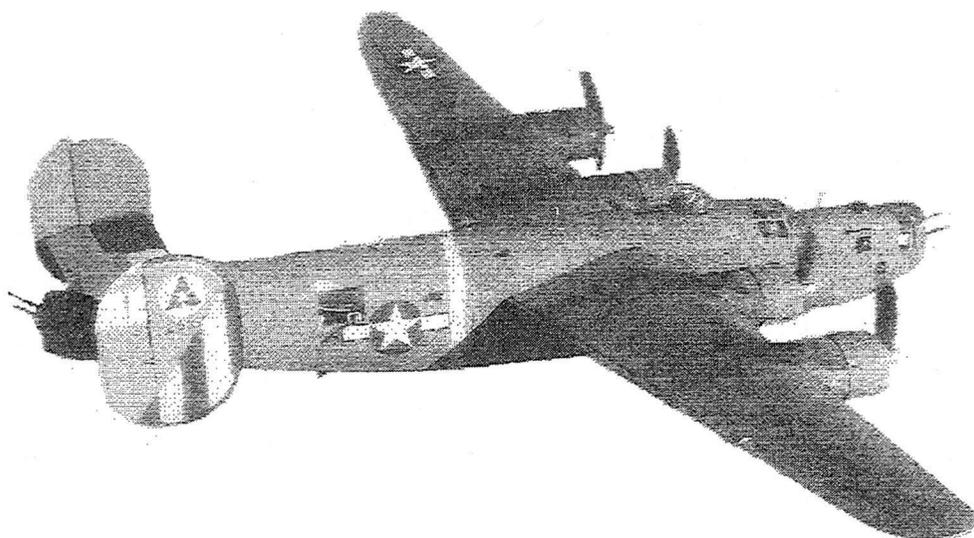
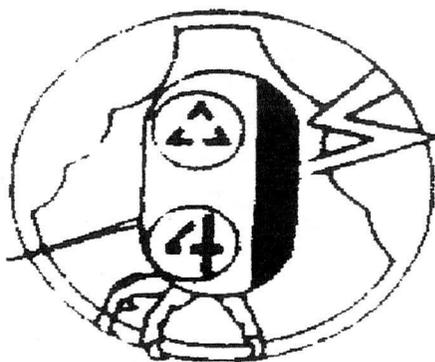


15TH ARMY AIR FORCE
450 BOMBARDMENT GROUP
720 BOMB SQDN
MANDURIA, ITALY
1943 - 1945

720



I hereby by acknowledge the following sources, without which this version of the history of the bombardment squadrons of the 450th Bombardment Group (H), could not of been assembled:

1. National Archives
2. Air Force Archives
3. Department of the Air Force
4. A. L. Campa 450th Bomb Group
5. J. H. Wells 450th Bomb Group
6. R. W. Cain 450th Bomb Group
7. Photos B.S. Benton 721st BS
P.W. Boettcher 722nd BS
L.B. Heath, 720th BS
G.M. Kanen, 720th BS
J.B. Newton
1st Combat Camera Unit
8. Anonymous Contributors

DEDICATION:

This chronicle of events is dedicated to all those men who lost their lives in combat over the skies of Europe during World War II and especially to my crew members, who were killed in action on October 17, 1944, while on a bombing mission over Vienna, Austria.

The abridged version of the history of the 450th Bombardment Group (H), has been compiled by Robert A. Davis, (T/SGT) Radio-Operator, Gunner, who flew 25 combat missions with the 721st Bomb Sqdn. and was shot down over Vienna, Austria.

An explanation is necessary about the documents copied. Micro-film of the exact document was used. These documents, being over fifty years old at the time this book was assembled, are naturally in very bad condition due to time and the elements. Although the project was difficult and time consuming, I feel that I have correctly transformed the faded images on the micro-film to the readable text found in this book. It is possible that I have copied some words incorrectly, if this is so, I apologize for it. However, I feel that ninety eight per cent of the text has been correctly copied. If the wording, grammar, and punctuation is not as it should be, the fault lies with the writer of the original document and not with the copier. I had no wish to make any changes to the original document. As you read it now, it is the same as it was written, over fifty years ago.

+ + +

Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.
William Jennings Bryan

+ + +

Deeds of heroism are but offered to those who, for many long years, have been heros in obscurity and silence.
Maurice Maeterlinck

AUGUST 1994

+ + +

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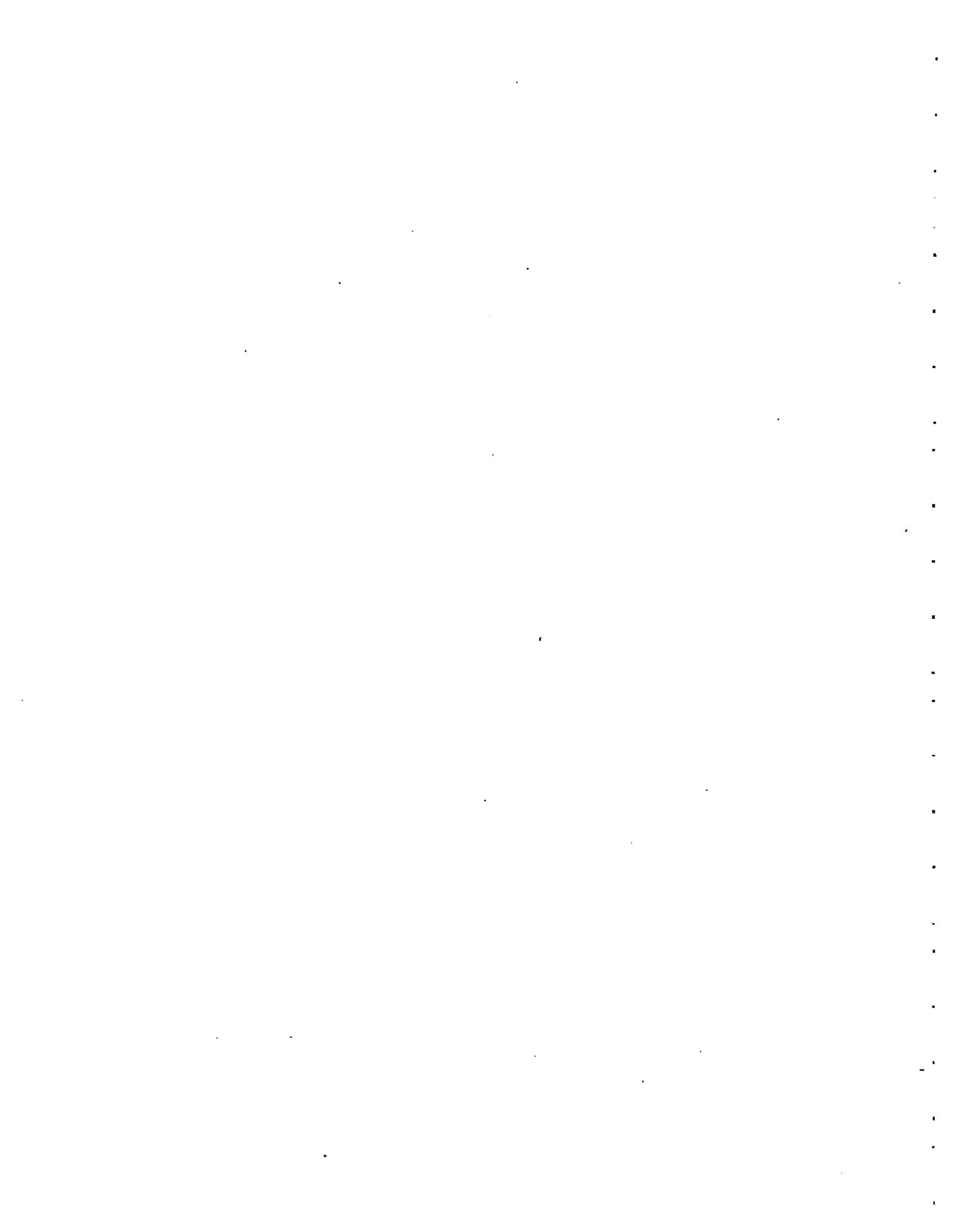
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F-I-N-E-T-O

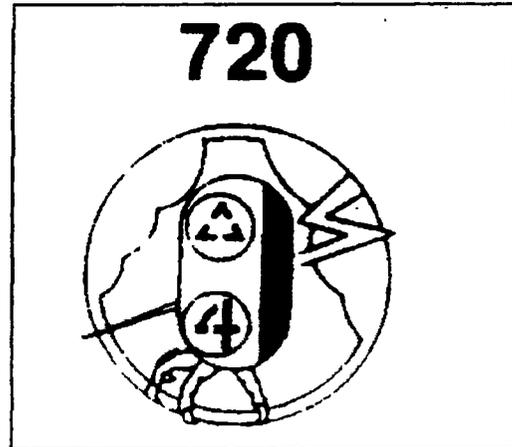
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**15th ARMY AIR FORCE
450th BOMB GROUP (H)**

720th Bombardment Squadron

LINEAGE: Constituted 720th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) on 6 Apr 1943. Activated on 1 May 1943. Redesignated 720th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on 23 May 1945. Inactivated on 15 Oct 1945. Redesignated 720th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 29 Oct 1953. Activated on 25 Dec 1953. Inactivated on 8 Aug 1955. Redesignated 720th Fighter-Day Squadron on 13 Nov 1957. Activated on 11 Dec 1957. Redesignated 720th Tactical Fighter Squadron on 1 July 1958. Inactivated on 18 Dec 1958. Redesignated 720 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), and activated on 15 Nov 1962. Organized on 1 Feb 1963.



ASSIGNMENTS: 450th Bombardment Group, 1 May 1943-15 Oct 1945. 11th Air Division, 25 Dec 1953-8 Aug 1955. 450th Fighter-Day (later Tactical Fighter) Wing, 11 Dec 1957-18 Dec 1958. Strategic Air Command, 15 Nov 1962; 450th Bombardment Wing, 1 Feb 1963-.

STATIONS: Gowen Field, Idaho, 1 May 1943; Clovis AAB, NM, 21 May 1943; Alamogordo AAFld, NM, c. 8 Jul-26-Nov 1943; Manduria, Italy, 2 Jan 1944-13 May 1945; Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, c. 31 May 1945; Harvard AAFld, Neb, 24 Jul-15 Oct 1945. Ladd AFB Alaska, 25 Dec 1953; Eielson AFB, Alaska, 17 May 1954-8 Aug 1955. Foster AFB, Tex, 11 Dec 1957-18 Dec 1958. Minot AFB, ND, 1 Feb 1963-.

AIRCRAFT: B-24, 1943-1945; B-29, 1945. F-86, 1954-1955. F-100, 1958. B-52, 1963-.

OPERATIONS: Combat in MTO and ETO, 9 Jan 1944-26 Apr 1945.

SERVICE STREAMERS: None.

CAMPAIGNS: Air Offensive, Europe; Naples-Foggia; Rome-Arno; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; North Apennines; Rhineland; Central Europe; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.

DECORATIONS: Distinguished Unit Citations: Regensburg, Germany, 25 Feb 1944; Ploesti, Rumania, 5 Apr 1944.

EMBLEM: Unit adopted World War II Class C insignia.

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**450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
FIFTEENTH ARMY AIR FORCE**

MAY 1, 1943 TO MAY 8, 1944

ABRIDGED HISTORY

General Order No. 68, 22 April 1943, Headquarters 2nd Air Force, Ft. George Wright, Washington, officially activated a new group to be known as the 450th Bombardment Group (H) on 1 May 1943 at AAB, Gowan Field, Boise, Idaho. Twenty-one days later a paper transaction transferred the 450th to the AAB in Clovis, New Mexico. The key personnel was assigned on this base, and Captain William G. Snaith issued Order No. 1 assuming command until 12 June when Colonel John Stuart Mills arrived to take formal command of the Group.

The 450th Bomb Group commenced combat operations in January, 1944. The first really successful mission was flown against Pisa, Italy on the 18th of January, and by the following month the group was in the big leagues. During the next fifteen months until the final operation effort of April 26, 1945, the Group flew a total of 274 missions against a variety of targets throughout German-occupied Europe.

From the little village of Manduria, in the heel of Italy, 450th bombers fanned out over a vast perimeter extending from Toulon, France to the Black Sea. Cottontail crews have seen action in the skies above Northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France, Austria and Germany. Both strategically and tactically, the 450th played a forceful part in weakening the German war effort, striking effective, long-range blows at enemy communications, industry and oil resources, blasting gun positions, observation points, vehicles and troop concentrations in direct support of Allied ground forces.

Early in combat the 450th earned the name by which it became known in the Mediterranean Theater and in the United States. The white rudders of the big tailed Liberators were spotted by the German Luftwaffe when the 450th led the devastating attack against the Prufening Aircraft Factory in Regensburg, Germany on February 25, 1944. Smarting under the blows of the 450th bombing, "Axis Sally," better known to the airmen as "The Berlin Bitch", came on the air that night with a threat and a warning to "The White-Tailed Liberators." On subsequent bombings over Germany, hundreds of ME-109's and FW-190's supported rocket firing JU-88's attacked aggressively, knocking down several 450th bombers. From Berlin came the gloating voice of Sally: "How did you like it, white-tailed Liberators." From "white-tails" the obvious nickname of "Cottontails" developed.

The week beginning February 20, 1944, has been described by General Arnold as one which broke the back of the Luftwaffe. The 450th participated in three major attacks during this historic week, smashing at the ME-109 Aircraft Factories at Regensburg, Germany and the Aero-Engine Works at Steyr, Austria. Other high priority aircraft factories hit several months later by the 450th included those at Wiener-Neustadt and Schwechat, Austria, Budapest, Hungary, Munich and Friedrichshafen, Germany.

During the Winter of 1944 rail yards in Northern Italy were bombed with regularity. Hitting Ferrara and other key transportation centers, the Group helped to keep from the German forces the necessary supplies for a counter-attack against our troops fighting in the bitter mountains North of Naples.

When the daring landing at Anzio was conceived, heavies were give a vital role to play and the 450th severed its share of railroad lines leading into Rome and neutralized airfields from which the Luftwaffe might have interfered with the landing operations.

Early in April, rail hubs servicing the Germans in the East assumed top importance, as the Soviet armies prepared to launch the drive that swept them through the Balkans. On successive days, the 450th took part in assaults on the Budapest, Bucharest and Ploesti Marshalling Yards, leading the entire 15th Air Force on the latter mission, which was the opening round in the Battle of Ploesti.

When the Southern France invasion was launched, the 450th assisted with very effective pin-point bombing that knocked out gun installations along the shore; cut supply lines.

Earlier, the submarine pens at Toulon had been severely damaged and harbor installation in Southern France successfully bombed.

After a record year of operations the 450th entered its second year in combat by resuming all out attacks on the main German communications system in Southeastern Europe, an effort coordinated with the grand Soviet offensive through Hungary and Austria. Such vital and highly defended targets as Linz, Graz, Munich and Vienna were blasted by the 450th.

The "Cottontails" rounded out extensive service in the Mediterranean Theater in support of the final Allied offensive in Italy. When the 5th and 8th armies launched the push into the Po Valley in April of 1945, the 450th lent 100% support, dispatching every aircraft in commission to strike at gun emplacements and troop concentrations, and achieving 100% bombing accuracy in destroying the Legnago Railroad Bridge in Northern Italy. It was a fitting climax to an operational career that had been marked by many outstanding combat achievements.

The officially credited victory total of 450th gunners since the beginning of the Group's combat operation far outnumbered losses directly attributable to enemy fighters. 194 Nazi aircraft were destroyed by the 450th; 38 probably destroyed; 27 damaged.

In addition to hundreds of decorations presented to 450th personnel, the Group itself has been awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy.

The first citation was granted in recognition of the Group's heroic achievements in an attack on the Regensburg, Prufening Aircraft Factory, Germany, on February 25, 1944.

For superior leadership of the entire 15th Air Force in striking the initial blow against Ploesti on April 5, 1944, the "Cottontails" won a cluster to the D.U.C.

#

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

I M M E D I A T E A C T I O N

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS SECOND AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
Fort George Wright, Washington

May 21, 1943.

370.5 (E-3)

SUBJECT: MOVEMENT of UNIT: 450th Bombardment Group.

TO : See Distribution:

1. Announcement is made of the movement without personnel or equipment of the 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP from AAB, GOWEN FIELD, BOISE, IDAHO, to AAB, CLOVIS, NEW MEXICO, effective May 21, 1943.

2. This is a TEMPORARY change of station (Last perm station activated at AAB, GOWEN Field, Boise, Idaho, has never been moved to a permanent station.)

By command of Major General Johnson:

A. W. SEIBT
1st Lt, AGD
Asst. Adj. General.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

/s/ JAMES A. MCKAMY

JAMES A. MCKAMY,
Major, Air Corps,
S-2 Officer

(Distribution: See Page 2)

b:\so53143.450

I M M E D I A T E A C T I O N
C O N F I D E N T I A L

Army Air Base
Clovis, New Mexico

SPECIAL ORDERS)
May 31, 1943

NO.....151)

E X T R A C T

1. The fol-named personnel of the 302nd Bomb Gp, organization indicated, are trfd to the 450th Bomb Gp, organizations indicated, and are atchd to the organizations they are trfd fr for rat, adm & training. The 450th Bomb Gp, was activated at AAB, Gowen Fld, Boise, Idaho, Auth: 2AF Memo 35-15, dd Nov 24, 1942.

Relieved from: 355TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AAF

Assigned to : 720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AAF

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Captain CLARK J. WICKS | Squadron Commander |
| 2nd Lt JOHN C. GIRAUDO | Co-Pilot |
| 2nd Lt Wilbur C. Hollands | Supply and Transport. O |
| 2nd Lt ROBERT P. KRATZ | Bombardier |
| 2nd Lt ROBERT P. MEULLER | Navigator |
| 2nd Lt HARLEY W. RHODEHAMEL | BSM Officer |
| 2nd Lt JACK N. RYNE | Communications Officer |
| 2nd Lt MONROE SACHS | Operations Officer |
| 2nd Lt JOHN H. WELLS Jr | Adjutant |
| 2nd Lt MAX L. WILLIAMS | Engineering Officer |
| F/O JOE M. SMITHT | Co-Pilot |

TECHNICAL SERGEANTS

WILLIAM M. BOARD DONALD L. KULENKAMP EVERETT F. BASOON

STAFF SERGEANTS

NORMAN HUBER RALPH J. MASON Jr. VINCENT P STRETCH
RICHARD P. LONG

SERGEANTS

DOYLE W. CHUPP EUGENE T. COLE ALFRED HUBSC
HARRY W. SCOTT JACK E. SMITH HERBERT R. TAYLOR
RICHARD VELEY

SAMUEL KOSANOVIC JOHN T. LEACH LEONARD NASTROPIER
EUGENE C. MUNSON JOHN R. NENNE THOMAS W. NETHERTON

CORPORALS

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| JAMES M. BECKEIIIC | THOMAS S. COX | CUAUHTEMOC CUELLAR |
| GLEN W. ESTER | FRANK GRGURICK | NORTON R. HILDRETH |
| WALTER E. IVES | JOSEPH B. KEZAL | HAROLD R. MERICLEW |
| ITHOLD A. PLENTIE | MICHAEL RECHICHAR | ROY W. REINE |
| RAYMOND H. SCHMIDT | BRUCE A SELBY | LEONARD SHAW |

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| CARL J. BLCOM | JAKE L. CORN | WILBER D. DRUMMOND |
| ALFRED HUIISH, JR. | KENNETH E. LASH | NOLAN H. LeMOND |
| RICHARD S. MANCUSO | WILLIAM MANN, JR. | MICHAEL PETRAS |
| JACK M RAND | DONALD B. SCHANEL | FREDERICK SKINNER |
| LESLEY YANDELL | | |

PRIVATES

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| FRED BUCKMANN | JACK CORYELL | JOSEPH A. DEFERARI |
| CHARLES Des NOMERS | RALPH K CAUKER | CHARLES E. JONES |
| CHESTER LEATHERBERRY | CHARLES M. McATRE | JOHN J O'BRIEN |
| WILLIAM T. PRATT | EARL G. RODEWILD | LESTER L. SCHULTZ |
| *HERBERT A. SHARKEY | | |

* Relieved from 356th Bomb Sq.

HEADQUARTERS
ARMY AIR BASE

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER.....309)

Alamogordo, New Mexico
19 November 1943

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

* * *
1. The flight echelon, 450th Bomb Gp (H), sq and pers as per atchd roster, is trfd to the AAB, Herington, Kans; first units departing 20 Nov 1943. Aircraft, with crews and passengers as indicated below:

Depart 20 Nov 1943, and arrive o/a noon 20 Nov 1943:

ROSTER OF FLIGHT ECHELON, 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

720th Bombardment Squadron (H)
Ship No 41-28612

*WICKS, Clark J Capt Sq CO
RHODEHAMEL, Harley 1st Lt Arm Off
FLANAGAN, Joseph S/Sgt Gp S-4 Clk
CARR, Rolland R 1st Lt B
BOARD, William M M/Sgt Line Chf
WILLIAMS, Max Jr 2nd Lt
RYNE, Jack W 2nd Lt Com Off

WASSERMAN, Soloman Sgt AR
SACHS, Monroe 1st Lt CP
BROWN, Robert L 1st Lt N
WAGNER, Alfred W Capt M
WEBER, Verne A Capt S-2
GRGURICH, Frank S/Sgt C
HUBER, Norman M/Sgt Insp

Ship No 42-7735

KORDICH, Nicholas P 1st Lt
COOPER, William H 2nd Lt CP
JONES, William A 2nd Lt
GREIVE, Norvin C B 2nd Lt
BARKER, James A S/Sgt
MORRISON, Raymond R S/Sgt R
BARTLEY, David W Sgt AE

PFLETCHER, Willis W Sgt AR
FLOLO, Eugene C Sgt G
NLUBIN, Soloman E Sgt AG
BOEREMA, John A 2nd Lt G
BATHO, William D Sgt E
NENNE, John R S/Sgt Flt Cf
SCOTT, Harry W S/Sgt C Cf

Ship No 42-7743

WHITEHEAD, Ronald R 2nd Lt P
BIBB, James M Jr 2nd Lt CP
BROWN, Joseph W 2nd Lt N
LOWEN, Thomas K 2nd Lt B
GOODMAN, Joseph L S/Sgt E
STERNBERG, John M Sgt R
KRASKA, Chester J Sgt AE

YOUNG, Paul G Sgt AR
MEANS, Jack W Sgt G
AMUNDSON, Donald R Sgt AG
HECHT, Russell J Sgt G
HOPKINS, Wallace C Sgt G
PLENTIS, Withold A S/Sgt
O'BRIEN, John F Sgt C Cf

ROSTER OF FLIGHT ECHELON, 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

720th Bombardment Squadron (H) Continued

Ship No 42-52148

FRENCH, Gerald M 2nd Lt P
 CUMMINGS, Richard S 2nd Lt CP
 POLCE, John L 2nd Lt N
 CUMMING, James D 2nd Lt
 WARD, John L Sgt E
 WOOD, James A Sgt R
 JOHNSON, Stanley J Sgt AE

ROBERTS, Elwyn D Sgt AR
 PFELCHNER, Charles C Sgt G
 VERDUIN, Howard J Sgt AG
 STARKOVICH, John Sgt E
 FINNIGAN, Kenneth C Cpl G
 CENTERS, Dillard D M/Sgt C
 SHAW, Leonard S/Sgt Elec

Ship No 42-7748

MARPE, Frank C 2nd Lt P
 RALLS, Warner T F/O CP
 JOYCE, Joseph J 2nd Lt N
 GUTHRIE, Lawrence B 2nd Lt B
 DUNN, Joe W Cpl E
 MATAN, Francis A Sgt R
 BOREN, Earl E Jr. Cpl AE

ANDERSON, Marion D Sgt AR
 O'HARA John J Sgt G
 ADAIR, Jay R S/Sgt AG
 LARIVEE, Leo M Sgt R
 KOSANOVIC, Samuel S/Sgt Cf
 DEWEY, Hartley C 2nd Lt P
 RECHICHAR, Michael A S/Sgt

Ship No 42-7697

MCCRAW, Reaford C 2nd Lt P
 FULKS, John S Jr 2nd Lt CP
 TAYLOR, William R 2nd Lt N
 CONNORS, Ernest D 2nd Lt B
 JUNEAU, Dominique S/Sgt
 FLANAGAN, Charles R Sgt R
 VIOLETT, Harold J Sgt A

BRITTON, William H Sgt AR
 BARNACLE, John F Cpl G
 NETHERTON, Thomas W Sgt AG
 COUNTS, Dave 2nd Lt B
 ELROD, Paul E Sgt E
 STOY, Harry X Jr Sgt C Cf
 GLEMOND, Nolan H Sgt Sq

Ship No 42-64458

STEBBING, Harry T Jr 2nd Lt P
 CUNNINGHAM, Charles E Jr 2nd Lt CP
 ADEIMY, John D 2nd Lt B
 PARK, Arthur D 2ND Lt B
 MANDANYOHL, Joseph A Cpl AR
 KRISTAL, Stanley L Sgt R
 HAIGHT, William J Sgt AR

HEFFERNAN, Josphe J Pvt G
 CASTRO, Julio Sgt AG
 HODGSON, Sidney W 2nd Lt P
 HEYMAN, Ralph Sgt E
 ESTER, Glen W Sgt C Cf
 MASON, Ralph J M/Sgt Arm Cf
 NEELY, Hugh A Sgt E

Ship No 42-52162

EDWARDS, Robert W 1st Lt P
 LAMB, Harry 1 2nd Lt N
 SIGNS, William J Sgt G
 BAZ, Joseph D Sgt R
 SCHOONOVER, Jack C Sgt
 JACKSON, Thomas W Capt S-4 OFF

FARMER, Robert L 2nd Lt CP
 DELLARIO, Michael Sgt G
 OPENSHAW, Melvin L Sgt AG
 KITSON, Francis L 2nd Lt P
 WARD, John W Jr 2nd Lt CP
 WILSON, Homer B Sgt C Cf

ROSTER OF FLIGHT ECHELON, 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

720th Bombardment Squadron (H) Continued

GENTILE, Frank Sgt AR

ALLEN, Thomas H 2nd Lt B

Ship No 41-29247

CRANSTON, William R 2nd Lt P

HEINLEN, Richard L Sgt G

BUSH, Keith G 2nd Lt CP

CHAMBERS, Kenneth M Sgt AG

ORAVEC, Joseph J 2nd Lt N

WILLIAMS, Eugene A 2nd Lt

AMSTER, Louis 2nd Lt B

JOHNSON, Herbert F Sgt G

FERRY, Angelo T Sgt R

CAIN, Burdette I Sgt C Cf

LEATHERBERRY, Chester O Sgt Sq Opns Clk

LAFOUNTAIN, Leo H Sgt AG

THOMPSON, Albert L Sgt E

GEIGER, Aubrey H Jr Pvt AR

Ship No 41-28598

WAGNER, Donald F 2nd Lt P

CLAPPROOD, Edward L Sgt AR

BECHTELL, Donald R 2nd Lt CP

MILLER, Lawrence R Sgt G

HOPPER, Elvyn G 2nd Lt N

FASOLAS, Charles C Sgt AG

BRANNON, Richard E 2nd Lt B

HANNAH, Lewis D 2nd Lt N

KUSMIRAK, Stephen W

HODGSON, Ralph G 2nd Lt P

KITTELSON, Lloyd K Sgt R

EVANS, Merle Sgt A C Cf

PETERSON, Robert A Sgt AE

Radkoff, Stephen T/Sgt

Ship 42-52124

CANTRELL, Paul B 2nd Lt P

TEDFORD, Harley O Jr Sgt AR

ADRIAN, Elmer 2nd Lt CP

BARKLEY, Howard R Sgt G

DE KRAKER, Donald 2nd Lt N

BOYNTON, Charles J Sgt AG

MILES, Lawrence H 2nd Lt B

HACKEL, Richard 2nd Lt N

AYLESWORTH, Scott M Sgt

KNAPPENBERGER, Clifford Sgt

NOE, Jack R Sgt R

KERR, Samuel H S/Sgt C Cf

MACQUEEN Henry C Capt A/Gpp Opns Off

MONKUS, Victor Jr AE

Ship No 42-52119

LEY, Edmund A 2nd Lt P

MASON, John Jr Sgt AR

WATSON, Winston C 2nd Lt CP

HERRMAN, Edward F Sgt G

MALARKEY, John E 2nd Lt N

FRYMIRE, Clarron J Sgt AG

TEED, Albert S 2nd Lt B

RUSSO, Alfred R Sgt R

CANNON, Walter W Sgt E

BARNHILL, Oscar C Sgt G

MCDONALD, William W Sgt R

KULCHISTZKY, Bill S/Sgt

GRIFFIN, Arlie L Sgt AE

MCLAUGHLIN, Bill Sgt C Cf

SHIP No 42-7742

SMITH, Dalton W 2nd Lt P

GRZYWA, Edwin F Sgt R

MOLINA, Frank W 2nd Lt CP

MORGAN, Robert L Sgt AE

HART, Thomas F 2nd Lt N

HEINEMAN, Cyril G Sgt G

HARPER, Ryan D Sgt E

COMPTON, Eugene M Sgt AG

ROSTER OF FLIGHT ECHELON, 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP

720th Bombardment Squadron (H) Continued

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| BROWN, Arlie L 2nd Lt B | MOON, Carl A Jr Sgt AR |
| GAUKER, Ralph K Sgt RM | MOORE, Maurice W Sgt G |
| WRIGHT, James 2nd Lt Asst Opns Off | MANCUSO, Richard S Sgt CC |

Ship No 42-52142

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| *MILLS, John S Col Gp Comdr | FILI, William J Sgt AE |
| VARVIL, Dana V 2nd Lt P | HANEY, Randolph F Sgt AR |
| BAHTI, Lenus A 2nd Lt CP | FOSTER, John C Sgt G |
| BOYLE, Glen E 2nd Lt B | KOURVELAS, Charles Sgt AG |
| BELL, Edward W 2nd Lt B N | GOLDVARG, Jerome 1st Lt N |
| CULVER, Robert B Sgt E | BOHANNON, Robert J Sgt R |
| SWEARINGEN, Paul Sgt R | COX, Thomas S Sgt C Cf |

Ship No 42-64443

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| GIRAUDO, John C 1st Lt P | REARDON, John H Sgt AR |
| WHITE, Stanley A 2nd Lt CP | BARR, Charles F S/Sgt G |
| SHERRILL, Franklin A 2nd Lt N | PRIVATEER, Russell S/Sgt AG |
| POMERVILLE, Edward J 2nd Lt B | BOWES, Jerome P 2nd Lt B |
| BROWN, William C S/Sgt E | BISTRITZKY, Harry Sgt R |
| JOHNSON, Vernon L Jr T/Sgt R | ALEXANDER, Jesse M Sgt C Cf |
| MANAK, John S/Sgt AE | SELBY, Bruce T/Sgt Bomsit M |

Ship No 42-7728

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| JOHN, Ernest F 2nd Lt P | MCCORKLE, Richard E S/Sgt |
| ARUGUSTENBORG, Jorgen J J 2nd Lt CP | KIRKLAND, Norman J S/Sgt G |
| SMITH, Lawrence J 2nd Lt N | FELDER, Harold A 2nd Lt CP |
| GLADSTONE, Harold E 2nd Lt B | SMITH, Francis M Sgt R |
| BESHORE, Robert E Sgt E | TAYLOR, Herbert R S/Sgt C Cf |
| VANDEUSEN, Donald S/Sgt Ck | SCHANEL, Donald B Sgt Eng C1 |
| BERNSTEIN, Joseph Sgt AE | STRAUTMAN, Raymond H Sgt AG |

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Squadron History

720th Bomb Sq 450th Bomb GP (H)

Manduria, Italy

The 720th Bomb Sq left Alamogordo, New Mexico on 26 November 1943. After four days on the train we arrived at Camp Patrick Henry, Newport News, Virginia on 29 November 1943. This was our P.O.E. Station. After our processing, which included the issuing of clothing and being paid, was finished, we left on 5 December 1943. We traveled part way by train and part way by ferry to our boat, the USS Henry Baldwin. While aboard the ferry we were served hot coffee by women of the Red Cross. We left for the open sea on 4 December 1943. During our uneventful trip across the Atlantic, a short skit "Arm Pit Review Of 1943" was put on by members of the Squadron, 450th Bomb Group personnel, 449th Bomb Group personnel, and the Navy and Merchant Marine of the ships crew. Another of these skits was put on during a Christmas party held on Christmas afternoon. Each member of the Squadron and the two Groups were given a carton of cigarettes from Special Services and a bag of various articles from the Red Cross. The only complaint that can really be made of the whole trip was the poor food we were served, outside of the canned rations and the Christmas dinner.

On 26 December 1943 we anchored at Augusta, Sicily, where we spent the night. We left for Bari, Italy, the following morning. We arrived at Bari on 29 December 1943 and went to the Fifteenth Air Force Reception Center while waiting for transportation to our permanent base. Our new base is between Oria and Manduria. We left the Center on 2 January 1944 by truck convoy and arrived at our base in the afternoon of the same day. Pup tents have been our common home although some of our personnel have moved into barracks while the others are getting large tents which make living more comfortable.

On 19 December 1943 one of our planes crashed in the Atlas mountains in North Africa, while enroute to this base. All were killed except for Sgt Solomon E. Lupin, the tail gunner, who received a broke jaw and was hospitalized in Tunis. Following is a list of the members who were killed:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Lt Nicholas P. Kordich | -Pilot |
| Lt William H. Cooper | -Co-pilot |
| Lt William A. Jones | -Navigator |
| Lt Norvin C. Grieve | -Bombardier |
| S/Sgt James A. Baker | -Engineer |
| S/Sgt Raymond R. Morrison | -Radio Gunner |
| Sgt Eugene O. Flolo | -Armorer Gunner |
| Sgt David W. Bartley | -Assistant Engineer |
| Sgt William D. Batho | -Passenger |
| Sgt Willis W. Gletcher, Jr. | -Armorer Gunner |
| T/Sgt John R. Nenne | -Passenger |
| S/Sgt Harry W. Scott | -Passenger |

The rest of the crews have arrived safely and have completed various missions which will be enumerated in following chapters of this history.

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S.ARMY

24 March 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period 1 January to 31 January 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

No Changes in organization.

Strength, commissioned and enlisted
Month of January 1944
At beginning: 486
Increase: 6
Decrease: 26
At end: 466

Manduria, Italy, #25, Army Air Base. Departed Alamogordo, New Mexico, Army Air Base, 26 November 1943; arrived Manduria, Italy #25, 2 January 1944.

Campaigns

- (1) Italian
- (2) Duration: From 2 January 1944, still in progress.

Operations

(1) Nineteen (19) missions were flown for one hundred twenty-five (125) sorties.

(2) Operations were directed against marshalling yards in Italy and Yugoslavia; and airdromes in Italy and France.

(3) Our mission of 27 January 1944 was highly commended as a "courageous and well executed mission." The target was an enemy airdrome at Istres Le Tube, France. The objective was to smash installations on that airdrome, servicing enemy long range bomber aircraft. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Six of our planes were over the target. The target was well covered.

(4) The Squadron was subjected to heavy, intense accurate anti-aircraft fire at Pisa, Italy, 18 January 1944. One aircraft was damaged and landed in Corsica. The same type flak was encountered at Istres Le Tube, France, on 27 January 1944.

Captain Clark J. Wicks was fatally wounded when his plane was badly damaged by heavy, intense, accurate flak at Udine, Italy, airdrome on 30 January 1944. No tactics to avoid this flak were reported. Enemy single engine fighter aircraft attacked our Squadron during a mission on Skoplje, Yugoslavia, marshalling yards, 24 January. The enemy planes came from high at eleven to one o'clock. The attack was fast and of short duration and few of our planes fired on them. One enemy plane went down when he sheered off his right wing and the right vertical stabilizer, and rudder off 2nd Lt Gerald M. French's Liberator. Lt. French brought his aircraft and crew, safely, back to the base.

Captain Clark J. Wicks led the Squadron in the raid on Istres Tube, France, airdrome, 27 January. The target was bombed successfully with airdrome installations being well covered.

Losses in Action

(1) Raid on airdrome at Udine, Italy, 30 January 1944. Captain Clark J. Wicks, Squadron Commander, killed in action.

(2) Raid on marshalling yards, Skoplje, Yugoslavia, 24 January 1944. Missing in action: 2nd Lt. Roland R. Whitehead; 2nd Lt Gordon S. Taylor, co-pilot; 2nd Lt Joseph W. Brown, navigator, 2nd Lt Thomas K. Lowen, following enlisted men, S/Sgt G. L. Goodman, Sgts J.M. Sternberg, C.J. Kraska, Paul G. Young, Jack W. Means, and Donald R. Amundson.

Captain Clark J. Wicks awarded "Order of the Purple Heart", having been wounded in action over enemy airdrome at Udine, Italy, 30 January 1944.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 January to 31 January 1944.

720TH WAR DIARYJANUARY 1944

This Diary of the 720th Bomb Squadron (H) will cover our overseas operations from 2 January 1944. On that date, the Squadron ground echelon arrived at #25 Manduria, Italy. This airdrome was our first overseas station. The flying echelon was arriving at intervals, over a month's period around that date.

The ground echelon moved into pyramidal and pup tents upon arrival here. The kitchen was temporarily set up in a wall tent and served mess, on schedule, on the evening of 2 January. Kitchen and barracks space was scarce because many Italian military personnel were still quartered here. The flight echelon had moved into available barracks space.

From 2 January to 9 January our personnel were principally interested in procuring more comfortable quarters and setting up various sections. During this period the Group operated on one short mission but our Squadron did not participate.

Our First combat mission was against harbor installations a Zara, Yugoslavia. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. We had twelve planes scheduled; one did not get off because it stuck on a muddy taxi strip, one returned early and brought back the bombs, and ten planes jettisoned in the Adriatic Sea. This was flown on 9 January.

On 10 January five of our planes jettisoned a 12 x 500 G.P. bomb load in the Adriatic Sea. Two planes dropped bombs on the marshalling yard at Skoplje, Yugoslavia, the primary target. One plane dropped twelve bombs on the town of Bize, Yugoslavia.

The airdrome at Perugia, Italy, was the target on 13 January. Only two planes dropped on the primary target. The bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P. bombs. Another plane jettisoned in an early return. Six jettisoned in the Tyrhennian Sea. This jettisoning has been a policy of safety because of the bad conditions of our runway.

On 14 January, ten of our planes took part in a successful raid on a marshalling yard at Mostar, Yugoslavia. The load was 12 x 500 G.P. bombs. Seven of these dropped on the primary target and one on an alternate target. Two jettisoned because of malfunctions, one in an early return.

Prato, Italy, marshalling yards was the target for 15 January. Two planes jettisoned in an early return. Capt. Clark J. Wicks, Squadron Commander, jettisoned when his bombs could not be gotten away over the target. Six planes dropped bomb loads on the primary target. The bomb load was again, 12 x 500 G.P.

On 16 January we again took a 12 x 500 G.P. load to Zara,

720TH WAR DIARYJANUARY 1944

Yugoslavia, to wreck harbor installations and shipping. Six of our planes got over the target to drop their bombs. Lt. Dalton V. Smith dropped bombs on the tip of the Zara Peninsular, and one jettisoned in an early return.

All bombs were jettisoned in the Tyrhennian in a mission attempted against Arezzo, Italy, marshalling yard on 17 January. Ten planes jettisoned 10 x 500 G.P.'s, one in an early return.

We had our first taste of "Missing in Action" on 18 January. 2nd Lt. Dalton V. Smith's aircraft was damaged by flak over the marshalling yard at Pisa, Italy. That was the target for a 10 x 500 G.P. bomb load. Eight such loads had been put on the primary target, and one jettisoned in an early return. Lt. Smith and his crew were safe in Corsica, and contacted this base, after difficulties occasioned a two day delay. He had also dropped on the primary target.

We attempted to reach the airdrome at Perugia, Italy, on 19 January. Five planes dropped on an alternate target, Iesi, Italy, airdrome, one jettisoned in the Adriatic and one dropped on a railroad in Metelica, Italy. The load was 10 x 500 G.P. bombs.

January 20 was a fine day. Six planes took 12 x 500 G.P.'s each, to an airdrome in Guidonia, Italy. Squadron personnel were paid for the month of December. Personnel were quick to make use of the Finance Department "PTA" plan for dispatching money home.

Lt. William Cranston crashed his plane on take off on 21 January. The crash was caused by runaway props on engines three and four. 2nd Lt. Louis Amster was hospitalized because of an injured back. Three planes dropped 30 x 500 G.P.'s on the yards at Prato, Italy.

The mission for 22 January sent seven planes carrying 70 x 500 G.P.'s against the marshalling yard at Arezzo, Italy. All bombs were dropped on the primary target. On this date, the Squadron opened a barber shop with two Italian barbers. Prices were 10 lire for a shave and 15 per haircut. Laundry and dry cleaning service was also provide on this date. Before this, laundry had been sent to the Q.M. laundry in Manduria, ten pieces weekly at no charge.

An enemy landing strip approximately twelve miles east of Rome was the target for 23 January. The bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P.'s and eight planes put bombs in the target area.

The first plan for 24 January was to bomb marshalling yards at Sofia, Bulgaria. That plan was "scrubbed," however, and six planes took off for the Skolpje, Yugoslavia, yards. One plane dropped 12 x 500 G.P.'s on the primary target. Three dropped on an alternate target, one

720TH WAR DIARYJANUARY 1944

jettisoned bombs in the Adriatic, and one crew is missing in action. Missing with 2nd Lt. Roland R. Whitehead, pilot, are: 2nd Lt Gordon S. Taylor, co-pilot; 2nd Lt Joseph W. Brown, navigator; 2nd Lt Thomas K. Lowen, bombardier; and the following enlisted men, S/Sgt G. L. Goodman, Sgts J.M. Sternberg, C.J. Kraska, Paul G. Young, Jack W. Means, and Donald R. Amundson. This plane was last seen in the Skolpje area, from which place it was observed to have taken a heading for base. The plane was observed in good condition seeking cloud cover and there were no enemy fighter aircraft in the vicinity. The first Squadron victory over an enemy aircraft was scored on this raid. This was accomplished, without firing, when a ME-109 suddenly dived on 2nd Lt Gerald M. French's "Liberal Lady." The enemy plane sheared off its right wing and "Liberal Lady's" right vertical stabilizer and rudder. Lt French and his crew brought their damaged plane back to base.

Because of bad weather no missions were run on 25 and 26 January. Special Services Division entertained Group personnel with a stage show in the Oria theater. The show featured Italian talent and pulled a capacity house who enjoyed the show very much. This entertainment is supplemented by moving pictures staged three times weekly in the Group area. The movies are shown in our large outdoor, "bring your own seat" amphitheater.

The best job of this month was highly commended by head headquarters. The Group was led by Lt. Col. Robert Gidenon, Deputy Group Commander, on a "courageous and well-executed mission" against an important target. This important target was the enemy airdrome at Istres le Tube, France; attacked 27 January. Six planes dropped 72 x 500 G.P.'s on airdrome installations and two jettisoned in early returns. The target so successfully attacked was important because it based enemy heavies operating against the Anzio Beachhead.

On 28 January we came back to marshalling yards again. The bomb load on this date was 12 x 500 general purpose bomb and the target for them was the yards at Ferrara, Italy. Six planes were observed to hit the target with their loads, two hit the town, and one jettisoned in a early return. Sienna, Italy marshalling yard came in for the same kind of attack on 29 January; when eight planes dropped "five hundred pounders" on the yards and vicinity.

Capt. Clark J. Wicks, Squadron Commander was fatally wounded over the airdrome at Udine, Italy, on 30 January. Capt Wicks was wounded by flak and his plane badly damage. 2nd Lt. Bechtel, co-pilot, brought the plane into Foggia, Italy, and the Captain was hospitalized there. Our target was parked aircraft on the airdrome, attacked with six clusters of twenty "frag" bombs in each plane. Eight planes dropped bombs on the airdrome and one jettisoned in an early return.

720TH WAR DIARY

JANUARY 1944

Capt. Clark J. Wicks died of his wounds at 1300 hours on 31 January. The Squadron operated eight aircraft against installations on an airdrome at Aviano, Italy. Seven got over the target to drop bombs and one brought back bombs in an early return. The load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Lt. William Cranston landed at Foggia because of gasoline shortage, but continued back after servicing. Squadron and Group personnel enjoyed a stage show in Oria featuring "Joe E. Brown." There was matinee and evening performance and both drew full houses of very enthusiastic "first-nighters."

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

31 MARCH 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period
1 February to 29 February 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment
Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

Changes in Organization.

Capt Gordon T. Colley appointed Squadron Commander per
paragraph 4 Special Orders No 11, HQ 450th Bomb GP (H), dated 3 February
1944.

1st Lt Robert W. Edwards appointed S-3 per paragraph 1
Squadron Orders No 4, HQ 720th Bomb SQ (H).

Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted

Month of February 1944

At beginning: 465

Increase: 2

Decrease: 25

At end: 442

Operations

Nine (9) missions flown for seventy-five (75) sorties.

The 720th Squadron participated in four missions against
marshalling yards in Italy with 500 lb general purpose bombs. One
fragmentation mission was flown to Tabouinia, Italy, airdrome. One
mission was attempted against enemy supply stores for troops opposing
the Anzio Beachhead; this mission, though it drew enemy fire, was
unsuccessful due to a solid overcast which prevented bombing. Two
missions were flown to the aircraft factories at Regensburg, Germany and
one to the aircraft factory at Steyr, Austria.

The important missions of the month were carried out on
22, 23, and 25 February. On the first date, the Squadron with nine
planes, dropped 108 x 500 general purpose bombs on the
Regensburg/Obertraubling Messerschmitt aircraft assembly plant. On 23
February the Squadron with five planes, dropped 60 x 500 general purpose
bombs on the Aero Engine Works at Steyr, Austria. On the 25th of
February eight aircraft of the 720th dropped 96 x 500 general purpose
bombs on the Prufening Messerschmitt 109 plant at Regensburg, Germany.
In all, thirty-two (32) officers and enlisted men made all these three
important missions. The targets were well covered on these three

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

On 22 February the Squadron was subjected to attack by enemy single engine aircraft on approaching Regensburg. The attacks were made from high to level, from six to nine o'clock, and were aggressive. Our gunners destroyed two enemy aircraft and probably destroyed three enemy aircraft. All our aircraft returned to base. The Germans again attacked as we were over the target at Steyr, Austria, on 23 February. The attacks were from high, level, and low from one to eleven o'clock. These single engine fighters attacks were again aggressive and broke down after attacks. Two enemy aircraft were destroyed and four probably destroyed. All our aircraft returned to base. One of our aircraft is presumed to have been lost to heavy, intense, accurate flak over the target at Prufening, Regensburg, Germany. This was on 25 February. The aircraft bombed the target and kept formation but was abandoned over Northern Yugoslavia when ten chutes were seen from the plane. Enemy fighters did not engage our Squadron on this mission.

Lt Colonel Robert W. Gideon, Deputy Group Commander, led the 47th Wing and our Group on the mission against Prufening Regensburg Aircraft Factory, on 25 February. First Lieutenant Robert L. Brown and First Lieutenant Rolland R. Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, respectively, were working with Colonel Gideon in the lead plane.

Losses in Action

(1) 1st Lt. John C. Giraud, became missing in action during the raid on Regensburg, Germany on 25 February. The following list of names are those of his crew who are also missing in action: 1st Lt. Monroe Sachs, 2nd Lt. Franklin Sherrill, 2nd Lt. Edward J. Pomerville, T/Sgt William C. Brown, S/Sgt Frank Gentile, T/Sgt John Manak, S/sgt Edwin F. Grazwa, T/Sgt Charles F. Barr, T/Sgt Russell C. Privateer, and PFC James B. Arlinton.

(2) 2nd Lt. William R. Cranston also became missing in action during the raid on Regensburg, Germany, on 25 February. Following is the list of his crew: 2nd Lt. Frank W. Molina, 2nd Lt. Joseph J. Oravec, 2nd Lt. Arlie L. Brown, S/Sgt Albert L. Thompson, S/Sgt Hugh A. Neely, Sgt Aubrey H. Geiger, S/Sgt John J. O'Hara, and S/Sgt Ryan D. Harper.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 February 1 to February 29, 1944.

720TH BOMB SQUADRON

FEBRUARY 1944

Our Group Commander, Col John S. Mills, and his staff and approximately sixty-five (65) officers and enlisted men of the Squadron attended the funeral of Capt. Clark J. Wicks. Our former Commander was buried at Bari, Italy in the afternoon of 1 February. Chaplain Paul M. Stevens conducted the service held at the grave. No mission was flown on this date.

There was no mission on 2 February. The best thing which happened this day was the removal of the Squadron kitchen from a tent into a former Italian kitchen. Food started a gradual improvement from this date.

The first operational mission of the month was conducted on 3 February. A 12x500 general purpose load was taken to the marshalling yards at Pontassieve, Italy. Three (3) Squadron planes unloaded on the town, four (4) hit the target, and one (1) dropped on a target of opportunity. Capt. Gordon T. Colley assumed duties as Squadron Commander relieving 2nd Lt. Earnest F. John, who had been acting Squadron Commander for Capt. Wicks. Our new Squadron Commander had a separate meeting with staff officers and enlisted men to discuss future policy. Capt. Colley expressed satisfaction with the functioning of the various sections and asked that they carry on as they had performed for Capt. Wicks.

No missions were run on 4, 5, 6, and 7 February due to wet weather and the consequent unserviceable condition of the runway. On 4 February the Squadron was paid for the month of January. In the afternoon of Sunday, 6 February, Squadron and Group personnel drilled in the rain and mud for forty-five minutes. This "exercise period", for officers and enlisted men, was occasioned by a very apparent lack of military courtesy and customs of the service. This "reminder" brought about a decided improvement.

A fragmentation load, 20 clusters of 6 frags, were carried to an enemy airdrome at Tarquinia, Italy, on 8 February. Three planes hit the primary target, three hit an alternate target, and three jettisoned. One of the latter was an early return. Undercast skies caused difficulties for observation and bombing.

The third stage show for Group personnel was held in the Oria theater on 9 February. The "S.R.O. Sign" was out for this show featuring Italian talent. Especially well received were the singing and dancing girls. Regardless of the opinions of some persons, acclaim of the audiences indicates that dancing and singing girls are the best entertainment for the greater number.

720TH BOMB SQUADRON

FEBRUARY 1944

A mission was attempted in support of the troops on the Anzio Beachhead on 10 February. The objective was to destroy enemy supply stores at Valmontone, Italy. Eleven planes brought back their 12 x

500 G.P. bomb loads, one in an early return. A solidly undercast sky prevented bombing coupled with the fact that friendly troops were close by the target.

The weather was wet and cold on 11, 12, and 13 February and no missions were run. We returned to marshalling yards on 14 February. The 12 x 500 G.P. bomb load was taken that day to Verona, Italy. Six planes dropped twenty-two (22) bombs on the primary target, one dropped eight (8) on the target and jettisoned four (4), one plane brought back twelve (12), and one plane jettisoned twelve (12) in an early return caused by malfunction in #3 engine. Crews complained on this raid because there was no apparent reason for staying at altitude for such a long period. The severe sub-zero temperatures at altitude hospitalized seven enlisted crewmen upon the return from this mission. On this date a very welcome change was made in Squadron officers messing facilities. Our officers started to mess with the Squadron in a mess hall adjoining the kitchen. The officers found that food much better prepared by Squadron cooks than it had been in the Group officers' mess.

The weather was wet and cold on 15 February and there was no Squadron activity. The target attacked, on 16 February, was the yards at Pontassieve, Italy.

The mission for 17 February was directed against marshalling yards at Marino, Italy. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Seven planes dropped bombs on the target area, one dropped ten and later jettisoned two, and two brought back bombs in early returns.

The weather continued bad with low overcast and missions were not run on 18, 19, 20 and 21 February. On the 19th classes were held in S-2 on armament and ordnance. These classes were for combat personnel and were conducted by officers from the 15 Air Force. EAME Theater ribbons were issued on 20 February to Squadron personnel. It was being rumored about that bronze stars would be authorized for the Italian Campaign, to wear on these ribbons. On 22 February the first group of combat men went to rest camp at the Isle of Capri, and San Cesario.

The first raid into Germany was made on 22 February. Nine planes dropped bombs on the Regensburg/Obertraubling aircraft factory in Germany. The bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P. bombs. Broken undercast made observation difficult but photo reconnaissance showed good coverage on the target. Lt. Reaford McCraw brought his plane back

720TH BOMB SQUADRONFEBRUARY 1944

badly shot up and three of his crew were hospitalized. Two of his enlisted men were wounded when enemy aircraft attacked the plane. One enlisted member of the crew was hospitalized by frostbite.

Lt. Dalton Smith and his crew were forced, by gas shortage, to abandon their plane near Viesta, Italy. Lt Smith was hospitalized when he baled out from 400' after his crew had left the plane. The aircraft was demolished and Lt Smith took up with "Banana Boat III". The crew were all safe.

The second in the "big three of February" came on 23 February. The target this day was the Aero Engine Works at Steyr, Austria. Eight of our planes were scheduled to participate in the successful raid with 12 x 500 G.P.'s. Lt William Cranston could not get off because of a gas leak. Six planes dropped bombs on the target, one brought bombs back when they could not be released over the target, and one jettisoned in an early return. Fighter opposition was aggressive but our planes all came back.

After a days respite on 24 February, the last raid of February was a fine one. On 25 February Lt. Col. Gideon, Deputy Group Commander, led the Wing and Group on this mission to Prufening aircraft factory at Regensburg, Germany. Col Gideon received the "Silver Star" for his gallantry and leadership on this very successful raid. 1st Lt Robert Brown and 1st Lt Rolland R. Carr, Squadron navigator and bombardier, respectively, were riding with Col. Gideon in the lead plane. The bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P.'s for this ME-109 plant. Six planes were over and hit the target, two jettisoned in early returns, and one plane did not reach the target and is missing. This latter plane was piloted by 2nd Lt. William R. Cranston and turned back near Munich with one engine feathered. There was some observation that the aircraft took up a heading for Switzerland. The plane appeared in good condition and no enemy fighters were in the vicinity. The aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt. Donald Bechtel had one engine shot out by flak and did not reach the target. He turned back near Munich and landed at San Severo, Italy. All the crew were safe. 1st Lt. John C. Giraudo took his plane over the target and kept formation until over Partisan-occupied Yugoslavia. At the time, ten parachutes were seen from his aircraft. Eleven men had been on this plane; one being a Group photographer.

There were no missions on 26 and 27 February. The weather was very wet and the runway in unserviceable condition as a consequence. On the latter date we became the "white-tailed boys" in a German propaganda broadcast. The white tail became our trademark on this date. 1st Lt. Robert W. Edwards was appointed Operation officer to succeed 1st Lt. Monroe Sachs, missing in action; and 2nd Lt. Dalton

720TH BOMB SQUADRON

FEBRUARY 1944

V. Smith became Flight Commander in the stead of 1st Lt. John C. Giraudo, missing in action.

A Group formation on 28 February was addressed by our Group Commander, Col. John S. Mills. Col. Mills first read notes of commendation received from Generals Eaker, Spaatz, and Atkinson. Col. Mills then addressed the entire Group in a congratulatory message.

The Colonel said we would put more white on the tails to make the Hun squeal louder. He expressed alarm at the increase in Venereal disease and asked that personnel keep free for infection in their duty as soldiers.

The "extra day" of the month was just that: no mission was run on 29 February because of adverse weather.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S.ARMY

12 April 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period 1 March to 31 March 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

No Changes in organization.

Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted

Month of January 1944

At beginning: 441

Increase: 75

Decrease: 35

At end: 481

OPERATIONS:

(1) During the month ten (10) missions were flown for seventy-seven (77) sorties.

(2) Two fragmentation missions were flown to bomb dispersed aircraft on airdromes located in Italy. Five missions were flown against marshalling yards in Italy and at Sofia, Bulgaria. One mission was flown against harbor and submarine installations at Toulon, France. Two missions were forced to drop on estimated time of arrival, because of weather: these missions bombed Vienna and Graz. The last eight (8) missions carried five-hundred pound general purpose bombs.

(3) Commendations were received from Colonel Rush, Commanding Officer of the 47th Wing, for the coordination and timing of the raid on 11 March. This raid was to demolish submarine repair facilities at Toulon, France. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. Six of our planes were over the target. Results of the bombing were good. On 30 March, nine of our planes dropped bombs on Sofia, Bulgaria. The purpose of the raid was to hit the marshalling yards and industrial area, and to persuade the Bulgarians to leave this war. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Results of the raid were excellent.

(4) The unit was subjected to action by nineteen (19) enemy fighters during the raid on Toulon, France, on 11 March. The attacks were from all around the clock, mostly high. They were not aggressive and seemed to attack without coordination; breaking away after firing a few bursts at six to eight hundred yards. One of our planes was damaged and landed at Corsica for an engine change. One

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

FW-190 was destroyed over the target. Seventeen (17) enemy aircraft attacked our Group formation on 19 March during the raid on Graz, Austria. The attacks were mostly single from five to seven o'clock, high and low. One coordinated attack, by six enemy aircraft, was made by the enemy. This attack was in pairs abreast dividing and breaking off to right and left. The Squadron lost no planes to these tactics. One ME-109 was destroyed and one probably destroyed. Sixteen (16) enemy aircraft engaged the Group as we drove in on Rimuni, Italy, on 23 March. The enemy attacked in groups of four or five from five to seven o'clock, low. Our wing ships were attacked by elements of three abreast, level, from three and nine o'clock, and broke off to rear; and from front through three and nine o'clock. One ME-109 seemed to act as fire control ship. JU-88's came from three and nine o'clock to fire rockets. One of our aircraft was shot down by the enemy. Our gunners destroyed four (4) ME-109 aircraft. On 29 March, 1st Lt Ernest F. John was forced to turn back fifteen minutes short of the target at Bolzano, Italy. His plane was attacked by eight (8) ME-109's and two (2) FW-109's. The battle lasted about twenty-five minutes with the enemy attacking from all angles and breaking off in all directions with attacks predominantly from five to seven o'clock, level to high. Three ME-109's were destroyed in this battle. Lt John brought his badly shot-up aircraft back to base with all the crew uninjured. Flak is not mentioned in this account of enemy action because it is encountered on nearly all missions.

Captain Gordon T. Colley, Squadron Commander, led the Group in the raid on submarine facilities at Toulon, France, 11 March. This was carried out with good results, and the coordination and timing was commended by Colonel Rush, Commanding Officer of the 47th Wing. Colonel John S. Mills, 450th Group Commander, led the Wing on the raid which covered the marshalling yards at Mestive, Italy, on 28 March. First Lieutenants Robert Brown and Rolland R. Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, respectively, worked with Colonel Mills on this very successful mission. Captain Gordon T. Colley, Squadron Commander, again led the 450th Group on 29 March. This mission bombed the marshalling yards at Bolzario, Italy, with good results.

LOSSES IN ACTION:

(1) 1st Lt Reaford C. McCraw and his crew became missing in action during the raid over Schwechat, Austria, on 17 March 1944. Following is the list of his crew members: 1st Lt Edward B. Krinkle, 2nd Lt William R. Taylor, 2nd Lt Ernest D. Connors, S/Sgt William N. Britton, T/Sgt Charles R. Flanagan, S/Sgt Truett O. Dickerson, S/Sgt Richard E. McCorkle, S/Sgt John F. Barnacle, S/Sgt Kenneth M. Chambers.

(2) 2nd Lt Ralph G. Hodgson Jr and his crew became missing in action during the raid over Steyr, Austria, on 24 March 1944. Following is the list of his crew members: 2nd Lt Merrill W. McKingley, 2nd Lt Richard F. Hackel, 2nd Lt Samuel R. Sprott Jr, S/Sgt Maurice W. Moore, S/Sgt Robert L. Bohannon, S/Sgt Robert L. Morgan, S/Sgt Alfred P. Russo, S/Sgt Cyril C. Heineman, Sgt Ralph (NMI) Heyman.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 March to 31 March 1944.

720TH SQUADRON WAR DIARY MARCH 1944

1 and 2 March

This month started slowly from an operational view point. No missions were flown on 1 or 2 March. On 1 March, M/Sgt Frederick W. Skinner became acting 1st Sergeant. He replaced Sgt Donald Kulencamp. The latter had been called before a board of officers and was reduced to Sergeant, without prejudice, and sent on detached service. The moving picture "Thank Your Lucky Stars" was shown in Oria. 2nd Lt. George T. Ready left on 2 March for Chemical Warfare Service School at Orta Nova, Italy. That evening Brig. Gen C. W. Atckinson, Commander of the 47th Wing, was in S-2 in preparation of the mission for 3 March.

3 March

The mission first planned for today was Budapest/Tokol airdrome in Hungary. This was not carried to the briefing stage because of adverse weather conditions. The mission operated was a "double-cluster" fragmentation one against Viterbo, Italy, satellite #2 airdrome. Eight of our planes got over the target as against one early return. All planes jettisoned in Taranto Bay. 2nd Lt. Egan of the 723rd Squadron and formerly of the 720th perished in a crash during take off. The aircraft of the 723rd exploded during take off and the crew perished. 2nd Lt. Isbell was the pilot. In the evening U.S.O. Camp shows put on a vaudeville show in Oria. The matinee and evening performances were well attended but the show was just fair and was short. The public address system was "out" and this helped spoil the show.

4 March

The mission for today was abortive. The Group was briefed and took off to bomb Breslau, Germany. The bomb load was 8 x 500 General purpose bombs for this new headquarters of the Reich. Col. Mills was leading and came back about an hour after takeoff. In the afternoon the Group practiced new tactics in formation flying. 1st Lt. William P. Correia, Ordnance Officer, took over as Squadron Transportation Officer. Squadron officers were paid for the month of February and again complained about the five dollar assessment for the Group Officers' Club. The 451st Group moved the 724th Squadron onto this base for operations. This was occasioned because their runway is unserviceable because of steady rains.

5 March

Capt. Floyd I. Robinson joined the Squadron as a pilot today. A Squadron "news bulletin" was established at the orderly room. Intelligence keeps current war news posted there for all personnel.

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6 March

A mission was briefed for the Lavariano, Italy, airdrome. The objective was to destroy installations on the field with a 10 x 500 G.P. load. The mission was not flown due to adverse weather. We had ten planes scheduled. Enlisted men were paid for February. The evening show was "Thousand Cheer". The 725th Squadron moved in today to operate from this base.

7 March

The planes were scheduled for the mission against the marshalling yards at Certaldo, Italy. The skies were broken to solid undercast and observations were difficult. Col. Rush, Commanding Officer of the 47th Wing, inspected the Squadron area with Col. Mills and Lt. Col. Price.

8 March

Adverse weather again held us up. A raid against the yards at Arezzo, Italy was briefed but did not take off. In the afternoon a practice mission was flown to work on new formation tactics. The old Post Exchange system, by sections, was abolished. The Squadron opened a PX room to be open two hours a day, three days per week, to enable all personnel to get their rations in off time. The movie shown in Oria by Special Services was "Top Man". A one day old restriction for disorderly and unclean barracks was partially lifted, for combat men. Word was received today that Lt. Sachs, Lt. Sherrill, Lt. Pomerville and three enlisted men of Lt. Giraud's crew (missing in action) are safe in Partisan-occupied Yugoslavia. The first replacement crew came in today. 2nd Lt. Jack Ryne, Communications Officer, received word of his promotion to 1st Lieutenant today.

9 and 10 March

No missions were flown. The "big noise" on these days was the opening of the "Cottontail Club" on the 9th. Many officers who attended still had a singing effect in their heads on the 10th. The "Cottontail Club" is the Group Officers Club. The rooms are fine and all attending were satisfied that their assessments were well spent. A Squadron insignia, as drawn by 2nd Lt. Donald Bechtel, was accepted on 9 March.

11 March

Commendations from Col. Rush were received for the coordination and timing of the raid on U-boat repair facilities at Toulon, France. This raid was made on 11 March and the Group was led by our Squadron Commander, Capt Gordon T. Colley. The bomb load was 10 x 500 G.P.'s and coverage of the target was good. Six planes dropped bombs on the target, and four planes brought back bombs in early returns. 1st Lt. Redford McCraw took off forty minutes late due to a flat tire and turned back twenty minutes short of the target when he could not sight the

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formation. Two planes were forced back by gas leaks. 2nd Lt. Wagner was missing for several days but contacted this base and reported that he was awaiting an engine change in Corsica. T/Sgt William W. McDonald, of 1st Lt. Ley's crew claimed an FW-190 over Toulon.

12, 13, 14, 15 March

There were no missions on these four days. The weather continued wet with low overcast and haze. The Group practiced formation tactics on 12 March. The second replacement crew arrived on that date. Officers of this vicinity were very grateful for an Office's Post Exchange opened in Manduria recently. With a fine stock this store is very popular. A "swap crew" arrived on 13 March from England. Lt. Dewey and his crew are schedule to leave for England on 16 March. The laps in operations was filled by training. 1st Lt. Chronister, Group P.I. Officer, has inaugurated study meetings each morning there is no mission flown. This a especially designed for bombardiers. Navigators were shown a training film at S-2 on 14 March. On this latter date, many persons were driven to cover by a British ack-ack practice in the evening. Lt. Ready returned from detached service at Chemical Warfare School. The movies shown during these days were "Presenting Lily Mars" and "Princess O'Rourke". Matinee and evening shows drew full houses.

16 March

Budapest/Tokol airdrome was scheduled as a mission for today, but this was not briefed due to adverse weather. There was a meeting on tactics for pilots and co-pilots in the afternoon at S-2. 1st Lt. Edmund Ley went on "tour" today: he was on detached service to England. Accompanying were his co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Winston Watson, 2nd Lt. John Malarkey, navigator, and the crew's aerial engineer and radio operator. First choir practice for Easter Service was held today with seventy fine voices. Maj. North and orchestra are practicing with the choir twice a week.

17 March

The mission for today was not successful due to a solidly undercast sky. Ten of our crews participated in the scheduled attack on an aircraft assembly plant at Schwechat, Austria. One of our aircraft was operated by the 721st Squadron. Seven of our planes dropped 70 x 500 G.P.'s on targets of opportunity and the alternate target: the industrial heart of Vienna. These latter release bombs on ETA. One plane jettisoned bombs in the Adriatic in an early return caused by a super-charger being out; another early return was caused by an oil leak and brought back ten bombs. This plane crashed, upon landing, without injury to personnel aboard. Lt. Reaford McCrew and his crew turned back short of Zagreb but never reached this base. It was reported the next day that the aircraft was ditched in the Adriatic. The movie shown in Oria, afternoon and evening, featured Betty Grable in "Coney Island".

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18 March

Dispensed aircraft at Lavariano, Italy, airdrome was the target for today. This target was well covered by fragmentation bombs. The Squadron had eight (8) planes over the target, one early return caused by super-charger trouble. The latter jettisoned bombs in the Adriatic. In the evening, Group officer personnel were entertained in the "Cottontail Club", with a fine show. The 721st Squadron put on a novel briefing with vivid characterizations. Lt. Anderson "stole the show" as Col. Mills. American Red Cross girls put on a "truth or consequences contest", which started the show off on high pitch. Capt. Hunt, Group Dental Officer, was a fine hula dancer "as a consequence." He had neglected to learn that "Woodrow Wilson's first name was "Thomas".

19 March

The Group was briefed and took off to bomb the Wazlagerwerk Ball Bearing Works at Steyr, Austria. The target was obscured by solid cloud cover and the formation bombed and alternate: Graz. With seven planes the 720th dropped 84 x 500 General Purpose bombs. One plane brought back twelve bombs in an early return. The target was well hit, S/Sgt Howard J. Verduine and S/Sgt Raymond H. Strauttman each claimed an enemy ME-109 shot down. There was a very large turnout for church today. Services are also held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings to minister to men who are not able to attend on Sunday. Two replacement crews joined the Squadron today. Choir practice was held for the musical program for Easter Sunday sunrise service. Major North plays the organ and the seventy-five voice choir is led by Chaplain Stevens.

20 and 21 March

No missions were operated on these two days. Crews were briefed on the first date for Plodiv, Bulgaria but that mission was "scrubbed". about thirty minutes after briefing due to adverse weather. Two replacement crews joined the Squadron on 20 March. On both dates, new combat personnel were in S-2 for instruction in first-aid, escape, and interrogation procedure. Lt. Ready, Squadron Gunnery Officer, instructed gunners on both dates. Practice formation flights were held on the two days. Special Services sponsored two good shows: "I Dood it" was a moving picture, and "Stage Door Latrine" a stage presentation. The latter was portrayed by enlisted personnel of the 47th Wing.

22 March

Today the weather was cold and wet. There was no mission flown. New crews were at S-2 for lectures on procedure in intelligence in this command. All Squadron enlisted personnel were addressed by Capt. Alfred W. Wagner, Squadron Medical Officer, and Capt Colley, Squadron Commander, on sex morale. Today a large load of lumber was secured

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for use on the mess hall for enlisted personnel. Work on the project is proceeding nicely and soon the mess will move from the present, temporary establishment. The movie shown in Oria was "The Song of Bernadette".

23 March

The ball bearing plant at Steyr, Austria was briefed again. Our aircraft took off on this mission but returned within the hour because they could not make rendezvous in the low and solid overcast. 1st Lt. Dalton V. Smith returned from the hospital but will not be able to take over his duties as Flight Commander for a few days.

24 March

This morning started with cold and snow but soon became bright. The target briefed was the Wazlergrwerk Ball Bearing plant at Steyr, Austria. Our planes got off on schedule with the 10 x 500 G.P. bomb load. The weather and visibility were poor and the second attack unit turned back before Major Snaith leading in a 720th Plane, turned to an alternate target. Our Squadron was in the first attack unit. In a battle with enemy fighters 2nd Lt. Hodgson, pilot, and his crew were shot down into the sea near Pola, Italy. In the air battle, S/Sgt's Kirkland, Mason, Beshore, and Openshaw each claimed an ME-109 shot down into the sea. Eight of our planes went on to Rimini, Italy, and in clear weather bombed the marshalling yards there. In the evening, Squadron S-2 gave an orientation and news summary at Group S-2. A fine turnout resulted despite competition with a U.S.O. Camp Show unit and movie in Oria. Reports indicate that both "shows" were well-liked. Mail was heavy "going-out" as many men sent a "Group Easter greeting" on V-Mail to their homes.

25 March

A mission was briefed for the marshalling yards at Genoa, Italy. This was called-off before take off because of poor weather conditions. The "event of the day" was an area inspection by Col. Mills. Major Donald G. North, Squadron Executive Officer, reported that the barracks and area were in excellent condition. In the evening Group officers were entertained in the officers' club by 722nd officers. The show was an excellent one and the audience showed appreciation with loud laughter. That was a good evening.

26 March

A mission was briefed for the ball bearing works at Steyr, Austria. The weather prevented take off on that mission. The area and offices were quiet in the morning when church was well-attended. 2nd Lt. George T. Ready instructed replacement gunners in enemy tactics, at S-2, in the afternoon. The weather was cold with steady rain and a solid overcast.

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27 March

Weather on this day was cold with skies overcast. Program was maximum maintenance. No mission was briefed and passes were issued to combat personnel. The matinee and evening performances of "Madame Curie" was well-attended.

28 March

Our planes took off in snow flurries under an almost solidly undercast sky. Col. Johns S. Mills was leading the 47th Wing and our Group over the target. With Col. Mills was 1st Lt. Robert Brown, Squadron navigator, and Roland R. Carr, Squadron bombardier. This "team" worked well again and the Mestre, Italy Marshalling yard was well covered. Eight of our planes dropped 80 x 500 general purpose bombs on the target. No flak or enemy fighters were encountered by the Squadron. It was reported today that 1st Lt. Reford McCrew was killed in action, on 17 March. The remainder of this crew are reported safe. An enjoyable movie program featured "Prelude to War" and "World Series Shots". This was well-attended.

29 March

Capt. Gordon T. Colley, Squadron Commander, led the Group on the mission against the marshalling yards at Bolzano, Italy. Seven of our planes were over the target. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. One of those seven planes could not get their bombs away and returned them to base. The target was well covered. 1st Lt. Ernest F. John was forced to turn back fifteen minutes short of the target and was jumped by eight ME-109's and two FW-190's. This battle lasted for about twenty-five minutes and attacks from all directions. Gunners on the crew claimed three enemy aircraft destroyed and two probably destroyed. Lt. John got his plane into cloud cover and brought all his crew, safely, back to base. The aircraft was badly shot up by the aggressive attacks of the enemy. In the evening, the theater was full for a good picture for our crews: "A Guy Named Joe."

30 March

Nine of our planes were over, and dropped on, the primary target. The target was the marshalling yard and industrial area of Sofia, Bulgaria. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Results of the bombing were excellent. Instruction for replacement gunners was held at S-2 and 2nd Lt. George Ready started his schedule of training. The program is to include enemy tactics, maintenance, and firing. In the afternoon, a Squadron formation was held and Air Medal awarded to combat personnel.

