

BREAKS RECORDS

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Among the targets which the "Joker II" has seen action over are: Innsbruck, Munich, Salzburg, Graz, Rosenheim, Moosbierbaum, Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Nice, Toulon, Ora, Verona, Brenner Pass, Ferrara, Ploesti and almost every high priority target which the 450th has flown in the last year.

The aircraft first arrived in the 720th in May, 1944 and took its place with the Air Force armadas which were making daily trips to unload destruction on the Nazi-held communication and industrial centers.

Since the "Joker II" begun flying, it has had eight engine changes and has always been ready to fly at a moment's notice. The only serious trouble it has ever encountered was its ill-fated 102nd mission when Nazi flak almost put an end to its combat life.

The plane has led the 720th Squadron in all forms of maintenance and has been commended numerous times. M/Sgt. Homer Wilson, its crew-chief, is well known for his record-breaking planes and fine maintenance.

One of Gen. Patton's aides tells of the trying months of training in the States during which Patton insisted that every man adhere strictly to regulations. Their shoes had to be clean, buttons polished, ties knotted, etc. One day Patton noticed a man atop a telegraph pole stringing wire in a Signal Corps sector. The man's collar was open and he wore no tie. Patton ordered him down. "Why aren't you wearing a tie?" the General asked... Why should I?" was the bold answer.... Patton, red-faced, barked: "What's your name and company?"... "My name's Co.," was the answer, "and my company's the Bell Telephone."

Camouflage A Big Problem at CBI Bases

This is a third of a series of articles on life in the CBI theater. The anecdotes contained herein are taken from the experiences of an engineer-gunner who served his first tour as an airman with a B-25 Group in the Pacific.

Chinese are frequently difficult to distinguish from certain varieties of Japanese. The differences between the two are so slight that often one cannot tell with any degree of accuracy whether his neighbor is friend or foe. As a result, the Japs have been able to organize a particularly effective espionage system in many parts of China and Burma. Through this means they have been able to gain minute details concerning our operations, and more directly of our bases and air strips.

Rather than covering buildings with whitewash as in Italy, troops stationed in the CBI familiarize themselves with the implementing of nature and jungle growth to conceal an airfield so that it may not be recognized through air or photo reconnaissance.

At an air base in a province of China over-run since by the Japs, the job of camouflaging was so effective that it was necessary to outline the runway and taxi-strip during flight operations so that friendly pilots would recognize it. Nature aided the camouflage artists by making a large lake at the end of a lava-run extending from an extinct volcano. The shores of the

lake were used as taxi-strips, and ran to harbors hidden in the dense jungle near the water. The runway was leveled in an irregular design so that no pattern was discernable from the air. Though the Japs knew of the camouflage through ground espionage they were unable to use effective measures because there were many such lakes in the vicinity with identical lava runs. The only possible means of discovery were the tracks of planes and vehicles that moved over the sand taxi-strips. But American ingenuity soon destroyed even this evidence. A condemned aircraft engine was set up on a boat anchored in the lake, and equipped with wooden paddles to wash the lake water up on the sandy beaches and cover all tracks. The Japs soon learned the trick, but the Air Corps, not to be outwitted, was still a jump ahead. They set up several dummy wave makers in each of the many similar lakes that the Japs were constantly photographing.

The Japs attacked these bases several times a week, but they seldom hit anything. The only effective attack were made by lone night raiders whose only damage was interrupting a good night's sleep. More effective than the Japs were their related "allies," the CBI mosquitos who had a noisier "armament." Ever see a Jersey mosquito? Mate it to the B-19 and you have the CBI counter-part.

FOOLS FORMATION

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oozing from one engine and another completely out, Lt. Hanna made the bomb run and dropped his bombs successfully.

S/Sgt. William Shea, aerial photographer, observed an engine was not operating and immediately notified the pilot that No. 1 engine was out. This was ironic for Lt. Hanna had feathered the engine before completing the bomb run.

Meanwhile a radio call warned the crippled Liberator that enemy aircraft were sighted in the vicinity. A spark from the guns, though, was likely to blow the plane to smithereens.

"For heavensakes, boys, don't shoot unless there's no other way out," pleaded Sgt. Reynolds whose chute was unusable.

Luckily, "Molto Buono" had lost the enemy planes in a cloud and continued its homeward journey unmolested by the decimated Luftwaffe.

Meanwhile, Lt. Sumner Menken, navigator, was plotting a course which would take the riddled Liberator over emergency landing fields. Slowly, the huge plane winged its way over the jagged Alps and across the Adriatic until a friendly field was in sight.

The silver Liberator lost altitude in preparation for a landing. Wavering as it approached the landing strip, its wheels finally touched the ground. Almost at the same moment, another engine went out on the aircraft. The landing was smooth despite the fact that the outboard engines were inoperative.

When the plane came to a stop at the end of the runway, gas was still leaking from the pierced fuel tanks. Meanwhile fire trucks and ground personnel cluttered around the holed Liberator.

Stepping out of the riddled plane, Lt. Hanna noticed a jagged 155mm hole in the wing. A shell had passed through the wing but failed to explode. His aircraft had also lost more than 300 gallons of gas on its trip back.

The entire crew was jubilant over their safe return and patting the smiling pilot and engineer on the back. Three men aboard the "Molto Buono" were especially happy to get back. Sgts. Owen Bolin, "Snake" Henson and "Count" Sforza had just rounded out their 50th mission, and a big celebration party was awaiting them at their home base.

MANY IN GROUP DECORATED

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PURPLE HEART

Capt. Bernard B. Gawne	720	Sgt. Jonh E. Evans	722
2nd Lt. Byron E. Conley, Jr.	723	Sgt. Daniel J. Harris	722
2nd Lt. Karl C. Eberly, Jr.	722	Sgt. Francois L. Massie	723
2nd Lt. Clinton S. Liechty	722	Sgt. Lloyd Nordstrom	720
2nd Lt. William J. Reid	722	Sgt. Calvin G. Reckley	722
S-Sgt. Owin M. Bolin	220	Sgt. Sam L. Thompson	723
S-Sgt. Malcolm R. Smith	723	Cpl. Claudie P. Bobbitt	723



Mascot Gets Bath at No. 3, "Cottontail Lane"

FOUND: At Group theatre. One parachute pack, containing some personal photographs, a fountain pen and blank sheets of typewriter paper etc. Owner may have same by calling at P.R.O. and identifying same.