

## 765 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, TACTICAL



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

765 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 19 May 1943

Activated, 1 Jul 1943

Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945

Redesignated 765 Bombardment Squadron, Light, 11 Dec 1953

Activated, 23 Dec 1953

Redesignated 765 Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, 1 Oct 1955

Inactivated, 8 Jan 1958

### STATIONS

Wendover Field, UT, 1 Jul 1943

Gowen Field, ID, 29 Jul 1943

Kearns, UT, 11 Sep 1943

Wendover Field, UT, 30 Sep 1943

Hammer Field, CA, 30 Oct 1943-1 Jan 1944

Venosa, Italy, 18 Feb 1944

Torretto, Italy, 23 Feb 1944-1 Jul 1945

Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 22 Jul-28 Aug 1945

Hill AFB, UT, 23 Dec 1953

Blytheville AFB, AR, 8 Feb 1956-8 Jan 1958

### ASSIGNMENTS

461 Bombardment Group, 1 Jul 1943-28 Aug 1945

461 Bombardment Group, 23 Dec 1953-8 Jan 1958

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24, 1943-1945

B-26, 1954-1955

B-57, 1955-1958

## **COMMANDERS**

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Budapest, Hungary, 13 Apr 1944

Ploesti, Rumania, 15 Jul 1944

## **EMBLEM**



*"Liber Raiders"*

765 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) emblem

765 Bombardment Squadron, Light emblem: On a disc yellow, bordered black, the head in profile of a saber-toothed tiger in proper colors, on an irregular shaped pattern white, edged red. (Approved, 27 Aug 1954)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

1943 August 11 – 765th Bombardment Squadron of the 461st Bombardment Group was activated from the 43rd Bombardment Squadron of the 29th Bombardment Group. The nucleus cadre consisted of the following nine officers and thirty-six enlisted men.

### Officers

1st Lt. Sandall, John C.	Sq Commander
1st Lt. Smith, Norman M.	Sq Operations Officer
F/O Norris, Samuel M.	Co-Pilot
2nd Lt. Iconis, John D.	Sq Bombardier
2nd Lt. Dusenberry, Robert K.	Sq Navigator
2nd Lt. Dubal, Robert (NMI)	Sq Armament Officer
2nd Lt. Case, Shadie L.	Sq Comm. Officer
2nd Lt. Maxsom, Frank B.	Sq Engineering Officer
2nd Lt. Simai, Samuel B.	Sq Adjutant

August 14 – Captain Sidney Raines joined the organization as the executive officer of the Squadron.

August 31 – 1st Lt. William F. Foster joined organization as Squadron Intell. Officer.

September 10 – The Squadron departed Gowen Field for station to Kearns, Utah.

September 11 – The Squadron arrived at Kearns, Utah.

September 17 – The ground and air echelon underwent separate training schedules on this date.

September 20 – 2nd Lt. John D. Iconis was transferred from Squadron. 1st Lt. Benjamin S. Murphy was assigned to this Squadron. The following six officers and seven enlisted men were placed on Detached Service at the Army Air Base, Salt Lake City, Utah.

1st Lt. John C. Sandall

1st Lt. Norman M. Smith

1st Lt. William F. Foster

1st Lt. Benjamin S. Murphy

2nd Lt. Robert K. Dusenberry

F/O Samuel M. Norris

Five more enlisted men joined this Squadron.

September 23 – 2nd Lt. Robert Dubal returned to this Squadron for active duty from Detached Service.

September 24 – 1st Lt. Daniel E. Nathan rejoined this organization after completion from course at Orlando, Florida. Lt. Nathan gave all the enlisted men in the Squadron a physical inspection.

September 30 – This day the Squadron left Kearns, Utah to arrive at Wendover Air Base, Utah later the same day. Leaving behind two enlisted men who were confined in the hospital.

The first few days of October were busy ones for all members of the 765th Bombardment Squadron. The primary task was that of getting settled at our new home, Wendover Field, Utah. This procedure, by necessity, had to be carried out with the utmost rapidity; for two days subsequent to the arrival of the Squadron, the critical and helpful eyes of an Administrative Inspector were scanning our records and forms.

Our accommodations, while not the most comfortable, were adequate and proved good experience for the men. The members of the Squadron took to the tents without complaint. The food, consumed from mess kits, was good.

On the first day of October, the 765th Bombardment Squadron was a small group of officers and men working and living together in the attempt to build a tactical organization. At that time, our complement of personnel totaled 12 officers and 94 enlisted men, but a fraction of Table of Organization strength, and the original model crew was the solo comprisal of our air echelon. By October 31st, this same Squadron was no longer an offspring; it was an adolescent

rapidly reaching the adult stage. Its personnel were over one-half complete, with 57 officers and 258 enlisted men assigned to this organization. Moreover, its roster showed the addition of 13 flying crews during the month. This was a total gain of 45 officers and 196 enlisted men.

A vigorous training program was undertaken at Wendover Field with particular emphasis placed on qualification in arms, first aid and sex hygiene, safeguarding military information, defense against chemical attack, elementary map and aerial photograph reading, the Articles of War, and military discipline and courtesy.

All during October a weeding out process was under way which eliminated from the Squadron those physically unfit for combat duty.

On October 3rd, jubilant news reached the ears of the men. An announcement was made that ten per cent of the Squadron could be on furlough at any one time. Men started leaving within a week; and, over the month, 90 enlisted men of the Squadron visited home, families, and friends. Leaves for officers were granted later in the month and 30 officers, most of whom were aircrew men, took advantage of this privilege during October.

On October 25th, the 461st Bombardment Group received a new commander. Lt. Col. W. M. Carter was removed from flying status for physical reasons and Col. F. E. Glantzberg assumed responsibility for the guidance of the destiny of the Group. The sorrow over the loss of our Group Commander was accompanied by the determination and resolution to work, learn, and train under our new leader to become a highly potent combat unit.

The last few days of the month were busily occupied by getting ready for a change of station. The 461st Bombardment Group was leaving the jurisdiction of the 2nd Air Force and entering that of the 4th Air Force at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. An advance party was sent ahead to California to prepare for the arrival of the Squadron. A detail was appointed to remain at Wendover Field after the departure of the Squadron for the purpose of cleaning up the area. Transportation difficulties made it necessary for the Squadron to travel in two separate groups leaving one day apart. It was with no measure of regret that the 765th Bombardment Squadron departed from Wendover Field for it was on to more advanced training and one step closer to our goal, actual combat with our enemies.

October 1 The major part of the day was occupied in the task of getting organized at Wendover Air Field, Utah.

October 2 This was a busy day preparing for the arrival of an Administrative Inspector. All preparations for the habilitation of the Squadron were approved. Eight EM joined the Squadron.

October 3 An announcement of furloughs for the EM was met with great approval.

October 4 Lt. Nathan, Squadron Medical Officer gave the men a lecture on sanitation and hygiene. Capt Drobeck, gave a Group lecture on rifle instruction and care. An inspection by Lt. Sinai and Capt. Rainen was made of the EM in the Squadron.

October 5 Capt. Drobeck, took the EM out on the firing range for qualification on the rifle.

October 6 Our Squadron was taken out for dress inspection by Capt. Rainen before Lt. Col. Carter and Lt. Col. Dippy.

October 25 2nd Lt. Willie M. Platt, Intelligence Officer joined our Squadron.

The month of November found the members of the Squadron setting up their various departments and getting accustomed to their new home at Hammer Field. The accommodations provided the group were an excellent morale builder after spending a month of "roughing it" in tents at Wendover Field, Utah.

The Group was welcomed into the Fourth Air Force by Brig. General Connell, Commanding General of the Fourth Bomber Command. Following his speech, Colonel Glantzberg, 461st Group Commanding Officer, introduced the members of his Headquarters Staff and the Squadron Commanders of each Squadron to the men.

Shortly after our arrival here, the second phase of our training got under way. The planes and their crews started bombing missions; men attended lectures and qualified on the firing range. Every man went over the infiltration course where they simulated real combat by having dummy bombs explode around them and fired live ammunition above their heads.

There was a large increase in the personnel and combat crews for the month of November. At the beginning of the month we found 308 officers and enlisted men and 13 combat crews. At the end of the month we had 492 officers and enlisted men and 18 combat crews.

Early in the month we found the members of the Squadron mourning the death of little "redline", the Squadron mascot, who was killed by a truck. During his two short months of life, "Redline" had become endeared to every member of the organization.

Twice during the month we found a change in Squadron Commanders and Operations Officers. 1st Lt. Sandall was replaced by Major Yurkanis as Squadron Commander while Captain Briggs replaced 1st Lt. Smith as Operations Officers. Later in the month Major Yurkanis was replaced by 1st Lt. Book as Squadron Commander and 1st Lt. Smith replaced Captain Briggs as Operations Officer.

The Squadron participated in Group reviews and inspections every week. The officers and men dressed in their best uniforms and made a proud appearance for the organization. Toward the end of the month a marked improvement was noted in the personal appearance of the men.

The 22nd of November was a day of great sorrow throughout the Squadron, when it mourned the death of 2nd Lt. Edward J. Drucker, killed when one of our planes crashed near Tonopah, Nevada. 2nd Lt. Reginold Tribe, pilot of the ship, is in the hospital with injuries received in the crash. The rest of the crew parachuted to safety.

Toward the end of the month the Squadron started making preparations for POE. Men were required to mark all their clothing and have all their records up to date. As we neared our goal, that of actual combat with our common enemies, the high morale of the men was not only noticeable but was felt by everyone.

November 22. Lt. E. J. Drucker killed in a plane crash near Tonopah, Nevada.

November 23. 1st Lt. William J. Bock assigned from Headquarters, 461st Bomb Group, to assume duties as acting Squadron Commander.

Under the supervision of Major Leigh Lott and his staff of Group S-2, lectures in Safeguarding Military Information were given to the members of the Squadron during the first two evenings of the month. Half of the Squadron attended the lectures the first night and the other half the second night. Training films on Camouflage and Safeguarding Military Information were shown. The lectures and training films lasted about three and a half hours each night. Each Squadron S-2 Officer was included in the program by giving a short talk. Pamphlets on mail regulations and etc, for overseas, were distributed to the men after each lecture.

The Combat Crews of this Squadron were very busy all month participating in Group missions. They were briefed before take-offs by group and interrogated by the Intelligence Officers after landing.

Early in the month the members of the organization waited news from crew #25 flying in ship #463. They were lost on a routine night mission. Planes searched for days and emergency bail out crews were formed to aid the men if the lost ship was found. After tireless days of searching, the ship was given up as lost. The crew consisted of: 2nd Lt. Turvey, 2nd Lt. Fish, 2nd Lt. Hester, 2nd Lt. Cronin, S/Sgt. Burse, and S/Sgt. Wandtke.

The Squadron appeared in the Group Reviews and Inspections every Friday during the month. All officers and enlisted men available showed up for the Inspections and made a good showing for the organization.

The Squadron party was held in Jadron Hall, about three miles from camp. A buffet supper and drinks of all kinds were served to the officers and men and all their lady friends. Music was supplied by two bands that played until 1:00 AM. Several members of the Hammer Field WAC detachment showed up to act as dancing partners for the men. Col. Glantzberg, Group Commander, and Major Applegate, Squadron Commander, gave brief talks. A wonderful time was had by all.

During the month the Squadron Photo section took pictures of all the Combat Crews and the Squadron Staff Officers. A copy of each picture was given to each crew member. Several copies were sent to Group and several copies were kept to be mounted in the Squadron Photo Album.

Later in the month we lost another ship. All the crew bailed out to safety. 1st Lt. Norman Smith, pilot, suffered from a broken leg, made while landing in his parachute. 2nd Lt. Kurtzberg, Navigator, suffered minor injuries. A couple of days after the crash, Captain William Bock flew down to Blythe California and brought them back to our organization. Lt. Smith was placed in the Base Hospital and will not be able to go overseas with this organization.

The night before Christmas found the cooks working hard preparing for Christmas dinner. Christmas day found a wonderful dinner prepared for the men; turkey and all the trimmings. Most of the men thought of the folks back home, but didn't seem to mind being away from them, knowing they were here for a worthy cause.

The end of the month found all of the Departments in the Squadron, packing, waterproofing, and crating all their equipment for overseas shipment. As we close the Squadron History for this month and for the year of 1943, we find both the ground and air crews eager to get overseas and help get this mess over with so we all can go home with our families for Christmas of 1944.

December 1. The members of the Squadron attended lectures on Safeguarding Military Information at the Base Gym.

December 2. The second half of the Squadron attended the lectures on Safeguarding Military Information this evening.

December 5. Crew #25 was missing today in ship #463 with the following crew members: Lt. Turvey, Lt. Hester, Lt. Fish, Lt. Cronin, S/Sgt Wandtke, and S/Sgt. Burse.

December 6. Today the search continued for ship #463. Lt. W. F. Foster, 2nd Lt. Kahn, Sgt. Farrell, Sgt. Daniels, Sgt. Carson, Sgt. Wilgel, and Sgt. Alexander formed an emergency bail out crew to rescue the men if the ship was found. They returned late in the afternoon after not finding the ship. 1st Lt. Jack Cody was assigned as Tech Supply Officer in addition to his other duties.

December 7. Today on the second anniversary of the sneak attack upon Pearl Harbor by the Japs, found the members of the Squadron still waiting for some news on 2nd Lt. Turvey and his crew. Lt. Maxson was designated as Squadron Parachute Officer in addition to his other duties.

December 8. Three Corporals were reduced to the grade of Pvt. Three privates were promoted

December 9. Major Robert Applegate assumed the duties of temporary Squadron Commander relieving Capt. Bock who assumed the temporary duties as Operations Officer.



After several months of extensive training for a combat theatre on New Years Eve, December 31, 1943, the members of the ground echelon found themselves boarding a train for a Port of Embarkation. Fourteen Officers and two hundred and sixty enlisted men boarded the train for an unknown destination. The trip was long and tiresome and the members of the organization passed the time away playing cards, reading, and looking out the windows at the scenery. Calisthenics were given each time the train made a long stop. The members of the Red Cross in various towns and cities served coffee and doughnuts to the men for between meal snacks. Duchess, the black cocker-spaniel mascot of the Squadron was left with Captain Rainen's brother at Kansas City. From a scenic standpoint, the trip was enjoyed very much by everyone.

Six days of train riding brought about the final destination, Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Everyone found the climate to be very cold in comparison with the mild California climate to which they had been accustomed for the past few months. At this station everyone was given a physical inspection and all of their clothing was checked. The movies and the Post Exchange were the main attractions here as everyone was confined to the post. One enlisted man was released from the Squadron and confined to the Station Hospital due to a minor illness.

On January 12<sup>th</sup> 1944, fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty-six enlisted men boarded the transport George S. Hanley at Newport News, Virginia. Their destination was unknown. The first night on the transport was spent tied up to the pier. Everyone found their bunks to be quite comfortable, but the quarters were very close and space was limited. The second night on the transport was spent anchored in the harbor outside of Newport News. The following day the George S. Hanley set out to sea to join a convoy which was escorted by several United States destroyers. Everyone was happy to be at last on their way and they quickly began to accustom themselves to the life on a transport which would be their home for the next four or five weeks.

During the trip calisthenics was given each day for a half an hour. Dust drill was given each day to prepare the men for any emergency. While on deck the men were required to wear their life vests at all times. Early in the trip almost every member of the organization got seasick during a storm. One the third day out at sea, four pups were born to the mascot of the ships crew. One of the pups was given to the members of the Squadron for a mascot. He was named, "C-Rations".

On February 1st, while sailing through the Mediterranean Sea, the Squadron got its first taste of actual warfare when the convoy was attacked by enemy aircraft. The attack started at 1825 and ended at 1900. All members of the Squadron were required to go below decks. Several of the Squadron Gunners served on the ships gun crews during the attack. The destroyer escort laid a smoke screen over and around the convoy. It was believed that one of the ships was hit and had to put into a local port. There were no casualties.