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31 March

On 31 March, there was no mission. The weather was wet and low overcast, clearing in the afternoon. Squadron officers and enlisted men were paid for the month of March. The Red Cross "pepped up" a fine noon meal with doughnuts for dessert. In the evening the Group was entertained with a stage show and movie in Oria. The movie presented was "The Fallen Sparrow". The star of the show "John Garfield" and other Hollywood stars were on the stage.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

10 May 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period 1 April to 30 April 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

Changes in Organization.

Capt Grant D. Caywood appointed Squadron S-2 vice 1st Lt Robert W. Edwards per Squadron Order Number 9 dated 7 April 1944.

Capt Floyd I. Robinson appointed Flight Leader vice 1st Lt Frank C. Marpe Jr. per Squadron Order Number 10 dated 11 April 1944.

2nd Lt Paul B. Cantrell appointed Flight Leader vice 1st Lt Dalton W. Smith per Squadron Order Number 11 dated 14 April 1944.

Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Month of April 1944 | |
| At beginning: | 481 |
| Increase: | 151 |
| Decrease: | 118 |
| At end: | 514 |

OPERATIONS:

(1) Seventeen (17) missions were flown for one hundred thirty-three (133) sorties.

(2) Operations were predominantly of a tactical nature; nine (9) missions being against marshalling yards in Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Roumania. In this same category one (1) mission was flown to destroy dispersed aircraft on Budapest/Vesces Airdrome. Four (4) mission of s strategic nature were flown. These being against ball-bearing and aircraft production in Austria. One (1) mission was flown to Toulon Harbor in France. One (1) mission bombed the center of Sofia, Bulgaria, by Pathfinder methods, as an experiment. Bombs loaded were fragmentation bombs, 40 x 100, 8 to 12 500, and 5 x 1000.

(3) The mission of 5 April 1944 was important and very successful. Eleven (11) of our planes took off and eleven (11) bombed the marshalling yards and refineries at Ploesti, Roumania. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Another important mission, was the one against Brasov, Roumania, marshalling yards on 16 April 1944. Ten (10) of our planes bombed the target with excellent results. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs.

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

(4) The Squadron was subjected to enemy fighter action while penetrating to Steyr, Austria, on 2 April. Attacks were generally not aggressive and broke off usually at 300 yds. The enemy seemed to be awaiting stragglers. Six (6) enemy fighters lobbed rockets and then closed to 100 yards firing machine guns, and breaking off to ring and left. These attacks were from line-astern formation. Two (2) of our bombers were shot down over the target. Our gunners claimed 4 ME-109's, 1 ME-110, and 1 JU-88 destroyed. In all 30/40 enemy fighters engaged our formation on this mission and the battle lasted just over one hour. The Squadron was again subjected to enemy fighter action on the mission to Budapest on 3 April. These attacks were generally from high at 3 o'clock and in a wide sweep leaving at 5 o'clock. Other attacks came in from low at 6 o'clock, closed to about 100 yrs in coordinated attack in pairs-astern; these broke off to right and left. Fourteen (14) enemy aircraft were encountered. Our gunners claimed two enemy aircraft shot down. All our crews returned safely to base. On 4 April we again experienced fighter reaction during our mission to Bucharest. All this action was in the target area. Moderately aggressive attacks were made from 6 o'clock level principally by ME-109's and FW-190's, singly and in pairs. A few JU-88's and ME-109's stood off, out of range, and fired rockets and explosive shells. Our gunners claimed no enemy aircraft and all our planes returned safely. On 5 April the most severe enemy fighter action was encountered. This was to block our attack on Ploesti. Our Squadron was in the lead unit and took the brunt of the attack. Forty (40) to sixty (60) enemy fighters attacked during penetration and aggressiveness increased as the target was approached. The whole battle lasted about an hour. The first attacks were from 12 o'clock, high, and were coordinated in pairs, threes, and fours. These dove through the formation and up under the second attack unit. After this attacks developed from all angles. Many attacks were made from six (6) o'clock in formations of six (6) in line abreast, braking off at 50 yds. Many rockets were fired from planes which stood off at 10 o'clock. Three of our bombers went down over the target, where they had experienced flak and fighter action simultaneously. Our gunners claimed 3 - 5 - 1. The enemy reacted to our attack on Brasov, Roumania, on 16 April. These attacks were made about five minutes after we left the target. Twenty (20) to thirty (30) enemy aircraft attacked for about twenty-five (25) minutes. These attacks were all single and from 3 and 9 O'clock, and from 6 o'clock, high to low. Attacks were very aggressive. All our planes returned safely. Squadron gunners claimed one enemy aircraft destroyed. On 25 April we encountered ten (10) to fifteen (15) enemy aircraft as we attempted to bomb at Varese, Italy. Single attacks were made from 3, 6 and 9 o'clock, high and low. Some attacks were aggressive but tactics were generally to wait for stragglers. All attacking planes fired 20 MM explosive shells. Two (2) of our bombers are missing. We claimed one enemy aircraft shot down. Flak reaction is not outlined because it is encountered on all missions. However, flak became very effective toward the latter part of the month: we lost one bomber over Ploesti on 24 April, two planes were lost during the mission to Orbetello, Italy on 28 April; and one plane is missing as result of the mission to Toulon, France, on 29 April. All these must be presumed to have been lost to flak.

Captain Gordon T. Colley, Squadron Commander, led the Wing on the very important mission to the marshalling yards at Ploesti, Roumania. That very successful mission was flown on 5 April 1944. Colonel John S. Mills, Group Commander, rode as co-pilot, with Captain Colley, to direct the mission.

Losses in Action

(1) Captain Donald A. Buck and his crew became missing in action during the raid on Steyr, Austria on 2 April 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing: 2nd Lt Nicholas G. Cilli, 1st Lt James S. Gover, 2nd Lt Frank B. Kelly, T/sgt Roy D. Hammond, T/Sgt Archie J. Walker, S/Sgt Ralph C. Wessel, S/Sgt Charles B. McCaughey, S/Sgt John J. Verbitski, S.Sgt Harold L. Pace.

(2) 2nd Lt John S. Fulks Jr and his crew became missing in action during the mission to Steyr, Austria on 2 April 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 2nd Lt Milton C. Baker, 2nd Lt Bernard E. Ross, 2nd Lt Arthur J. Crowns Jr, S/Sgt William B. Oschman, S/Sgt Edwin D. Booz, Sgt Richard L. Wilson, Sgt Ernest E. Williams, Sgt Michael Hazara, S/Sgt Eugene M. Compton.

(3) 1st Lt Frank C. Marpe Jr and his crew became missing in action during the mission to Ploesti, Roumania on 5 April 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 2nd Lt Richard H. Middleton. 2nd Lt Joseph J. Joyce, 2nd Lt Lawrence B. Guthrie, T/Sgt Joe W. Dunn, T/Sgt Francis A. Matan. S/Sgt Earl E. Boren Jr, S/Sgt Marian D. Anderson, S/Sgt Jay R. Adair, S/Sgt Oscar C. Burnhill.

(4) 2nd Lt Donald F. Wagner and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Ploesti, Roumania on 5 April 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 2nd Lt Francis L.J. Kitson, 2nd Lt Elvyn G. Hopper, 2nd Lt Richard E. Brannon, T/Sgt Stephen W. Kusmirak, T/Sgt Lloyd K. Kittelson, S/Sgt Robert A. Peterson, S/Sgt Edward L. Clapprood, S/Sgt Lawrence R. Miller, S/Sgt Charles E. Fasolas.

(5) 1st Lt Robert W. Edwards and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Ploesti, Roumania on 5 April 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: F/O Warner T. Ralls, 2nd Lt Harry T. Lamb, 2nd Lt Thomas H. Allen, T/Sgt William J. Signs, T/Sgt Joseph T. Baz, Sgt Walter Clive, Sgt Harold E. Shilts, S/Sgt Michael Dellario, S/Sgt Melvin L. Openshaw, 2nd Lt Joseph L. Devlin.

(6) 1st Lt Ernest F. John and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Varese, Italy on 25 April 1944. The following as a list of his crew: 2nd Lt Harold A. Felder, 2nd Lt Lawrence J. Smith, 2nd Lt Harold E. Gladstone, T/Sgt Robert E. Beshore, T/Sgt Donald Van Deuson, S/Sgt Joseph Bernstein, S/Sgt Harold L. Francis, S/Sgt Norman J. Kirkland, S/Sgt Raymond H. Strautman.

(7) 2nd Lt Harry L. Foster and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Orbetello, Italy on 28 April 1944. The following as a list of his crew: 2nd Lt Edward Rafferty, 2nd Lt Robert H. Reback, 2nd Lt Francis D. Bauder, S/Sgt Jimmie C. Finch, T/Sgt Donald E. Wilson, Sgt Robert P Neary, Sgt James R. Martin, Sgt Eugene E. Avery Jr, Sgt John Waschak.

(8) 1st Lt Paul F. C. Radue and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Toulon, France on 29 April 1944. The following as a list of his crew: 2nd Lt James W. Clark, 2nd Lt James W. Clark, 2nd Lt David w. Magnuson, 2nd Lt Wayne L. Murry, S/Sgt Theron F. Bittle, S/Sgt Kenneth L. Zellers, Sgt Clifford V. Przekurat, Sgt David J. Evans, Sgt Anthony L. Lukowski, Sgt Nicholas M. De Paul.

(9) 2nd Lt Leonard S. Houston Jr, and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Toulon, France on 29 April 1944. The following as a list of his crew: 2nd Lt Wesley Uргуheart, 2nd Lt Morris Sipser, 2nd Lt William L. Chartherm, S/Sgt Howard A. Dowski, S/Sgt Donald A. Durant, Sgt Albert Lattimer, Sgt William L. Haley, Sgt George F. Monroe, Sgt Benjamin H. Roderique.

(10) 2nd Lt Oscar J. Anderson and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Toulon, France on 29 April 1944. The following as a list of his crew: 2nd Lt William A. Clancy, 2nd Lt Preston M. Mckart, 2nd Lt Frank L. Wetzell, Sgt Edmond A. Fretz Jr, Sgt Fred G. Beck, Sgt Rocco J. Scavetta, Cpl Leon Rosenband, Sgt Stratton Beesley, Cpl William K. Gernheuser.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 April to 30 April 1944.

720TH SQUADRON WAR DIARY FOR APRIL 1944

1 April

The day started off in excellent fashion for "April Fools Day". The day started off bright and warm, with not a cloud in the sky. A mission was briefed for the marshalling yards at Treviso, Italy. This plan was "scrubbed" before take off because of expected poor weather, and the day was still bright. Approximately an hour later, it started to rain very hard and became overcast. The weatherman's new-found accuracy fooled one and all. Inspection of the tent area displeased our commanding officer very much and he wasn't fooling. Later in the day another inspection discovered a "new and brighter face" on that area. Our Squadron Commander was not fooling about a threatened restriction. In the evening, the 723rd Squadron put on a very good show for officers, in the "Cottontail Club".

2 April

The mission for today was to the Daimler-Puch Engineering Works at Steyr, Austria. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Eight of our planes were over and bombed the target, two of our aircraft were shot down over the target, and we had one early return. Capt Buck and his crew, and 2nd Lt. Fulks' aircraft, went down at the target. The target was obscured by smoke and observation of results was not possible. Lt. Cantrell brought back a badly damaged plane and three members of the crew wounded. The air battle lasted about one hour approaching to and withdrawing from, the target. Two replacement crews came in today. This was a busy Palm Sunday and many of our personnel were at church. Those on operations can attend church on Tuesday or Thursday. The area is drying up and the "home" and tents are becoming much more comfortable.

3 April

The mission was briefed for marshalling yards at Budapest, Hungary. Seven of our planes took off and seven got over the target to drop their 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. All our planes returned safely from this very successful mission. Our gunners claimed one FW-190 and a JU-88 destroyed from our position in the low left of the second attack unit. A movie featuring "Hedy Lamarr" drew good audiences in the afternoon and evening. Just incidentally, the movie was entitled "Heavenly Body". It was a very nice day and many men were out with baseballs and there was talk of organizing soft ball teams. Two replacement crews joined the Squadron today. Lt. George Ready again conducted classes in gunnery and tactics. Intelligence also held indoctrination courses for new men.

4 April

Seven planes participated in a successful mission on the marshalling yards at Bucharest, Rumania. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Flak was lighter than anticipated and enemy

720TH WAR DIARY FOR APRIL 1944

fighters observed did not press any attacks on our Squadron. All planes returned safely. Indoctrination was held for newly arrived crews. This comprised intelligence procedure and escape, medical advice, and operations. Gunners were instructed by Lt. Ready, Gunnery Officer. Sixty men attended a news presentation and display of bomb strike photographs at S-2. The very nice weather has our men out in the sun and a volley ball game was in progress. New crews are making their tents comfortable.

5 April

Captain Gordon T. Colley, Squadron Commander, led the Wing on the mission to Ploesti, Rumania. Eleven of our planes took the 12 x 500 general purpose bomb load on this successful mission. Col. Mills, Group Commander, rode as co-pilot with Capt. Colley. All our planes were over the target. 1st Lt. Robert Edwards, Squadron Operations Officer, and his crew, and 1st Lt Frank Marpe, and 2nd Lt. Donald Wagner and their crews were shot down over the target. Our gunners claimed eight enemy aircraft destroyed and three probably destroyed. Major Huber became our Squadron Executive officer and Major North went to the 722nd Squadron. In a matinee and evening performance the Group saw "No Time for Love." The nice weather is enabling us to "clean things up" with white paint and whitewash.

6 April

No mission was scheduled for today. Our planes were badly shot up and all on yesterdays mission needed repair. The program for the day, was maximum maintenance and training. The Group was out for a ceremony in which "Silver Stars", "Distinguished Flying Crosses", and the "Order of the Purple Heart" were presented to combat personnel. The weather was beautiful and the presentations were very impressive. This was especially so because the Squadron was badly "Shaken" by losses on yesterdays mission. The Squadron barber shop was moved into a well appointed shop.

7 April

We were able to get only five planes off for the mission to Mestre, Italy, marshalling yards. Two of these were forced to turn back because of mechanical failures. The target was very well hit and we had taken a bomb load of 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. The target area was very well hit. The aiming point was obscured by smoke. For this reason bomb hits could not be observed on that point. "Cabin in the Sky" was the afternoon and evening movie. Maintenance was keeping our sections busy after the damage at Ploesti. Gas chamber exercises were held for all personnel. Two members of 1st Lt. John C. Giraud's crew returned to this unit.

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8 April

A mission was briefed for the aircraft assembly plant at Weiner Neustadt, Austria. Seven planes took off but returned in two hours and a half due to weather conditions. Our Squadron put on a good entertainment at the "Cottontail Club" ...the music, skits and impersonation were well carried out. Capt Floyd I. Robinson made this a success by his untiring efforts.

9 April

There was no mission scheduled for this Easter Sunday. The weather was very nice and church was well attended. The large choir made the service very impressive. To make it a real nice day, we had a very fine chicken dinner at the Squadron Mess. Nine members of 1st Lt. Reaford McCraw's crew have returned to base. They reported that Lt. McCraw has been buried in Yugoslavia.

10 April

No mission for today. The Group enjoyed an afternoon and evening performance of the "Miracle of Morgan's Creek" in Oria. The Squadron tent area is being wired by the Communications Section, so that all personnel will have electric lights in their quarters. The "S.S. Henry Baldwin" is in at Brindisi and naval personnel from that transport were visiting Squadron enlisted personnel at this camp. This is the ship which transported Squadron ground personnel to this base.

11 April

A mission was briefed for the marshalling yard at Treviso, Italy. None of our planes got off as the mission was scrubbed before take off. Nine of our planes were scheduled for this mission. From the Wing came the Commanding General, Col, Rush, to conduct a "surprise" inspection of the Squadron area. Formation flying was practiced in the afternoon by some "new" crews. Squadron men engaged in a close order drill exercise. It was a fine day and Group softball practice was started. In the evening, S-2 conducted a well-attended news and bomb-strike presentations. This weekly function is drawing more attendance each week. Today, attendance was surprisingly good because an orientation film and pictures of the "Sammy Angott-Bob Montgomery lightweight championship match" were shown in Oria. Capt Floyd I. Robinson became Flight Commander in place of 1st Lt. Frank W. Marpe, missing-in-action.

12 April

Nine planes participated in the attack on the aircraft plant at Weiner-Neustadt, Austria. One of our planes was forced to turn back from the initial point because the formation could not be reached.

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This plane had lost a super-charger. Escort was excellent and no trouble was had with enemy fighters. The formation was last of course and experienced trouble with flak at Mostar, Yugoslavia. The bomb load was 40 x 100. U.S.O. Camp Shows staged a good show in Oria afternoon and evening. A scheduled movie was not shown because of defective sound apparatus. Lt. Cantrell's crew returned from rest camp at Santo Cesario, Italy, and Lt. John's crew left for the same camp. Two replacement crews came in today.

13 April

In carrying on the counter aircraft production offensive, eight of our planes got off and over in a fragmentation mission. The target was the Budapest/Vesces airdrome. The escort was excellent and our planes encountered no fighter opposition. All our planes and personnel returned safely from this mission. All sections are "contributing" help in an effort to speed up the opening of the day room for Squadron enlisted personnel. Lt. Ready was again instructing replacement gunners in gunnery and enemy tactics.

14 April

The mission scheduled for today was scrubbed before briefing. Lt. Ready was carrying on his instruction of replacement gunners. The new "indefinite" plan for rotation of combat crews is not popular. The Squadron Flight Surgeon explained this plan to combat officers, today. A matinee and evening performance of the novel, "Buffalo Bill." was well liked. Two replacement crews joined the Squadron today.

15 April

Our Squadron was leading the Group in the days mission; to bomb the marshalling yard at Bucharest, Rumania. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. The target was under solid overcast and bombs were dropped by Pathfinder methods. The alternate target was bombed. That being, the industrial center of Bucharest. Escort was fine and no enemy fighters were encountered. Ten of our planes were over the target, but one could not get bombs away and later jettisoned in the Adriatic. Flak was sight over the target, portraying a apparent effectiveness of radar "window".

16 April

Ten of our planes took off and ten bombed the marshalling yards at Brasov, Rumania. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. The weather was clear and the target was well hit. The escort left in the vicinity of the target and our formation was immediately jumped by enemy fighters. The attacks were from four to eight o'clock, level to high, and were aggressive. Our gunners claimed two ME-109's destroyed, one probably destroyed, and one damaged. In the evening

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a B-24 aircraft burned and exploded, on the line. The gasoline and bomb explosion was terrific. All squadron personnel were safe, except for slight injuries and shock. Technical Sergeant Julian C. Clark, of Ordinance, and PFC. Marquis Cedeno, of Armament Section probably save another plane which caught fire after the explosion. This latter plane was about one hundred and fifty feet away from the explosion and these men extinguished a blaze on top of the wing. The explosion put the finale on a fine show which Group Headquarters was staging in the "Cottontail Club".

17 April

Several of our planes were not able to get off due to damage from the explosion of yesterday. Seven of our planes dropped on the center of Sofia, Bulgaria. It was bombed by Pathfinder methods. We had one early return. Escort of P-51's was good and only two passes were made on our formation. These were not aggressive. In the afternoon and evening, the Group enjoyed a movie in Oria Starring Rosalind Russel and Brian Aherne.

18 April

There was no mission today. The day opened with clouds and showers, and the winds blew sand to remind us of New Mexico. No one became homesick about this remembrance unless, perhaps, he just happened to live in the "great southwest". The news summary and bomb strike photo presentation again drew a good crowd from the Squadron. S-2 was again in competition with a movie shown in Oria. Work has progressed nicely on the new mess hall, and the day room, for enlisted men. An opening has tentatively been set, this coming Saturday evening, for the day room. Work has been started on a boxing ring being constructed in the Squadron area. It is planned to have boxing shows started in about a week.

19 April

There was no mission today. The sun was shining brightly and it was an excellent day for maximum maintenance and training. In the afternoon and evening, a movie was shown entitled "Johnny Come Lately" starring James Cagney. A practice flight was held in the afternoon for formation and bombing.

20 April

Nine of our planes took off and got over the target at Treviso, Italy, marshalling yards. The target was "blotted-out" by 10/10 cloud cover and all bombs were brought back. The load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. Many of the Squadron enlisted personnel were busily engaged at the new day room: getting it ready to open this coming Saturday evening. The evening meal for enlisted men was "pepped-up" with a Coca Cola for each man.

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21 April

The mission for Ploesti, Rumania, marshalling yards took off in the morning. Because of weather the Group and our nine planes were back in about two hours. In the afternoon a sprinkle of rain helped make the base more comfortable. There was an Italian talent stage show and a movie entitled, "Dangerous Blondes", in Oria. The show was on matinee and evening. The kitchen was busy baking for the day room opening. Armament beat Ordnance in softball, 23 to 5. This was the first game and was a bit rugged.

22 April

There was no mission today. After an all night rain the base was muddy again after several weeks. The opening of the enlisted mens' day room was a grand success. No "females" appeared, as had been rumored about, but a great time was had by all present. In fact, it was a fine affair in which the presence of any lady would have been detrimental. It was "a man's night". All personnel who had contributed to the appointment of this room were justly proud of their achievements. The room contains a fine looking bar, a reading and writing room, card table and a dice table. The room is very nicely decorated and, with more work to be done, will be better than any day room our men have had up to this time. Engineering beat Armament 5 to 4 in softball. Armament afterwards said their team was weakened because a pitcher and outfielder were absent.

23 April

Nine of our planes took off and nine were over the Schwechat, Austria, aircraft factory. The bomb load was 10 x 500 bombs. The target was interesting; it being the production center for German jet-propelled aircraft. No fighters were encountered. Flak was not very effective; however, 1st Lt. Edmund Ley was wounded by flak over the target. He was hospitalized upon return to base. The first boxing show was held this evening. The fine ring was been constructed under the supervision of 2nd Lt. James Cumming, Squadron Athletic Officer. Group Special Services "took over" last night. It is planned to have a boxing show each Sunday evening. The best bout of the seven, last night, was between a British ack-ack lad and a colored MP. Both these boys could fight and they made an excellent battle. The British lad won a close decision. The assistant engineer of 2nd Lt. Jeff's crew was killed when their plane crashed about eight miles short of base, due to gasoline shortage.

24 April

Eight of our planes took off for Ploesti, Rumania, marshalling yard. The target was obscured by smoke and the 10 x 500 general purpose bomb load went into the city. 2nd Lt. Varvil went down over the target. Four chutes were seen from this plane. The plane had lost an engine

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another smoking and they should have had time to get out. We had two early returns and six were over the target. Escort was very good over the target and very accurate flak was the only enemy action. One plane "washed out" in landing, but all the crew were uninjured. "Action in the North Atlantic" was the movie in Oria.

25 April

Nine of our planes took off to bomb the Macchi Aircraft Factory at Varese, Italy. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose. The formation flew through clouds and the whole plan became disorganized. What looked like a "milk run" turned into a tough mission. Our planes apparently were over the target, which was successfully bombed, this target being Ferrara, Italy, marshalling yards. This was a target of opportunity picked when the primary and three alternate targets were all weathered in. Two of our planes were shot down. This being 1st Lt Ernest John and crew and 2nd Lt. Leonard L. Houston and his crew. Our gunners claimed two ME-109's destroyed. The enemy jumped our formation when it became loosened up in clouds and hit stragglers. Marlene Dietrich and her show never did show as had been expected. Someone said she was in the hospital. Someone else said they didn't blame her. Intelligence again put on a news presentation in the War Room and attendance was fine, as usual.

26 April

Mission was briefed at 0515 and "scrubbed" about forty-five minutes later. The weather was threatening rain and was cold with solid overcast. Armament beat Engineering in softball today. Some money changed hands and the losers are keeping the score a secret. The movie was "Riding High" afternoon and evening.

27 April

The scheduled mission was called off before briefing time. A "new deal" was inaugurated in the Squadron PX today. It is to be run "according to Hoyle" from now on. Our new ring is providing some exercise and entertainment.

28 April

Eight of our planes were scheduled to bomb the harbor at Orbetello, Italy. All these planes were over the target with 10 x 500 general purpose bombs, and dropped bombs with indifferent success. Two of our planes and crews did not return. These crews are comparatively new in our operations. They were the crews of 2nd Lt. Redue and 2nd Lt. Foster. Our heavy casualties of the past week have effected Squadron morale. The softball game scheduled between Armament and Engineering was postponed because those sections could not spare the time now. The movie shown in Oria, by Special Service, was "The Lady Takes A Chance". This program was partially spoiled by the fact that our men were

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forced to sit through training films. It was especially trying when combat men had to see pictures of planes crashing and burning. Special Services should continue to entertain and not resort to training for "relaxation". Overshoes have arrived. We can probably use them next winter somewhere. The "mud" is now flying around in the wind.

29 April

Seven of our planes took off to bomb the submarine pens and repair facilities at Toulon, France. The bomb load was 5 x 1000. Two of our planes returned early and 2nd Lt. Anderson and his crew are missing in action. This plane was lost due to flak. The target was covered by a smoke screen and observation was impossible. "Engineering" turned the tables on "Armament" and won their second softball game. The "Cooks" got a team of "All Stars" (from all parts of the field) together and beat "Curly" Clarke's Ordnance team. This was a "heartbreaker" for Ordnance and they were gunning for the cooks in more ways than one. Some people hope their aim is excellent. Three replacement crews came in today. These men come and go so fast we don't become acquainted. The question now is why they bother to unpack. Inspection of the area and sections was very good.

30 April

There was a fine mission for today. Flak was very light and there was no fighter opposition. Six of our planes dropped 48 x 500 general purpose bombs on the marshalling yard at Alessandria, Italy. We had one early return. Our bad luck had ceased and all our planes returned. It was a cold evening and the scheduled boxing show was cancelled due to the cold weather. The Squadron was paid today.

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

9 June 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period 1 May to 31 May 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

Changes in Organization.

Capt Floyd I. Robinson appointed Squadron Operations Officer, per Squadron Order No.14, Paragraph 1, dated 6 May 1944, vice Captain Grant D. Caywood.

Capt Grant D. Caywood appointed Squadron Commander per Squadron General Order No. 2, dated 25 May 1944 vice Captain Gordon T. Colley.

Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Month of May 1944 | |
| At beginning: | 514 |
| Increase: | 81 |
| Decrease: | 85 |
| At end: | 510 |

OPERATIONS:

(1) Sixteen (16) missions were flown for one hundred fifty-nine (159) sorties.

(2) Two (2) missions were flown against oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania; and one (1) mission to the same type target at Porto Marghero, Italy. Against marshalling yards we flew the following missions: one (1) to Brasov, Roumania; three (3) in Italy at Piacenza, Vicenza, and La Speza; and two (2) such missions to France at Nice and Marseilles. One (1) mission was attempted against a railroad bridge near Latisana, Italy and when the target could not be reached, a railroad bridge near Montesilvano, Italy, was bombed. One (1) mission was flown to attack an enemy troop concentration opposing the Anzio beachhead. Two (2)missions were flow against an airdrome near Wiener-Neustadt, Austria, and one (1) mission against an aircraft components factory in the same vicinity. Two (2) missions were flow to Porto San Stefano, Italy, to attack harbor installations.

(3) An important mission was flown on 29 May. The pattern and aim was good and installations on Wollensdorf Airdrome, near Wiener-Neustadt, Austria, were well hit. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Then (10) of our planes took off, one (1) returned early, and nine (9) hit the target. The fighter escort was good and did not permit the

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

hovering enemy to make an effective attack on our formation. Flak was ineffective and all our planes returned safely. Our objective was to destroy airdrome installations and aircraft assembly facilities. Another purpose was to relieve the great aerial pressure which the enemy is exerting against the Partisans in Yugoslavia.

(4) (a) The Squadron was subjected to enemy fighter attacks just as the left rally was made from an oil refinery at Ploesti on May 5. The attacks were mostly from six o'clock, high, and out of the sun. Attacks were made singly and in pairs. Several attacks were also made from twelve o'clock, level; and two (2) attacks from five and seven o'clock. The 15/20 ME-109's and (1) FW-190 were not aggressive in the air battle which lasted for approximately twenty (20) minutes. All our planes returned safely. Our gunners claimed one (1) FW-190 shot down. Our formation was also subjected to ineffective rocket fire.

(4) (b) During the mission to Wollensdorf Airdrome, at Wiener-Neustadt, two (2) of our bombers were shot down on the first pass, which came from high at twelve (12) O'clock. This was on 24 May. Enemy aircraft encountered numbered 40/50 ME-109's and 10 FW-190's. Attacks were from 12 o'clock, high, level and low in "V" formations of eight (8) to fifteen (15) planes. Then broke upward and attacked from all around the clock. Rocket fire against us was again ineffective. The attacks were aggressive with the enemy diving through the formation. This air battle lasted for 20 to 25 minutes and covered the route from Graz to the target. Our gunners claimed 2/2/2.

(4) (c) On another mission to Wollensdorf, at Wiener-Neustadt, enemy fighters attempted to reach our Squadron. The escort was excellent and the enemy could not reach our formation. This was on 29 May.

(4) (d) Again on 30 May enemy fighter reaction was severe during a mission to the vicinity of Wiener-Neustadt. Sixteen (16) to twenty (20) ME-109's attacked from six (6) o'clock, level and high, then broke down to come in from 3 to 4 o'clock, level. The attacks were mostly single passes, but some came in twos (2) abreast with one breaking down and one upward. The attacks were very aggressive; closing to fifty (50) yards. Our gunners claimed two (2) destroyed. The battle was cut short when P-51's put in a welcome belated appearance. All our planes returned safely to base.

(4) (e) Flak is not reported because it is encountered on all missions, with rare exceptions.

Colonel John S. Mills, Group Commander, led a fine mission to Porto San Stefano, Italy on 17 May. The target was harbor installations. Our Squadron led the Group and 1st Lt Robert Brown and 1st Lt Rolland Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, flew in the lead with Colonel Mills. Lt's Brown and Carr form the best "team" in the Group and continued their fine string of successes. A good pattern was on the target and flak was evaded by good navigation and flying.

Losses in Action

(1) 2nd Lt Francis D. Layton and his crew became missing in action during the raid on Weiner-Neustadt, Austria on 24 May 1944. Following is a list of his crew: 2nd Lt Harry F. Reed Jr, F/O Zelig Finkelstein, 2nd Lt Stanley Lewandowski, S/Sgt William Teunis Jr, S/Sgt Rodney L. Booker, Sgt Charles M. Trinnier, and Cpl Frank E. Van Limburg.

(2) 2nd Lt Donald G. Guldberg and his crew became missing in action during the raid to Weiner-Neustadt, Austria on 24 May 1944. Following is a list of his crew: 2nd Lt Paul E. Lee, 2nd Lt James J. Akins, 2nd Lt Robert R. Cook, S/Sgt Robert L. Bauer, S/Sgt Jack M. Suverkrup, and Sgt James Fife and Sgt Walter S. Florozak.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 May to 31 May 1944.

720TH WAR DIARY FOR MAY 1944

1 May

No mission flown today. The weather was bright and cool. Two practice flights were held, in search of leaders. It was "Defense Day" and all personnel wear or carry their respective arms, gas mask, and helmet. The formal opening of the "Day Room" was held this evening. It was a fine party. This also celebrated the opening of the new mess-hall for enlisted personnel. This hall is very nice: with nicely painted tables, white walls, and a concrete floor. Capt Wagner, Squadron Surgeon, gave the first of four scheduled lectures on malarial control. All Squadron personnel were present. All are to start taking atabrine today. The movie shown in Oria was "Swing Out The Blues". Today is the first anniversary of this Group, and this added to the holiday spirit.

2 May

No combat mission today. Practice formation and bombing flights were held. The area was rather quiet with enlisted personnel "lying-low" after the formal opening of the Day Room. The problem now seems to be as to how things can be made quiet enough at night, for personnel to sleep. In the evening six fine boxing matches were held by Group in our Squadron "Manduria Square Gardens". "Gunner" Kristal, of the 720th Squadron, dropped a bout by TKO to a British ack-ack man. The feature bout showed two M.P.'s and everyone hoped they would murder each other, or a least commit "modified mayhem".

3 May

The mission briefed for the marshalling yards at Ploesti, Rumania, was "scrubbed" just after briefing: mild cheering accompanied the news that this mission was canceled. In the afternoon a ceremony was held in which awards were presented to Group combat personnel. Col. John S. Mills, Group Commander, was presented the "Silver Star". This was for outstanding leadership when our Squadron led the Wing on the Ploesti raid of 5 April. Col. Mills had directed the attack as co-pilot with Captain Colley Squadron Commander. The Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medals, and "Order of the Purple Heart" were also presented. The "holiday spirit" was continued when our mess served "old fashioned" hot dogs, and the meal was further pepper-up with Coca-Cola for each man. The latter came from our Post Exchange ration. The movie shown in Oria was a "horse-opry" entitled the "Black Hills Express".

4 May

A mission was briefed and took off for Ploesti marshalling yards. The planes were back in about three hours because of weather. In the afternoon all personnel exercised in a close-order drill, except skeleton forces in each section.

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5 May

Eight of our planes took off and bombed an oil refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. The bomb load was 10 x 500. The target was obscured by smoke from pots of the enemy and preceding bombs. All our planes returned safely and one gunner claimed an FW 190 destroyed. Fighter opposition was not as great as expected. 1st Lt Phebus became Engineering Officer today and the fact that we had no early returns made him happy. The Squadron saw a film on malarial control at S-2. The movie shown in Oria was "The Saint Returns". One gunner completed fifty missions today and was placed on rotation. This "possibility" helped the morale of combat men.

6 May

Eight of our planes dropped seventy, five-hundred pounders on Brasov, Rumania marshalling yards. One plane could not get them away and jettisoned just after leaving the target. It was a good mission with fighter opposition and flak being slight. The bombing pattern was not so good but the choke point was well covered. Capt. Grant T. Caywood became Squadron Commander, today, replacing Capt. Colley. Capt. Floyd I. Robinson became Operations Officer, replacing our new commander. Our 1st sergeant was "hurt" because the Colonel did not inspect the area today. Especially so, because he learned that Wing will inspect on Monday. Informal softball games are an almost daily occurrence when the planes are out. Yesterday, Engineering beat Ordnance 15 to 3. For this shellacking Ordnance had plenty of "excuses", but no "excuse".

7 May

Nine planes took off for the mission to Bucharest marshalling yards. The planes turned back due to weather, having met no opposition from fighters or flak. Notification was received that T/Sgt Julian Clark and Pfc. Marquis Cedeno, of Ordnance and Armament, respectively, were awarded the Soldiers Medal for having saved a burning aircraft on the line. To prove who puts on these fights we have -- today we had no program because Lt James Cumming of the 720th has been at rest camp. Group Special Services is just there.

8 May

The mission was scrubbed before briefing. The morning was cool with a completely overcast sky. Wing officers inspected today and our Squadron area was noted as the best in the Group. Instruction was given in recognition of Russian aircraft and escape procedure. Practice bombing and gunnery flights were flown by replacement crews. The movie, "Reveille With Beverly" shown in Oria seemed very popular with the men. The 720th softball team lost to 450th Group, 7 to 5. Our boys still think they have the best team. This 450th personnel team is not popular.

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9 May

Briefing was set for 1100 hours but was cancelled before that hour. Beer, at a quart for each man, was a lone and popular item at the Squadron Post Exchange. Beer was served in the officer's mess in the evening. A stage show, by the U.S.O. was held afternoon and evening in Oria. Despite this attraction by Special Services, S-2 had about fifty men present for the weekly news and bomb strike presentation. The 720th softball team lost to the 331st Service Squadron 2 - 1. Our team still looks pretty classy and the 331st has a fine team and won a good game.

10 May

The mission was abortive. Ten of our planes took off in nice weather for Weiner Neustadt but turned back after several hours due to bad weather. All bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Ordnance beat Engineering 17 - 7, in softball. Engineering was beaten by the "boom" of the "Bomb Boys". Ordnance really "teed-off" on the pitcher.

11 May

A practice mission for today was cancelled. The program was maximum maintenance. The Squadron Post Exchange is very popular this week, with beer and Coca-Cola for each man. There was also a fine supply of cigarettes and candy. The 450th Group team beat the 720th, in softball. The men of our Squadron are "griped" because the Group outfield was solid 720th.

12 May

This was a "double-header" day. We ran two missions against harbor installations and shipping. The missions served a double purpose in that our planes were routed past our front line in a effort to boost morale there, and, of course, to cut down facilities for supplying the German forces. Eleven of our planes took off in the morning, and all bombed Porto San Stefano, Italy. The pattern was good and was right on our aiming point. The bomb load was 12 x 500 general purpose bombs. Col Mills was leading the Group and aiding him were 1st Lt Robert Brown and 1st Lt Rolland R. Carr, 720th Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, respectively. These two men have worked on more than their share of our very successful missions, including this morning's mission. Ten planes were scheduled and took off for the second mission. These planes turned back before rendezvous was made due to weather. The show in town was "Beautiful But Broke".

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13 May

The mission continued the counter communications plan. Ten of our planes and crews took off to bomb the marshalling yards at Piacenza, Italy. Lt Col Gideon was leading the Group in another of our planes. Nine of our planes dropped their 10 x 500 bomb loads, in a good pattern, on the target. We had two planes return early. There was no flak and no fighter opposition.

14 May

Ten of our planes took off for the marshalling yards at Vicenza, Italy. Eight planes each dropped 10 clusters of incendiaries at the target. One plane dropped two, and later jettisoned eight. One plane was forced to turn back twenty minutes short of the target. Navigation was very poor, the mission was poorly run, and it is doubtful if anyone hit the target. There was no fighter opposition and flak was slight, inaccurate, and of heavy calibre. Col Mills addressed a formation of the Ground Echelon and congratulated and thanked these men. Col Mills also read messages of commendation. The boxing show scheduled for the evening was cancelled because of the danger of air attack. Our personnel are enjoying the beach which the 47th Wing has established.

15 May

There was no mission today. The program was maintenance and two practice missions were flown. The officers have built a volleyball court and have set up a board for the "eagle-eyed" basketball men. With the warm sun, exercise is doubly beneficial. With the same facilities for enlisted men, and the boxing ring and softball diamond, all men can get some recreation and exercise. There was a movie in Oria. This is not so popular now because games are attracting attention. The men liked Deanna Durbin's new-found roundness, displayed in "His Butler's Sister".

16 May

No mission today. The weather here is very pleasant and all men are puzzled by the seeming "delay". Practice formation and bombing missions were flown. Combat personnel went down to the beach in the afternoon for a swim. S-2 could not have the weekly news presentation because of a conflict with lectures on "escape".

17 May

Col Mills, Group Commander, led a fine mission to Porto San Stefano, Italy, to bomb harbor installations. The bomb load was 10 x 500. The pattern was good and the target was well hit. Flak was

720TH WAR DIARY FOR MAY 1944

not effective and all men were grateful that Col Mills had done a excellent job in evading the flak. There was no fighter opposition. Ten of our planes were scheduled, took off, and bombed the target. Our Squadron was leading the Group and 1st Lt Robert Brown and 1st Lt Rolland R. Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, again did a good job. That is becoming the usual thing. The beach is being used now by personnel who have a little time. This is a fine aid to health and morale. The Group softball league got off to a good start when 720th beat 721st Armament.

18 May

Ten of our planes took off for Ploesti, Rumania, oil refineries. The mission was abortive, when the planes turned back after several hours. The cause was weather, again. The Squadron photographer was busy taking pictures of the various sections for the Squadron album. S/Sgt "Joe" Heffernan, gunner, finished fifty today. In typical Bronx fashion, "Joe" said it was a "cinch" and Adolph's lads were a lot of chumps. Approval on that "score" was not spontaneous.

19 May

The mission today was flown through hazardous weather conditions. The Group was ably led, as usual, by Lt Col Robert Gideon and the target was rather clear. The pattern and aim was good and the target well hit. Ten of our planes bombed the marshalling yards at Spezia, Italy. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Flak was slight to moderate, inaccurate, and all our planes returned. There was no fighter opposition. Second Lt Lawrence Miles, bombardier, was the first officer in the Group to complete fifty missions. His success "gave heart" to other men who are still "sweating them out". He is bombardier and owes great thanks to 2nd Lt "Pappy" Cantrell, who has flown forty-five missions without turning back. "Pappy" is not the "hot type" but all know him as a fine pilot and officer: an officer who cares for his men and does a good job in a quiet manner.

20 May

This was an "off" day in everything. It rained here and almost all were pleased to learn that this was possible, in Italian summer. The Saturday inspection was fine, and showed that our new acting First Sergeant, Thomas Wilson, is capable as well as affable. Our Squadron softball team beat the 47th Wing officers, 7 - 0. Our boys played good ball to beat a good team.

21 May

There was no mission today. The weather was cloudy and cool in the morning. The sun came out bright in the afternoon and many men

720TH WAR DIARY FOR MAY 1944

went to the beach. This was, of course, after a Group formation at which awards were made. Notable awards for our Squadron were the "Silver Star" to S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley, and a "Soldiers Medal" to Pfc. Marquis Cedeno, of Armament. Sgt Barkley was given this fine award for gallantry in action during a raid on Steyr, Austria. He was wounded on the same mission. Pvt Cedeno had, with great courage, extinguished a fire on a B-24 aircraft after another had exploded nearby. In the evening five good matches in the boxing ring were held in the 720th "Manduria Square Gardens". 2nd Lt James Cumming, of the 720th is still the motivating force behind this fine entertainment which last night drew over a thousand spectators. The 720th was the only Squadron who had fighters in the show and we had two who lost and drew in good fights. Lt Cumming has difficulty getting some of our "wednesday evening battlers" into the ring on Sunday night. Lt Cumming acts as matchmaker and referee and wants to get rid of the latter job. The 450th Bomb Group is deeply indebted to the colored boys from the 734 M.P.'s and to the British anti-aircraft units. These outfits are always well represented by men who fight clean, hard, and interesting matches. The feature bout last evening was a fine heavyweight match in an arena. In this fight Stanley Goicz took a close decision from Ira Baudie, of the 734 M.P.'s. Both these men had the "know how" and "willingness" which makes for an interesting fight. Stanley Goicz is a "stranger" to fans here, and a welcome new face. He came from up "Gioia way".

22 May

The mission was briefed for a railroad bridge over the Tagliamento River, near Latisane, Italy. The load was 10 x 500 and altitude 20,500 feet. Ten of our planes took off but, due to weather conditions, could not reach the primary target. Alternate targets could not be reached. All our planes bombed on a target of opportunity at Montesilvano, Italy. The railroad bombed was cut, and the pattern looked good. Flak was heavy, intense, and accurate, in the vicinity of Pescara. There was no fighter opposition. All our planes sustained minor damage but all returned safely. In the evening, Group Special Services opened a very nice outdoor theater on the base. An ample stage has been erected, a screen has been mounted, and there is a projection booth. A good crowd attended and enjoyed "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" and "Betty Grable". Our men were very grateful for this new theater because there is no transportation problem and there is no dusty, rough road. There will be no "S.R.O. sign" out in this theater because capacity is unlimited. The theater was well planned and will give a lot of enjoyment.

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23 May

Ten planes took off with 10 x 500 load to attack a troop concentration at Grottaferrata, Italy. This was in support of the Anzio beachhead. Our men are always seemingly enthused about aiding the infantry. Men of the Air Forces have a very wholesome respect for the soldiers up on the front. The target was partially obscured by clouds and the first run was broken up when another formation came into our line of flight. On the second run the lead element of the second attack unit did not drop bombs and therefore three of our planes returned bombs to the base. Six of our planes dropped bombs in the target area. Results were not observed. One of our planes was forced to turn back just short of the target when the plane was damaged by flak and 2nd Lt Thomas Hart, navigator, was wounded. This plane was "washed out" on landing at base but no one suffered further injury. The movie scheduled for this evening in our new outdoor theater was "called" because of rain and wet grounds. A "raincheck" is not necessary for future attractions nor will a double-header result. The "G.I." movies which were to be shown will no doubt be scheduled for an open date. The Squadron's weekly news presentations have been cancelled. Lack of attendance is attributed to the major competition of movies and sports. Intelligence does not feel capable of competing with Betty Grable and others from Hollywood and does not want to interfere with the "great American pastime". News coverage will be kept up on a Squadron bulletin board as has been the policy in the past. Excellent coverage of the news is available at Group S-2 War Room. Squadron softball lost a non-league game to the 723rd Squadron 5 - 4. It was supposedly a "tune-up" for the 331st Signal Game.

24 May

The mission was for Wollensdorf Airdrome at Wiener-Neustadt, Austria. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Eight of our planes were scheduled but only seven got off, due to sickness of an officer at take off time. Our plane did not lead the Group, but our crew operated with Lt Col Gideon in the lead. The mission was not successful. We did not meet any escort for penetration and our Group was attacked before we reached the initial point. Two of our bombers went down in the first pass, which came from high at eleven to one o'clock. The attackers swept around to attack from all angles but did not shoot down more bombers. Our gunners claimed two destroyed, two probables, and two damaged. We did not hit the target. In the evening a thriller was held at our theater entitled "The Uninvited". It was a "spook" show and one combat man commented that he was more frightened than he had been on the mission. But from witnessing the movie and listening to stories concerning the mission, it is safe to assume that the "goose-flesh" on that man came from more natural causes. The evening was cool and damp. The theater is popular and the crowd was fine. By beating the 331st Signal Team our Squadron took over first place in the softball league. The score of the game was 8 - 0.

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25 May

Mission for Porto Margheo, Italy. The target attacked was a oil refinery, specifically; the oil storage and power house. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Ten of our planes took off and seven bombed the target. Two planes turned back one jettisoned after leaving the target. Flak was slight and inaccurate and there was no fighter opposition. The target was well hit. In the evening all men who have over forty missions were invited to a barbecue and show at the theater. This "forty-plus" party was sponsored by our Red Cross Director. There was a fine barbecue, "real" potatoes roasted, and a show. From all reports the local talent "laid an egg". The "clown prince" of this outfit "Doc" Hunt, has apparently, long ceased to be funny. That is the "rumor".

26 May

The mission was for a marshalling yard at Marseilles, France. Twelve of our planes were scheduled with a bomb load of 10 x 500. The target was well hit with an excellent pattern. Eleven of our planes dropped bombs on the target. One plane was forced to turn back, due to mechanical failure. The fine mission boosted morale. No flak and no fighters is the best boost for combat morale, followed closely by good escort. The movie in the evening was "Mr. Big". The only thing "big" about this entertainment was the appointment, due to defective sound. Many of our men went down to the beach for a fine swimming day. It is rumored that many men were caught with the "pants off" when some nurses came to the beach.

27 May

The mission for today was to a marshalling yard in Marseilles, France. The bomb load was, as usual, 10 x 500. Lt Col Robert Gideon was leading the Group and had with him Lt Brown and Lt Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier. Ten of our planes took off and eight bombed the target. One plane returned early from a point just 15 miles short of landfall on France. Col Gideon jettisoned bombs short of the target when his plane was damaged by flak. The target was obscured by smoke of previous groups but our aiming point was hit. There was no fighter opposition. Several planes were holed by flak and Col Gideon was forced down at Corsica with a engine out. There was no recreation scheduled but when a stand down was announced for the ensuing day, a mild holiday spirit pervaded the barracks and area. The 720th beat 835th Engineers, 18 - 3. The game had too many errors by outfielders. A very poor game.

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28 May

The program for today was maximum maintenance and training. It was a very nice day and church was well-attended. It would have been a very fine Sunday day with a nice radio and the Sunday paper. The American custom of Sunday "hang-over" was probably followed, at least it should have been. The beach came in for heavy duty, morning and afternoon. There was a fine five bout boxing card in the evening. Special Services seems to be propelled with "dead-wood", for Jim Cumming, 720th athletic Officer, had to get this card together in a hurry. Without the "Cowboy" (Lt Cumming) we would have no boxing. The 720th had boys in the two best bouts of the evening. Cpl. Alfonse, of Armament, lost a close decision to a colored M.P. The crowd booed heartily and Alfonso got his colors flying and challenged the colored lad for a rematch. That will be a popular match with the fans. In another bout Sgt Anzelone, one of our gunners, won the finest match of the evening by a TKO in the second round. His opponent was a classy British "Tommy", who showed the "old moxie" when he got off the canvas three times and come back to fight. Sgt Anzelone is the classiest boy to show in "Manduria Square Gardens" to this date. Many of the fans are our Squadron men and they have lost their shyness to cheer on their buddies. After show an air raid alert had us in the shelters.

29 May

Eleven of our planes were schedule for the Wollersdorf Airdrome at Weiner-Newstadt, Austria. One plane did not get off and one returned early. Nine planes dropped the 10 x 500 bomb load on the target. The escort was very fine and the P-51's "took care of" the many enemy planes who attempted to reach our bombers. Flak was generally not effective, but one gunner had his leg badly fractured. In the evening a large crowd enjoyed the movie, "Lost Angel". The beautiful little girl, "Margaret O'Brien", made many of the older men a little homesick. The "kraut" again put in a appearance and came at a very appropriate time. He came over between the second and third reel and the men walked off to sweat him out. When he had gone the men walked back to see the ending of the picture. The picture had a lovely ending and so did the day, with no bombs dropped and little dismay.

30 May

The mission was for Ebreichsdorf, Austria, to hit an aircraft components factory. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Nine planes were scheduled and eight dropped bombs "in Austria". One plane returned early. some twenty (20) German fighters attacked very suddenly from high at five to seven o'clock. These were extremely aggressive. Our gunners claimed two ME 109's destroyed. The battle was of short

720TH WAR DIARY FOR MAY 1944

duration when P 51's came on the scene. The target was not hit and there was no pattern. In the evening there was a long "G.I." movie but the big excitement was an expected land air attack which never materialized.

31 May

Lt Col Gideon, Group Deputy Commander, with Lt Brown and Lt Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier, led the 47 Wing, and Air Force, on today's operations. Our Wing target was the Ploesti/Romano Oil Refinery. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Ten of our Squadron planes took off and bombed the target. The target was very effectively screened by smoke, but huge fires were started, with much black smoke; making it evident that the target was probably hit. Interception was attempted but all our planes returned safely. One ME 109 was claimed as destroyed when the enemy pilot bailed out. In the evening the movie, "Courageous Women", did not strike a responsive chord. Our men have seen too much of the genuine heroics to go for this synthetic variety, especially when it is a bit false in nature. The picture had lots of pretty gals and that was a help. The 720th softball game lost first place in the league to 721st Ordnance. The score was 9 - 6, with two extra innings. It was a good game.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

8 July 1944

SUBJECT : HISTORICAL RECORDS

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, Attention:
Historian (through channels)

Unit History of the 720th Bombardment Group (H) for the period 1 June to 30 June 1944.

The present designation of the unit is 720th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Wing, 15th Air Force, United States Army.

Changes in Organization.

1st Lt Morris A. Erickson appointed Squadron Operations Officer, per Squadron Order No. 20, Paragraph 1, dated 25 June 1944 vice Capt Floyd I Robinson.

Capt Lester L. Ostrove appointed Squadron Fight Surgeon, per Special Order 162, Headquarters 15th Air Force, Paragraph 9, dated 10 June 1944 vice Capt Alfred W. Wagner.

Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Month of June 1944 | |
| At beginning: | 509 |
| Increase: | 41 |
| Decrease: | 75 |
| At end: | 475 |

OPERATIONS:

(1) Fourteen (14) missions were flown for one hundred and forty-one (141) sorties.

(2) Five (5) of our missions were of a tactical nature against marshalling yards: these were located at Geno, Ferrara, Castel-Maggiore, in Italy; at Simeria, Roumania, and at Brod, Yugoslavia. Six (6) missions were flown against oil refineries and oil storage facilities: two (2) such missions were flown to Ploesti, Roumania; one (1) to Trieste, Italy; and one (1) to Constanta, Roumania; one (1) Osijek, Yugoslavia; and one (1) to Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. One (1) mission was flown to Allach, Austria, aircraft engine works. One (1) mission attacked the airdrome and aircraft assembly facilities at Schwechat, Austria. One (1) mission attacked the center of Munich as an alternate target. This mission bombed by Pathfinder methods.

(3) An important mission was flown on 26 June. The mission was to bomb the Schwechat, Austria airdrome and Heinkel Aircraft Assembly plant. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. Lt Colonel William Snaith, Group Operations Officer, was flying Wing lead with our Squadron. The first bursts were observed directly on the aiming point, and subsequent bursts were in a heavy concentration over

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

the entire target area. Target area was completely destroyed. Ten (10) of our planes participated in this very successful mission, as the lead Squadron.

(4) (a) The Squadron was subjected to enemy fighter reaction during the mission to Bratislava, Czechoslovak, on 16 June. Twelve (12) to fifteen (15) single engine aircraft opposed our formation in attacks which were not aggressive. These attacks were made from low, from five (5) to seven (7) o'clock and lacked coordination. One (1) of our gunners was credited with an ME-210 destroyed. All our planes returned safely.

(4) (b) Enemy fighter reaction was extremely severe during our mission to Ploesti, Roumania on 24 June. The attacks started about ten (10) minutes before the target and the air battle lasted for about twenty (20) minutes. The enemy force consisted of 30/35 ME-109's, 10/15 FW-109's, 2 JU-88's, and 3 ME-110's. The attacks were coordinated and for the most part were made by units of three or four from twelve o'clock level. After going through the formation the enemy would reform to attack again on the same pattern. Sporadic passes were also made from other angles. The fire consisted of 20mm cannon and rockets. None of our Squadron aircraft were lost to these attacks. Five (5) enemy aircraft were credited, to Squadron gunners as destroyed: Four (4) Me-109's and one (1) JU-88.

(4) (c) Flak is encountered on all missions, with rare exceptions. For this reason, anti-aircraft fire is not listed in detail. During the month we drew heavy, intense and accurate flak over Munich, Austria, and Ploesti, Roumania. One (1) of our aircraft was lost at each of these targets, presumably to flak.

Lt. Colonel William G. Snaith, Group Operations Officer, led an excellent mission to Schwechat, Austria. The objective was achieved and the airdrome and Heinkel Aircraft Assembly Plants were demolished. Our Squadron was leading the Group and Wing. Capt Robert Brown and Capt Rolland Carr, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier again did excellent jobs. 1st Lt James Wright, Squadron Flight Commander, was co-pilot in the lead plane. This mission was flown on 26 June.

Losses in Action

(1) 2nd Lt Homer V. Smith became missing in action during the mission to Munich, Germany on 13 June 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 2nd Lt Garvin M. McCain, 2nd Lt Owen M. Akers, 2nd Lt Mitchel E. Farris, S/Sgt Paul H. Gritten, T/Sgt Edgar Cooper, S/Sgt Thomas B. Hepburn, S/Sgt Charles B. Brahier, S/Sgt Theodore Hallet, and S/Sgt Joseph R. Falonetti.

(2) 2nd Lt Lloyd O. Osborne became missing in action during the mission to Munich, Germany on 6 June 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 1st Lt Barney H. McClure, 2nd Lt Irving B. McNulty, 2nd Lt John F. Flannery, S/Sgt Eugene L. Watkins, S/Sgt Lawrence H. Cugine, S/Sgt Sidney D. Benjamin, S/Sgt Philip A. Smith, S/Sgt Lloyd T. Smith, and S/Sgt Chester Wojcik.

(3) Capt Floyd I. Robinson became missing in action during the mission to Ploesti, Roumania on 24 June 1944. Following is a list of his crew who are also missing in action: 2nd Lt Vincent H. Olney, 2nd Lt Marshall N. Samms, 2nd Lt Louis Amster, T/Sgt Armand J. L'Heureux, T/Sgt Richard S. Hackney, S/Sgt George F. Dobbs, and Sgt Vernon P. Tanem.

Enclosed is the War Diary of this unit from the period 1 June to 30 June 1944.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

1 June

The program for the day was maximum maintenance and training. New Crews were indoctrinated at Group S-2 and practice gunnery and bombing missions were flown, morning and afternoon. Many men were, by this brief respite from operations, enabled to take a swim at the beach for several hours. The boxing ring the Squadron built in our Squadron area is providing fine exercise and recreation. From watching these boys sweat and punch each other around, it seems all the pleasure should be in the spectators. But some rugged healthy lads seem to enjoy this fine sport. Many of our men are learning, fast and well, under the tutelage of some experienced boys.

2 June

Ten of our planes took off for the mission to Simeria, Rumania, marshalling yard. We had one early return. The bomb load was our 10 x 500 "package". The mission was a shameful failure, due to poor bombing. The navigation was perfect, the target was clear, formation was good, and there was no disturbance from flak or fighters. That we missed spoiled a "beautiful" mission. No fighters and no flak made it a perfect day for six Squadron men who were put on rotation after landing. It has become the policy to send an officer to the beach each day to supervise our men. A near drowning occasioned this precaution. "Bob Hope" was fine, as ever, in "Lets Face It". That little gal, Betty Hutton, "ain't bad" either. She make a man a bit nostalgic and "that ain't all".

3 June

The mission for a marshalling yard in Rumania was "scrubbed" just after an early morning briefing. It was weekly inspection day and this has become so routine that things shape up well now. All our inspections are good now since we have the best Squadron area. The enlisted men have built some fine homes in their spare time. They have classified the homes now as "hovels, huts and hotels". The latter are elaborate homes. An opening usually calls for a lukewarm to hot house warming. The nature of the inhabitant, not the pretentiousness of the home, seems to determine the degree of warmth in the opening. The efforts of these men are now paying dividends because the stone houses are cooler and cleaner. At a formation this afternoon Air Medals were presented to newer men. The "720 Ramblers" beat 722nd Communications 5 - 2. While awaiting this team a pickup game featured Major North, Executive Officer and Lt. Wells, Adjutant. These men are always there as spectators.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

4 June

The marshalling yard at Genoa, Italy, was our target for today. Ten of our planes took off and nine bombed the target. We had one early return. The bomb load was 36 x 100. The moderate flak was not effective and there was no fighter opposition. The aiming point of our target was well covered with a good pattern. We had a surprising boxing show this evening. "Cowboy" Cumming, matchmaker and impresario, had an excellent card line up. Cumming was very disappointed when he had to announce that his card could not show because several contributing units had been placed on alert. With some coaxing a good pickup card was lined up. Men for five bouts stepped up into the "unknown" and put on an excellent show.

5 June

The mission was for Castel Maggiore Marshalling Yards, near Bologna, Italy. Lt Col Gideon, acting Group Commander was leading the Group with a Squadron crew. 1st Lt Carr and Brown, Squadron Navigator and Bombardier were in the lead ship. The run-up to the target was good but a good pattern went too far over, with only the lead bombardier hitting. Bombardiers claimed the target was one for medium bombers. Nine of our planes bombed the target and we had one early return. There was no fighter opposition and flak was moderate and accurate. All planes returned safely. Just after the mission returned a formation was held to present awards. In our Squadron, the following were received: 1st Lt Robert Brown, "Silver star"; 1st Lt Rolland Carr, "Silver Star"; 1st Lt John Malarkey, D.F.C.; M/Sgt Julian C. Clarke, "Soldiers' Medal"; S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley, "Order of the Purple Heart", and S/Sgt Harold Felchner, "Order of the Purple Heart". Matters then went from the sublime to the very ridiculous when Red Skelton came to town in a movie entitled "Whistling in Brooklyn". The silly connotation joined with this named "borough of New York" was not nearly so silly as this story and Red. Even in our very pleasant and well-ventilated outdoor theater this one "stunk up the joint". Many persons seemingly liked it, so "all the world remains a stage". Today, personnel were busily engaged in preparing for the welcome visit of General Twining, which is anticipated for tomorrow.

6 June

The Squadron today put up eleven planes for Ploesti, to bomb the Romano/Americana Oil Refinery. Again we had more planes than any other Squadron. One of our planes returned early after being damaged by flak over Belgrade. The navigator was too far north and seemingly some navigators use this flak as check-points. Combat men get a little peevish about that.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

Our Group was leading the Wing, and carrying 10 x 500. The target was again very effectively screened and results were not observed. It is believed, however, that the run was good on the target and some fire and smoke was observed. In the evening. "G.I." movies drew a good attendance. It was a very fine evening and the beautiful moon made a night for remembrances, if not romances.

7 June

No mission was scheduled today. The nice day "took" many men to the beach. Lectures were held at S-2 on air-sea rescue. In the evening "Olivia DeHaviland" drew the biggest crowd yet to our theater. Probably fifteen hundred men enjoyed "Olivia", but the picture "Government Girl" was a cruel disappointment. Even the loveliness of the leading lady could not drown the stench of some sequences in that picture. Those home front heroics and inconveniences hand most men a laugh. Many men thought "Sonny Tufts" would look pretty good in a uniform and not as a "Hollywood Commando". The beach was very popular today as this was the hottest day yet.

8 June

There was no mission today. Our men were surprised by this inactivity so close in the wake of "the invasion". Men criticize so freely when they are not in position to see the whole picture or can't think that far. The men were especially bitter about our new "secret weapon": "close order drill". Four hundred men from each Squadron drilled at 0900 hours. High altitude formation flying was also held in a quest for unit and box leaders. Aircraft recognition was taught at S-2. In the evening Special Service provided an excellent stage show at our theater. This was the finest stage show we have had. The vaudeville included a good band, a very pretty singer, a good juggler, some comedy skits, and just to make us homesick a couple of big blondes of the peroxide variety. The latter were not the most accomplished part of the show but a "hippy" blond (or brunette, redhead) has a way with an American soldier. This show kept the crowd of about two thousand very enthused for about one hour and forty minutes. The "720th Ramblers" beat the "721st Officers", in a league game, 8 - 2.

9 June

Our Group was leading the 47th Wing on the mission to Oberpfaffenhoffen airdrome, 15 miles southwest of Munich. Captain Caywood, Squadron Commander, was leading the second attack unit of our Group. The bomb load was 10 x 500. Our ten planes did not do so well.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

We had three early returns and one plane went down before the target was reached. In that plane, Lt Osborne and his crew are missing in action. This plane was last observed going into cloud cover, in relatively good condition, after one or two crew members had bailed out. The target was obscured by 9/10 cloud cover and the center of Munich was bombed on Pathfinder, as a secondary target. Our Group was pleasantly surprised by the absence of fighter reaction and ineffective flak. In the evening, a large crowd enjoyed the movie entitled "The Adventures of Tartu".

10 June

Eleven of our planes participated in the mission to Trieste, Italy. The objective was to destroy oil storage and loading facilities in the harbor. The bomb load was 10 x 500 and ten of our planes dropped a good pattern on the briefed aiming point. A large ship, probably a warship was hit by a stick of bombs. One of our planes returned early. Flak was ineffective and escort arrived just in time to divert a threatened interception. It was a quiet evening with no scheduled entertainment but the beach is always popular. In our thriving "twilight league", the 720th Ramblers (Squadron team) beat 721st combat by a score of 8 - 3. It was a good game and a fine crowd came out to cheer on the "Ramblers". There is a real rivalry with the 721st always and there will probable be some "action" before this season ends. The Ramblers are now running a second place having won seven and lost one. The leader is 721st Ordnance whose "boom-boom boys" "hung" that one on the wrong side of the "Ramblers".

11 June

Our mission for the day was to fly Wing lead with Lt Col William G. Snaith, Group Operations officer, leading our Group. The mission was well led with a good run being made on the oil storage tanks, at the Black Sea port of Constanta, Rumania. The bombing was poor with our Group's bombs falling short and to the right. It is believed that one element hit well with the bomb load of 20 x 250. There was no enemy fighter reaction to this long mission and flak was ineffective. It was a quiet evening on the base. The regular weekly boxing matches were not held. "Cowboy" Cumming, bombardier, was too busy flying to act as matchmaker and our "Special Services" did not, or could not, line up a card. This is especially surprising because our Athletic Officer has had himself publicized as a former college pugilist. For such a youngster he has lost interest in such activity in a hurry. With a stand down for the next day the evening was profitably spent in more elevating entertainment such as reading books, drinking wine, playing poker, and just "batting the breeze". Special Services has probably come into the realm of thought which contends that there has been too much entertainment.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

Though such a thought could conceivably come to some officers, Special Services should never become a party to any such "doings" and so do nothing. Our personnel have been very thankful for the apparent fine results of malarial control measures. The dire threats of malaria has not materialized and mosquitoes have not been so plentiful as had been expected. If some measures could only be taken to keep down venereal disease, then health would be excellent. It seems that personnel are not educatable to total abstinence and moderation is not the complete answer "venereal disease".

12 June

There was no mission for today. However, in the morning, a practice mission called for nine planes from each squadron. Flights were also held for practice gunnery and bombing. It was a warm day and the beach was popular. The 47th Wing beach has been well conducted since M.P.'s took over. The latter are to make certain that trunks are worn and order maintained. In the evening the movie feature was "Bombers Moon". This picture seemed to have a false note and our men were not greatly impressed. Our transportation brought in a load of very nice furniture for our day room. However, the day room is not too popular. There is too much out door competition now.

13 June

The mission was for the Allach Aircraft Engine Works near Munich, Germany. The bomb load was 5 x 1000. Eleven of our planes took off and Captain Grant Caywood, Squadron Commander, was leading the second attack unit. Eight of our planes were over the primary target. We had two planes return early, and 2nd Lt Smith and his crew are missing in action. Flak was intense and accurate and probably accounted for the plane. The enemy planes in the vicinity did not make attacks, because we had a good escort. The target was not hit. For some reason the first attack unit bombed Munich, the secondary target, even though the primary target was clear. In the evening G.I. movies were show at the base theater. There were likes and dislikes expressed and smoldering, but as large crowd saw the good with the bad.

14 June

The mission was for Osijek Oil Refinery in Yugoslavia. The bomb load was 20 x 250. Ten of our planes were over the target and dropped in the area. The target was not hit with any pattern, but, fortunately, the group preceding us hit it well. In the evening the movie "The Iron Major" was shown at out theater. Some more

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

combat men left for home today on rotation. All men hope that their good luck will go on with them. Our Squadron Ramblers won again tonight, beating 722nd Engineering in softball, 4 to 1. Major North, our Executive Officer, long a good fan got a closer view as umpire. A fine one too.

15 June

There was no mission. It was a beautiful day and practice formation, gunnery and bombing flights were held. On this off-day the beach served well as some relaxation for men who were not busy. In the evening about fifteen hundred men enjoyed the best stage show we have had. The good acts, singing and several "prettier than usual" Italian girls gave us an excellent show. During the show it was announced that the Japanese mainland had been bombed by land-based aircraft, presumably B-29. This announcement occasioned more applause than the show and the latter was well-appreciated. Before the show started one of the men with the show told the audience that the 450th Group theater was one of the best he had seen in Italy. This remark was duly appreciated but there was quite a bit of feeling that he, perhaps, "tells that to all the boys"; or, perhaps, he hasn't been around much. However, we do have good shows in a fine outdoor theater. We do not lack good entertainment.

16 June

Eleven of our planes took off for the mission to bomb an oil refinery at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. The bomb load was 20 x 250. We had one early return. The target was destroyed by a good pattern. Flak was ineffective. Twelve or fifteen enemy aircraft opposed our Squadron, and were not aggressive or persistent. Attacks were generally made from low, five to seven o'clock. One of our gunners claimed an ME-110 destroyed. This man was flying his fiftieth combat mission and this was his first victory in the air. All our planes returned safely. In the evening a large crowd enjoyed Bing Crosby's "Going My Way".

17 June

No mission today. Briefing was held early in the morning but the mission was called off just after briefing. The day was spent in staff meetings, area inspection, exercise, and swimming at the beach. It seems our Squadron has an objective; to improve our areas so that it will equal the high standards of other squadrons in the Group. The facilities we have are, however, ample and though not so elaborate we have had the use of these facilities for two months while other squadrons were building. The value of a thing diminishes if the expenditure outweighs the utility.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

18 June

A mission was again "scrubbed" just after briefing. It is being rumored about that a "new deal" is coming up in our mess. Our much-maligned Mess Sergeant is to be replaced, so the intentions go, by a man more seasoned in "seasoning". There is a need for a shifting about of mess personnel because good ideas become stagnated. Because a man, as Mess Sergeant, lacks imagination meals can become very "humdrum". What is needed is a dissemination of information on how these stock materials can be prepared. It has been said that "C" rations and corned-beef can be made delectable. Such an accomplishment would take more imagination than this writer boasts. Many men feel that our mess is good enough but there will always be men who "live to eat" and others to "eat to live". Our Squadron "Ramblers" beat 721st Communications in our Twilight League. The score was 9 to 7 and the victory put our team in sole possession of second place with 9 won and 1 lost.

19 June

There was no mission today. Since we were ordered to stand down and this notification came last evening combat men were able to sleep in. The weather was very pleasant here and the beach came in good use. Any girl is welcome on a beach, and especially on our beach; but when the girls are Red Cross ladies with doughnuts and lemonade, then everybody welcomed them. Our mess seems to have improved. Perhaps the threat of new personnel was a help. In the evening, our theater showed the movie "Bombardier". It was a comedy! Not by design or intention, rather because of the audience. When a bombardier aims into an ordinary smoke stack, from 20,000 feet, and hits a poorly-lighted target, that makes a comedy. Good for home consumption, though! Our non-operation aircraft crashed and burned near the base and Sergeants Louvier and Meixner perished. The plane was piloted by an officer from the 721st Squadron. Our new Flight Surgeon took over officially today and conducted a physical inspection at once. He is a hard worker and the combat men say he is a "tough baby".

20 June

There was no mission today. The plan was scrubbed before briefing. It was a very fine day and was spent quietly. Our Mess continues to improve with the cracking down process. The Red Cross helped out a good noon meal with all the doughnuts a man could eat. All sections are busy preparing for an inspection coming up. Section heads have been warned to be vigilant in keeping matters in good shape. Squadron personnel are busy making improvements. We had a good stage show in the evening. "Patsy Moran" was the M.C. and carried along a good show. A pretty singer and two versatile "clowns" made up the vaudeville cast.

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

G.I. movies were shown after the stage show and these short subjects were good. An especially interesting reel was one on the conditions and efforts in China.

21 June

The mission for today was 'scrubbed' just after briefing. The weather was excellent at this base. This gave us some time to work on the area. The movie in the evening was supposed to be a thriller. The sound was defective and if that was supposed to be a mystery it could fool any man. The pictures were on the screen when the sound was off, and then just to add to the confusion, the opposite situation imposed itself upon a patient audience. The great mystery which evolved out of the evenings entertainment is just what this Special Services does all the time. All we have are movies and stage shows and all we need is to have good apparatus. That this is defective seems to indicate that a group of our capable mechanics might do better as a Special Services outfit.

22 June

The target for the bomb load of 20 x 250 was Udine, Italy marshalling yards. The weather closed in at the upper reaches of the Adriatic and our bombers turned in to Ferrara, Italy. The marshalling yards there, and surrounding industrial plants, were well hit. Ten of our planes took off, were over the target, and returned safely. Flak was ineffective and no fighter opposition was met. The big inspection for tomorrow has been postponed. "Shades of the States": When they had threats of inspections to get needed work done. It worked here and many improvements were made around the area. Everybody felt a small disappointment but were happy that the work had been done. In the evening an old movie was shown entitled "You Can't Escape From Me". This movie replaced a stage show which couldn't get here. The boys were disappointed because they didn't get to see the "French Bell Ringer" (the dancing gal who rings a belt of bells by swaying her hips). The latter may be just a rumor. We had one of our finest meals with sauerkraut and frankfurters and real potatoes. Our mess seems "okay" to the writer but there are still complaints.

23 June

Our planes took off but returned after about two hours when they ran into bad weather. It was a quiet day here and the hot sun tanned more of our men at the beach. The enlisted men's volleyball courts and the basketball court were also used, as usual. Our boxing ring is used almost every evening. This provides fine sport, and recreation for fighters and almost inevitable spectators. In the evening, "Nine Girls" was the mystery movie shown at our theater. One mysterious thing about this presentation was how our Special Services finally got one run off

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720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

smoothly. Officers in charge of sections have the pleasant task of selecting personnel for rest Camps. Enlisted men go to Lecce or Santa Cesarea and an office goes to Villagio Mancuso each week.

24 June

Ten of our planes took off to bomb the Americano/Romano Oil Refinery near Ploesti, Rumania. The bomb load was 10 x 500 general purpose bombs. Capt. Floyd I. Robinson, Squadron Operations Officer and leader of the low left box of the first attack unit was shot down by flak at the target. His very gradual descent confused the low left box and it was broken up. The remainder of this element fought individual battles on return home with a approximately fifteen single engine enemy aircraft. Only by a combination of good flying and gunnery were these planes enable to reach base. Our gunners had corroborated claims for five enemy aircraft destroyed. The target was not hit. The target was clear enough for good bombing but bombing was poor. Eight of our planes bombed target and two returned early.

