong, and the mark of years was written in a certain Christian sadness that could be read amid the wrinkles of his face. He was Pagliacci, for his huge, undisciplined handle bar mustache lent a comic effect to his appearance. Beside him, his head in his hands, sat a young Italian soldier, *caporale maggiore*, clean, with a clean-cut face, the quick and open look of strength and honesty. I liked the way he looked as I saw him in the mirror — sharp and bright as the mirror itself. He and the old man had been talking.

The young man lifted his face and clenched his fists. Then he relaxed, and the words wrenched themselves from his lips: "Uncle, I tell you Italy is dead, my mother Italy is as dead as my mother Theresa, God be with her, and her dirge is in the hearts of her few remaining faithful children. For seven years I have worn this uniform and I fought in Ethiopia and Albania against people with whom I had no quarrel. I fought for the brigands who ruled Italy because I had to, and because Italy was my country. I fought in the army of him who had me put for two years behind bars for daring to ask questions, because Italy was my country, right or wrong. She was wrong but she was my country and I fought for her. Now I have been ordered to fight again, to join the Americans in the fight against the Germans. Of course, I shall fight. Willingly I shall fight. It is a debt we owe to those who have liberated us. But alas for men who must thank the stranger for giving their country back to them. For afterwards, what? Uncle, Italy is dead, the love of country is dead and all that is left is petty men and slavish souls."

The old man sighed, and pointed to the Church, to the need for hope and faith, but the young man was not comforted. "These things do not comfort me now", he said, "I want to know what there is for me to hope for on this earth. My wife is sick, my wife whom I have seen so seldom these past seven years. My child is dead. And my soldier's wage is small enough. Uncle-an-honest man eats badly. I have worked

CHAPLAIN'S REFLECTIONS

It's a pretty good idea to keep a vivid remembrance of what you were before coming into the army. Quite often soldiers come into my office and begin showing pictures which I must confess frequently surprise me. Here is just an ordinary G.I. Joe showing me pictures of a beautiful wife, a fine home with a well kept lawn, cultured parents and a profitable business enterprise. It is easy to get into the habit of thinking of our fellow soldiers as just corporals, or sergeants or even just captains. Worse still we may come to the place of thinking of ourselves in the same way. We are prone to lose our individuality, and those characteristics, interests and enthusiasms which make us people with interesting personalities.

Keep in remembrance the person you really are. Keep in your mind a clear picture of that home of which you are or will be the head, that wife who sees great things in you, that business which will someday be your own. Remember what you really are.

CHAPLAIN EASTWOOD