The transport anchored in the bay at Agesta, Sicily for about a week and then started off for Naples where it docked at 1500 on February 15th. Here the men boarded trucks for the staging

area at Bagnoli, Italy. At Bagnoli the men slept on marble floors of a modern Italian college, formerly used by the Germans for an OCS school. There were many holes in the building from bomb and artillery shells, which made it very cold at night for sleeping.

On February 15th the officers and men boarded the train for Barleten, Italy. They arrived early the next morning. Late in the afternoon they boarded trucks for Toretta, Italy, their final destination. At Toretta the members of the ground echelon and the members of the air echelon were joined together again after being separated for over a month and a half.

The remainder of the month the members of the Squadron working together fixing the Squadron area, and getting everything ready to prepare the air crews for their missions with our enemy. The high morale of the men was noted, for they were at last overseas where they would try their very best to help bring a quick victory over our enemy.

December 29. One EM transferred to Headquarters Detachment, 461st Bomb Group. One EM transferred to this organization from Headquarters, 461st Bomb Group.

December 30. Two EM from duty to AWOL as of today. 2nd Lt. Morin transferred to Hq & Hq Sq, IV Bomber Command, Hamilton Fld, Calif.

December 31. On the last day of the year the members of the ground echelon boarded the train for a Port of Embarkation.

January 1. 14 officers, 260 EM enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, 70 miles west of Wendover Field, Utah.

January 2. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. at midnight Minturn, Colo.

January 3. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At midnight Harrington, Kansas.

January 4. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At midnight, Forrest, Ill.

January 5. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At midnight, Chillicothe, Ohio.

January 6. Arrived at Camp Patrick Henry, Va. at 2100.

January 13. Aboard transport George S. Hanley, destination unknown.

February 1. 15 officers, 256 EM aboard transport George S. Hanley. Convoy attacked by enemy planes at 6:20PM in the Mediterranean Sea. Attack lasted until 7:00 PM. No casualties.

February 15. 15 officers, 256 EM debark from transport at 1900 in Naples, Italy. Arrive at Staging Area #1, Bagnoli, Italy, 2100.

February 16. At Staging Area #1, Bagnoli, Italy.

February 23. 15 officers, 256 EM depart from Staging Area #1, 1400. Destination unknown.

February 24. 15 officers, 256 EM arrive at Toretta, Italy at 1530 and join the Air echelon.

February 25. All members of the organization were busy cleaning up after the British who were on this field prior to our arrival.

During the month members of the Squadron reported in after spending weeks trying to get back to the organization. At the end of the month almost all had reported in. However, there are a few still enroute from the states.

Two officers were promoted during March. 1st Lt. William F. Foster, Squadron Combat Intelligence Officer, was promoted to the rank of Captain. A few days later Captain Sidney Rainen, Squadron Executive Officer, was promoted to the rank of Major. There were no promotions among the enlisted personnel. However, there were some reductions. One Staff Sergeant, two Sergeants, and one Private 1st Class were reduced to the grade of Privates.

Members of the aircrews and ground crews guarded the Squadron Area and all of our airplanes on the line twenty-four hours a day, in all kinds of weather. A good job was done by all.

Everyone worked together in perfect unison to get the planes, equipment, and crews in condition to perform combat missions. Several Squadron and Group practice missions were flown during the month. On one Group practice mission, in which twenty- nine planes participated, twelve were from this organization, and they all completed the mission. Bad weather and mud limited the missions during the month.

On March 18th, 1st Lt. B. J. Murphy dropped the first bomb upon Italian soil for the 765th. It was dropped from 18,000 feet at 40° 13' North and 16° 45' West. It was a 100-pound demolition bomb. The C.E. was 90 feet at 3:00 o'clock. The plane, #717, was piloted by our Squadroin Commander, Major Robert E. Applegate, with 1st Lt. Robert K. Dusenberry as his Navigator.

Movies were held every fourth night during the month at the Enlisted Man's Service Club. There was a large attendance each night they were held.

During their spare time, officers and enlisted men worked on the construction of their respective clubs. Tile was purchased and laid on the floors by local workmen.

Pictures were painted on the walls by Pfc. S. Sasvay. The Officers Club was finished and formally opened on March 25th. The Club was names, "Club Amazon." Colonel F. E. Glantzberg, Group Commander, and all the Squadron Commanders attended the opening as guests of the officers of this organization.

The closing of the month found improvements everywhere. Everyone spent most of their spare time trying to make their quarters more comfortable. The Squadron Area

was improved in many ways. On the line, men adjusted themselves to working under conditions that are to be found here in Italy. Combat crews were much better prepared and were anxiously awaiting word for them to start on their actual missions over enemy territory.

March 18. At 1033 local time (0035 GMT), the 765th Bomb Squadron dropped its first bomb upon Italian soil at 40° 13' North, 16° 45' West. It was dropped by 1st Lt. S. S. Danky, Squadron Bombardier, by ship #717, piloted by Major R. E. Applegate with 1st Lt. R. K. Dusenberry as Navigator. The C.E. was 90 feet at 3:00 o'clock. It was a 100 lb demolition bomb and was dropped from 18,000 ft.

March 21. Crews were briefed for a practice Group Mission. The mission had to be called because of bad weather. One EM transferred to General Hospital, Bari, Italy from Field Hospital at Cerignola, Italy. One EM from duty to Hospital at Cerignola, Italy.

March 22. Gunners were briefed again for a Group Practice mission. It was again called off because of bad weather. One EM reduced from Pfc to Pvt. Two civilian employees released from attached for rations.

March 25. At 2000 the officers of the Squadron opened their club and named it, "Club Amazon." Two orchestra's supplied popular and hillbilly music for the occasion. Col. F. E. Glantzberg, Group Commander, and his staff were present at the opening as guests. The Squadron Commanders and their staffs were also present as guests. One EM went from duty to 34th Field Hosp., Cerignola, Italy.

March 27. The Air Crew members were briefed at 0700 for a practice Group Mission.

March 30. A British Airman was forced down near here. He was interrogated by the Squadron Intelligence Officer and then returned to his organization.

At dawn on April 1st, the combat crews of this organization were briefed on their first combat mission. The target for the day was the Ancoha Railroad bridge in Northern Italy. Due to adverse weather the mission was "scrubbed." On the second day of April the 461st Bomb Group flew its "freshman mission." The target was the Bihac Marshalling Yards in North Western Yugoslavia. We were unfortunate enough to lose two planes over the target area. They were from the 766th and 767th Bomb Squadrons and they collided in mid-air. With its "freshman mission" under its belt, the Group set out to let the "Jerries" know that the organization with the painted cowlings was over here strictly for business; and that business was complete destruction of the enemy.

Our Squadron lost its first ship on April 6th while returning from a raid on Zagreb, Yugoslavia. As the bombardier was salvoing his bombs off the coast of Yugoslavia, one of them exploded, wrecking all the controls and starting a fire in the waist of the ship.

S/Sgt. E. D. McGaugh patched up the leaking gas line and extinguished the fire. Through this bravery and that of all members of the crew, they were recommended for the Distinguished

Flying Cross. Lt. Milne, Lt. Sullivan, and Sgt. Marszalkiewicz bailed out at the first explosion near the coast of Yugoslavia. Our Commanding Officer, Major Applegate and 1st Lt. Specht did a marvelous job in bringing the crippled ship over the Adriatic Sea and into such a position that the remaining members of the crew were able to parachute to safety behind our own lines. Major Applegate, 1st Lt. Specht, and Sgt. Curtin received the Purple Heart on this mission.

A lecture was given by the Squadron Surgeon on precautionary measures to be taken against catching malaria. Attabrine tablets are taken by everyone six days out of the week each week. Mosquito nettings were required on all beds. These were inspected and men were "gigged" if they had them up improperly or didn't have them up at all.

During the middle of the month the rest of our "pigeons" arrived home. The story of their trip from Morrison Field to here was indeed a sad one. From Morrison Field they went to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, where they stayed about three weeks. Then they boarded a troop transport for a nine-day ocean crossing to Casablanca. From Casablanca they took the famous "40 and 8" railroad train. After riding seven days and seven nights, our weary travelers found themselves in Tunis. A week was spent in Tunis trying to find out where the Group was. Again they boarded the "40 and 8" box cars for three day and night journey. This time they were dumped out in Algiers. After spending many days in Algiers, they were flown to their final destination here at Torretta. Sgt. Earl Blalock was lost in action while on Detached Service with the 766th Bomb Squadron. While on a mission to Budapest, Hungary, the plane he was in was shot down over the target by flak.

"Big Stinky", flown by 1st Lt. Nixon and crew was lost on April 24th on the raid on Bucharest, Roumania. It was last seen when it peeled out of the formation with #4 engine on fire. It is believed that everyone had time to bail out as the ship did not appear to be out of control. However, the ship had disappeared out of sight before anyone had a chance to see if they had bailed out.

The enlisted men's Service Club was opened at 1900 on April 24th. Beer, wine, and sandwiches were served. Some smooth popular music was supplied from the 455th Bomb Group Dance Band. There was some entertainment with the band and some of our local talent showed their stuff. Major Applegate, Major Rainen, Lt. Amoroso and Lt. Campo were guests at the opening. Many of the boys had some big heads to carry around in the morning from the Italian "vino".

During the month sixteen combat missions were flown; two planes were lost, and fourteen men are missing in action. Nine enemy aircraft were shot down by our gunners. The following men were awarded the Order of the Purple Heart: Major Robert E. Applegate, 1st Lt. John F. Specht, F/O Robt B. Stewart, S/Sgt. Don K. Holliday, Sgt. Peter N. Codine, and Sgt. Joseph S. Curtin. The following officers and EM were recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross: Major Robt E. Applegate, 1st Lt. John F. Specht, 1st Lt. Marion C. Mixson, S/Sgt. Everett D. McGuagh, Sgt. Delmar Day, Jr., Sgt. Jack Aikon, Sgt. Albert S. Dawes, and Sgt. Joseph S. Curtin.

April 1. Crews were briefed for their first combat mission. The mission was called off as the weather closed in. The target was to be a RR bridge at Ancona, Italy. EM of the organization were paid.

April 2. Mission #1 was flown today. The target was the Marshalling Yards, Bihac, Yugoslavia. Take off was approximately 0729. All planes returned safely at approximately 1312. S/Sgt. D. Holliday got some glass fragments lodged in his eye when a frag bomb exploded just after leaving the bomb racks. He was sent to the Field Hospital at Cerignola and recommended for the Order of the Purple Heart.

April 3. Mission #2 was flown to the Drnis Marshalling Yards in Yugoslavia. Take off time was approximately 0729. All planes returned at 1205.

April 5. Mission #3 was flown to the Marshalling Yards at Nis, Yugoslavia. Take off was approximately 1107, and all our planes returned safely at approximately 1625.

April 6. Mission #4 was flown to the ME 110 assembly plant at Zagreb, Yugoslavia. The planes took off at approximately 1243. All but one plane returned at approximately 1824. The missing plane was piloted by 1st Lt. Specht and Major Applegate. A frag bomb exploded in the ship. Lt. Sullivan, Lt. Milne, and Sgt. Marszelkiewicz bailed out over Yugoslavia. The rest of the crew bailed out in the vicinity of Foggia and our own base. Some of the men suffered minor injuries. S/Sgt. McGuagh, Engineer, was recommended for the DFC. The 765th destroyed its first enemy plane today when a ME 109 was shot down by S/Sgt. M. D. Williams of Crew #35. One ship landed with its nose wheel up and scraped the nose. Lt. Weem's hydraulic system was shot away and he was forced to run his plane off the taxi strip in order to stop it. One EM from duty to Field Hospital at Cerignola, Italy.

April 7. Mission #5 was flown to the Marshalling Yards at Ferrara, Italy. Take off was 1018 and all planes returned safe at approximately 1604. The group was escorted by P- 38 fighters. Three EM from duty to DS at 766th Bomb Squadron.

April 8. Crews were briefed for their sixth mission. The mission was called off because of bad weather. One EM released from assignment and transferred to the General Hospital at Bari. One Sgt was reduced to the grade of Private.

April 9. Crews were briefed for mission #6; the M/Y's at Zagreb, Yugoslavia. However bad weather forced the mission to be called off. Easter Sunrise Services were held by the Group Chaplain at 0600 in the Group Headquarters area. Lt. Sullivan, Lt. Milne, and Sgt. Marszalkiewicz were carried on the morning report as follows: "From MIA to dropped from the rolls."

April 10. Rain kept all planes grounded today. Combat crews were briefed at 2000 on "Escape Procedure" at Group Headquarters.

April 11. Crews were again briefed for their sixth mission. The weather closed in and the mission was called off.

April 12. The combat crews flew Mission #6 today. The target was the M/Y's at Zagreb, Yugoslavia. All planes returned safe at approximately 1500. Photos showed over 150 hits in the target area.

April 13. Mission #7 was flown to the ME-110 assembly plant at Budapest, Hungary. Take off time was approximately 0905 and all of our planes returned safe at approximately 1615. Three of our gunners shot down three enemy planes. Sgt. Earl Blalock, who was on DS with the 766th, was shot down with one of the 766th planes. He has been carried on the morning report as MIA. The following named officers were appointed Summary Courts Officers for the estates of men Missing in Action, in addition to their other duties: 2nd Lt. Rapp, 2nd Lt. Raymond, and 2nd Lt. Lightbody.

April 14. Crews were briefed for their eighth bombing mission. The weather closed in and the mission was called off.

April 15. Mission #8 was flown to the M/Y's at Bucharest, Romania. Take off time was 0826 and all of our ships returned at 1606. Due to bad weather over the target the bombardiers had to bomb on their ETA. One EM from duty to the Hospital at Cerignola, Italy.

April 16. Mission #9 was flown today. Take off time was 0720. Due to bad weather some of the planes returned at 1100. The target was Brasov, Romania. Because of bad weather over Brasov the secondary target, Belgrade, Yugoslavia was bombed. The rest of our planes returned at approximately 1315. Sgt. Blalock was carried on the morning report as: from missing in action to dropped from the rolls. Six enlisted men returned to duty from DS, AAB Hammer Field, California.

April 17. Crews were briefed for Mission #10. All the planes returned. The mission was not completed because of bad weather. The bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic Sea. 2nd Lt. Gold was released from his assignment to this Squadron and transferred to the 26th General Hospital at Bari.

April 18. There was no mission today.

April 19. No mission was flown today. One was proposed but was called off.

April 20. Mission #11 was flown today. The target was Ferrara M/Y's. Due to cloudiness over the target the group continued on to the secondary target, Taglimento/Casara, Italy and bombed it. Take off time was approximately 0958 and all ships returned safely at approximately 1600. Photograph showed the target was well hit by our bombardiers.

April 21. Crews were briefed for the 765th's combat mission #12. The target was Bucharest, Romania. Take off time was 0840. All planes returned safely at 1630. Due to bad weather the target could not be seen and the bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic Sea. Sgt. E. P. Ward, a tail gunner, shot down one ME 109.

April 22. No missions were flown today.

April 23. Today the Squadron flew Mission #13. Take off time was 1016. All planes returned safely at 1740. The target was Bad Veslau A/D, Austria. Photographs taken on the mission showed complete coverage of the target. One EM from DS at XII Fighter Command. One EM from duty to Hospital at Cerignola. Three of our gunners shot down three enemy planes.

April 24. The 14th mission was flown today to the M/Y's at Bucharest, Romania. Take off time was 0832. All but one of our planes returned safely. The missing ship was, "Big Stinky." The ship was crewed as follows:

1st Lt. F. D. Nixon (Pilot)  
2nd Lt. R. Lindgren (Co-Pilot)  
S/Sgt. J. W. Wick (Eng)  
2nd Lt. S. A. West (Bomb)  
2nd Lt. C. D. Spangler (Nav)  
Sgt. J. C. Brlansky (RO)  
Sgt. L. E. Slayton (AEG)  
Sgt. E. P. Ward (Tail Gnr.)  
Sgt. J. Householder (Gnr.)  
S/Sgt. C. M. Martin, Jr. (ARO)

The ship was last seen when it fell out over the target with #4 engine on fire. Sgt. Massie of Crew #39 shot down one ME 109. At 1900 the Enlisted Men's Service Club was opened. Music was supplied by the dance orchestra from the 456th Bomb Group. Major Applegate, Major Rainen, Lt. Amoroso, and Lt. Campo were guests at the opening.