25 June

The planes took off on a mission to Toulon, France, this morning. The bomb load was 500# G.P.'s. The mission was not completed. Distinguished visitors at this base today were Gen. Salinas, a Mexican Officer, Maj. Gen. Henry, and entourage. Gen. Henry is Liaison Officer to the Mexican Officer. It is understood that some Mexican pilots will be flying with this Group soon. These people visited the S-2 War Room among other prominent spots on the base. There was no movie. Lt. Carr, Squadron Bombardier, and Lt. Brown, Squadron Navigator, received their promotions to Captaincy.

26 June

The mission was to Schwechat A/D and A/C Assembly Plant. Again the carried 500# G.P.'s. The mission was a "smashing" success with approximately 300 bombs landing on the aiming point. Our Squadron led the Wing on this mission. Ten of our planes took off and eight bombed the target. We had two early returns. The movie this evening was "Never A Dull Moment" with the Ritz Brothers. Some feel that the title was erroneous as "slapstick" is not too heartily laughed at anymore. The Group received a "shot in the arm", as it were, from the wonderful bombing on todays mission. Once again, this evening fresh, real potatoes were served for supper. This welcome addition to the menu was supplemented with fried chicken. Everyone is laboring long and arduously, "knocking themselves out", in preparation for the impending inspection on Wednesday, 28 June. Captains Carr and Brown, Squadron Bombardier and Navigator, respectively, were in the lead plane of our Group which led the Wing today.

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723 - BOMB SQDNS

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

27 June

The mission was for Budapest Vesces Airdrome but Brod marshalling yard was bombed because of the not unusual adverse weather. The mission was successful. 250# bombs were used. Nine of our planes took off and all bombed the alternate target with fair results. This afternoon a 15th Air Force inspector was around to inspect the light rescue squad and the combat forces that are charged with the defense of certain sectors. After the inspector was shown the meager supply of four stretchers and a couple of shoves the helmeted, gun-totin", knife-carrying, heterogeneous crew was dismissed. This affair was just a preliminary to the over-all encompassing inspection to be "pulled-off" tomorrow. The theater this evening offers "Andy Hardy's Double Life" with Mickey Rooney. G.I. movies had been billed so this came as a surprise. There are many little pleasantries the mess offers such as fresh cherries, fresh lemons, and sometimes "fresh cookies" in the form of Red Cross girls, at the table at meal-time. The fresh lemons aid immeasurable in improving the dehydrated "Lemonata" and the iced tea. Occasionally fresh onions and cucumbers appear. All this, of course, is "molto buono" with the EM's and sometimes, I think, they are properly grateful. Especially for the onions served with the "C" ration stew which can stand considerable improving.

28 June

There is a stand-down today which means maximum maintenance and for those more fortunate, maximum swimming. The siesta, no doubt, will hold its proper place and be well-practiced. The inspection came off as scheduled with a great conglomeration of rank in attendance. Our Squadron area was said to be the best in the Group, and one of the best in this Wing. The shower room for Enlisted Men which is a joint-4 squadron affair, never was too good, but of late has been "running down" more somewhat. There are numerous showers without shower heads, various pipes leak, the water has a habit of stopping when a man is "well-soaped". Also, some days the water is off for long periods. With the time, and unquestionably, money, lavished on other edifices it is surprising that the shower room is neglected and not properly cared for. The most disreputable tents in the Squadron area are slowly being transformed into decent living quarters. The majority of tents, however, are fixed up rather nicely. Thought for the day: A man does not necessarily "sweat" out the chow line because he's hungry, but from force of habit! There was a sign on the bulletin board which noted that "E.M. will be sold 4 cans of beer per man this evening. Bring small change." There is hardly any comment necessary about this. The cinema, this evening, offered, "Gildersleeve's Ghost". Some thought this a "stinkeroo".

720th Bombardment Squadron
Diary for Jun 1944

29 June

Stand down again today. Around the area peace and quiet prevails. The Squadron authorities were seemingly well-pleased with the appearance the Squadron put up for the inspection, yesterday. We have received information that S/Sgt. Frank Henn, Supply Sergeant, has been awarded the Soldiers Medal for heroism. He save a fellow soldier from drowning at the beach. The actual presentation of the medal will be made within a few days. Officers from the Group are now visiting Rome. It is presumed that Enlisted Men will soon be give the same privilege. There was no show.

30 June

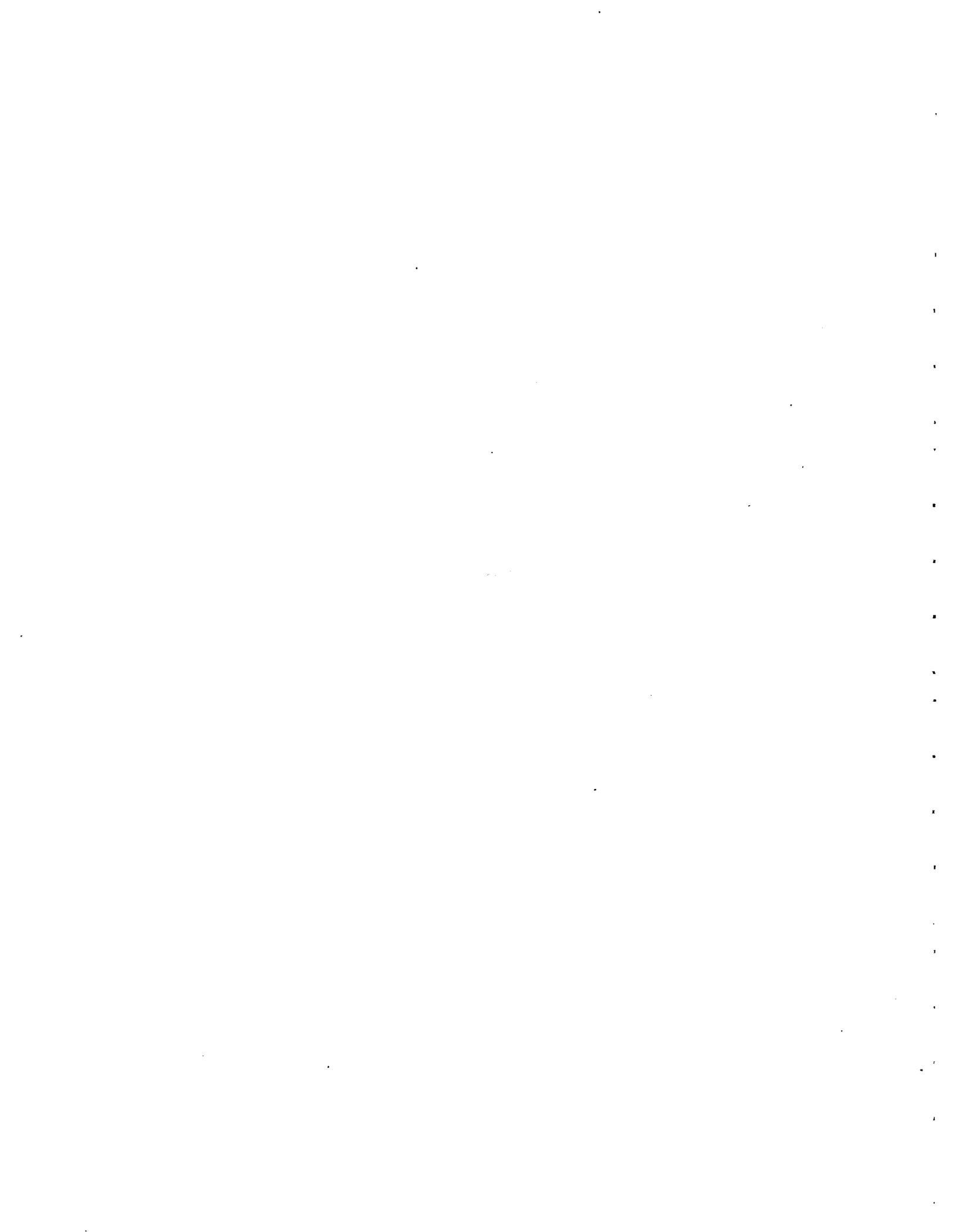
The mission was to Zagreb A/D. Due to bad weather no target was bombed. Bombs were jettisoned and some brought back. Pay call is a two o'clock. At about two thirty. "craps call". The Squadron has a new system of paying off the men and the whole operation of all Enlisted personnel take about thirty minutes. This eliminates one of the worst lines of all to "sweat out". The movie is "Hi Diddle Diddle" with Adolph Mange, Dennis O'Keefe and Martha Scott.

Editors Note:

The practice of keeping official diaries by Group and Squadrons was discontinued July 1, 1944, reason unknown.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723 - BOMB SQDNS



H E A D Q U A R T E R S
720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
OFFICE OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER

APO 520, U S ARMY
 29 November 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Officers.

TO : Awards & Decorations Officer, 450th Bomb Group (H),
 A.P.O. 520, U.S. ARMY.

1. Transmitted here with is complete roster of Officers in the
 720th Bombardment Squadron as of 5 April 1944.

MAJOR

North, Donald G.

CAPTAINS

Caywood, Grant D.
 Wagner, Alfred W.

Colley, Gordon T.
 Weber, Varne A.

Robinson, Floyd I.

1ST LIEUTENANTS

Brown, Robert L.
 Edwards, Robert W.
 Leigh, Leon H.
 Marpe, Frank C.
 Ryne, Jack W.
 Williams, Max L.

Carr, Rolland R.
 French, Gerald M.
 Ley, Edmund A.
 Phebus, James E.
 Smith, Dalton W.
 Wright, James G.

Correia, William P.
 John, Ernest F.
 Malcom, Walter T.
 Rhodehamel, Harley W.
 Wells, John H.

2ND LIEUTENANTS

Adeimy, John D.
 Amster, Louis
 Bahti, Lenus A.
 Bechtel, Donald R.
 Cantrell, Paul B.
 Cunningham, Charles E.
 Erickson, Maurice A.
 Foster, Harry L.
 Gouldon, Herbert
 Hart, Thomas F.
 Littlefield, Herbert J.
 Mayo, Harry B.
 Nathanson, Julius
 Perkins, Jack R.
 Ready, George T.
 Shackelford, Lewis F.
 Stebbings, Harry T.
 Toddd, Victor K.
 Varvil, Dana V.
 Watson, Robert C.

Adrian, Elmer
 Anderson, Richard D.
 Barnett, Victor D.
 Bell, Edward W.
 Counts, Dave
 De Karaker, Donald
 Farmer, Robert L.
 Fox, Jack E.
 Guthrie, Lawrence B.
 Jeff, John L.
 Malarkey, John E.
 Miles, James F.
 Olney, Vincent H.
 Polce, John L.
 Rieback, Robert H.
 Skau, William H.
 Stricklin, Robert D.
 Tomlinson, Harold T.
 Wagner, Donald F.
 Watson, Winston C.

Allen, Thomas H.
 Augustenborg, Jorgen
 Bauder, Francis D.
 Boyle, Glen E.
 Cummings, Richard S.
 Ebert, John C.
 Felder, Harold A.
 Gladstone, Harold E.
 Hagen, Earle Q.
 Lessard, Louis W.
 Markowitz, Fred P.
 Miles, Lawrence H.
 Park, Arthur D.
 Rafferty, Edward
 Samms, Marshall W.
 Smith, Lawrence J.
 Teed, Victor K.
 Tune, Williams S.
 Ward John W.
 White, Stanley A.

720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Roster of Officers
5 April 1944

Flight Officer

Carlson, Edward E.
Ralls, Warner T.

Cumming, James D.

Mooney, Ralph T.

For the Squadron Commander:

/S/ Robert S. Ogozalek
1st Lt. Air Corps
Adjutant.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

H E A D Q U A R T E R S
720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
OFFICE OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER

APO 520, U S ARMY
 4 December 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Enlisted Men.

TO : Awards & Decorations Officer, 450th Bomb Group (H),
 A.P.O. 520, U.S. ARMY.

1. Transmitted here with is complete roster of Enlisted Men in the 720th Bombardment Squadron as of 5 April 1944.

M/SGTS

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Board, William M. | Centers, Dillard D. | Huber, Norman V. |
| Kosanovic, Samuel | Mason, Ralph J. | Plentis, Withold A. |
| Skinner, Frederick W. | | |

T/SGTS

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Aylesworth, Scott M., Jr | Baz, Joseph T. | Cain, Burdette L. |
| Cannon, Walter O: | Clark, Julian C. | Culver, Robert B. |
| Dunn, Joe W. | Ester, Glenn W. | Evans, Merle A. |
| Kerr, Samuel B. | Kittelton, Lloyd K. | Kusmirak, Stephen W. |
| Matan, Francia A. | McDonald, William W. | McLaughlin, Bill L. |
| Reine, Roy W. | Selb y Bruce A. | Signs, William J. |
| Stoy, Harry M. | Stretch, Vincent P. | Swearingen, Paul |
| Taylor, Herbert R. | Van Deusen, Donald | Ward, John L. |
| Wilson, Donald E. | Wilson, Homer B. | Wood, James A. |

S/SGTS

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Adair, Jay R. | Adle, Donald | Allen, Lloyd H. |
| Anderson, Marion D. | Barkley, Howard D. | Barnhill, Oscar C. |
| Beckelic, James H. | Bernstein, Joseph | Beshore, Robert E. |
| Bishop, Ray | Blanchard, Elwell P. | Blue Daniel, |
| Boren, Earl E. | Bowden, Avis L. | Boyton, Charles J. |
| Castro, Julio | Cirigliano, Angelo J. | Clapprood, Edward L. |
| Cox, Thomas S. | Craven, Robert J. W. | Cuellar, Cuauhtemoc R. |
| Deferari, Joseph A. | Dellario, Michael | Esquivel, Manuel E. |
| Fasolas, Charles C. | Fields, William O. | Fili William J. |
| Finch, Jimmie C. | Foster, John G. | Francis, Harlod L. |
| Frymire, Clarron J. | Grgurich, Frank | Griffin, Arlie L. |
| Grybel, Walter A. | Hackney, Richard S. | Haight, William J. |
| Haynes, William J. | Hecht, Russell J. | Hildreth, Norton R. |
| Hopkins, Wallace C. | Ives, Walter E. | Jacobson, Richard M. |
| Johnson, Stanley J. | Johnston, Norris E. | Jones, Thomas E. |
| Kirkland, Norman J. | Kourvelas, Charles P. | Kristal, Stanley L. |
| La Rivee, Leo M. | La Fountain, Leo H. | Laudon, Edward T. |
| Leasure, Richard B. | Leatherberry, Chester C. | L'Heureux, Armand J. |
| Long, Richard P. | Mancuso, Richard S. | Mann, William B. |
| Mason, John, | Miller, Lawrence R. | Modrowski, Theodore S. |
| Moen, Carl A. | Monkus, Victor J. | O'Brien, John F. |

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Roster of Enlisted Men
5 April 1944

S/SGTS - Continued

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Openshaw, Melvin L. | Peterson, Robert A. | Phipps, Warren J. |
| Phillips, John | Phillips, Russell W. | Pratt, William T. |
| Randazzo, Janck M. | Roberts Elwyn D. | Sanders, William N. |
| Schanel, Donald B. | Schoonover, Jack C. | Shaw, Leonard |
| Starkovich, John | Strickland, James E. | Strautman, Raymond M. |
| Tedford, Harley O., | Thomas, Seamon C. | VerDuin Harold J. |
| Violett, Harold J. | Walters, John P. | Wasserman, Solomon |
| Webb, Thomas C. | Zaleski, Peter T. | Zawislak, Stanley P. |
| Zeller, William V. | | |

SGTS

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Arron, William W. | Allen Joe D. | Allen, Lawrence L. |
| Avery, Eugene E., | Anderson, Maxwell E. | Anderson, Roy W. |
| Arcand, Jean R. | Barbee, Oscar L. | Barlow, Fred W. |
| Bartel, Harrison A. | Belanger, Yves E. J. | Bennett, Stanley J., |
| Berg, James W. | Bernard, Douglas A. | Bianchi, George S. |
| Bistritzky, Harry | Black, Charles B. | Brandalick, Martin W. |
| Bramlett, Walter G. | Browne, Jack H. | Buckman, Fred |
| Buffum, Francis M. | Butynski, Stanley S. | Canary, Arthur D. |
| Cettina, Frank N., | Chapman, Frederick W. | Christopher, Clifford |
| Clive, Walter | Collins, Bennett H. | Corn, Jake L. |
| Coryell, Jack | Cottle, William A. | Coulter, Neil F. |
| Cox, James P. | Crane, Charles H. | Dachman, Perry |
| Davis, James C. | DesNoyers, Charles H. | Dicamillo, John A. |
| Dobbs, George F. | Dudley, William C. | Faoiz, Norman J. |
| Farwell, Ward M. | Fenske, Norman C. | Fox, Martin E. |
| Freeman, Marvin R. | Fruchtgarten, Milton H. | Gauker, Ralph K. |
| Gil de Rubio, Manuel | Gilliam, Maurice H. | Good, Lamar H. |
| Haney, Randolph F. | Hazara, Michael, | Heffernan, Joseph J. |
| Heinlen, Richard L. | Henn, Frank W. | Heytota, John |
| Hodanich, Michael | Holland, Horace J. | Hopkins, Morris L. |
| Huish, Alfred L., | Humphries, Harold | Jamieson, HOWard C. |
| Jelly, William A. | Jones, Charles E. | Jones, Garnett H. |
| Kanner, Louis | Kelley, Robert G. | Kulenkamp, Donald L. |
| Lash, Kenneth E. | LeMond, Nolan H. | Lochte, Charles W. |
| Louvier, Robert U. | Mandanyohl, Joseph A. | Martin, James R. |
| Mastropier, Leonard P. | Mauritz, Edgar J. | McAtee, Charles M. |
| McCree, Vernon N. | McEachon, Robert R. | Mericle, Harold R. |
| Miller, James I. | Moody, Everett O., | Moore, Howard W. |
| Morris, Theodore H. | Murray, Alen H. | Murphy, Daniel P. |
| Neary, Robert P | Oakleaf, Roba C. | Peterson, Lawrence F. |
| Phinney, Rex V. | Plummer, Bobby R. | Pons, Clifton C. |
| Rasmussen, Richard P. | Reyes, Nicanor M. | Rohrbaugh, William G. |
| Rook, Robert R. | Ryan, Paul J. | Rayn, Terrence G. |
| Sandy, Frank | Schoenberger, Norman H. | Schmit, Raymond H. |
| Schultz, Lester L. | Schwarten, Joseph F. | Scheller, Carl F. |

720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Roster of Enlisted Men
5 April 1944

S/SGTS - Continued

Smith, Warren J.
 Swieca, Walter J.
 Vaile, Donald E.
 Wernett, Ralph W.
 Yandell, Lesley

Spendlove, Duward
 Terry, Robert N.
 Walsh, Joseph C.
 West, Oscar D.
 Yohann, Gordon P.

Stults, Harold E.
 Truex, Vincent C.
 Waschak, John
 Woodward, Norman L.

CPLS

Adamson, Lars B.
 Ashe, Tearl F.
 Basken, Howard M.
 Bort, Sam
 Brown, Donald J.
 Cain, Cletes A.
 Cangiano, James L.
 Cohan, Irving
 Coward, Thomas A.
 Crow, Gene L.
 Dillow, George L.,
 Dupont, Gerand L.
 Fleenor, High C.
 Hass, Reuben
 Hoffman, Herman C.
 Ilten, Edward L.
 Kealiher, Willard E.
 Kirzedor, Harold T.
 Lukas, Theodore J.
 McCobb, Carleton L.
 Melby, Albert
 Morley, Arthur W.
 Nelson, Rolland Q.
 Park, William H.
 Pruitt, Curry T.
 Robertson, Woodrow W.
 Socias, Antonio
 Tate, Sam
 Vendittelli, Guido F.
 White, Donald R.

Alfonso, Mario P.
 Ayers, Francis
 Blackhurst, James H.
 Brady, Edward T.
 Bujno, Joseph L.
 Campbell, James L.
 Carroll, John M.
 Comeau, Eugene A.
 Crawford, Ronald W.
 Dean, Ronald Q.
 Donnell, Omer
 Figg, George T.
 Franklin, William P.
 Hay, John F.
 Hopp, Clayton E.
 Jacobs, Jack M.
 Keeler, Harry R.
 Koski, William J.
 Mann, Wilbur E.
 McKoy, Raiford H.
 Metcalfe, Thomas W.
 Moran, Joseph B.
 Oliver, Manuel
 Petras, Michael
 Puglisi, Carmelo N.
 Russell, Irin F.,
 Stepan, Raymond
 Tussey, Carl b.
 Weiss, Morris
 Wzorek, Carol J.

Anderson, Joseph L.
 Bartholomew, Edward D.
 Bonsall, Leo B.
 Brandt, Ammon L.
 Bukovac, Stephen
 Campbell, Leonard E.
 Clemente, Joseph
 Conkling, Alvin R.
 Critcher, Joseph M.
 Didziulis, Vincent S.
 Doran, Frank
 Fincher, James L.
 Gallardo, Salvador G.
 Heglar, Charles S.
 Hower, Lloyd E.
 Johanknecht, Clarence E.
 Ketzell, George J.
 Lennox, John H.
 Mathisen, Edward E.
 Meixner, Donald H.
 Mintz, Abraham
 Moulton, Rodney F.
 Pace, Clyde D.
 Price, Glenn H.
 Richards, William J.
 Ruswick, Earl W.
 Stranahan, John J.
 Vandergrift, Howard E.
 White, Morris J.

PFCS

Anastasio, Michael
 Bogdan, Walter
 Bucher, Vernor B.
 Cedeno, Marquis
 Coulick, Lemuel L.
 Darrow, Percy
 Getz, Gerald L.

Baker, Delamr B.
 Bommarito, Lawrence A.
 Caplicki, Donald A.
 Chomer, Edward J.,
 Cushing, Victor H.
 Doyle, Edward C.
 Giraud, Sylvain P.

Bland, Gerald C.
 Bowen, Larry E.
 Carr, Harry M.
 Collinson, Robert J.
 Dahl, Walter M.
 Duffy, Kerwin M.
 Goldstein, Irving

**720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Roster of Enlisted Men
5 April 1944**

PFCS - Continued

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Grosso, Albert J. | Gutierrez, Roland S. | Harrison, Jerome L. |
| Hendrickson, James V. | Huff, Clarence E. W. | Hunter, Arthur E. |
| Ingram, Manual | Kape, Jack | Jacob, Everett N. |
| Kiviat, Herbert S. | Knowlton, Richard F. | Lopez, Bernave B. |
| Molvig, Glenn D. | Murphy, James C. | Outz, Elzie L. |
| Owen, James H. | Paska, Emil J. | Pyskaty, Tony A. |
| Quackenbush, Arnold G. | Randall, Raymond H. | Rich, Sanford |
| Rice, Lawrence P. | Sarver, Delaney H. | Smith, William T. |
| Socha, Edward | Stefansen, Norman I. | Stewart, Bahnson W. |
| Stroder, Henry | Sutherland, Cleo L. | Sutton, Bernard J. |
| Winters, John C. | | |

PVTS

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Alexander, Jesse M. | Bailey, Joseph W. | Benzinger, Joseph J. |
| Blandano, Vincenzo J. | Brewer, Earnest | Chupp, Doyle W. |
| Decker, Silas P. | Diaz, Frank | Faierberg, Carl R. |
| Ferry, Algelo T. | Finnigan, Kenneth C. | Gacek, Alden |
| Hoyne, Peter T. | Jacoby, Franklin H. | Karpinski, Andrew M. |
| Milligan, Wayne L. | Oresick, Charles | Rodriguez, Ramon Z. |
| Roth, Richard H. | White, Raymond M. | |

For the Squadron Commander:

**Robert S. Ogozalek
1st Lt. Air Corps
Adjutant.**

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U.S. Army

MIA INTERROGATION REPORT

1. In compliance with letter from Headquarters, 15th Air Force, file #221/704, Subject: "Processing of Aircrews Returning to Italy from Allied Controlled Territory," dated 26 January 1945, the following information is submitted pertinent to:

SPENCE, JASON L. Sgt 720th Bomb Sq (H), 450th Bomb Gp (H).
MIA - 15 Jan 1945 RTD 11 Feb 1945 Sorties -14

2. On 15 January 1945, Sgt Spence was member of a crew of a B-24 type aircraft participating in a mission to bomb the Southeast Goods Depot at Vienna, Austria. Due to engine failures, it was necessary to leave formation and head for Russian territory. At 1400 hours from 14,000' all members of the crew bailed out and landed in the vicinity of TAMASI (46-38N - 18-17E). Sgt Spence wore the new type quick release parachute harness and was equipped with a chest pack. He left the aircraft through the bomb-bay and delayed pulling the ripcord for 6 seconds, at which time the parachute failed to release from the pack. He tore open the pack and fed the chute out by hand. Due to wearing the harness in an improper manner, when the chute opened the strap making a junction with the bottom of the central release mechanism took too much strain and broke a metal fastening. Unconscious, he dangled and was supported by the arm straps, sustaining facial lacerations and vertebrae in his neck and back were cracked. Subject had no idea of how long he was unconscious but came too and could not observe the ground due to the position of his head. Observed the horizon and estimated he was nearing the ground and pulled up his legs. This action started the chute oscillating as a result he landed on his left side in about eight (8) inches of snow. Landed on flat ground and received no additional injuries.

3. Peasants immediately approached and carried him to a house about one quarter (1/4) of a mile away, where a girl gave him first aid treatment. Treated very well and remained overnight. Name of the people is not know by the exact spelling, but phonetically sounds some what like "PAR-VAR-CHI". On the morning of the 16th, the subject and the girl walked five (5) miles towards TAMASI, and were given a ride in a sleigh for the remaining two (2) miles. Other members of the crew were there and all reported to the Russian Commandant. The Russians attended to the injuries the subject had sustained and did everything possible to aid the crew.

4. Sgt. Spence's experiences throughout the duration of his stay in Russian controlled territory coincides exactly with those of the balance of his crew.

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U.S. Army

MIA INTERROGATION REPORT

22 March 1945

1. In compliance with letter from Headquarters, 15th Air Force, file #221/704, Subject: "Processing of Aircrews Returning to Italy from Allied Controlled Territory," dated 26 January 1945, the following information is submitted pertinent to:

ADAMSON, OSCAR C., T/SGT., 720th Bomb Sq (H), 450th Bomb Gp (H).
MIA - 15 January 1945 RTD - 11 Feb. 1945 Sorties -15

2. Delay in submission of this report is due to the Escape Officer having no knowledge of the return from MIA of the subject personnel to this unit on 24 February 1945.

3. During a mission to bomb the Southeast Goods Depot at Vienna, Austria on 15 January 1945 mechanical difficulty was encountered with the aircraft. The crew eventually bailed out near TAMASI (46-38N - 18-17E), behind Russian lines. Parachute functioned perfectly and subject landed in open snow covered field but badly sprained his ankle. Peasants approached to a hillcrest nearby and as subject was not aware of their intentions he hid under his parachute. The peasants departed from sight and he then hobbled to a pile of cornstalks and hid inside. Suddenly a little dog ran up and began barking and jumped on his lap. The people had returned and subject called our Americanski and left his hiding place and put his hands over his head. People then approached and stated they were cautious in approaching him due to their being afraid of his shooting at them.

4. People then assisted him to a farmhouse where he met other members of his crew. His ankle was bathed and bandaged and the next day he was taken to TAMASI by cart and reported to the Russians. There he received medical treatment and assistance for the Russians.

5. The balance of Sgt. Adamson's experiences were the same as the rest of his crew.

6. Sgt. Adamson received very good medical treatment from the Russians throughout his stay under their control.

/S/ JAMES S. WHYTAL JR,
Captain, Air Corps,
Escape Intelligence Officer

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U.S. Army

ESCAPE STATEMENT

18 April 1945

1. Odom, Joseph R. S/Sgt 720 Bomb Sq. 450th Bomb Gp.
MIA -13 Sept 1944 RTD -14 April 1945 Missions -43
2. Graham, Roger F. Sgt. 720 Bomb Sq. 450th Bomb Gp.
MIA -13 Sept 1944 RTD -17 April 1945 Missions -9 Sorties -7

3. On Sept. 13, on a mission to a bridge in the Brenner Pass, this B-24 type of airplane ran into difficulties. Even before land fall on the Adriatic several bombs had to be jettisoned due to engine malfunction. However, the a/c with a lightened load was able to make the target and drop its bombs. The plane was not struck by the flak but its remaining engines went out one by one. Losing altitude fast the pilot gave bail out orders near Mestre, 4529N - 1215E. Both Sources declare that all ten chutes opened. The plane was seen to turn around and looked as if it might hit the Sources bailing out. However it was seen to go into a nose dive, crash and explode.

4. Never in enemy hands.

5. Source 1 after hitting earth near Mestre, took off on a road to San Dona di Piave 4538N - 1233E. There Source 1 met two Englishmen who had been in POW camp near Bologna. These two Englishmen helped Source 1 secure food and lodging for the night. Source 2 bailed out with two other crew members. The two Englishmen who were well know characters in the locality, were contacted the following day by the local citizens and were brought to Passarella 4540N - 1237E. There on the second day after bail out, Source 2 connected with Source 1 and another crew mate. Thus on the second day after bail our there were five crew members, and 2 Englishman, all evaders in a small area.

At one time two there were as many as 18 evaders in a very limited area and too many people were talking. It was decided to break up into smaller groups. Therefore 2 days later, 10 Oct. 44, Source 2 and the engineer went to Zemson di Piave about 18 kilometers south of Passarella. The trip was made by bicycle. The following day Source 1 and the tail gunner also went to Zemson on the advice of the two Englishman who had made contact there. After staying there a number of days and meeting some rich Italians who provided money and bicycles, the party decided, for security reasons, to go off in separate parties. Source 1 returned to Passarella 4540N - 1237E, about 25 October and Source 2 about 8 November. There they stayed in separate houses and with different families. Both sources were fed well. The Fascists however working closely with the Brigati Nero began to close in on the different evaders. On 14 Dec 44, Source 1 was almost caught, and it was decided that he would move to Torre de Fino together with a New

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

Zealander. There Source 1 stayed for about four weeks (Jan 20th) before returning to Passarella. The Germans had started to fortify Torre de Fina and it was thought wise to leave the vicinity. Source 2 in the period 15 Dec - 18th when the Germans, Brigati Nero, and Italian Republicans were making arrests in the Passarella vicinity found no one to put him up. After walking around several days with a New Zealander they built a cabin on the Piava Grisolera, 4335N - 1241E. There they stayed for four months. Italian families were very friendly and brought food and wine three times a day.

In the meantime Source 1 moved back to Passarella to a house of a friend of his original benefactor. There he stayed until 21 March, at the same time two New Zealanders were staying at the next house and two New Zealanders living in the field and in a haystack. On 21 March, Source 1 moved down to Piave Ve Chio 4533N - 1237E and with two New Zealanders and joined Source 2 in a hut in the fields. This move was caused because Passarella was again getting dangerous. On 10 April in the evening word was passed to prepare to leave the following morning for evacuation by PT boat. On night of 13 April boat arrived near Torre de Fino and whole party was evacuated to Ancona. There two Sources were passed on to Rimini, and Florence and from there hitch-hiked by air to Bari.

APPENDIX B

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| T.E. Orack British Columbia | H.P. Maritz South Africa | R.U.N. Trayes New Zealand |
| W. Wickliffe New Zealand | R.W. Scott New Zealand | James Chamberlain England |

These boys were with them steadily. Had been evaders since Italian Armistice before that they were POW's, Maritz was first the leader and after he was captured, Scott took over and made contact with P.T. boat.

13 Sept. 1944 - 21 March 1945 Giovanni Ferrazzo, Bernaade Ferrazzo, Antonio Ferrazzo, Don Ernesto, Catholic priest fed, clothing for Sources and also families. Giovanni was greatest friend but whole family looked after New Zealanders and Source 1 off and on at Passarella. 4540N - 1237E.

18 Dec. 1944 - 19 Jan 1945 Dalio Giovanni Food and bed and good attention at Torre de Fino.

13 Sept. - 21 March Padrone of Antonio Ferrazzo (name forgotten) Bitter foe of Fasism had been in jail ten years. Helped in arranging food and friendly supplied Sources with money - part of organization. Count Berdinni (Zenson di Piave) was killed by fasist elements for working with the underground.

13 Sept. 15 Dec Vicenza Furlong of Passarella, gave and furnished food, lodge for 2 days, (given chit)

Oct, Nov 1944 Livini Timoteo, Zenson de Piave, food and lodging for 30 days, (given chit)

Nov, Dec 1944 Angelo Monsom, Passarella, Food and lodging.

Dec, Mar Angedlo and Tani Finoto (brothers) Piave Vecchio or Capa Selo, food and lodging, (given chit). There was no mission in the locality and no direct contact. Contact made through Partisans and New Zealanders.

Evacuation point near Ferra de Fince.

APPENDIX D

Source saw RR bridge and road bridge of San Dona Di Piave, 4538N - 1233E, over Piave river completely destroyed by B-24's Oct 13, 1944.

Sources state that Piave Veccho river is used by Germans nightly and actively for transportation of ammunition and food to Venice. As many as 18 barges deeply loaded passed in the night.

Town of Iesolo, 4532N - 1238E, completely inhabited by Fascist leaders and Germans. All civilians have been evacuated. Good target town of Grisolera. 4535N - 1241E. Also evacuated of civilians. Full of German soldiers and Fascists.

Sources report that in bombing of Treviso on Good Friday 1944, 7000 people were killed. RR yards and stations wiped out. All RR facilities at Padua also destroyed.

APPENDIX F

Lt. Rocco Edwards, Bombardier and Sgt. Tamaso Desemone Radio Operator, took off for front lines on 5 Nov. 1944. Never heard of them again.

Sgt. Sam Shaw, Engineer took off with a New Zealander on 4 Nov. 1944. Never heard from again.

Sgt. Fields, captured about 30 Oct. at Vicenza 4532N - 1132E, trying to make front.

Source believes that rest of crew were captured at bail out.

A Major Rumbels (Grunole?), P-38 pilot, crashed on Dec 44, was running around trying to get out.

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HEADQUARTERS 450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U.S. Army

ESCAPE STATEMENT

5 May 1945

1. Nafle, Carl D. 2nd Lt. 720 Bomb Sq. 450th Bomb Gp.
MIA -29 Dec 1945 RTD -5 May 1945 Missions -2 Sorties -2
1. Lee, Charles H. 2nd Lt. 720 Bomb Sq. 450th Bomb Gp.
MIA -29 Dec 1945 RTD -5 May 1945 Missions -12 Sorties -19
1. Bechtolff, Harold F. Sgt 720 Bomb Sq. 450th Bomb Gp.
MIA -29 Dec 1945 RTD -5 May 1945 Missions -18 Sorties -12

2. On 29 Dec 1944, Sources were on a bombing mission to the Brenner Pass. Over the target near Bolzano, flak (probably mobile) was encountered. One engine was knocked out, and another probably hit. The bombs were salvoed and the aircraft headed for home. Flak again was encountered and the crew bailed out. All jumped successfully and the a/c was seen to hit a mountain and explode. The approximate coordinates of bail out are 4600N - 1202E.

3. Never in enemy hands.

4. Sources all met at an American mission (near San Antogia) Belluno, (4612N - 1215E) and spent about 15 days there. Mission was up in the mountains. They planned several escapes but Germans blundered plans. First attempt ended at Vittorio Veneto, 4558N - 1215E.

Sources, after first attempt to go to Yugoslavia failed, returned to neighborhood of mission. They built several airstrips and considered several plans of escape. Sources and other members of crew were split into parties of two and were with British missions in neighborhood of Consilio. Snow interfered with plans of escape. Two English Captains were dropped and efforts were made to build a good airport. Sources were evacuated by English mission to Treviso on 3 May 1945. From there by truck sources were taken to Verona and received C-47 trip to Bari.

5. APPENDIX B: Jan 25 - Feb 5, 1945, Zannin family gave Sources (3) food and shelter for 10 days. Tortel - Belluno (4612N - 1215E). Home possibly burnt.

APPENDIX F: Reagan, M. (NMI) F/O and Anderson, T.E. Lt. left Sources about 8 March to go to Tramonti. Sources believe they are o.k. Sources believe that rest of their crew were in Partisan hands. Radio Operator was wounded and probably in Belluno hospital.

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US CONFIDENTIAL EQUALS BRITISH CONFIDENTIALREPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
22 FEBRUARY 1944

LOSS OF BANANA BOAT II

U. S. Army aircraft, Serial No., 41-29330, Type B-24 H, assigned to 720th Bomb Squadron H, 450th Bomb Group, departed Manduria, Italy 0745 hours 22th February 1944 on operational mission. Aircraft preceded as ordered and completed said mission. (Target: REGENSBURG, GERMANY - OBERTRAUBLING AIRCRAFT FACTORY)

At a point north of Udine, Italy, at about 1400 hours aircraft fuel was at a low ebb. Engineer reported that between 400 and 500 gallons of gasoline was on hand at that time. Aircraft preceded on briefed course in company with formation to a point on the Yugoslav coast at which time approximately 100 gallons of fuel was reported on hand. This was at about 1500 hrs.

At about 1520 hours the pilot ordered IFF set switch to emergency and co-pilot began to try to send MAYDAY call on D channel. Being unsuccessful, he attempted to reach BIG FENCE on B channel. At about 1530 hours BIG FENCE was contacted. At about 1535 hours Radio Operator sent SOS on 4535 KC. Position at 1535 hours. was approximately (4230N - 17-00E).

MAYDAY never was contacted. BIG FENCE was contacted with difficulty; readability poor. The Radio Operator had difficulty in getting a bearing from shore stations. This was probably on account of frosted transmitters.

Preparation for ditching was begun at 1515 hours and continued until crossing Italian coast, the preparation was made with excellent order. All members of the crew conducted themselves in a most commendable manner.

At 1550 hours No. 4 engine was feathered due to lack of fuel. At 1555 hours No. 1 engine was feathered for the same reason. The cross feed system failed to operate apparently on account of the fuel supply being so low.

The aircraft crossed the Italian coast on the Gargantuan Promontory at a point northwest of Vieste at 1600 hours. The ship was abandoned at about 1601 hours at 1100 feet in good order within 45 seconds. No. 3 engine cut out at 1602 before the pilot cleared the ship. The aircraft crashed at 1604 hours at (4155N - 1603E). The entire crew chuted out safely. Three men were bruised and shaken up on landing. (Lt. Dalton W. Smith sufficiently to require long-term traction hospitalization in Italy and stateside, but complained about no injury until return to Manduria on 23 February.

LOSS OF BANANA BOAT II - continued

Crew was picked up by British Detachment stationed at Unibra Forest Sawmill about 5 miles West of Vieste. Detachment extended every possible assistance in searching for 3 men originally missing after landing and provide crew with 10 rations from their own mess. The detachment rations only about 20 men.

Members of Detachment investigated wreck and attempted salvage of papers which they thought of value. Civilians had already reached the wreck when they arrived. (Detachment members) reported A/C completely destroyed by explosion, crash and fire. No part was intact including engines. Parts of A/C spread over an area of more than a acre.

Three Spitfires and 3 British vessels were observed patrolling possible ditching area after ship crashed. No communication was possible until arrival at 2nd Bomb Group base at Manfredonia at about 1010 hours at which time 15th AAF HQ. was notified of safety of crew and destruction of A/C.

Bomb sight and IFF was destroyed before abandoning ship. Target charts were salvaged.

US CONFIDENTIAL EQUALS BRITISH CONFIDENTIAL

(The foregoing is based on original rough draft of the official report rendered by Lt. Dalton W. Smith in his capacity as aircraft commander. Clarifications and additions, made by Thomas F. Hart, are enclosed in parentheses.)

CREW MEMBERS OF BANANA BOAT II

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|------------------------|------------|
| 2nd Lt Dalton W. Smith | Pilot | 2nd Lt Frank W. Molina | Co-pilot |
| 2nd Lt Thomas F. Hart | Navigator | 2nd Lt Arlie L. Brown | Bombardier |
| Sgt Ryan D. Harper | Engineer | Sgt Edwin F. Grzywa | Radio Opr |
| Sgt Robert L. Morgan | Gunner | Sgt Cyril G. Heineman | Gunner |
| Sgt Eugene M. Compton | Gunner | Sgt Carl A. Moen | Gunner |

On injury of Lt Smith in above incident, crew was dispersed as unassigned replacements; thus end of Banana Boat crew.

25 Feb Molina, Brown and Harper assigned as replacements on Cranston crew; Grzywa on Giraudo crew. Mission: Regensburg. Cranston ship know to land in Switzerland. Giraudo crew bailed out over Yugoslavia.

24 Mar Morgan and Heineman assigned as replacements on Hodgson crew. Mission: Steyr but target aborted due to weather. Six ships lost before attack on alternate target due to collision, combat, or missing; one of which was the Hodgson ship.

LOSS OF BANANA BOAT II - continued

2 Apr Compton assigned as replacement on Fulks crew. Mission: Steyr. Ship missing; cause unknown.

23 May As of close of this day Moen was the only member present for duty at Manduria. Hart was wounded over Anzio operations area and was hospitalized for extended care this day.

It is believed that Morgan, Heineman and Compton were, of the Banana Boat crew, the only ones lost in action. They served faithfully. They died heroes. We honor them as comrades sorely missed.

(Ed Note: The entire record of this incident was submitted by Thomas F. Hart.)

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

The following received as a news release dated June 8, 1992, from M. Eugene Farris, Bombardier, 720th Bomb Squadron.

The ten-man crew of the World War II B-24 Liberator, heavy bomber, "Babe In Arms" will hold their first reunion since World War II, at Drury Inn (Airport) in St. Louis on June 13, 1992, exactly forty-eight years after the crew was shot down over Munich, Germany on June 13, 1944, and separated at that time. It was discovered last year that all ten members of the crew, ages now 68 to 76, were still living.

The crew was formed at the Army Air Forces Combat-Crew Training Center at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, on January 1, 1944 after the members had completed training at various Army Air Force Training Centers.

The crew consisted of Pilot, Homer W. Smith of Sandusky, MI; Co-Pilot, Garvin Mc Cain of Daingerfield, TX; Navigator, Owen Akers of Chadron, NE; Bombardier, M. Eugene Farris of St. Louis, MO; Engineer, John Ciborski of Allegan, MI; Radio Operator, Edgar Cooper of Niagara Falls, NY; Nose Gunner, Thomas Hepburn of Hyde Park, PA; Waist Gunner Charles Brashier of Quitman, MS; Ball Turret Gunner Theodore Hallet of Portchester, NY; and Tail Gunner Joseph Falconetti of Jersey City, NJ.

After completing the required combat-crew training in April 1944, the crew traveled to Topeka, KS, where they were assigned a new B-24, just off the assembly line. After routine testing, and the addition of special equipment, the crew flew to Air Fields in Florida, Trinidad/Tobago, and Fortelaza, Brazil. From Brazil they crossed the Atlantic to Dakar, West Africa, and then to Casablanca, Algiers, Tunis, and to the Air Base of the 450th Bombardment Group of the 15th Air Force, in Manduria, Italy, to which the crew was assigned.

Before leaving Topeka, the crew pooled their resources and had appropriate 'nose-art' painted on the plane. This consisted of a bikini-clad young lady astride a large bomb, symbolic of the name selected, "Babe In Arms."

The 25th mission of the crew was to Munich, German, a bombing mission from which they did not return; as they had returned on twenty-four previous occasions; usually hit and frequently battered, but returning. The plane was severely damaged over the target by anti-aircraft fire, with one engine knocked out, another engine severely damaged, and further damage causing the spillage of fuel. Unable to maintain altitude, the plane immediately dropped out of formation, only to be attacked by enemy fighters. Fortunately, American P-51's and P-38's, flying protective cover, drove the enemy fighters away.

Unable to maintain enough altitude to cross the Alps and reach the safety of Switzerland, only 90 miles away, the Pilot and Co-Pilot exhibited outstanding leadership and airmanship in flying the plane at low altitude, through the Brenner Pass, following the course plotted by the Navigator, evading more anti-aircraft over Innsbruck, until they reached the northern part of the Craton province of Yugoslavia, when the plane could no longer be kept aloft, and the pilot gave the order to

abandon ship and parachute.

After parachuting, the pilot and radio operator were captured by the Germans occupying Yugoslavia, and were prisoners of war until May 1945. With amazing luck, the other eight members of the crew were spotted and rescued by various members of the Yugoslav Partisan underground, and hidden in various places until brought to a central point and united four days later. American OSS operatives, working from secret locations in Yugoslavia, visited the crew, and advised that nearly every flyer parachuting into that particular area near Gospic were captured by the German Army or by Nazi sympathizers and imprisoned by the Germans.

After the OSS operatives contacted the US Forces in Italy, the eight remaining crew members and members of the underground built a make-shift landing strip in a valley, and on the night of July 3/4, Air Force pilots flew an unarmed, unescorted, blacked-out C-47 onto the landing strip, left the engines running while the eight rescued flyers climbed aboard, took off immediately and landed safely in Italy, in time to celebrate July 4th in friendly confines.

During the time the crew was hiding in Yugoslavia, they felt somewhat comforted with the knowledge that they would be re-assigned state-side if they could get back to Italy, under the rule that any American Flyer escaping from enemy territory would not be permitted to fly any further combat missions. The thought was that any flyer shot down a second time might be forced to compromise information regarding his escape the first time. However, two days after returning to Italy, the crew was advised the rule had been changed on June 12, 1944, and thereafter any returning escapee would have to complete fifty missions. The eight returning escapees were advised they were the first to be "caught" by the new rule. As a consolation, the eight were granted five days of Rest and Relaxation at a seaside resort.

The ten members of the "Babe In Arms" crew received a total of over one hundred awards and decorations during their service. In addition, the 450th Bomb Group received two coveted Presidential Unit Citations for leadership in the 15th Air Force. Known as the "Cottontails" because the 450th painted the plane tails white, the group was featured in a recently published book, "The War Of The Cottontails."

While the 450th Bomb Group had a 100% turnover of flying personnel in the Killed In Action or Missing In Action categories, initial research has not discovered any other combat crew of the 450th, which was shot down, where all the crew members are still living, in 1992.

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The following submitted by Col Loren B. Heath, Jr., Navigator, 720th Bomb Sqdn.

Besides the horror of combat missions and the tragedy of lost crew members, here are a few of my other memories--some I'm sure will also be remembered by others.

The 15th AF captured an Italian destroyer, stationed it in the Gulf of Toranto close to our gunnery range so radar obs could practice their bombing skills. Although it was an excellent target I failed to come close at all during practice bombing raids. In desperation we flew a long pattern and I really concentrated on my scope's radar blip wanting to make this try a good run. Well, it happened to be the wrong target--only a fishing vessel taking a short cut through the bombing range. Since my bombardier was so disgusted with my prior poor results, he didn't visually check this run. The bomb barely missed the fishing vessel causing a splash over the center of the ship. As we rushed away from the scene of my mishap, that vessel really zigzagged. The co-pilot was so shook up he failed to unlock the brakes so when we landed at Manduira, both main landing gears were left on the runway. Scratch one mickey aircraft plus cuts and bruises on all crew members. As for the destroyer, it was finally sunk, the only enemy vessel I know of to go down by Blue practice bombs--but none were my bombs.

The 720th was the last squadron to drop their bombs on the invasion of Southern France. Night take-offs and grouping up in darkness was something to behold. We had several near mid-air before we left. S-2 said we bombed late and the wrong beach and that the lead crew should be punished for this. Since we were the lead crew, we were concerned. Later, I talked to several friends in the 45th Infantry Division and yes, our late drop sacred them but one sergeant said we took out mine fields and barbed wire on the beach plus sent some Germans to cover. We saved lives and made their landing a bit safer.

On a return from a mission over Brenner Pass, we had a 2000 pound bomb hang up. I worked on this in the bombay using a screwdriver to chip mud and ice from the bomb shackles. Suddenly the bomb fell taking bombay doors with it (and nearly me too). In horror I watched it hit a lonely farm house in the Alps' foothills, dead center.

On a bombing a German Air Base in February, 1945, the bombardier really hit our target which was the hangers on the east side of the base. Two 100 pound bombs hung up and this time were jettisoned just as we turned. Each bomb took out two other hangers away from the target area--what a lucky shot for us!

On the 28th day of December, 1944 over Brenner Pass, we had #1 and #2 engines out, and a flak hole in #3. Lt. Davis and Flight Officer Vega did a wonderful job of flying as we threw everything we could out of the aircraft.

We crashed landed at Rimini. Davis and I made friends with some wonderful Canadians and sobered up with them on the front lines. Since we drew enemy fire, we were taken back to a one pounder artillery

position and allowed to fire one shot at a German OP. We were returned in time to Rimini to meet our transportation along with some items taken from the Germans. Major Stevens, 720th CO was quite upset over our adventures.

I flew the last 12 missions as one of the lead navigators in the nose turret. We could kill the drift and the turret angles to assist the bombardier in target locations. After bombs away, our view could assist in leaving the target area and locating flak. You could see patterns of their tracking fire and avoid it. Visual navigation from the nose turret was excellent.

In January, I flew with a two ship formation to slow time engines as I needed the time to qualify for flight pay. We were enjoying the Southern Italian landscape for a time until I suggested to the pilot that we should fly to Albania for a look at the mountains since S-2 said the Germans were gone. We found out S-2 was wrong and beat a hasty retreat back to Italy.

On one mission, we had special radio equipment with airmen assigned to listen to German military radio transmissions. In route to the target in Austria, the airmen became quite upset because the Germans were broadcasting our IP, target and altitudes. The aircraft commander ordered us to never discuss this upon our return to Manduria. This event came to mind when I was visiting Lt Thomas, one of my original crew, after he was released from POW camp. He related to me that the Germans had bragged to him about a sheep header spy equipped with a radio they (Germans) left behind in Southern Italy. Perhaps he was the header who grazed his sheep on the south part of our base, overheard crews talking about the upcoming missions and radioed that information to our enemy.

After a mission to Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery, on my 12 visit to Vienna, March 1, 1944 my tour was completed. On my return to CONCUS, I was quite fortunate in being assigned as a navigator on a war weary B-17 flying the Southern route, Dakar, Liberia, Acession Islands Brazil, Ramey Air Force Base to Florida, then on to Wright Patterson before my lead e and reassignment.

In 1949, while stationed at Furstenfeldbruck Air Base German, I visited one are we bombed--by then I didn't want to see another.

Of the crew I went over with, all were K.I.A. on the 10th of September, 1944 except Lt Cantrell and Thomas who ended up as POW's. The flight engineer Sgt Davis and I were not on that mission. I was then assigned to the crew of Lt's Vega and Davis. Again i was spared. This time on a mission to Salsburg during February on 1945 and Deputy Lead Plane needed a navigator and I was reassigned to fill this slot. Vega and Davis' plane was assigned the number 4 slot for this mission.

On the return, their plane disintegrated over the Adriatic, there were no survivors. Consequently, thereafter, I flew most of my missions with various crews. They were all great people. I just wish I could remember each and everyone of them. God bless them all!

The following article written by Harley W. Rhodehamel, 720th BS, appeared in "COTTON TALES" the 450th Bomb Group Association's Newsletter.

THE 450TH'S LAST COMBAT LOSS, APRIL 9TH, 1945

All losses are tragic and each must carry with it accounts of suffering, heroism, injury and death. Details of some such tragedies are known; others are forever hidden in the shroud of mystery. The details of the 450th's loss on April 9th, 1945, is known. This is its story.

Monday, April 9th, 1945, was a beautiful sunny day in southern Italy between those two small towns of Oria and Manduria where the 450th had been stationed for some 18 months. Some of us had suffered through two severe winters in this area of Italy with weather conditions travel guides failed to mention. but now it was a glorious day; the war was going well and even the pessimists would agree that Hitler's reign of terror was fast approaching its end. There was even exciting hearsay circulating around in the ever active rumor mill that the 450th had indeed done its share in defeating the Germans and would soon be sent home to retrain and go after the Japanese.

Together the four squadrons of the 450th sent 41 B-24's roaring down the short dirt runway headed toward northern Italy to bomb German gun emplacements that blocked the American 8th Army's advance. The planes carried almost 100 tons of devastating fragmentation bombs. No enemy aircraft thwarted the success of the mission but supporting P-51's, a plane that every German pilot had learned to fear, were nonetheless a welcomed sight. but the flak batteries were there.

Some six hours after take off 40 planes returned to base. No red flares filled the air to alert the waiting medics at runway's end of wounded on board. They dispensed the appreciated 2 ounces of bourbon to calm shattered nerves while the Red Cross girls supplied donuts and coffee. But as we counted the landing planes we realized one was missing.

S-2's reports for the mission of April 9th listed no planes unaccounted for but one sighted, with a missing left rudder assembly, had crashed. Flak was suspected as the most probable cause. But eye witnesses soon confirmed instead, the true unpleasant cause: the plane had been hit by bombs dropped from above by "friends". The eye witnesses were Paul Blanchard, Samuel E. Alexand and David B. Kline.

The family received that dreaded telegram: Missing in Action to be followed some three months later: Killed in Action. With the war over crews could inspect the crash site and were able to account for ten of the eleven men but without positive identification of all. The missing man was presumed to be a prisoner of war. Yet today that missing person (or perhaps more likely body) still remains a mystery. Perhaps this story will flush out that lingering riddle of the last loss of the 450th. The inspection crew also uncovered distressing information. A local Italian had witnessed the crash from his house just 100 yards from

the site where the plane struck the ground. He reported seeing several parachutes as men escaped the doomed plane. But they drifted not to safety but as targets to German machine gunners, who fired with deadly accuracy.

But there is more! It was customary as new crews arrived from the States to replace fallen airmen, or the lucky ones, those who had completed their 50 missions, to assign a few of those replacements with a seasoned, battle experienced crew. Owen W. Wahl and his crew had faced combat. Thus Leonard Markley was assigned to fly in the place of Fred N. McDonald, Wahl's co-pilot, while Michael Fayden, a flight engineer, joined the crew for experience along with Wahl's regular flight engineer, making eleven crew members rather than the customary ten. Charles Brown, Wahl's tail gunner was in the hospital and relieving Rains, filled his usual position. With that, the story continues.

Charles Brown's widow, Mrs. Grace Brown Hall, knew her husband was killed in action but she did not know where he was buried, if indeed the site were known. In 1991 through Sortie, a 15th Air Force publication, Mrs. Hall placed a query seeking information about the place of her husband's burial. With a shock, Bill Rains saw the query and recognized the name of a man he never knew but a man who died in his stead. He contacted Grace, travelled to Italy and found Charles Brown's grave. Now in the letters arriving from the suggestion in Cotton Tales was one from Gerald Brown, Charles's son which explained the story of Rains' involvement.

But also came two other letters pertinent to the story. Richard B. Broxson, with an unrestricted view of Wahl's plane as a ball turret gunner in a plane above Wahl's wrote, with unnecessary apologies for possible memory glitches after 50 years: "Just as we were about to toggle our bombs a box of B-24's slide under us. Before a warning could be given, bombs fell and one B-24 was struck by a bomb." Why Broxson's information was not reported by S-2 is unexplained. The second letter arrived with astonishing copies of a collection of pictures of the actual events, in sequence, of bombs striking Wahl's B-24! Of special interest, to me at least, is that I first saw these pictures, probably on April 10th. We were all shocked and the pictures were deemed confidential. I certainly never expected to see them again.

The crew of the last B-24 lost by the 450th deserves listing: Owen W. Wahl, Pilot; Leonard Markley, replacement Co-pilot; Julius Kunz, Jr., Bombardier; Edwin I. Weseman, Navigator; Luther G. Synder, Michael M. Keuchel, John C. Sanford, John J. Rogosz, Billy B. Maxwell, Charles E. Brown and Michael J. Fayden, replacement or additional flight engineer.

Space prevents more details about this mission for there is more to tell. Not only Bill Rains but Fred McDonald are alive by fate. Family members of the crew members may well be interested in more details. And it is through the efforts of Gerald Brown and Bill Rains that Charles Brown's widow knows the complete story.

The following information, in regard to this incident has submitted by William Marak, Navigator 720th BS: "On Apr. 8 '45 my 13th mission was the roughest of my 21. Due to unexpected high headwinds we were in heavy flak over the Brenner Pass for about 20 min. The aircraft commander, pilot Bill Ward of Paducah, Ky., rejected the use of a sluggish aircraft for the mission - and we were assigned a better aircraft. The very next day the sluggish aircraft was assigned to the other officers in our eight man barracks room. Although our pilot informed the other pilot of a previous bad experience with the aircraft, he accepted it anyway. Their mission was dropping fragmentation bombs over the front enemy lines. Unfortunately, the aircraft fell behind over the target and the rudder was hit by mobs form aircraft above. It was reported that the B-24 went into a flat spin and crashed behind enemy lines. Three chutes were seen. Only the one of 41 aircraft was lost that mission. I had trained with the navigator."

c:\bookfive\lastloss.a09

IN HONOR OF OUR CREW ON THE MISSION WE DID NOT COMPLETE

By: Dillard R. (Count) Cantrell, Bombardier

It was September 10, 1944 and we were aboard a B-24 as part of the 720th Squadron of the 450th Group and our target was Vienna.

About ten seconds after bombs away, a terrific roar and a simultaneous hutter from the aircraft spelled disaster.

My parachute worked and after being saved from the civilians by an Austrian soldier, I was ushered into a large room in a government building just in time to see Tommie, our co-pilot, complete a salute to a German officer.

Starting the next day, Tommie and I began our search for our crew. This included our train ride to the Budapest city jail, Stalag Luft III at Sagan, Stalag Luft VIIA at Moosburg, Camp Lucky Strike at LaHarve and the ocean ride on the "Sea Robin".

It wasn't until we docked at New York and got to Camp Shanks that we were able to find exactly what losses we had suffered.

Our crew (see notes below) is listed in the Maxwell Field records as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1st Lt. Harold F. Stratton | KIA |
| 1st Lt. Dillard R. Cantrell | POW |
| 2nd Lt. John E. Thomas | POW |
| T/Sgt. Edward A. J. Jablonski | KIA |
| T/Sgt. Paul H. Gritten | KIA |
| S/Sgt. Willard F. Shelton | KIA |
| S/Sgt. Raymond W. Cole | KIA |
| S/Sgt. Clyde M. Franklin | KIA |
| S/Sgt. James F. Ross | KIA |

Notes by Dillard R. Cantrell:

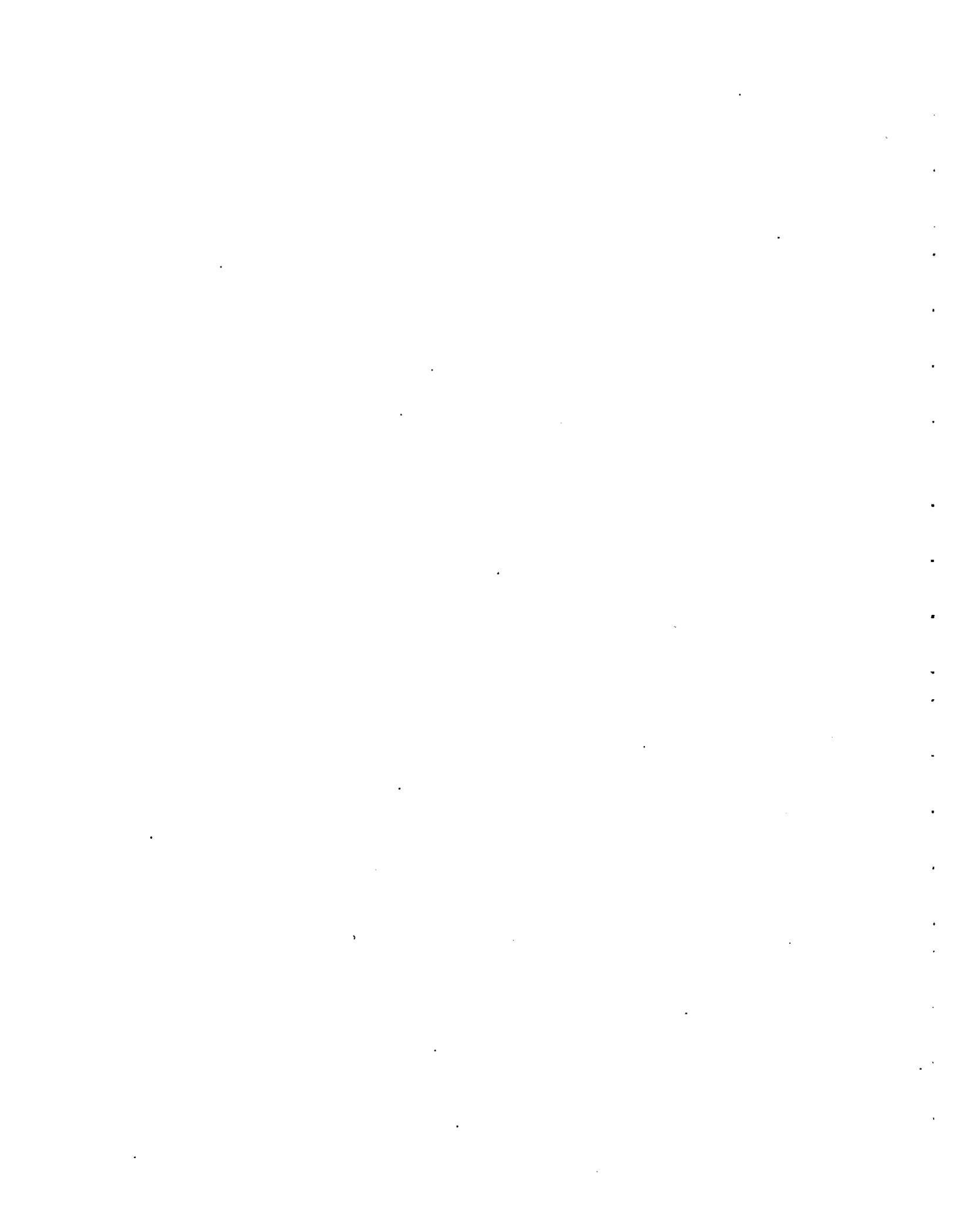
- (1) John E. Thomas died of cancer after World War II.
- (2) Paul H. Gritten was finally interred in Penfield, Illinois.
- (3) The other crew members were finally interred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.
- (4) Loren B. Heath, Jr., our navigator, had been re-assigned to lead training.

At Sagan, we were given a small New Testament and on the front inside cover I listed the names of our crew members and wrote the following:

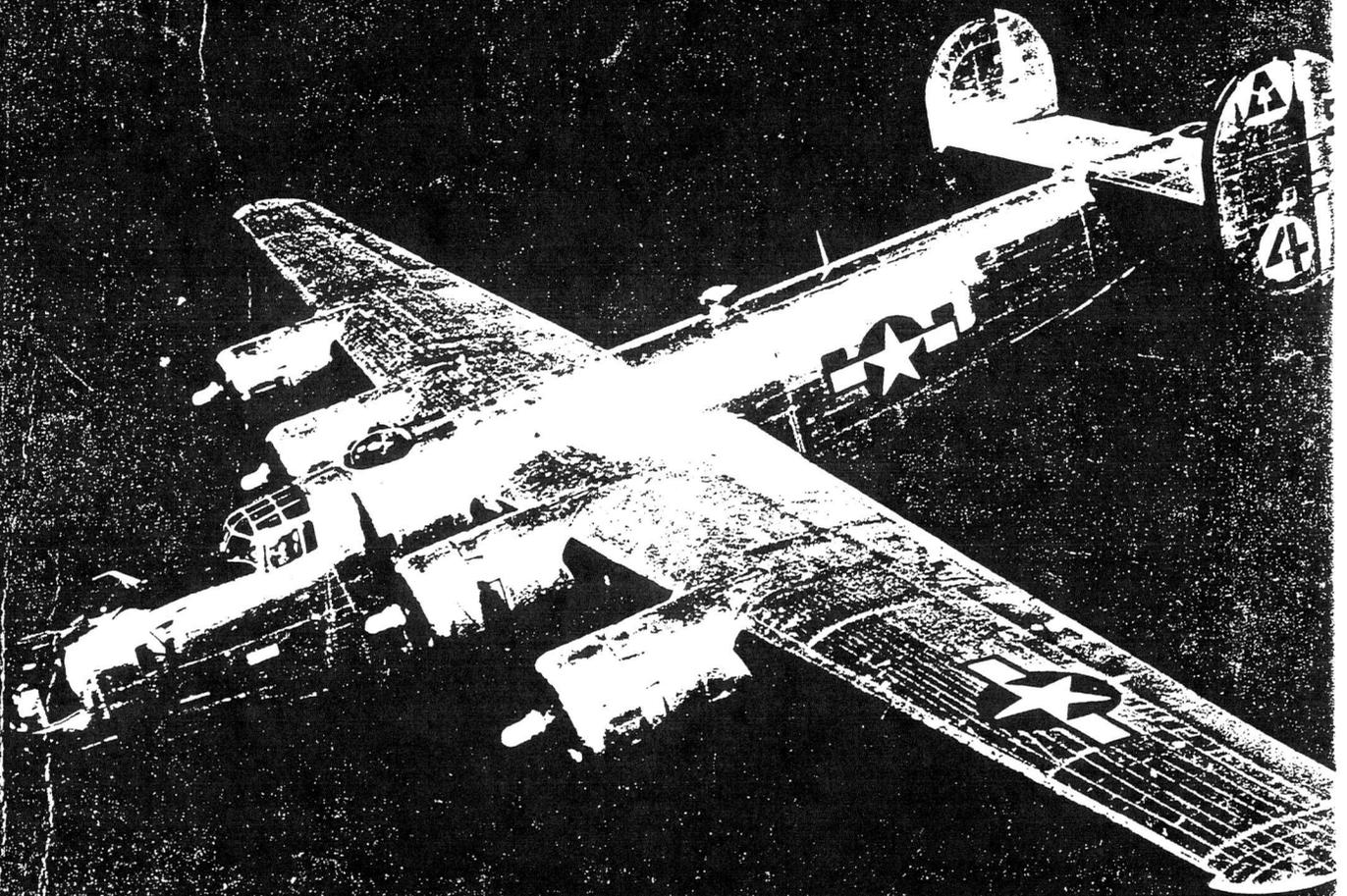
"Boys, I hope and pray that you made it through."

Someday, there will be another flight when our crew is all together again, but this time the weather will be CAVU, there will be no loud noises nor parachutes and we will complete our flight in peace and tranquillity, forever.

God bless you.



450th BOMB GROUP (H)



Regensburg
Brufening

25 FEBRUARY 1944



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HEADQUARTERS 47TH BOMB WING
APO 520 US ARMY

200.6

10 August 1944.

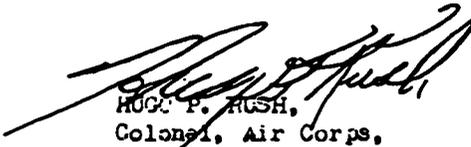
SUBJECT: 450th Bombardment Group (H) Citation.

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520.

1. In accordance with War Department Circular No. 333, Section 4, dated 22 December 1943, and Circular No. 26 NATOUSA, dated 6 May 1944, there are herewith inclosed recommendations for a War Department Citation for the 450th Bombardment Group (H).

2. The heroism and loyal devotion to duty demonstrated by this Group in accomplishing this hazardous mission; the determined efforts despite all obstacles and violent enemy resistance, together with its outstanding record throughout this arduous campaign, make it well deserving of the citation herewith recommended.

3. It is highly recommended that the citation be made by the Theater Commander and confirmed in War Department General Orders pursuant to Section IV, Paragraph 26, War Department Circular No. 333, dated 22 December 1943.


HUGH P. RUSH,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

U S R E S T R I C T E D
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
AFO 520 U S ARMY

G/NPT/sc

27 February 1944.

MEMORANDUM:

TO : All Units Fifteenth Air Force.

1. It is a source of much gratification to me to pass on this well deserved praise from General ARNOLD.

a. Paraphrase of Cable received:

"AN ATTACK IS BEING DRIVEN HOME BY YOU WITH A RELENTLESS DETERMINATION THAT DEMANDS THE RESPECT OF EVERYONE IN THE ARMY AIR FORCES AND WHICH IS DESTROYING THE VERY VITAL OF GERMANY. THE STRONGEST DEFENSES THAT A DESPERATE ENEMY CAN DEVISE ARE NOT STOPPING YOU. YOUR LOSSES ALTHOUGH HEAVY HAVE BEEN FAR LESS THAN ENEMY LOSSES. BY YOUR ATTACKS ON REGENS-BURG, STEYR AND OTHER VITAL FIGHTER FACTORIES GERMAN FIGHTER PRODUCTION IS BEING WIPED OUT AND THE FOUNDATION FOR FINAL AND DECISIVE OPERATIONS IN THE FUTURE IS BEING LAID. I COM-MEND ALL RANKS IN YOUR COMMAND FROM TOP TO BOTTOM FOR THE SUPPERB JOB YOU ARE DOING. IN CONTINUING TO CARRY THIS DESTRUCTION THROUGH THE HEART OF GERMANY ALL OF YOU HAVE MY BEST WISHES."

2. In view of the distinct honor paid the personnel of this Air Force by the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces it is my personal wish that every individual be given a chance to hear or read this tribute.

/s/ N. F. Twining
N. F. TWINING,
Major General, USA,
Commanding.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:


ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Asst Adjutant.

U S R E S T R I C T E D
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

U S R E S T R I C T E D

**HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 U S ARMY**

27 February 1944

MEMORANDUM:

TO : All Units Fifteenth Air Force.

1. It is with pride and admiration that I forward to the Air Force the commendations from higher commands. The skill, determination and courage displayed by all in this greatest of air battles and the results obtained are most gratifying.

a. Paraphrase of cable from Lieutenant General SPAATZ from this theater to United Kingdom.

"STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE REGENSBURG ATTACK EXAMINED AND I CONSIDER THAT SUPERIOR RESULTS WERE OBTAINED. THE FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ACCOMPLISHED A SUPERIOR JOB OF BOMBING AND VITAL DESTRUCTION TO ENEMY INSTALLATIONS IN THE FACE OF HEAVY AIR ATTACK, WITHOUT FIGHTER SUPPORT AND WITH HEAVY LOSSES. EVEN WITHOUT CONSIDERATION OF THE NINETY-THREE ENEMY FIGHTERS SHOT DOWN BY OUR BOMBERS, THE RESULTS FAR OUTWEIGH OUR LOSSES."

b. Paraphrase of message received from Lieutenant General EAKER.

"YOUR STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE SECOND SUCCESSIVE DAY HAVE GIVEN US AN EXAMPLE OF PRECISION BOMBING AT ITS VERY BEST. BEING ENGAGED IN ONE OF THE GREATEST AIR BATTLES IN HISTORY, YESTERDAY YOUR FORCE FOUGHT THROUGH THE HEAVIEST OPPOSITION IT HAS YET ENCOUNTERED. THE AIR FORCES RECORD OF REACHING THE OBJECTIVE AND ACCOMPLISHING THE ASSIGNED TASK WAS MAINTAINED WITH DISTINCTION. AIRCRAFT FACTORY DESTROYED BY YOU IN THIS ATTACK IS ESTIMATED TO PRODUCE AIRCRAFT AT THE RATE OF TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY PER MONTH. WHEN CONSIDERING THE LOSSES SUSTAINED THIS FACT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND. ALSO BECAUSE OF THE SUCCESS OF YESTERDAY'S MISSION IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THERE WILL BE SEVERAL LESS ENEMY FIGHTERS IN THE AIR TO BE ENCOUNTERED. FOR A JOB WELL DONE GENERAL SPAATZ JOINS ME IN COMMENDING YOU. PASS THIS ON PLEASE, TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS OPERATION, BOTH OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN."

2. This memorandum will be read to all Officers and Enlisted men of this command.

U S R E S T R I C T E D
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

U S R E S T R I C T E D
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

/s/ N. F. Twining
N. F. TWINING,
Major General, USA,
Commanding.

DISTRIBUTION:

AS ABOVE

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Robert A. Schmitt

ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant.

