

Geiger, Richard F.

Sgt. Geiger Says Nazis "Weren't Kidding" About U. S. Air Power

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Sergeant Richard F. Geiger, son of Richard Geiger, 253 East Church Street, is a sergeant major with the 15th Air Force, based in Italy. He is a member of the 99th Bomb Group, and has been in the Army since June, 1942. During his 23 months overseas, he has been awarded four battle stars and at present is on furlough at Nice on the French Riviera.

"Now that the pressure of operations has been eliminated, I find myself on the Riviera with time on my hands for just plain loafing," he told a newsman. "I can remember when our outfit, the 99th Bomb Group, was so busy that I was lucky if I had time to write more than once or twice a week, much less read a newspaper regularly.

"No doubt the folks at home have been reading where Field Marshals Goering and Von Runstedt and Kesselring blame their defeat on the superiority of Allied air power.

"Those high ranking Nazis aren't just putting out propoganda this time. And outfits like ours get a lot of satisfaction out of those statements because we were a part of that air power which helped to cripple Germany and make the Allied offensive as a whole successful.

"Despite the fact that a sergeant-major is usually busy with a lot of paper work, you can't live with an outfit without hearing about its accomplishments and getting almost the same kick out of them as do the air crews who actually flew the missions.

"When the crews came back from the big raid on Ploesti—those who did, that is—all of us felt badly about the men who were lost. But it was a little easier to take when we found that over 50 per cent of the Nazi's crude oil production had been wiped out. When the last big operation came off—sealing off of the Brenner Pass supply route be-

tween Italy and Germany, air power's superiority was so evident that the job was easy by comparison.

"It doesn't sound like a glamorous job—sergeant major—but when you forward papers giving your unit two Presidential Unit Citations you can't help being proud. Especially when you have the enemy's statements to prove it!" he said.

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