April 29. Mission #15 was flown today. The target was the harbor at Toulon, France. Take off time was approximately 0735. All our ships returned at approximately 1510. They had a lot of trouble bombing the target because of German smoke screens.

April 30. The final mission for the month of April, #16, was flown today. The target was the M/Y's at Alessandria, Italy. Take off time was approximately 0830. All our planes returned safely at 1600.

After missing the first day of the month, we flew our first mission of the month on the second of May. The target was Parma, Italy, and adverse weather prevented all of the ships from hitting the target; however, the mission is not indicative of the work our Squadron did this month.



Our first good bombing started on the fifth of the month, when we plastered the Marshalling Yards at Ploesti, Romania. The target was heavily protected with AA guns and almost all of our ships had holes in them when they returned. The officers celebrated with a party in their club, and the music was supplied by a local GI band.

On the 8th of this month at approximately 0445, Ship #22 caught fire on the ground and blew up with nine hundred pound bombs on it. Fortunately all the men on the line had enough time to get out of the way, and no one was hurt. Parts of what was left of the ship were scattered around the field for a half a mile, and the hole left in the parking revetment was about fifteen feet deep. There wasn't a part of the ship left that was recognizable. One of the engines flew across the taxi strip and landed on a ship parked in another revetment. Part of the landing gear landed near the Control Tower almost a half a mile away.

On May the 10th after our bombers returned from a tough mission to Wiener Neustadt, Austria, a plane from the 767th blew a tire on landing and the pilot lost control, ending up in the field next to the runway, with two of the engines burning. Captain Nathan, our Squadron Flight Surgeon, with the aid of Captain Goree, C.S. of the 764th climbed inside the burning ship and got one of the crew members out who was pinned beneath the command deck.

No mission was flown the 21st of this month; however, we were all called down to the Group Theatre to hear a report of the Groups Standing. We were all very much pleased to find that the 461st Bombardment Group was first in the 15th Air Force, as shown by statistics of bomb hits within a thousand feet of the target. Colonel Glantzberg went on to say that all this would not be possible without the cooperation of all concerned. This Squadron has pledged to do everything possible to keep up the standing of the Group to this degree and will extend every effort to improve.

On the morning after the mission to Plembino, Italy, ship #21 failed to return. The ship's crew is as follows: 1st Lt. W. P. Bennett; 2nd Lt. W. W. Peterson; 2nd Lt. N. W. Owen; 2nd Lt. W. B. Barlett; S/Sgt. C. G. Boronso; T/Sgt. O. W. Barzeorf; S/Sgt. D. Frebulfor; S/Sgt. B. O. Ivy; S/Sgt. J. W. Evans; and S/Sgt. W. G. Warner. The ship was last seen about 20 miles off the coast of Italy, after it signaled that it was leaving the formation. Air and sea rescue workers tried for two days to find some trace of the missing ship but were unsuccessful.

This month we were able to send two crews for a well-deserved rest to the isle of Capri for a weeks rest, also 5 officers were sent to Bari for the same purpose.

On the last day of the month our mission was Ploesti, Romania. Take off time was around 0530, and all of our ships, except "Loading Lady" returned by 1400. The last time "Loading Lady" was seen, was 30 minutes after she had gone over the target. By this time she was in Yugoslavia, but was leaking gas badly. It appeared that she had been hit in one of her tanks, and didn't have a chance to make it back home. We can only hope that they are all safe. A list of the crew is as follows: 2nd Lt. Sanuel E. Norris; 2nd Lt. Edwin (NMI) Equman; 2nd Lt. Everett C. Kamps; 1st Lt.

Edmund F. Stefenson; S/Sgt. Arthur J. Bindrin; S/Sgt. Glen F. Kolpoin; S/Sgt. Jefferson K. Varroll, Jr.; S/Sgt. Bufort H. Cullor; S/Sgt. Joseph S. Curtin; S/Sgt. Harry F. Kandori.

During the month 20 combat missions were flown. 3 planes were lost in combat, and one was lost due to an explosion. 20 men are on our reports as missing in action. Captian Nathan, Sqd. Flight Surgeon, was recommended for the soldiers medal. 4 enemy aircraft were shot down by our gunners. 7 2nd Lt.'s were promoted to 1st Lt., and one Flight Officer to 2nd Lt. We had an average of 8.7 ships over the target per mission, and 12 missions which we participated in were scored Good, Excellent or Superior.

May 1. There was no mission today.

May 2. The first mission of the month of May was flown today. Severe weather prevented all of our ships from hitting the target. This was mission #17. All of our ships returned.

May 3. The crews were briefed for a mission today, however the mission was called off. The target was to be Ploesti, Romania.

May 4. The Group flew a practice mission today.

May 6. Mission #19 was flown today. The target was the Marshalling Yards at Ploesti, Romania. No flak or fighters were encountered on the trip. From observations and photos, the Bombardiers had a perfect bomb pattern.

May 11. All ships were kept on the ground today to prepare for the mission tomorrow.

May 15. No mission was flown today.

May 16. No combat mission was flown today.

The first mission of the month was flown on the 2nd of June and the target was the Marshalling Yards at Szolnok, Hungary. Nine of our bombers had their bombs on the target, from all reports this was a very good mission, and with a good bomb pattern. No flak or fighters were seen, and all of our ships returned safely. Captain Beck left us again to go to the General Hospital in Bari.

June the 5th, on the day that Rome was entered by the "Yanka", our crews were briefed to hit Borgo Val di Taro, Italy. All 10 of the ships made it over the target and back home. We didn't run into any flak; however, flak was seen around Bologna, and no E/A intercepted our ships. The target that the men were briefed for was missed, but the RR lines were blasted.

The second big day of this month was the 6th when our army and the British crossed the English Channel and secured a "Beach-Head". We all hope this will be the beginning of the end. Our bombers hit Ploesti, Roumania, and as usual the flak was heavy, accurate and intense, all nine of our ships made it over the target, and back to the base; however, Lt. Moss lost a Super

Charger over the target and had to draw 30 to 60 inches of mercury to keep up with the formation. They broke formation after they were well away from the target and decided to try and make Yugoslavia, after making it by throwing out all the guns and flak suits they decided to try and make it in. Contact was kept with the radio station at Foggia at all times. After landing on an airfield near Foggia, with a cup full of gasoline, they refueled and came on home.

June the 9th was the first time we have hit Germany. The target was Munich, and it is believed the Industrial part of the city was well hit. However, there was an undercast and the extent of damage is unknown. S/Sgt. Drezek, Lt. Moss's ball turret gunner had a probable on a ME-109. Major Robert E. Applegate was promoted to Lt. Colonel. 1st Lt. Mixson to Captain and Lt. Fulks to 1st Lt.

The 13th of every month has to come at the same time in every month and the month of June is no exception. So we will blame today's mission on that fact. The target was to be Munich, Germany again, and due to a little trouble in the navigation the boys found themselves all over the southern part of Europe – Switzerland included. On the way back Porto Marghera was bombed.

After 7 days of stand-downs we flew a mission to Trieste, Italy; however, the planes had to return to the base with their bombs due to weather conditions over the target.

On the 23rd the mission was to Giurgiu, Roumania. The flak was moderate, but one piece found its way to S/Sgt. Norris Krivitsky's turret, and his right eye was injured by broken glass. Sgt. Krivitsky was awarded the Purple Heart, the only one for the Squadron this month.

The toughest mission of the month was Korneuberg, Austria. Not only was the flak bad, but the sky was full of E/A. It was reported that Group lost one plane on this mission. S/Sgt. "Casey" Jones added a ME-109 to his credit. After playing a few burst on him the ME blew up in mid-air.

During the month of June 10 combat missions were flown, The large number of "Stand Downs" this month was not due to our ships being grounded, but the weather conditions in Southern Europe, and the Balkins was bad. We lost no planes, and none of our men are Missing in Action. A number of our men were able to go to Rest Camps, Capri, 49th Bomb Wing Rest Camp, etc. They were all very pleased with their visits, and it seems to have done them a lot of good. S/Sgt. Morris Krivitsky was awarded the Purple Heart, 1 E/A was shot out of the sky and one probable. Major Applegate was promoted to Lt. Colonel. We had an average of 8.5 ships over the target per mission, and 5 missions that we participated in were scored Good, Excellent or Superior.

June 2. The first mission of the month was flown today, and the target was the Marshalling Yards at Szolnok, Hungary. Nine of our bombers had their bombs on the target. From all reports this was a good mission, and the target was well covered. Captain Bock left us again to go to the 25th General Hospital in Bari.

June 3. No combat mission was flown today.

June 4. The mission today was to Orelle, France. Nine of our bombers had their bombs on target, and one had to jettison them at the I.P. There was no flak or fighters, and due to smoke at the target there were no observations, but it is believed the target was well hit.

June 5. On the same day that the allies entered Rome our bombers were briefed to hit Berge Vel De Toro, Italy. All 10 of them made it over the target and back home. We didn't run into any flak; however, flak was seen around Bologna, and no E/A intercepted our ships. The target that the men were briefed for was missed, but the RR lines were blasted.

June 6. Today the Invasion of Europe started, and our bombers hit Ploesti, Rumania. As usual the flak was heavy, accurate and intense. All ten of our ships made it over the target and back to the base safely; however, Lt. Moss lost a super charger over the target and had to draw 50 to 60 inches of mercury to keep up with the formation. They broke formation after they were well away from the target and decided to try and make Yugoslavia; after making it by throwing out all the guns and flak suits they decided to try and make it on in. Contact was kept with the radio station at Foggia throughout the flight. After making it to an airfield near Foggia they refueled and came on home. Fighters were encountered on this mission, but kept their distance.

June 7. The 41st mission was the viaduct at Antheor, France. Of the eight ships that took off only 6 of them made it over the target, the other two had to jettison their bombs and return early. A couple of the ships had flak holes; however, the flak was light and no fighters were seen. The results of this raid were fair but most of the bomb pattern was over the target.

June 8. No combat mission was flown today.

June 9. We hit Germany for the first time today. The target was Munich, and it is believed that the industrial part of the city was well hit. However there was an undercast and the extent of damage is unknown. One of the ships had to abort, and they hit a RR bridge on the way back to the base. At the bridge they were jumped by 3 ME-109's and Sgt. Drezek, the ball turret gunner, on Lt. Moss's crew got a probable on one of them. The last that was seen of the ME was smoking on the way to the ground.

June 10. The mission today was to the oil storage tanks, and refinery at Porto Marghera, Italy. From the photographs and observations we blew up quite a bit of oil today. We had eight bombers over the target, and the flak was light, also no fighters.

June 11. The crews were briefed this morning for Giurgiu, Rumania, making the 44th for the Group. The flak for this area was accurate and a few ME-109's were seen, however none of them made a pass at our bombers. Bombing today wasn't as good as usual, and we had one abortion.

June 12. No combat mission was flown today.

June 13. The intended target today was Munich, Germany, but something went wrong somewhere, and the boys found themselves all over the southern part of Europe – Switzerland included. There were so many abortions that they decided to come back, and on the way in they plastered Porto Marghera, Italy again.

June 14. The 46th mission was the gasoline refinery plants at Szony, Hungary. We had 11 ships take off and 11 over the target. All of our ships returned safely by 1430. The results of this mission were very good. Some flak was seen around the target area, but it didn't come near our ships.

June 22. Not much can be said for the mission today. The crews were briefed to hit Trieste, Italy, but when they arrived the target was 10/10 covered, so they had to return to the base with their bombs. This was the 47th mission for the Group and the first we have flown in 7 days. A little flak, but no fighters were encountered.

June 23. The mission today was to Giurgiu, Rumania and was the 48th for the Group. We had 9 ships over the target. The flak was moderate. Outside of this mishap all of our ships returned safely by 1630. By reports the target was well hit, and smoke was seen to 10,000 feet.

June 24. No combat mission was flown today.

June 25. The men were briefed to hit France again today, the target being Avignon, France. Nine of our ships took off, and we had nine over the target. The bomb pattern was good, but a little to the left. Not much flak, and no fighters were seen.

June 26. The target for today was Korneuburg, Austria. It was the 50th for the Group, and was one of the toughest missions on the month. Not only was the flak bad, but also the sky was full of E/A. We had eight ships over the target, but the bomb pattern was a little to the left. All of our crews returned safely, but it is reported that the Group lost one.

June 27. No combat mission was flown today.

June 28. The M/Y at Bucharest, Rumania was the target for today's mission, but due to a malfunction of the bomb rack in the lead ship, they dropped their bombs a little late. However, it was a nice bomb pattern right in the center of Bucharest. Ten of the 785th's bombers hit the city. The Jerry's got a little confused and threw their Ack-Ack a little low so our bombers weren't bothered too much by it. A few E/A were seen but kept their distance.

June 29. No combat mission was flown today.

June 30. The target today was the synthetic oil refinery at Blechhammer, Germany. The weather was bad above Lake Balaton and the ships returned to the base with their bombs. This makes the 52nd mission for the Group, and the 18th for the month of June.

The first mission of the month of July was flown on the 2nd of this month, and was to Budapest, Hungary. It was reported that there were large fires, and lots of smoke. Observations to damage of the target were unobserved. Lt. Arbuthnot had to jettison his bombs due to engine trouble, and on the way back he escorted another crippled ship. They ran into a flak field at low altitude; however, he was able to make it back to the base, and the ship had quite a few flak holes.

On the 5th of July the mission was to the Marshalling Yards at Beziers, France. It was one of the longest flights we have made, and 3 of the returning planes had to land at Corsica to refuel. The flak over the target was light and there were no fighters. Lt. Warner left the formation 30 minutes before the IF, and two other ships were early returns. Seven of our planes made it over the target, and really blasted it.

One of the best missions of the month as far as hits on the target is concerned was flown the 6th of this month, and was to Aviano, Italy. We had 48% of our bombs within 1,000 yds. from the center of the target. No flak or fighters were encountered on this mission.

One of the most discussed targets for the month was the synthetic oil refineries at Blechhammer, Germany, before it was flown on the seventh. As expected the flak was very heavy, and there were a lot of E/A to and from the target. The fighter coverage was very good, and all of our aircraft returned safely. They had to bomb through a smoke screen and the results didn't show up in the pictures, but it is believed that the target was well hit. Pfc Buffalo, and S/Sgt. Geo. M. Smith on Lt. Wasters crew got credit for a ME-109 apiece, and Sgt. Ness on Lt. Arbuthnots crew had a probable on a ME-109. Lt. Chester James was wounded by flak and was recommended for the Purple Heart.

July the eighth was a day for a big celebration for two of our men, 1st Lt. Thomas Moss, and S/Sgt. Peter Grozeh were the first to complete 50 combat missions in the 765th Bombardment Squadron.

The sixth mission on the 12th of July was to the Marshalling Yards at Nimes, France, and what seemed to be a "milk run" turned into a very rough one. Just before the ships made their run on the target, 8 to 12 ME-109's came out of nowhere into the front of the formation. Before the gunners could collect their wits 3 of the bombers from our Group were shot down, and the fourth flew into the water on the way back. Two of our ships were returning, and had us sweating for a while. Lt. Morse had to land at Corsica for gas, and Lt. Nestke had to land at Spinacola, Italy. Flak over the target was intense and accurate. The results were not too good and a lot of the aircraft returned with flak holes; however, some of the bombs were on the target and did quite a bit of damage. Lt. Amoroso and Rothberg were slightly injured by flak and will receive the "Purple Heart".