U S R E S T R I C T E D
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

LETX LXXU LEUY LXWT V LDOR NR 3 3 3 2 ROUTINE
LETX L
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LEUY
LXWT
FROM ATKINSON NUPOFT 261129A NR 1420

GR BT
CONGRATULATION ON YOUR EXCELLENT BOMBING OF REGENSBURG PD IT TOOK GUTS
TO DO SUCH A JOB AGAINST DETERMINE ENEMY OPPOSITION AND YOU HAD THEM PD
OUR LOSSES WERE HIGH AND WE CANNOT STAND THEM EVERY DAY AND OF COURSE
DO NOT INTEND TO AND WILL NOT HAVE TO PD THE HUN CANT STAND MANY BLOWS
LIKE YESTERDAYS PD I AM PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF SUCH A DETERMINED AND
EFFICIENT COMMAND END FSWA -1

▲ CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Robert A. Schmitt
ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 47TH BOMB WING
APO 520 US ARMY

'8 August 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 17)

COMMENDATION OF UNIT I

SECTION I -- COMMENDATION OF UNIT

The outstanding performance of duty of the 450th Bombardment Group (H) under extremely adverse conditions during the period 11 December 1943 thru 1 August 1944 is deemed worthy of the highest commendation. One of the Heavy Bombardment Groups ordered into the Mediterranean Theater to form the Strategic Air Force for the purpose of bombing industrial centers in northern Italy, Germany, and enemy occupied countries, it was ordered to occupy an airdrome not released as operational by the Corps of Engineers, however the 450th Bombardment Group continually carried out operational missions despite all handicaps. The loyalty and devotion to duty of the personnel of the organization was demonstrated on 25 February 1944 when it was called upon for a maximum effort to aid in the destruction of one of the aircraft factories in Germany. This vitally important target had an estimated production of 250 aircraft per month, thereby rendering it a target of utmost priority. The destruction of this aircraft factory would cost the enemy eight to nine months of production and would materially diminish the enemy fighter opposition to the Allied strategic bombing. Despite the fact that the field was in poor operational condition due to recent rains and adverse weather, on 25 February 1944 the 450th Bombardment Group took off leading the Wing formation of five (5) groups (H) to destroy this vital enemy aircraft factory. Though the group had flown successive missions to Steyr, Budapest and Sofia, the ground personnel responded with enthusiasm and tremendous esprit de corps. As a result the group was able to place a maximum number of aircraft into the air on that day. While twenty (20) minutes away from the target the formation was attacked by enemy fighters. The gunners of the 450th answered this challenge with effective machine gun fire that dispersed the attack and sent two (2) enemy planes to the ground. Despite intense and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire as the bombers approached the target the 450th Bombardment Group mindful only of the important mission held unwaveringly to its bomb run. The damage inflicted on the Prufening aircraft factory was tremendous. Photo reconnaissance which revealed terrific damage to the entire plant. Direct hits were scored on workshops, assembly shops, hangars, and office building. The light metal workshop, the main workshop

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

(GO #17, Hq 47th B Wg, 8 Aug '44, cont'd)

and a large number of aircraft were completely destroyed. The outstanding performance of the 450th Bombardment Group in leading this highly successful mission, the excellent teamwork by all crew members in inflicting tremendous damage to the enemy, together with the indefatigable and enthusiastic work of all ground personnel of the 450th Bombardment Group was an amazing exhibition of esprit de corps in the face of a very hazardous task. This Groups extraordinary heroism and superior performance of duty has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service and has reflected great credit upon the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

By: Order of Colonel RUSH:

ERNEST L. WALTERS,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Ernest L. Walters,
/t/ ERNEST L. WALTERS,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

DISTRIBUTION: A Plus:

2 - C.G., AAF, Washington 25 D.C.
Attn: AC/As, I.H. Division.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Robert A. Schmitt
ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 47TH BOMB WING
APO 520 US ARMY

200.6

10 August 1944.

SUBJECT: Proposed Citation for the 450th Bombardment Group (H), Army Air Forces.

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520.

1. In accordance with War Department Circular No. 333, Section 4, dated 22 December 1943, and Circular No. 26 NATOUA, dated 6 May 1944, a Presidential Unit Citation is requested for the 450th Bombardment Group (H) for extraordinary heroism on 25 February 1944, during an unusual and hazardous bombing mission on a vital target of great military importance at Regensburg, Germany.

2. The Prufening factory in Regensburg, Germany comprised both component erection and final assembly of ME109's with an estimated production of 250 aircraft per month, thereby rendering it a target of utmost priority. The destruction of the plant would cost the enemy eight to nine months of production and would materially diminish the interception of Allied strategic bombing.

3. With four other groups the 450th Bombardment Group (H) took off at 0841 on the morning of 25 February 1944 to destroy this vital aircraft factory. Though the group had flown successive missions to Steyr, Budapest and Sofia, the ground personnel responded with enthusiasm and tremendous esprit de corps. As a result the group was able to place a maximum number of aircraft into the air on that day.

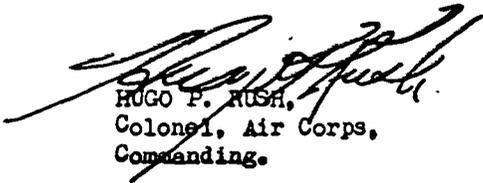
4. At various points along the way they were subjected to intense and accurate enemy fire. While twenty (20) minutes away from the target enemy interceptors attacked viciously. The enemy fighters were exceptionally aggressive and experienced. Attacks were made from all angles and levels, every tactic known to aerial warfare was employed. The gallant gunners of the 450th Group answered this challenge with effective machine gun fire that dispersed the attack and sent two enemy pursuit planes to the ground. Despite the increased defensive tempo as the bombers approached the target, the 450th Bombardment Group mindful only of the important mission held unwaveringly to its bomb run. The bombs being released, the formation turned away and headed for home under heavy flak and pressing enemy attacks.

5. The effectiveness of the attack was evidenced by subsequent photo reconnaissance which revealed terrific damage to the entire Prufening plant. Direct hits were scored on workshops, assembly shops, hangers, and

(Proposed Citation, 450th Bomb Group, cont'd)

office buildings. The light metal workshop, the main workshop and a large number of aircraft were completely destroyed. This highly successful attack was a long step toward attaining the prime objective of air-power, to gain and maintain air superiority over the enemy.

6. The outstanding performance of the leaders of this difficult and hazardous mission, the heroic determination and combat efficiency on the part of the highly trained crews, plus the exceptional professional skill and intense devotion to duty of all ground personnel concerned, was an amazing exhibition of esprit de corps and extraordinary gallantry in the face of overwhelming odds. This Group's extraordinary heroism and superior performance of duty has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service and has reflected great credit upon the Armed Forces of the United States of America.



HUGO P. RUSH,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

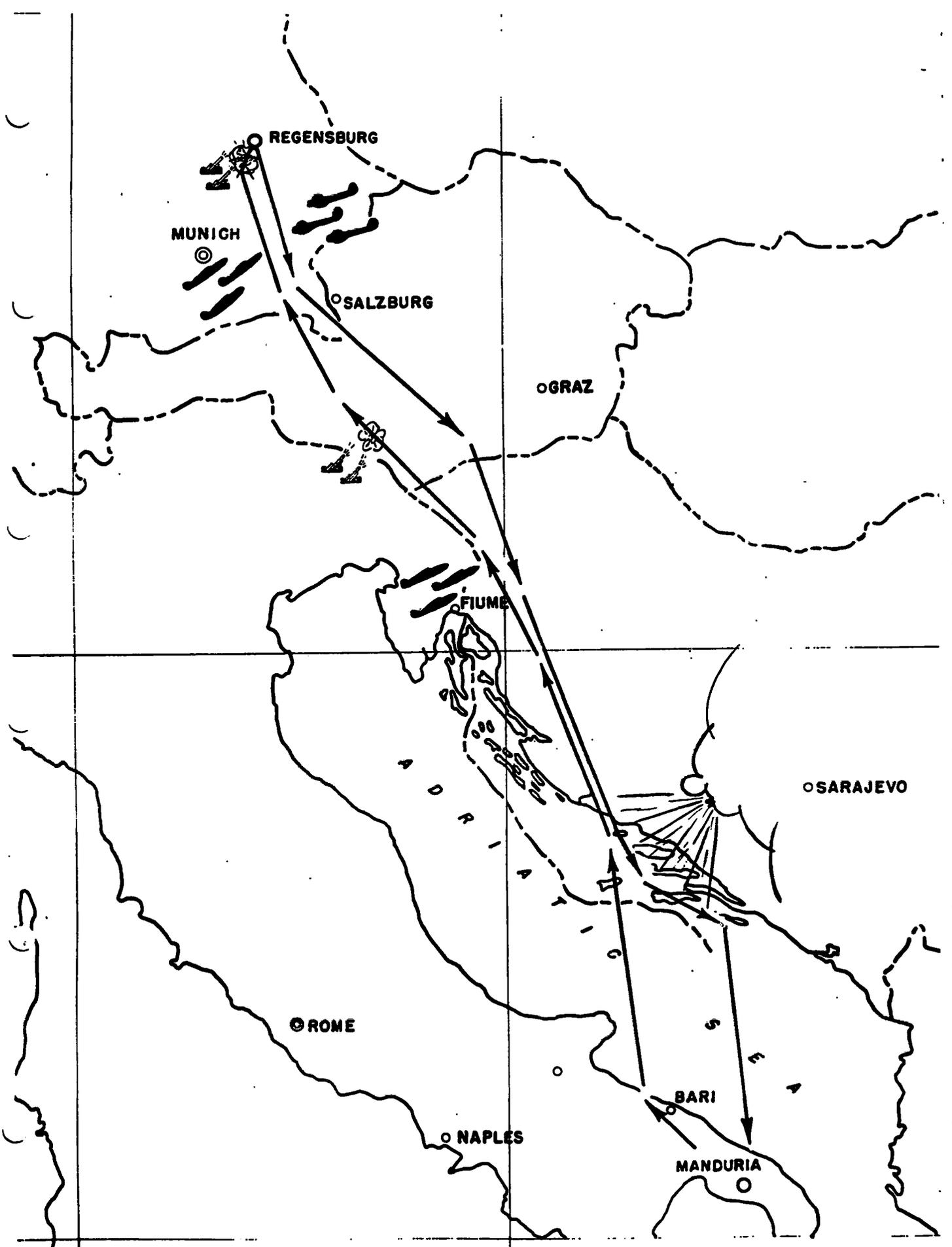
1 Incl:
Proposed Citation.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

P R O P O S E D C I T A T I O N

450th Bombardment Group (H). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict against the enemy. On 24 February 1944, the 450th Bombardment Group was notified to prepare a maximum number of aircraft for a mission against the Prufening Aircraft Factory in Regensburg, Germany. The initial purpose of this attack was to destroy this important plant, capable of producing two hundred and fifty (250) ME-109s monthly. A successful completion of the mission would cost the enemy eight (8) to nine (9) months of production and would materially diminish Nazi interception of allied strategic bombing on the continent. Throughout the evening prior to the attack, the ground crews worked untiringly in a muddy field, determined to have their aircraft in perfect mechanical condition for this vital operation. On 25 February 1944, twenty-nine (29) B-24 type aircraft, heavily loaded with maximum tonnage, took off for their important destination in the lead of an entire wing formation. Hazardous weather was encountered shortly after the take-off, and over fifteen (15) enemy fighters intercepted them while still three hundred (300) miles from the target. The gallant crews fought off the enemy onslaught, overcame the hazards of weather, and unwaveringly held to their course as a second wave of twenty (20) ME-109s attacked them. The approaches to the target and the target proper were heavily defended by flak batteries that threw up an intense barrage through which the formation flew undaunted to a precise bomb-run, delivering a telling blow to the important factory and surrounding installations. This outstanding achievement contributed immeasurably to the effective crippling of enemy production at a significant time. The palls of smoke issuing from the debris left in the wake of the bombers obscured observation, but subsequent reconnaissance revealed a complete destruction of the target. Throughout the aerial battle too, the courageous crews fought two more enemy onslaughts enroute, and accounted for one (1) enemy aircraft destroyed. Our own losses were held down to four (4), lost in a mission wrought with hazardous weather, intense ground defenses and a total of over sixty (60) enemy fighters. By the determination, outstanding professional skill and heroic courage of the combat crews, together with the devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 450th Bombardment Group has rendered an invaluable contribution to the Allied war effort, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

C O N F I D E N T I A L



C O N F I D E N T I A L

N A R R A T I V E S T A T E M E N T

On the morning of 25 February 1944, at 0841, the 450th Bombardment Group (H), composed of twenty-nine (29) B-24 Liberator bombers, took off in the lead of a wing formation to bomb the vitally important Prufening Aircraft Factory in Regensburg, Germany. Despite the fact that recent successive missions had been flown to Steyr, Budapest and Sofia, both ground and flying personnel worked feverishly through the night in a determined effort to put into the air every available aircraft. The Prufening Aircraft Factory comprised both component erection and final assembly of ME-109s with an estimated production of two hundred and fifty (250) aircraft per month, thereby rendering it a target of great priority. The destruction of this plant would cost the enemy eight (8) to nine (9) months of production, and would materially diminish the interception of Allied strategic bombing. Appraised of the important mission at hand, the 450th took off with a maximum bomb load and proceeded on course. Shortly after take-off the weather began to close in, and by 0940 there was a complete undercast over the eastern shore of Italy and the Adriatic. This perilous weather reduced alarmingly their visibility and impaired their safety in flight, but the cool and professional skill of the leader overcame these hazards and brought the formation safely to their landfall in Yugoslavia. While still three hundred (300) miles from the target, twenty (20) miles east of Fiume, a wave of over fifteen (15) enemy fighters attacked in line abreast from all directions, but the gunners countered with a terrific fire that dispersed the interceptors. Fifty (50) miles further north a second wave of over twenty (20) ME-109s and JE-88s attacked the formation and downed two (2) of the bombers. Again the onslaught was repelled by the aggressive and gallant fire of the 450th. While still one (1) hour from the target, between Villach and Klagenfurt, the formation was subjected to a heavy, intense and accurate flak barrage that holed the lead ship. Five (5) more interceptors hovered over the formation waiting for stragglers, but the alert fire of the determined crew men kept them at bay. Sporadic attacks continued north of Klagenfurt and at the I. P. The number of fighters increased to over twenty (20) ME-109s and JU-88s. The formation tightened; the undaunted gunners opened fire, and one (1) ME-109 crashed in flames as it attempted to break through the defenses of the 450th. On the approaches to the target, heavy, intense and accurate fire from numerous batteries sought vainly to disperse the attacking bombers, but the leader calmly maneuvered his formation over the exact axis of attack and made a successful bombing run in the face of lethal enemy fire. Twenty (20) ships had been holed by flak and fighters, two (2) more

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

were badly crippled, and four (4) officers and men had been wounded. Interceptors still continued to harass the group as far out as Salzburg, over forty (40) minutes after the target, and finally succeeded in downing the crippled bombers, the fourth aircraft to succumb to the combined enemy defenses of flak and fighters. Before the formation reached the Adriatic, on the return trip, the weather closed in. A cloud wall over twenty-thousand (25,000) feet high hung over the Yugoslavian littoral extending far inland. With the same skill and calm determination maintained throughout the mission, the formation dropped through a momentary break three hundred (300) feet over the water in order to avoid the imminent danger of mid-air collision, and returned to the base with a loss of four (4) aircraft after having encountered over sixty (60) enemy fighters. Subsequent photo reconnaissance revealed the important part the 450th had played in the destruction of the target. The excellent bomb pattern of this group was an invaluable factor in making the overall attack one of the most thorough accomplishments of heavy bombardment. The outstanding performance of the leaders of this mission, the heroic determination and combat efficiency of highly trained crews, together with the skill and intense devotion to duty of all ground personnel is a tribute to this group's esprit de corps in the face of overwhelming odds. The successful participation of the 450th Bombardment Group in the complete destruction of the Prufening Plant attests to the leadership of this group, and reflects great credit upon the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S-2 SECTION

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 17

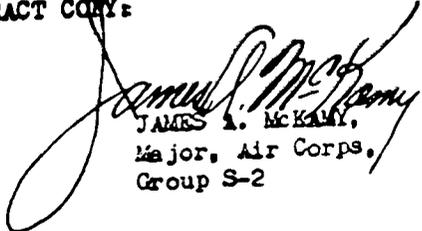
For Week Ending 5 March 1944

EXTRACT

.....
RESULTS OF ALLIED ATTACKS

Regensburg/Prufening: This Messerschmitt assembly plant was target for two concentrated attacks on 25 February, with 149 Fifteenth Air Force B-17s and B-24s bombing less than an hour before 266 Eighth Air Force B-17s arrived. Results following appear excellent. Strike photographs and early reconnaissance cover show several heavy concentrations of bursts on or near important buildings, including the main flight hangar, final assembly shops, main workshops, and nearby rail facilities. On and near the airfield there are numerous craters, and a very large unidentified building was blanketed by bursts. A number of aircraft, mostly fighters, are probably destroyed or damaged

.....
A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:


JAMES A. MCKAMY,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2

SECRET

S E C R E T

**HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S-2 SECTION**

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 18

For Week Ending 12th March 1944

E X T R A C T

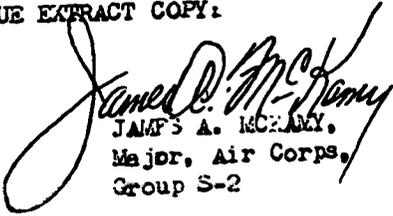
RESULTS OF ALLIED ATTACKS

Regensburg/Prufening: Detailed interpretation of reconnaissance photos made following the double attack on 25 February by Eighth and Fifteenth Air Force heavy formations confirms preliminary estimates. Very severe damage is now seen to have affected the entire works. Craters virtually cover the open spaces between buildings, probably causing very heavy blast damage. A large number of small aircraft are seen damaged or destroyed, and the airfield is at least temporarily unserviceable.

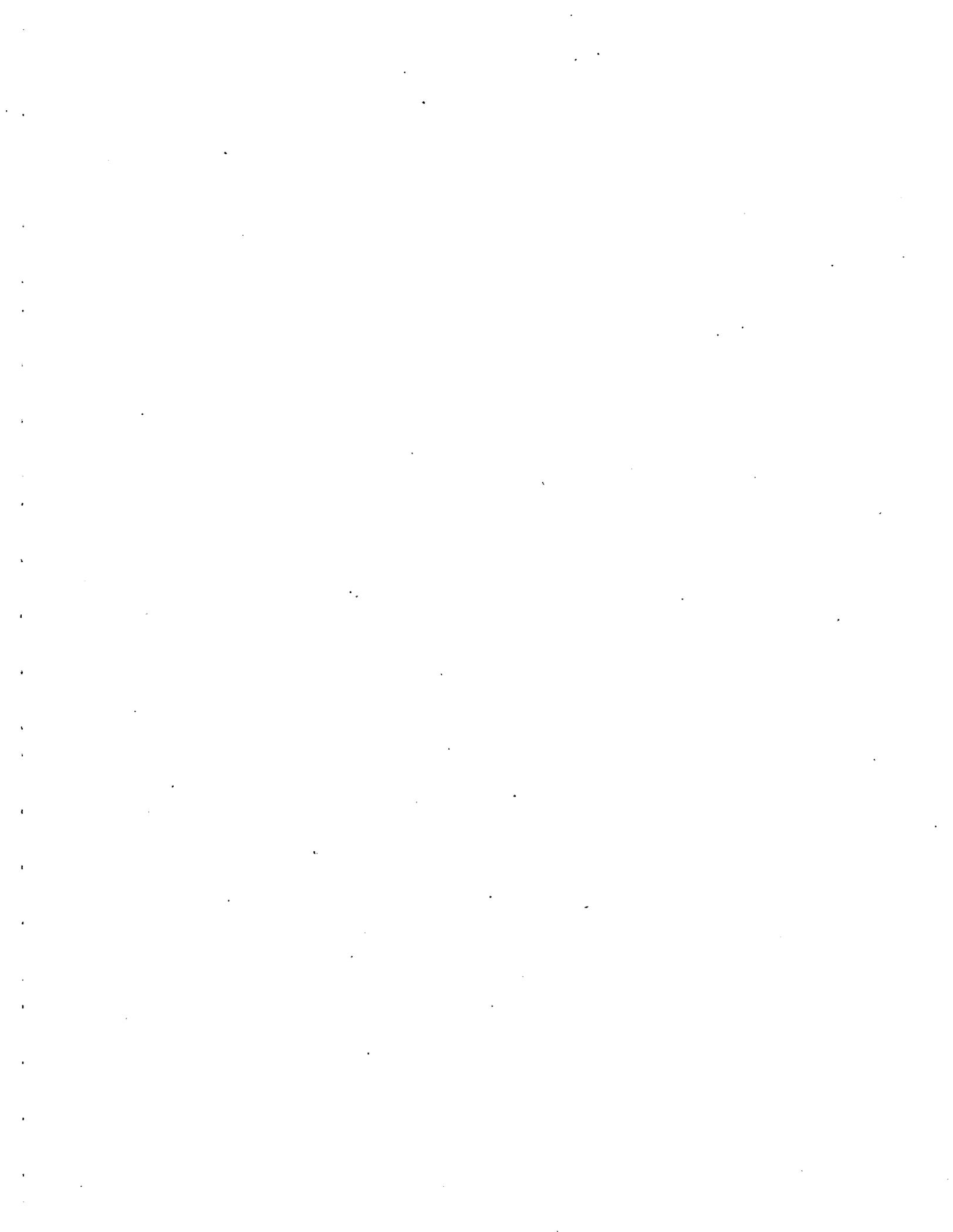
Among the important buildings affected are the main workshops, main stores buildings, and nearly all adjacent sheds, very severely damaged. Two office buildings had direct hits and a third suffered blast damage; the gun-testing range had three direct hits, a flight hangar has a large hole in its roof, and interior damage may be severe. The final assembly shop was partly destroyed in two separate places. The sheet-metal workshop was almost destroyed and three adjacent sheds were wrecked.

Other assorted sheds, small toolshops, and similar structures were damaged or destroyed throughout the plant area. The rail line received two hits, and probably was cut at least temporarily.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:


**JAMES A. MCCREEDY,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2**

S E C R E T



S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S-2 SECTION
AIR INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY NO. 68

Period from 0001 Hours 28 February to 2400 Hours 5 March 1944

E X T R A C T

PART II

ALLIED AERIAL OPERATIONS

1. SUMMARY OF WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

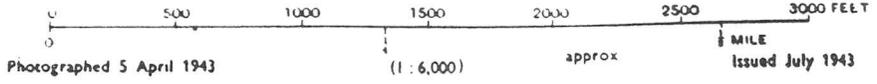
Regensburg Profening Factory Eliminated: The Regensburg Profening factory, which escaped damage in the 22nd February attack, was the target for 46 B-17's and 103 B-24's on 25 February. Escorted by 36 P-47's and bombing in conjunction with aircraft from Great Britain, the Fortresses and Liberators fought their way through a screen of approximately 200 enemy fighters to carry out a completely successful attack. The primary and secondary objectives were almost entirely destroyed, and an absolute minimum of 22 aircraft were wrecked - 20 in front of the hangar and 2 among fallen buildings. A considerable number must also have been written off within the factory.

The flight hangar, with the test pilot's offices, received a direct hit and many damaging near misses, and the final assembly shop was gutted, only part of the roof remaining. The roof of a small shop used in connection with final assembly was blackened by fire, and although the building is still intact serious damage must have been caused to the interior by several near misses. All the main workshops are destroyed, and only about 20 per cent of the main store remains. In addition to these main buildings many smaller, but important, subsidiary buildings have been destroyed and damaged. Railway facilities, flak installations, and surrounding housing estates have also received very considerable damage, and the landing ground was rendered unserviceable by numerous direct hits.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY


JAMES A. MCKAY,
Major, Air Corps,
Group 3-2.

S E C R E T



Photographed 5 April 1943

(1 : 6,000)



KEY.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Sports ground with swimming pool and sports pavilion. | 11. Boiler house with adjoining coal dump. |
| 2. Flight hangar with test pilots' offices. | 13. Canteen and/or offices. |
| 3. Final assembly shop. | 15. Main store and also workshops. |
| 4. 6. 8. 9. 12. 14. Main workshops. | 16. 17. 18. Offices. |
| 5. Gun testing range for aircraft. | 19. Canteen and/or offices. |
| 7. Small shop used in connection with final assembly. | 20. Workshop. |
| 10. Large new shop, under construction on 5.4.43. | 21. Reported as light metal works supplying the factory. |

3 (e) 537

EXCERPT FROM DB 10 - 27 FEBRUARY 1944

Bomb Damage - Mission of 25 February 1944

REGENSBURG/FRUFENING A/C FACTORY

Very severe damage affects almost the entire works. Craters are seen in almost all the open spaces between buildings, probably causing extensive blast damage. All except the extreme northeast tip of the airdrome is covered by innumerable craters. A large number of small aircraft being damaged or destroyed, and the field being unserviceable. Some damage has been done to residential property in the neighborhood.

1. Workshop damaged by blast.
2. Near miss on office buildings.
3. Already severely damaged main stores and workshops further damaged, and nearby sheds destroyed.
4. Two office buildings damaged by direct hits.
5. Already damaged canteen and/or offices hit again in several places.
6. Two sheds near boiler house damaged.
7. One end of previously damaged main workshop very severely hit again and nearby shed destroyed.
8. Gun testing range hit in three places and severely damaged.
9. Small hut destroyed.
10. Large hole in roof of flight hangar and probably further damage by blast from near misses.
11. Final assembly shop very severely damaged in two places.
12. Largest shed in light metal works almost destroyed and three smaller sheds damaged.
13. Main workshop and nearby shed destroyed.
14. Unidentified large shed joining main workshop and final assembly very severely damaged in at least three places.
15. Damaged workshop hit again several times.
16. Another severely damaged workshop now virtually destroyed.

excerpt from DB 10 (cont'd)

17. Small shed destroyed and still smouldering.
18. Additional damage to previously damaged workshop.
19. Unidentified small works south of R/R half destroyed.
20. Two hits on R/R, probably cutting tracks.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

Bordin S. Chronister
BORDIN S. CHRONISTER,
Captain, Air Corps,
Photo Interpreter.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 US ARMY

25 February 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Officers and Enlisted Men Missing in Action, Killed in Action and Wounded.

TO : Public Relations Officer, 450th Bomb Group, APO 520, U. S. Army.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>ASN</u> | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Organization</u> | <u>Status</u> |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Gillespie, Bernard J. | 0-749226 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Rzatkowski, Francis S. | T-360 | F/O | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Ryczek, John J. | 0-809732 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Cooke, Harold L. | 0-681523 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Martin, David J. Jr. | 13079762 | T Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Brazzle, William | 14162015 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| McClellan, Lucius W. | 34407691 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Kemp, Fred B. | 34720470 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Vance, Arthur R. | 35577898 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Flora, Raymond W. | 15338865 | Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Retzlaff, Willie R. | 0-748241 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Parrish, William A. | 0-691055 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Nisiobincki, Edward J. | 0-690703 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| McClure, J. C. | 0-741274 | 2d Lt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Champagne, Alcide | 31211173 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Wilch, Herbert N. | 17068010 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Greinert, Hugo L. | 32473693 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Klinshaw, Benedict L. | 32582036 | Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Grad, George G. | 35518707 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Booth, William J. | 34205040 | S Sgt. | 722d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Giraud, John C. | 0-739765 | 1st Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Sachs, Monroe | 0-796441 | 1st Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Sherrill, Franklin A. | 0-809743 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Pomerville, Edward J. | 0-676522 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Brown, William C. | 35451337 | T Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Manak, John | 36328772 | T Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Grzywa, Edwin F. | 32831531 | S Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Gentile, Frank | 32624030 | S Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Barr, Charles F. | 38181953 | T Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Privateer, Russell C. | 32478232 | T Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Arlington, James B. | 16001115 | Pvt. 101 | 723d Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Cranston, William R. | 0-737368 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Molina, Frank W. | 0-689329 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Ltr. Hq 450th B G, 25 Feb '44 re O & Em MIA, KIA, & "ndd, cont'd

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|--------|-----------------|-----|
| Oravec, Joseph J. | 0-689630 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Brown, Arlie L. Jr. | 0-749668 | 2d Lt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Thompson, Albert L. | 14125812 | S Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Neely, Hugh A. | 14053111 | T Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Harper, Ryan D. | 14025003 | S Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| Geiger, Aubrey H. Jr | 33095820 | Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |
| O'Hara, John J. | 32785921 | S Sgt. | 720th Bomb. Sq. | MIA |

By Order of the GROUP COMMANDER:



ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D.C., 8 JANUARY

GENERAL ORDERS)
1945

NUMBER :
3

E X T R A C T

Section

* * * * *
Battle Honors -- Citations of Units VIII

* * * * *
VIII -- BATTLE HONORS.

* * * * *

3. As authorized by Executive Order No. 9396 (Sec. I, Bull. 22, WD, 1943), superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (Sec. III, Bull. 11 WD, 1942, citation of the following unit in General Orders, No. 4427, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, 10 November 1944, as approved by the Commanding General, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, is confirmed under the provisions of section IV, Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The 450th Bombardment Group (H) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 24 February 1944, the 450th Bombardment Group (H), was notified to prepare a maximum number of aircraft for a mission against the Prufening Aircraft factory in Regensburg, Germany. The initial purpose of this attack was to destroy the important plant, capable of producing two hundred and fifty ME-109's monthly. A successful completion of the mission would cost the enemy 8 to 9 months of production and would materially diminish Nazi interception of Allied strategic bombing on the continent. Throughout the evening prior to the attack the ground crews worked untiringly in a muddy field, determined to have their aircraft in perfect mechanical condition for this vital operation. On 25 February 1944, twenty-nine B-24 type aircraft heavily loaded with maximum tonnage took off for their important destination in the lead of an entire Wing formation. Hazardous weather was encountered shortly after the take-off, and over 15 enemy fighters interecepted them while they were still 300 miles from the target. The gallant crews fought off the enemy onslaught, overcame the hazards of weather, and unwaveringly held to their course as a second wave of twenty ME-109's attacked them. The approach to the target and the target proper were heavily defended by flak batteries that threw up an intense barrage through which the formation flew undaunted to a precise bombing run, delivering a telling blow to the important factory and surrounding installations.

GO #3, WD Washington, DC, dd 8 Jan 45 - BATTLE HONORS - 450th BG
(cont'd)

This outstanding achievement contributed immeasurably to the effective crippling of enemy production at a significant time. The palls of smoke issuing from the debris left in the wake of the bombers obscured observation, but subsequent reconnaissance reveals a complete destruction of the target. Throughout the aerial battle the courageous crews fought two more enemy onslaughts enroute and accounted for one enemy aircraft destroyed. Our own losses were held down to 4, lost in a mission wrought with hazardous weather, intense ground defenses and a total of over 60 enemy fighters. By the determination, outstanding professional skill, and heroic courage of the combat crews, together with the devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 450th Bombardment Group (H) has rendered an invaluable contribution to the Allied war effort; thereby reflecting great credit on themselves and the armed forces of the United States.

* * * * *

By order of the SECRETARY OF WAR:

G. C. MARSHALL,
 Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

ROBERT H. DUNLOP
 Brigadier General
 Acting The Adjutant General

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY
 John H. Wells, Jr., /S/

JOHN H. WELLS, JR.,
 Captain, Air Corps,
 Adjutant, 450th Bomb Gp (H)

c:\bookfive\sonbr3.450

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS



450th BOMB GROUP (H)



123

PLOESTI

5 APRIL 1944



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2. Group Headquarters

3. 720th Bombardment Squadron

4. 721st Bombardment Squadron

5. 722nd Bombardment Squadron

6. 723rd Bombardment Squadron

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 47TH BOMB WING
APO 520 US ARMY

6 December 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 31)

COMMENDATION OF UNIT I

SECTION I -- COMMENDATION OF UNIT

The 450th Bombardment Group (H) is cited for outstanding performance of duty against the enemy. On 4 April 1944 the 450th Bombardment Group (H) was notified to prepare a maximum number of aircraft for a highly important mission against the Ploesti Marshalling Yards. Inasmuch as Ploesti was the chief petroleum producing center for Germany, its marshalling yards were indispensable for the transportation of these vital supplies to the eastern fronts. Despite the facts that successive missions to Steyr, Budapest and Bucharest had been flown in the preceding three days, both flying and ground personnel worked feverishly through the night in a determined effort to place every available aircraft in the air. On 5 April 1944, forty (40) B-24's took off with a maximum bomb load and proceeded on course leading the Wing formation. Lack of fighter cover made the formation more vulnerable at a time when the enemy had a powerful force of aircraft available within interception range. While still one hour and ten minutes from the target, two (2) FW-190's flew alongside as observation scouts, presaging the attacks that began 25 minutes before target time. Approximately twelve (12) ME-109's dove out of the clouds and shot down three planes from the leading element. In the ensuing air battle, the aggressive interceptors attempted to break up the formation and nullify the mission. With the tenacity evidenced in other similar missions, the leader rallied his formation while the gunners shot down or dispersed the enemy aircraft. This group valiantly fought its way to the target despite the incessant and determined enemy opposition. In addition to the enemy fighters, heavy flak began to burst about them at this point, but the 450th continued on to the bomb-run. Fifty to sixty (50-60) ME-109's and FW-190's attacked relentlessly, aided by ten (10) ME-110's and ten to fifteen (10-15) JU-88's which shot rockets into the bomber formation in an effort to break up and disperse it. Almost one hundred (100) enemy interceptors were over the target area when the bombardiers took over for that short interval and placed their bombs directly on the target. Enemy fighters however followed this unit for twenty-five (25) minutes after the bombs were released and managed to down two (2) more bombers, but not until our own gunners had

R E S T R I C T E D

GO 31, Hq 47th Hg., 6 Dec 44

exacted a heavy toll of fourteen (14) ME-109's, 10 FW-190's and 3 JU-88's. Two more enemy aircraft were probably destroyed and nine others were damaged. The enemy's attempt to obscure the target with smoke generators was an added hazard that failed to prevent this group from causing terrific destruction, which photo reconnaissance verified. After inflicting enormous damage on one of the enemy's most strategic supply centers, the 450th Bombardment Group rallied its formation under fire and fought its way home with nineteen (19) damaged ships, five lost, and four wounded men aboard. The outstanding leadership of the officers, the heroic determination and combat efficiency of the crews, together with the skill and devotion to duty of all the ground personnel, is a tribute to this group's esprit de corps. This group's superior performance of duty is attested by the effect of this attack on subsequent enemy resistance. The heroism and devotion to duty displayed by the 450th Bombardment Group on this, as on all other missions, is deserving of the highest commendation.

By command of Brigadier General RUSH:

ERNEST L. WALTERS,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:



ERNEST L. WALTERS,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Adjutant.

DISTRIBUTION: A plus
2 C.G., AAF, Washington,
25, D.C. Attn: AC/AS
I.H. Division.

R E S T R I C T E D



Colonel John S. Mills, Commanding Officer of the 450th receiving the Silver Star Medal, awarded for his gallant leadership in the attack against Ploesti Marshalling Yards on April 5, 1944.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-bar

22 April 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 262)

| | |
|--|-----|
| Award, Posthumous, of the Silver Star | I |
| Awards of the Silver Star | II |
| Awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross | III |

SECTION II -- AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in cable No. 9782, Headquarters NATOUSA, 5 December 1943, and Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the Silver Star is awarded the following named personnel, residence and citation as indicated:

JOHN S. MILLS, O-17106, Colonel, Air Corps, Headquarters, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. For gallantry in action. On 5 April 1944, Colonel Mills was wing leader of a formation of five (5) heavy bombardment groups on a vital mission to bomb an enemy oil production and rail center in Rumania. An intense fog delayed the take-off for two (2) hours, but in spite of this initial set-back, realizing the importance of the target, Colonel Mills was determined to carry out the assigned mission. Approaching the target area the formation was intercepted by approximately ninety (90) enemy fighters which made coordinated attacks from all sides of the formation. Despite the persistence of these fighter attacks, the intense barrage of enemy flak, and the partial concealment of the target by a smoke screen, Colonel Mills remained on course, bringing his formation through for an extremely successful bombing run, which resulted in the destruction of one (1) distillation unit, four (4) storage tanks, a car loading station, and covered the target with forty-seven (47) direct hits. In addition to the bombing damaged caused by his superior and gallant leadership of the formation, the lead group alone destroyed twenty-seven (27) enemy aircraft in the air, with our losses held to a minimum. By his extraordinary professional skill and superior leadership, in carrying out a mission of the highest strategic importance despite opposition and adverse conditions, Colonel Mills has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Appleton, Wisconsin.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

J. M. IVINS,
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

I CERTIFY THIS TO BE A TRUE COPY:

Robert A. Schmitt
ROBERT A. SCHMITT, 1st Lt. AC.

R E S T R I C T E D

C O N F I D E N T I A L

P R O P O S E D C I T A T I O N

450th Bombardment Group (H). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict against the enemy. On 4 April 1944 the 450th Bombardment Group was notified to prepare a maximum number of aircraft for a mission against the ploesti marshalling yards in Rumania. The initial purpose of this mission was to disrupt the enemy's oil supply so vital to their operations on the Russian front, and to their interception of Allied strategic bombing. In spite of cold, heavy rains and mud, both ground and flying personnel worked feverishly through the night in a determined effort to place every available craft in the air. On 5 April 1944 forty (40) B-24 Liberator bombers loaded with maximum tonnage, took off for their important destination leading a wing formation. Lack of fighter cover made the formation more vulnerable at a time when the enemy had a powerful force available within interception range. While still one hour and ten minutes from the targets, enemy scout interceptors flew alongside presaging the attack that came twenty-five (25) minutes before target time. Approximately twelve (12) ME-109s dove out of the clouds and shot down three planes from the leading element. The enemy fighters increased in numbers and aggressiveness as the formation neared the target. JU-88s shot rockets trying desperately to break the bombing attack and over fifty (50) ME-109s, FW-190s and ME-110s

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Proposed Citation, cont'd

attacked viciously from all directions heedless of the heavy bursting flak. The gallant gunners of the 450th fought valiently and efficiently, accounting for the total destruction of fourteen (14) ME-109s, ten (10) FW-190s and three (3) JU-88s. Two (2) more were probably destroyed and nine (9) others were damaged. Our own losses, despite the enemy's terrific defenses, were only five (5) aircraft lost and nineteen (19) damaged, and four (4) men wounded on board. The enemy's attempt to obscure the target with smoke generators did not prevent the skilled bombardiers of the 450th from placing their bombs directly on the target causing enormous destruction and irreparable damage to the railroad installations and marshalling yards. The outstanding performance of the officers, the heroic determination and combat efficiency of the crews, together with the skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, is a tribute to the group's esprit de corps that reflects great credit upon 450th Bombardment Group and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

N A R R A T I V E S T A T E M E N T

On 4 April 1944 the 450th Bombardment Group (H) was notified to prepare a maximum number of aircraft for a highly important mission against the Ploesti marshalling yards. Inasmuch as Ploesti was the chief petroleum producing center for Germany, its marshalling yards were indispensable for the transportation of these vital supplies to the Eastern Front. A successful attack, therefore, would not only increase their supply problem, but it would deprive the hard pressed forces fighting on the southern Russian front of vitally needed petroleum. Despite the fact that successive missions to Steyr, Budapest and Bucharest had been flown in the preceding three days, in spite of the cold rains and muddy weather, both ground and flying personnel worked feverishly through the night in a determined effort to place every available aircraft in the air. At 11:17 on 5 April 1944, forty (40) B-24 Liberator bombers took off with a maximum bomb load and proceeded on course leading the 47th wing formation. Lack of fighter cover made the formation more vulnerable at a time when the Luftwaffe had over two hundred (200) single engined fighters and around fifty (50) twin engined interceptors along the route. Added to this number were the one hundred (100) fighters of the Roumanian Air Force, but these grave hazards only intensified the grim determination of the 450th to hold tight to their formation and follow the exact briefed course to the target. While still one hour and ten minutes from the target, two FW-190s flew alongside as observation scouts presaging the attacks that began 25 minutes before target time when ten to twelve (10-12) ME-109s dove out of the clouds from 12 o'clock high and shot down three planes from the leading element and in the ensuing air battle the aggressive interceptors attempted to break up the formation and nullify the mission. With the tenacity evinced in other similar attacks, the leader rallied his formation while the gunners countered with a lethal fire that sent ME-109s and FW-190s spinning to the ground in flames. The 450th fought its way valiently and courageously to the I. P. amidst the incessant and determined enemy opposition. In addition to the harrying fighters, heavy flak began to burst about them at this point, but the 450th fought on, poised for the bomb-run. The grim enemy fighters increased in numbers and in viciousness as the formation neared the target. They dived, they came in head on, in line abreast, in twos, in threes, and in fours unmindful of the bursting flak. Fifty to sixty (50-60) ME-109s and FW-190s attacked relentlessly, aided by ten (10) ME-110s and ten to fifteen (10-15) JE-88s which shot rockets into the bombers formation in an effort to break up and disperse the courageous attackers. All conceivable tactics were employed by the Luftwaffe, but their vaunted aggressiveness

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Narrative Statement, cont'd

and skill was unable to disperse the steady bombers whose sole objective was to reach and destroy the target. Almost one hundred (100) enemy interceptors were over the target area when the bombardiers took over for that short interval during which they placed their bombs in an excellent pattern right on the target. But the battle was not over. The enemy fighters, still intent upon the kill, followed the 450th for twenty-five (25) minutes after the bombs were released, managing to knock down two (2) more bombers, but not until the brave and resolute gunners had exacted a heavy toll of fourteen (14) ME-109s, ten (10) FW-190s, and three (3) JE-88s, all of which went down in flames. Two more were probably destroyed and nine were damaged. The enemy's attempt to obscure the target with smoke generators was an added hazard that failed to prevent the 450th from causing a terrific destruction which photo reconnaissance verified as several hits on distillation units, direct hits on four (4) storage tanks, ten (10) direct hits on a building, forty (40) direct hits on installations and loading stations, twenty-four (24) hits on the railroad overpass, and seven (7) direct hits on the north choke point of the marshalling yards. After inflicting this enormous damage on the Nazis' most strategic supply center, the 450th rallied its formation under fire and fought its way home with nineteen (19) holed ships, five lost, and four wounded men on board. The outstanding performance of the leaders of this mission, the heroic determination and combat efficiency of the crews, together with the skill and intense devotion to duty of all the ground personnel, is a tribute to this group's esprit de corps in the face of overwhelming odds. The successful leadership of the 450th Bombardment Group in opening the aerial campaign against Ploesti on that memorable 5th of April is attested by the subsequent effects on enemy resistance, and the heroism displayed in bringing this about reflects great credit upon the group and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520, U. S. ARMY

6 April 1944

SPECIAL NARRATIVE MISSION REPORT NO. 45
MISSION: 5 April 1944 - FLORESTI M/Y.

I. CHRONOLOGY

40 B-24s took off at 1117 hours to bomb Floresti M/Y and adjacent industrial area. 6 returned early. 28 dropped 84 tons of 500# G.P. bombs, $\frac{1}{2}$ fused (.10-.025) and $\frac{1}{2}$ fused (.10-.01), on target at 1437 hours from 21,000 - 22,000'. 1 jettisoned 3 tons at 43°58'N, 22°39'E due to engine failure. Of the six early returns, 3 jettisoned 9 tons in the Adriatic and 3 returned 9 tons to base. 29 returned to base at 1723 hours. 5 lost. None missing. None at friendly fields.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvoused with the 98th Bomb. Group at 1203 hours at 6000' over Manduria and with the remainder of the group on rendezvous line to San Vito D'Normannie at same altitude. Continued on course until TP was reached (Conita), then made right turn onto target attacking on an axis of 102°. Ballied right and continued on course to Vidin, to key point and base. No rendezvous was made with fighters on route out but contact was made with 30/40 P-38s on route back at 1510 hours over Craiova 44°19'N, 23°48'E.

III. RESULTS

Just prior to the target it was observed that there was some obscurity due to smoke from pots but the haze was light and certain identification features could be seen. The target area was well covered with much damage done. Photo coverage showed several direct hits on distillation units (M-N-18) T.C. 11-101-B-NA which started a large fire and caused a huge explosion. Another fire and explosion was caused by hits on 4 large storage tanks (P-17). Still another fire was started by 10 direct hits on large building (M-16) believed to be tank car loading station and among tank cars. There were several direct hits on SE end of Spur M/Y (N-17) among cars and installations with resultant fires. 40 hits were recorded: on installations at SE of M/Y (O-18), 24 hits on R. R. overpass and installations at (J-19), direct hits on installations at (I-20) and 7 direct hits in the north choke point of M/Y at K-16.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: At 1313 hours or 1 hour, 10 minutes before target time 2 FW 190s were seen flying in from the south and they stayed with our formation until the first attack was made acting as observers and, without doubt, radioing information as to strength and heading to attacking units. Our group was jumped 25 minutes from the target by 10/12 ME 190s at 44°30'N, 24°30'E who, using cloud cover, made a surprise attack from 12 o'clock high. These A/C dived through the first attack unit directing their major power at the high right element and came up under the second attack unit. Three of our A/C were shot out of formation with this first pass. The attack was coordinated and the fighters came through in twos, threes and fours. They would rally to the rear of our formation make a side pass,

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT NO. 45 (Continued)

MISSION: 5 April 1944 - PLOESTI W/Y.

gain altitude and then use the same tactics again. Somewhat closer to the target the enemy resistance increased and 50/60 ME 190s and FW 190s, 10 ME 110s and 10/15 JU 88s were seen. Attacks were made from all angles, singly and by pairs, closing to within 50' before either pulling up or diving under. Coordinated attacks came from 6 o'clock low by formations of six flying two abreast, closing to 50/100 yards and breaking away on either side in a diving turn following by a split S and then raking the under side of the attacked A/C. No break off in intensity was noted over target and enemy fighters flew through flak to harass our formation. JU 88s stood off at 600/800 yards and fired rockets apparently directing the fire at the lead ships in each attack element. Few closures were made by this type ship. All attacks were broken off 15 minutes past target. The fighter pilots were either very experienced or were driven by desperation. Our claims during this engagement are as follows; Destroyed 10 FW 190s, 14 ME 109s and 3 JU 88s. Probable 2 ME 109s and 2 FW 190s. Markings; ME 109 - black cowlings, grey and silver wings and fuselages and yellow and orange spinners; FW 190 - grey fuselage, black wings and yellow and orange noses; JU 88 - black fuselage and wings. One ME 109 had British markings on the underneath side of each wing while 1 FW 190 painted yellow and green fuselage and wings with yellow nose had American insignia on the top of left wing.

B. Flak: Over I.P. (Ocnița) this group experienced, good, heavy flak while at target it was moderate good, heavy. In both cases it was predictor armed but at target it also seemed to be of the barrage variety particularly around the W/Y. On the route out flak was encountered at Nis and it was intense, good heavy. 19 of our A/C were holed.

V. SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

A. Communications: At 1352 hours from 18,000' 10 steam engines and 300 cars seen in W/Y at Vidine. At 1335 hours from 16,000' at 43°29'N, 21°44'E a 20 car train in steam heading south.

B. Flak Positions: None pinpointed.

C. Smoke Screens: A smoke screen, somewhat ineffective was initiated at the target. Smoke pots seemed to ring the entire city and were along every road in the Southeast, south and southwest sections. Pots also were seen around the W/Y and all around the refinery area.

D. Naval: At 1524 hours from 19,000' 15 river tows consisting of a tug and 5/10 barges were seen in the Danube near Vidine going east. The Danube seemed to be very active and conveying large amounts of traffic. At 1638 hours from 7000' a large freighter was seen at 41°57'N, 19°09'E. Also at this point were many mine nets off the coast. From 20,000' 15 boats were seen in the harbor at 44°00'E, 22°52'E. From 6500' a large M/V was seen in the harbor at 42°05'N, 18°37'E. From 6000' a freighter was seen at 41°55'N, 19°10'E.

E. Radar: From 6500' at 42°05'N, 19°05'E the screen in the pathfinder ship picked up a radar station which seemed to be directly below.

F. Air: At 1425 hours from 21,000' at 44°50'N, 25°15'E our A/C no. 950 was

SPECIAL NARRATIVE REPORT NO. 45 (Continued)
 MISSION: 5 April 1944 - PLOESTI W/Y.

attacked by ME 109s and shot down - no chutes out. At 1442 hours from 20,500' at 44°50'N, 25°50'E our A/C No. 757 was seen with engine smoking and immediately started to spin down - 3 chutes out and opened. At 1432 hours from 21,000' 1 B-24 down - 4 chutes out and opened. At 1440 hours from 21,000' 1 B-24 blew up - no chutes out. At 1450 hours from 21,000' 1 B-24 with engine on fire - 5 chutes out and opened. At 1450 hours from 20,000' 10 miles southwest of target 2 ME 109s destroyed by low left element - 1 ME 109 blew up and the pilot in the other bailed out.

VI. CONCLUSIONS:

A. Total Losses:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| From Flak | 0 |
| From Fighters | 5 (7 chutes seen to open) |
| Other reasons | 0 |

B. Damage:

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| From Flak | 19 (None serious) |
| From fighters | 5 (None serious) |
| Other reasons | 0 |

C. Casualties:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| From Flak | |
| Killed | 0 |
| Seriously wounded | 0 |
| Slightly wounded | 4 |
| From fighters | |
| Killed | 0 |
| Seriously wounded | 0 |
| Slightly wounded | 0 |

D. Victories: (Claim sheets being submitted)

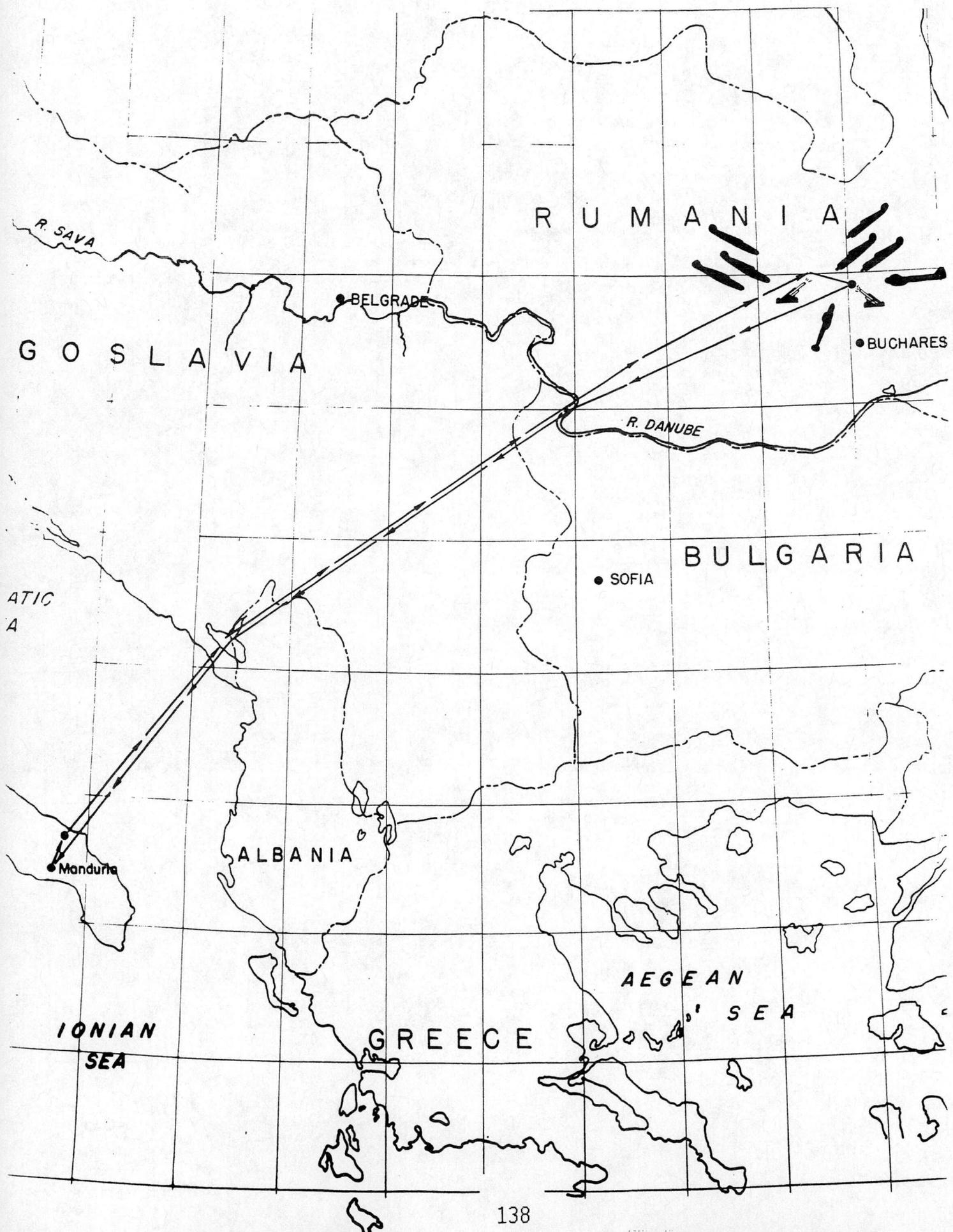
| <u>Destroyed</u> | <u>Probably Destroyed</u> | <u>Damaged</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 10 FW 190 | 2 FW 190 | 0 |
| 14 ME 109 | | |
| 3 JU 88 | | |

E. Corrections on Telephone Mission Report not included above: None.

I CERTIFY THIS TO BE A TRUE COPY:

Francis M. Harwood
 FRANCIS M. HARWOOD, Major, AC.

JAMES A. MCKAY,
 Major, Air Corps,
 Group S-2.



C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S - 2 SECTION

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED STRATEGIC AIR FORCE

INTORS SUMMARY NO. 258

PERIOD: 2400 hours, 4 April to 2400 hours, 5 April.

E X T R A C T

* * * * *

1. PLOESTI MARSHALLING YARDS: The 47 wing going into the target first engaged about 125/150 E/A (ME 109, FW 190, ME 110, 210, 410 and JU 88) just before, through and for 40 minutes beyond the target. The attacks were generally very aggressive, the E/A attacking from all around the clock, singly and, in some instances in mass frontal attacks of 20 a/c from above. Some E/A fired rockets.

* * * * *

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY


FRANCIS M. HARWOOD,
Major, Air Corps,
S - 2 officer.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S - 2 SECTION

MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED STRATEGIC AIR FORCE

U.S. FIFTEENTH
205 GROUP R.A.F.

P L O E S T I

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS RESULTS AND TACTICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN 24 ATTACKS

BETWEEN 5 APRIL 19 AUGUST 1944

E X T R A C T

* * * * *

THE AIR BATTLE OF PLOESTI

A General Summary of operations and results.

At the time of the 5 April attack the PLOESTI refineries were potentially capable of a crude oil throughput capacity of 709,000 tons per month. Actual estimated production at this time was 458,000 tons of crude throughput per month of which 177,000 tons represented maximum gasoline production - approximately one-third of the total AXIS gasoline output.

* * * * *

▲ TRUE EXTRACT COPY

Francis M. Harwood

FRANCIS M. HARWOOD,
Major, Air Corps.
S - 2 Officer.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S - 2 SECTION

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

AIR INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 22

For Week Ending 9 April, 1944.

E X T R A C T

* * * * *

RECENT ENEMY TACTICS

Last Week's Opposition

5 April: Some 150 enemy aircraft were encountered over Ploesti by Fifteenth Air Force planes. These were mostly ME-109a and FW-190s, with a few twin-engine aircraft. The attacks were aggressive from all around the clock; single and in some instances in mass frontal attacks of 20 aircraft from above. Some of the aircraft were rocket-equipped.

* * * * *

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY


FRANCIS M. HARWOOD,
Major, Air Corps,
S - 2 Officer.

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
S - 2 SECTION

HEADQUARTERS MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES A-2 SECTION

AIR INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY NO. 73

10 April 1944

E X T R A C T

* * * * *

PART II

ALLIED AERIAL OPERATIONS

1. SUMMARY OF WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

On 5 April the Ploesti marshalling yards had 588 tons of H.E. and incendiary bombs dropped on them by 136 Liberators and 95 Fortresses, which were covered by 132 Lightnings and 43 Thunderbolts. Considerable damage was caused to the main marshalling yard and the sidings which lead to the oil refineries. Several strings of H.E.'s fell in the repair shop area and on the nearby munitions factory, and direct hits damaged the oil loading stations. Huge explosions and much smoke came from the entire area. Again the enemy put up a strong force of fighters, approximately 150 being seen, and of these, 83 were shot down. 21 probably destroyed and 4 damaged.

* * * * *

▲ TRUE EXTRACT COPY


FRANCIS M. HARWOOD,
Major, Air Corps,
S - 2 Officer.

S E C R E T

STRIKE ASSESSMENT REPORT

GROUP: 400th Bombardment Group (H)

TARGET: Floesti M/Y

Target Chart No: 11-101-NA

OPERATION: 5 April 1944 at 1437 hours

BOOMBS DROPPED: 324 x 500 lb. G.P. booms from 21000 feet.

BOOMB STRIKES PLOTTED ON PHOTOS:

STRIKE ASSESSMENT:

1. Many direct hits on the target at the SE end of spur M/Y (N-17) among cars and installations causing a large fire.
2. Direct hits on four (4) large storage tanks (P-17) starting large fire.
3. Ten (10) direct hits on large building (M-16) (believe to be tank car loading station) causing large fire in the building and among the tank cars.
4. Several direct hits on the distillation units (MN-18) starting a large fire, and causing a great explosion.
5. Forty (40) hits on installations at SE of M/Y (O-18).
6. Twenty-four (24) hits on RR overpass and installations at J-19.
7. Direct hits on installations at I-20.
8. Seven (7) direct hits in the N-choke point of M/Y at K-16.

REMARKS: The target area was well covered with much damage. Numerous small smoke pots were in operation in the target area. They were ineffective, producing only a light haze over the target area.

Borden S. Chronister
BORDEN S. CHRONISTER,
PHOTO INTERPRETER,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), AAF
APO 520 US ARMY

8 April 1944

SUBJECT: Missing Air Crews on mission over Ploesti, Rumania, 5 April 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, 450th Bomb. Gp. (H), APO 520, U. S. Army.

The following is a roster of crews by squadrons reported missing in action as of 5 April 1944 on mission over Ploesti, Rumania:

| <u>RANK</u> | <u>NAME</u> | <u>A. S. No.</u> | <u>CREW POSITION</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| <u>720th Bombardment Squadron (H)</u> | | | |
| 2d Lt. | Donald F. Wagner | 0-735844 | P |
| 2d Lt. | Francis L. Kitson | 0-680455 | CP |
| 2d Lt. | Elvyn G. Hopper | 0-690425 | N |
| 2d Lt. | Richard E. Brannon | 0-752311 | B |
| T Sgt. | Stephen W. Kusmirak | 33285555 | AEG |
| T Sgt. | Lloyd K. Kittleson | 39680056 | ROG |
| S Sgt. | Robert A. Peterson | 16014998 | AAEG |
| S Sgt. | Edward L. Clapprood | 31149526 | AROG |
| S Sgt. | Lawrence R. Miller | 39304578 | AO |
| S Sgt. | Charles E. Fasolas | 33286674 | AAO |
| F O | Warner T. Ralls | T-121902 | P |
| 1st Lt. | Robert W. Edwards | 0-1699465 | CP |
| 2d Lt. | Harry L. Lamb | 0-690669 | N |
| 2d Lt. | Thomas H. Allen | 0-688733 | B |
| T Sgt. | William J. Signs | 35347128 | AEG |
| T Sgt. | Joseph T. Baz | 15354645 | ROG |
| Sgt. | Howard L. Stults | 16087657 | AROG |
| Sgt. | Walter Clive | 32670945 | AAEG |
| S Sgt. | Michael Dellario | 32374098 | AO |
| S Sgt. | Melvin L. Openshaw | 39551615 | AAO |
| 1st Lt. | Frank C. Marpe | 0-681454 | P |
| 2d Lt. | Richard Middleton | 0-748209 | CP |
| 2d Lt. | Joseph J. Joyce | 0-809625 | N |
| 2d Lt. | Lawrence R. Guthrie | 0-682027 | B |
| T Sgt. | Joe W. Dunn | 14185626 | AEG |

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Ltr, re SAC Pleesti on J APR '44, dated 8 Apr '44.

| | | | |
|--------|--------------------|----------|------|
| T Sgt. | Francis A. Matan | 11102489 | ROG |
| S Sgt. | Earl E. Boren | 34395963 | AAEG |
| S Sgt. | Marion D. Anderson | 18082213 | AROG |
| S Sgt. | Jay R. Adair | 39835372 | AG |
| S Sgt. | Oscar C. Barnhill | 38135277 | AAG |

721st Bombardment Squadron (H)

| | | | |
|--------|--------------------|----------|----|
| S Sgt. | Thomas R. Tornillo | 32466984 | AG |
|--------|--------------------|----------|----|

722d Bombardment Squadron (H)

| | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------|------|
| 2d Lt. | Rex A. Beene | 0-680157 | P |
| 2d Lt. | Robert E. Cheesman | 0-695037 | CP |
| 2d Lt. | Winfield P. Cowgill | 0-814255 | N |
| 2d Lt. | Harold E. Golengeske | 0-690802 | B |
| Sgt. | Roland T. H. Jensen | 37441490 | AEG |
| S Sgt. | Laverne Keevert | 35527757 | ROG |
| Sgt. | John C. Domoracki | 15323567 | AAEG |
| Sgt. | Willard A. Rabe | 18190535 | AROG |
| Sgt. | Miles F. Schmidt | 33235727 | AG |
| Sgt. | Sol Rosen | 35474341 | AAG |

723d Bombardment Squadron (H)

| | | | |
|---------|------------------------|----------|------|
| 1st Lt. | Francis V. Lael | 0-667525 | P |
| 1st Lt. | Ralph R. Rickey | 0-684813 | CP |
| 2d Lt. | Edward C. Roberts, Jr. | 0-690718 | N |
| 2d Lt. | Eugene F. Hagenson | 0-682028 | B |
| T Sgt. | William W. Turrentine | 15013407 | AEG |
| S Sgt. | Russell H. Preihs | 16143400 | ROG |
| S Sgt. | Cyril J. Chadwell | 34189291 | AAEG |
| Sgt. | Edgar Carroll | 31247314 | AROG |
| S Sgt. | John A. Mytych | 32691718 | AG |
| Sgt. | Otto J. Doepcke | 37654332 | AAG |

Robert A. Schmitt

ROBERT A. SCHMITT,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Statistical officer.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

29 November 1944.

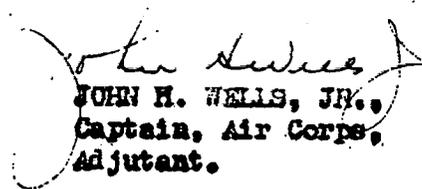
SUBJECT: Roster of Officers.

TO : Awards and Decorations Officer, 450th Bombardment Group (H), APO 520.

1. Transmitted herewith is complete roster of officers in Headquarters as of 5 April 1944.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>A.S.N.</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Mills, John S. | Colonel | 0-017106 |
| Gideon, Robert R., Jr. | Lt. Colonel | 0-022064 |
| Price, Orlie | Lt. Colonel | 0-304766 |
| Donovan, Clarence J. | Major | 0-906477 |
| McHany, James A. | Major | 0-904660 |
| Smith, William G. | Major | 0-399635 |
| Thorpe, George L. | Major | 0-369206 |
| Burt, Slayden V. | Captain | 0-506112 |
| Jackson, Thomas W. | Captain | 0-854348 |
| Kuecker, Henry C. | Captain | 0-728282 |
| MacQueen, Henry C. | Captain | 0-364961 |
| Stevens, Paul M. | Captain | 0-508880 |
| Vogel, Charles W. | Captain | 0-649574 |
| Wright, Louis A. | Captain | 0-431690 |
| Andrews, George H. | 1st Lieut | 0-861414 |
| Baker, Frank L. | 1st Lieut | 0-901568 |
| Campa, Arthur L. | 1st Lieut | 0-577066 |
| Chronister, Borden S. | 1st Lieut | 0-571260 |
| Gandy, Frank B., Jr. | 1st Lieut | 0-862278 |
| Goldvarg, Jerome R. | 1st Lieut | 0-795232 |
| Hollands, Wilbur C. | 1st Lieut | 0-577951 |
| Jackson, Russell C. | 1st Lieut | 0-856958 |
| Ring, William E. | 1st Lieut | 0-1551720 |
| Robinson, Charles W. | 1st Lieut | 0-856531 |
| Schmitt, Robert A. | 1st Lieut | 0-649706 |

By order of Lt. Colonel JACOBY:


JOHN H. WELLS, JR.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

29 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Roster of Enlisted Personnel.

TO : Awards and Decorations Officer, 450th Bombardment Group (H), APO 520.

1. Transmitted herewith is complete roster of enlisted personnel in Headquarters as of 5 April 1944.

| Name | Rank | AsS.N. |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Batters, Emil A. | M Sgt | 96212585 |
| Bord, Robert H. | M Sgt | 14068115 |
| Brinkhoff, Stephen | M Sgt | 92403783 |
| Silverman, Martin A. | M Sgt | 97287967 |
| Carlson, Paul S. | T Sgt | 37124180 |
| Flanagan, Joseph C. | T Sgt | 91215969 |
| Lillis, Richard M. | T Sgt | 31168533 |
| Montretti, William E. | T Sgt | 39909459 |
| McCool, Oliver H. | T Sgt | 32624226 |
| Moore, John L. | T Sgt | 93569326 |
| Pedrick, William H. | T Sgt | 32063491 |
| Petry, King D., Jr. | T Sgt | 15087881 |
| Wilson, Thomas F. | T Sgt | 6903318 |
| Abraham, Howard E. | S Sgt | 19077471 |
| Blaise, Howard W. | S Sgt | 11000267 |
| Byles, John C. | S Sgt | 94761463 |
| Campbell, John E. | S Sgt | 11037627 |
| Joyce, William E. | S Sgt | 31040106 |
| Loada, Harry E. | S Sgt | 36127969 |
| Michowski, Emil P. | S Sgt | 35154539 |
| Falkington, Harold E. | S Sgt | 96696000 |
| Ferguson, Marvin G. | S Sgt | 19143150 |
| Whidden, James H. | S Sgt | 34444548 |
| Woolley, Robert W. | S Sgt | 39834928 |
| Avainkangas, Urho J. | Sgt | 97288726 |
| Haina, Vincent J. | Sgt | 36480520 |
| Herman, Joseph D. | Sgt | 32885195 |
| Hart, Howard W. | Sgt | 33274027 |
| Johnson, Walter C., Jr. | Sgt | 36644889 |
| Lipnick, Albert J. | Sgt | 11040109 |
| Price, Richard M. | Sgt | 34548345 |
| Murray, Francis B. | Sgt | 33464321 |
| Sanderson, James W. | Sgt | 36457027 |

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|----------|
| Thomas, Earl H. | Sgt | 32885137 |
| Witte, Harry A. | Sgt | 39013235 |
| Bauer, Crawford A. | Cpl | 39109931 |
| Bishop, Wilfred J. | Cpl | 11129800 |
| Conner, George H. | Cpl | 31284665 |
| Cunningham, William F. | Cpl | 12123869 |
| Dumont, David W., Jr. | Cpl | 15383639 |
| Fishleder, Eli | Cpl | 32872670 |
| Hiligren, Joseph M. | Cpl | 39037222 |
| Iranda, Frank H. | Cpl | 33541917 |
| Polain, Stephen H. | Cpl | 36014449 |
| Serra, Charles E. | Cpl | 35547685 |
| Stark, Theodore R. | Cpl | 37181038 |
| Swilmer, Albert J. | Cpl | 33323000 |
| Ohlson, Lucio F. | Pfc | 39413439 |
| Ritaria, Fred J. | Pfc | 33605180 |
| Gamm, Gilberto M. | Pfc | 38251246 |
| Johnson, Edward B. | Pfc | 36480480 |
| Kessel, Lawrence F. | Pfc | 32196850 |
| Fahst, Jesse J. | Pfc | 36598128 |
| Zak, Stephen | Pfc | 32992958 |
| Sauvagnot, John H. | Pvt | 35754960 |

By order of Lt. Colonel JACOBY:

John H. Wells, Jr.
 JOHN H. WELLS, JR.
 Captain, Air Corps,
 Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S AIR

29 November 1944

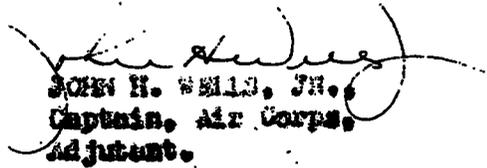
SUBJECT: Roster of Officers (Attached).

TO : Awards and Decorations Officer, 450th Bombardment Group (H), APO 520.

1. Transmitted herewith is complete roster of officers attached to this Headquarters as of 5 April 1944.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASST</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Thomas, David A. | Captain | C-922570 |
| Wekler, Charles S. | 1st Lieut | C-923411 |
| Mark, Sherwood A. | 2nd Lieut | C-924516 |

By order of Lt. Colonel JACOBY:


JOHN H. WELLS, JR.
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

29 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Roster of Enlisted Personnel (Attached).

TO : Awards and Decorations Officer, 450th Bombardment Group (H), APO 520.

1. Transmitted herewith is a complete roster of enlisted personnel attached to this Headquarters as of 5 April 1944.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>Serials</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Russo, Anthony A. | T Sgt | 20249493 |
| Sheehan, William J. | S Sgt | 32009958 |
| Horton, James H. | Sgt | 1111246 |
| Kouklis, George G., Jr. | Pfc | 19161459 |

By order of Lt. Colonel J. COBY:

John H. Miller, Jr.
JOHN H. MILLER, JR.
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS
720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
OFFICE OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER

/rb

APO 520, US ARMY
29 November 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Officers.

TO : Awards & Decorations Officer, 450th Bomb Group (H),
A. P. O. 520, U. S. Army.

1. Transmitted herewith is complete roster of Officers in the
720th Bombardment Squadron as of 5 April 1944.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>A.S.N.</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| NORTH, DONALD G. | Major | 0-449882 |
| CAYWOOD, GRANT D. | Captain | 0-387512 |
| COLLEY, GORDON T. | Captain | 0-412089 |
| ROBINSON, FLOYD I. | Captain | 0-24769 |
| WAGNER, ALFRED W. | Captain | 0-471088 |
| WEBER, VERNE A. | Captain | 0-902772 |
| BROWN, ROBERT L. | 1st Lieut | 0-798738 |
| CARR, ROLLAND R. | 1st Lieut | 0-734425 |
| CORREIA, WILLIAM P. | 1st Lieut | 0-1559975 |
| EDWARDS, ROBERT W. | 1st Lieut | 0-1699465 |
| FRENCH, GERALD M. | 1st Lieut | 0-685248 |
| JOHN, ERNEST F. | 1st Lieut | 0-681426 |
| LEIGH, LEON H. | 1st Lieut | 0-667311 |
| LEY, EDmund A. | 1st Lieut | 0-735806 |
| MALCOLM, WALTER T. | 1st Lieut | 0-578485 |
| MARPE, FRANK C. JR | 1st Lieut | 0-681454 |
| PHEBUS, JAMES E. | 1st Lieut | 0-864930 |
| RHODEHAMEL, HARLEY W. JR | 1st Lieut | 0-856621 |
| RYNE, JACK W. | 1st Lieut | 0-861711 |
| SMITH, DALTON W. | 1st Lieut | 0-663192 |
| WELLS, JOHN H. JR | 1st Lieut | 0-579625 |
| WILLIAMS, MAX L. JR | 1st Lieut | 0-511689 |
| WRIGHT, JAMES G. | 1st Lieut | 0-442499 |
| ADKINS, JOHN D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690342 |
| ADRIAN, ELMER | 2nd Lieut | 0-691137 |
| ALLEN, THOMAS H. | 2nd Lieut | 0-688733 |
| ALLEN, QUENTIN | 2nd Lieut | 0-695288 |
| AMSTER, LOUIS | 2nd Lieut | 0-688896 |
| ANDERSON, RICHARD D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-809997 |

Roster of Officers (29 Nov 44, 720th Bomb Sq)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| AUGUSTENBERG, JORGEN H. J. | 2nd Lieut | 0-684223 |
| BAHTI, LENUS A. | 2nd Lieut | 0-691468 |
| BARNETT, VICTOR D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-810970 |
| BAUDER, FRANCIS D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-695793 |
| BECHTEL, DONALD R. | 2nd Lieut | 0-684241 |
| BELL, EDWARD W. | 2nd Lieut | 0-747567 |
| BOYLE, GLEN E. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690621 |
| CANTRELL, PAUL B. | 2nd Lieut | 0-795355 |
| COUNTS, DAVE | 2nd Lieut | 0-688926 |
| GUMMINGS, RICHARD S. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690059 |
| GUNNINGHAM, CHARLES E. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-684292 |
| DE KRAKER, DONALD | 2nd Lieut | 0-690381 |
| EBERT, JOHN C. | 2nd Lieut | 0-753869 |
| ERICKSON, MAURICE A. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-795031 |
| FARMER, ROBERT L. | 2nd Lieut | 0-661089 |
| FELDER, HAROLD A. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690070 |
| FOSTER, HARRY L. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-690944 |
| FOX, JACK E. | 2nd Lieut | 0-694357 |
| GLADSTONE, HAROLD E. | 2nd Lieut | 0-682571 |
| GOULDON, HERBERT | 2nd Lieut | 0-809270 |
| GUEHRIG, LAWRENCE B. | 2nd Lieut | 0-682027 |
| HAGEN, EARLE Q. | 2nd Lieut | 0-747011 |
| HANNAH, LEWIS D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690649 |
| HART, THOMAS F. | 2nd Lieut | 0-690416 |
| JEFF, JOHN L. | 2nd Lieut | 0-805476 |
| LESSARD, LOUIS W. | 2nd Lieut | 0-694792 |
| LITTLEFIELD, HERBERT J. | 2nd Lieut | 0-689475 |
| MALARKEY, JOHN E. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-690472 |
| MARKOWITZ, FRED P. | 2nd Lieut | 0-697046 |
| MAYO, HARRY B. | 2nd Lieut | 0-693300 |
| MILES, JAMES F. | 2nd Lieut | 0-728500 |
| MILES, LAWRENCE H. | 2nd Lieut | 0-749728 |
| NATHANSON, JULIUS | 2nd Lieut | 0-759820 |
| OLNEY, VINCENT H. | 2nd Lieut | 0-687340 |
| PARK, ARTHUR D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-752354 |
| PERKINS, JACK R. | 2nd Lieut | 0-683771 |
| POLCE, JOHN L. | 2nd Lieut | 0-689649 |
| RAFFERTY, EDWARD | 2nd Lieut | 0-819552 |
| READY, GEORGE T. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-864397 |
| RIEBACK, ROBERT H. | 2nd Lieut | 0-698146 |
| SAMBS, MARSHALL W. | 2nd Lieut | 0-696152 |
| SHACKLEFORD, LEWIS F. | 2nd Lieut | 0-818953 |
| SKAU, WILLIAM H. | 2nd Lieut | 0-685041 |
| SMITH, LAWRENCE J. | 2nd Lieut | 0-809749 |
| STEBBINGS, HARRY T. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-804419 |
| STRICKLIN, ROBERT D. | 2nd Lieut | 0-689555 |
| TEED, ALBERT S. JR | 2nd Lieut | 0-749628 |
| TODD, VICTOR K. | 2nd Lieut | 0-696820 |

Roster of Officers (29 Nov 44, 720th Bomb Sq)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|
| TOMLINSON, HAROLD E. | 2nd Lieut | O-509894 |
| TUNE, WILLIAM E. | 2nd Lieut | O-810970 |
| VARVIL, DONA V. | 2nd Lieut | O-749361 |
| WAGLER, DONALD F. | 2nd Lieut | O-735844 |
| WARD, JOHN W. JR | 2nd Lieut | O-691931 |
| WATSON, ROBERT C. | 2nd Lieut | O-700790 |
| WATSON, WINSTON C. | 2nd Lieut | O-691020 |
| WHITE, STANLEY A. | 2nd Lieut | O-691026 |
| | | |
| CARLSON, EDWARD E. | Flt Off | T-1546 |
| CHESTNUT, JAMES D. | Flt Off | T-1536 |
| MOONEY, RALPH T. | Flt Off | T-123945 |
| RALLS, WARNER T. | Flt Off | T-121902 |

For the Squadron Commander:

Robert S. Ogozalek
 ROBERT S. OGOZALEK
 1st Lt., Air Corps
 Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS
720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
OFFICE OF THE SQUADRON COMMANDER

/rb

APO 520, U S ARMY
4 December 1944

SUBJECT: Roster of Enlisted Men.