On the morning of the 15th of July we received word that Lt. Smit and crew, who were on a non operational flight, crashed on an Air Field near Rome, Italy, at approximately 2100 last night. All

of the particulars as to why the accident happened are not available but from reports that we received it seemed that he tried to "go around" after over-shooting the field, with an engine out. A list of the crew, who were all killed, is as follows: Lt's John M. Nee, Roy E. Johnson, Chester James, and S/Sgt. Manley. Mission 62 was flown today, and was to the oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania. Flak was reported light; however, Lt. Weems ship was hit and all of the crew had to bail out, approximately 10 minutes from the target. It was the crew's 48th mission, and it is sincerely hoped they all made a safe landing. A list of the crewmembers is as follows: 1st Lt. Weems, William M. Jr, 2nd Lt. Myllmain, Edward S., 2nd Lt. Rudder, Peter J., 2nd Lt. Moore, Orville S., S/Sgt. Stringer, Glenn S., S/Sgt. Mahuta, Eugene A., S/Sgt. Ryan, Timothy J. Sr., S/Sgt. Semore, Bonnie E., S/Sgt. Weaver, Arthur D., S/Sgt. Manuele Harry C. The results of this mission were reported good; however, they had to bomb through clouds. Smoke was seen 100 miles from the target.

The 18th of July on the mission to Friedrichshafen, Germany, Sgt. Antozak was slightly injured by flak and has been recommended for the Purple Heart.

On the 19th the target was Schleissheim, Germany. The flak for the area was intense, accurate and heavy. Lt. Abadi, Lt. Kahn's Bombardier was slightly injured in the leg by a piece of flak, and will receive the Purple Heart. No fighters were encountered. The bomb pattern was very good, but seemed to start a little short.

The 22nd of July was really filled with a lot of excitement. The mission today was to Ploesti, Rumania, and as usual the flak was very heavy. The oil refineries were the target for today, and some of the last sources of oil that Hitler has were well defended. In the lead ship we had a special crew made up of the men with just a few missions to go before completing their 50, also Colonel Glantzberg, and the Group Bombardier, and Navigator. At half way to the target this ship had to turn back, because two of the engines were out. One having been knocked out by flak, and the other, on the same side, had to be feathered also, the broken gas line was throwing gasoline above the engine and a shroud of fire was trailing well beyond the tail of the ship. Colonel Glantzberg gave the order for the crew to get ready to bail out, but due to the quick thinking of T/Sgt. Hotzel and T/Sgt. Bayfield the fuel line was plugged up with a 50 cal. Machine gun bullet, and the fire in the engine soon went out due to no gasoline. They were able to start the other engine, and made it back to the base. Due to the ability of Colonel Glantzberg, Lt. Specht and the two EM mentioned above all of the men on the crew will be able to hit at the enemy again. Lt. Simeroth the navigator, flying in the nose was slightly injured in the hand by flak and will receive the Purple Heart. Lt. Kahn and crew had to abort because his landing gear wouldn't stay up, and also his carburetors were inoperative. They hit a RR bridge and highway in Bulgaria. As for the results of this mission most of the ships toggled on the lead ship and their bombs fell a little short; however, a couple of the ships had their bombs on the target. Lt. Taylor and crew made it back to the base, but were unable to land because #4 engine was dead, windmilling with no oil, and his hydraulic system was shot out. Being unable to land, he headed the ship out and all of the crew bailed out near the 464th Group. F/O Smithkin bailed out all right but for some reason unknown to any man the chute failed to open until he was about 100 feet from the ground, and of course that was too late. Lt. Jack Gunn received a

broken ankle from the jump. S/Sgt. Daniels, and Lt. Kaufman are in the hospital with slight ankle and leg injuries. Another thing that happened today was a grass fire that got out of control and swept through the Bomb Dump. A lot of Frags and ammo exploded. The men of this Squadron were called to assist the fire fighters, and the fire was soon put out. The damage wasn't too bad.

The most costly day for the Squadron was the 25th. The men were briefed to hit the German Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria, and also that this would be a rough mission, with lots of flak and fighters. Without a doubt this was the blackest day for the Squadron. Of the six ships that made it to the target area, only one was able to make it back to our field, and one was able to land at Foggia. Lt. Foster was able to make Vis Island and bail out. The story that two returning crews told was that approximately 150 to 170 fighters jumped them just before they started over the target. Things happened so fast, and there was so many ships failing that the men had no time to watch other ships or much of anything else. They were too busy shooting at ME's and FW's. A list of the crews that failed to return today is as follows: 1st Lt. Fulks, Glenial, 2nd Lt. Ludium, Marion C., 1st Lt. First, Harry M., F/O Stewart, N. B., S/Sgt. Krivitsky, Morris, S/Sgt. Diamond, Geo., S/Sgt. Binartino, Louis, S/Sgt. Jaske, Walter E., S/Sgt. Duran, Fred C. Jr., S/Sgt. Godino, Peter S., 2nd Lt. Githens, Kenneth C., 2nd Lt. Gidez, Calvin D., 2nd Lt. Tarp, Roland F., 1st Lt. Patterson, ?????, S/Sgt. Peterson, Geo. C., S/Sgt. Esser, Geo., S/Sgt. Farr, H. J., S/Sgt. Morrison, Hermit C., S/Sgt. Wendte, D. S., S/Sgt. Sipple, C. B., 2nd Lt. Warren, Rbt. A., 2nd Lt. Schwinow, W. M., 2nd Lt. Enghroch, C. N., F/O Griton, D. N., S/Sgt. Wiseman, W. N., S/Sgt. Flaker, M. R., Cpl. Connan, R. M., Cpl. Myers, S. R., Cpl. Wilson, N. S., Sgt. Roznicek, R. T. The gunners on Lt. Arbuthnot's crew accounted for 10 destroyed, Lt. Cockrins gunners accounted for 7, and Lt. Fosters crew accounted for 4 destroyed. Quite a few men on these crews were hurt due to the bail out, flak, and fighter fire. The men who will receive Purple Hearts are as follows: Lt's Foster, Racek, Dennis, and Carter, Rodecker, Buffalo, Antcsar, Walsh, Navio, Smith, Gore, J. D. Lt. Jenkins made a nice landing at Foggia. His nose wheel was inoperative, and he was able to keep the nose off the ground until the ship had slowed down to about 20 MPH.

On the 28th of July our bombers hit Greece for the first time since we have been operating. The target was the M/Y at Phlorina. The results of this mission were very good.

After the mission to Budapest, Hungary all of our ships returned safely to the field; however, Lt. Mohan's engineer failed to transfer gas and they were forced to make a landing in a field about four miles from the Squadron. The plane just did stop in time before going over a steep embankment.

During the month of July 21 combat missions were flown. We lost seven ships. Four over the target, one bail out near the Sqd. Area, one bail out over the Island of Vis, and one forced landing. 19 officers and 24 enlisted men are "Missing in Action". 5 officers and one enlisted man were killed in a crash near home. One Flight Officer was killed parachuting from a disabled aircraft. The Purple Heart and two clusters were awarded this month, one posthumously to F/O Smithkins family. A number of our men were able to go to rest camps for periods of 5 to 7 days. 10 officers and 20 enlisted men were able to pay a visit to Rome. 28 E/A were destroyed, 10



damaged, and 3 probables by our gunners, with the men on Lt. Arbuthnot's crew high with 14 destroyed in a single day. Three 1st Lts were promoted to Captain. 31 2nd Lt. To 1st, and one F/O to 2nd Lt. We had an average of 6.2 ships over the target per mission. As a majority of the missions haven't been scored by Group yet, there is no breakdown on the results. However, of the five scored we have 2 Superior, 1 Excellent, 1 Fair and 1 Poor.

July 1. No combat mission was flown today.

July 2. Today's mission was the first for the month of July and was to Budapest, Hungary. The flak over the target wasn't as intense as it had been in the past, and only a few E/A were seen. The reports state that there were large fires, and a lot of smoke over the target so it must have been hit. Lt. Arbuthnot had to jettison his bombs due to engine trouble, and return to the base. On the way back he escorted a crippled ship and ran into a flak area at low altitude. The ship was badly shot up when they returned but no one was hurt. The mission was the 53rd for the Squadron. Promotions for enlisted men were posted today.

July 3. The 54th mission for the Squadron was flown to Bucharest, Roumania today. As the lead ship started the bomb run, they changed their mind and decided to go to an alternate. The other ships had their bomb bay doors open and were ready to drop their bombs when xxx xxx flares came from the lead ship. It was too late for them to do anything but drop their bombs, so most of the bombing today went unobserved. As far as our ships were concerned the flak wasn't too bad. One ship, from another Group was seen to go down.

July 4. No combat mission was flown today.

July 5. Today's mission makes the 55th for the Group, and was flown to the Marshalling Yards at Beziers, France. It was one of the longest flights we have made, and 3 of the ships had to land at Corsica to refuel. The flak over the target was very light and there were no fighters. Lt. Warner left the formation 30 minutes before the xx, and Lt. Jenkins and Huber were "Early Returns". Seven of our ships made it over the target and really Blasted it.

July 6. The mission today was Aviano, Italy. We had 80% hits on the target which is really good bombing. Eight of our ships made it over the target, and all returned safely by 1230. No flak or fighters were seen. This mission makes the 56th for the Squadron. Captain Foster left us today to go to the 26th General Hospital.

July 7. Mission number 57 was to the Blechhammer, Germany. As expected the flak was very heavy, and there were a lot of E/A to and from the target. The fighter coverage was very good, and all of our aircraft returned safely. They had to bomb through a smoke screen and the results didn't show up in the pictures, but it is believed that the target was well hit. We had seven ships over the target, and two abortions. Four of the ships had holes in them from flak and fighters. Pfc Edward Boffalo, and S/Sgt. George W. Smith, on Lt. Fosters crew, claimed a ME-110 apiece, and Sgt. Moss on Lt. Arbuthnots crew got credit for a probable on a FW-100.

July 8. The mission today was to Korneuburg, Austria, which is about seven miles from Vienna. From all reports the fighter pilots did a good job protecting our bombers. The flak today was accurate and intense and a couple of B-24s were seen to go down, but it is believed that all the men got out of them safely. Another was seen to blow up and it is doubtful than any of the crew got out. From photographs and reports the target was well blasted. Lt. Moss and S/Sgt. Prozob were the first of our organization to finish fifty missions.

July 9. No combat mission was flown today.

July 10. No combat mission was flown today.

July 11. The mission today was to Toulon, France. The target was the harbor, and this makes the 59th for the Squadron. We had seven ships over the target, and from all reports we did a good job; however, smoke from other bombings partially obscured the briefed target, and some of the bombs fell further in the harbor. Lt. Garrison had a salvo of bombs in the sea, and Lt. Smith had to abort, and land at Salerno. Flak was accurate and intense. Also, some of the boats in the harbor were throwing it up at us. Lt. Louis Grayner flying in the nose of the lead ship was hit by a piece of flak in the arm, and was awarded the "Purple Heart".

July 12. The 60th mission for the Group was the M/Y at Nimes, France. The mission was coming off fine until just this side of the target. The gunners were watching some ME-109's that were playing around high and to the rear, when all of a sudden 6 to 8 aircraft came into the front of the formation.

Before the men could collect their wits 3 of our aircraft were shot down, and the 4th flew into the water on the way back. Two of our ships were late returning, and had us sweating for a while. Lt. Morse had to land at Corsica for gas, and another crew had to land at Spinazola, Italy. At last all our crews returned safely. The results of the mission were not too good, with the bombs a little south of the target. Lt.

Amoroso, and Lt. Rothberg were slightly injured by flak and will receive the "Purple Heart". July 13. No combat mission was flown today.

July 14. Today's mission was the 61st for the Squadron and the target was the Oil Refineries at Petfurdo, Hungary. All seven of our ships made it over the target, and from all reports this was a very good mission, with approximately 70% of the bombs on the target. There was a little flak, and a few fighters were seen, but caused no trouble. All the aircraft returned safely.

July 15. We received word this morning that Lt. Smith and crew, who were on a non-operational flight, crashed on an airport in Italy at approximately 2100 last night. From reports received it seems that he tried to "Go around" after over shooting the field, with one engine out. A list of the crew, who were all killed, is as follows: Lt's. John H. Smith, Roy L. Johnson, and S/Sgt. Hanley. Mission #62 was flown today, and the target was the Oil Installations at Ploesti, Roumania. Flak was reported light, however, Lt. Weems ship was hit, and all of the crew had to

“bail out” approximately 10 minutes from the target. It was the crews 10th mission, and it is sincerely hoped that they all made a safe landing. A list of the crew is as follows: 1st Lt. Weems, William Z. Jr., 2nd Lt. Myllmaki, Edward E., 2nd Lt. DeRudder, Peter J., 2nd Lt. Moore, Orville S., T/Sgt. Stringer, Glenn E., S/Sgt. Mahuta, Eugene A., S/Sgt. Ryan, Timothy J. Jr., S/Sgt. Powers, Donnie E., S/Sgt. Weaver, Arthur D., S/Sgt. Samuels, Harry C. As for the mission itself they had to bomb through clouds, but from all reports the mission was a success. Smoke was seen 100 miles from the target.

July 16. Today’s mission was to the Aircraft Factory at Wiener Neudorf, Austria, and was the 63rd for the Squadron. An 8 to 9 tenths coverage over the target was reported, and the results were unobserved. The flak for this area was reported as intense, accurate, and heavy, and a few of our ships returned with flak holes.

July 17. No combat mission was flown today.

July 18. The 64th mission was flown to Friedrichshafen, Germany, and the target was an A/C Factory. Not much flak was encountered, however, it was accurate and heavy. All of the ships had a few holes when they returned. We had six ships over the target, and the results of this mission were fair. We had a few hits on the target, but most of them were over to the right. Sgt. Antczak was hit by a small piece of flak and was slightly wounded. He will receive the Purple Heart.

July 19. Mission 65 was to Schleissheim, Germany. The flak for this area was intense, accurate, and heavy. Lt. Abadi, Lt. Kahn’s bombardier, was slightly injured in the leg by a piece of flak, and will receive the “Purple Heart”. No fighters were encountered on this mission. The bomb pattern was pretty good, but seemed to start a little short. One B-24 was seen to go down, but it wasn’t from this Group.

July 20. No combat mission was flown today.

July 21. Today’s mission makes number 66, and was to Brux, Germany, or Czechoslovakia depending on what map you use. They had to bomb by PFF and it was believed that the target was hit.

July 22. The crews were briefed for Ploesti, Romania today, and as usual the flak was very heavy. The Romana Americana Oil Refinery was the target and being one of the last operative refineries in this area, all of the enemy’s guns were mashed on this target. In the lead ship today we had a special crew made up of the men who just had one or two to go before completing 50 missions. Also, Colonel Glantzberg, and the Group Bombardier, and Navigator. A half a minute from the target this ship had to turn back, because two of the engines were out. One having been knocked out by flak and the other, on the same side, had to be feathered also. The broken gas line was throwing gasoline above the engine and a stream of fire was trailing well beyond the tail of the ship. Colonel Glantzberg gave the order in preparation for the crew to bail out, but due to the quick thinking of T/Sgt. Hotsel and T/Sgt. Mayfield the fuel line was

plugged with a 50 cal. shell, and the fire in the engine soon went out due to no gasoline. They were able to start the other engine and make it on back to the base. Due to the ability of

Colonel Glantzberg, Lt. Specht and the two EM mentioned above all of these men are back to hit the enemy again. Lt. Simeroth, the Navigator flying in the nose turret, was slightly injured in the hand by flak and will receive the "Purple Heart". Lt. Kahn and crew had to abort because his landing gear wouldn't stay up, and also his carburetors were inoperative. They hit a RR and Highway in Bulgaria. As for the results of this mission: Most of the ships toggled on the lead ship and their bombs fell a little short. However, a couple of the ships had their bombs on the target. Lt. Taylor and crew made it back to the base, but were unable to land so headed the ship out and all crew bailed out near the 464th Group. F/O Franklin bailed out all right, but for some reason unknown to anyone his chute failed to open until he was 100 feet from the ground, and of course that was too late.

July 23. No combat mission was flown today.

July 24. The mission today was to Andrijevica, Yugoslavia, and the target was "Troop Concentrations". There was no flak or fighters seen on this mission and would have been a very successful one if all the ships had toggled on the lead ship. After making one pass at the target and not having things lined up to suit Captain Murphy, they went around again. This time things still weren't right, however, Lt. Abadi got his go, and the rest of the ships did the same. Their bombs were a little short and to the left. Captain Murphy then went around again and let his right at the center of the target. This makes the 68th mission for the Squadron.

July 25. The crews were briefed to hit the Herman Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria, and also that this would be a rough mission, with lots of flak and fighters. Without a doubt this was the BLACKEST DAY for the Squadron. Of the six ships that made it to the target area, only one was able to make it back to our field, and one was able to land at Foggia. Lt. Hester was able to make it to the Island of Vis and bail out. The story that the two returning crews told was that approximately 150 to 170 fighters jumped them just before they started over the target. Things happened so fast, and there are so many ships falling that the men had no time to watch other ships or much of anything else. They were busy shooting at E/A's. A list of crews that failed to return is as follows: List is unreadable. The rest of today is also unreadable.

July 26. No combat mission was flown today.

July 27. The 70th mission was to Pec, Yugoslavia. There was no flak or fighters; however, the 1st section dropped their bombs before the target. We had 5 ships over the target. F/O Richman was promoted to 2nd Lt. July 28. The target for today was a M/Y at Phlorina, Greece and makes the first time this Bomb Group has dropped their bombs on this country. The crews ran into no fighters or flak. It was reported that the bomb pattern was good. We had five ships over the target and one ship had to jettison their bombs. All of our ships returned safely. The target makes the 71st for the Group.

July 29. No combat mission was flown today.

July 30. The mission today was to Budapest, Hungary, and makes the 72nd for the Squadron. A few E/A were seen, but none of them made a pass at our formation. The flak was moderate and inaccurate. From reports there was a good bomb pattern but seemed to be to the right of the target.

July 31. The 73rd and last mission for the month was to Bucharest, Romania, and the target was oil refineries. The flak for this area was intense, but inaccurate. The reports for the mission were good, with a lot of hits on the target.

In August, the 765th Bombardment Squadron participated in 20 combat missions, during which 120 squadron airplanes succeeded in reaching the targets to drop 260 tons of explosives on enemy installations. France, Hungary and Italy each were attacked four times; Rumania was the target for our bombs on three occasions; both Germany and Austria were visited twice; and one mission was flown to Yugoslavia. The outstanding aerial activity for the month was the softening up of the southern coast of France preparatory to the Allied invasion of that region and on "D" day giving tactical aid to the landing forces. Other noteworthy sorties were flown to Avignon, France, where devastating bombing accuracy destroyed a railroad bridge; to Vienna, Austria at which target direct hits on an underground oil storage depot were scored; and to Blechhammer, Germany to aid in the complete demolition of the synthetic oil refinery there. On August 17th, the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania were bombed, an attack which later proved to be that last one any group ever will have to make on that strategic and feared objective. On other days, formations attacked communications, supply, and transportation centers in Italy, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Five enemy aircraft were shot down by squadron gunners in August. On "stand down" days, training flights were scheduled with special emphasis placed on the newly- developed techniques of radar bombing.

One crew was MIA as a result of the month's operations. Lt. Schweisberger was forced to abort from the formation en route to Friedrichshafen, Germany on August 3rd and never has been seen or heard from since. Lt. Johnson's crew gave the squadron quite a scare when the explosion of an airplane in his flight severely damaged his ship, forcing him to leave the formation and land just south of the battle lines in Italy. It was two days later that word of his safe landing reached the squadron. During the interim everyone had given the men up for lost. The month was heralded out with great news, as on the evening of the last day a message stating he and his men to be safe in Bari. They were released from prison camp when the Hungarians surrendered.

Two airplanes were lost in action and two others classified as unserviceable during the month. Seven new airplanes flew their first mission in August.

The strength of the ground crew enlisted men showed a slight decrease for the month. Although eight men joined the organization, two others were transferred out of the squadron and eight men from the line were selected to return to the United States for B-29 Superfortress

training. Lt. Norris, who was MIA over Yugoslavia and rescued by the partisans, returned to the squadron and was assigned duty as Assistant Intelligence Officer. Later in the month, Lt. Monio, another S-5 Officer, joined the organization.

The excellent combat records of Captain Murphy and Captain Dusenberry won recognition in August in the form of the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross. Lt. Johnson, Sgts. Daynovsky and Hager, and Cpls Priest and Tukey merited the Purple Heart. Most of the new crew members earned the Air Medal.

A large number of men were able to rest war-torn nerves during August. Twenty-one officers and forty enlisted men relaxed for a week at Capri, San Spirito, de Villagio Mancuso. Thirteen other officers and thirty-eight other enlisted men spent three full days in historic Rome. F/Sgt Pagg lived for a week with the 5th Army on the front lines near Florence.

Three enlisted men “went over the hill” in August. All returned to face the consequences of their offenses. Three other men, involved in the theft of valuables and equipment from tents of MIA crews, departed for a four-month confinement in the 15th Air Force Stockade in Bari.

Eighteen men were hospital patients in August. Of this total, two were aircrew men wounded in action and three were malaria victims, the first in the squadron. Two cases of venereal disease were reported and both were successfully treated and cured.

The usual amount of entertainment and recreation existed for the men. Movies were shown every other night, projector permitting. The Enlisted Men’s Club and “Club Amazon” functioned on other evenings. One night the Red Cross girls handed out coffee and doughnuts in the squadron area and chatted with the men. A squadron birthday party, commemorating its first year of existence, was held on August 11th; and, later in the month, an all-negro orchestra provided music for a celebration in the Officer’s Club. A squadron baseball team was organized and during the month accumulated an enviable record of wins against neighboring organizations.

The first group war bond raffle was held on August 11th with thirty-nine bonds and one cash prize going to the lucky ticket holders. Only four of the forty winners were members of the 765th Bombardment Squadron.

The month of August marked the first anniversary of the activation of the 461st Bombardment Group. The squadron looked back on a year of assembling men and equipment, training both the air and ground echelons, molding the unit into a well-knit organization, preparing for overseas movement, leaving the United States for foreign soil, arriving in Italy, and finally actual combat with the enemy. The men looked ahead to the squadron’s second year of operation with the hope that its outstanding achievement would be the utter destruction of tyranny and aggression and the creation of a lasting peace. As the German resistance began to crumble, there seemed to be a good possibility that all would celebrate the second anniversary of the group at home with their families.

August 1. No combat mission was flown today.

August 2. Today's mission was to Avignon, France; the target – a railroad bridge; results – excellent. The formation was lead by 1st Lt. Taylor, six of our planes, each carrying nine 500 pound bombs, participated. The aircraft took off between 0845 and 0915. The flying time was approximately 8 hours. Crew 34 was forced to abort at I.P. when Lt. Landry, the navigator, crawled out to see why the bomb bay doors failed to open, and passed out from lack of oxygen. Three enlisted men, gunners, joined the Squadron today.

August 3. Captain Specht led the Group on an attack on the chemical works at Ober Hadorach, Germany. Seven of our planes took off; but aircraft number 63, piloted by 2nd Lt. Schweisberger, had to return because a supercharger was on fire, and was last seen just south of the Alps. A list of the crew is as follows: 2nd Lt's Schweisberger, Guy, Koester, Nolan. S/Sgt. Haag – Sgt's Durning, Frye, Tidd. Cpl's Furfare and Huhn.

August 4. No combat mission was flown today. Four of the Red Cross girls were at the Squadron tonight to give the boys some coffee and doughnuts.

August 6. The planes took off at approximately 0745 for an attack on the marshalling yards at Miramas, France. Two ships aborted, one because of an engine malfunction and the other because of a faulty oxygen system. The remaining 5 ships did an excellent job, laying a concentrated bomb pattern that blanketed the objective.

August 7. The 77th mission for the Squadron was to the Synthetic Oil Refineries at Blechhammer, Germany. Take off time was approximately 0700, and our Squadron had six ships over the target. The flak was intense, and heavy, but was inaccurate. The bombing was done by PFF, and the results weren't recorded by camera; however, it is believed that the target was well blasted. Several columns of black smoke were seen. All of our ships returned safely at 1500. Seven of our officers and 20 enlisted men were able to go to Rome, Italy for a three day visit.

August 8. No combat mission was flown today.

August 9. The Almasfuzito Oil Refinery in Hungary was the 78th mission for the Group. The flak for this area was light, inaccurate, and heavy, and no fighters were seen. The target was well blasted, and the bomb pattern was very good. Black smoke was seen to 15000 feet and large fires and explosions were also reported. We had seven ships from the Squadron over the target and all returned safely by 1400. Lt. Novak, having finished 50 combat missions, left for Personnel Center xx today.

August 10. Our ships took off for Ploesti, Rumania at approximately 0520, and nine of our aircraft had their bombs on the target. Bombing was done by PFF, due to the heavy smoke from previous bombings, and smoke screens. Of course the actual bomb hits weren't recorded, but

from all reports they were headed in the right direction. One of the ships had to jettison their bombs because of a malfunction of the bomb bay doors. Ship 34 had its gas tanks shot up, and two of the men were injured. Cpl. C. S. Prient and S.M. Tukey were the men injured. Two ships were seen to go down over the target, but they weren't from the 461st Bomb Group. Lt. Kahn had his rudder controls, elevator control, and right aileron shot out by the flak, also there was a large hole in his main gas tank. T/Sgt. Harry Lightstone did a remarkable job of repairing the control cables. He was doing all this work at 20000 feet in the bomb bay without oxygen. The crew was about to bail out, but with the repaired cables and the C-1, Lt. Kahn was able to nurse the ship back to the base, and made a beautiful landing with the C-1, and shot up cables.

August 11. No combat mission was flown today. Nine officers and x EM relieved from duty and transferred to Personnel Center #6. These men have completed "50" combat missions. The following 2nd Lt's were promoted to 1st: Abidi-Cessna-Grabenstein-Haggerty-Jenkins-Pasiuk-Schear-Green- Hasenkampf-Humburg. Today marked the first anniversary of the activation of the 765th Bombardment Squadron and was celebrated by the officers and men with parties at their clubs.

August 12. Mission #80 was to Genoa, Italy, and the target was coastal installations of gun batteries. The flak for this area was very accurate, and one ship must have received a direct hit in the bomb bay because it blew up over the target. During the excitement, Lt. Johnson and crew just disappeared from the air, and we have no account as to their whereabouts. The results were not so good.

August 13. On this date, our aircraft bombed the gun emplacements at Genoa, Italy for the second consecutive day. Seven ships participated in the mission; and, although it is impossible to state for sure, it is believed that one of the flights succeeded in obtaining direct hits on the target. Flak was encountered over the target, both from land batteries and from ships in the harbor; however no one was hit.

August 14. Eight aircraft flew on mission #82, which was aimed at the destruction of gun emplacements at St. Raphael on the southern France "Invasion" coast. The 1230 take-off on this date was the latest yet for a combat mission, and our ships did not arrive back at the base until 1000. Slight opposition was not, and returning crews claimed that bombs hit the briefed objective. We received news today that Lt. Johnson and crew are all safe and sound and are on their way back to the Squadron. They landed behind the lines in Northern Italy. Lt. Johnson had a slight head wound.

August 15. Today we paved the way for the landing in southern France of our troops. The target was the beach between Toulon and Nice. Two ships had to bring their bombs back, because of a rack malfunction. But the rest of the aircraft had their bombs right on the money. No flak or enemy aircraft were encountered.

August 16. No combat mission was flown today.



August 17. Mission #84 was flown to an oil refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. Nine aircraft from the Squadron took off on schedule, but two of them were forced to abort from the formation. The rest of them went on to the target, where they succeeded in obtaining direct hits upon the objective. AA fire was both intense and accurate and several ships were moderately damaged. All personnel were unharmed. Five officers and two EM having completed their 50 missions, left for the States.

August 18. Mission #85 was flown today, and the seven aircraft that participated encountered no opposition, but our bombs really plastered the target, an airdrome situated at Alibunar, Yugoslavia. Three new aircrews joined our Squadron: Lt's Baker, Beatty and Chalmers are the First Pilots.

August 19. No combat mission was flown today.

August 20. Today's mission was flown to an enemy airdrome at Szolnok, Hungary. Seven of our ships participated in the raid, and all report that the target was well covered with bomb hits.

August 21. No combat mission was flown today.

August 22. Today's mission to an underground oil storage depot near Vienna was a rough one. Seven Squadron aircraft each dropped four 1000 pounders on the target with excellent results. We were lucky that all our men returned safely as enemy fighters took a large toll of B-24's.

August 23. Seven Squadron aircraft flew mission #88 to drop their frags on Markersdorf Airdrome in Austria. Lots of flak and fighters greeted them at the target, but we escaped without loss. Captains Ben S. Murphy, and Robert K. Dusenberry were awarded the D.F.C.

August 24. Today's mission was to Ferrara, Italy, and the target was a R/R bridge. There was a little flak, but no fighters were encountered. The bombs fell a little off, and only the approaches were hit.

August 25. No combat mission was flown today.

August 26. Seven Squadron aircraft went off on mission #90 to aid our day old allies, the Rumanians, by bombing a German airfield just outside of Bucharest. No opposition was encountered.

August 27. Today's mission was a milk run to a railroad viaduct in northern Italy near the Yugoslavian border. Our boys really focused their sights on the target and the viaduct is a mass of wreckage. No opposition was met.

August 28. Mission #92 had for its target a vital enemy bridge at Szalnok, Hungary, and once again the fliers returned to tell of good results. Enemy resistance was negligible.

August 29. The target for today was a marshalling yard at Szeged, Hungary. Seven Squadron airplanes dropped 22,000 tons of explosives on the objective adding materially to the German's overwhelming supply and transportation problem. All the planes returned safely.

August 30. No combat mission was flown today.

August 31. No combat mission was flown today. We were informed today that all the members of Lt. Weems crew are safe. And are here in Italy. They were released after the Russians and Rumanians decided to fight together instead of against each other.

During the month of September, the 765th Bombardment Squadron flew on seven bombing missions, during which forty squadron airplanes dropped a total of ninety-five tons of explosives on enemy installations. On one of the sorties, the target area was covered by such a complete overcast that the bombs were brought back to the base. Four of the objectives were situated in Yugoslavia; two were in the Athens, Greece vicinity; and the other was located in northern Italy. The flights to the Balkans were aimed to block the escape of the German armies beleaguered there. The outstanding function of the organization for the month was the delivery of gasoline and bombs to American troops fighting in France. Seven of these transport missions were flown to Lyons. On numerous occasions, several of the aircraft were forced to remain in France overnight. September marked the one hundredth combat flight of the squadron. Counting the supply sorties, the total number of missions reached the one hundred and seven mark. Adverse weather was primarily responsible for the fifteen stand-downs that occurred during the month. Training flight and practice missions were scheduled on those days.

No men are missing in action as a result of the month's aerial activities. Not a serious injury was suffered, although several gunners were slightly but painfully wounded by anti-aircraft fire.

Two new combat crews augmented the roster of flying personnel in September. Fifteen flying officers and thirty aerial gunners, having completed their tour of duty in this theater, departed for the United States on a permanent change of station.

Three new Liberators were assigned to the squadron during the month. The fourth airplane numbered "22" was lost when it caught fire at Lyons, France. The more superstitious members of the organization do not advocate giving this "jinxed" number to any more ships. Old "Invistus", one of the original combat airplanes of the squadron, was returned from the sub-depot and declared in commission for non-combat flights only.

A great many changes occurred in the air echelon personnel of the squadron. Heading the list was the transfer of Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Robert E. Applegate, to the 451st Bomb Group. Major Francis J. Hoermann assumed the duties of commanding officer. Captain Arbuthnot stepped up into the position of Squadron Operations Officer, and Lt. Gray, one of the newer pilots, was selected as his assistant. Captain Murphy was transferred to Group Headquarters to fill the vacancy left by the return of group bombardier, Major Leffler, to the United States. Lt. Malita became squadron bombardier. Lt. Prien, now a Captain, took over the

responsibilities of squadron navigator when Captain Dusenberry departed on a permanent change of station, but shortly thereafter he was placed on DS at Group Headquarters and Lt. Toth was chosen to pinch-hit for him. Similarly, the gains and losses of ground echelon men were above average for the thirty-day period. Lt. Hume, cryptographic officer on DS to group ever since the arrival of the squadron in Italy in February, officially was transferred there. One instrument mechanic, three armorers, one electrician, one technical inspector, two cooks, and seven general duty soldiers joined the organization. On the other side of the ledger, three men were lost to the detachment of patients; two on DS to Group Headquarters were transferred there; one man was sent to Wing; and four others reassigned to different organizations within the group.