TO : Awards & Decorations Officer, 450th Bomb Group (H),
A. P. O. 520, U. S. Army.

1. Transmitted herewith is complete roster of Enlisted Men in the
720th Bombardment Squadron as of 5 April 1944.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Board, William M. | M Sgt | 35276380 |
| Centers, Dillard D. | M Sgt | 19055655 |
| Huber, Norman V. | M Sgt | 35285980 |
| Kosanovic, Samuel | M Sgt | 13085343 |
| Mason, Ralph J., Jr. | M Sgt | 20106013 |
| Plentis, Withold A. | M Sgt | 36057232 |
| Skinner, Frederick W. | M Sgt | 31128074 |
| | | |
| Aylesworth, Scott M., Jr. | T Sgt | 14163459 |
| Baz, Joseph T. | T Sgt | 15354645 |
| Gain, Burdette L. | T Sgt | 17089950 |
| Cannon, Walter O. | T Sgt | 34576601 |
| Clark, Julian C. | T Sgt | 7005862 |
| Culver, Robert B., Jr. | T Sgt | 16169319 |
| Dunn, Joe W. | T Sgt | 14185826 |
| Ester, Glenn W. | T Sgt | 15081890 |
| Evans, Merle A. | T Sgt | 37121106 |
| Kerr, Samuel B. | T Sgt | 34169332 |
| Kittelson, Lloyd K. | T Sgt | 39680056 |
| Kusmirak, Stephen W. | T Sgt | 33285555 |
| Matan, Francis A. | T Sgt | 11102489 |
| McDonald, William W. | T Sgt | 13080583 |
| McLaughlin, Bill L. | T Sgt | 35567235 |
| Reine, Roy W. | T Sgt | 39088899 |
| Selby, Bruce A. | T Sgt | 39536929 |
| Signs, William J. | T Sgt | 35347128 |
| Stoy, Harry M., Jr. | T Sgt | 18081439 |
| Stretch, Vincent P. | T Sgt | 37132869 |
| Swaeringen, Paul | T Sgt | 16146307 |
| Taylor, Herbert R. | T Sgt | 38137167 |
| Van Dausen, Donald | T Sgt | 12203261 |
| Ward, John L. | T Sgt | 14150983 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Wilson, Donald E. | T Sgt | 6919134 |
| Wilson, Homer B. | T Sgt | 12168550 |
| Wood, James A. | T Sgt | 33341008 |
| Adair, Jay R. | S Sgt | 39835372 |
| Ade, Donald | S Sgt | 12030988 |
| Allen, Lloyd H. | S Sgt | 14094760 |
| Anderson, Marion D. | S Sgt | 18082213 |
| Barkley, Howard R. | S Sgt | 39553433 |
| Barnhill, Oscar G. | S Sgt | 38135277 |
| Beckelic, James H. | S Sgt | 16043302 |
| Bernstein, Joseph | S Sgt | 13119892 |
| Beshore, Robert E. | S Sgt | 19094566 |
| Bishop, Ray | S Sgt | 6142127 |
| Blanchard, Elwell P. | S Sgt | 11085828 |
| Blue, Daniel, Jr. | S Sgt | 16143861 |
| Boren, Earl E., Jr. | S Sgt | 34395963 |
| Bowden, Avis L. | S Sgt | 38280002 |
| Boynton, Charles J. | S Sgt | 14133651 |
| Castro, Julio | S Sgt | 39842549 |
| Cirigliano, Angelo J. | S Sgt | 32781138 |
| Clapprood, Edward L. | S Sgt | 31149526 |
| Cox, Thomas S. | S Sgt | 32377949 |
| Craven, Robert J. W. | S Sgt | 12064177 |
| Cuellar, Guauhtemoc R. | S Sgt | 38092622 |
| Deferari, Joseph A. | S Sgt | 11094451 |
| Dellarico, Michael | S Sgt | 32374098 |
| Esquivel, Manuel E., Jr. | S Sgt | 38312961 |
| Fasolas, Charles E. | S Sgt | 33286674 |
| Felchner, Charles C. | S Sgt | 36441150 |
| Fields, William O. | S Sgt | 37057591 |
| Fili, William J. | S Sgt | 13151977 |
| Finch, Jimmie C. | S Sgt | 38395917 |
| Foster, John G. | S Sgt | 39121479 |
| Francis, Harold L. | S Sgt | 32580104 |
| Frymore, Clarron J. | S Sgt | 35540139 |
| Grgurich, Frank | S Sgt | 35426225 |
| Griffin, Arlie L. | S Sgt | 14187905 |
| Grybel, Walter A. | S Sgt | 16148425 |
| Hackney, Richard S. | S Sgt | 17157885 |
| Haight, William J. | S Sgt | 12049710 |
| Haynes, William J. | S Sgt | 32399552 |
| Hecht, Russell J. | S Sgt | 37654204 |
| Hildreth, Norton R. | S Sgt | 16148895 |
| Hopkins, Wallace G. | S Sgt | 35597436 |
| Ives, Walter E. | S Sgt | 19114327 |
| Jacobson, Richard M. | S Sgt | 11115677 |
| Johnson, Stanley J. | S Sgt | 39266181 |
| Johnston, Norris E. | S Sgt | 17044070 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Jones, Thomas E. | S Sgt | 15377782 |
| Kirkland, Norman J. | S Sgt | 17076571 |
| Kourvelas, Charles P. | S Sgt | 34503266 |
| Kristal, Stanley L. | S Sgt | 20214091 |
| La Rivee, Leo H. | S Sgt | 11091483 |
| La Fountain, Leo H. | S Sgt | 12025374 |
| Laudon, Edward T. | S Sgt | 36007198 |
| Leasure, Richard B. | S Sgt | 35424465 |
| Leatherberry, Chester C. | S Sgt | 35335165 |
| L'Heureux, Armand J. | S Sgt | 31122494 |
| Long, Richard P. | S Sgt | 33015017 |
| Mancuso, Richard S. | S Sgt | 13107893 |
| Mann, William B., Jr. | S Sgt | 15394435 |
| Mason, John, Jr. | S Sgt | 35373694 |
| Miller, Lawrence R. | S Sgt | 39304578 |
| Modrowski, Theodore S. | S Sgt | 35574997 |
| Moen, Carl A., Jr. | S Sgt | 19179245 |
| Monkus, Victor J., Jr. | S Sgt | 13136982 |
| O'Brien, John F. | S Sgt | 31139102 |
| Openshaw, Melvin L. | S Sgt | 39551615 |
| Peterson, Robert A. | S Sgt | 16014998 |
| Phipps, Warren J. | S Sgt | 16013263 |
| Phillips, John | S Sgt | 36555222 |
| Phillips, Russell W. | S Sgt | 32385086 |
| Pratt, William T. | S Sgt | 36352945 |
| Randazzo, Jack M. | S Sgt | 32382357 |
| Roberts, Elwyn D. | S Sgt | 17154926 |
| Rodewald, Earl G. | S Sgt | 36245900 |
| Sanders, William N. | S Sgt | 14092396 |
| Schanel, Donald B. | S Sgt | 36629926 |
| Schoonover, Jack C. | S Sgt | 19112512 |
| Shaw, Leonard | S Sgt | 38298128 |
| Starkovich, John | S Sgt | 38168649 |
| Strickland, James E. | S Sgt | 14182383 |
| Strautman, Raymond M. | S Sgt | 16034427 |
| Tedford, Harley O., Jr. | S Sgt | 16129926 |
| Thomas, Seamon C. | S Sgt | 18150918 |
| VerDuin, Harold J. | S Sgt | 36276762 |
| Violet, Harold J. | S Sgt | 17033301 |
| Walters, John P. | S Sgt | 38149781 |
| Wasserman, Solomon | S Sgt | 12182533 |
| Webb, Thomas C. | S Sgt | 13047909 |
| Zaleski, Peter T. | S Sgt | 35559352 |
| Zawislak, Stanley P. | S Sgt | 33327553 |
| Zeller, William V. | S Sgt | 20252677 |
| | | |
| Aaron, William W. | Sgt | 16129924 |
| Allen, Joe D. | Sgt | 18202571 |
| Allen, Lawrence L. | Sgt | 39030409 |
| Avery, Eugene E., Jr. | Sgt | 31253105 |

Rooster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 December 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Anderson, Maxwell E. | Sgt | 38715677 |
| Anderson, Roy W. | Sgt | 16143047 |
| Arcand, Jean R. | Sgt | 11101497 |
| Barbee, Oscar L. | Sgt | 34463010 |
| Barlow, Fred W. | Sgt | 17087945 |
| Bartel, Harrison A. | Sgt | 39692585 |
| Belanger, Yves E. J. | Sgt | 31177794 |
| Bennett, Stanley J., Jr. | Sgt | 33279421 |
| Berg, James W. | Sgt | 16141630 |
| Bernard, Douglas A. | Sgt | 37474222 |
| Bianchi, George S. | Sgt | 19067099 |
| Bistritzky, Harry | Sgt | 39529611 |
| Black, Charles B. | Sgt | 34526677 |
| Brandelick, Martin W. | Sgt | 32883677 |
| Bramlett, Walter G. | Sgt | 35450664 |
| Browne, Jack H. | Sgt | 19183708 |
| Buckmann, Fred | Sgt | 12152783 |
| Buffum, Francis M. | Sgt | 12131176 |
| Butynski, Stanley S. | Sgt | 16151485 |
| Canary, Arthur D. | Sgt | 32293422 |
| Cettina, Frank N., Jr. | Sgt | 12158075 |
| Chapman, Frederick W. | Sgt | 36560854 |
| Christopher, Clifford | Sgt | 37520372 |
| Clive, Walter | Sgt | 32670945 |
| Collins, Bennett H. | Sgt | 38370093 |
| Corn, Jake L. | Sgt | 14137710 |
| Coryell, Jack | Sgt | 36505263 |
| Cottle, William A. | Sgt | 39906041 |
| Coulter, Neil F. | Sgt | 36589429 |
| Cox, James P. | Sgt | 14123981 |
| Crane, Charles H. | Sgt | 11079388 |
| Dachman, Perry | Sgt | 37333456 |
| Davis, James C. | Sgt | 6395689 |
| DesNoyers, Charles H. | Sgt | 34687399 |
| Dicamillo, John A. | Sgt | 32689423 |
| Dobbs, George F. | Sgt | 17048410 |
| Dudley, William C. | Sgt | 14075716 |
| Faolz, Norman J. | Sgt | 35551258 |
| Farwell, Ward M. | Sgt | 36475884 |
| Fenske, Norman C. | Sgt | 39555678 |
| Fox, Martin E. | Sgt | 14170799 |
| Freeman, Marvin R. | Sgt | 16168916 |
| Fruchtgarten, Milton H. | Sgt | 34076872 |
| Gauker, Ralph K. | Sgt | 33188197 |
| Gil de Rubio, Manuel | Sgt | 32862779 |
| Gilliam, Maurice H. | Sgt | 34607148 |
| Good, Lamar H. | Sgt | 18119038 |
| Haney, Randolph F. | Sgt | 13120901 |
| Hazara, Michael, Jr. | Sgt | 13053280 |
| Heffernan, Joseph J. | Sgt | 32497841 |
| Heinlen, Richard L. | Sgt | 37547245 |
| Henn, Frank W. | Sgt | 33675316 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Heytote, John | Sgt | 32558077 |
| Hodanich, Michael | Sgt | 33456951 |
| Holland, Horace J. | Sgt | 36531592 |
| Hopkins, Morris L. | Sgt | 39677387 |
| Huish, Alfred L., Jr | Sgt | 19106469 |
| Humphries, Harold | Sgt | 32888091 |
| Jamieson, Howard C. | Sgt | 20733467 |
| Jelly, William A. | Sgt | 32605947 |
| Jones, Charles E. | Sgt | 19102229 |
| Jones, Garnett H. | Sgt | 13027541 |
| Kanner, Louis | Sgt | 32329384 |
| Kelley, Robert G. | Sgt | 33757967 |
| Kulenkamp, Donald L. | Sgt | 16026738 |
| Lash, Kenneth E. | Sgt | 33188158 |
| LeMond, Nolan H. | Sgt | 39089417 |
| Lochte, Charles W. | Sgt | 32579655 |
| Louvier, Robert U. | Sgt | 38341710 |
| Mendanyohl, Joseph A. | Sgt | 33550331 |
| Martin, James R. | Sgt | 14153409 |
| Mastropier, Leonard P. | Sgt | 33276486 |
| Mauritz, Edgar J. | Sgt | 16009469 |
| McAtee, Charles M. | Sgt | 13086146 |
| McGree, Vernon N. | Sgt | 34612328 |
| McEachon, Robert R. | Sgt | 32738653 |
| Mericle, Harold R. | Sgt | 35339319 |
| Miller, James I. | Sgt | 33565700 |
| Moody, Everett O., Jr | Sgt | 18168314 |
| Moore, Howard W. | Sgt | 32070879 |
| Morris, Theodore H. | Sgt | 37404715 |
| Murray, Alan H. | Sgt | 32165912 |
| Murphy, Daniel P. | Sgt | 33221864 |
| Neary, Robert P. | Sgt | 33489300 |
| Oakleaf, Roba C | Sgt | 18127087 |
| Peterson, Lawrence F., Jr | Sgt | 16156752 |
| Rhinney, Rex V. | Sgt | 17098618 |
| Plummer, Bobby R. | Sgt | 18161598 |
| Pons, Clifton C. | Sgt | 14057145 |
| Rasmussen, Richard P. | Sgt | 17151775 |
| Reyes, Nicanor M. | Sgt | 32636356 |
| Rohrbaugh, William G. | Sgt | 35035853 |
| Rook, Robert R. | Sgt | 33435892 |
| Ryan, Paul J. | Sgt | 32751544 |
| Ryan, Terrence G. | Sgt | 31144802 |
| Sandy, Frank | Sgt | 33374339 |
| Schoenberger, Norman H. | Sgt | 33496805 |
| Schmit, Raymond H. | Sgt | 36262170 |
| Schultz, Lester L. | Sgt | 36281386 |
| Schwarten, Joseph F. | Sgt | 35429645 |
| Scheller, Carl F. | Sgt | 36296370 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Smith, Warren J. | Sgt | 36461614 |
| Spendlove, Duward | Sgt | 39679016 |
| Stults, Harold E. | Sgt | 16087657 |
| Swieca, Walter J. | Sgt | 32475525 |
| Terry, Robert N. | Sgt | 35369827 |
| Truex, Vincent G. | Sgt | 35563816 |
| Vaile, Donald E. | Sgt | 36640193 |
| Walsh, Joseph C. | Sgt | 20120199 |
| Waschak, John | Sgt | 33673548 |
| Wernett, Ralph W. | Sgt | 20329197 |
| West, Oscar D. | Sgt | 16154677 |
| Woodward, Norman L. | Sgt | 12168352 |
| Yandall, Lesley | Sgt | 38107176 |
| Yohann, Gordon P. | Sgt | 16155986 |
| | | |
| Adamson, Lars B. | Cpl | 32889580 |
| Alfonso, Mario P. | Cpl | 32765511 |
| Anderson, Joseph L. | Cpl | 13076303 |
| Ash, Tearl F. | Cpl | 34605527 |
| Ayers, Francis | Cpl | 34579465 |
| Bartholomew, Edward D. | Cpl | 33487897 |
| Basken, Howard M. | Cpl | 12159737 |
| Bertrand, Romeo C. | Cpl | 37467695 |
| Blackhurst, James H. | Cpl | 13128549 |
| Bonsall, Leo B. | Cpl | 37801986 |
| Bort, Sam | Cpl | 18143583 |
| Brady, Edward T. | Cpl | 92319380 |
| Brandt, Ammon L. | Cpl | 33387322 |
| Brown, Donald J. | Cpl | 35547521 |
| Bujno, Joseph L. | Cpl | 13046865 |
| Bukovac, Stephen | Cpl | 35172532 |
| Cain, Cletas A. Jr | Cpl | 38427768 |
| Campbell, James L. | Cpl | 14163447 |
| Campbell, Leonard E. | Cpl | 17166274 |
| Cangiano, James L. | Cpl | 32734992 |
| Carroll, John M. | Cpl | 36740247 |
| Clements, Joseph | Cpl | 32881043 |
| Cohan, Irving | Cpl | 32747283 |
| Comeau, Eugene A. | Cpl | 32632799 |
| Conkling, Alvin R. | Cpl | 17164237 |
| Coward, Thomas A. | Cpl | 16111514 |
| Crawford, Ronald W. | Cpl | 39410895 |
| Critchler, Joseph M. | Cpl | 34644363 |
| Crow, Gene L. | Cpl | 34601412 |
| Dean, Ronald G. | Cpl | 35722178 |
| Didziulis, Vincent S. | Cpl | 32739846 |
| Dillow, George L. Jr | Cpl | 35686472 |
| Donnell, Omer | Cpl | 34191591 |
| Doran, Frank | Cpl | 39198856 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Dupont, Gerard L. | Cpl | 11101781 |
| Figg, George T. | Cpl | 36716853 |
| Fincher, James L. | Cpl | 38395992 |
| Fleener, Hugh O. | Cpl | 35567551 |
| Franklin, William P. | Cpl | 36199988 |
| Gallardo, Salvador G. | Cpl | 39282159 |
| Haas, Reuben | Cpl | 37228880 |
| Hay, John F. | Cpl | 35475867 |
| Heglar, Charles S. | Cpl | 37232204 |
| Hoffman, Herman G. | Cpl | 32365813 |
| Hopp, Clayton E. | Cpl | 36596734 |
| Hower, Lloyd E. | Cpl | 34547034 |
| Ilten, Edward L. | Cpl | 39557845 |
| Jacobs, Jack M. | Cpl | 16168963 |
| Johanknecht, Clarence E. | Cpl | 36266887 |
| Kealiher, Willard E. | Cpl | 39201857 |
| Keeler, Harry R. | Cpl | 37382250 |
| Ketzel, George J. | Cpl | 32533542 |
| Kirzeder, Harold T. | Cpl | 36437783 |
| Koski, William J. | Cpl | 18024219 |
| Lennox, John H. | Cpl | 39529076 |
| Lukas, Theodore J. | Cpl | 32748376 |
| Mann, Wilbur E. | Cpl | 11122126 |
| Mathisen, Edward E. | Cpl | 36352133 |
| McCobb, Carleton L. | Cpl | 13070375 |
| McKoy, Raiford H. | Cpl | 34682928 |
| Meixner, Donald H. | Cpl | 16148522 |
| Melby, Albert | Cpl | 37443931 |
| Metcalf, Thomas W. | Cpl | 13131900 |
| Mintz, Abraham | Cpl | 32420348 |
| Morley, Arthur W. | Cpl | 36575525 |
| Moren, Joseph B. | Cpl | 37182072 |
| Moulton, Rodney F. | Cpl | 17108958 |
| Nelson, Rolland G. | Cpl | 14161723 |
| Oliver, Manuel | Cpl | 39098885 |
| Pace, Clyde D. | Cpl | 38307196 |
| Park, William H. | Cpl | 35472758 |
| Petras, Michael | Cpl | 16151502 |
| Price, Glenn H. | Cpl | 34646021 |
| Pruit, Curry T. | Cpl | 38167963 |
| Ruglisi, Carmelo N. | Cpl | 32211432 |
| Richards, William J. | Cpl | 32336716 |
| Robertson, Woodrow W. | Cpl | 33632273 |
| Russell, Irin F. Jr | Cpl | 34257796 |
| Ruswick, Earl W. | Cpl | 16142405 |
| Socias, Antonio | Cpl | 38415006 |
| Stepan, Raymond | Cpl | 37352328 |
| Stranahan, John J. | Cpl | 35528617 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Tato, Sam | Opl | 34600293 |
| Tussey, Carl B. | Opl | 33562528 |
| Vandergrift, Howard E. | Opl | 39281557 |
| Vendittelli, Guido F. | Opl | 36593983 |
| Weiss, Morris | Opl | 32769172 |
| White, Morris J. | Opl | 31332749 |
| White, Donald R. | Opl | 37473137 |
| Wzorek, Carol J. | Opl | 31212632 |
| Anastasio, Michael | Pfc | 31143500 |
| Baker, Dolmer B. | Pfc | 33648828 |
| Bland, Gerald C. | Pfc | 37341995 |
| Bogdan, Walter | Pfc | 18171283 |
| Bonmarito, Lawrence A. | Pfc | 37610663 |
| Bowen, Larry E. | Pfc | 12023498 |
| Bucher, Vernor B. | Pfc | 35548493 |
| Caplicki, Donald A. | Pfc | 12170802 |
| Carr, Harry M. | Pfc | 12171424 |
| Cedeno, Marguis | Pfc | 39039722 |
| Chomer, Edward J., Jr. | Pfc | 35548430 |
| Collinson, Robert J. | Pfc | 36444460 |
| Couick, Lemuel L. | Pfc | 34772381 |
| Cushing, Victor H. | Pfc | 31317687 |
| Dahl, Walter E. | Pfc | 39271518 |
| Darrow, Percy | Pfc | 39201006 |
| Boyle, Edward C. | Pfc | 31316745 |
| Duffy, Kerwin M. | Pfc | 35216787 |
| Getz, Gerald L. | Pfc | 35051039 |
| Giraud, Sylvain P. | Pfc | 39132786 |
| Goldstein, Irving | Pfc | 32879302 |
| Grosso, Albert J. | Pfc | 31328154 |
| Gutierrez, Roland S. | Pfc | 38363938 |
| Harrison, Jerome L. | Pfc | 36745402 |
| Hendrickson, James V. | Pfc | 35681450 |
| Huff, Clarence E. W. | Pfc | 33208189 |
| Hunter, Arthur E. | Pfc | 39035270 |
| Ingram, Manual | Pfc | 35650722 |
| Kape, Jack | Pfc | 16105677 |
| Jacob, Everett N. | Pfc | 36563064 |
| Kiviat, Herbert S. | Pfc | 32620782 |
| Knowlton, Richard F. | Pfc | 32856510 |
| Lopez, Bernave B. | Pfc | 39408416 |
| Kolvig, Glenn D. | Pfc | 39911440 |
| Murphy, James C. | Pfc | 32888908 |
| Outz, Elzie L. | Pfc | 34645426 |
| Owen, James H. | Pfc | 38445320 |
| Paska, Emil J. | Pfc | 36657542 |
| Pyskaty, Tony A. | Pfc | 36566709 |
| Quackenbush, Arnold G. | Pfc | 32739881 |
| Randall, Raymond H. | Pfc | 33222615 |

Roster of Enlisted Men (720th Bomb Sq 4 Dec 44)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Rich, Sanford | Pfc | 32608563 |
| Rice, Lawrence P. | Pfc | 33428282 |
| Server, Delaney H. | Pfc | 38267928 |
| Smith, William T. | Pfc | 38391754 |
| Socha, Edward | Pfc | 31313761 |
| Stefansen, Norman I. | Pfc | 37552280 |
| Stewart, Bahnon W. | Pfc | 34670118 |
| Stroder, Henry | Pfc | 38267957 |
| Sutherland, Glee L. | Pfc | 33647017 |
| Sutton, Bernard J. | Pfc | 36562564 |
| Winters, John C. | Pfc | 39286446 |
| Alexander, Jesse M. | Pvt | 14156050 |
| Bailey, Joseph W. | Pvt | 38468379 |
| Benzinger, Joseph J. Jr | Pvt | 35799827 |
| Blandano, Vincenzo J. | Pvt | 12151997 |
| Brewer, Ernest | Pvt | 34802815 |
| Chupp, Doyle W. | Pvt | 14082047 |
| Decker, Silas P. | Pvt | 12138131 |
| Diaz, Frank | Pvt | 39263650 |
| Faierberg, Carl R. | Pvt | 36321504 |
| Ferry, Angelo T. | Pvt | 20134183 |
| Finnigan, Kenneth C. | Pvt | 39020884 |
| Gasak, Alden | Pvt | 37560439 |
| Hoynes, Peter T. | Pvt | 36339846 |
| Jacoby, Franklin H. | Pvt | 36297429 |
| Karpinski, Andrew M. | Pvt | 32747121 |
| Milligan, Wayne L. | Pvt | 36655090 |
| Oresick, Charles | Pvt | 93163142 |
| Rodriguez, Ramon Z. | Pvt | 39021126 |
| Roth, Richard H. | Pvt | 38421742 |
| White, Raymond M. | Pvt | 32490620 |

For the Squadron Commander:

Robert S. Ogozalek
 ROBERT S. OGOZALEK
 1st Lt., Air Corps
 Adjutant.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
 FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
 APO 520

GENERAL ORDERS)
 :
 NUMBER 1176)

6 March 1945

Section

Citation of UnitI

SECTION I - CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP. For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 4 April 1944, the 450th Bombardment Group was notified to prepare maximum number of aircraft for a mission against the Ploesti Marshalling yards in Rumania. The initial purpose of this mission was disrupt the enemy's oil supply so vital to their operations on the Eastern front and to their interception of allied strategic bombing. Prior to this operation, the ground crews worked zealously and with grim determination to have their aircraft at the peak of mechanical performance to insure the success of this mission. On 5 April 1944, forty (40) B-24 type aircraft, heavily loaded with maximum tonnage, were airborne, and after assuming the lead of the Wing formation, set course for their destination. Nearing the target the formation was aggressively attacked by approximately (50) enemy aircraft, firing rockets, cannon and heavy machine guns, in a desperate effort to break up and destroy the bomber formation before the objective was reached. Displaying outstanding courage and determination, realizing the strategic importance of their task, the gallant crews battled their way through to the targets. Despite the persistence of the fighter attacks, the intense barrage of enemy flak and partial concealment of the target by a smoke screen, the Group continued through for a highly successful bombing run, inflicting grave damage to vital enemy installations, supplies and equipment. Throughout the aerial battle, these gallant crews, in the heroic defense of their aircraft, destroyed a total of twenty-seven (27) enemy fighters and probably destroyed or damaged many more, thus holding our losses to a minimum for such a long and extremely hazardous mission. By the conspicuous gallantry, professional skill and determination of the combat crews, together with the superior technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 450th Bombardment Group has reflected great credit upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United State of America.

BY THE COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins,
J. M. Ivins,
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General.
DISTRIBUTION: "D"

A TRUE COPY:
/s/ John H. Wells, Jr.
Major, AC, Adjutant.
450th Bomb Gp (H)

R E S T R I C T E D



450th Bombardment Group (H)

Activation Through Mediterranean Campaign

Published by
COTTONTALES
Italy, May 1, 1945

EDITORIAL STAFF:

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1st Lt. Robert Maurer, Artist
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Sgt. Mortimer Metchik
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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

A Message From the Group Commander

The conclusion of one of the war's most important and difficult fronts brings to a climatic close the combat operations of the 450th Bombardment Group in Italy. I am deeply gratified to have participated with you in the brilliant strategy conceived by our leaders. The success that we have achieved have been the result of concerted effort, made possible through the sustained cooperation of air and ground echelons. The brief survey that follows points out some of the highlights of our overseas activities, and marks another milestone in the history of our organization.

I take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to all officers and enlisted personnel for their fine work as we enter another chapter in the history of this struggle.

E.R. Jacoby
Col. Air Corps,
Commanding.

Historical Resume

Activation:

General Order No. 68, 22 April 1943, Hq 2nd AF, Ft. George Wright, Washington, officially activated a new group to be known as the 450th Bombardment Group (H) on 1 May 1943 at AAB Gowan Field, Boise, Idaho, Twenty-one days later a paper transaction transferred the 450th to the AAB in Clovis, New Mexico. The key personnel was assigned on this base, and Captain William G. Snaith issued Order No. 1 assuming command until 12 June when Colonel John Stuart Mills arrived to take command of the group.

School of Applied Tactics:

On 16 June 1943 the key personnel together with four model crews. were sent to the School of Applied Tactics in Orlando, Florida where they spent a month learning some of the more practical aspects of heavy bombardment. At the conclusion of their schooling, they returned to the AAB in Alamogordo, New Mexico, where other members of the 450th complement had already begun to arrive from all parts of the United States. Another sister group, the 449th, was to train on the same field, and they too had arrived simultaneously.

Setting up Camp:

The first thing done upon arrival was to set up camp for the four squadrons, known as the 720th, 721st, 722nd and 723rd respectively. Banging hammers and rasping saws gave every indication that the young Group would become one of the most building minded out-fits in the Army Air Forces. In record time they had school rooms, briefing rooms, orderly rooms, offices, shops set up to begin their ground training. Maps were put up, benches were made, and all sorts of visual aids and training devices were invented by the ingenious department members. By the first of August they were ready to start their ground training.

Ground School and Flying:

The Schools Officer prepared a complete schedule for all three phases of ground school, ranging from Intelligence to Armament. All effort and time was devoted to training for overseas duty with the result that by the middle of September, 24 crews were well on their way to the third phase. On that date, the B-24 Mobile unit of the TTC arrived to prepare the combat and ground crews in their respective line of work. A continuous schedule running from 0700 and through 1800 was put into effect with a telescoped program that put the personnel through third phase as well by the end of October. Leaves and furloughs were given to all in anticipation of an overseas movement, and physical fitness was brought up to 100%.

Despite the stepped up program, most everyone found time to run down to El Paso for a bit of diversion during which they managed to cross the Mexican border into Juarea for a few bottles of "Carta Blanca" and a steak dinner. Anything else outside of this is purely exaggeration.

Historical Resume - Continued

Preparation for Overseas Movement:

The month of October saw the end of Ground Training Program and by November the first practice formation flights were flown to the nearby cities in western Texas and Oklahoma. On 10 November 1943 the POM arrived in Alamogordo and gave the word that sent the 450th air echelon on its way to the staging area in Herrington, Kansas on the 20th of November.

The processing in Herrington took around ten days, at the conclusion of which the echelon flew to West Palm Beach, the last stop in continental United States. There were poker games, dice and mixed drinks in addition to a bit of sight-seeing all along the way, but the crews were eager to keep moving in anticipation of their new assignment.

On to Brazil:

From Florida, the Liberators fanned out over the Lesser Antilles some going directly to Atkinson Field in British Guiana, others to Trinidad's Waller Field, but the majority stopped at Borinquen in Puerto Rico. The latter was the highlight of the trip insofar as accommodations and beauty was concerned. The South American coast was next with its teeming jungle and the wide Amazon. Belem and Fartaleza were the next stops followed by Natal on the Brazilian Litorral. The strong smell of coffee, toasted Brazil nuts and fresh pineapple were in abundance as well as Swiss watches and the now famous Brazilian leather boot.

The Hop to Africa:

The hop across the southern Atlantic was without incident, except for the surprise visit of President Roosevelt on his way back from a conference in northern Africa. When the weather lifted in Algeria the crews left the Senegal and arrived in Marrakech. This was the first interesting foreign city in Algeria. Those who spoke French were able to bargain with the French speaking Arabs, and the rest were content with looking at women who displayed only their eyes over their veiled faces.

General Arnold Speaks:

By now everyone knew that the destination of the 450th was Chateaudun de Romel near Tulergma, but Captains Quinn and Campa happened on the airport just as General Arnold arrived, and in the conversation that ensued, the General informed the officers that they would spend two days in Chateaudun and proceed to Italy. The General seemed to know what he was talking about, for after two days stay in the village those who were there started to Manduria but were forced down in Tunis. By now the air echelon had scattered all over Africa. Some were in Casa Blanca, others in Agadir, but all knew their destination.

Historical Resume - Continued

Excusez Moi!

Lt. Wagner was a very surprised pilot when a Frenchman landed his plane on top of his Liberator. No one was hurt, but later in the day an Arab darted across the path of Lt. King's plane as it taxied out and a prop sent him to Allah. In due time, beginning with the 20th of December, the 61 planes and 70 crews arrived in Manduria with the exception of Lt. Kordage and his crew who failed to make the mountain pass and are now buried in Constantine.

"Sunny Italy"

Down in the heel, both literally and figuratively, of Italy where Hannibal once watered his elephants, stands the ancient city of Manduria. Ten kilometers to the north on a solid rock promontory, the city of Oria with its high walled castle of Roman days overlooks the countryside where the 450th was to spend a year and a half.

Six inches of mud for a runway, a few dilapidated, vermin-infested barracks of the defunct Italian Air Force and a two century old olive grove was the airport from which the 450th would soon begin operations. The first plane landed on December 20th in a heavy drizzle, and the rain continued almost daily for several months.

"Ground Echelon Arrives:

The ground echelon left Alamogordo the day after Thanksgiving and travelled by train to Newport News, where it embarked on the 4th of December. They split into three parties. The 720th Squadron and Headquarters left on the "Stanley Baldwin," and after an uninteresting and crowded trip, punctuated by their introduction to "C" rations, they arrived at the port of Bari on New Year's Eve. The 721st and the 722nd reached Italy on the "Bret Harte" and disembarked in Naples two days after Xmas. The battle-scarred University of Naples was their first stopping place. Seven days later they arrived by convoy into Manduria. The 723rd took a longer route via Sicily where they learned early the art of trading with the Italian peasants. By the time they arrived on January 15, 1944, the Group had already flown six missions.

Lake Manduria:

With the arrival of the entire complement, the squadron areas were promptly set up. So many square yards of olive trees and a share of mud and guagmire was the location allotted to each squadron. The accumulation of water augmented by the incessant rains came to be known as "Lake Manduria" and many a brave jeep stalled in an attempt to cross it. High ground for pup tents was at a premium, but the ingenious soldiers lost no time in discovering the building virtues of Italian "tufi" rock blocks.

Historical Resume - Continued

Vini, Bambini and Fichi:

Signs in the nearby villages announced the one unlimited commodity: "vino", dark red wine of dubious vintage. Ragged urchins crowded around the Americans with the characteristic greeting of: "Allo, Joe, sigraetta?" Figs or "fichi" were also in season, but the dried fruit's name soon developed into a less edible but more marketable product.

Building Boom:

The four squadrons assigned to their respective areas proceeded to put up their installations and private quarters. Lumber, nails and roofing were the most difficult items to procure in southern Italy. The German Luftwaffe had sunk 18 supply ships in the Bari harbor, destroying most of the supplies which would have been available to units of the 15th Air Force.

Early in January it was discovered that the Italian Admiral in Thereunto was able to release Italian stores to the American Army. Requisitions and chits were put through channels and in a week's time the building boom was on. Thousands of feet of lumber, tin, nails, light bulbs, wire and seven Diesel generators were brought to camp. Other supplies were acquired from English Army and Navy sources. By the end of the year several tons of materials, including cement, were safely stored in the 450th warehouses.

The construction of officers's clubs, day rooms, mess-halls and office buildings was give priority, and before long the original quagmire referred to as "Lake Manduria" had been transformed into an area which the "I.G". declared to be a "model for the entire Air Force."

The furniture secured from the Italian Air Force was a nucleus around which grew the comfortable furnishings to be found later in the clubs of the 450th. Nothing was spared by the Commanding Officers that could improve the living conditions in the otherwise dreary flats of southern Italy. Each club boasted a bar, railing and all, and some of the areas went so far in their dressing up program that the First Combat Camera Unit made several movies of them.

When it came time to build a Base Aid Station, the specifications were made to conform to other buildings on the base. As a result, the station turned out to be a two-wing hospital with wards, dispensaries, operating room, and X-ray room, and private offices. Instead of wood structure it was a neatly plastered, cement floored, "tufi" building with all modern plumbing facilities.

Historical Resume - Continued

"Cottontails"

Early in combat the 450th earned the name by which it became known in the Mediterranean Theater and in the United States. The white rudders of the big tailed Liberators were spotted by the German Luftwaffe when the 450th led the devastating attack against the Pruferring Aircraft Factory in Regensburg, Germany on 25 February 1944. Smarting under the blows of the 450th bombing, "Axis Sally," better known to the airmen as "The Berlin Bitch" came on the air that night with a threat and a warning to "The White Tailed Liberators". On subsequent bombings over Germany, hundreds of ME-109's and FW-109's supported rocket firing JU-88's attacked aggressively, knocking down several 450th bombers. From Berlin came the gloating voice of Sally: "How did you like it, white-tailed Liberators?" From the "white-tails" the obvious nickname of "Cottontails" developed in Disneyian fashion and under that battle name the 450th helped to change the melodious voice of Sally into a dying groan.

Operations Digest

The 450th Bomb Group commenced combat operations on the 8th of January 1944, dispatching 20 Liberators to attack the Mostar Airdrome in Yugoslavia. The first really successful mission, however, was flown against Pisa on the 18th of January, and by the following month the Group was in the big leagues. During the next fifteen months until the final operational effort on April 26, 1945, the Group flew a total of 265 accredited missions against a variety of targets throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

From the little village of Manduria in the heel of Italy, 450th bombers fanned out over a vast perimeter extending from Toulon, France to the Black Sea. Cottontail crews have seen action in the skies above Northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, the 450th played a forceful part in weakening the Nazi war effort, striking effective, long-range blows at enemy communications, industry and oil resources, blasting gun positions, observation points, vehicles and troop concentrations in direct support of Allied ground forces.

"Breaking the Back of the Luftwaffe"

The week beginning February 20, 1944, has been described by General Arnold as one which broke the back of the Luftwaffe. The 450th participated in three major attacks during this historic week, smashing at the ME-109 Aircraft Factories at Regensburg, Germany and the Aero-Engine Works at Steyr, Austria. Other high priority aircraft factories hit several months later by the 450th include those at Weiner Neustadt and Schwechat, Austria, Budapest, Hungary, Munich and Friedrichshafen, Germany.

Operations Digest

"Operations Strangle"

During the Winter of '44 railyards in northern Italy were bombed with regularity. Hitting Ferrara and other key transportation centers, the Group helped to keep from the German forces the necessary supplies for a counter-attack against our troops fighting in the bitter mountains north of Naples. When the daring landing at Anzio was conceived, heavies were given a vital role to play and the 450th severed its share of railroad lines leading into Rome and neutralized airfields from which the Luftwaffe might have interfered with the landing operations.

"The Battle of Ploesti"

Early in April, rail hubs servicing the Germans in the east assumed top importance, as the Soviet armies prepared to launch the drive that swept them through the Balkans. On successive days, the 450th took part in assaults on the Budapest, Bucharest and Ploesti Marshalling Yards, leading the entire 15th Air Force on the latter mission, which was the opening round in the "Battle of Ploesti".

Through the spring and summer, strategic bombing concentrated on the number one resource for the Wehrmacht war machine-oil! Again and again, the Ploesti fields and refineries were hit, despite the heaviest flak barrages encountered anywhere and despite skillful smoke screening. The 450th contributed materially to the depletion of Ploesti's productive capacities, which present more than one third of the oil available to the Nazis.

Many other important oil targets were attacked by the 450th including the refineries at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia; Vienna and Moosbierbaum, Austria and Blechhammer, Germany.

In July, the Group hammered the Manfred-Weiss Armament Works, the largest industrial installation in Hungary.

"Operations Uppercut"

When the Southern France invasion was launched, the 450th assisted with very effective pin-point bombing that knocked out gun installations along the shore, cut supply lines. Earlier, the submarine pens at Toulon had been severely damaged and harbor installations in southern France successfully bombed.

All-Out on Communications

In September, the Group began in earnest its pounding of communications facilities, the object of which was to cut the German line of retreat from Italy, Roumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

The "Brenner Blitz" reached a climax at Christmas time, with incessant blows leveled at the Verona and Innsbruck terminals, and tactically important railroad bridges along the Brenner Line.

Operations Digest

All-Out on Communications

After a record year of operations, the 450th entered its second year in combat by resuming all out attacks on the main Nazi communications system in southeastern Europe, an effort coordinated with the grand Soviet offensive through Hungary and Austria. Such vital and highly defended targets as Linz, Graz, Munich and Vienna were blasted by the 450th.

The "Cottontails" rounded out extensive service in the Mediterranean Theater in support of the final Allied offensive in Italy. When the 5th and 8th Armies launched their push into the Po Valley in April of 1945, the 450th lent 100% support, dispatching every aircraft in commission to strike at gun emplacements and troop concentrations, and achieving 100% bombing accuracy in destroying the Legnago Railroad Bridge. It was a fitting climax to an operational career that had been marked by many out-standing combat achievements.

Bomb Tonnage

The 450th has dropped nearly 15,000 tons of bombs on German-held targets since January 1944. Its highest monthly total was 1415 tons, dropped in May 1944. The Group's highest total tonnage for a single mission was on the 15th of April 1945, when Cottontail Libs blasted gun emplacements and troop concentrations in the Bologna area with 155 3/4 tons.

Bombing Accuracy

From the point of view of bombing accuracy, that is, percentage of bombs dropped on or within 100 ft. of the aiming point, the 450th has achieved an enviable record.

For the past year of operations, the 450th was the outstanding Group in the 15th Air Force in bombing. Figures released by higher headquarters indicate that it has been continually at or near the top since commencing combat service. The Group performed the number one job in the Air Force for the following months:

| | | | |
|----------|------|---|-------|
| August | 1944 | - | 59% |
| November | 1944 | - | 47.0% |
| December | 1944 | - | 48.0% |
| February | 1945 | - | 59.3% |

Measured over six-month periods, the 450th achieved the following bombing accuracy percentages:

| | | | | | |
|---------|---------------|---|-------|---|-----------------------|
| As of - | November 1944 | - | 47.0% | - | 3rd in 15th Air Force |
| | December 1944 | - | 48.0% | - | 1st in 15th Air Force |
| | February 1945 | - | 59.3% | - | 1st in 15th Air Force |
| | March 1945 | - | 56.0% | - | 2nd in 15th Air Force |

On two occasions, the "Cottontails" attained 100% excellence in bombing accuracy. A perfect pattern of bombs was laid on the Brenner Pass, Italy, December 27th, 1944 and the Legnago Railroad Bridge in Italy was knocked into the Adige River April 16th 1945.

Since October 1944, the bombing accuracy record of the 450th for any one month has been higher than the average of the 15th Air Force.

Operations Digest

The 450th, in the field of maintenance, has also ranked at the head of the Air Force. Its cumulative average percentage of aircraft operational throughout the entire period of combat is 81.8%, which is higher than the Air Force average at any time. The Group's highest monthly average was 90.9%.

In the month of April 1945, 450th maintenance was of exceptionally high caliber. On six separate missions, every aircraft assigned to the Group was in commission. The Group was 100% operational for the mission of April 15, which called for maximum support of the Allied ground forces in opening the final offensive in Italy. This all-out effort was in large measure responsible for the special commendation of the Wing by General Spaatz, Commanding General of all Strategic Air Forces in Europe.

Victories

The skies over Ploesti, Steyr, Regensburg, Wiener Neustadt, Vienna and other high priority targets will always be remembered by 450th air crews as the scenes of fierce air battles with Goering's once-formidable Luftwaffe.

The officially credited victory total of 450th gunners since the beginning of the group's combat operations far outnumbers losses directly attributable to enemy fighters. 191 Nazi aircraft were destroyed by the 450th; 38 probably destroyed; 27 damaged.

Awards and Decorations:

In addition to hundreds of decorations presented to 450th personnel, the Group itself has been awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy.

The first citation was granted in recognition of the Group's heroic achievements in an attack on the Regensburg Prnfening Aircraft Factory, Germany, February 25, 1944.

For superior leadership of the entire 15th Air Force in striking the initial blow against Ploesti, April 5, 1944, the "Cottontails" won a cluster to the D.U.C.

The following awards have been made to individual members of the 450th since the beginning of combat operations:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Distinguished Service Cross | 1 |
| Legion of Merit | 1 |
| Silver Star | 65 |
| Distinguished Flying Cross | 574 |
| OLC to Distinguished Flying Cross | 28 |
| Soldier's Medal | 18 |
| Purple Hearts | 373 |
| Bronze Star Medal | 50 |
| Air Medal | 3023 |
| Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal | 6469 |
| Good Conduct Medal | 2417 |

Accomplishments of the 450th

The history of the 450th in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations has been punctuated by a series of accomplishment which have placed the "Cottontails" in a unique position in the 15th Air Force.

In many fields of activity it has led the rest of the Air Force. It initiated many innovations and improvements in housing and training; established records in maintenance and bombing.

The 450th pioneered, and many of its ingenious practices later became S.O.P. for the Air Force.

The Group holds many "firsts" in the Air Force. The 450th was
FIRST - To score 100% in bombing accuracy; Brenner Pass, Dec. 27, 1944.

FIRST - In bombing accuracy in the 15th AAF for the months of November and December 1944 and February 1945.

FIRST - In bombing accuracy in the 15th AAF for six-month periods as of December 1944 and February 1945.

FIRST - To make a high-level attack on the Ploesti, Rumania Oil Refineries.

FIRST - Among the groups in the 15th AAF to make a daylight attack on Budapest, Hungary.

FIRST - To make full use of Italian rock "tufi" in the housing program, with the results that greater number of its personnel were in permanent buildings that of any other group in the 15th AAF. The fine upkeep of these installations is attested by the last two Wing inspections.

FIRST - Group in the 15th Air Force to build a radio transmitting station.

FIRST - Group in the 15th Air Force to install underground telephone and power lines.

FIRST - To devise a new supply for transmitting equipment SCR 274N when used as ground installation for airdrome control purposes.

FIRST - To equip its ambulances with a two-way communication system with planes.

FIRST - To introduce a new type of Zeus fastener, which was invented by a ground crew member of the Group.

FIRST - To introduce an elongated metal handle to facilitate the use and operation of the engine control throttles in a B-24.

Accomplishments of the 450th Continued

- FIRST - Group in the 15th Air Force to install a K-22 aerial camera in the bombsight position of a B-24, which enabled photographers to take front oblique photos of target.
- FIRST - To use balopticon projector in showing target photos, in coordination with A-2A bomb trainers. Bombardiers made simulated runs on actual target photos.
- FIRST - Group in the 15th Air Force to give Wing Navigators pin points for checkpoints by radar.
- FIRST - To teach gunners position firing in Gunnery School.
- FIRST - To set up mock turrets to train its gunners.
- FIRST - To build and install a skeet range.
- FIRST - To use electrical solenoids on training machine guns.
- FIRST - To employ "glide bombing" under actual combat conditions.
- FIRST - To fly last ship in the formation to train potential lead crews under actual combat conditions.
- FIRST - Place in the 1944 15th Air Force Basketball Championship.

These outstanding accomplishments of the 450th were given official recognition in the report of the I.G. According to the report, "the overall operational techniques of this Group were, as such, being pursued in a highly effective manner... Training facilities showed evidence of much initiative and labor... The 450th has the best equipped and the best maintained bombsight shop in the 15th Air Force... The 450th Group Headquarters is a model for the 15th Air Force.

MOLTO BUONO

Unofficial Publication of the 450th Bombardment Group (H)

Vol. 1, No. 12

SATURDAY, JUNE, 24 1944

ITALY

ORDNANCE IS BEATEN

LT. DALGISH DECORATED

1st Lieutenant Chris E. Dalgish, bombardier of the 723rd squadron, has been awarded the silver star for gallantry in action. He also flew his fiftieth mission recently.

On the mission to Sofia last March, Lt. Dalgish was severely wounded by flak just as the formation began the bombing run. He was knocked away from his bomb sight, but despite the pain he suffered, and damage to the bomb-sight, he managed to resume his position and dropped his bombs directly on the target. After bombs away, Lt. Dalgish helped extinguish a fire that had flamed in the nose of the plane. Only then did he accept first aid.

Beside the silver star, Lt. Dalgish received the purple heart for the wounds he sustained. He's sweating out the home-ward bound orders to Yonkers, New York.

NEW SURGEON FOR SQUADRON

Captain Lester L. Ostrove, of 47 W. 76 st., New York City, was recently appointed flight surgeon of the 720th squadron.

Captain Ostrove graduated from Ohio university in 1935 and St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1939 where he was commissioned. Prior to his entrance in the service in 1939 he served as an interne in the Lincoln Hospital, N. Y. City. Captain Ostrove attended the Randolph Field Aviation School of Medicine then joined the 720th squadron as flight surgeon.

He has two brothers in the service.

With the coming of the new flight surgeon the Medic section began their process of spring cleaning and painting of the dispensary. The painting is being done by Cpl. Gallardo, P. F. C. Hoyne and Cpl. Melbi while S Sgt. Foziz and Sgt. McEachon are supervising the proceedings.

21st COMBAT BOYS TIGHTEN BASE RACE

The 721st Combat Crew threw the Base Soft-ball League wide open again, on Wednesday by whipping the 721st Ordnance team 4-0.

The league standing now is such that Group Communications is the team that apparently holds the power of deciding the winner.

The Group team has the 720th Squadron and the 721st Ordnance teams to play and as these teams are tied for the top it seems that the one that knocks them off should be the winner.

The league standings, to date, including all games excepting the 47th Wing Officers — H Q game, are printed below.

BASE LEAGUE STANDING

| | W | L | Ave. |
|----------------------|----|----|------|
| 721st ORDNANCE | 10 | 1 | .909 |
| 720th SQUADRON | 10 | 1 | .909 |
| GP. COMMUNICATIONS | 8 | 3 | .727 |
| 431st SIGNAL CORPS | 7 | 4 | .636 |
| 722nd ENGINEERS | 7 | 4 | .636 |
| 721st COMBAT CREWS | 7 | 4 | .636 |
| GP H. Q. | 6 | 4 | .600 |
| 47th WING E. M. | 6 | 5 | .545 |
| 721st ARMAMENT | 6 | 5 | .545 |
| 47th WING OFFICERS | 5 | 5 | .500 |
| 835th ENGINEERS | 4 | 7 | .364 |
| 721st COMMUNICATIONS | 4 | 7 | .364 |
| 722nd COMMUNICATIONS | 2 | 8 | .273 |
| 722nd OFFICERS | 3 | 8 | .273 |
| 722nd ORDNANCE | 1 | 10 | .091 |
| 721st OFFICERS | 1 | 10 | .091 |

"FIGHT - FUN - WORK" IS ORDNANCE CREED

An outfit that works hard and plays hard is a rough unit to beat.... that's about the story of the 721st Ordnance group.

Ordnance is ordnance and that's about all it means to most of the men in other sections but in reality it is a most essential unit of any bomber group. A good Ordnance

outfit means less accidents more security for the combat crews and more grief for the enemy.

The 721st Ordnance section is our subject today and when asked what they did, Lt Howard, section head, said, "Work". So we checked up and our resume came to the

(Continued on page four)

THE MOLFO BUONO

Colonel John S. Mills,
Commanding Officer 450th Bomb. Gp. (H)
S/Sgt. Dick Price..... Editor

STAFF

S/Sgt Jack Prescott, 722; Sgt N. Moscovitz, 722; M/Sgt S. Radkoff.
Pro Staff Members

1st Lt W. C. Hollands.. Censor

EDITORIAL

Today's Thought:

The American people never carry an umbrella. They prepare to walk in eternal sunshine.....Al Smith.

The dropping out of teams in the Base softball league is a shameful procedure and is certainly a disgrace to the 450th.

Because a team has apparently lost a chance to win is no reason to quit. If the sport is worth anything it is worth everything. The sport is bigger than victory or defeat.

The league was formulated to provide recreation for the men and the winning of the league is secondary. Apparently some sections have lost their American sense of sportsmanship. For God's sake and our Country's, lets not lose that, fellows... it's the one thing in this world that is truly American and makes us stand head and shoulders over all other nations.

HOW DO YOU SPELL IT?

Although Captain Russell Jackson is the Group's Weather Expert, it is doubtful that he is the type described by the man who can look

READERS COLUMN

Dear Editor;

Now that we have our own theatre and it is no longer necessary to dress up in class "A's" to visit Oria to see a show, why do some characters insist on using two or three seats and forcing the rest of us to stand! There seems to me to be enough seats for everyone even if we don't get there two hours before the show.

P. E. Doff

(There are plenty of seats, all placed in a position to see the screen and to hear from the speakers, I can't answer your question — Ed)

Dear Editor;

So we have the best theatre in the Air Force! So we are getting some better than ever stage shows! So why in the hell can't the shows start on time! Is it the fault of a few G. Is who insist on crowding around the stage and breaking up the shows! If so, why doesn't someone kick some sense into their heads! Why are a few permitted to spoil the shows for the rest of us!

Disgruntled First Nighter

(Stage shows will not start until all are seated front of the stage. The reason, — the performers do not like to play to people behind them or in the wings. Seats should not be moved for stage shows, the fact that you can get six inches closer by moving the seats, means inconvenience for everyone — Ed)

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THIS AIN'T THE POST-WAR SOLDIER

by Ethel Barnett De Vito

When he gets back, he'll be so fond
Of rising before dawn has dawned,
He'll scornfully refuse the bore
Of lying abed an hour more.
"Missing the best part of the day!
I couldn't think of it" he'll say.

When he returns once more, he'll be
So bound to Rations K and C,
He'll never warm to layer cake
Or pies like mother used to make.
"They lack," he'll wistfully confess,
"The finer points of G. I. mess."

When he gets back, he'll so delight
In country walks by day or night,
He'll scoff at using train or car
Or bus for going near or far.
"Nothing," he'll warmly say, "is like
A nice brisk twenty five mile hike!"

When he returns, he'll be so free,
So used to male society,
He'll even spurn that pearl of pearls
The loveliest of lovely girls,
Saying, "What a fellow most enjoys
Is playing ping-pong with the boys."
(Oh yeah... Ed)

RODEO DRAWS G.P. COWBOYS

Five "cowboys" from the 450th Bomb Group will journey to Foggia on the 4, 5, 6 of July to uphold the honor of the group at the "Doughboy's Round-up" rodeo.

The boys are Sgt Raymond G. Dewey, and Pfc Johnnie C Taylor of the 722nd Squadron; Sgt Larry Peterson of the 720th Squadron and Pfc Samuel Harris and Sgt Joe Couch of the 723rd Squadron.

These boys all have been prominent in rodeos in the "Good old USA" and the entire group will be rooting for them to bring back the prize money.

"Ride 2 an' Cowboy?"

450th BOMB GROUP'S COTTON TALES

Poop from Group

Three new Captains received their bars this week, and one of them received just a bit more. The happy trio are Captain Jerome R. Goldvarg, Chicago; Captain Charles W. Robinson of Doylestown, Pa.; and Captain Borden S. Chronister of Corinth, Miss. Captain Chronister also received notice, this week, that Mrs. Chronister presented him with a bouncing baby boy on the Captain's birthday, June 2, who will, heretofore bear the monicker — Ranville Borden Chronister. Congratulations Captain.

720th JOTTINGS

The 720th Squadron had a pleasant surprise a few days ago when they were honored by a visit from two Red Cross lassies who graciously ate in the enlisted men's mess hall. Needless to say the flying officers tried to get the girls to eat in their mess hall but the two girls were saved by the gallant 1st Sgt. Wilson who came in like a knight of old and said "Nay Nay." Lt. John Wells and Lt. Ryan both came back from the rest camp . . . they claimed to have had a big rest . . . Their communique stated that all was quiet on the rest camp front . . . needless to say there are many doubts in the squadron Cpl. Oliver is the proud father of a bouncing baby boy . . . he is going to name him "Slugga" Just like his Pop Leonard Shaw proved himself to be an old vino hound when he stayed on "the road to blissful recovery" for one complete day Sgt. Homer Wilson, the famous butter and egg man, has more troubles . . . the boys in his shack keep him awake with the drinking parties they have been throwing

To days vignette M/Sgt. Harry Stoy, flight chief, proved

himself to be an able G-man when he caught a sabateur snooping around his plane . . . "All I did", said the modest Sergeant, "is to grab him by the scruff of the neck and take him in on a Jeep. He tried to give me a sob story but all I said was no compre! . . .". The Italian proved to be a man wanted for suspected espionage and black marketeering

721st NOTES

After many weeks we find that the decorations for the 721st are finally clearing the Air Force Headquarters. This past week we had two complete crews decorated with the D. F. C. in addition to Lieutenants Wayne and Tate. Lt. Barthelmy, who we all remember as having participated in the defusing of live bombs while in mid-air recently, was awarded the Silver Star posthumously. Our squadron is now the most decorated in the group.

Our genial "Hagueite" Pat Larkin is still sporting scars from his battle with a fox-hole. Most of us listened with our tongue in our cheek when he tried explaining the mouse under his right eye. Here's a double brandy side-car, Pat.

Many bouquets to the crew members of Lt. De Vane's unit. After several days of harrowing experiences behind enemy lines they have finally joined us. A few days at the rest camp and they will be ready for any eventualities.

Our Ordnance Base-ball team is still leading the league with no defeats. Unless something unforeseen happens we ought to have that cup on display in our day-room very soon.

After several weeks of secrecy M/Sgt Manring revealed the name of the A. M. who was going to fix the "wiggly" wing condition with the use of a screw driver and wing

nuts. Ingenious these ground crew men!

Sergeant Downtain tells us that he now has so many photographs of the planes and men on this field that he is writing home for an album to contain them. Tell us the secret of your success, Sergeant.

Can you imagine Tech-Sergeant Leo Neier of the Bombsight Maintenance department trying to crowd "Red" Tofte out of his bed in the dead of night? He tells us that he was completely sober because he takes nothing stronger than the orange soda sold in our day-room.

"HOLY JOE"

Once again we are here to tell you of the going concern, the 722nd Squadron. Under the well known Sunny Italian sun, we are really getting a lot accomplished.

The Squadron Day-room really must be a place of interest. We have visiting dignitaries from each Squadron during the course of an evening. On opening night we were honored with the presence of several of our local RC ladies and Nurses. Lt. C. Thomas was right on the beam with his version of the Post-war Jeep. A classy job.

Sgt Donald Swank has an open challenge to any Ping-Pong player. (We warn you, he's good).

The opening of the Personal Supply and Aid station in the wings behind the dayroom is the next event on our card.

Sgt Paul Stoner and Lester Shields are to be congratulated on the swell job of carpentering they did. Cpl DuBoise "Lover from Hollywood" Larson receives credit as originator of our "Holy Joe" insignia. S/Sgt Adolph (Excuse me, I'm from California) Meiers just finished his one-day-a-month job

(Continued on page four)

COTTON TALES

(Continued from page three)

the "payroll" hard worker that man (1).

M/Sgt Gerald Merritt and M/Sgt John Robertson are doing good teamwork now. Robertson makes them and Merritt drinks them. Merritt says he isn't going to drink anymore (we think he means anymore than he does now).

Congrats to the boys winding up their 50. They deserve lots of credit. Luck to those that are nearing the goal.

There is a certain S/Sgt whose last name starts with the letters Zidan, who can really sleep even with a phone ringing. Wake up, John, there's a war going on. Until next time...so long, gang...JP

QUIT LEAGUE

Three teams dropped out of the Base softball league this week making four in all who will not complete the season.

The 835th Engineers moved off the Base so could not complete the schedule. The 722nd Ordnance, 722nd Officers and 722nd Communications teams all withdrew.

Teams scheduled to play these teams will be awarded the victory by forfeit.

DRUNK?

With all the day-rooms open and the bar flourishing ye Editor took upon himself the job of finding the definition of drunkenness, not that anybody gets that way, of course. Our best efforts discovered T. L. Peacock's verse from Misfortunes of Elphin to be what we call a classic description. Here it is:

Not drunk is he who from the floor
Can rise alone, and still drink more;
But drunk is he who prostrate lies,
Without the power to drink or rise.

"FIGHT - FUN - WORK" IS ORDNANCE CREED

Continued from page one

same definition "work".

The section is divided into four crews of five men each. It is headed by M/Sgt Joseph Hoffman, section chief; S/Sgt Henry Scott, asst section chief; S/Sgt Donald Kent, line chief and Sgt Walter Rork, automotive mechanic. The crews are Sgt W. Bales, crew chief; Cpl W. Meyer, asst; Cpl J. Vashlishan, Pfc Patigaulo, and Sgt C. Henningson in crew number one; number two: Sgt. Carlyle M. Kaasa, chief, Cpl. Lyons, assist; Cpl J. White, Cpl M. Kate-mo, Pfc T. Zaluski; three — Sgt Charles Stewart, chief, Cpl J. Reed, asst; Pfc G. Smith, Pfc G. Griffin, Pvt P. Janson; four- Sgt H. Stohlhoefer, chief, Sgt R. Marshall, asst, Pfc M. Horth, Pfc G. Judd and Pfc N. Pleasanton.

Five armorers are in the section headed by Sgt G. Driesbach, Armorer chief, Sgt E. Jennings, asst, Cpl R. Templeton and Pfc R. Walsh.

Sgt Charles Henningson is the chief clerk of the section.

The crews are munitions workers and when orders arrive to load the ships they bring the bombs in from the dump, where one of the crews is on duty all day. This means that they usually are working nights and late at night too. After bringing the bombs to the ships they await the Armament crews who load the bombs and then back to work go the crews to fa and fuse the bombs.

Orders that change the bomb load are probably the biggest headache the Ordnance boys have. Oftentimes the load has been changed three times in one night.

The bomb dump, upon arrival here, was a mass of mud, as was everything, but the Ordnance outfit has cleaned it up and it is in superb shape at present.

Bombs are loaded in mud, rain, sleet, or snow and despite the weather that night the boys are on the line handling the dangerous explosives so that they may be on their way to damage the enemy the next day.

Dangerous explosives is the word for it. Frag bombs are the most dangerous, they are the babies that can make a strong brave man tremble a bit. The incendiaries are next, but they all have their possibilities. Accidents on this base, however, have been few due to careful handling, and, although these boys brave danger every night, they seem to be so busy that they have no time to think about it.

The armorers of the section handle the repairing of the guns in the ship. New parts, worn parts or the idiosyncracies of the 50 cal. are no mystery to these men and they quickly straighten out the temperamental ones.

The section handles the supply of guns, bombs, small arms, and ammunition.

This Ordnance outfit was organized at Biggs field, Texas in April, 1943 and moved into the 450th as a unit in August. In the states they handled the practice bombs, the small arms and ammunition, and in co-operation with Armament handled the ranges.

The Ordnance outfit is a proud one and will point out the fact that they are a snappy drill outfit, a great inspection unit, and that they have the willingness to stick together in fight or in fun at all times. Their softball team tops the base league and can be the league winner, this despite the fact that Lt Howard refuses them the right to "go out and get" a pitcher. They believe with a pitcher of good calibre they could beat any team, any where. a great spirit and a great section. Good luck, boys, we all respect your work, your ability, and yourselves as men and soldiers.

WILL PRINT NEW SERIES

Molto Buono has noticed considerable interest by men of this group concerning the allies, the enemy, enemy propaganda, the future course of our country, etc.

This interest is a most worthy one and if this publication can be of use to help guide and inform the men of the unit... we feel that it is space well spent.

Therefore, beginning next week it will be our aim to publish articles on "World Affairs and YOU" and to aim to give all the facts in context so that you may formulate your own opinions on the subject.

No attempt will be made to "whitewash" our Allies but credit will be given where due.

A different topic will be covered each week. Your comments, pro and con, are cordially invited.

Next week's article will deal with Enemy Propaganda.

EYETIES WINNING

Italian soldiers have been "cleaning up" in the fights at Bari lately. These fights held every Sunday night at Bari Stadium draw huge crowds but except for some 5th Army negro battlers the Italians have dominated the victories in the ring.

The 150th is expected to send a couple of battlers against the "Eyeties" tomorrow night..... be a rooting, fellows.

FRESH MEAT

The article on the Mess Hall written last week has caused many men to wonder why fresh meat isn't being served everyday as was written.

Since the article was written the Quartermaster unit has not been getting it... nobody's holding out on you, fellows.

23rd C. O. IS POINT MAN

Major Ellsworth R Jacoby, Kansas City, Mo, assumed command of the 723rd Squadron last week.

Major Jacoby is a former classmate of Colonel Gideon and was his roommate at West Point.

The new C. O. is quite young in fact and appearance although he has had a lengthy military career. Graduating from the U. of Missouri in 1935 as a Chemical Engineer, he entered the United States Military Academy. There he became acquainted with Col Gideon and they soon became close buddies.

Receiving his commission as 2nd Lt in 1939, Major Jacoby was assigned to the Infantry, but took up flying training and was transferred to the Air Corps in June, 1940. He served in the Flying Training Command for three years as Instructor, Flight Commander and Director of Flying at Randolph Field and Enid, Okla. The Major attended B-25 school at Roswell, N. M. and flew A-20's at Will Rogers field.

Previous to his appointment as C. O. of the 723rd, the Major had held two commands in a tactical unit. He was Deputy Group Commander of the 410th Bomb Group and a Squadron C. O. in the same outfit.

Major Jacoby attended the Command General Staff school and the Air Force Staff school in Washington prior to his assignment to this theatre.

"I think I'm pretty lucky to get in with an outfit that's done such a commendable job", Major Jacoby declared. "I am particularly impressed with the maintenance record of the 723rd—one of the best in the Air Force."

The new Commander stresses prom-

ENTERTAINMENT

Mon — Never a Dull Moment - Ritz Bros.

Tues — G.I. Movies

Wed — Gildersleeve's Ghost

Fri — Hi Diddle, Diddle.

JUNE 28, WEDNESDAY

721ST OFF VS 450TH HQ
722ND ORD VS 721ST COMM
331ST SIG EM VS 721ST COMBAT EM
722ND ENG VS 47TH WING OFF
47TH WING EM VS 720TH SQ
835TH ENG VS 721ST ARM
720TH ENG VS 722ND OFF
GP COMM VS 721ST ORD

JULY 1, SATURDAY

450TH HQ VS 720TH SQ
722ND ENG VS 722ND ORD
720TH ENG VS 331ST SIG EM
47TH WING OFF VS 835TH ENG
47TH WING EM VS 721ST COMBAT EM
722ND OFF VS 721ST ARM
721ST ORD VS 721ST OFF
GP COMM VS 721ST COMM

ENTRY TIME IS EXTENDED

Lt Walsh announced today that entries for the volleyball tournament may be made until the 28th of June instead of closing today as originally announced.

All teams wishing to enter the tournament are urged to get their entry in as soon as possible.

A trophy for the winning team is now on display at the Special Service Office.

fitness and thoroughness in the performance of every job, as the two essentials of combat efficiency. "We've got a good airplane in the B-24—just about the best heavy bomber in the world. Let's continue to keep it in fine shape and in the air. We're playing a really important job in finishing this war."

MEDICAL MUSINGS

"TAIL"
(A serial) PART II

A doctor can examine the prostitute and certify that she isn't infected. Scientific, ethical, and honest physicians are unable to do this. A physician who certifies prostitutes as non venereal or non-infectious is either intentionally dishonest or else is grossly incompetent. Why? Let us examine a few of the many reasons why this is a physical and scientific impossibility. First of all: it is necessary to know the definition of an incubation period. An incubation period is the period of time (in the case of syphilis) from the instant the syphilis germ passes from the prostitute to the victim until signs on or in the body show up sufficiently well enough so that a physician can diagnose it or at least suspect the diagnosis. With syphilis, the incubation period averages about 21 days and can vary from 10 to 90 days or longer. During the incubation period the patient can transmit syphilis to others yet there are no means whatsoever by which the disease can be diagnosed during this period of time. Therefore, in a well regulated house we isolate both the prostitute and the customer for a minimum of 90 days to be sure that neither is infected with syphilis. During the period of isolation, if done properly, they should be physically incommunicade with all other human beings. Ridiculous, isn't it; but let's go further. At the end of the incubation period, a chancre appears which is missed or not seen in at least 30% of female patients. It is not however until about 6 weeks after the first appearance of the chancre that the blood test becomes positive. Blood tests for syphilis taken before this period of time have elapsed are negative or at best very unreliable. To what does it add up? The answer is ob-

(To Be Continued)

HONOR FOR TWO CREWS

Two complete 721st crews were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross "for extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as crews of B-24 type aircraft," in the past week.

The crew of Lt. McIver was decorated for its participation in an attack against a vital and heavily defended enemy aircraft factory in Austria. While on the bombing run, intense and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire was encountered severely damaging their aircraft. Two engines were destroyed, a fire broke out in the rear turret and one crew member was lost due to mechanical difficulties. In spite of imminent danger from enemy interceptors these men elected to remain with their wounded comrade and plane. They crash landed in Yugoslavia and were aided in their escape to the base by Tito's partisans.

Lieutenant Wolcott's crew was decorated for participation in a bombing mission against a vital and heavily defended enemy rail center in Hungary. Returning from a very successful run on the target one of the engines was rendered inoperative by enemy flak and direct hits on their fuel tanks saturated the entire ship with highly inflammable fluid. Despite the danger of an explosion these men courageously remained with the ship, beating off persistent attacks from an aggressive enemy. The pilot was severely wounded, but with complete disregard for his personal safety he kept the crew at their positions and the bomber returned safely to its base.

The men who received the award were: Lts. James F. Hunter, Claude T. McSloy, William G. Ramshaw, Edmund H. Wolcott, Herbert

MOVIE TROUBLE IS MECHANICAL

The occasional trouble that develops at the motion picture theatre seems to disturb many of the men. We find that most of these disturbed greatly have just come over seas and haven't realized the difficulties that have been overcome in the past to reach the present point.

It is true that there has been mechanical difficulties of late. If you think that's bad for you... you should be sweating it out in the projecting booth and trying to find out what is causing the trouble.

At the present time there is a complicated amplification system at the theatre and naturally from time to time there is bound to develop some difficulty. But this must be expected, everything that can be done to keep the show going is being done, you may rest assured, and a poor show causes the operator more grief than it does the spectator.

It is possible, too, to get a poor sound track on the film, there is nothing that can be done about that but try to get it through as smoothly as possible. There have been several that you probably never knew about too.

If you will just bear with the operators and the Special Service department, it is quite possible that there will eventually be as big an improvement over the present set-up as was the move from the Oria theatre to the out-door theatre.

S. Huff, Robert H. Leebody, Victor K. Meeker; the enlisted personnel included Sgts William F. Flanagan, Robert C. Fisher, J. R. Frank, John V. Goldthwaite, James R. McGown, Benjamin F. Runyan, Paul D. Bear, Lonie L. Graves, Harold Adams, Martin H. Grossman, John Patrick Hortal, William F. Mills.

MOLTO BUONO

Unofficial Publication of the 450th Bombardment Group (H)

Vol. I, No. 13

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1944

ITALY

Volley - Ball On Monday

Opening games for the Base championship tournament in volley-ball will be held on Monday night in the area beside the Cotton-Tails theatre.

Eight teams are entered and will play a double elimination tournament for the title. Games will be played on Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of this week, if necessary to decide the champion.