For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight, Major Hoermann, Captain Arbuthnot, Captain Prien, Lt. Kahn, and T/Sgt. Gore were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Lt's Childrey, Calavito, Gourtz, and Moss, T/Sgts Hetzel and Mayfield, and S/Sgt. Martin, all of whom had returned to the United States, also came out with orders for this coveted medal. Captain Specht became the first member of the squadron to be awarded the First Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross. Captain Baker and Sgt. Liebhart received the Purple Heart for injuries sustained while on flight against the enemy. Numerous Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters were earned. Twenty-one ground echelon enlisted men were recommended for the Bronze Star.

Many new bars and stripes made their appearance during the month. Lts Johnson, Phillips, Baker, Sinai, and Prien became wearers of "railroad tracks"; eighteen 2nd Lts changed the color of their collar insignia from gold to silver; F/O Barnes was commissioned, two S/Sgts made "tech"; six buck Sgts became first three graders; twenty-four Cpls. Added another stripe; six Pfcs. Became "non-coms"; and five Pvts. Were given their first chevron. Six men lost their ratings during September, three for taking an ambulance on a pleasure jaunt, one for being caught "off-limits", another for inattentiveness while on guard at the main gate, and one air crew man was "busted" when he requested and was given ground duty.

The rest camp quota for the squadron continued throughout the month. Twelve officers and eighteen aerial gunners received the opportunity to spend a week on the Isle of Capri. Thirteen ground echelon enlisted men, most of whom worked on the line, were given a seven day change of scenery at San Spirito. Twelve officers and forty-three enlisted men flew to Rome to spend three days in the Italian capital.

There was only one case of AWOL during the month. The guilty soldier was court martialed and sentenced to four months of hard labor; but, when the time came for him to depart for the 15th Air Force stockade, he was nowhere to be found. All MP stations have been given his description and informed to arrest him on sight.

On the 4th of September a practice air raid, gas alert and ground attack took place at 2100. The men had been organized into groups in advance and everyone knew precisely what he was suppose to do upon the sounding of the alarm. At 2200, the all-clear was sounded, and the practice maneuver was declared by the umpires to have been well carried out. On September

18th, the men were filed through the gas tent in order to test their gas masks. Defective chemical warfare equipment was repaired or replaced.

During the month, the tents both in the ground echelon and the aircrew areas were lined up into company streets. Almost immediately, a winterization program was commenced just in time, as the last few days of the month were stormy ones. Drainage trenches were dug in back of the row of tents.

There were other improvements made in the squadron area. A black and white striped gate was built across the entrance to the squadron and all unidentified vehicles are required to come to a stop before being permitted to pass through. A roof was made for the shower, which will permit its use through the winter. Plates were purchased from the squadron fund and are to be used in the enlisted men's mess hall as soon as a shed for washing them can be constructed.

Information concerning the Army Air Force Aid Society was posted on the bulletin board. Each enlisted man was expected to become a member for one year at a cost of one dollar, and every officer was expected to purchase a benefactor membership for five dollars. Captain Arbutnot, whose crew shot down fourteen enemy fighters during the Linz attack on July 26th, and M/Sgt. Genuardi, crew chief of "All American", the Liberator they were flying, were sent to Rome to make a radio transcription of a script concerning the remarkable achievement.

The entertainment for the men again consisted of movies. Several USO shows were presented on the stage of the group theater. Six motion pictures were shown in the squadron area, of which four were repeats. On five other evenings, scheduled pictures were cancelled because the projector had broken down.

The atmosphere of the squadron was unusual as the month neared its end. Everyone had on his mind a series of questions, the answers to which were all-important to the future welfare of the men of the organization. Would the organization be able to continue combat operations throughout the winter? Would the war with Germany end in 1944? The articles in the Stars and Stripes concerning the transfer of air power to the Pacific subsequent to the surrender of the Nazis had caused much talk and comment. Was this to be the fate of the squadron? Were plans being formulated to transform the group into a B-29 outfit? In other words, there was more than the usual concern about the future of the squadron. October might well contain many of the answers.

September 1. Seven squadron bombers returned for another try at the Ferrara railroad bridge in northern Italy. However, a severe overcast was encountered at the objective and only a few stray bombs hit the target.

September 2. In an effort to trap German divisions in the Balkans, squadron fliers bombed a railroad bridge in southeast Yugoslavia with excellent results. No enemy opposition was encountered.

September 3. On this date, mission #96 was flown, again with the main purpose of trapping the Nazis in the Balkans. The target was ferryboat slips in Yugoslavia and aerial photographs showed that the airmen of the squadron did a great job of pin-point bombing.

September 4. No combat mission was flown on this date. Lt. Johnson's crew departed Capri and their ground echelon enlisted men were sent to San Spirito for a week. At 2100, a practice air raid, gas alert, and ground defense against paratroopers was staged. The maneuver was declared to be a success by the umpires. Four of the enlisted men of Lt. Weems' crew returned to the squadron from prison camp in Rumania.

September 5. Mission #98 was flown to the Sava East Railroad Bridge in Yugoslavia, but the extreme overcast at the target made accurate bombing an impossibility so the explosives were brought back to the base. Lt. Kahn received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his splendid job of bringing back safely a severely crippled ship on the last Ploesti attack. Six general duty soldiers were assigned to the squadron.

September 6. A mission was flown to a target and this time the objective was unobscured enabling the fliers of the squadron to cover it with a good pattern of bomb hits. Lt. Liebhart was wounded in the leg by anti-aircraft fire.

September 7. No combat mission was flown on this date. Orders were received to equip all airplanes with luggage racks. Capt. John N. Specht became the first member of the organization to be awarded the First Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross. Capt. Arbuthnot was awarded the D.F.C. for the exception flying ability he evidenced on the Linz attack on July 25th.

September 8. No combat mission was flown on this date.

September 9. For the third consecutive day no combat mission was scheduled. Preparations were made to begin flying transport missions to France.

September 10. The squadron carried out its first mission as transport planes. Fuel and bombs were landed in Lyons, France. The operation was not a complete success, as a airplane caught on fire at Lyons just before take-off for the return trip. Several men were singed but fortunately no one was seriously injured. Two of the airplanes of the squadron remained in France overnight. For the first time in combat ground crew personnel went along on the mission. There was one armorer on each airplane to help tend the 300-pound bombs.

September 11. No combat mission was flown on this date.

September 12. The second shipment of gasoline was flown to Lyons, France. Ten ground crew chiefs were scheduled to spend ten days in Marseilles, France to maintain our airplanes that would land there to reload rather than all the way to Italy. However, this plan was cancelled at the last minute.

September 13. Another transport mission was flown to Lyons. Lt. Green was forced to land en route near Toulon because of adverse weather. On the return trip one airplane spent the night at Rome and one stayed over at Foggia. All the tents were moved net up along company streets. Capt. Arbuthnot and M/Sgt. Gouardi flew to Rome to make a radio transcription of a script written about the 14 German fighters shot down by Capt. Arbuthnot's crew flying Gouardi's "All American" during the Linz attack on July 25th. First

September 14. Another cargo flight was scheduled for this date, but it was called off during the night. Lt. Richman and Sgt. Gore left the squadron to return to the States, having flown their "50" against the enemy. Capt. Nathan, squadron surgeon, departed on DS to the 51st station hospital in Foggia to undertake a practical training course.

September 15. Five squadron airplanes delivered gasoline to American troops fighting in France. While taking off after his forced landing near Toulon, Lt. Green damaged the wing tips of his airplane. A ship was dispatched there to bring his plane a new part. Information as to the workings of the Army Air Force Aid Society was posted on the bulletin board. Colonel Applegate requested each enlisted man to become a member for one year at a cost of one dollar and stated his wish that every officer purchase a benefactor membership for five dollars.

September 16. Another transport mission was flown to Lyons. Nothing extraordinary happened and all those airplanes made it back.

September 17. More gasoline was delivered to France. This time three airplanes were forced to remain in Lyons overnight.

September 18. No combat mission was flown on this date. Major Hoermann assumed the duties of Squadron Commander preparatory to the departure of Colonel Applegate. Captain Arbuthnot became Operations Officer, and Lt. Gray was selected to be his assistant. Members of the ground echelon marched through the gas chamber to test the functionality of their gas masks. Faulty equipment was repaired or salvaged at once.

September 19. For the second day in a row there was a stand-down. Lt. Colonel Applegate left the squadron to assume new duties with the 451st Bomb Group.

September 20. Only training flights were flown on this date. The armorers spent a busy day replacing the ball turrets on most of the airplanes. Major Jena came down from the 49th Bomb Wing to take over the medical duties of the squadron in the absence of Captain Nathan.

September 21. Again only training flights were scheduled. Six officers and twenty-one enlisted men were sent to rest camp at Rome for three days. Sgt. Padgett of the communications department was placed on DS with the 6660th Signal School Co.

September 22. Four squadron airplanes delivered more gasoline to France. All the ships returned to the base before dark.

September 23. No combat mission was flown; only training flights were scheduled. Italian workmen began digging drainage trenches between the rows of tents in preparation for the forthcoming rainy season.

September 24. The squadron flew its first bombing mission since September 6th. The target was an enemy airdrome near Athens, Greece. An excellent pattern of hits was scored on the objective. The appearance of the squadron area was greatly improved by the removal of the embankment between the enlisted men's tent area and the headquarters buildings. A leveler was run over the ground until all lumps of dirt had been evened down.

September 25. A bombing mission was flown to the Athens area for the second consecutive day. This time the primary target was submarines in one of the four harbors. F-22's preceded the group as reconnaissance to spot the subs and direct the Liberators to their location. However no "pig boats" could be observed and the harbor facilities were attacked as an alternate. The results of the bombing were very poor. Lt. Presho's crew was scheduled to fly to Naples on route to Capri but bad weather forced them to postpone their departure until the following day. Three ground echelon enlisted men departed for a week of relaxation at San Spirito. Three medics were reduced to the grade of private for commandeering an ambulance for private use. Lt. Campo departed on DS to Bari to attend 15th AF Personal Equipment School. The winterizing of tents continued with many individuals building walls of tufa block to keep out the rain and wind. Another blanket was issued to each man.

September 26. No combat mission was flown on this date.

September 28. A double-header mission was originally scheduled for this date, but a stand-down was called at the last minute. The squadron aircraft had been divided into two attacking forces, each briefed to participate in the demolition of different targets.

September 29. The same double mission as was planned for the previous day was again scheduled and again called off at the last minute. Several truck loads of lumber were made available to the men for winterization purposes and a mad scramble to get the most and best boards resulted. Final touches were put on the roofing of the squadron shower.

September 30. For the third consecutive day, the double mission had to be cancelled because of the unflyable weather prevailing. Captain Phillips departed for a permanent change of station in the United States. Lt. Gray accidentally shot himself in the leg while riding his motorcycle and was taken to the hospital. Salaries for the month of September were paid. All enlisted men and officers who had not as yet joined the Army Air Force Aid Society passed directly from the payline to a desk where their membership was accepted. Two enlisted men turned over in a weapons carrier on the road to group but fortunately no one was seriously

injured. Lts Rothberg and Waggoner held a house warming in their new tufa block house. They seem to have started an epidemic as at least seven others are now under construction.

The weatherman definitely was on the side of the Axis during the month of October. Of the 27 missions scheduled during the 31-day period, only 8 were completed and on two of those alternate targets had to be attacked. Of the remainder, 11 were cancelled before take off; on four occasions bad weather forced the airplanes to return to the base before arriving at the target; and three times when the objective was reached a heavy overcast prevented the explosives from being released. On two days, the squadron divided its attacking force into two separate units briefed to bomb different targets. When flying was possible a maximum number of airplanes were sent into the sky, which accounts for the fact that 67 squadron airplanes dropped 128 tons of explosives on enemy installations during October.

Three of the targets were in Italy; Munich was bombed twice; Vienna and Linz were each visited once; and alternate targets in Hungary bore the brunt of two attacks. On the six days of scheduled stand downs, as many training flights and practice missions as possible were flown with particular emphasis placed on bombing and gunnery. Night navigation and take offs and landings were practiced on several occasions.

One crew is MIA from the month's aerial operations. On October 4th over Munich, Germany, Lt. Waggoner's ship was last seen peeling from the formation with one engine aflame. No word of the fate of his crew has as yet reached the squadron. Friday the thirteenth inflicted its grim curse upon Lt. King's crew. Just after take off, his airplane collided with another in his flight and crashed 10 miles south of the field. Lt. Chalmers' crew was given up as lost when they failed to return from the Munich raid of October 4th. But, having parachuted to safety over Yugoslavia, they were picked up by the partisans and a few days later returned to the organization.

Seven new combat crews and eight aerial gunners, transferred from the 8th Air Force in England, swelled the number of aircrews to 23, a new high. The enlisted men of Lt. Schweisberger's crew, MIA en route to Friedrichshafen, Germany on August 3rd, returned to the organization to await orders shipping them back to the United States. The men had made their way back through 70 miles of territory in northern Italy.

Five new silver Liberators were assigned to the squadron during October. One was the Tulsa American, a B-24 purchased from war bond subscriptions of the people of Tulsa, Oklahoma. One war-weary airplane was given the organization by the 767th to be stripped and used as a transport. Two battle-scarred ships returned from sub-depots where their wounds had been healed. One was the "Flying Finger", the airplane Capt Johnson had crashed landed in northern Italy, and the other was the "Upstairs Maid", an original combat ship of the squadron that had been badly damaged during the Linz attack of July 25th. On the other hand, three airplanes were lost on combat flights, including the famous "All American", one was transferred to the 764th Squadron, and one was sent to Gola for repair. Outside of the personnel gained from the arrival of the new crews, the shift in manpower was predominately negative. Capt. Arbuthnot, T/Sgt. Gore, and Pvt. Stettin were sent back to the United States on a permanent change of



station; Lt. Rothberg and T/Sgt. Fraser appeared before the Flying Evaluation Board, which terminated their combat flying in this theater and prepared to return them to the United States; Lt. Norris, having been questioned by the same board, was reclassified into a C-47 pilot; Cap. Specht finished his 50 missions and was placed on DS with the Flight Control Section of the 15th Air Force; S/Sgt. Price, Sgt. Tukey and Pvt. Miller were transferred to the 26th General Hospital in Bari; Capt. Prien became Group Navigator, and five of the men of Lt. Schweisberger's crew were sent home. Offsetting these losses somewhat were the transfer of photographer Van Norstrand back into the squadron; the assignment of S/Sgt Shaffer, a German-speaking radio operator; the assumption of command of the squadron by Lt. Col. Hardy; the assignment of Lt. Whitlock as Assistant Engineering Officer; and the return of Capt Mixson and Lt. Dietrick from rotation to the zone of the interior. Major Rainen returned from the hospital to resume his duties as Executive Officer.

For "extraordinary achievement in aerial flight", Capt. Johnson, Lt. Jenkins, and T/Sgt. Fraser were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Lts Weems, DeRudder, and Moore and T/Sgt. Stringer, all of whom had left for the United States, also came out on orders for this medal as did Lt. Schweisberger, a prisoner of the Germans. M/Sgts Larsen, Bryer, and Martinus, Rice, Gouardi and Chase and T/Sgt. Brown became the first members of the organization to receive the Bronze Star for extraordinary achievement in direct support of military operations. Eight purple hearts and one cluster to this medal were presented to wounded men. Numerous Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters were earned. A summary of awards and decorations to date showed that 27 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 2 Clusters to the D.F.C, 2 Soldiers Medals, and seven Bronze Stars had been earned by the members of the squadron.

The command of the 765th Bombardment Squadron was taken over by Lt. Col. Otha B. Hardy, Jr. on October 25th. He became the sixth squadron commander the organization has had. Major Hoermann reverted to his former duty as Operations Officer; Capt. Baker became Assistant Operations Officer; and Capt. Gray was designated Aerial Gunnery Officer.