Monday's games pit the 721st Officers vs 720th Communications (B); 723rd Officers vs 721st Ordnance; 722nd Rambling Duces vs HQ's; 723rd Communications vs 720th Communications (A)

Thursday's games will be: 721st Officers vs 721st Ordnance; 720th Communications (B) vs 723rd Officers; 722nd Rambling Duces vs 720th Communications (A); HQ's vs 723rd Communications.

Friday's games will depend on the outcome of the preceding games and will be posted in the Special Service Office on Friday morning.

Games will start at 6:30, with the first named teams being prepared to play at that time. All games will be played on the same court.

Cartoons On Sale

Bill Mauldin's famous "Stars and Stripes" cartoons are in book form and may be purchased at the Special Service office.

The book contains a fine collection of Mauldin's work and may be mailed home. It has been passed by the Board of Censors.

SMITH FIRST DOCTOR TO FLY ON MISSION

722ND FLIGHT SURGEON MAKES MISSION

OVER ITALY WITH SQUADRON COMMANDER

Safety Unit Is Praised

One of the most important sections in the Group is the Safety Equipment section, known also as the Parachute department, and recently given the auspicious title of Personal Supply.

The 720th Squadron's section headed by Lt Howard C Boulton was visited by your correspondent for information and it was found that it was a most interesting and very active unit.

Lt Boulton's section has four enlisted men. Sgt John Becklick, who handles the heated clothing; Cpl James C Murphy, Parachute inspector; Cpl Gene Grow, inspector of safety equipment in the planes, and Pfc Sanford Rich.

Although all kinds of safety equipment is usually taken for granted until the time arises when it is needed, the section works just the opposite. All safety equipment, from the Parachutes to the rations and water in the accessory kits of the Life Raft, is checked and inspected regularly and often. The section has a tremendous responsibility and although it is true that no one has ever returned and claimed that a parachute wouldn't open, they are

(Continued on page four)

"Coming along tomorrow, Doc?" is Major Jacoby's habitual, interested query whenever he bumps into Capt. William B. Smith, 723rd Flight Surgeon, on the eve of a mission. Last Thursday, Capt Smith donned a "Mac West" and flak suit and went along with the Squadron Commander to Northern Italy. "I wanted to find out at first hand what a combat crew really experiences," he later explained.

If so happens that the first mission for "Doc" Smith was a comparative milk run, but he did meet up with some flak. "A few minutes after our navigator, Lt. Walters, told us we were approaching the target, I saw numerous black spots in the distance, which I thought was another formation of B-24s, when we got a little closer, I realized they weren't moving like Churchill's famous Liberators... and besides, they were busting."

Capt. Smith came back with a new appreciation of the special task of each crew member, especially that of the pilot. "I couldn't help admiring the skill with which Major Jacoby and Lt. Loomis, handled their ships," he declared.

The first squadron Surgeon to fly a combat mission, Capt Smith intends to try it again some time. "I really haven't decided how I like it," he said (with his tongue in his cheek).

(Continued on page four)

COTTON TALES

(Continued from page three)

"HOLY JOE"

1st Sgt Bill Kuhn is as good as his word. Have you noticed his clean shaven face. When S/S Jack Prescott started sprouting a tickler, Bill told Jack to either shave it off or he would shave his off. Jack didn't, Bill did. Now Jack is adding eyebrow pencil to his (for that lit. the Red Cross Girl) anyhow she says it is cute..... The fellows decided one night to go on pass to Lecce... a good time was had by all, including Bolerjack and Apamavage who returned sans shorts. Seems there is a shortage of broadcloth in Italy... aren't shorts expendable, anyhow?... T/S Francis Geiser finished his fifty the other day, including many very rough ones, but he came out with nary a scratch... now he's limping... seems that he indulged in volley-ball and found it very rough.... Capt Brewer says vino is bad for the brain but Pfc Gil Weiss rattled off the capitols of the 48 States the other night with only two errors.... are you sure about that vino, Capt?.... the gang really went to work on the area for the big inspection last Wednesday... result.. a perfect area, of course, anybody can see that... the volley-ball team is still looking for worthy opponents... they just whipped the Communications outfit.... if Special Services' Dick Price is having any trouble with the loud speaker, we recommend getting Sgt Spurgeon Hill to fill in.. he has what is known as a "calling voice" and no amplifier is necessary. So long, for now.... see you at the bar.... XM

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SAFETY UNIT PRAISED

(Continued from page one)

always alert in handling the equipment, which is such a great factor in saving lives in emergencies.

Parachutes are inspected every day and are repacked every 60 days. The flying personnel turn their parachutes into the section after a mission and as they are stored in their private cubby-holes they are inspected thoroughly. The men draw them out again before briefing for the next mission. Each flying man has his own chute.

The section's day starts 30 minutes before briefing and from then until after all equipment has been inspected, after the mission, the men are busy.

Upon the return from a mission all planes are inspected for damage to the safety equipment, Life Raft, 1st aid kits, accessory kit, the emergency radio (known as the Gibson Girl) blankets, extra parachutes and flak suits are carefully inspected before the equipment is okayed for another mission.

Flak suits are assigned to the ships and before take-off each day the personnel of each ship checks the suits and someone from the section checks with them to ascertain the satisfaction of each crew.

The section has worked out an ingenious gadget to test heated suits, which replaces the continuity test and is much more effective and accurate. The result of this is that when a heated suit goes into the air, the men are practically guaranteed, it will work satisfactorily.

In addition to the handling of all the safety equipment the unit requisitions and issues all Air Corps flying clothing.

The entire section realizes the tremendous importance of their work and are proud of the respect and confidence that is placed in them by the flying personnel.

SILVER STAR
FOR 21st CO.

Major Howard A. Davis was recently awarded the Silver Star for "gallantry in action". On April 12th the Major led an entire Wing formation on a mission against an enemy aircraft factory in Southern Germany. This target was bombed successfully by the entire formation and the excellent leadership of Major Davis, in spite of intense flak and many enemy fighters, was in great part responsible for the terrific amount of damage inflicted. Discovering upon leaving the target that five armed bombs had lodged in the bomb bay and jammed the controls, he directed his crew in safetying the live bombs so that they would not explode. Not having use of the controls, it was necessary for him to constantly adjust power setting and move his crew about in order to maneuver the plane and maintain altitude needed to reach the base. Major Davis directed the rest of the formation to leave him as an explosion in his plane would endanger the rest. On approaching the field, through advice by radio, the fuses of the bombs were removed and a safe landing made in spite of two punctured tires. Major Davis' skill and his gallant in bringing his plane through this dire emergency undoubtedly saved the plane and the lives of his crew.

DOC SMITH FLYS
MISSION OVER ITALY

(Continued from page one)

Capt. Smith has had previous experience with aircraft. His first trip in a plane was at the age of 12 when he flew from Wright field to Dayton, Ohio in an old Army pursuit ship. Years later, while attending Flight Surgeon's School at Randolph Field, he took private lessons in his spare time and continued flying on his own at Davis Mo. and at Tucson, Arizona incidentally, he holds a C. A. A. Civilian Pilot's license.

Capt. Smith's home town is Grand Ridge, Illinois.

WORLD AND YOU

by Lt. W. C. Hollands

Considerable interest has been noted by men of this group concerning the Allies, the enemy, enemy propaganda, the future course of our country, etc. It is our aim to give all the facts in context so that you may formulate your own opinions on the subject.

No attempt will be made to "whitewash" our allies but credit will be given where due.

ENEMY PROPAGANDA

Nazi propaganda is a major weapon in the war against us. It has six major objectives:

1 - Allied Disunity.

The Nazis well knew they couldn't win so long as the United States, Great Britain, Russia, China and the other Allied Nations remained united in a solid front. They attempt to have us distrust our allies and fight amongst ourselves.

The Nazis tell Americans we are fighting to preserve the British Empire or spread communism over Europe. They tell the British that "Wall St." plans to annex the British Empire. They tell the Russians that Stalin is shedding Russian blood to preserve Capitalism. The Nazi story differs according to the audience it addresses.

We should understand that this is a global war and that one ally alone cannot win this war. At the Moscow conferences the United Nations stated -- "WE WILL NOT SPLIT."

2 - National Disunity

This Nazi objective is to destroy us from within, to attack our democracy and way of life. They attempt to set capital against labor, whites against negro, religion against religion, soldiers against civilians. The Nazis seek to set Americans fighting amongst themselves so that we will lose the will and strength to fight our common enemy.

3 Enlist Support and Give Guidance

This third objective of enemy propaganda aims at giving guidance and direction to Nazi agents so they shall know "the line". It also seeks to enlist outright supporters who will swing us into the Nazi camp.

The Nazis want a few traitors and plenty of dupes to help with the dirty work. Hitler puts it very cynically, "We shall not need to bribe them. They will come of their own accord. Ambition and delusion, party squabbles and self-seeking arrogance will drive them".

4 - Spread Complacency

This objective is to lull us into smug complacency. If the Nazis can't demoralize us he will try to get us to relax our efforts. They circulate stories that the Nazis and Japs are about to fall apart. The idea is to have us believe that the war will end in 90 days. Get a few million soldiers to let up and it's a cinch..... for Hitler.

5 - Spread Defeatism

This objective is to demoralize both soldiers and civilians by destroying our faith in our country and our national leadership; in our military leadership, in our military equipment to prepare us for easy surrender and defeat. This line worked very well in Europe during the early phases of the war.

Now that the "terror angle" fails to function a new "line" is being used. The argument runs something like this: "Why fight? Suppose you win this war... you will lose everything at the peace conference, and every country will get a fascist dictatorship anyhow".

6 - Negotiated Peace

The sixth objective is to win victories without fighting. Munich was the classic example of "Peace

ENTERTAINMENT

Mon — "Swing Time Johnny" with Andrew Sisters, Harriet Hilliard.

Tues — G.I. Movies.

Wed — "Jack London" with Michael O'Shea, Susan Hayward Thurs-French Stage Show 2030hrs.

Fri — "Corvette K-225" with Randolph Scott

Sat — Popular Music Hour (1900-2100)

JULY 1, SATURDAY

450TH HQ VS 720TH SQ
722ND ENG VS 722ND ORD
720TH ENG VS 331ST SIG EM
47TH WING OFF VS 835TH ENG
47TH WING EM VS 721ST COMBAT EM
722ND OFF VS 721ST ARM
721ST ORD VS 721ST OFF
GP COMM VS 721ST COMM

JULY 5, WEDNESDAY

450TH HQ VS 721ST ARM
721ST COMBAT EM VS 722ND ORD
721ST COMM VS 331ST SIG EM
GP COMM VS 47TH WING OFF
720TH ENG VS 47TH WING EM
722ND OFF VS 835TH ENG
721ST ORD VS 722ND ENG
720TH SQ VS 721ST OFF

at any price". Now that the Nazis are on the defensive they aim in two other directions; (1) to talk one or the other Allies into a separate peace so they can concentrate on the others; (2) to gain a victory even in defeat by saving most of their war machine. The unconditional surrender policy decided at the Moscow and Casablanca Conferences sounded the death knell for the enemy.

Propaganda can render you inefficient as a soldier if you are lulled by their sweet talk. A full understanding of the enemy and what he stands for will counter-act all the propaganda tossed your way.

MEDICAL MUSINGS

"TAIL"
(A serial) PART IV.

Now let us look at gonorrhoea in the female. The incubation period in gonorrhoea is usually 3 to 5 days but some cases extend out to two weeks. The majority of women have few if any symptoms early in this disease unless their internal female organs are affected — especially the tubes. So unless the tubes are causing them trouble the majority do not seek the aid of a physician. The early signs are obvious and practically unmistakable. What about making the diagnosis in the female? It sounds simple — but in most cases it is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. The examination of the discharge of the vagina is almost valueless. During intercourse, the penis touches three parts of the female genitals that may contain the germ of gonorrhoea, namely the urethra (canal for passage of urine), the cervix (mouth of the womb), and bartholin glands located just inside the genital lips. Let us look into the diagnosis of gonorrhoea germs in the mouth of the womb. During the greater part of intercourse, the opening of the penis and the mouth of the womb are in contact. The gonorrhoea germs when in the mouth of the womb, live, grow, and multiply in the bottom of the millions of glands. These glands line the canal in the mouth of the womb — they do not live at the surface of the canal nor in the canal. This part of the womb is hard like gristle. The glands can not be seen by the human eye. In attempting to obtain gonorrhoea germs from the mouth of the womb, the doctor inserts a cotton swab (cotton wrapped tightly around the end of the stick) into the canal of the womb and rubs it over the surface of the canal, thus over the tops of these glands. He cannot get every gland,

LEAGUE STILL TIED

The Ordnance and 720 Squadron remain tied for the lead in the softball league with two games left.

BASE LEAGUE STANDING

| | W | L | Ave. |
|----------------------|----|----|------|
| 721st ORDNANCE | 12 | 1 | .923 |
| 720th SQUADRON | 12 | 1 | .923 |
| 722nd ENGINEERS | 9 | 4 | .692 |
| 721st COMBAT CREWS | 9 | 4 | .692 |
| GP. COMMUNICATIONS | 8 | 5 | .615 |
| 331st SIGNAL CORPS | 8 | 5 | .615 |
| GP H. O. | 8 | 5 | .615 |
| 47th WING E. A. | 7 | 6 | .538 |
| 721st ARMAMENT | 6 | 8 | .461 |
| 47th WING OFFICERS | 5 | 8 | .384 |
| 835th ENGINEERS | 5 | 8 | .384 |
| 721st COMMUNICATIONS | 5 | 8 | .287 |
| 722nd OFFICERS | 3 | 10 | .230 |
| 722nd ORDNANCE | 1 | 12 | .077 |
| 721st OFFICERS | 1 | 12 | .077 |

GROUP SONG?

Do you remember the song "Red Sails in the Sunset" . . . try these words with the tune . . . perhaps you'll like it as much as we did.

"White Tails"

White Tails in the sunrise,
Way up in the sky
O, Carry our brave lads,
Who are daring to fly.
Cotton Tails gleaming
Proudly you fly
Guns sharply pointing
For Nazis to die.
Swift wings on the morrow
Will head for the war
We'll hit them tomorrow
And we'll go flying no more.
White Tails in the Sunset
Returning to view
White Tails in the Sunset
We're sweating out you.

frequently he can not get any of the gonorrhoea germs out of the glands — hence his specimen contains no gonorrhoea germs. He, therefore, cannot say the woman does not have gonorrhoea. In order to positively say that he would have to cut the uterus up into little fine slices and examine each under the microscope very carefully. Obviously the flaws with this procedure are the time involved and the fact that he can't replace the pieces.

(To Be Continued)

23rd OPENS DAY ROOM

The 723rd dayroom will open tonight, pay-day too! A record breaking exchange of bank-rolls and a variety of drinks for everyone is anticipated. The executive committee running the show, headed by President M. Sgt Floyd W. Faire, extends the welcome hand to all group personnel, officers and enlisted men, on opening night.

The day room was designed to satisfy and respect every taste. It is divided into three distinct sections. One wing houses a marble-top bar with tall, cushioned stools. The dice and blackjack enthusiasts have a room of their own, open-air — to relieve the inevitable hot, smoky atmosphere, while those who wish simply to take in the cool evening breezes, can step into the reading and writing room, soft armchairs and radio.

In addition to President Faire, the democratically elected committee which has laid all the plans and established policy, consists of Vice Pres. T Sgt Livio A. Miller, Secretary Cpl. Hugh Hossell and Treasurer T Sgt Michael J. Rinke. They have been eagerly assisted by a board of governors, representative of the entire squadron. T Sgt George Birdno will be in charge of the bar, supervising the sale and dispensing of drinks.

To 1st Sgt. Willard O. Toliver, Cpls. Arthur Firby, John A. Morgan and Pfc. Jimmy Vitone goes the credit for the hard work involved in the designing and construction of an unusually attractive dayroom.

Squadron personnel are now competing in a contest to select a suitable name for the new dayroom. The winner will receive a bottle of the best Italian champagne.

MOLTO BUONO

Unofficial Publication of the 450th Bombardment Group (H)

Vol. I, No 18

SATURDAY, August, 5 - 1944

ITALY

Shoe Repair Prices Are Judged Fair

Many complaints have been received in this office about the cost of shoe repairing by the Italian shoemakers on the base.

A check-up shows that the prices although really very high according to the standards we believe in, are not too excessive considering the circumstances.

The price of soles and heels is 3.50, and one shouldn't pay more.

The leather is not GI nor drawn through Quartermaster and the work is all done by hand. These two factors naturally make the prices soar.

G. I. shoes, of course, may be turned into supply for repair and the civilian and officers type shoe alone is handled by the shoemakers.

Captain Wells, 720th Adutant, said that if anyone believed they had a better deal, they should be pleased to try and arbitrate for them.

450th Movies Shown in Rome

Some of the gang that went to Rome last week enjoyed a movie at Rome's famous Cinema Palace. Much to their surprise they saw themselves and many of their friends on the screen as the newsreel presented the 450th to the world. It was one of the seven motion pictures taken by the ICCU at this camp.

New we'll sweat it out at the Cottontail theatre....and the operator better not mess it up, either.

STAGE SHOW ON TONIGHT

Tonight on the Cottontail Theatre stage a colored revue with 24 entertainers will hold forth.

The show comes highly recommended and is said to be fast moving throughout. A boogie-woogie band adds to the entertainment.

ENTERTAINMENT

MON. - DuBarry was a Lady with Red Skelton.

TUES. - G. I. Movies

WED. - Behind the Rising Sun.

FRI. - Hi Sailor with Donald Woods.

MAJ. WRIGHT MOVES TO WING

Major L. A. Wright moved into Wing to take over Communications there, and Capt. O'Hara, formerly 722nd Communications head, took over the Group job.

HODGE IS NAMED MANAGER OF TEAM

Lt Joseph L. Walsh announced today that Sgt Willie Hodge, Carolina speed-boy, would be in charge of the Group baseball team.

The Group team has been having difficulty getting baseballs and transportation and have been unable to play often during the past two weeks.

Rare Award To Gp Crew

An entire crew of the 723rd squadron has been awarded the silver star for gallantry in action against the enemy. The first crew in the 47th Wing to be so decorated, and the fifth in the history of the 15th Air Force. This uniquely honored liberator team was commanded by Lt. Bryant L. Smick, and included the following men; Lt. Theodore W. Sorenson, co pilot; Lt. Edward C. Fulmer, navigator; Lt. Edward C. Pontz, Bombardier; S Sgt Joseph C. Portuges, nose gunner; Sgt. Harold E. Brown, waist gunner; S Sgt Oliver J. Ruse, waist gunner; Sgt. Max L. Dowdy, ball gunner; Sgt. John Raven, top-turret gunner and Sgt. Joseph B. Rapoza, tail gunner.

The story of Lt. Smick and his crew is a harrowing and inspiring one. On May 24, "Sweet Cheri" took off on a mission to bomb an

40 ME 109's dove down on Cheri's box in fierce, head-on attacks. Lt. Smick's ship was singled out and hopelessly crippled. The first assaults blew holes in 3 propellers, disabled the hydraulic lines, rendering the flaps, brakes and turrets inoperative and tore gaping holes in the wings and fuselage. The Liberator's gunners fought a bloody 40 minute duel with the enemy fighters. A vicious burst of 109 fire pierced the tail and wounded Sgt. Rapoza. Two 20 mm. shells tore through his left shoulder, and at the same time, one of his guns was directly hit. But though one arm hung useless at his side and his turret system was shot out, he worked the turret manually and fired unceasingly with his one good arm until his ammunition was exhausted.

(Continued on page 2)

THE MOLTO BUONO

Unofficial publication of the 450th Bomb. Group (H)

Lt. Colonel Robert R. Gideon
 Commanding Officer 450th Bomb. Gr (H)
 S/Sgt. Dick Price..... Editor

STAFF

HQ- M Sgt S. Radkoff; 720- Cpl. A. Mintz;
 721 T Sgt C. Micck; 722- T Sgt J. Prescott,
 Sgt N. Moscovitz; 723 - Sgt. M. Motchik.
 Lt. A. L. Campa, P. R. O. and staff
 Capt. W. C. Hollands.. Censor

EDITORIAL

We received a letter this week which we deemed advisable to answer in this column. The letter asks quite a number of questions which we will try to answer here.

The writer wants to know if the paper is for the enlisted man and is willing to back up enlisted men. This paper is for the Group as a whole. We are willing to crusade on the side we think is right for anything, be it for E. M. or officer.

The writer wants to know if the paper is restricted on it's policy. We have had no restrictions placed upon us. We are sure that if any campaign or policy we adopt is to better conditions, or to aid the Group, the superior officers of this group will give us their permission to go ahead, within reason.

The writer wants to know if we will "stick our neck out for a good cause"... we believe that if the cause is good we wouldn't be sticking our neck out. We honestly believe that if the cause is good the Officers in charge want to know about it.

The writer wants to know why we don't blast things that are unsatisfactory in the group. Probably because we don't know of such things. We run a "Reader's Column" which is open to everyone...if things are not to your liking say so... it's your paper.

The writer wants to know why we don't run an advice to the love-lorn column. Guess we'd have to find a pretty special sort of a GI to operate that kind of advice, wouldn't we?

READERS COLUMN

Dear Editor:

The letters you printed last week in Molto Buono were really fine. It was great to read what Col Mills and Col Gideon had to say and also Generals Baker and Devers. It kind of makes you feel good to have the superiors write stuff like that. I liked your answer to Col Mills also.

A Cottontail

(We enjoyed printing the letters, too-Ed)

Dear Editor:

You sure have been taking the knocks but I'd like to be one to congratulate you. You apparently keep the columns of our paper open for both sides. Although we agree with you on the PRO set-up we did like to hear the rebuttal. Thanks for keeping Molto Buono a paper for us all. Hope you print this.

A Reader

(Thanks, we don't get many letters like yours... Ed)

Dear Editor:

We have tried to get a location of our buddies in this theatre but cannot find anyone who can tell us where APO numbers or units are. Can you help us?

A Crew

(Try the Red Cross... Ed)

Dear Editor:

There is a rumor around this camp that MIA trinkets and personal belongings are being sold. This does not seem possible to a few of us and we would like to have you deny it in your columns.

A Combat Crew

(We, too, have heard the rumor but hardly believe that it is possible... at press time we are still checking. We hope to deny it in our next issue- Ed)

RESTRICTED - This newspaper is restricted to U. S. Army personnel and may not be sent through the mails

PX PRICES

For your benefit we print here the cost prices which prevail on major items on sale at PX's on this base. These prices are official.

- Cigarettes.....5c per pack
- Cigars.....4 or 6c each
(Brands may vary the price of this item)
- Matches.....1c per box
- Pipe Tobacco.....6c, 7c, 8c,
(according to brand)
- Candy.....3c per bar
- Gum.....3c per pack
- Tooth Paste... 15c a tube
- Beer.....6c per can
- Cokes.....4c per bottle
- Toilet Soap...6c per bar
- Klex Soap....5c per bar
- Tooth Powder..7c per box
- Lifesavers.....2c per roll
- Lighter Fluid.. 6c per can
- Chewing tobacco (Scrap)...4c
(Plug)...3c
(Red Man)...8c
- Combs.....3c each

Other items vary in prices according to the type or brand and therefore are not standardized.

This list is printed for your benefit and we repeat is official. items sold at PXs on this base are sold at cost.

450th CLAIMS

COVER GIRL

Life's cover girl for the July 17th issue is the lovely and charming Ann Scott, known to the 450th Group better as Mrs Earl Thomas, wife of the Group Communications Sgt.

Sgt Thomas was pleasantly surprised when he gazed at the Life cover and who can blame him for saying she's his favorite pin-up and all round "gal".

Mrs Thomas visited her Sgt husband at Alamogordo and many of us in the group had the pleasure of meeting the famous young model at that time.

- WORLD AND YOU -

by Capt. W. C. Hollands

The Post-War Fight

Many of us are interested ONLY in getting the war over with one way or another so that we can get home again. It is a natural impulse and no one can really be censured for harboring that feeling but it is dangerous not only to ourselves but also to the future welfare of our country.

When the echo of the last shot is heard the post-war fight will begin. The fight for a lasting peace. This fight will consume as much of our energy and require our personal participation as has the present conflict.

In 1919 the U. S. Refused to enter the League of Nation. That was just about the biggest blunder we ever pulled. You know the rest of the story..... a weak League; Japan, Italy and Germany starting their conquests; America sitting back unconcerned, safe(?) between two oceans. It is no wonder that we were surprised at Pearl Harbor.

Can we avoid repeating the mistakes made before? It is going to require sound thinking, careful study and endless effort to regain and keep a world worth living in. Let's think it out and talk it out together. American, British, Russian, French, Chinese.

What is the main thing we are fighting for? This war is being fought to give the United Nation an opportunity to have again what they refused in 1919-- the chance to build courageously a free world. Let's not miff the opportunity.

Orbits are formed in the Army which will be carried over into civilian life. Pride in outfit — pride in country. Confidence in Leadership. Selection of responsible representatives. Sense of duty — sense of

citizenship. The good soldier of today is preparing for that day when he becomes a really good citizen by using his overseas service as an opportunity to understand our allies and their problems.

Working with ideas is always more difficult than working with facts or things. Yet men have died, been enslaved, and towns and nations destroyed because the democratic world for a time gave up certain ideas. No, it is not an easy job. But making democracy work is never easy.

If you are interested in forming a discussion group to discuss future world problems submit your name to the Special Service Office. There will be NO lectures. YOU will decide the topic and YOU discuss it. EVERYONE will be heard and NOT ridiculed regardless of his opinion.

AN APOLOGY

Sgt Couch was recently accredited as "escorting Miss Carroll home" in a Molto Buono story. Although this was true as far as it went the story failed to slip in the fact that he was "one of a party" that escorted Miss Carroll home.

We are sorry that we made Sgt Couch appear as a "Don Juan" but it wasn't our intention. Sorry. Sarge.

MATCHES AT H.Q.

The Ping Pong tournament, scheduled for the theatre, has been moved inside to the HQ day-room. The theatre proved to be an impractical spot and better playing conditions will exist in the day-room.

Scheduled games are posted in the Special Service office.

?? QUIZ ??

Well, we lost a carton of cigarettes. T/Sgt James V. Hopper of the 722nd crashed through with the winning answers although we still don't understand how he knew what that R with a line through the tail meant. As advertised we'll pay off though.

Here's this week's tough ones:

1. What is the highest denomination of banknote issued by the U. S. Federal Reserve?
2. In what country did our numerals originate?
3. How does the movement of a cat's jaw differ from that of a dog's?
4. Who invented the first successful fountain pen?
5. Who was the first woman to make a solo flight across the Atlantic?
6. What was the name of Barney Google's horse?

Last week's quiz answers were: 1-An R with a line through the tail stands for the Latin "recipere" meaning to take. 2-About 64 by airplane and dirigible crossed the Atlantic before Lindberg (Hopper said 63 (close enough). 3-President Wilson's first name was Theodore. 4-Babe Ruth hit 60 homers in 1927. 5- Barometer measures changes in atmospheric pressure. 6- Porto Ricans are citizens of the United States.

Checker Title Matches

The Checker tournament scheduled to start tonight will be postponed for a time, Lt Walsh said today. The Athletic Officer hopes to have each squadron hold a meet to decide their champion and to have the champions meet for the Group title.

MEDICAL MUSINGS PLANE FIRST AID

You know, it really isn't hard to give efficient First Aid and yet many fellows can't do it when the show-down comes. Here are a few reminders for those who may have forgotten.

Keep your head! When you are excited you can't remember what to do next. Your patient will have much more confidence in you that way, too, so keep calm.

When you have a wound to treat, expose it by cutting away clothing, shoes, etc., so you can see the extent of the wound and how much bleeding is present.

Bleeding must be stopped next. In artery bleeding (spurting bright red blood), you may have to use a tourniquet. Don't forget this is applied between shoulder and elbow, or hip and knee, and must be loosened every 20-30 minutes. In vein bleeding (oozing, dark red blood) pressure is all that is needed to stop it.

Sprinkle sulfanilamide powder thoroughly into and around the wound in all cases, then apply the regular First Aid dressing firmly, so it won't slip and so it will control some of the bleeding.

Pain control is next on the list and here we use Morphine. One tube injected under the skin will make him very comfortable. This may be repeated in a couple of hours if he is again having severe pain.

If you think a fracture is present in arm or leg, then splint it with splints from the box of Battle Splints and Dressings, or use a rolled blanket to make a blanket splint.

Make him as comfortable as you can and keep him warm with blankets and flying clothing.

In an abdominal wound dress it and see that he drinks nothing by mouth. In a chest wound dress it and try to seal off the dressing with tape, so he won't suck in air.

Remember you are giving good First Aid, if you: 1. Keep your head. 2. Expose the wound. 3. Stop bleeding. 4. Apply sulfanilamide powder. 5. Apply a firm dressing. 6. Believe pain and make him comfortable. 7. Keep him warm. 8. Splint fractures.

Incidentally - you ground guys - the same principles apply to First Aid anywhere.

COTTON TAILS

721st Nctes.

Last week the day-room committee answered the curious by posting financial statements concerning the cost, up-keep, and operation of the day-room from the period of 12 June to 28 July.

The figures indicate that the cost of the day-room and auxiliary equipment was 1470 of which squadron personnel had contributed 1430. The total receipts from sales at the bar were 6389.15. The total expenditures for the period were 6189.10. At the present time there is 200.05 cash on hand and a stock valued at 360.20 showing a total profit of 560.25. The stock and cash on hand do not represent a true picture of the profit, because the value of the building and equipment shows a further profit of 1470. A debt of 735 was also paid off to the people who had advanced money to start a working fund. At the present time there are no further obligations to be paid. The only expenditures in future will be to purchase any incidentals.

The people responsible for the construction, management, and organization of the proposition as a profitable paying institution have earned the gratitude of the squadron. They have done the work on personal time in addition to their regular duties. M/Sgt. Moyer, section chief of squadron communications deserves special approbation for carrying on the major portion of a masterful task. Keep up the good work, men!

Molto Buono Edition Is Cut To Four Pages

Only four pages of Molto Buono today. No news from squadrons plus a slight paper shortage. We hope to be back with the larger edition next week

AWARD TO CREW

(Continued from page one)

usted. Sgt Dowdy, the ball gunner, was also struck, in the arm, but clung to his guns, and Sgt. Brown the right waist gunner and engineer, died fighting. Mortally wounded, he kept firing while his life bled away. Meanwhile, Sgt. Russell, the other waist gunner, had been blasting away at Jerry, when his guns suddenly jammed. He was hit, the impact of the bullet spun him around and recovering from the shock, he discovered Brown, slumped at his guns. Despite an intense pain, Sgt. Russell took over the position and destroyed two fighters before he passed out, unconscious. Altogether, these gallant gunners accounted for five Nazis.

After the fighters left, "Sweet Chariot" went on to bomb the target and was subjected to a terrific flak barrage - bombs away - and then the bomb-bay doors wouldn't close, so Lt. Fulmer, the navigator, crawled out along the cat-walk, slicky with hydraulic fluid, and tried to crank the doors down manually, but they had been partly shot away. Then Lt. Sorenson, the co-pilot, Lt. Pontz, the bombardier, and Lt. Fulmer went back to the waist and administered first aid to the wounded gunners, in the midst of the flak barrage.

In bringing the plane back home, the pilot and co-pilot "displayed superb airmanship and courage in regaining control of the air-raft after the controls had jammed, and safely landed the plane without the use of flaps or blakes".

The citation, awarding this entire crew the Silver Star, stresses the extraordinary individual heroism of the men and their exceptional co-ordination and air discipline as a fighting team.

PING PONG TEAM BEAT!

The Group ping-pong team that is playing in the matches at the Manduria Red Cross dropped a close decision on Wednesday to the 62nd Service Group.

GERMANY QUITS

Today, May 8, is VE-Day, and will be officially proclaimed so by the leaders of the Big Three in simultaneous declarations in Washington, London and Moscow.

This was announced last night following unofficial celebrations yesterday afternoon throughout the world, inspired by a broadcast by Germany's new Foreign Minister that the Wehrmacht High Command had ordered its armed forces to surrender unconditionally, and by press reports, unconfirmed by SHAEF, that the Reich's capitulation to the Allies and Soviets had been signed early yesterday morning at Rheims, France, at a schoolhouse serving as Gen. Eisenhower's HQ.

U.S. Really Let Go With Yells At (Unofficial) Peace News

NEW YORK, May 7 (Clouds of torn paper and inkier tape swirled down on screaming crowds packed in the streets of New York this morning within a few minutes after news had been received that Germany had surrendered unconditionally.)

Office girls opened windows and emptied wastebaskets. Bits of paper fluttered in clouds all over Manhattan and settled in a thick carpet on the damp sidewalks.

Some offices closed as soon as word was received from Associated Press at 9:35 AM and employees joined the thousands milling through the thoroughfares.

City authorities said the crowds, estimated at 1,000,000 persons, were "bigger than 1918." The streets were knee deep in paper, all phones were dead and traffic was diverted.

In the Hudson River lanes and tugs let loose their sirens, adding to the noise of planes that dipped crazily over the city in celebration.

In Times Square cheers rang out and couples danced through a blizzard of confetti. Service men of many nations mingled in the packed victory throng.

Outside one Broadway hotel, a group of Americans, British and Canadian servicemen formed a priming line, while a long string of girls marched past placing congratulatory kisses on their lips-kissed faces.

In the financial district, costless and hatless men and women filed the narrow streets, their jells accompanied by the ceaseless honking of automobile horns.



THEY SIGNED: (Left) Gen. Eisenhower, (right) Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith.

Press reported that among those who signed the terms by which Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies were Lt. Gen. Walter B. Smith, Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff (left), and Col. Gen. Gustav Jodl, the Wehrmacht's chief of staff.

Passes, Furloughs Extended 48 Hours

Effective with the official announcement of VE-Day today, passes and furloughs of all military personnel in the U.S. are extended for 48 hours, U.S. Base AG announced yesterday.

Neutral Swiss Rejoice

BERN, May 7—All church bells in Switzerland were rung for a quarter of an hour following news of the unconditional surrender of Germany, although the celebration, made one a little more festive, greeted Europe with

at a schoolhouse serving as Gen. Eisenhower's HQ.

Following publication yesterday afternoon of an Associated Press dispatch describing Rheims and reporting that the surrender terms were signed by Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff; Russian Gen. Ivan A. Susloparov and French Gen. Francois Serey, (for the Allies and Russia, and Col. Gen. Gustav Jodl, the Wehrmacht's chief of staff, (for the Germans, the British Ministry of Information announced in London that today would be treated as VE-Day, ending the war five years, eight months and seven days after the Nazis invaded Poland on Sept. 1, 1939.

Prime Minister Churchill will broadcast the proclamation to the British at 3 PM in London today. Since the announcement will be made simultaneously by the Big Three leaders, this means that the statements by President Truman and Marshal Stalin will be broadcast from Washington and Moscow at 9 AM and 4 PM respectively.

Breaking by The Associated Press of the story on the surrender negotiations created a furor, coming soon after Flensburg Radio, on the Danish-German border, carried the broadcast announcing Germany's unconditional surrender.

SHAEF authorized correspondents there to state that, as of 4:45 PM yesterday, it had not made anywhere any official statement for publication up to that hour concerning the complete surrender of all the German armed forces in Europe, and that no story to that effect had been authorized. United Press and International News Service said dispatches from their Paris bureaus told of the suspension by Allied military authorities of the Associated Press filing of news dispatches from the ETO because of its Rheims dispatch.

Lack of direct confirmation for the Rheims story—though there was no outright denial of the details—created considerable confusion before the Ministry of Information announcement was released. The Columbia Broadcasting System's chief correspondent in London reported in a broadcast to New York that both Truman and Churchill were prepared to issue their proclamation last night, but that Marshal Stalin was not ready to do so, with the result that all three had agreed to postpone the announcements until they could be made at the same time.

In Washington yesterday afternoon President Truman announced, through his press secretary Jonathan Daniels, that he had agreed with London and

Instrument of Surrender
of
All German armed forces in HOLLAND, in
northwest Germany including all islands,
and in DENMARK.

1. The German Command agrees to the surrender of all German armed forces in HOLLAND, in northwest GERMANY including the FRISIAN ISLANDS and HELIGOLAND and all other islands, in SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, and in DENMARK, to the C.-in-C. 21 Army Group. This to include all naval ships in these areas. These forces to lay down their arms and to surrender unconditionally.
2. All hostilities on land, on sea, or in the air by German forces in the above areas to cease at 0800 hrs. British Double Summer Time on Saturday 5 May 1945.
3. The German command to carry out at once, and without argument or comment, all further orders that will be issued by the Allied Powers on any subject.
4. Disobedience of orders, or failure to comply with them, will be regarded as a breach of these surrender terms and will be dealt with by the Allied Powers in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war.
5. This instrument of surrender is independent of, without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by or on behalf of the Allied Powers and applicable to Germany and the German armed forces as a whole.
6. This instrument of surrender is written in English and in German. The English version is the authentic text.
7. The decision of the Allied Powers will be final if any doubt or dispute arises as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

B. L. MONTGOMERY
Field-Marshal
4 May 1945
1830 hrs.

FRIEDBURG.
KINSEL.
G. WAGNER.
POLECK
FRIEDEL

ACT OF MILITARY SURRENDER

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command all forces on land, sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on 8 May and to remain in the positions occupied at that time. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment.

3. The German High Command will at once issue to the appropriate commanders, and ensure the carrying out of any further orders issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and by the Soviet High Command.

4. This act of military surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on

behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

5. In the event of the German High Command or any of the forces under their control failing to act in accordance with this Act of Surrender, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command will take such punitive or other action as they deem appropriate.

Signed at Rheims at 0241 on the 7th day of May, 1945.
France

On behalf of the German High Command.
JOSEF

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

| | |
|--|---|
| On behalf of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. W. B. SMITH | On behalf of the Soviet High Command. SOUSLOPAROV. |
|--|---|

F SEVEZ
Major General, French Army
(Witness)

ACT OF MILITARY SURRENDER

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Supreme High Command of the Red Army all forces on land, at sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on 8th May 1945, to remain in the positions occupied at that time and to disarm completely, handing over their weapons and equipment to the local allied commanders or officers designated by Representatives of the Allied Supreme Commands. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment, and also to machines of all kinds, armament, apparatus, and all the technical means of prosecution of war in general.

3. The German High Command will at once issue to the appropriate commanders, and ensure the carrying out of any further orders issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and by the Supreme High Command of the Red Army.

4. This act of military surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

5. In the event of the German High Command or any of the forces under their control failing to act in accordance with this Act of Surrender, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and the Supreme High Command of the Red Army will take such punitive or other action as they deem appropriate.

6. This Act is drawn up in the English, Russian and German languages. The English and Russian are the only authentic texts.

Signed at Berlin on the 8. day of May, 1945

FRIEDBERG KEITEL STUMPF
On behalf of the German High Command

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

| | |
|---|---|
| On behalf of the Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force A W TEDDER | On behalf of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army G ZHUKOV |
|---|---|

At the signing also were present as witnesses:
F. DE LATTRE-TASSIGNY General Commanding in Chief First French Army
CARL SPAATZ General, Commanding United States Strategic Air Forces

“ . . . in the Name of the People of the United States”

Informal Remarks by THE PRESIDENT

GENERAL EISENHOWER, OFFICERS AND MEN: This is an historic occasion. We have conclusively proven that a free people can successfully look after the affairs of the world.

We are here today to raise the flag of victory over the capital of our greatest adversary. In doing that we must remember that in raising that flag we are raising it in the name of the people of the United States, who are looking forward to a better world, a peaceful world, a world in which all the people will have an opportunity to enjoy the good things of life, and not just a few at the top.

Let us not forget that we are fighting for peace and for the welfare of mankind. We are not fighting for conquest. There is not one piece of territory or one thing of a monetary nature that we want out of this war.

We want peace and prosperity for the world as a whole. We want to see the time come when we can do the things in peace that we have been able to do in war.

If we can put this tremendous machine of ours, which has made this victory possible, to work for peace, we can look forward to the greatest age in the history of mankind. That is what we propose to do.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The Allied armies, through sacrifice and devotion and with God's help, have wrung from Germany a final and unconditional surrender. The western world has been freed of the evil forces which for five years and longer have imprisoned the bodies and broken the lives of millions upon millions of free-born men. They have violated their churches, destroyed their homes, corrupted their children, and murdered their loved ones. Our Armies of Liberation have restored freedom to these suffering peoples, whose spirit and will the oppressors could never enslave.

Much remains to be done. The victory won in the West must now be won in the East. The whole world must be cleansed of the evil from which half the world has been freed. United, the peace-loving nations have demonstrated in the West that their arms are stronger by far than the might of dictators or the tyranny of military cliques that once called us soft and weak. The power of our peoples to defend themselves against all enemies will be proved in the Pacific war as it has been proved in Europe.

For the triumph of spirit and of arms which we have won, and for its promise to peoples everywhere who join us in the love of freedom, it is fitting that we, as a nation, give thanks to Almighty God, who has strengthened us and given us the victory.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby appoint Sunday, May 13, 1945, to be a day of prayer.

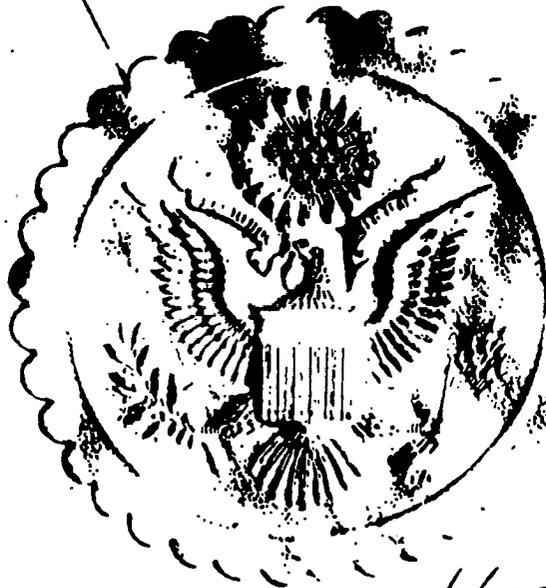
I call upon the people of the United States, whatever their faith, to unite in offering joyful thanks to God for the victory we

have won and to pray that He will support us to the end of our present struggle and guide us into the way of peace.

I also call upon my countrymen to dedicate this day of prayer to the memory of those who have given their lives to make possible our

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this eighth day of May in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-five and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-ninth.



By the President:

Joseph P. Kamp
Acting Secretary of State.

Harry Truman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAY 8 3 08 PM '45
REGISTER



S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

NOVEMBER 1944BOMBING SUMMARY:

The following is an account of the bombing done by this Group for the period from 1 November 1944 through 30 November 1944.

VIENNA SOUTH GOOD SIDINGS, 1 NOVEMBER 1944

This mission was incomplete because the formation was forced to turn back because of weather.

MOOSBIERBAUM OIL REFINERY, VIENNA, 3 NOVEMBER 1944

Three ships were sent out alone to bomb the Moosbierbaum oil Refinery in Austria by the PFF Synchronous Method. The PFF set went out in the first ship at the I.P. and the bombs were released in the area. The next two ships were able to go in on the target and drop their bombs.

MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARD, GERMANY, 4 NOVEMBER 1944

Three attack units were sent on this mission. All bombing was done by the PFF Synchronous Method. Lt Myers of the 720th Sqdn was the lead Bombardier and Lt Dieckman of the 723rd Sqdn was the "Mickey" Navigator. Lt Dieckman was not able to take a run on the primary target because of a course variation on the run. Coordination between Bombardier and Mickey was excellent and the bombs were released by the PFF system. The third unit came in next. The "Mickey" set went out near the target so this unit started to follow the first unit in to drop on them. However, the set came back in and the bombs were released by the synchronous method. It is believed that some bombs from this unit fell in the yard. The last box in had a very satisfactory run and coordination between "Mickey" and Bombardier was excellent. Lt Brickett was Bombardier and Lt Ryan was "Mickey" Operator.

PODGORICA, YUGOSLAVIA, 5 NOVEMBER 1944

This was a perfect mission. One box was sent out to bomb troop concentrations. Captain Leavitt was the Bombardier. He was given the center of town as an aiming point. However, on approaching the target he noticed the center of the town had already been bombed out. Using excellent judgement he moved his aiming point to an area which had not been bombed and let them go. This box did a 100% job of bombing.

FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY, VIENNA, 5 NOVEMBER 1944

The main effort of the Group went to this target on this date. The target was completely overcast. All bombing was done by the PFF Synchronous Method. No results could be seen because of the complete target cover.

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

NOVEMBER 1944BOMBING SUMMARY:ALI PASIN MARSHALLING YARD, YUGOSLAVIA, 6 NOVEMBER 1944

All bombs were returned to base on this effort because of weather.

MOOSBEIRBAUM OIL REFINERY, VIENNA, 6 NOVEMBER 1944

This was another PFF mission. However, after the run was almost over the Bombardiers were able to see the target. It was too late to do anything about it. The bombs were dropped by the PFF method. The patterns could be seen some 3,000 feet right of the target.

BRENNER PASS LINE, ITALY, 7 NOVEMBER 1944

Bombing was done by boxes. The primary target was covered so the Group went to aiming points along the Brenner Line. The lead box was led by Lt Myers of the 720th Sqdn. He used as his aiming point the center of the marshalling yards at Vipiteno. This box placed a 100% concentration of bombs in the center of this yard. The second box was led by Lt Friend of the 722nd Sqdn. Lt Friend had a malfunction on the run and was unable to release his bombs on the first run. The #2 man dropped when he heard someone in the plane mention something about bombs. The rest of the box also released after the #2 man. This is just another case of where bombardiers do not do as they are briefed. This box cut 25% off the Group's score for the day. The third box was led by Lt Campbell of the 723rd Sqdn. This box was forced to make three passes at the target. On the third run the bombs were dropped cutting the Brenner Line in three places. The last box was led by Lt Frank of the 721st Sqdn. The lead ship has an early return and Lt Murphy assumed the lead spot. He made an attempt to bomb the marshalling yard at Fortezza but dropped his bombs before he was completely synchronized. No damage was done by this box.

NOVI-PAZAR AND MITROVICA, YUGOSLAVIA, 8 NOVEMBER 1944

Only one box dropped their bombs on this mission. The rest of the boxes returned their bombs because the weather would not allow them to take a satisfactory run. Lt Miller of the 720th Sqdn. started his run under visual conditions. About forty seconds away from the target a cloud obscured the target from his sight. At the time he was very well synchronized. He noticed at this time that his bubbles were not level and tried to make an arbitrary correction for them without being able to see the target. His bomb fell some 3500 feet short and right of the target. Poor judgement was used in this case.

ORA R.R. BRIDGE, ITALY, 11 NOVEMBER 1944

Mission returned early because of weather.

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

NOVEMBER 1944BOMBING SUMMARY:ORA R.R. BRIDGE, ITALY, 12 NOVEMBER 1944

Three units were sent on this mission. Bombing was done by twelve ship units. The first two units were led by Lt Myers of the 720th Sqdn. and Lt Butner of the 722nd Sqdn. Neither unit hit the bridge but the first unit hit both approaches. The south approach was destroyed and the south span put out of use. Bombing was satisfactory as far as percentage goes but could have been better as far as destruction is concerned. The third unit was led by Lt Kemp of the 723rd Sqdn. This unit was unable to drop on the primary due to a malfunction of the Auto-pilot. This unit proceeded to the alternate target--the R.R. Bridge at Casarsa and bombed the by-pass there with 'excellent results.

INNSBRUCK MARSHALLING YARD, GERMANY, 15 NOVEMBER 1944

This was a single ship operation. Five ships went to this target individually. Bombing was done by the PFF Synchronous Method.

SZENICA TROOP CONCENTRATIONS, YUGOSLAVIA, 16 NOVEMBER 1944

No bombs dropped on this mission due to weather.

MUNICH WEST MARSHALLING YARD, GERMANY, 16 NOVEMBER 1944

This target was completely cloud covered. All bombing was done by PFF Synchronous Method.

FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY, VIENNA, 17 NOVEMBER 1944

Complete overcast of the target again forced us to bomb by the PFF Synchronous Method. No results were obtainable.

AVIANO A/D INSTALLATIONS, ITALY, 18 NOVEMBER 1944

Four units bombed this target. Two units were complete attack units and the other two were boxes. Clustered 100 lbs bombs were carried with the idea of destroying A/D installations and any parked aircraft in the area. Captain Leavitt of the 721st Sqdn led the first unit. This unit did a superior job of bombing laying a good pattern over their aiming point and target area. Lt Hudson of the 722nd Sqdn led the second attack unit. This unit missed their aiming point completely but managed to get their pattern in a dispersal area about 1000 feet to the right. Lt Miller and Lt Gawne both of the 720th Sqdn led the last two boxes in. Both of these boxes did an excellent job of bombing. Both covered their aiming point and target area well.

SCHWECHAT OIL REFINERY, VIENNA, 19 NOVEMBER 1944

Once again weather conditions forced us to bomb by PFF. The first attack unit unable to pick up the primary satisfactorily proceeded to the alternate at Gyer and made a PFF run there. The second attack unit bombed the primary by PFF. No results were observe

S-E-C-R-E-T**450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)****NOVEMBER 1944****BOMBING SUMMARY:****DOBOJ R.R. BRIDGE, YUGOSLAVIA, 20 NOVEMBER 1944**

This bombing was done by individual boxes on this mission. A good percentage was scored by three boxes but the bridge is still there. The first box was led by Lt Butner of the 722nd Sqdn. Lt Butner was unable to completely kill his rate and his box pattern started some 800 feet short extending up to the approach of the bridge. Lt Feinberg of the 720th Sqdn led the second box. This box had an excellent pattern about 2000 feet over and right of the bridge. No explanation has been found for this error. Lt Frank of the 721st Sqdn led the third box. Lt Frank did a superior job of bombing by placing his pattern right on the bridge. The last box led by Lt Kemp of the 723rd Sqdn scored a good percentage but missed the bridge some 300 feet to the right.

FERRARA R.R. BRIDGE, ITALY, 22 NOVEMBER 1944

Bombing was done by attack units on this mission. Only two of the attack units made successful runs on the target. The second unit broke formation because of an expected 360 degree turn which didn't materialize. The first attack unit was led by Lt Miller of the 720th Sqdn. Only about one third of the bridge was visible because of the smoke cover over the target area. Lt Miller did a very satisfactory job of bombing. His pattern fell on the north approach to the bridge. A better job could have been done had Lt Miller offset his vertical hair to the left even though the bridge was obscured. He would still have been able to keep his lateral hair on the bridge and synchronize. This procedure would have saved the bombs from the high right box. Lt Heryla of the 722nd Sqdn led the three ships left from the second attack unit over the target. No results were observed here. The third attack unit was led by Lt Caselli of the 723rd Sqdn. The entire target was obscured when this unit came in on its run. Using excellent judgement Lt Caselli used check points to synchronize on. His pattern fell along the north approach to the bridge. This was exactly what should be done when another run cannot be taken on a heavily defended target.

SZENICA R.R. BRIDGE, YUGOSLAVIA, 23 NOVEMBER 1944

Weather over the primary target was the cause for bombing this bridge. Three boxes bombed the rail bridge and one the highway bridge. The first box was led by Lt McHanon of the 723rd Sqdn. Bubble trouble seems to have caused an error here and the bridge was missed. A good percentage was scored by this box. The second box led by Lt Welch of the 721st Sqdn was the third box to bomb. Another good percentage was scored by this box but the bombs fell right and short of the bridge.

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

NOVEMBER 1944

BOMBING SUMMARY:

SZENICA R.R. BRIDGE, YUGOSLAVIA, 23 NOVEMBER 1944 - continued

The third box led by Lt Gawne of the 720th Sqdn bombed the highway bridge because the rail bridge was obscured by smoke. An excellent pattern was put very close to the bridge with several possible hits. The fourth box was led by Lt Glass of the 722nd Sqdn. This box did a superior job of bombing. Not only did they score a high percentage but they destroyed the target. This is the kind of bombing we are striving for.

Although we have flown but few visual missions this month our bombing has shown a marked improvement over the previous month. We still have a long way to go before we reach our ultimate goal. Bombardier's must keep working and practicing continually in order to assure a success on every mission.

Group Score for November 69.9%.

c:\bookfive\bombing.sum

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

MARCH 1945NAVIGATION SUMMERY

The following is an account of the navigation done by this Group for the period from 1 March 1945 through 31 March 1945.

MOOSBIERBAUM OIL REFINERY - 1 MARCH 1945

Two forces were employed in our effort against oil targets today. Both forces made rendy as briefed over San Vito. The course to the target was very well flown by both forces in spite of the fact that adverse weather just previous to the target area made navigation difficult. At the target all boxes of each force experienced normal PFF runs and results were unobserved. The rally was as briefed and the route home was closely adhered to by each force. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

BRESCIA M/YD - 2 MARCH 1945

Rendy over Manduria today was made at 0918 at 3,000 feet. The original target for today was Verona. However, just previous to the Initial Point it was seen impossible to bomb the primary target and the Group proceeded to the alternate Brescia M/YD. At the alternate, much haze and an almost complete cloud cover made it difficult to pick up the target. The X-Ray Attack Unit made two runs on the target and on the second run dropped their bombs. When the target was seen the Yoke Attack Unit made a run on the target which at that time was closed over, and the brought their bombs home.

ZAGREB W. M/YD - 4 MARCH 1945

Our effort was divided into two forces today. Both forces made rendezvous as briefed over San Vito at 1101 and 1106 respectively. Today neither force reached the control point. When they were told that the primary target could not be bombed visually they proceeded to the alternate target, Brod marshalling yard. The briefed initial point for this target was hit at 1334 and no bombs were dropped due to a thick undercast, which prevented synchronization. Two runs were made from different axis's with no view of the target. The route home was direct from the target. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

KOMAROM M/YD - 8 MARCH 1945.

After three days of standing down, due to weather, the mission this morning got off in good shape. The effort was composed of two forces departing on rendezvous at five minute intervals. The rendy was executed at Dubrovnik by both forces, the first force, 11,000 feet at 1003, as briefed, and the second force at 1009 at 12,500 feet respectively, at 1044 and 1051. The course to the primary target area was well adhered to by both forces. The first force hit the primary initial point at 1303 and made a partial bomb run. They rallied off the run approximately fifteen miles from the target because it was seen

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

MARCH 1945NAVIGATION SUMMERYKOMAROM M/YD - 8 MARCH 1945 Continued

impossible to see the target due to an undercast. After the rally the first force intercepted the briefed course up to the initial point and flew back to 46-55-16-40 just southeast of Kormend. Then to Leibnitz the initial point for alternate No. 2. A good bomb run was made and the axis and rally was as briefed. Axis 161 degrees true. Bombs away at 1245. This target was Maribor Loco Depot. The X-2 Box experienced a malfunction and were unable to drop on the target. They later salvoed their bombs in the Adriatic. The second force never reached the initial point for the primary target. At Nagymagyar 48-07-17-52 they were informed by the X-Ray 1 leader that it was impossible to bomb the primary target visually and that they were to proceed to alternate number two which was Maribor Loco Depot. They proceeded south and three miles north west of Zalaegerszeg 46-5-16-51 turned toward the initial point for the alternate. On the first pass at the initial point this force came in south, and elected to make a 360 degree turn. The second time they passed two miles right of the initial point and bombed at 1349 on an axis of 155 degrees. Y-2 Box had a malfunction and the leaders' bombs went away right after the initial point with some of the ships toggling. The route to base was direct from the rally. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

MARIBOR LOCO DEPOT - 9 MARCH 1945

Today two forces were briefed to strike the Maribor Loco Depot. The course up to the target area was well flown with the exception of some dog-legging due to bad weather enroute to the target. At Twimberg 46-55-14-51 it was seen impossible to bomb Maribor and the first force proceeded to the alternate Celje M/YD. This was not bombed due to an undercast. The X-Ray 1 Box bombed a target of opportunity at 46-48-14-51 at 1435 and both boxes proceeded back to base. The second force made runs on Celje also with no results. X-Ray 1 was the only box to bomb today. All others brought their bombs home. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

VIENNA FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY - 12 MARCH 1945

Rendy was made over Cazza over a complete undercast with the aid of Mickey, at 11000 feet at 1021. In the rendezvous area Lt Burke, Group leader, experienced a windshift which enabled the Group to make good a greater ground speed and therefore, was early at the keypoint. The course up to the target was strictly adhered to and the initial point was reached at 1251. It was necessary to turn on to the bomb run by a Mickey bearing due to the 10/10 undercast. All boxes experienced normal runs and the rally was as briefed. The briefed route back to the base was followed. Navigation on this mission is considered superior.

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

MARCH 1945NAVIGATION SUMMERYLANDSHUT M/YD - 19 MARCH 1945

The course to the target was flown very well. The rendy was 1/2 minute late at San Vito. At Vrulje the Group made a 360 degree turn because they were overtaking the 449th too swiftly. Passed 2 miles left of the keypoint at 1050 1/2 at 17000 feet. The initial point was hit at 1356 at 17000 feet and normal bomb runs followed, with the exception of the X-2 Box. This box could not pick up the target on the first run and elected to make a 360 degree turn. On the second run they over-ran a B-17 group but were able to get their bombs away in the target area. The rally was as briefed and the briefed route back to base was strictly adhered to. Navigation on this mission was considered superior.

AMSTETTIN M/YD - 20 MARCH 1945

A local rendy was executed today at San Vito at 1116 as briefed. The initial point for the primary target was never reached. At Judenburg the Wing leader informed our Group that it was impossible to bomb the primary target. Our Group altered course at Judenburg and proceeded to Gaming the initial point for the alternate target. Due to bad weather conditions existing in the target area it was necessary to bomb from 19,000 feet. The initial point was hit and all boxes experienced normal visual runs. The rally was a briefed and the briefed route to base was flown with few variations. Navigation of this mission is considered excellent.

VIENNA SOUTHWEST COMMUNICATIONS - 22 MARCH 1945

The Group once again performed a remote rendy and we were purposely 4 minutes late at rendy. The Wing was in perfect formation. The briefed route to the target was well flown and all four boxes experienced normal visual bomb runs. A sharp right rally took Group out of heavy, intense, accurate flak very quickly. Y-2 leader was damaged so his deputy took over and led box home alone. The remaining three boxes, with Lt Rummel as Group leader, cut extremely wide to avert Zagreb. In returning to briefed course the Group skirted the edge of Novska flak. The corridor in this area is not too wide and it doesn't pay to exaggerate your turns. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

ST. POLTEN SOUTH M/YD - 23 MARCH 1945

Again the 450th performed a remote rendy over Cazza and the briefed rendy and time were hit on the nose. The course to the I.P. was very good but after turning over the I.P. we ran a collision course with the 449th. Y-1 was able to continue its run but the remaining three boxes had to make a 360 degree turn. Y-1 dropped and trailed the 449th back

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

MARCH 1945NAVIGATION SUMMERYST. POLTEN SOUTH M/YD - 23 MARCH 1945 Continued

to base. The other three boxes experienced normal runs and rallied as briefed. One note of caution at our spacing point be on the alert for the Group preceding you. If it is off course slightly, dogleg so that you can get in proper trail. 360's are not the usual procedure in the target area. Navigation on this mission is considered superior.

NEUBURG A/D - 24 MARCH 1945

Remote rendy was again ordered and worked out well. Group was 1 minute later at 12,000 feet but the Wing formation looked pretty good. The course to the I.P. was very good and all boxes passed over the I.P. well squared away. Group rallied as briefed and course to base was as briefed. Fighters were seen on this mission so be on the alert hereafter. Our targets are getting deeper in the Reich now so keep your gunners awake. Navigation on this mission is considered superior.

CHEB OBERSCHON A/D - 25 MARCH 1945

A remote rendezvous was again the order of the day for the deepest penetration this Wing has ever made into enemy territory. Boxes were strung out so rendy was 8 minutes late due to a long south leg trying to get a good Group formation. Route to the I.P. was as briefed but none of the leaders could see it until past it. The Group actually passed about 5 miles left of it and then turned in for normal bomb runs. Rendy was as briefed and route home was very good. Navigation on this mission is considered excellent.

BRUCK AD LIETHA M/YD - 26 MARCH 1945

Targets in the Vienna area were the order for the Air Force today, and we had the Bruck M/Yd which lies south of Bratislava. Rendezvous was met one minute early and route to keypoint was very good. Just north of Zara the Group ran into heavy weather. All boxes got through but the two Attack Units lost each other. X-1 hit the I.P. and dropped bombs on their first run. They rallied and made a 360 degree turn around the rally point. X-2 couldn't pick up the target so made a 360 degree turn and bombed on the second run. Y-1 dropped on the first run and trailed X-1 home by five minutes. Y-2 also needed two runs on the target. X-2 and Y-2 returned to base alone. X-1 did right by executing a 360 degree turn to wait for the other boxes but should have made two. There was no danger of gas shortage on this mission and were only sticking our necks out when we let boxes return by themselves. Navigation on this mission is considered superior.

S-E-C-R-E-T

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

MARCH 1945

NAVIGATION SUMMERY

LINZ NORTH MAIN M/YD - 31 MARCH 1945

The Group wound up the month of March with another PFF mission. Rendezvous was executed as briefed and Group passed over Cazza at 0914 at 12,000 feet. We were last in the Group and preceded out on course. Thirty minutes out we ran into weather and all Groups executed a 360 degree turn to the right to get over it. We broke out in the clear and found two groups behind us and the 465th boxed us in from the left. No alternative was left but to proceed out on course as Wing lead Group. The briefed route to the pre-I.P. was closely followed and shortly thereafter the Mickey navigators took over for the bomb run. Our axis

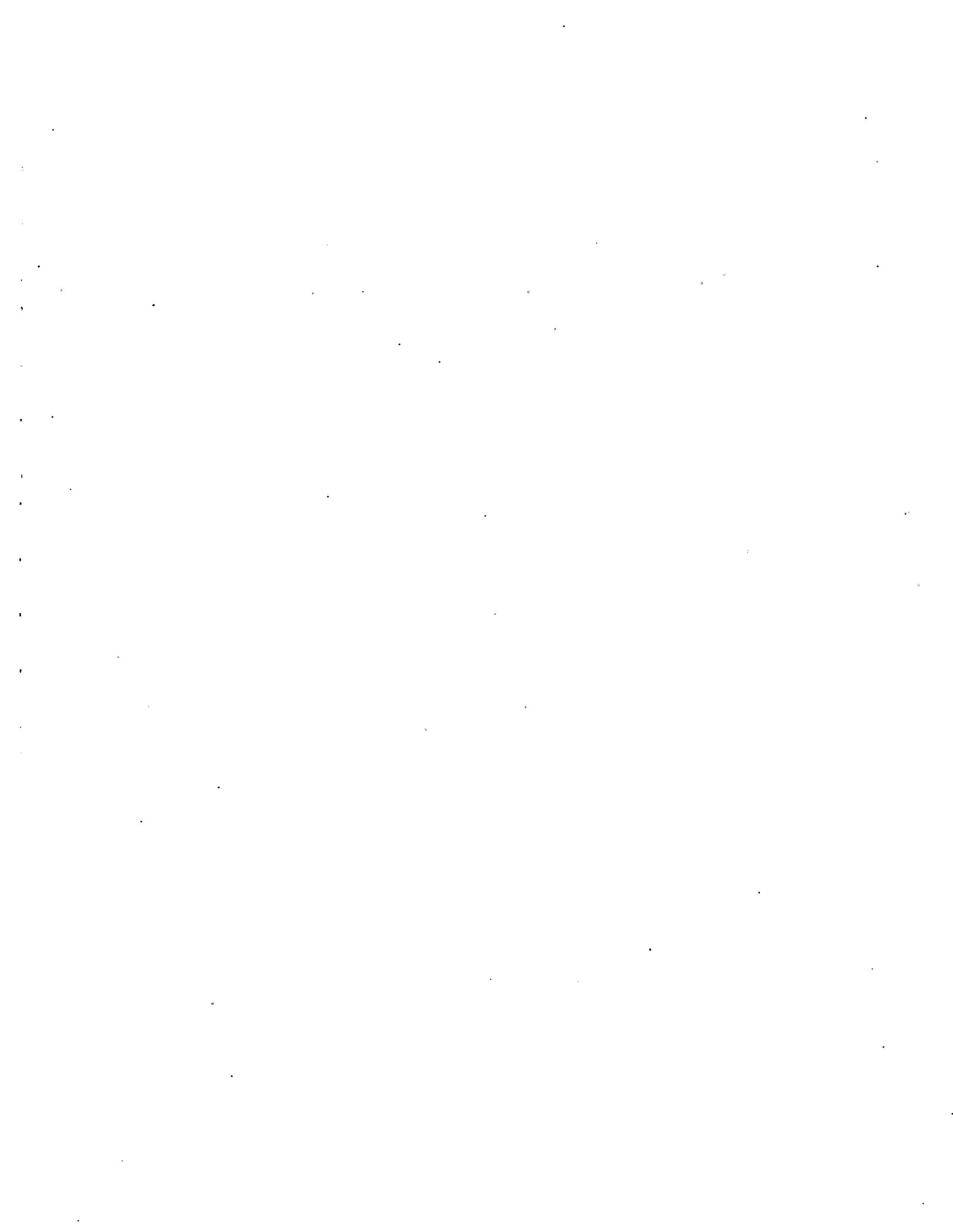
SUMMERY:

Our navigation for the month of march was even more outstanding that was the case in February. This month all the initial points were hit, with the exception of one or two where we encountered weather and a collision course with another group. This has greatly improved the success of our missions and bombing scores. In the coming weeks better weather should enable us to do even better navigation. All leaders are to be commended for their superior work this month. Hitting the initial point on the briefed axis is important, let's make it a habit to do so.

\S\ Eckley G. Schatzman
ECKLEY G. SCHATZMAN,
GROUP NAVIGATION OFFICER.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS



450th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

LEAFLET DROPPED ON GERMAN TERRITORY DURING
BOMBING RAIDS BY B-24 BOMBERS IN WORLD WAR II

ACHTUNG! LEBENSGEFAHR!

- Heute finden sich unter den Bomben, die uns der totale Krieg auf kriegswichtige Ziele in eurer Nachbarschaft zu richten zwingt, einige mit hoher Sprengwirkung, die nicht augenblicklich bersten.
- Das ist beabsichtigt, und diese Bomben sind alle mit Zündern versehen, die sie in verschiedenen Zeitpunkten zur Explosion bringen.
- Solche Bomben sind nicht ohne Gefahr zu entfernen, weil niemand weiss, wann sie krepieren werden.
- Wir beabsichtigen dadurch die in deutschen kriegswichtigen Industrie- und Verkehrsanlagen beschäftigten Arbeiter von ihren Werkstätten so lang wie möglich fern zu halten.
- Wenn eine derartige Bombe in euer Haus oder in seiner Nachbarschaft niederfiel, so war das nicht beabsichtigt. Doch ihr seid gewarnt, dass es Stunden, ja sogar Tage währen kann, ehe sie explodiert. Begebt euch deshalb sofort aus ihrer Nähe!
- So lange das Volk bereit bleibt, für Hitler und die NSDAP weiter zu kämpfen und weiter zu arbeiten, so lange werden wir genötigt sein, diese und andere neue Waffen zu verwenden.
- Sobald sich aber das Volk entschliesst, mit Hitler und seinem Krieg ein Ende zu machen, dann - und nur dann - kann mit der Zerstörung eingehalten und mit dem Wiederaufbau des wahren Deutschlands begonnen werden.

DAS VOLK MUSS ENTSCHEIDEN!

ATTENTION!

DANGER OF LIFE!

● Today you find yourself under our bombs which the total war has forced us to aim at strategic points in your neighborhood. Many have a high explosive charge, and can explode at any moment.

● This is done intentionally, and these bombs are all equipped with time-delay fuses that will activate an explosion of these bombs at various times.

● Such bombs cannot be removed without danger since no one knows when they will explode.

● Our purpose of this action is to keep workers employed at industrial and transportation facilities, that are strategic to the German war effort, away from their place of work as long as possible.

● When such a bomb falls in your house or neighborhood, it is not intentional; However, you are warned that it may be hours or even days before such a bomb explodes. Thus evacuate the vicinity immediately!

● As long as the people continue to fight and work for Hitler and the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers Party), we will be obligated to use these and other new weapons against you.

● However, as soon as the people decide to put an end to Hitler and his war, then, and only then can the destruction come to an end, and the rebuilding of the true Germany begin.

THE PEOPLE MUST DECIDE !

Publisher: The USAAF

**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

ESTIMATED LOSSES OF PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT FOR OCTOBER

PERSONNEL

Number of combat personnel on hand 1st of October - 2907

CASUALTIES:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Combat (KIA, MIA, Seriously Wounded) | - 2805 |
| Other Losses (Grounded, Killed and Injured in non-combat, etc) | - 536 |
| Total losses | 3341 |

Personnel less per sortie - 0.1884

Based on the expectancy of 20 missions of 112 A/C each, 2240 sorties will be performed during the months of October.

Estimated loss for the month - $2240 \times 0.1884 = 422$ men.

In addition 476 men may be expected to complete their tour of duty during the month.

Total losses of personnel - 898 men.

Replacements based on 15% of 96 crews per Group (576 men) will leave a net loss of 322 men and will reduce the Wing to 2585 combat personnel

Actual replacements during the month of September were 656 men.

AIRCRAFT

A/C on hand 1st of October - 254

A/C losses - 416

Average loss per sortie - 0.0234

Estimated loss for the month $2240 \times 0.0234 = 52$ A/C

Replacements based on 20% of 62 A/C per Group (48 A/C) will leave a net loss of 4 A/C and reduce the Wing to 250 A/C.

Actual replacements during the month of September were 59 A/C.

Source : SCU Forms 34, 110 & 112.

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**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

ESTIMATED LOSSES OF PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT FOR NOVEMBER

PERSONNEL

Number of combat personnel on hand 1st of November - 3655

CASUALTIES:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Combat (KIA, MIA, Seriously Wounded) | - 2993 |
| Other Losses (Grounded, Killed and Injured in non-combat, etc - | 575 |
| Total losses | 3568 |

Personnel less per sortie - 0.1841

Based on the expectancy of 20 missions of 112 A/C each, 2240 sorties will be performed during the months of November.

Estimated loss for the month - $2240 \times 0.1841 = 412$ men.

In addition 497 men may be expected to complete their tour of duty during the month.

Total losses of personnel - 909 men.

Replacements based on 15% of 96 crews per Group (576 men) will leave a net loss of 333 men and will reduce the Wing to 3322 combat personnel

Actual replacements during the month of October were 1284 men.

AIRCRAFT

A/C on hand 1st of November - 229

A/C losses - 465

Average loss per sortie - 0.0240

Estimated loss for the month $2240 \times 0.0240 = 54$ A/C

Replacements based on 20% of 62 A/C per Group (48 A/C) will leave a net loss of 6 A/C and reduce the Wing to 223 combat aircraft.

Actual replacements during the month of October were 32 A/C.

Source : SCU Forms 34, 110 & 112.

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

ESTIMATED LOSSES OF PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT FOR MARCH

PERSONNEL

Number of combat personnel on hand 1st of March - 4458

CASUALTIES TO 28 FEBRUARY:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Combat (KIA, MIA, Seriously Wounded) | - 3719 |
| Other Losses (Grounded, Killed and Injured in non-combat, etc) | - 677 |
| Total losses | 4396 |

Personnel less per sortie - 0.1723

Based on the expectancy of 15 missions of 112 A/C each, 1680 sorties will be performed during the months of March.

Estimated loss for the month - $1680 \times 0.1723 = 289$ men.

In addition 369 men may be expected to complete their tour of duty during the month.

Total losses of personnel - 658 men.

Replacements based on 15% of 96 crews per Group (576 men) will leave a net loss of 82 men and will reduce the Wing to 4376 combat personnel

Actual replacements during the month of February were 579 men.

AIRCRAFT

A/C on hand 1st of March - 204

A/C losses to 28 February - 581

Average loss per sortie - 0.0228

Estimated loss for the month $1680 \times 0.0228 = 38$ A/C

Replacements based on 20% of 62 A/C per Group (48 A/C) will be a net gain of 10 A/C and increase the Wing to 214 combat aircraft.

Actual replacements during the month of February were 57 A/C.

Source : SCU Forms 34, 110 & 112.

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**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

ESTIMATED LOSSES OF PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT FOR APRIL

PERSONNEL

Number of combat personnel on hand 1st of April - 4304

CASUALTIES TO 31 MARCH:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Combat (KIA, MIA, Seriously Wounded) | - 3682 |
| Other Losses (Grounded, Killed and Injured in non-combat, etc) | - 675 |
| Total losses | 4357 |

Personnel less per sortie - 0.1551

Based on the expectancy of 20 missions of 128 A/C each, 2560 sorties will be performed during the months of April.

Estimated loss for the month - $2560 \times 0.1551 = 397$ men.

In addition 470 men may be expected to complete their tour of duty during the month.

Total losses of personnel - 867 men.

Replacements based on 15% of 96 crews per Group (576 men) will leave a net loss of 291 men and will decrease the Wing to 4013 combat personnel.