A large-scale program of improving the squadron area was undertaken. Winterization of the tents continued. A garage for the repair of the squadron vehicles was near completion by the end of the month. Additions had been made to both the officer and enlisted men's mess kitchens. For the first time since arriving in Italy, the tents of the ground echelon enlisted men contained electric lights. Five men of the engineering department rigged up a power plant from a German motorcycle engine and a salvaged electric generator, and this Rube Goldberg contraption succeeded in furnishing enough power to light all the tents of the engineering department. Other departments made their own arrangements for obtaining electricity.

Olive drab clothing was issued by supply. Each man received two shirts, two trousers, and an overcoat. Also handed out were another blanket, the new type field jacket, a high neck slipover sweater, and additional set of woolen underwear, overshoes, and a folding shovel.

An extensive ground-training program was carried out during October. During the first of the month lectures on aircraft recognition were given combat crew personnel, and during the latter

days of October the men were taught to identify friendly and enemy aircraft by the Renshaw system of instruction. Each new crew was briefed on combat intelligence and escape procedure. Pfc. Hallisy spent two weeks at the 61st Station Hospital in Foggia receiving practical experience as a surgical technician. Lt. Campo attended the 15th Air Force Personal Equipment School. Cpl. Arai went to Cooks and Bakers School.

At 0900 on the morning of the first stand down of the week, an inspection of the area and personnel was made by one of the group staff officers. The men dressed in Class B uniform and stood at attention in front of their tent.

Twenty-one officers and fifty enlisted men were sent to the Isle of Capri or San Spirito during the month for a week of relaxation and change of scenery. One Rome trip was scheduled but after take off had to be postponed seven days in a row because the air field in Rome was closed to all traffic, the orders were cancelled.

Four men appeared before a court martial board. Pvt. Nevil, who had gone AWOL while on orders to be confined in the 15th Air Force Stockade for just that offense, stood trial again and was sentenced to an additional six months at hard labor. Three men charged with commandeering a government vehicle for private use were acquitted because of lack of evidence against them.

There was a decided improvement in the entertainment provided the men. The motion picture projector survived the entire month without a break down and sixteen pictures, of which five were repeats, appeared on the squadron screen. Broadcasts of World Series games helped pass otherwise monotonous evenings. One party was held in the Officers' Club with two Maltese and one American nurse providing the feminine charm and a jazz band from a neighboring bomb group furnishing the jive. Two stage shows were presented on the stage of the group theater. The Cerignola Music Hall offered several others. Orders were taken for a booklet of group pictures to be published around Christmas time.

By October 31st, the men of the squadron were reconciled to the fact that another long, wet, muddy, tedious winter was approaching. Yet, those who already had spent one winter in Italy knew that it would not be nearly as rough as last March and April. They could look back and remember when tent winterization was unheard of, when a man either fought to get wood to build himself a bed or slept on the ground, when straddle trenches served as latrines, when there was no mess hall and the men had to eat in the open in cold wind and rain that turned food cold before it could reach their mouth. The high spirit of optimism that had prevailed in mid-September had been all but lost. Illusions of a 1944 victory over the Nazis had been all but shattered. No longer were the men talking about the fate of the group following the fall of Germany; they felt there was a long fight ahead of them right at Torretta Field.

October 1. For the fourth consecutive day, the mission had to be cancelled. This time however the fliers almost got underway, as they had been briefed and were standing by their airplanes

when the order to stand down came through. A long promotion list was posted on the bulletin board.

October 2. The unflyable weather caused another stand down. In the evening, the engineering tent blew down and severely damaged the O-S1 parked in back of it. A roof was added to the enlisted men's latrine – an improvement that was really needed. Another blanket was issued to each man.

October 3. A mission was originally planned but cancelled just before take off. Clothing was issued to the enlisted men. Two pilots practiced after-dark take offs and landings to the flight of some night sorties. M/Sgt. King was designated acting First Sergeant. Lt. Crossman's crew joined the organization. Four aerial gunners from Lt. Schweisberger's crew that were MIA en route to Friedrichshafen, Germany on August 3rd, rejoined the squadron. The airplane that landed on a beach in northern Italy and the men had made their way back through 70 miles of enemy territory to reach the Allied Lines.

October 4. At long last, a double mission was carried out. Four squadron airplanes participated in an attack against marshalling yards at Munich, Germany with devastatingly accurate results, while eight other ships bombed a railroad bridge in northern Italy. One airplane aborted from the Munich mission and, of the remaining three, two failed to return. Lt. Chalmers, flying the "All American" was last seen coming back over the Alps; Lt. Waggoner, in airplane #39, was last seen peeling from the formation over the target with one engine aflame. Lt. Platt lectured to Lt. Crossman's crew on combat intelligence and emergency procedure. Overshoes were issued to the men of the engineering department. Field jacket sizes were taken by supply prior to the requisitioning of new type jackets.

October 9. Adverse flying weather caused another stand down to be scheduled. Lt. Col. Hawes conducted a personal inspection of the men and tents of the squadron. One of the two airplanes received by the squadron on October 8th bore the name "Tulsamerican". It was built from the receipts of funds from the bond sales to the people of Tulsa, Okla.

October 10. Seven squadron airplanes took off at 0745 to bomb a railroad junction at Castelgranco in northern Italy.

October 14. The black news of Friday the 13th was considerably lightened when news came in that both Lt. Summers and Lt. Louches had landed at Vis and were en route back to the base. The previous report on Lt. Summers' crew proved fictitious, proving once again the unreliability of many eyewitness stories. Five squadron airplanes with topped gasoline tanks took off for a long journey to the oil center of Blechhammer, Germany. However, adverse weather forced them to divert from the primary target and a railroad bridge at Bnarislatvia, Hungary was bombed with reported poor results. A search was made for the second man reported to have parachuted from Lt. King's airplane without success. Lt. Bloxom, returning from Vis, threw light on the mystery when he claimed that the second chute came down empty. In the evening a big party was held in the Officer's Club. Dress was formal. Two Maltese nurses and one American

nurse provided the feminine charm for the evening. An orchestra from a neighboring bomb group supplied the jive. Liquor was plentiful and the casualties from it were reported to be high.

October 15. No combat mission was scheduled on this date. Orientation training flights were flown by the three new crews. A new squadron duty was commenced. Each day one man from the overhead is to count the attendance at all three meals in the mess hall. The importance of this new task is evidenced by the fact that only the high-ranking non-coms have been selected to keep tally.

October 16. Mission #117 was flown to the Herman Goering Tank Works at Linz, Austria. And far different was it from the first visit made by the group to the target. The men were tense and ready for action as the target was approached, but not a single enemy fighter rose to challenge them and only moderate anti-aircraft fire covered the sky. Yes, unbelievable as it seemed, the second attack on Linz, Austria was a "milk run". The bombs were dropped through a formation of clouds and the results of the mission are unknown. Orders were accepted by the PX for a group booklet to be published around Christmas time. It will contain pictures of the group and a history of its achievements.

October 17. The target for this date was a Vienna oil refinery. As has happened frequently in the past few weeks, the objective was completely covered by an undercast and the airmen did not drop their bombs. One airplane dropped its explosives on the town of Alaszolnok in Hungary. The rest either jettisoned their bombs in the Adriatic or returned them to the base. Pvt. Miller, confined in the hospital for months with a seriously injured leg, was transferred from the organization.

October 18. Seven squadron airplanes took off early to attack a target in northern Hungary in advance of the Russian drive, but unfavorable weather caused them to return to the base shortly after they left the ground. Eight aerial gunners, who had 35 missions with the 8th Air Force to their credit, joined the squadron. Night navigation and landings were practiced for the second time. Aircraft recognition classes on the new types of American fighters, including the jet propelled planes, were commenced. Pvt. Sammy Ferraro, cook in the enlisted men's mess, traveled to Harletta to fill out necessary affidavits to wed an Italian girl. Three flying officers were promoted to first lieutenant.

October 19. No combat mission was scheduled for this date. Three squadron airplanes participated in an experimental flight. With a load of six 500-pound bombs, they were to attempt to reach an altitude of 30,000 feet. Confusion occurred though, and the flight never completed its function. Omitted from the squadron history has been the recent award of the Bronze Star to T/Sgt. Larson, line chief; M/Sgts Bryer and Martinas, flight chiefs, M/Sgt. Rice, crew chief of "Piecemaker", M/Sgt. Chase, armament head, and T/Sgt. Brown, ordnance chief. These were the first members of the squadron to be decorated with this medal. Lt. Jenkins earned the D.F.C. for his brilliant pilotage on the Linz attack. Assistant Operations Officer Gray donned bright new captain's bars.

October 20. Mission #119 was flown to an automotive parts factory at Milan, Italy. Squadron bombardiers scored near misses on the objective. No opposition was encountered. Capt. Johnson was awarded the D.F.C. for his brilliantly executed crash landing in northern Italy. S/Sgt. Fraser was cited for this medal because of the bravery he demonstrated by manning his guns and shooting down a German fighter after suffering a severe foot injury. Lt. DeRudder and T/Sgt. Stringer, long since departed for the U.S., received the same award for heroism over Ploesti, Rumania when they were forced to abandon ship. One officer and two enlisted men departed on a permanent change of station to the United States. Pvt. Nevil was brought to the squadron from the 15th Air Force stockade to stand before a court martial board – verdict: six months of hard labor in addition to the 4 months previously adjudged. Three enlisted men of the armament section appeared before the court charged with taking a government vehicle without proper authority. The presiding officer threw the papers out of the window, stating that there was no case against the men.

October 21. The mission for this date was to a little town in Hungary only a few miles from the Czech border. But bad weather caused the sortie to be cancelled before the airplanes left the ground. Further training in night flying took place. Capt. Johnson was appointed fire marshal for the squadron.

October 22. A mission was scheduled for this date but it was cancelled because of stormy weather. "The Flying Finger", airplane #21 that Johnson crashed landed in northern Italy, returned to the squadron. Another enlarging of the kitchen of the Officer's Club was commenced. S/Sgt. Shaffer joined the organization. He speaks the German language fluently and is to fly on combat missions and interpret the German radio broadcasts that are picked up. Capt. Specht was placed on DS with the 15th Air Force in Bari. He is going to be a member of the Flight Control Section. Captains' bars were in evidence on the shoulders of former lieutenants Sage, Malita, and Chalmers. The five men of Lt. Schweisberger's crew who had escaped from northern Italy departed en route to the United States.

October 23. The squadron participated in two separate missions on this date. Seven airplanes took off to bomb an aircraft assembly plant at Munich, Germany. Two of the Liberators aborted from the formation and returned early and the effectiveness of the rest could not be noted as there was a 10/10 coverage over the target and bombing was done by pathfinder. Four other ships headed for Milan, Italy but were forced to turn back because of weather.

October 24. The first stand down of the week occurred and consequently an inspection of personnel and tents was held at 0900. Lt. Col. Lawhon was the inspecting officer from Group. The first aircraft recognition class using the Renshaw course of instruction was held. Overshoes were issued to the men of the squadron who had not received them previously. Also handed out to each individual was a compact folding shovel. At 1915 trucks took the members of the squadron to the group theater to see a Red Cross stage show.

October 25. For the second consecutive day, no combat mission was scheduled. An aerial training program was carried out with many practice missions flown emphasizing bombing and gunnery. Lt. Col. Otha B. Hardy, Jr. was assigned to the organization as squadron commander. He is the sixth commanding officer that the outfit has had. Capt. Nathan returned from Bari with news of the fate of the men who had appeared before the Flying Evaluation Board. Lt. Rothberg and T/Sgt. Fraser are to return to the United States. Lt. Norris will become a C-47 pilot either in an ATC unit or a troop carrier command.

October 26. A mission was scheduled on this date but was cancelled one hour after early reveille when the rains came. The remaining gunner of Lt. Schweisberger's crew returned to the squadron from Bari. Plenty of entertainment was offered the men of the squadron. Some journeyed to Cerignola to see the 15th Air Force Service Command's "International Revue" on the stage of the Music Hall. At 1930 another 15th Air Force stage show was presented at the Group Theater.

October 27. At 0345 the reveille whistle resounded throughout the squadron area. By 0400 a stand down had been called and weary-eyed airmen and ground maintenance men returned to the sack to continue the sleep they had not fully awakened from. Lt. Whitlock was assigned to the squadron from the 764th, where he had been serving as assistant engineering officer.

October 28. Ten aircrews were briefed to bomb oil storage tanks at Regensburg, Germany, but the mission was cancelled before take off. Lt. Col. Hardy announced the following staff changes: Major Hoermann to be Operations Officer, Capt Baker to serve as assistant Operations Officer, and Capt. Gray to assume the duties of Aerial Gunnery Officer. Lt. Whitlock was assigned duty as assistant Engineering Officer.

October 29. Oil storage at Regensburg, Germany was again scheduled to be the target of squadron Liberators. Sunny sky over Torretta Field indicated that the attack units might succeed in reaching the objective this time. The weather over Regensburg was very different though and the bombers were forced to turn around and head for home at a point one hour from the oil storage tanks. The incendiary bombs were brought back to the base. Major Paine, cured of his yellow jaundice, returned to the squadron to resume his duties as Executive Officer. Capt. Mixson became the first of those sent home on rotation in July to return to the organization. Old #37, "The Upstairs Maid", one of the original combat ships of the organization returned to its hardstand on the line. It had been under repair since the Linz raid of the 25th of July when Lt. Jenkins' crew shot down seven Nazi fighters from its turrets and the ship crash landed at Foggia.

October 30. Two squadron aircraft were scheduled to bomb a gasoline depot in the Prague region of Czechoslovakia and nine others were to return to the Herman Goering plant in Linz, Austria, but bad weather caused the airplanes to remain on the ground.

October 31. Things happened slightly in reverse on this date. Instead of a stand down canceling a combat mission, a sortie against the Axis annulled a scheduled stand down. At 1000, group

operations called for 7 airplanes to take off at 1045 for a bombing attack against German troop concentrations in Yugoslavia near the Albanian border. However the fliers encountered bad weather as they reached the coast of Yugoslavia and had to return with their bombs. Pay formation was held in the afternoon. A summary of awards and decorations to date showed that the following medals had been received by members of the squadron: 27 D.F.C.'s 2 First Clusters to the D.F.C., two Soldier Medals; and 7 Bronze Stars. Lt. Dietrick returned to the organization from rotation to the U.S.

The month of November was one of the nicer months, as far as weather is concerned, and it was more or less in our favor for the bombing of the fortress Europe. Eighteen of the scheduled missions were accomplished. Twelve of these were single missions, and three were double target missions.

November 5 was a double mission. Seven of our aircraft struck at Vienna, Austria, and the target being oil supply, bombing by PFF. Two other aircraft hit Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, but because of the overcast were forced to return with their bombs. November 17 was also a twin mission, in which nine of our squadron Liberators attacked the oil center, Blechhammer, Germany. The results were unobserved but believed that explosions fell short of the target. Two other of our Liberators hit the oil refineries in Vienna, Austria. They bombed by PFF, and the effectiveness of the bombing could not be observed.

During November months operations we flew our first night mission and results could not be determined. Night navigation, and take offs and landings were practiced on several occasions. During the later part of the month the enemy had time to strengthen their defenses, because the weather was very poor and stand-downs prevailed.

One of the highlights that we are proud to place in this month's Squadron Historical Summary is the fact that on November 6 we had the pleasure of having among us General Twining, commanding general of the 15th Air Force. Aerial activity took second place that day. General Twining presented the group with its first War Department Citation for its outstanding bombardment attack on Ploesti, Romania that took place July 5, 1944. An Air Force band was on hand and the men passed in review before the General.

Two separate missions were flown again on this date. Our efforts and bombs that cause the destruction were aimed at the oil refineries in Vienna, Austria. Two out of the seven Liberators returned because of malfunction, but the other five broke through to the target. The results were unobserved because of the undercast. They reported that flak had been heavier than it had previously ever been. Four other Liberators headed for Bolzano, Italy, to attack power stations. Results were reported to be good, although cloud formations made accurate observations impossible.