Actual replacements during the month of March were 491 men.

AIRCRAFT

A/C on hand 1st of April - 224

A/C losses to 31 March - 581

Average loss per sortie - 0.0215

Estimated loss for the month $2560 \times 0.0215 = 55$ A/C

Replacements based on 20% of 62 A/C per Group (48 A/C) will be a net loss of 7 A/C and decrease the Wing to 217 combat aircraft.

Actual replacements during the month of March were 35 A/C.

Source : SCU Forms 34, 110 & 112.

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HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**SCOPE OF OPERATIONS**

With the 98th and 376th Groups suspending operations as of 16 April 1945 and with the entire Wing standing down as of 26 April 1945, the 47 Wing still dropped 4,176 tons in its last operational month in the Mediterranean Theater. This tonnage dropped during approximately only two-thirds of an operational month was exceeded only by the months April through August 1944. At this rate, the Wing would have dropped approximately 6000 tons in April 1945, had the whole month been operational.

For the period November 1943 through April 1945, the 47 Wing dropped a total of 56,915 tons of bombs on strategic points. The effectiveness of such operations is attested by no less than the statements of various German generals that it was the merciless pounding by the Allied Air Forces that cut down production, prevented movement of supplies, and finally prevented evacuation of men and material, contributing materially to the disintegration and final downfall of German armed might.

FINAL BOXSCORE OF OPERATIONS

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--------|
| Total Tons Dropped | - | 56,915 |
| Total Victories | - | 605 |
| Total Losses | - | 483 |
| Total Sorties | - | 30,272 |

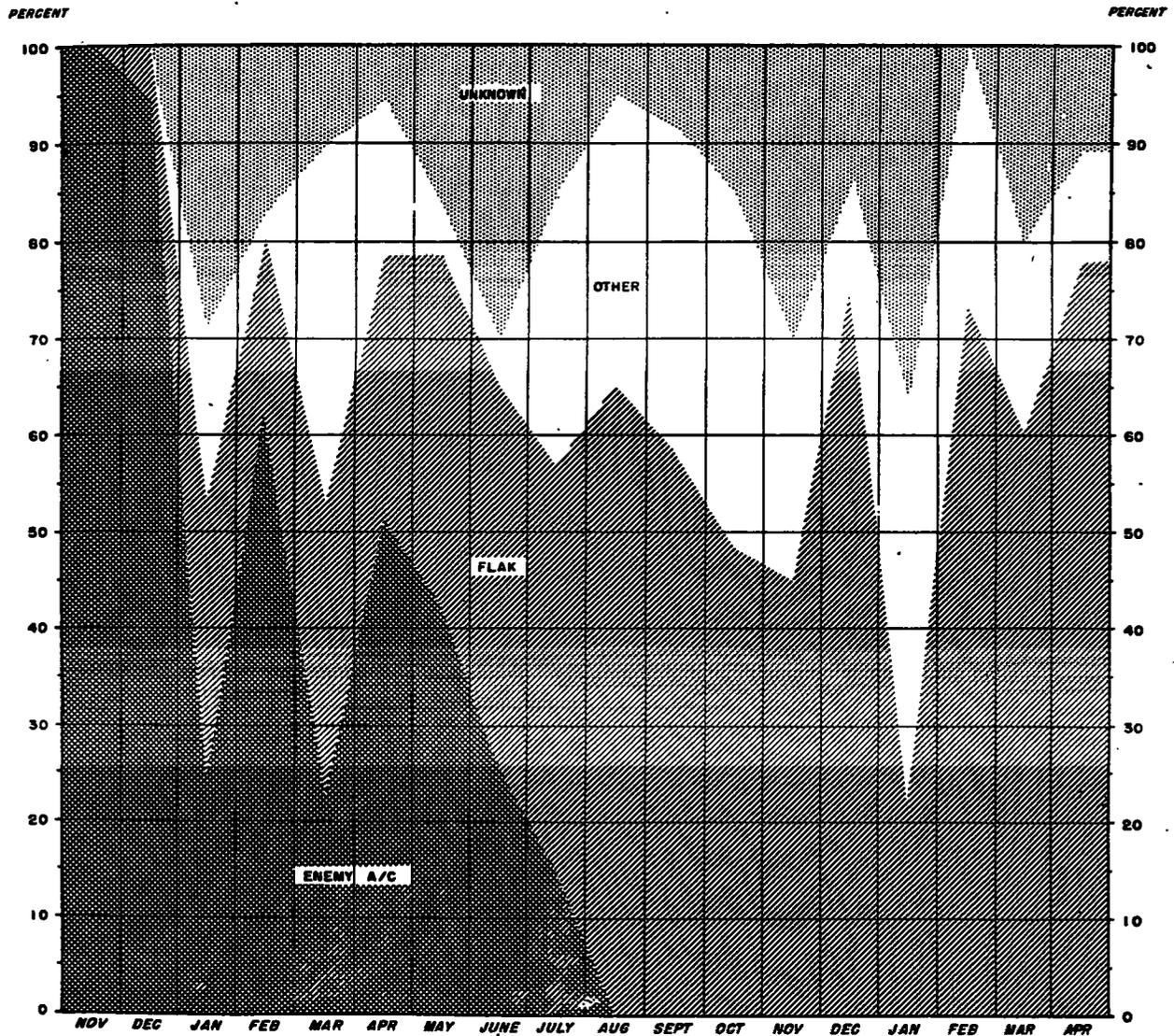
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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

47TH BOMB WING (H)

COMBAT LOSSES OF AIRCRAFT

NOVEMBER 1943 THRU APRIL 1945



| CAUSE | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | TOTAL |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| UNKNOWN | | | 5 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 5 | | 4 | 1 | 70 |
| OTHER | | | 3 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 12 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 96 |
| E/A | 2 | 17 | 4 | 28 | 4 | 31 | 16 | 10 | 7 | | | | | | | | | 0 | 119 |
| FLAK | | 1 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 20 | 26 | 7 | 13 | 9 | 22 | 3 | 19 | 12 | 1 | 186 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 18 | 17 | 45 | 19 | 61 | 38 | 38 | 47 | 40 | 12 | 27 | 20 | 30 | 14 | 26 | 20 | 9 | 483 |

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

OPERATIONAL COMPARISONS

The graphs on the following page are for varying periods of times, based on the availability of complete, accurate records. The Bombing Accuracy study is for the period: January 1944 - April 1945; the chart on Percent of Early Returns and Non-Effective Sorties: June 1944 - April 1945; the other two studies are for November 1943 - April 1945. Attention should again be called to the fact that the weather factor does not enter into the study on returns.

For the various periods the overall rating of the Groups is as follows:

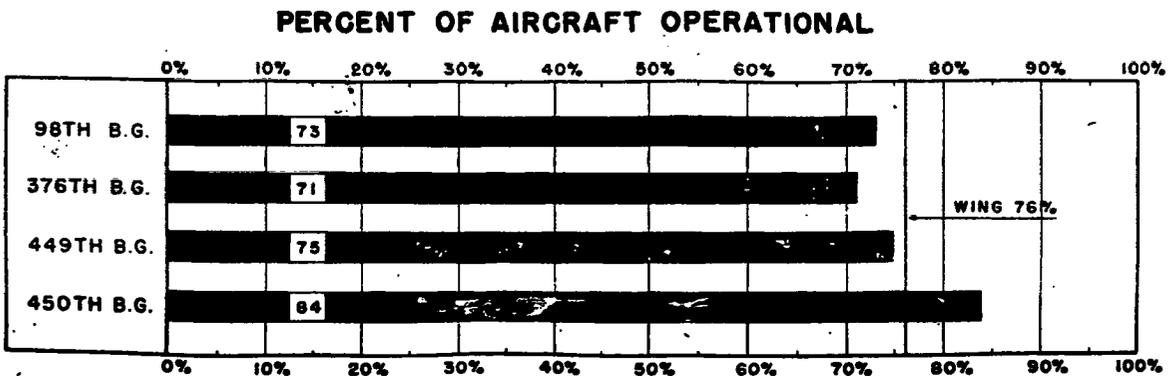
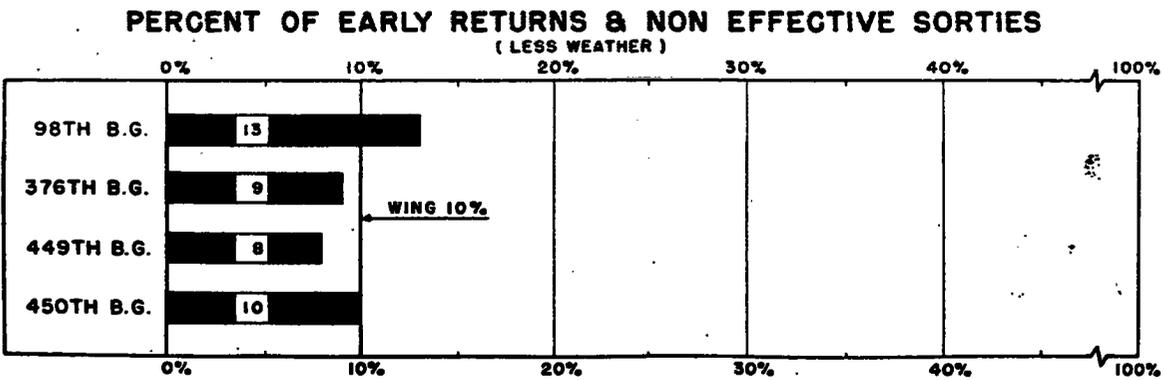
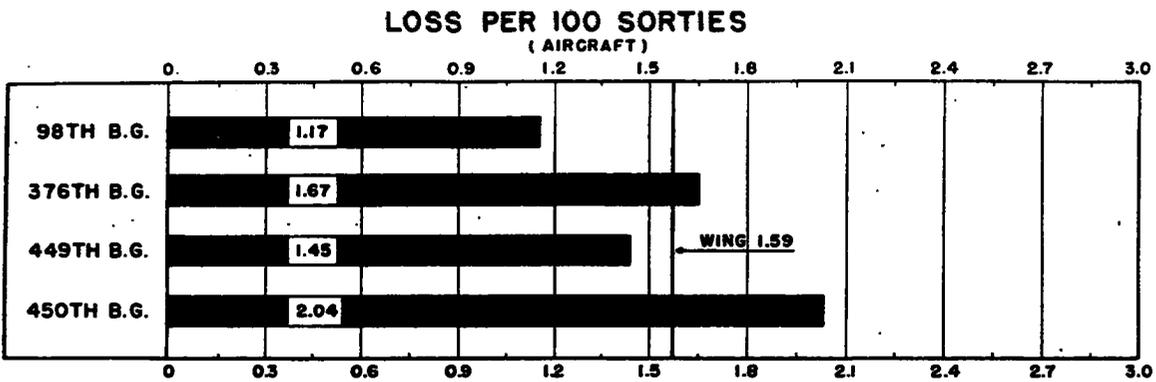
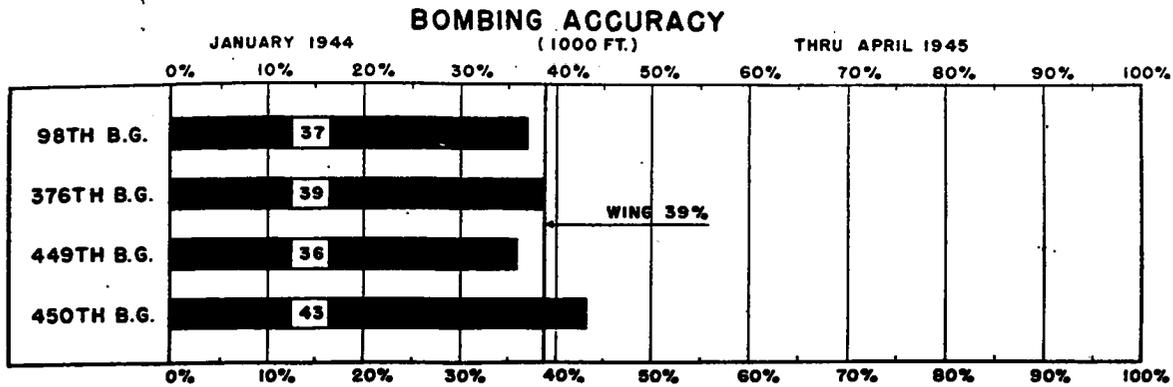
| <u>Bombing Accuracy</u> | <u>Losses per 100 Sorties</u> | <u>%Early Returns & Non-Eff. Sorties</u> | <u>Percent A/C Operational</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 450th - 43% | 98th - 1.17 | 449th - 8% | 450th - 84% |
| 376th - 39% | 376th - 1.67 | 376th - 9% | 449th - 75% |
| 98th - 37% | 449th - 1.45 | 450th - 10% | 98th - 73% |
| 449th - 36% | 450th - 2.04 | 98th - 13% | 376th - 71% |
| Wing - 39% | Wing - 1.59 | Wing - 10% | Wing - 76% |

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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

47TH BOMB WING (HV)

OPERATIONAL COMPARISONS



450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

VICTORIES AND LOSSES

Total Aircraft losses by the Wing amounted to Four Hundred and Eighty Three (483) for the entire period of operations. During the same period, the Wing destroyed Six Hundred and Five (605) enemy aircraft, no note being made of probables or losses of enemy aircraft on the ground.

Scrutiny of the causes of combat losses shows that no planes were lost to enemy aircraft during the period August 1944 - April 1945. Thus, again, the effectiveness of strategic attack is borne out; the thesis being simply that if the enemy cannot produce aircraft he cannot put forth a maximum defense against bombing attacks. For example, during the months from November 1943 - July 1944, when enemy aircraft was active defensively, our losses were One Hundred and Nineteen (119) planes to E/A as against Eighty Six (86) planes lost to flak. After the Luftwaffe was grounded, our losses from August 1944 - April 1945 to E/A were nil, while One Hundred and Twelve (112) aircraft were lost to Flak. Improved defensive patterns and excellent gunnery no doubt helped cut down our losses to E/A, but the fact remains that the drop in combat losses was due for the greater part to the lack of E/A put up in opposition.

THE FINAL SCORE

| <u>LOSSES TO E/A</u> | <u>LOSSES TO FLAK</u> | <u>OTHER CAUSES</u> | <u>UNKNOWN</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 119 | 198 | 96 | 70 |

Killed in Action - 302
 Missing in Action - 2455
 Wounded - 703

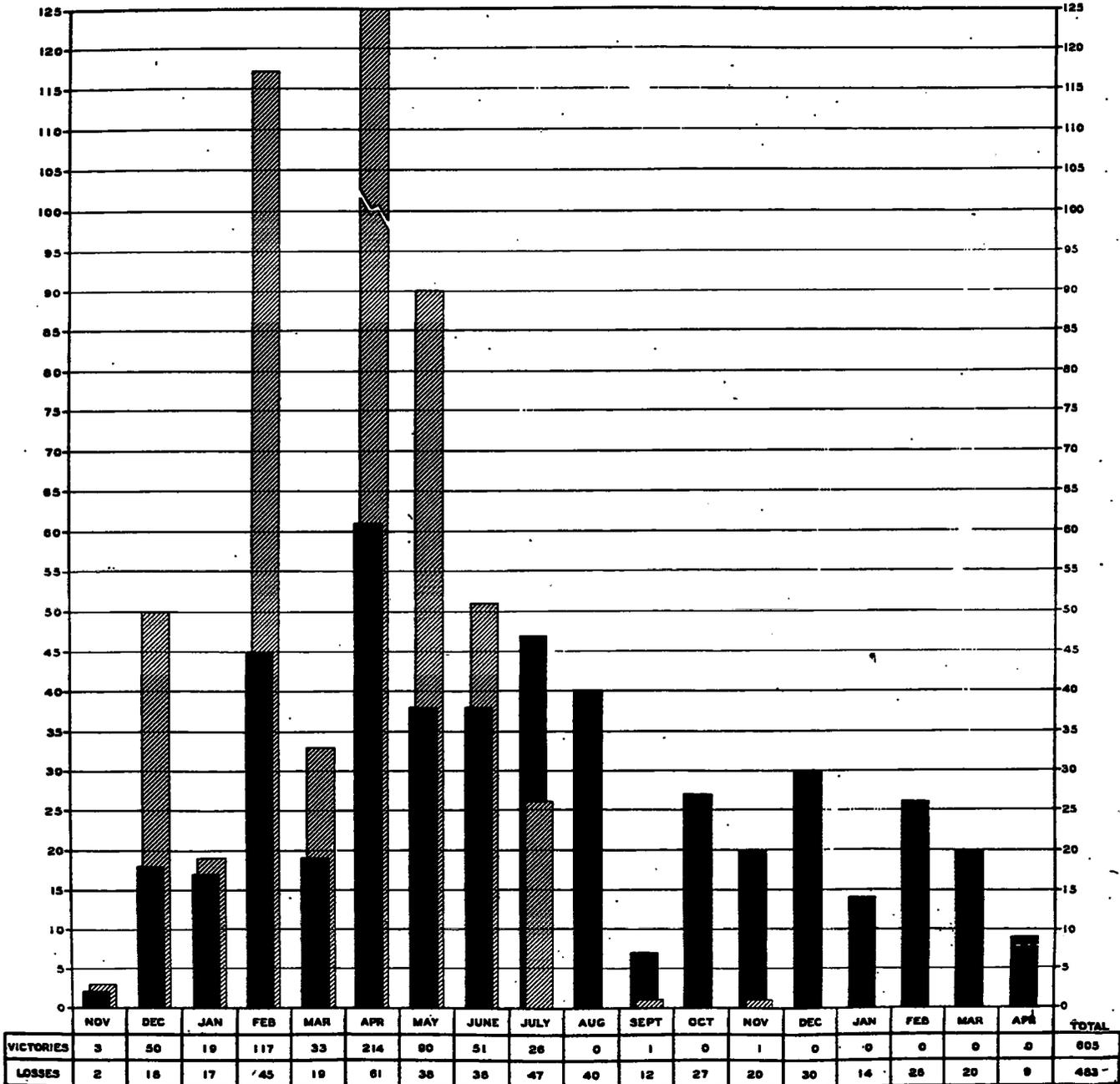
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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

47TH BOMB WING (H)

VICTORIES & LOSSES

NOVEMBER 1943 THRU APRIL 1945



SOURCE: SCU FORM 34

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

**HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
A.P.O. 520**

BOMBING ACCURACY

The partial month's operations during April resulted in a bombing accuracy score for the 47th Wing of 68.0% as compared with a score for the entire 15th Air Force of 61% for April.

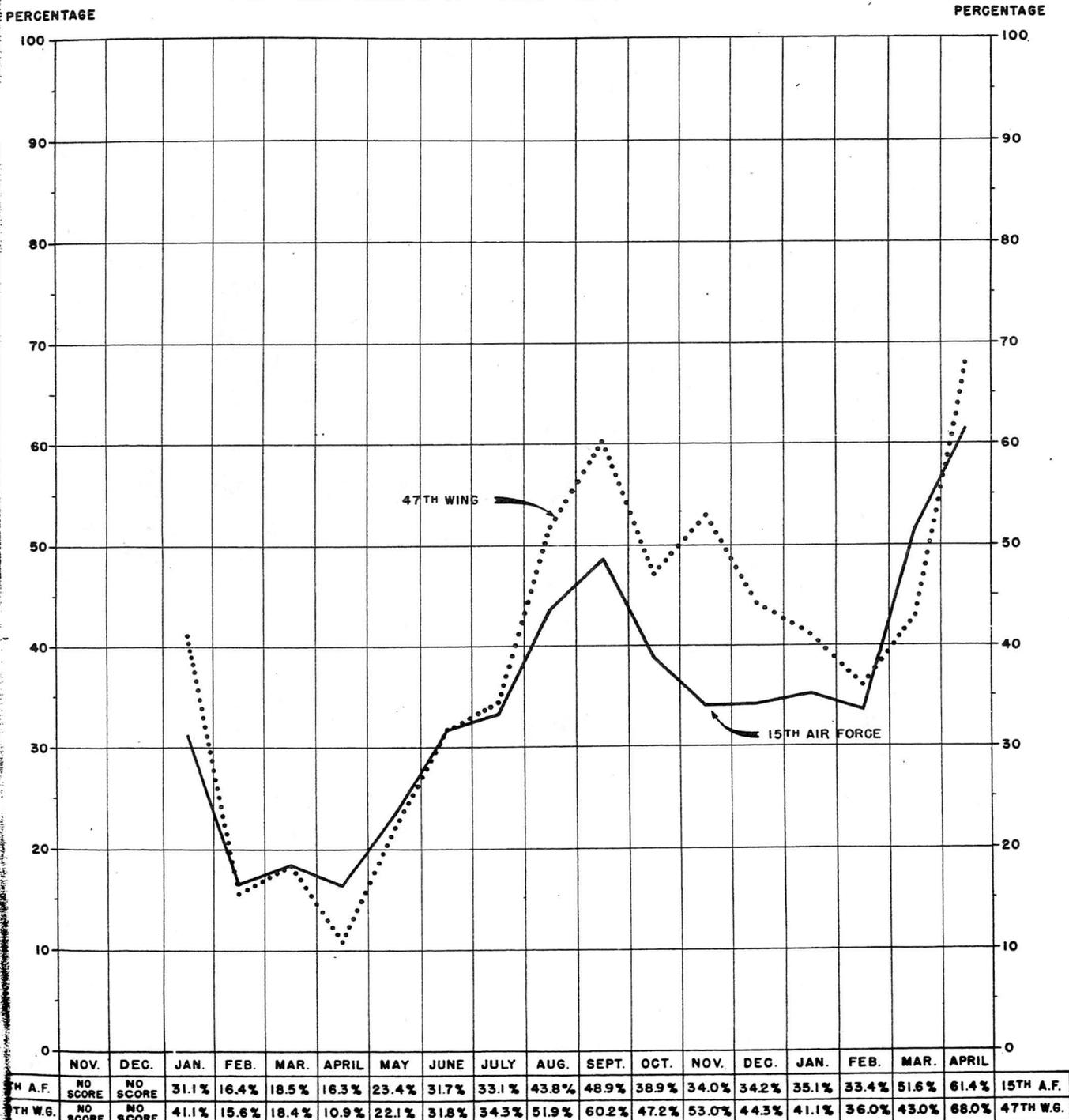
A resume of the entire operational period from November 1942 through April 1945 reveals that the Wing accuracy was above that of the Air Force during eleven of the sixteen months recorded, no scores being available for November and December 1942.

It is particularly interesting to note that the 47th Wing was first in the entire Air Force for six (6) months during the period April 1944 - April 1945, during which period it led the Air Force average for ten of the thirteen months scored.

BOMBING ACCURACY COMPARISON

(PERCENT OF BOMBS FALLING WITHIN 1,000 FT. OF MEAN POINT OF IMPACT)

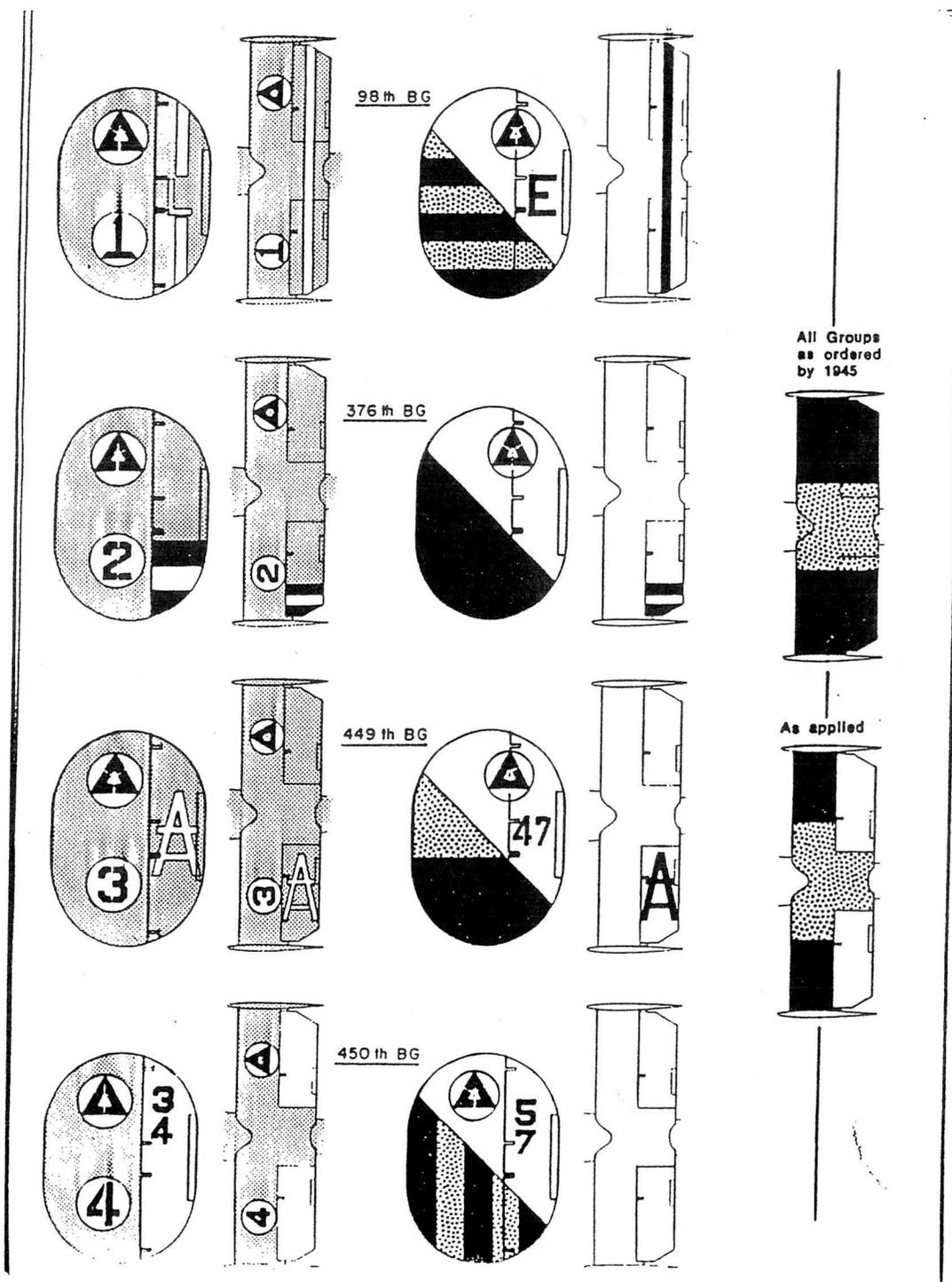
15TH AIR FORCE & 47TH WING NOV. 1943 TO APRIL 1945



SOURCE: 15TH A.F. BOMBING OFFICE

450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD - BOMB SQDNS

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE TAIL MARKINGS
47TH BOMB WING



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450TH BOMB GROUP - 720TH, 721ST, 722ND, 723RD BOMB SQDNS

REPRODUCED AT

SECRET

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE TACTICAL AND SERVICE UNITS

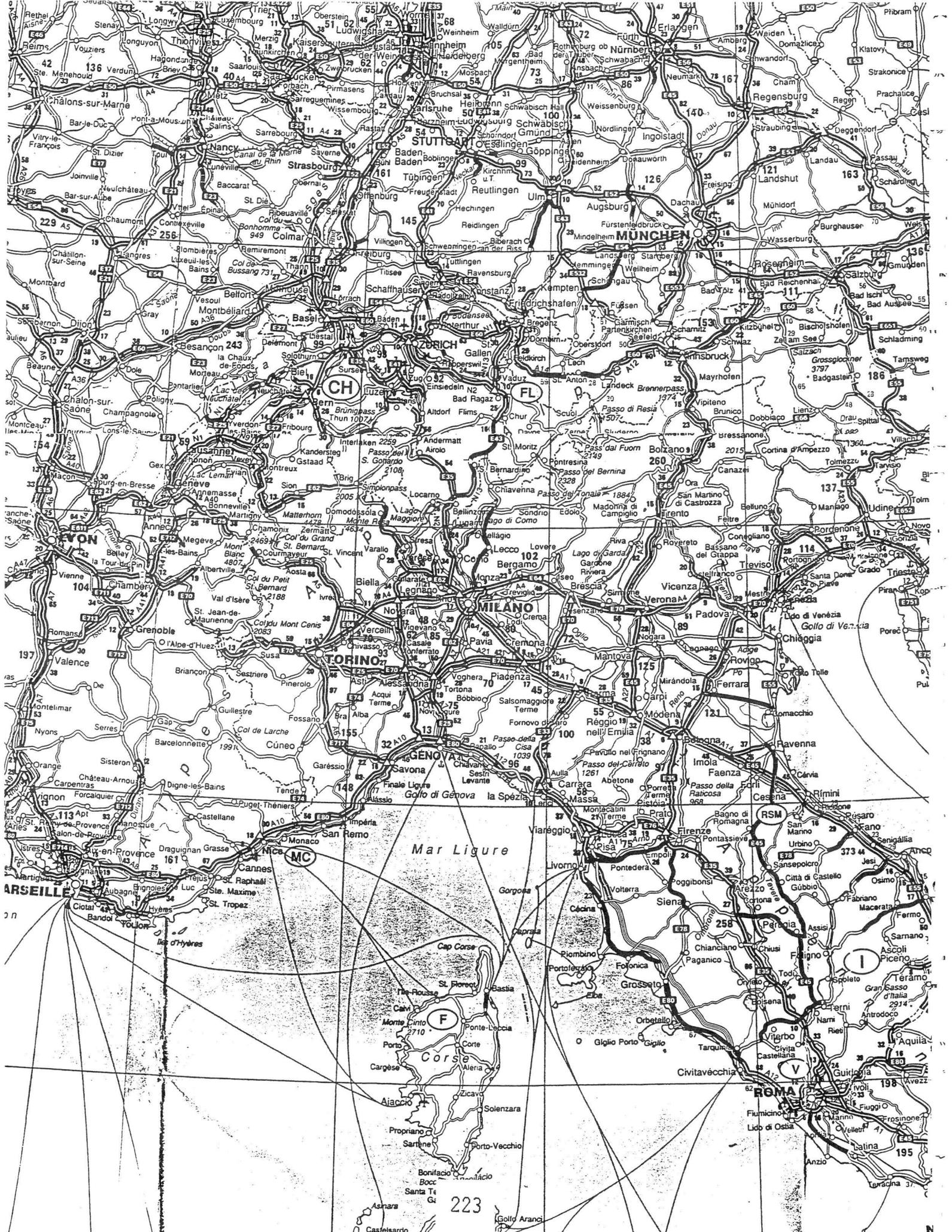
AS OF 31 MARCH 1945

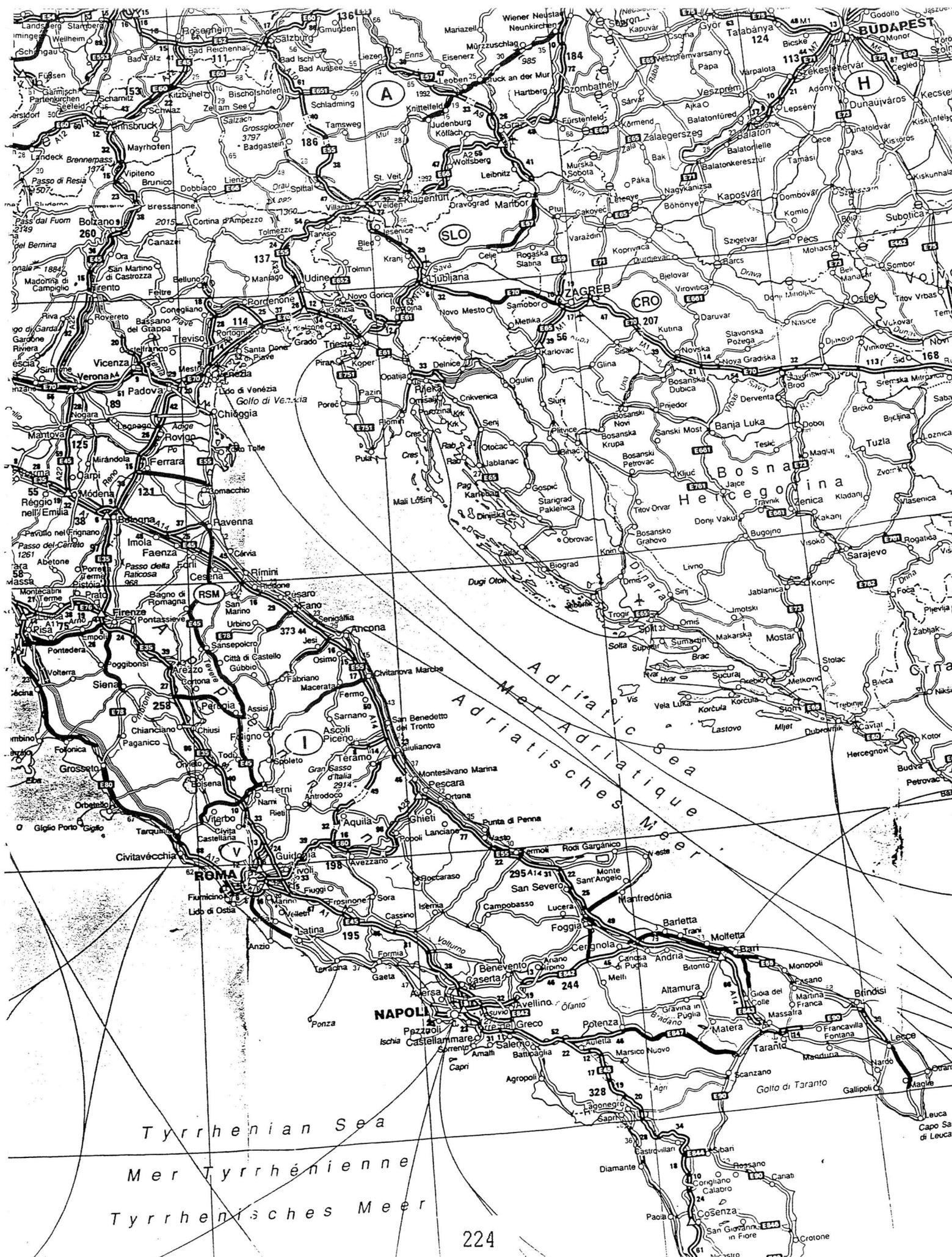
| UNITS ASSIGNED TO WINGS OR TO AIR FORCE HEAD-QUARTERS | HEADQUARTERS | 5TH WING | | | | | | | | 47TH WING | | | | 49TH WING | | | | 55TH WING | | | | 304TH WING | | | | XV FIGHTER COMMAND (Prov.) | | | | | | | | | | | | HEADQUARTERS 15TH A. F. | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|--------|--------|----------|----------------------------|----------|---------------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------|--|------|--|--|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | Newmarket | | | | Foggia | | | | Napoli | | Monduria | | Napoli | | Incomata | | Napoli | | Spinezzola | | Napoli | | Nearby | | | | Torremaggiore | | | | Napoli | | Bari | | | | | | | |
| | TACTICAL GROUPS | 2 | 97 | 99 | 301 | 463 | 483 | 98 | 376 | 449 | 450 | 451 | 461 | 484 | 460 | 464 | 465 | 485 | 454 | 455 | 456 | 459 | 1 | 14 | 82 | 31 | 52 | 325 | 332* | 5th Photo | 2461st Gp | | | | | | | | | | |
| TACTICAL SQUADRONS | 20, 49, 340, 341, 342, 419 | 348, 347, 342, 414 | 348, 416 | 353, 419 | 774, 775 | 817, 840 | 343, 344 | 512, 513 | 718, 717 | 720, 721 | 724, 725 | 764, 765 | 824, 823 | 780, 781 | 778, 777 | 780, 781 | 828, 829 | 738, 739 | 742, 743 | 748, 747 | 756, 757 | 27, 71 | 37, 48 | 95, 96 | 307, 308 | 2, 4 | 317, 318 | 95, 100* | 15, 32 | 953 | 154th | | | | | | | | | | |
| SIGNAL CO. WINGS | 317 | | | | | | 331 | | | | 345 | | | 342 | | | 301 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 314 | | | | | | | | | |
| AIR BASE SECURITY BN. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MILITARY POLICE CO. (AVN) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1051, 1053, 1281, 1178 | | | | | | | | |
| MILITARY POLICE BN. (Z1) | 734* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MISCELLANEOUS UNITS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1st CGU, 28th SCU, 1st OAU, 160th Med. Disp. ⁶ 6720th WAC Plot., Hq & Hq Sq 15th AF, 30th MRU ⁴ , 418th Sig. Co. Avn., 13th Ord. Bomb. Disp. Sq. | | | | | | | | |

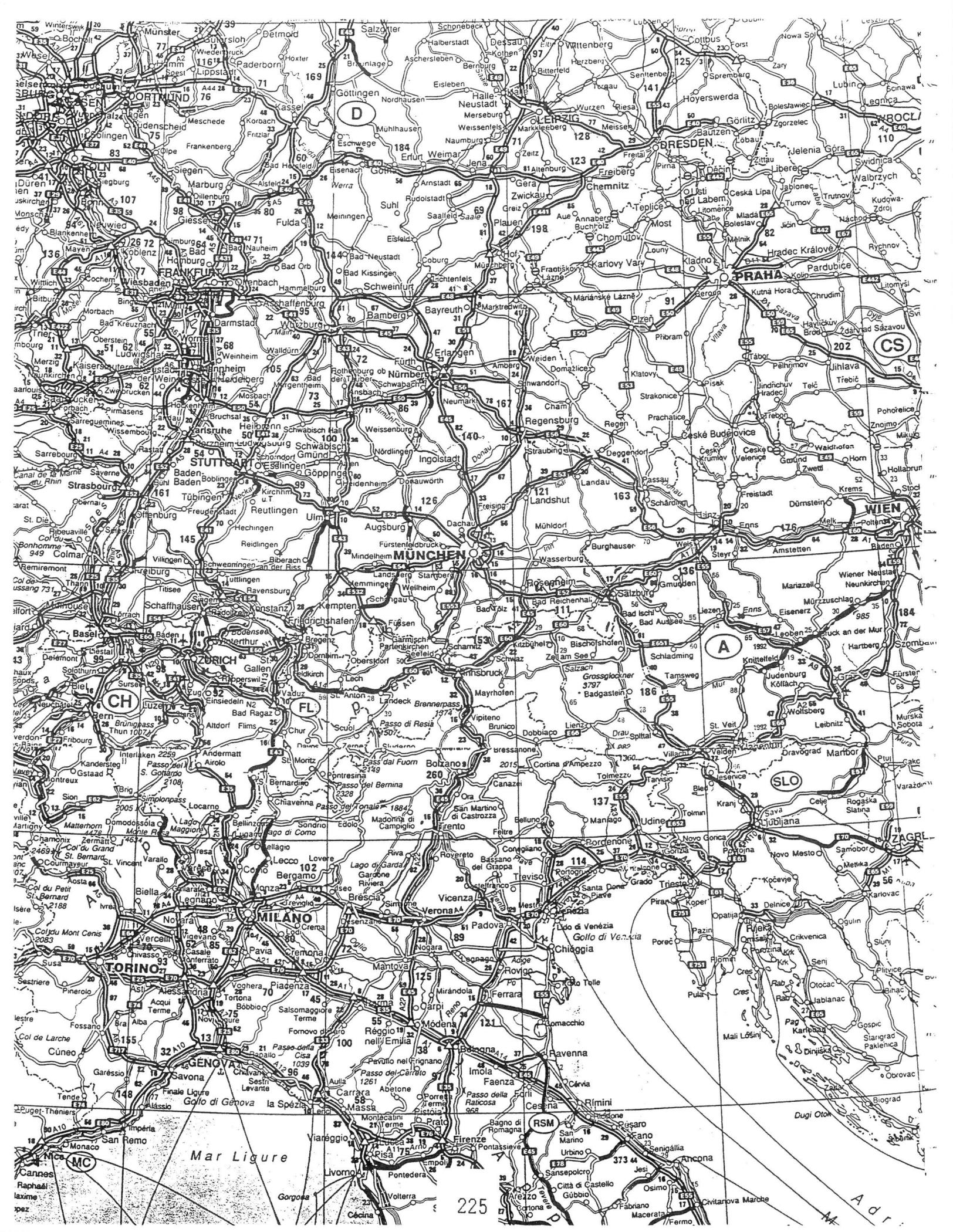
| UNITS ASSIGNED TO XV AFSC | 324th SERVICE CENTER | | | | | | | | | | | | 62nd SERVICE CENTER | | | | 37th SERVICE CENTER | | | 2639th SERVICE CENTER (Prov.) | | | | 43rd SERVICE CENTER | | | | 60th SERVICE CENTER | | | 38th SERVICE CENTER | | | | HEADQUARTERS XVAFSC | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------|-----|----|-----|------------|----|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------|----------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|------------------|----|---------------------|-----|------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------|--------|---------------------|-------|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | Orange | | | | | | Foggia | | | | | | Napoli | | Monduria | Napoli | | Incomata | | Napoli | | Spinezzola | | Napoli | | Torremaggiore | Torremaggiore | | Napoli | Bari | | | | | | | |
| | AIR SERVICE GROUPS | 339 | 50 | 368 | 350 | 564 | 568 | 559 | 58 | 348 | 331 | 60 | 663 | 496 | 518 | 517 | 518 | 519 | 557 | 558 | 561 | 560 | 94 | 351 | 359 | 306 | 55 | 83 | 368* | 18 ADG | 41 ADG | 96* | | | | | |
| AIR SERVICE SQUADRONS | 1992 FF, 1994 FF | | | | | | 1986 FF | | | | 2088 FF | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ENGINEER UNITS | 1433, 1874, 1879, 1680, 1744 | | | | | | 1627, 1647, 1860, 1739 | | | | 1434, 1435 | | | 1437, 1440, 1441 | | | | | | | | 1436, 1634, 1586 | | | | 1650, 1738, 1765* | | | | | | 1766* | 1688 | | | | |
| ORDNANCE S & M CO. | 1909, 1928, 1975, 1981 | | | | | | 1917, 1924, 2471 | | | | 2238, 2239 | | | 2232, 2233, 2234 | | | | | | | | 1904*, 2237 | | | | 1902*, 2028*, 2236 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| QM TRUCK CO. (AVN) | 1096, 1129 | | | | | | 1140, 1145, 1250 | | | | 1249 | | | 1150, 1246 | | | | | | | | 1248 | | | | 1135 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| QM COMPANIES (SG) | 1002, 1150 | | | | | | 1035, 1078 | | | | 1103 | | | 1103, 1149 | | | | | | | | 1152 | | | | 1000*, 1032 | | | | | | | 1044 | | | | |
| SIGNAL COMPANIES (SG) | | | | | | | 68th Med. Supp. | | | | | | | 163rd Med. Disp. ⁶ | | | | | | | | | | | | 43rd Med. Supp. ⁶ | | | | | | | 3rd & 14th Med. Supp. | | | | |
| MEDICAL UNITS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 33rd Med. Supp., 157th Med. Disp. ⁶ 162nd Med. Disp. ⁶ | | | |
| DEPOT SUPPLY SQDNS. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DEPOT REPAIR SQDNS. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| QM PLATOON (ADG) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| POSTAL UNITS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MISCELLANEOUS UNITS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 37th PRS; 520, 536, 567, 786, 789, 783 APU | | |

* COLORED * ATTACHED FROM OTHER COMMANDS

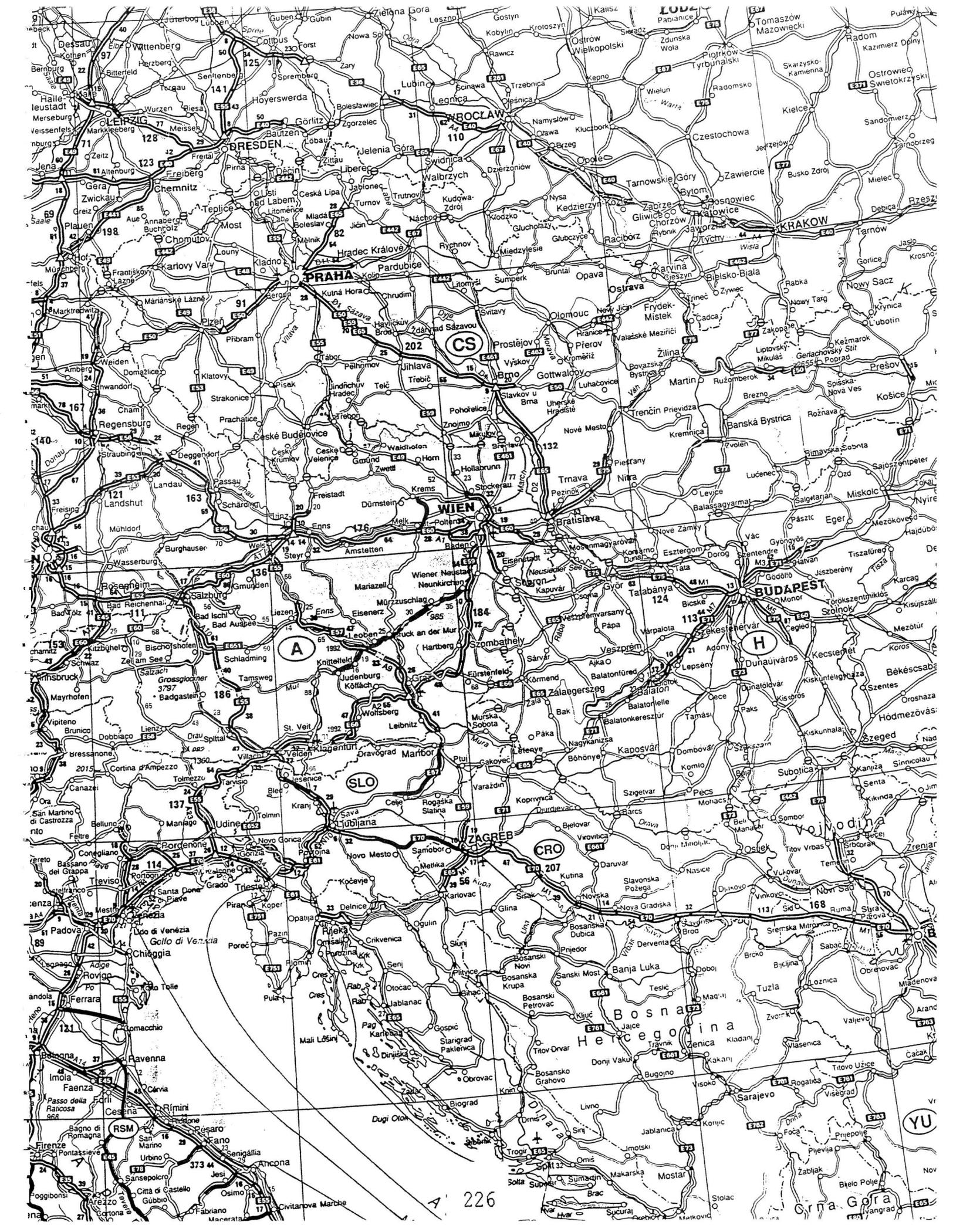
SECRET







Map showing major cities and roads in Central Europe. Key cities include Frankfurt, Stuttgart, München (Munich), Zürich, Wien (Vienna), and Milano (Milan). The map covers parts of Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy. Major roads are indicated by numbers and symbols. The map also shows geographical features like the Mar Ligure (Ligurian Sea) and the Adriatic Sea (Adriatico).



YU

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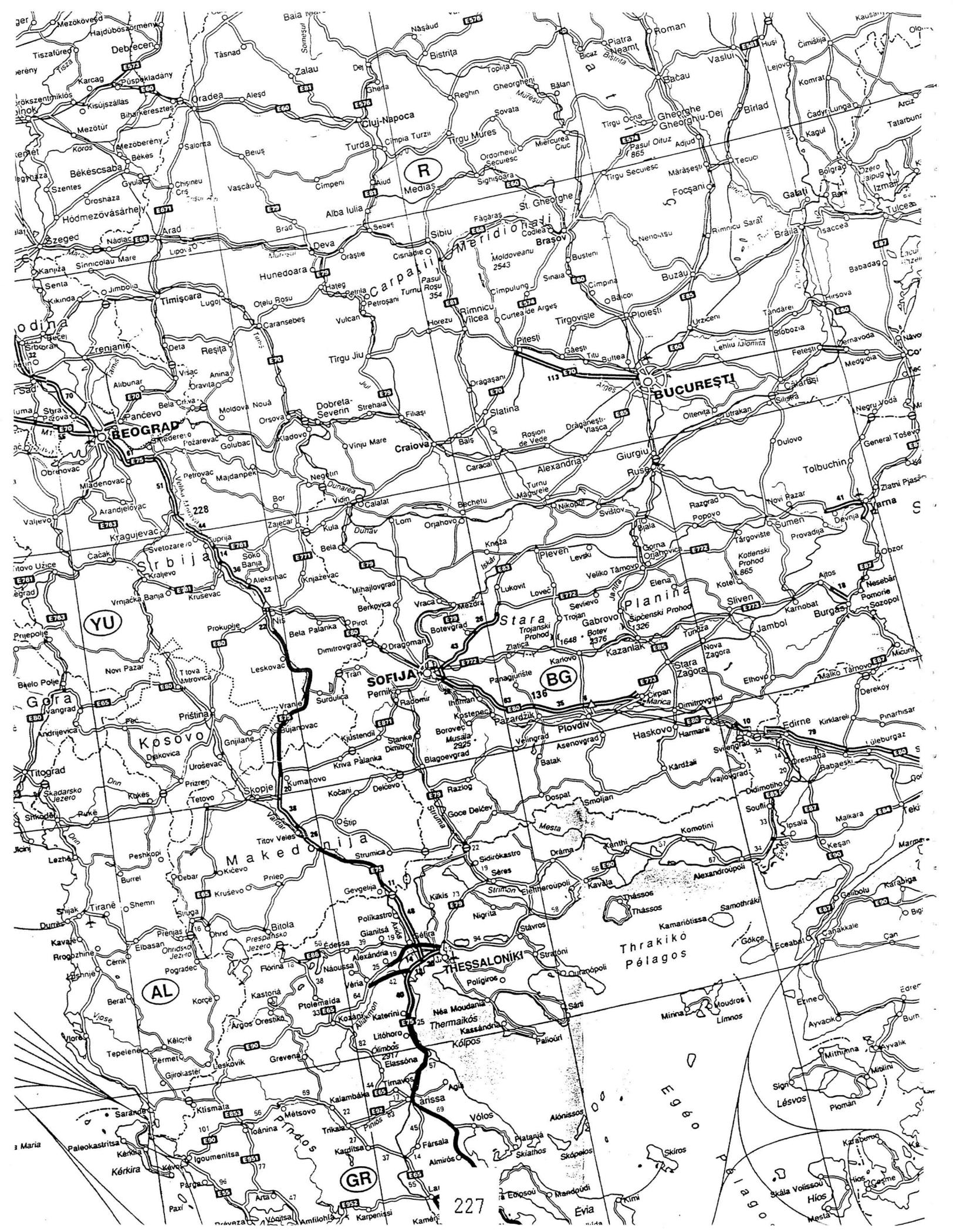
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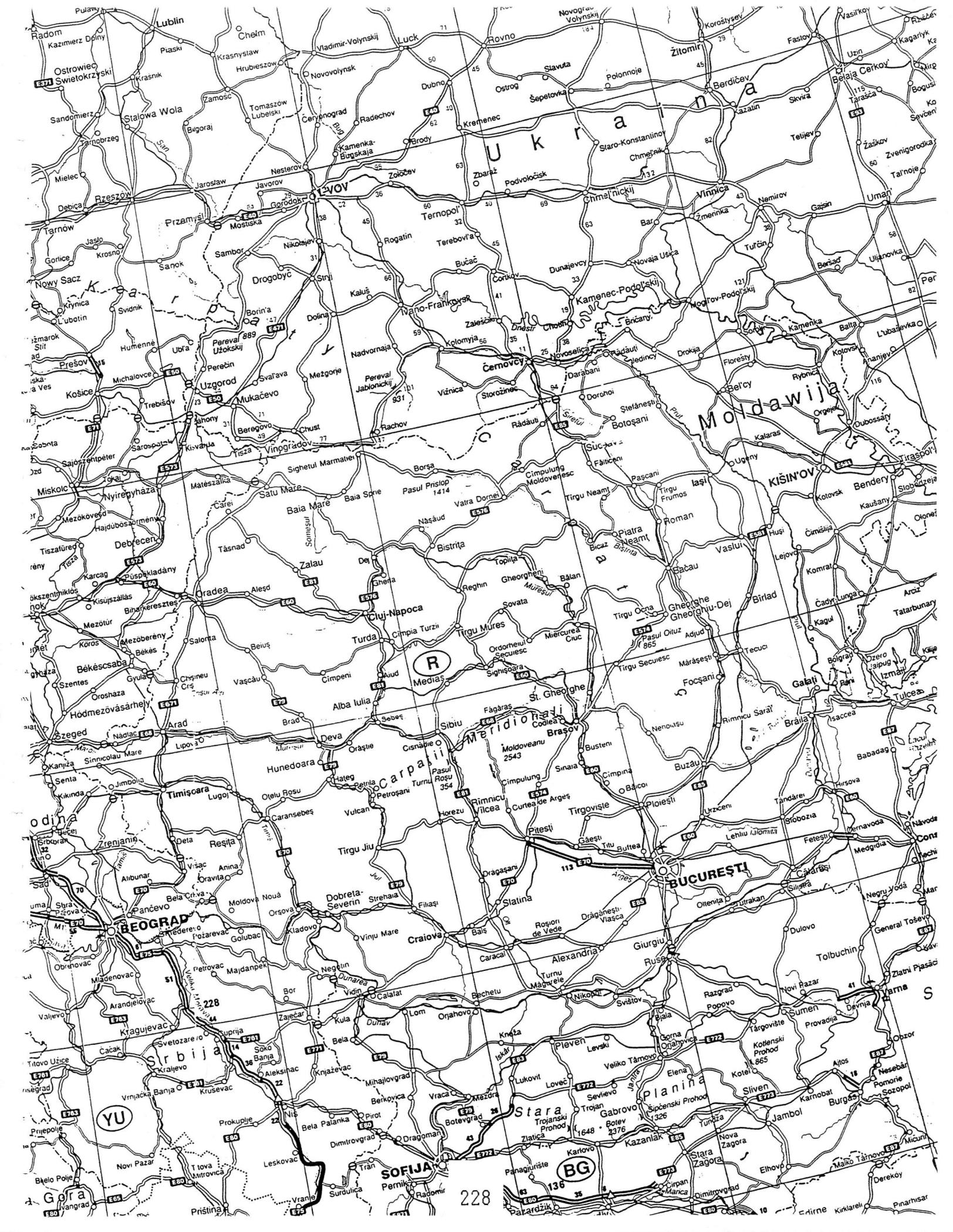
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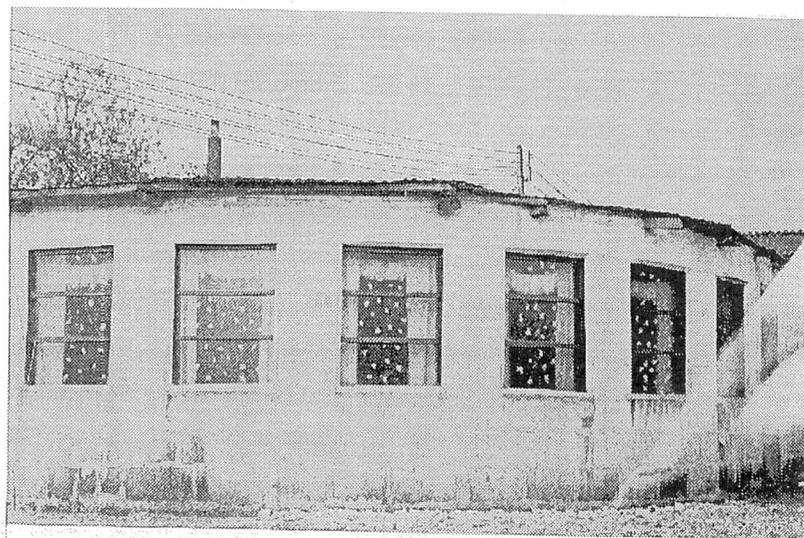
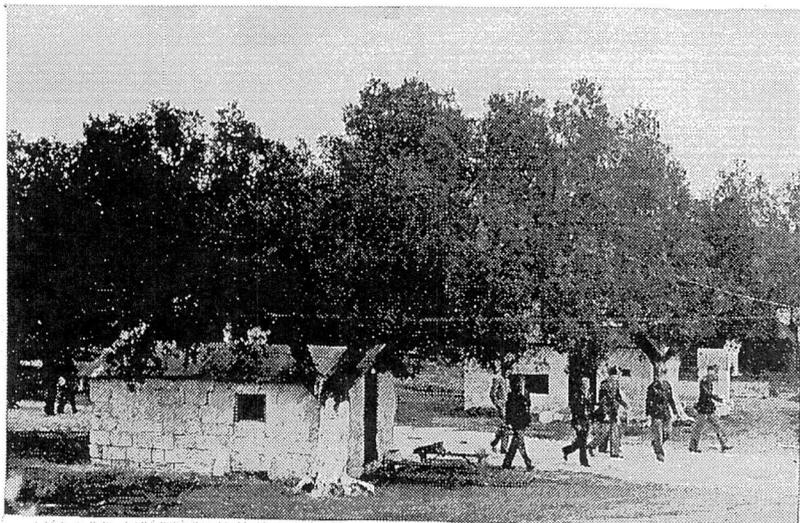
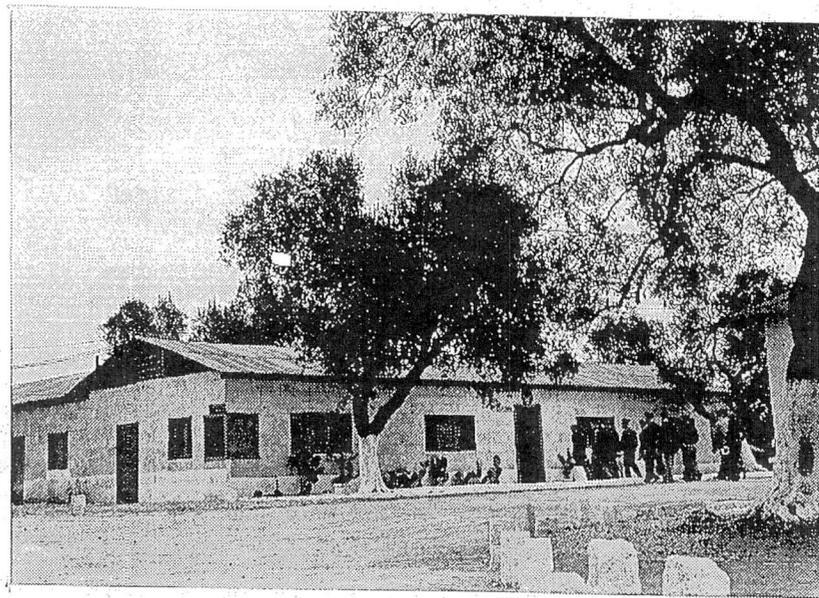
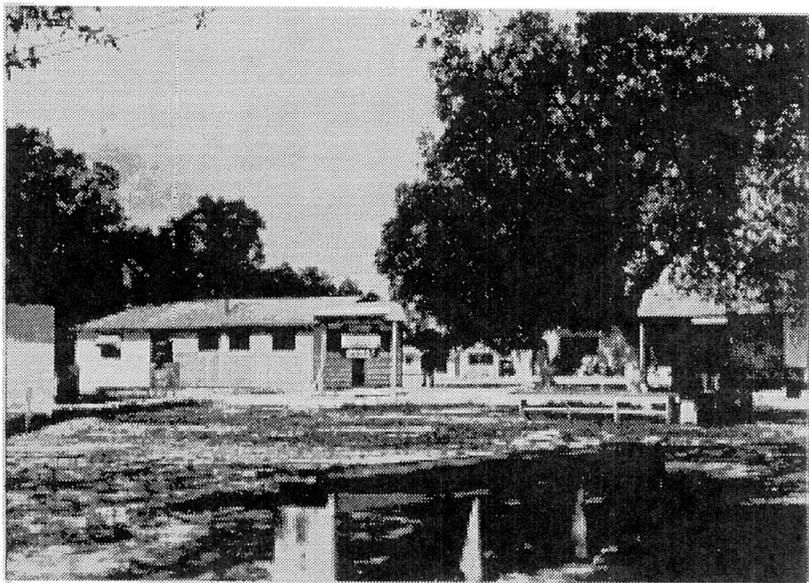
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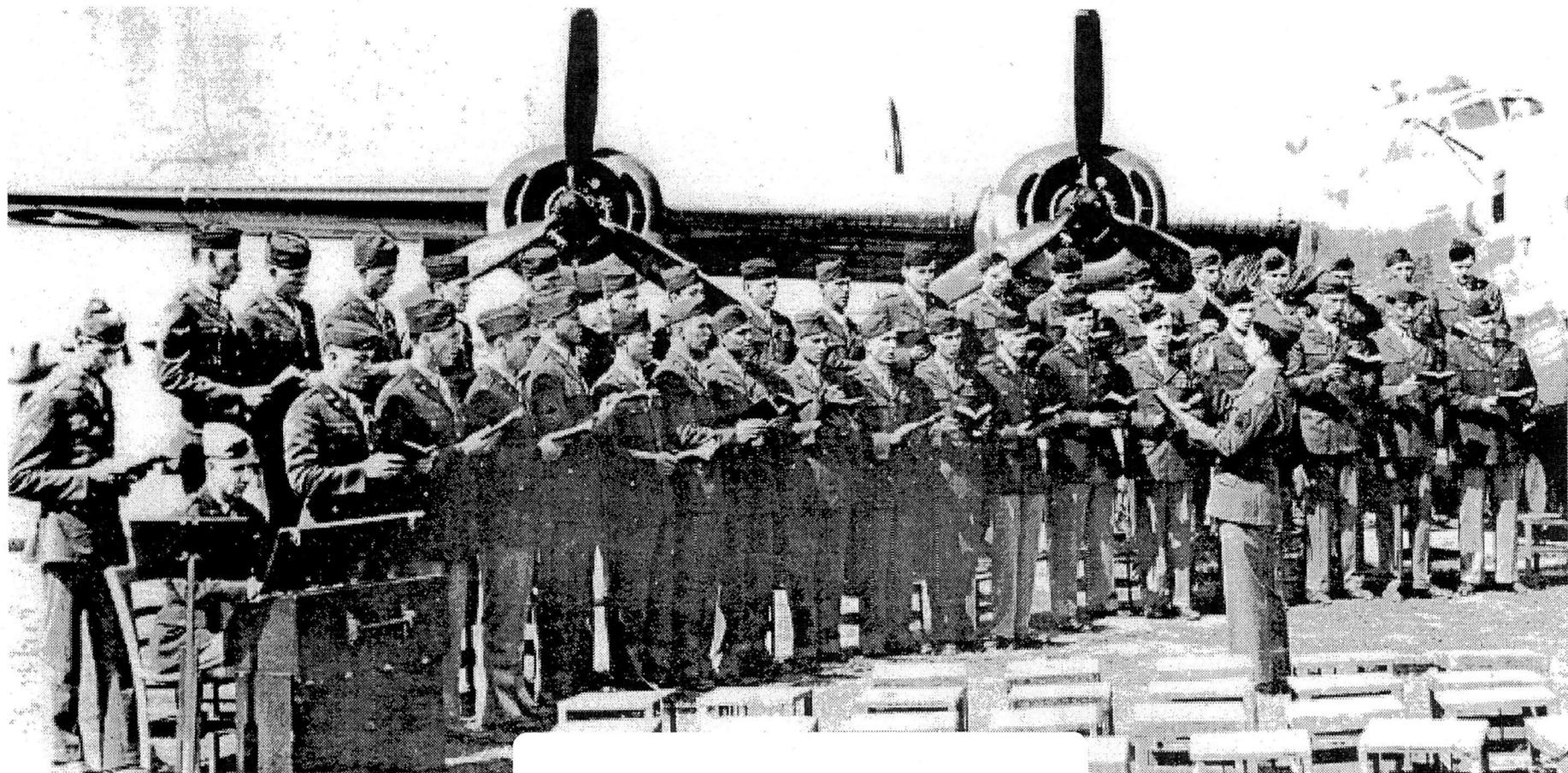
Map labels include major cities: Leipzig, Chemnitz, Dresden, Prague, Brno, Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Trieste, Udine, Padua, Ferrara, Ravenna, Ancona, and many others. Road numbers are shown throughout the map.



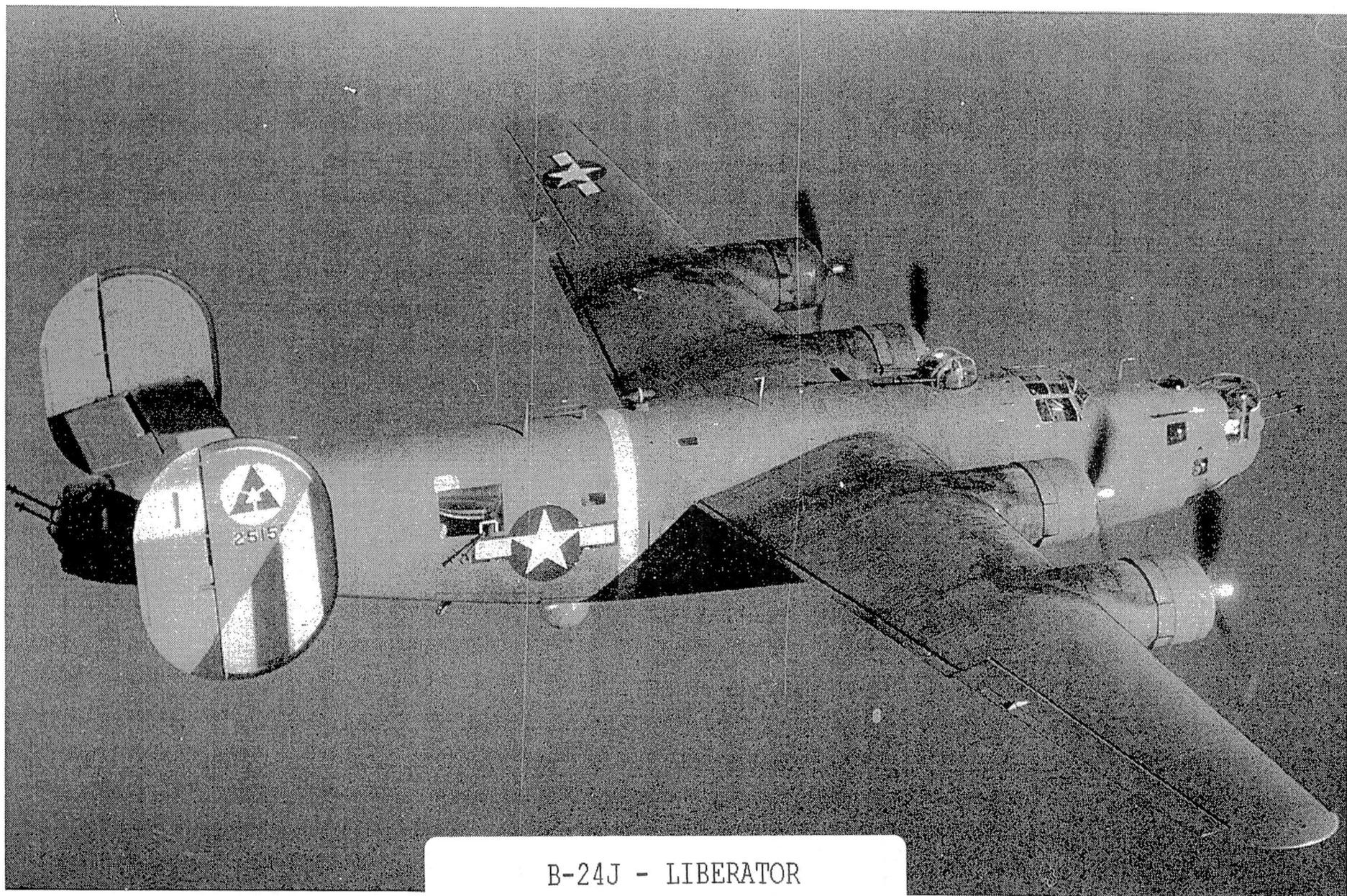




450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
BASE OF OPERATIONS
MANDURIA, ITALY



EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 9, 1944



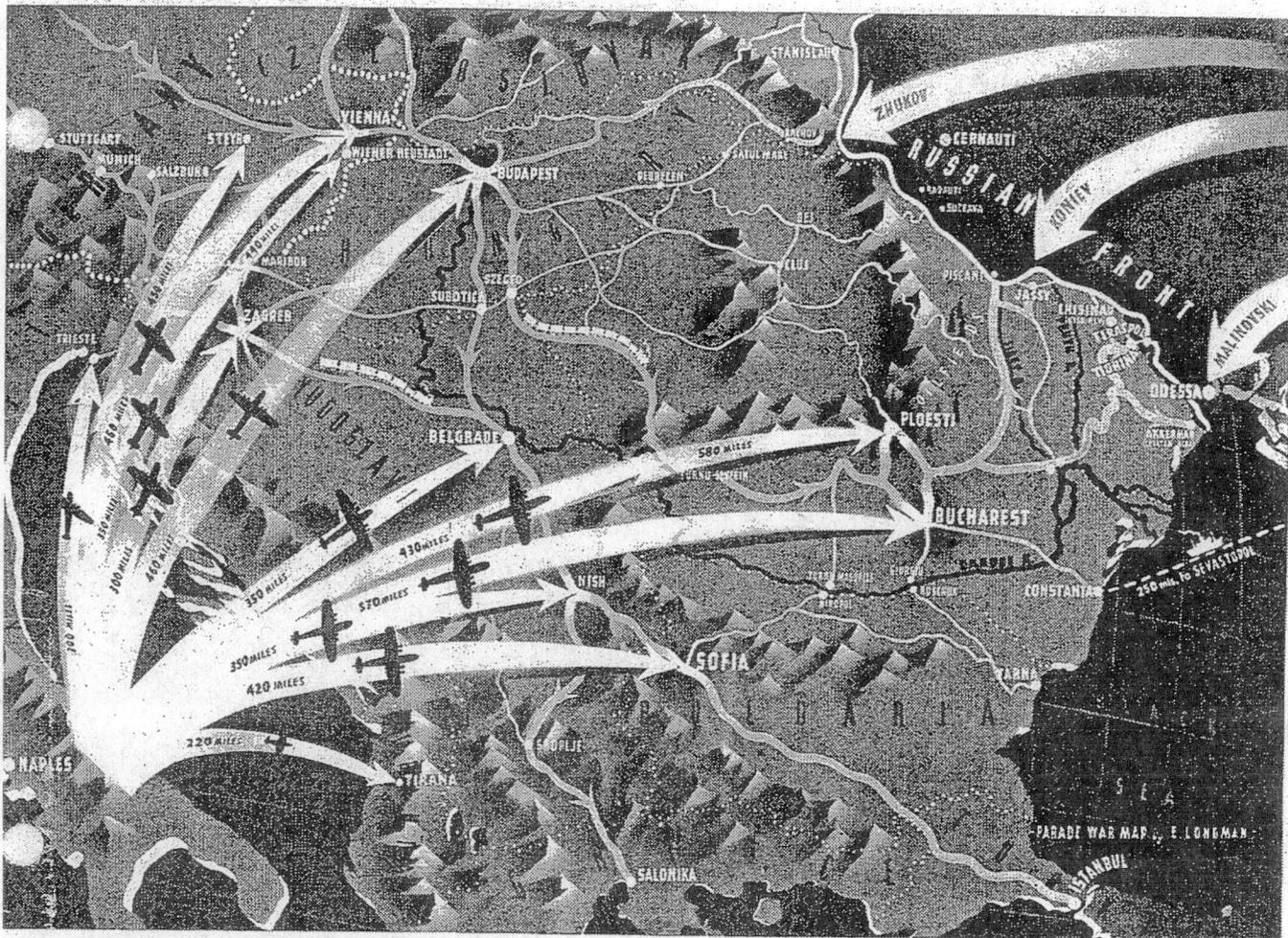
B-24J - LIBERATOR

450TH BOMB GROUP

15TH ARMY AIR FORCE

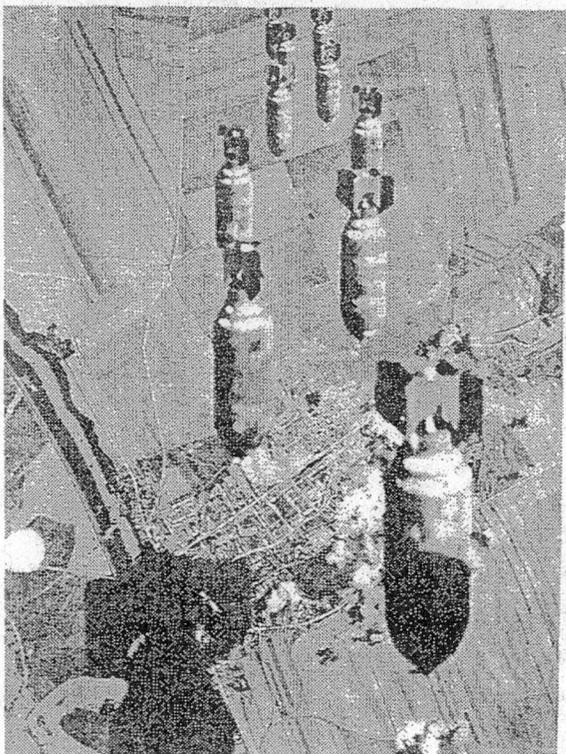
1942 - 1945

231



THIS EXCELLENT MAP OF THE MAAF'S ATTACK ON THE BALKANS IS BY E. LONGMAN, ARTIST FOR PARADE, BRITISH ARMY WEEKLY

HEAVY BOMBS cascade on Wiener-Neustadt factory complex where ME109s are made - one of biggest in Europe.



BLASTING THE BALKANS

Every week thousands of Americans fight in the German-held Balkans. They are pilots, crews of the 15th U.S.A.A.F.'s heavy bombers and escorting fighters who are flying an average of 4000 sorties weekly, dumping bomb loads which approach the volume now being dropped on Germany. As this YANK went to press, MAAF, in a special communique, made the portentous announcement that a force of Allied Strategic bombers attacked targets in Rumania and went on to land in Russia. In view of this, especial interest is attached to pictures on this and following three pages, showing, step by step, the great amount of planning, work, personnel and plain courage included in the simple phrase, "mission completed."

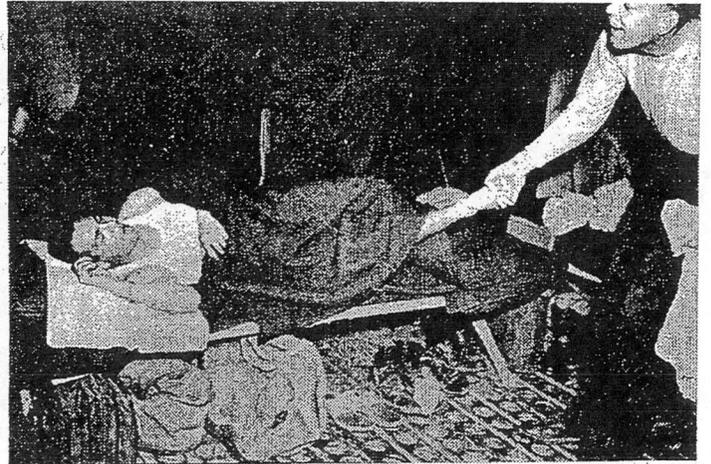
MISSION STARTS in War Room at Wing Hq. C.O. and staff plan B-24s' next target.





MISSION PLANS then go to Group Hq for fulfillment. Officers above study the plans, working out their air tactics with diagrams resembling

those of a football coach. This completed, day of mission starts with awakening of crews. Navigator Jerome Wojciechowski, Milwaukee, above,

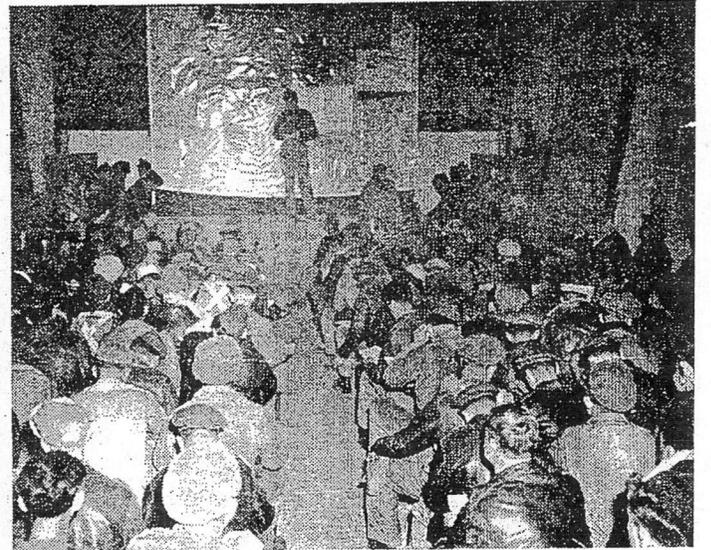


is aroused by his pilot, Lt. William Vanden Dries, Brooklyn, holding foot, and co-pilot, 2nd Lt. James B. Chessington, who is from Vista, Calif.

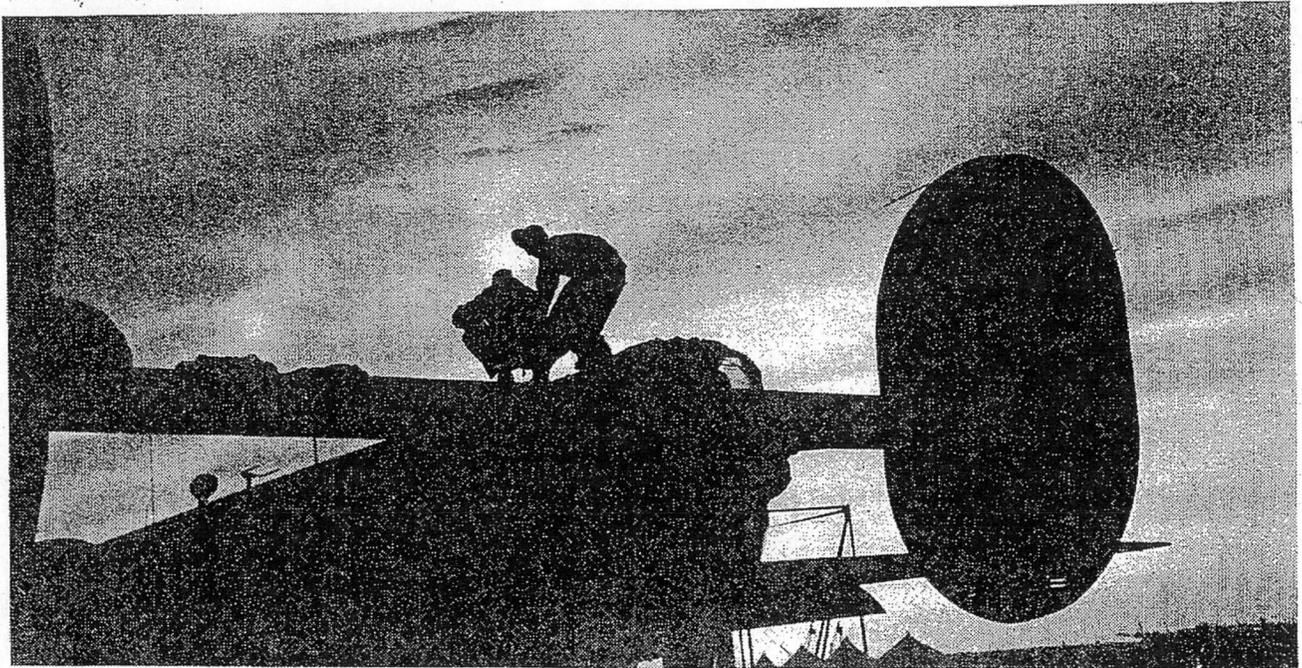


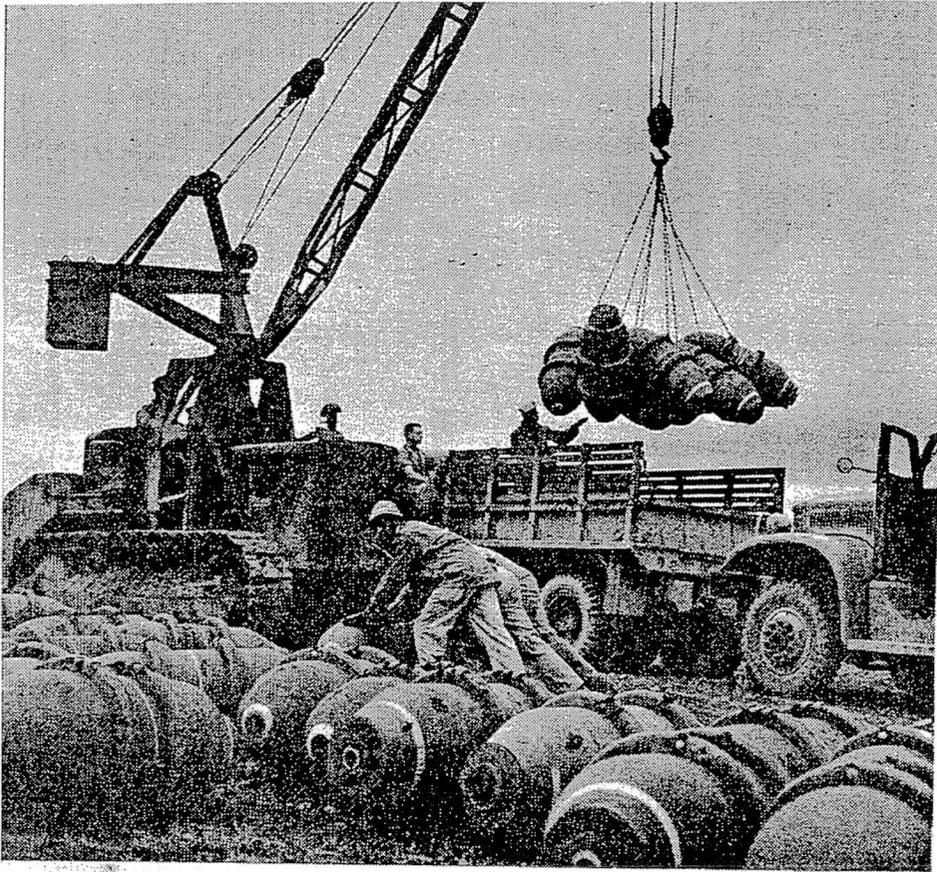
CREW IS UP early on day of mission because there is much yet to be done before takeoff. In unusual picture above, men line up for chow.

Right above, crews assemble for briefing in renovated Italian farmhouse. Here they learn what the target is, where they rendezvous with the



fighters, how much opposition to expect. Below, two ground crewmen are silhouetted against dawn sky as they tune up their Liberator for takeoff.



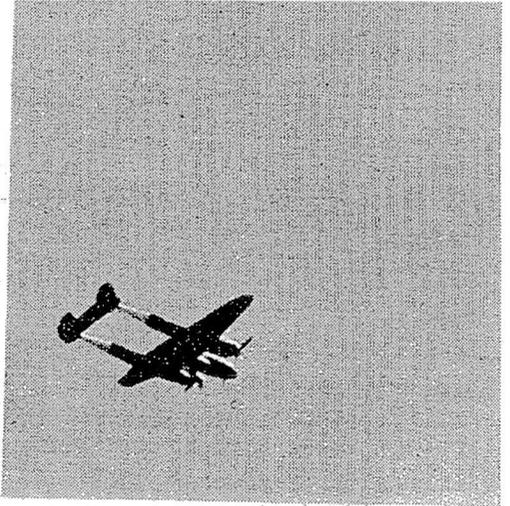


CRANE SWINGS CLUSTERS OF HEAVY BOMBS ONTO CENTRAL ITALY AIRFIELD

FIGHTERS RUN INTERFERENCE

In this theater as in others, American bombers pick specific targets and precision-blast them by day, this being possible largely because they can put a fighter cover over their bombers all the way. We knock out individual plants while the RAF concentrates on night saturation bombing of an industry in general. Extra fuel tanks

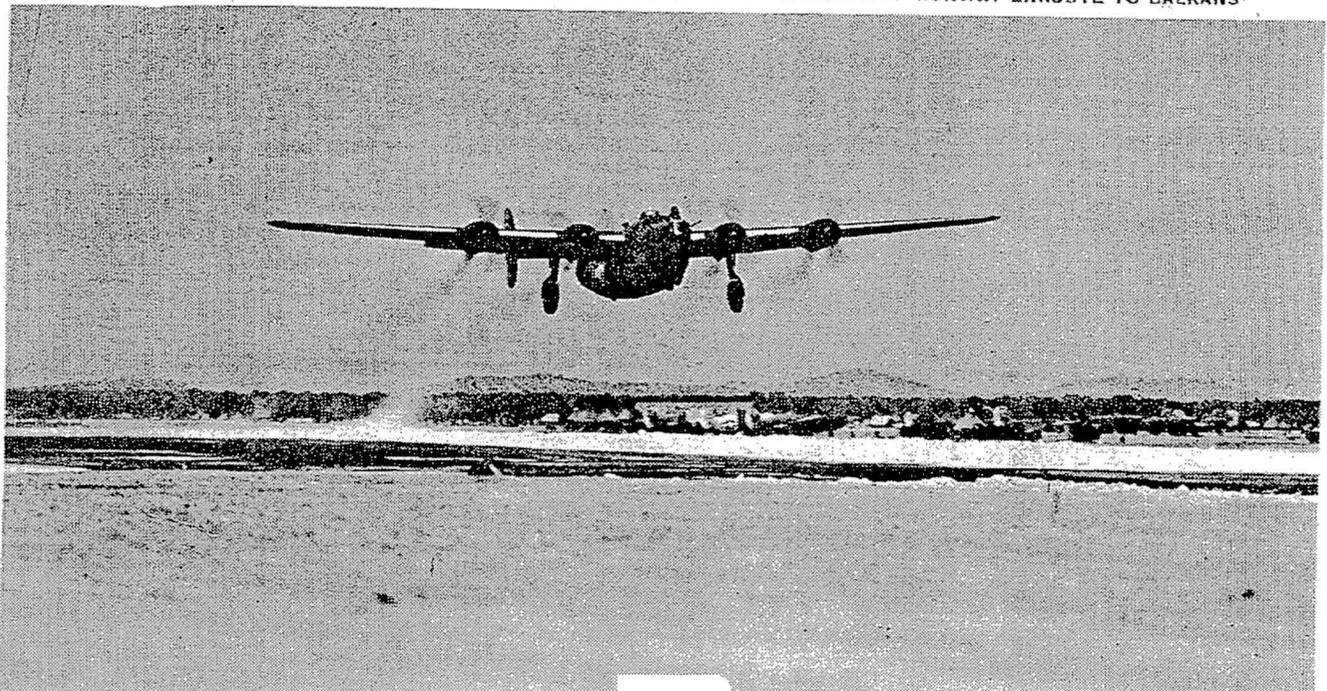
which may be dropped at will enable the fighters to accompany the long-haul bombers. Tanks are dropped when fighters reach the half-way mark, or when they get into a fight. Sound judgement is required to know when an enemy is really attacking, or just feinting to cause a pilot to drop his tanks. In the language of the airmen, the fighters are on hand to "dehouse" the bombers' route of "bogies," the 15th's name for the planes of the hard-pressed Luftwaffe.

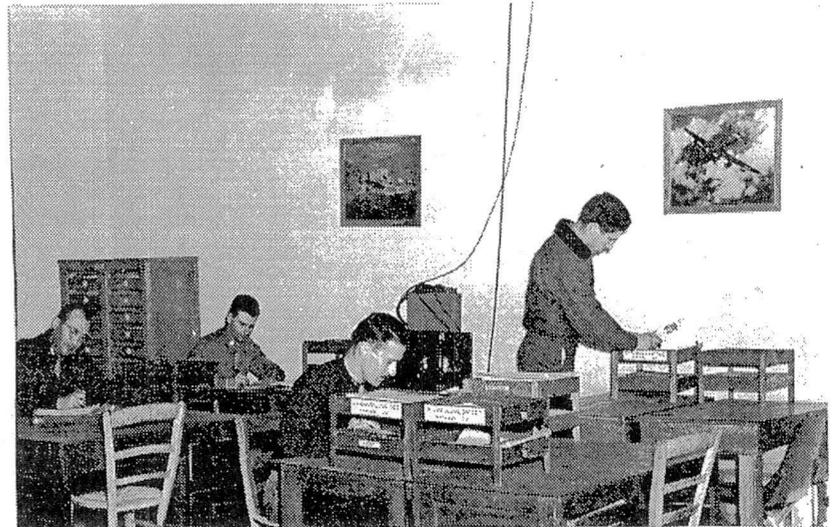
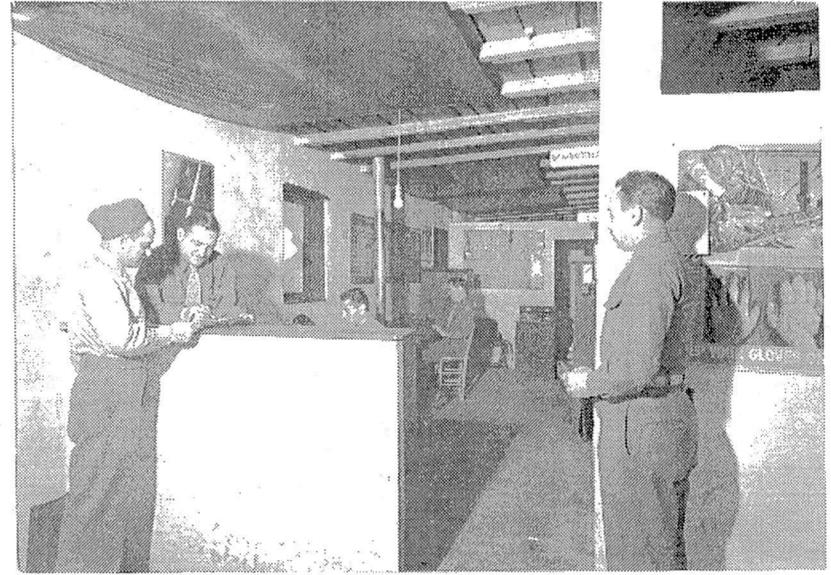
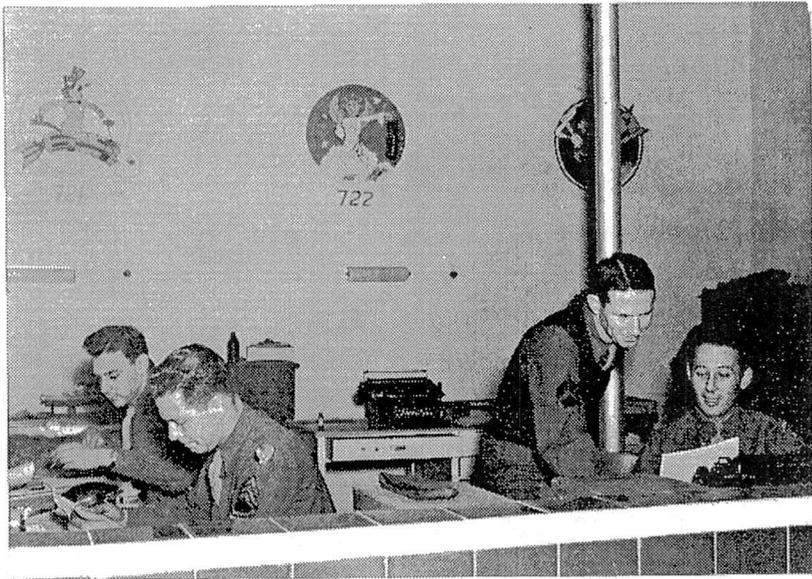


FORTRESS ON WAY to Balkan target meets its Lightning Escort at appointed rendezvous. Yan-

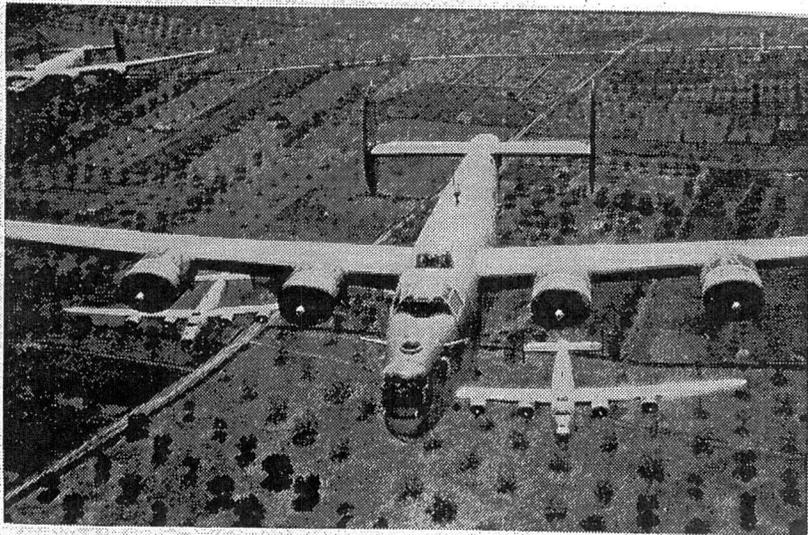
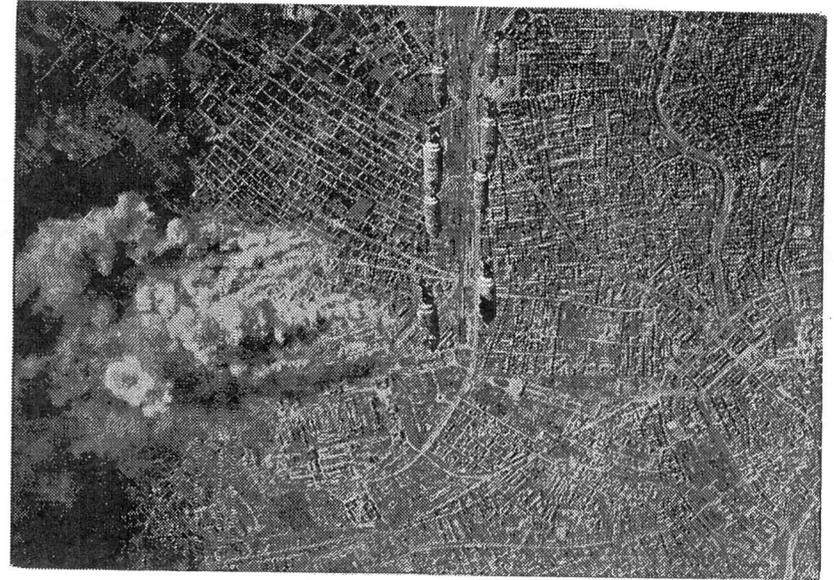
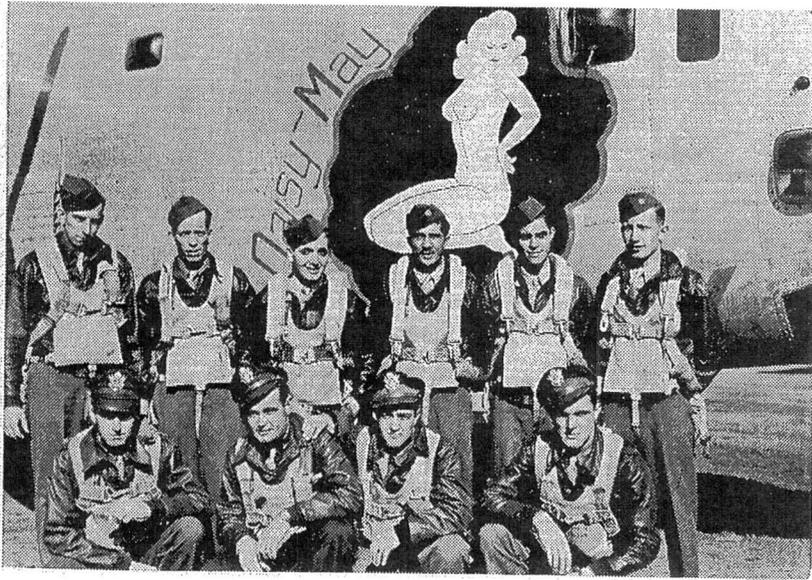


BRIEFED AND LOADED, THIS LIBERATOR LIFTS ITS 60,000-POUND WEIGHT OFF RUNWAY ENROUTE TO BALKANS

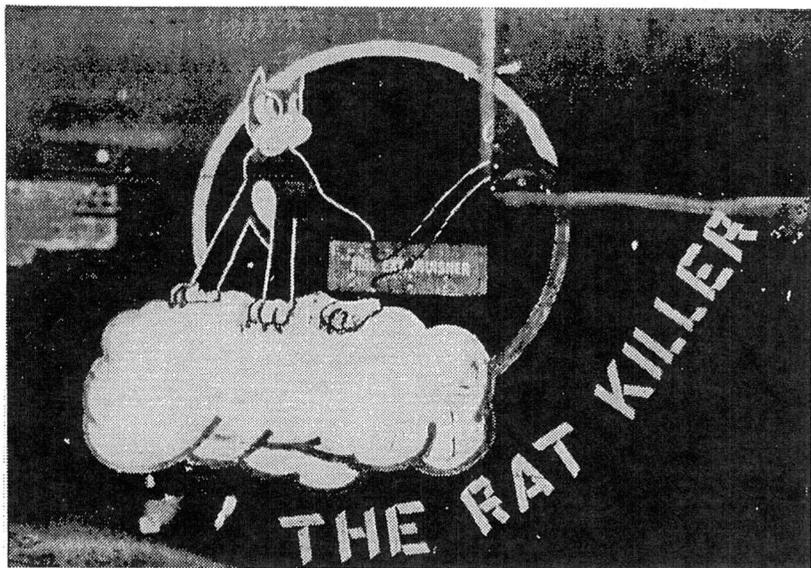


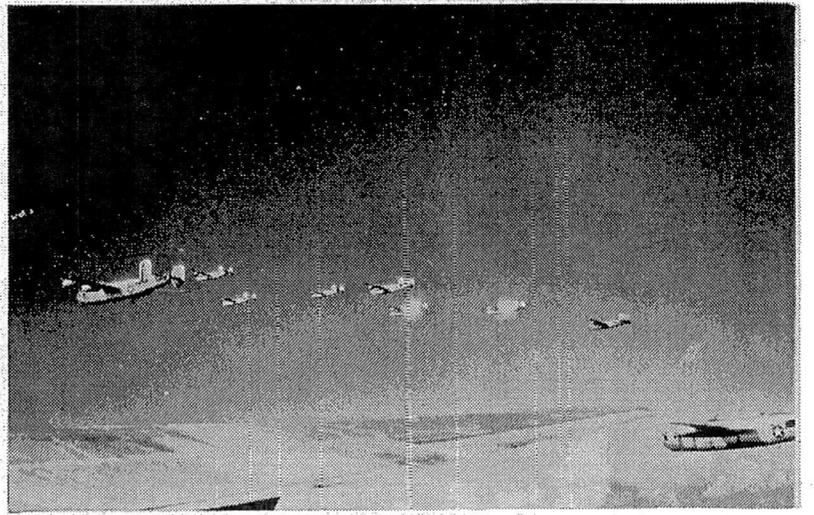
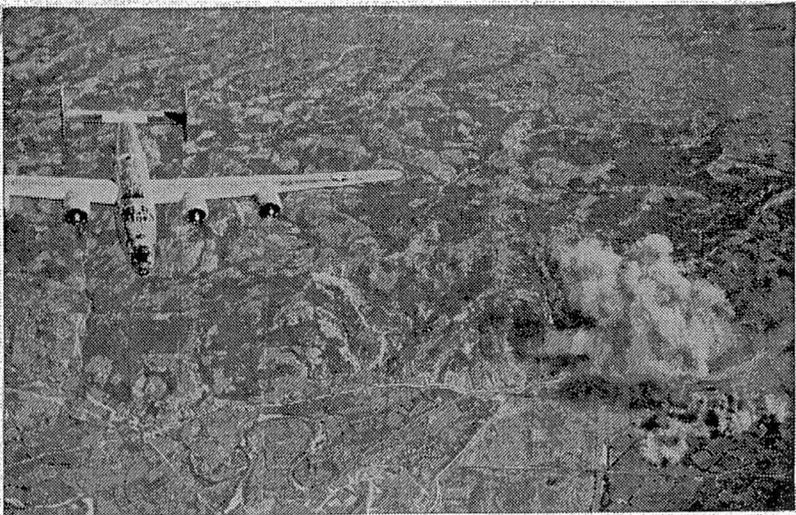
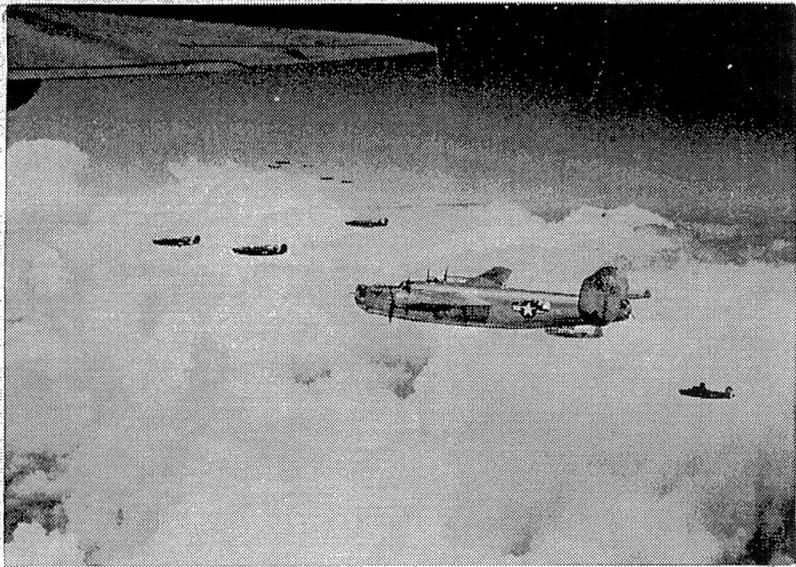


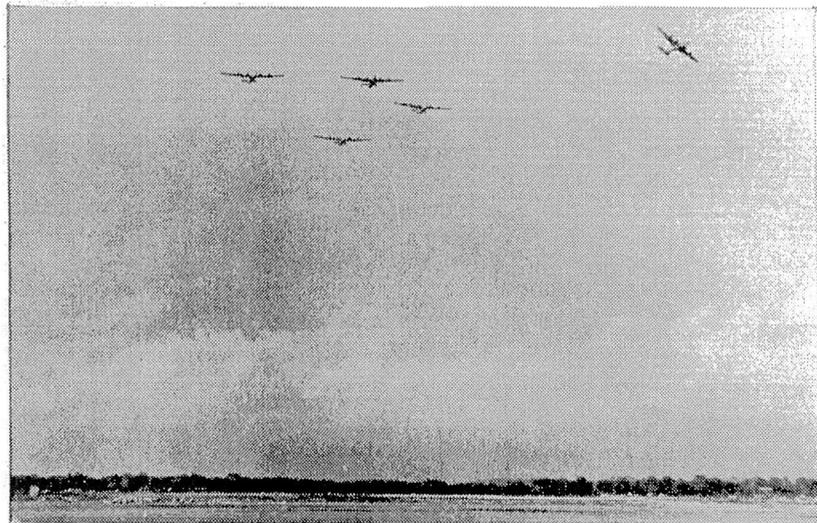
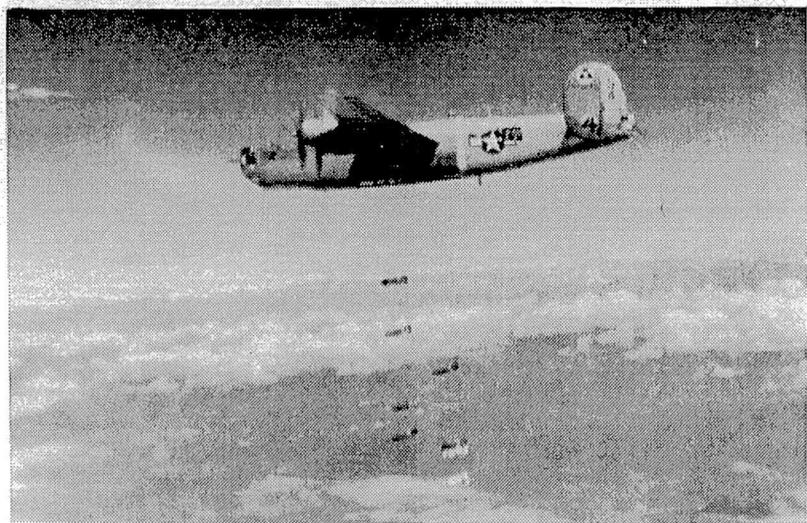
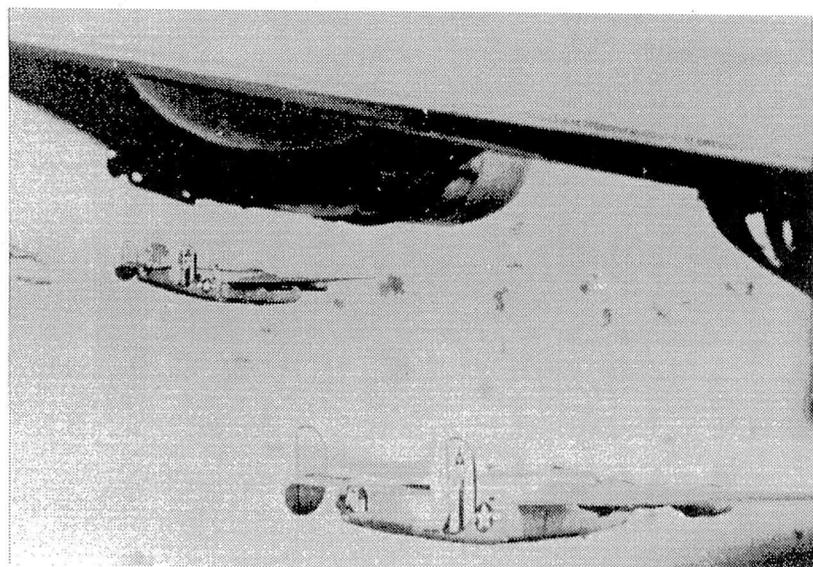
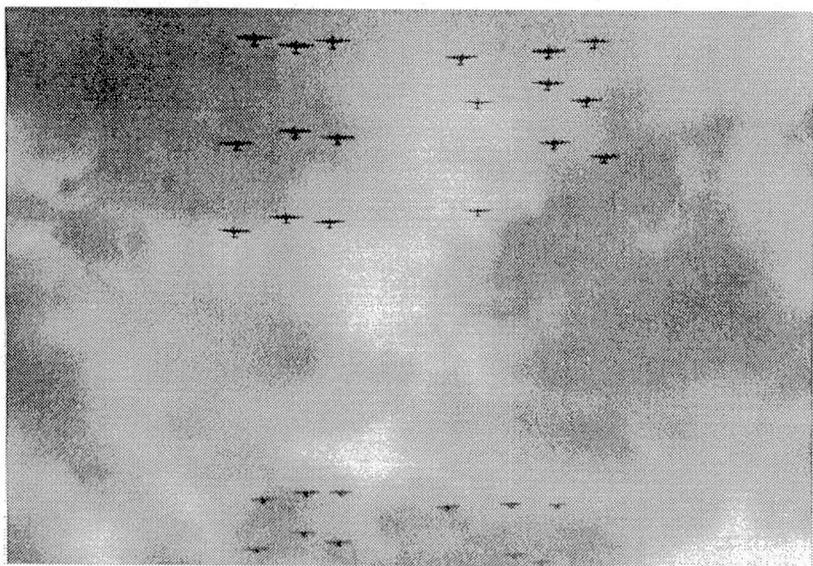


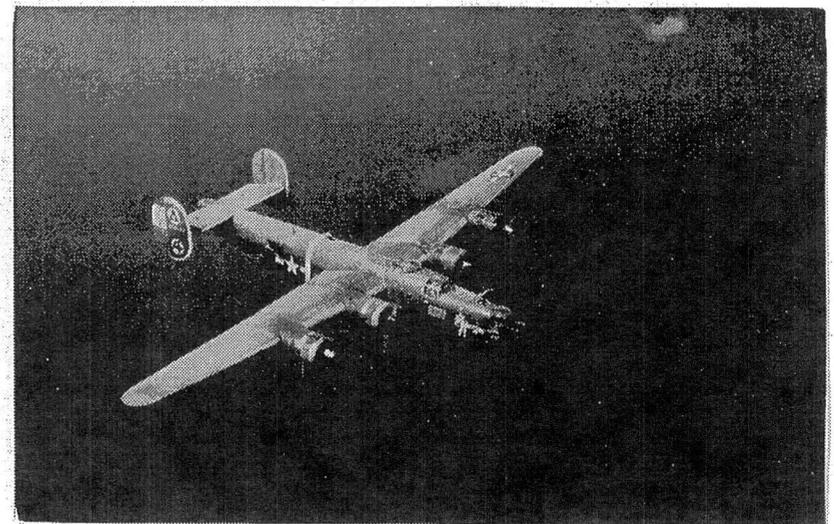
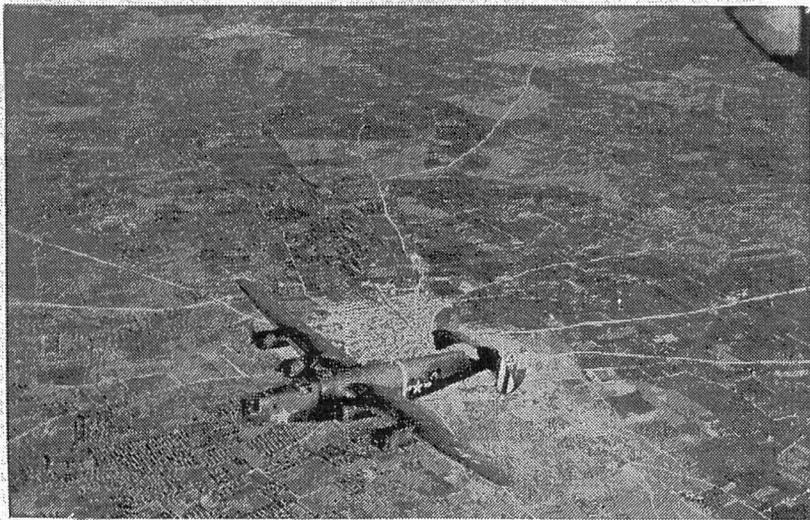
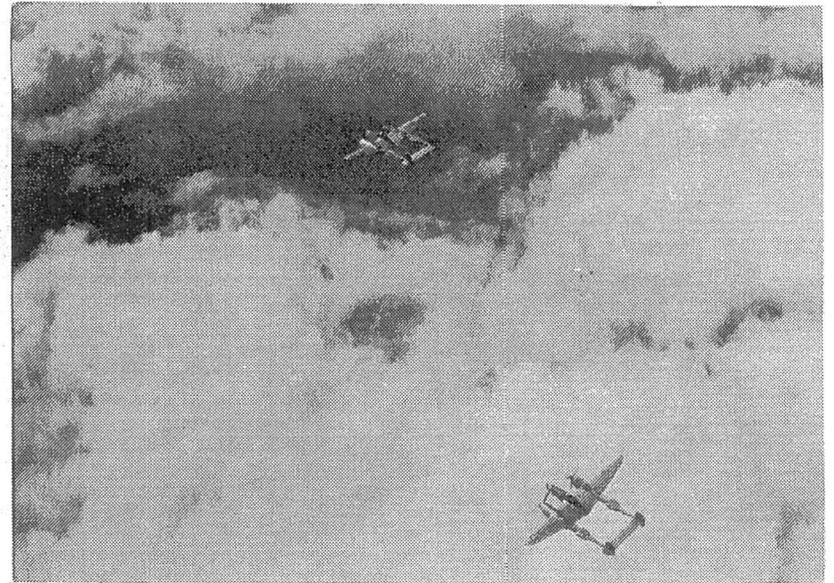
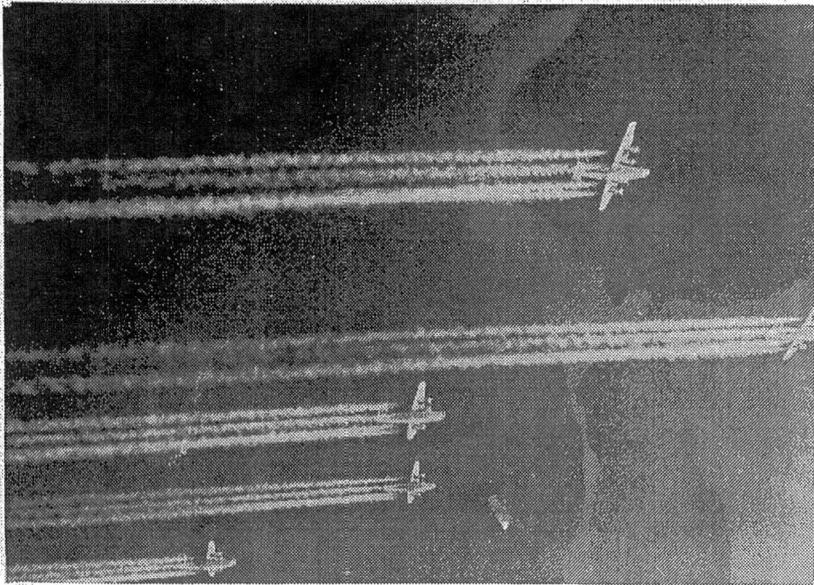


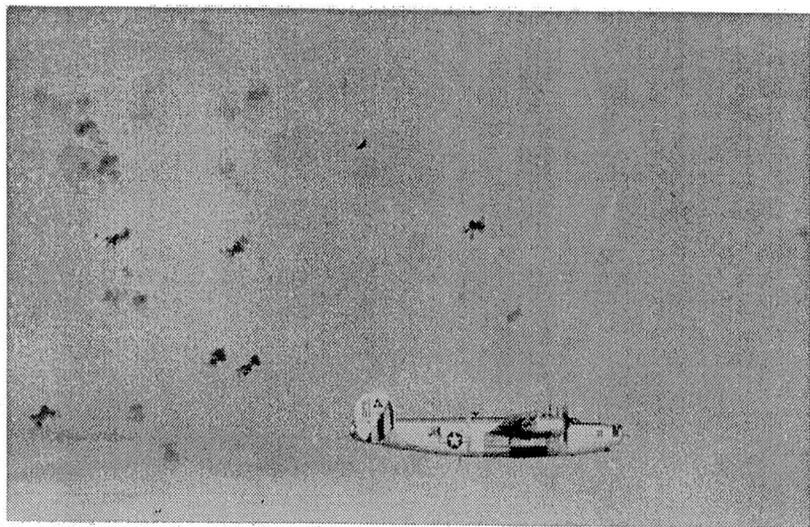
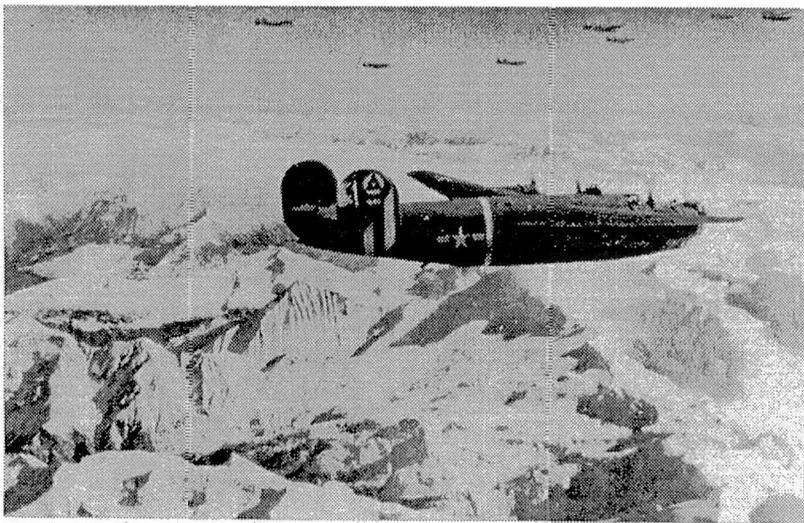
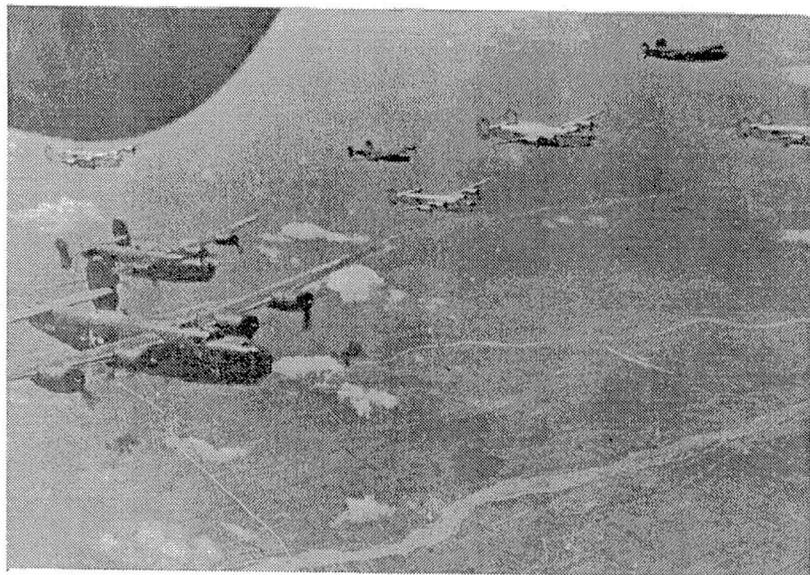
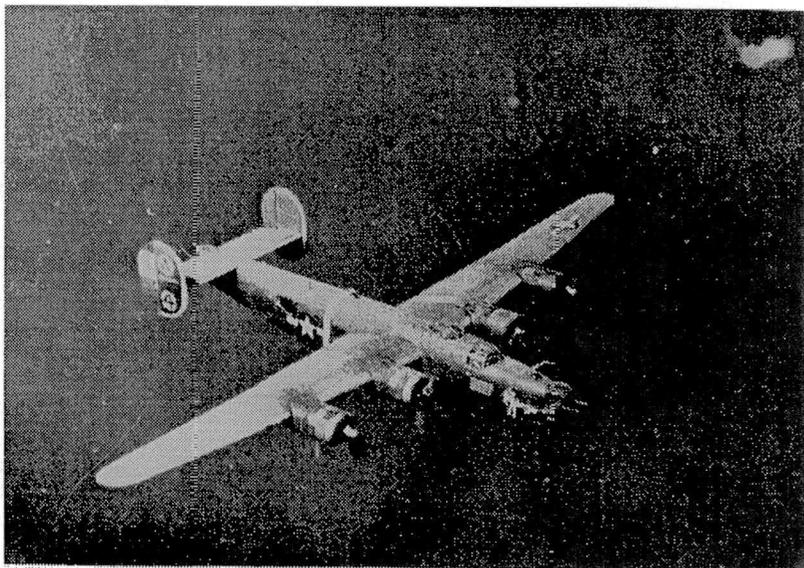


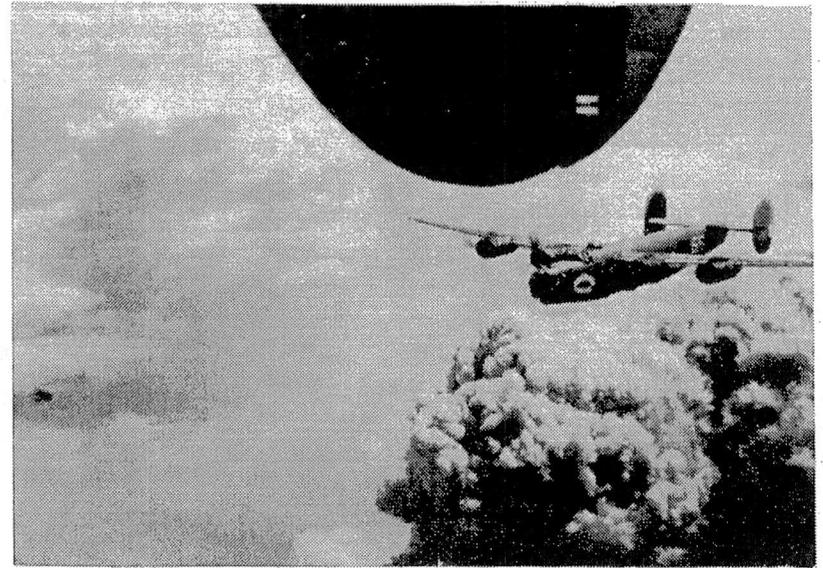
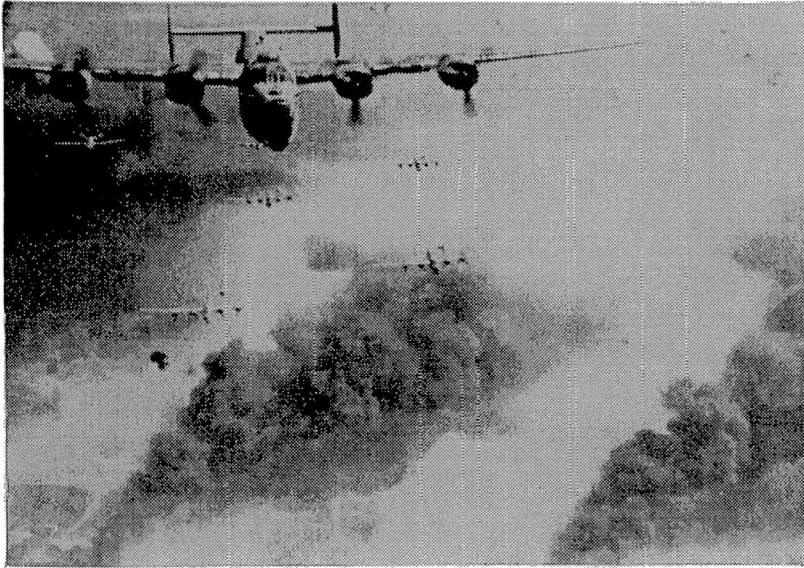




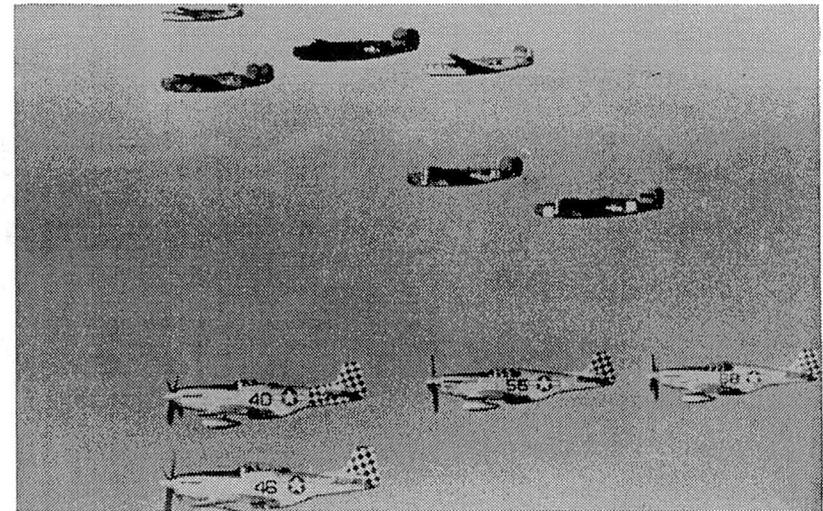
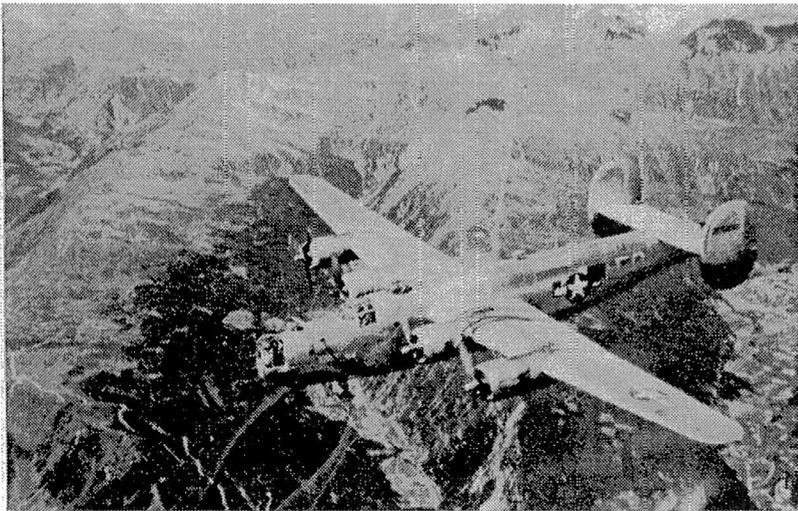








1ST COMBAT UNIT PHOTOS
Submitted by J.B. Newton

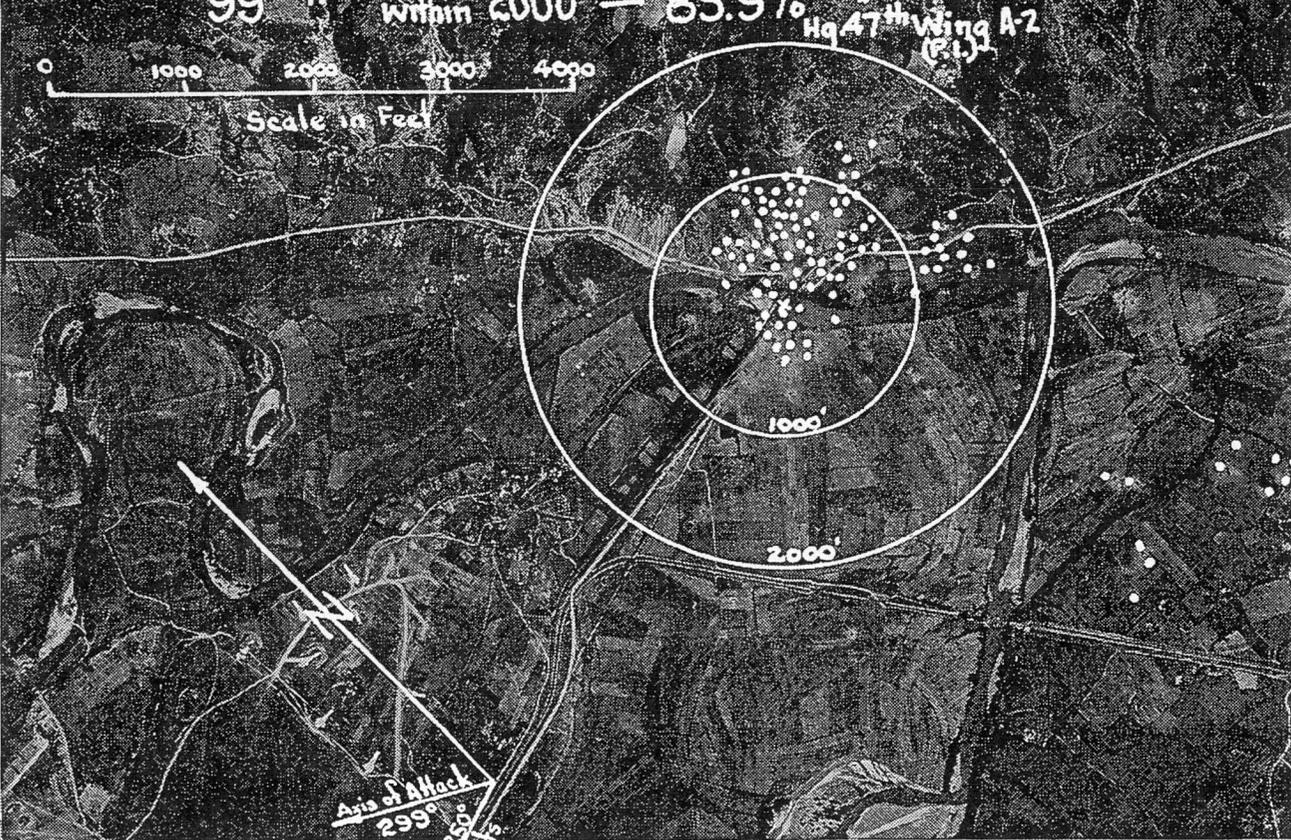






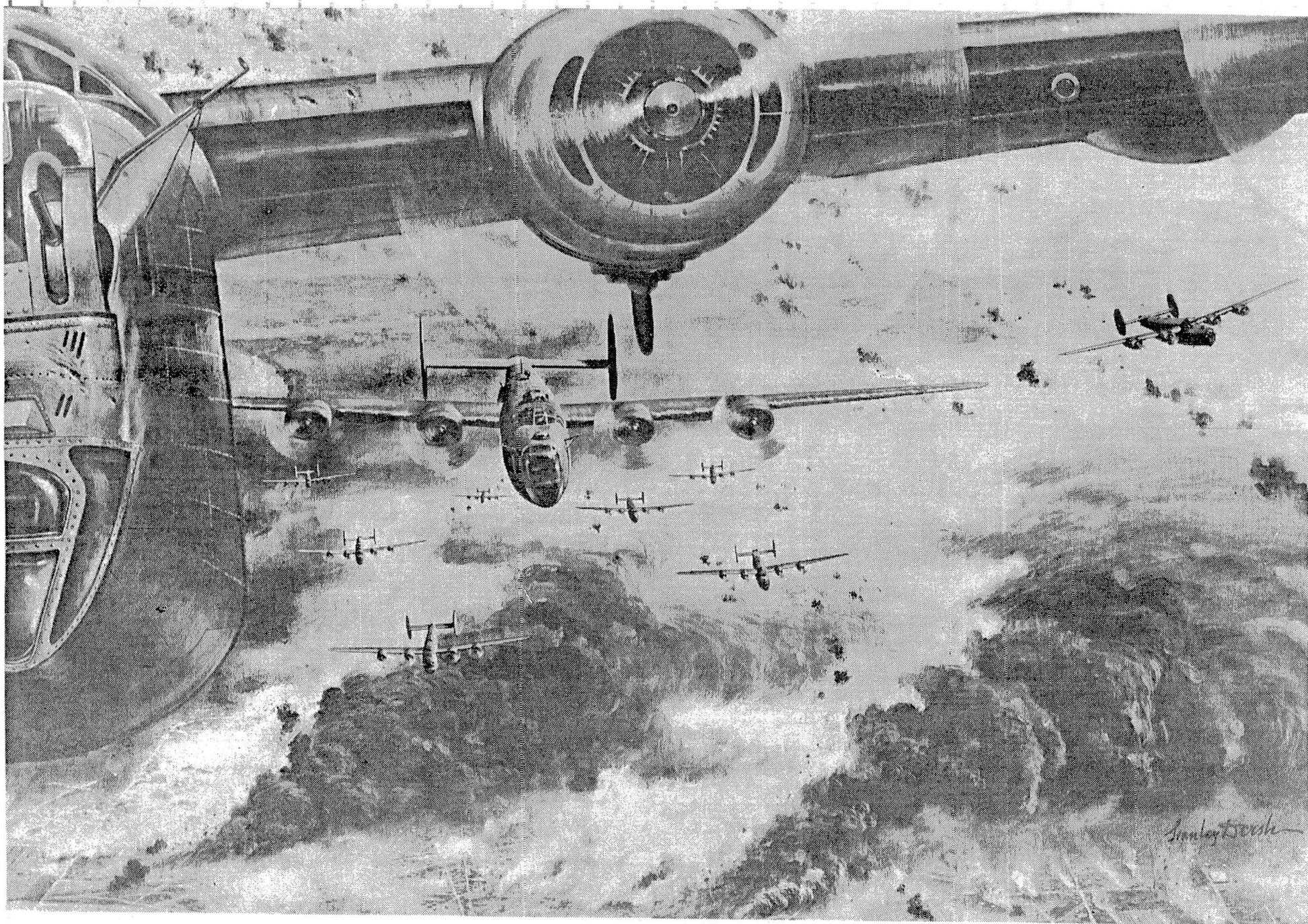
47th BOMB WING(H)
 450th Group
 KARLJEVO R.R. BRIDGE, YUGO.

1 Sept. 1944 at 10:40 hrs. Mission 129.
 134 x 1000 lb G.P. bombs dropped fused 18.01
 118 bombs plotted. Alt. 16,500' F.L. 12"
 + = Aiming Point • = bomb burst
 79 bursts within 1000' — 67.0% visible
 20 " from 1000'/2000' — 16.9% "
 99 " within 2000' — 83.9% "









RAID ON PLOESTI, 31 MAY 1944. Throughout the war in Europe, American and allied air power struck heavy and repeated blows at strategic Nazi industries, curtailing production and forcing the Nazi Government into a costly program of industrial maintenance, reconstruction, and rebuilding under ground. Steel production, ball bearing manufacture, synthetic rubber plants, armament works, oil production plants, and other industries, received heavy punishment at the hands of the strategic bombers. The refineries at

RAID ON PLOESTI

Ploesti were an important source of petroleum products for the Nazi war machine. Beginning in June 1942, a series of destructive raids kept production at a reduced rate. In all, AAF bombers made 25 attacks on Ploesti between June 1942 and August 1944; the RAF made three. The raid here depicted shows B-24's of the 15th Air Force attacking the area on 31 May 1944. On this raid 481 planes dropped more than 1,000 tons of bombs from an altitude of 19,000 to 24,200 feet. Sixteen bombers failed to return.

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED WITH THE
450th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

ITALY 1943 - 45 WORLD WAR II



SQUADRONS
720th 721st 722nd 723rd
"THE COTTONTAILS"

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATIONS

REGENSBURG FEB 25th 1944

PLOËSTI APR 5th 1944

1505 MEN OF THE 450th GROUP WERE
KILLED OR MISSING IN ACTION

INSTALLED ON CEMETARY MEMORIAL WALL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO
OCTOBER 16, 1987

REMINISCING WORLD WAR II (50 YEARS LATER) WITH THE 450TH BOMB GROUP

by

Maj. Gerald M. French - Flight Commander, 720th Bomb Squadron

Recently, late-night television has been saturated with movies about World War II. We even were exposed the other night to a scratchy re-issue of "*Bombardier*", a Randolph Scott and Pat O'Brien epic in which B-17's leveled Tokyo in one heroic mission.

Never mind that Japan was beyond the range of land-based bombers when the film was made in the early 1940's. Hollywood always was a year or two ahead of the actual forces in the march toward victory.

Some of the films made just after the war were better. "*Command Decision*" with Clark Gable at least conceded that we lost a plane or two and that the attrition from daylight bombing was an issue of some concern.

For the most part, however, the air war on film was an adaptation of the boy-meets-girl formula with aerial footage added. It began with a group of pink-cheeked boys struggling through training, proceeded to the Big Mission and ended, if not with the utter destruction of the enemy, at least with the hint that victory was in sight if one bought a few more war bonds.

In the process, boys became men, the smart-aleck kid from the first reel saved the entire squadron by some feat of heroism and the girls back home remained faithful to and turned out more bombers for their "guys" "over there".

Well, it was like that, and it wasn't. The air war really was fought largely by green kids led by a small cadre of pre-war professionals. There were numerous instances of derring-do and genuine heroism. And, though we probably give a tad more credit to air power's contribution than the ground forces would concede, the relentless bombings certainly shortened the war and may have decided its outcome.

On the other hand, missions rarely had the unbroken excitement that the condensed film accounts would suggest. For the most part, they were long, boring affairs highlighted by moments of anxiety.

What follows is one aging veteran's account of the experience. It probably was not typical and, polished by more than 50 years of retelling, it may not even be very accurate. But such as it is, it is a memory to all of us in the original 450th.

We really were a bunch of raw youngsters, most of us still in our teens or barely into our 20's. The Army called us men, and by the time we were formed into a bomber crew, we believed it.

After combat crew training at Alamogorda, New Mexico, we flew our brand new B-24's to Herrington, Kansas to pick up our combat gear, and to follow the Southern Route to Europe.

If one of today's airlines offered free flights down the east coast of Brazil, across the Atlantic and up the fringe of Africa to Tunisia with such crews, it probably would have no takers.

Most of us were only a year or two out of high school. My Navigator, Lt. John Polce, had never flown over water. My Crew Chief, who was known throughout the 720th Squadron as "Pop", did have good knowledge of the planes systems. My Radio Operator, Sgt. Woods, barely knew what was inside his black boxes. My Co-pilot, Lt. Dick Cummings, who later was promoted to 1st Pilot, was an expert on sailing (from Boston, Mass.). I always said if we ever had to ditch that he would immediately be in command. The rest of the crew were specialists on offensive and defensive weapons that were as useless at the moment as canons on a canoe.

Unlikely as it seems, however, most planes and crews arrived intact in North Africa.

The passage was not without incident, of course. Crews ditched off the U.S. Coast, went down in the Brazilian jungle, fell short of the African coast or were lost temporarily or permanently in other ways. You may remember one crew even had a French fighter plane land on top of his B-24 fuselage, while both planes were making an approach to the runway at Natal, Brazil.

Our war was a war of attrition. However gently the leadership might try to put it, it came down to a matter of producing planes and crews faster than could be destroyed by enemy fire or accident. With experience, the losses could be predicted and, obviously, they were found acceptable. Four percent loss per mission, times 50 missions added up to a 200% loss.

The remarkable thing to those of us who survived is that the attrition rate was not far heavier. Given the youth of the crews, the abbreviated training and the enormity of the operations, it now seems miraculous that as many made as did.

The anticipation of combat probably was the greatest mental hazard for most crews. As with any form of initiation, there was no adequate way to prepare for it, no way to answer the overriding question: Will I be too scared to function?

As it turned out, of course, the question was irrelevant. The essence of military training, probably from its inception, is to condition the combatant to function despite fear or any other distraction. If there were some militarily sound reason for doing so, a soldier probably could be trained to take a Swiss watch apart at the center of a raging battle and put it back together again without losing a gear. The really frightening thing was to have nothing to do.

On my crew the Navigator, Lt. John Polce, age 23 and oldest man on the crew, was one of the calmest individuals most of the time. Neither flak nor fighters interrupted his work, and only a direct hit could have stopped him from taking a sunline with his octant when he thought one was necessary. It was only over a target, when he had to give up his space to the Bombardier, that he huddled in his flak jacket and worried about his safety. The Bombardier, Lt. Jim Cummins from Apple Valley, California, was fully occupied only for those few minutes, tended to be calm over the target and nervous the rest of the trip. As for myself, a Flight Commander at 19, I was either

either too young, too dumb or too busy to worry about things I couldn't control. I know I prayed a lot on each and every mission.

Sometimes, as in the case of our Engineer and Top Turret Gunner, Sgt. Ward, the demands of the job brought out unexpected capabilities.

A cocky youngster with a natural love of engines, he apparently had acquired some insight to the bomber's systems without knowing it. We were returning from Southern France one day when all 4 engines quit simultaneously. While the B-24 dropped like the proverbial brick, the Sgt. reached up and turned a switch. Seconds later, three engines restarted, and we made it home.

Later, we deduced that the engines had been on "crossfeed", meaning that all were drawing from all four fuel tanks. One tank had gone dry, causing an air lock in the line and starving all four power plants. What the Engineer had done was switch the engines to their individual tanks, three of which had enough fuel left to feed them. He swore that he never remembered being taught to cope with that particular emergency but he had done just the right thing while the rest of us were deciding to jump or ditch.

As with most crews, our early missions were comparatively short "milk runs" to lightly defended targets. Sometimes, however, what the intelligence people advertised as "light flak and minimal fighter resistance" turned out to be pretty rough. Within five missions most of our crews had seen a good cross section of combat.

In that respect, however, judgments are subjective. How hairy a mission was, often was measured by the number of holes in the individual aircraft. Two crews on the same mission might rate it quite differently.

Our plane, "The Liberal Lady" developed several hundred holes in all, ranging in size from a fraction of an inch to more than a foot in diameter. On one mission an ME-109 ran into our right rudder and stabilizer, taking most of it with him down through the undercast. Sgt. Felchner, our nose gunner, was the only Purple Heart that day. Again we made it home O.K. As a crew, we were probably in the minority. We came through four visits to the oil fields of Ploesti and some disquieting moments over Austria and Germany and finished our missions flying "Liberal Lady the 4th".

The reason why the old movies make air combat look so intense and unsettling probably is that they borrowed actual footage from the Army to splice into the studio shots. It stands to reason that the official photographers were going to shoot the action, not waste film on the scenery.

What today's audiences don't feel is the pure tedium that went with those moments of high excitement.

Crews were roused at two or three in the morning, fed breakfast that often would set up to the consistency of cement in flight and then briefed for an hour or two on the details of the mission.

The term "briefing" always seemed a misnomer. In the belief that the troops needed not only to know where they were going but why it was important, the Group Commander, Col. Mills, often felt it necessary to explain the target's significance to the war effort. The intelligence people

then described every enemy air field and flak battery as though knowing them intimately somehow would make them less threatening. And the meteorologist gave a lengthy lecture on cloud formations, wind aloft, dew point and some interesting weather systems lurking in the Italian Alps.

It was dawn most mornings before crews reached their planes. However, the day was almost half spent by the time the whole group was assembled and starting off in an appropriate direction.

By then, we were reaching the altitude where oxygen and winter flight clothing were appropriate. And, as any pre-schooler might tell you, only after you have become encased in your snowsuit does the urge to go to the bathroom become overwhelming.

Closer to enemy territory, flak vests and helmets were added to the bulky flight clothing. Crew members spent most of a 10 hour mission embalmed in layers of clothing, their heads depressed by steel flak helmets, their torsos constricted by armor-plated flak suits and their feet alternately boiling and freezing in fleece-lined boots and their hands either freezing or constricted by heavy gloves -- either way eliminating the function of fingers as separate members.

Until the pressurized B-29, bombers were drafty metal barns with no central heating or cooling and no source of oxygen except a face mask that chafed the cheeks.

Much as we might have pictured ourselves looking like John Garfield or Van Johnson, we more closely resembled deep-sea divers in full gear.

Eating was impossible under such conditions, but enroute to the target, during the early part of our tour there usually was an opportunity to dine on "K"-rations. "K"-rations was a collection of oily canned meat, dog-biscuit crackers and insoluble candy that served as the in-flight lunch on such trips. This was the best we had in early '44, as our supply ships were sunk by the big German air raid on Bari Harbor in December of '43.

After a mission, the elation of having survived was dissipated by a lengthy debriefing and a cold-water shower. Those evenings at the club with the carefree warriors singing around the piano enlivened the war movies, and they did occur. For a crew scheduled for back-to-back missions, however, a light supper and an early bed was far more tempting.

Often, of course one or more crews did not return, and others came back with wounded or dead members. In the films, Clark Gable showed tight-jawed agony over such losses, and the surviving crews toasted the fallen comrades and carried on.

The real-life reaction was somewhat different. Nature has a way of numbing the nerves after a severe burn or a bad injury, and it does something of the sort with emotional wounds. We were not insensitive to the loss of a friend, but the reaction was delayed -- in a sense, postponed for a more convenient time. Without this sort of emotional postponement it probably would have been impossible to go back to the job. There would be, and indeed there has been, time to mourn the losses when it was all over.

The simple drudgery of flying missions was relieved by days off and stand-downs for weather. There also was a week off for rest and recuperation on the Isle of Capri. Our Flight Surgeon, Doc Wagner, normally watched the crews for signs of "combat fatigue". My crew was one of the early crews to go -- right after the mid-air collision with the ME-109. I really don't think we had "combat fatigue" until we spent the first night in Naples and the Germans decided to bomb the Naples harbor right next to our hotel, in January of '44.

The overriding goal, however, was to complete the number of missions required for a tour. Crews from the 8th Air Force, flying from England, needed 25. We had to make 50, presumably on the theory that Italy's 15th Air Force flew easier missions. Since this was only partially true, we were given double credits for trips into 8th AF territory or to targets such as Ploesti. Our crew earned its 50 credits with only 35 actual missions. Our last mission was on "D" Day, June 6, 1944, with all 10 men returning home.

That was enough. Whoever set the mission rule knew what it was about. There was nothing magic about the number 50. But, the idea of a fixed number was a good one. With a specific goal, one probably can do more and do it longer than would be possible on an indefinite tour.

Interestingly, the delayed psychological reactions set in after we finished our missions. Some of us compared notes and found we all had the same experience. When we were flying every day or two, we were able to turn off the war at night and sleep like babies. For years after our last mission, most of us had trouble getting to sleep. And when we did sleep, we had troubling dreams.

Some crews had two tours instead of one, and we all would have if the war had lasted longer in the Pacific. As it was, out of more than 3½ years of war, my crew spent only eight months overseas.

Ground soldiers who were overseas for a year or two and sailors who spent much of the war at sea tend to sneer at that modest a contribution. But the air war was different. It used up both planes and men at an alarming rate. During the war years, the United States produced more than 440,000 aircraft of all types and lost almost 60,000 of them. The proportionate losses were much higher for combat aircraft. The Army Air Forces alone lost almost 23,000 planes and suffered 120,000 casualties. The toll for the other Allied Air Forces was even higher.

The Axis powers produced fewer planes and trained fewer air crews but lost more of both. Certainly, many other factors decided the outcome of the war, but no small part of the Allies success lay in this country's ability to turn out enough planes and crews to cloud the skies over Europe and much of the Pacific throughout most of the war.

In summary, those of you from the 450th "Cottontails" can be justly proud of your individual and collective contributions to the war effort.

Thank you "Jerry" French