Lt. Col. Hardy, our new commanding officer, spoke to the enlisted men on two separate occasions. The topics which were covered were Squadron Discipline, Saluting of Officers in town as well as in the area, Promotion Policy, the construction of a new Enlisted Men's Service

Club, and other projects to be commenced in the future. The winterization of tents is just about complete, and the men are approaching being closer to the comforts of home.

A big help to boost the men's morale was the receiving of Christmas packages. Xmas seemed to come early for the men, for they had packages galore and still coming in strong. PX rations were good, and the men were also able to purchase Christmas cards. Another aid for the morale was a couple of USO productions at the group theater. The picture shows at the squadron theater were also good and we went through the month without any malfunctions of the camera. The medics are having a tough break this month because several men have been taken ill with diphtheria and were sent to the 34th Field Hospital.

Something new was tried in combat this month. One pathfinder from the 765th along with one each of the other squadrons took off on a bombing mission to Klagenfurt, Germany. Several men left for home to make a transcription of a radio script to be broadcasted in the United States. It was to be part of the program to encourage people to subscribe to the 6th War Bond Drive.

This month brought several promotions to the squadron. Lts. Dietrich, Ecklund, Kelleher, Landry, McGrath, Turner, Wilson, and Woodruff donned new silver 1st Lt. Bars. 23 enlisted men were promoted to S/Sgt; 35 to Sgt; 11 to Cpl.; and 6 were awarded a chevron. The officers donned blouses for a party in their club. A band from the 43rd Service Group provided the entertainment. Lt. Cody returned to the squadron after a special course of instruction in the States qualifying him to assume the duties of Squadron Gunnery Officer. A B-24 L Liberator, the first of this type model assigned to the squadron joined our fleet of airplanes. The engineering department was notified that four of the squadron's planes were to be transferred to the Wing. The selected ships were worked upon immediately and put into the best possible condition. Lt. Norris who had been transferred to an ATC unit because of an injury in the leg did not permit him to fly a B-24 came out on orders for the D.F.C.

In a raid over Munich, Germany, Lt. Welton and his crew failed to return from the attack. He was last seen crossing the Alps. Sgt. Norcross, cured of yellow jaundice, was discharged from the hospital. Cpl. Pardue was badly burned when his truck caught on fire. He was sent to the hospital. 1st Lt. Tyson was assigned to the organization to assume the duties of supply officer. Capt. Baker is once again Operations Officer and Capt. Gray is his assistant. The serving of food in the enlisted men's mess hall was greatly improved and facilitated by the installation of a steam table beneath the pans of food on the serving line. This prevents the food from getting cold between the time it leaves the stoves in the kitchen and the moment it is placed in the mess kits of the men. Lights made their appearance at each end of the engineering department streets giving the area a metropolitan look. The men of the organization turned in their summer issues of clothing to the supply room. Each man was awarded or issued his War Department Citation ribbon and an additional 15th Air Force shoulder patch.

Eleven squadron planes loaded with fragmentation bombs took off to bomb Villafranco airdrome in northern Italy. It was the first non-PFF mission in many a day and the results of the



bombing could be clearly observed. F/O Laksar, who had been suspended from flying duty by the 15th AF Evaluation Board, was transferred from the squadron to an MP unit.

The activities of the 765th squadron came to pass, but the spirit of the men has been raised to a new high. Thanksgiving played a great role in building the morale of the men. Each and every one had something to be thankful for on that day, thankful that they were still alive, others because they completed their missions and were going home, but the hope that was in their hearts was that of an early victory. The Thanksgiving feast was one of the best that could be prepared under the existing conditions. There was plenty of turkey for everyone and the food was well prepared. Tablecloths garnished the tables and the men ate out of plates. A photographer was on hand and pictures were taken of the dinner. Most of the men were seen coming out with a bulging stomach. Now the celebration was over, plans for another mission were in the kettle over the fire, but the men were ready for they were beginning to feel the holiday spirit. These were the things the men were thankful for and the hopes they had on their first Thanksgiving overseas.

November 1. Seven squadron aircraft took off to bomb an ordinance depot in Vienna. One ship returned early with a landing gear malfunction. The rest went on to the target only to find it covered with clouds. Consequently confusion reigned, the ships became separated, and the bombs were dropped wherever the opportunity afforded. If any damage was caused it was purely coincidental. Lt. Bloxom went into a spin over the target, managed to pull out of it and dropped his bombs in the heart of Vienna. A lengthy promotion list appeared on the bulletin board. 23 promotions to S/Sgt; 35 to Sgt; 11 to Col. And 6 were awarded a chevron. Lts Dietrich, Echlund, Kelleher, Landry, McGrath, Turner, Wilson and Woodruff donned new silver 1st Lt. Bars. M/Sgts Genuardi and Larson left for Rome to make a transcription of a radio script to be broadcasted in the United States. It was to be part of the program to encourage people to subscribe to the 6th War Bond Drive.

November 2. No combat mission was scheduled on this date. Maj. Hoermann left the squadron to assume the command of the squadron in the 461st Bomb Group. Capt. Mixson took over the duties of Operations Officer of the organization. Capt. Sage, having completed 50 missions in this theater, departed for a permanent change of station to the United States. Lt. Hughes' crew joined the squadron. The orderly room moved into temporary quarters in the rooms back of the S-2 office.

November 3. Something new in combat was tried on this date. One pathfinder from the 765th along with one from each of the other squadrons took off on a bombing mission to Klagenfurt, Germany. Seven other crews participated in a training mission. The officers donned blouses for a party in their club. A band from the 43rd Service Group provided the entertainment.

November 4. The Fatherland itself was the target the bombing mission of this date. A marshalling yard at Augsburg, Germany was attacked by formations of Liberators led by pathfinder aircraft. The explosives were unleashed through a heavy overcast and the results

could not be ascertained. This mission marked the first use of delayed action bombs by the squadron. A generous quota of PX rations was sold to the men.

November 5. Two separate missions took place on this date. Seven squadron aircraft again set out to reduce Germany's diminishing oil supply by attacking Vienna, Austria. Bombing was done by pathfinder through a 10/10 undercast and results could not be observed. Two other Liberators from the organization were scheduled to visit a marshalling yard at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia but a complete coverage of clouds over the target forced them to return with their bombs.

November 6. Aerial activity took second place in the news of the squadron on this date. At 1100, General Twining, commanding general of the 15th Air Force, landed at the base in a shiny silver C-47 to present the group with its first War Department citation for its outstanding bombardment attack on Ploesti, Rumania on July 15th. The men passed in review before the general with the Air Force band. Two separate missions were flown on this date. The major effort was directed against a Vienna oil refinery. They bombed by PFF, but because of the undercast were unable to completely determine the results. Four other ships went to Bolzano, Italy to attack the power station there. Results were good. Lt. Cassna's crew departed for a week of relaxation on the Isle of Capri. Cpls Wilks and Shamshak and Pfc Jamail filled the San Spirito quote for the week. Sgt. Parlapiano returned from the 34th Field Hospital. "Col. Comrades" was showing on the screen.

November 7. Mission #130 was flown to a marshalling yard at Ali Pasin Most, Yugoslavia. Fair results were reported. A squadron detail was started and various departments must furnish a quota of men to work on a construction project to better the appearance and to improve living quarters. Lt. Toth was placed on DS with Group Headquarters. He is to assume the duty of Group Navigator because Capt. Prien who recently completed his 50th mission returned to the States. The greatest number of packages from home arrived and was distributed to the men.

November 8. A mission was originally schedule for this date, but was cancelled during the night. For the second straight day a record-breaking number of packages arrived. Christmas seems to be coming early to this squadron. "Ladies Courageous" was playing at the squadron theater. Pvts Kastenber and Netishen were released from confinement in the 15th AF stockade and returned to duty in this squadron. We were flashed that Franklin D. Roosevelt had been re-elected for another term as president of the United States.

November 9. A practice mission took place on this date. Emphasis was placed on formation flying and bombing, but the bombing phase of the flight was never accomplished. Lights made their appearance at each end of the engineering department streets giving the area quite a metropolitan look. Sgt. Lester Anderson entered the 34th Field Hospital. More packages from home and the men are beginning to feel the holiday spirit. Sgt. Tidd, remaining member of Lt. Schweisberger's crew, departed en route to the States.

November 10. A mission was scheduled but a stand down was called before take off. Lt. Cody returned to the squadron after a special course of instruction in the States qualifying to assume the duties of squadron Gunnery Officer and relieving Capt. Gray of this responsibility. "Marriage is a Private Affair" was shown on the squadron screen.

November 11. Two bombing missions were scheduled on this date. The one to Linz, Austria

November 14. Once again squadron fliers were briefed to attack a strategic enemy installation in Vienna, Austria and once again the adverse flying weather caused the flight to be cancelled before take off. A practice mission was flown in the afternoon. 1st Lt. Tyson was assigned to the organization to assume the duties of Supply Officer. Sgt. Shinn entered the 91st Station Hospital in Foggia. "Rosie The Riveter" shown on the screen.

November 16. The target for this date's mission was Munich, Germany. However something went wrong and the bombs were dropped nowhere near the objective. All seven ships returned safely.

November 20. Seven squadron planes took off to attack Blechhammer, Germany. The bombs were dropped with much accuracy and the crews claimed the target to be well hit. Later photographs confirmed these claims. Lt. Norris, who had been transferred another unit because his injured leg would not permit him to fly a B-24, came up on orders for the D.F.C. The engineering department was notified that four of the squadron's planes were to be transferred to Wing.

November 25. No combat mission was scheduled for this date. Concern was beginning to be felt for Lt. Hughes and the men of his crew. They were reported to have landed on the island of Vis while returning from a mission to Blechhammer, Germany on Nov. 20th. However, their continued failure to return to the squadron or contact it has cast suspicion on the accuracy of this information.

November 26. Stand down for today. Group operations contradicted the previous report concerning the whereabouts of Lt. Hughes and his crew, originally said to have landed on the Isle of Vis, later information places them in Yugoslavia. Cpl. Pardue was badly burned when his gas truck caught on fire. He was sent to the hospital. Cpl. Bradford also entered the hospital. Chances are being sold in the squadron to give a boost to the 6th War Loan drive. Generous Bond prices are to be given. The raffle will take place Saturday.

The weatherman was more or less on our side during the month of December. There were fifteen (15) of our scheduled missions that were accomplished successfully. Results brought back were few because of the haze over the targets at the time of the bombing, however, on clear days where observation could take place the results were accurate and good. Castelfranco was a target in the northern section of Italy which was bombed with extreme accuracy. The plot photos show that 65% of the bombs dropped were inside the target and therefore we had a score of excellent for this day's operation. There is another mission of which we can boast of

for the month, the target being Venzone Viaduct, also in the northern sector of Italy, where six of our ships carrying six, one-thousand pound bombs in each, were dropped on this particular target, and we received another score of excellent.

These bombings were done visually. We also had several missions on which the bombings were done by PFF, but because of adverse weather conditions, and cloud coverage, results were not observed.

Only one double mission was scheduled to be flown this month, targets being the marshalling yards at Ali Pasin Host, Yugoslavia and Innsbruck, Austria, but these were canceled because of adverse weather conditions.

Tragedy struck home for the members in the squadron this month. It was a mission that proved to be disastrous. The target was the oil refinery at Odertal, Germany on December 17. Seven aircraft took to the air from this squadron, one aborted and returned early, four others though were unaccounted for, and the other two returning safely, but severely damaged. From information gathered, our planes were struck by enemy aircraft that were encountered shortly before reaching the I.P., however, with determination one of our ships got through to the target. Latest information has it that our group had lost approximately ten ships for this day's operation. To our credit, the gunners claimed to have shot down three enemy aircraft and one probable. The planes of the squadron that are MIA were piloted by Lt. Ford, Lt. West, Lt. Crossman and Lt. Smith. Lt. Welton piloted the one that completed the mission, also going over the target, and Sgt. Anderson, Sgt. Rauworth and Sgt. Russell each claimed to have destroyed one enemy aircraft apiece.

Now out of the dark and into a bit of sunlight for a part of the better news of the squadron. Once again the group has done it. On December 3 the Commanding General of the 15th AF paid us another visit to give the group its second War Department Citation for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. After the presentation had been made the men passed in review before the general.

The morale boosters for the squadron this month were primarily the receiving of a super abundant amount of Christmas packages. Some of the men were a little disappointed though when Vienna sausage and cans of spam were to be found, but all of them laughed it off. Second on the morale list was the drawing of War Bonds. All of the men were satisfied and were very anxious to see if they would win a bond. So eager were the men on this drive that tickets are now being sold for a second bond drive. The cinema was the third booster for the motion picture fans. The pictures this month were good but the projector seemed to want to take a night off now and then which proved to be a detriment to the morale of the men. The fourth but not the least of the morale builders was a Christmas dinner. Like Thanksgiving, as for Christmas, we had everything from soup to nuts.

The good luck that the squadron had, has certainly dropped this month, ill fate was upon us once again, for several of the men in the squadron were sent to the hospital with capital symptoms of diphtheria.

Too many cases had broken out so some 15th AF medical officers were sent down to give the men a shick test, to discover the number of men that were immune to this sickness and those that weren't. After all the men had taken the test and were examined it was found that the far greater percentage of the men were immune to diphtheria than those who weren't. S/Sgt. Walter Lenjer, supervised all the clerical work in summarizing the results of the shick test during the hospitalization of the squadron surgeon.

So ends the squadron activities for the month of December. However it means more than just closing the month for it means closing out 1944. The men were dreaming of a white Christmas this year, but adverse conditions did not permit it to be so, but let us hope that the dreams and the wishes that the men are making this new years eve, will all be answered in this coming year of 1945.

December 1. The target for today was to have been the M/Y at Innsbruck, Austria, but it was called off because of the bad weather.

December 2. A big mission was scheduled for today, the target being the oil refineries at Blechhammer, Germany. Nine of the squadron's planes were provided for by this squadron. The results of the mission were unknown due to the haze over the target, however all planes returned safely. Lt. Summers was forced to land his plane at the Isle of Vis for fuel, he also being slightly injured by flak that came through the windshield of his ship. Sgt. Phillips and Pvt. Ferraro returned from the hospital today. Lt. Wilson was taken to the hospital today. Lt. Bock, S/Sgt. Millard, and Sgt. Baker left for the States after completing their missions. T/Sgt. Flaherty, S/Sgt. Mervec, and Cpl. Aspesite returned to the squadron after spending a few days in Rome where they made a recording on the Rome radio. "GI" shorts were the feature attraction at our squadron theater.

December 3. A double mission was scheduled for today. They took off but were called back for some unknown reason. The targets to have been struck were the Marshalling Yards at Ali Pasin Most, Yugoslavia, and the other was the Marshalling Yards at Innsbruck, Austria. On the latter target the crew never left the ground. The group was presented its second presidential citation by the Commanding General of the 15th AF, General Twining. After the presentation the men passed in review before the commanding general. Sickness still prevails in the squadron as yet. Three new combat crews from the States have just been assigned to the squadron

December 4. Stand down for today, however a number of practice missions were flown. "Melody Parade" was the feature attraction at the squadron theater.

December 5. A mission originally scheduled for today was canceled.

December 6. Mission #143 was flown today and the target was the Marshalling Yards at Maribor, Yugoslavia. Nine of our squadron planes took off for the target and all but one dropped their bombs on the target. Capt. Samuel B. Sinai, squadron adjutant, was relieved from his duties and further assigned to the x16th Investigating Detachment. No movie tonight as the same old story of a broken projector.

December 7. Target for today was the Marshalling Yards at Innsbruck, Austria. Bombing was done by PFF, and only one ship took to the air from each squadron. Our ship was forced to turn back because of engine trouble, jettisoned its bombs in the Adriatic before returning to the base. All personnel who were given the "shick test" on Dec 5 were examined today and a large number were found to be immune to diphtheria. Construction of a new squadron orderly building was started today.

December 8. No combat mission was flown today, but a number of crews went up to practice "formation" and drop a few practice bombs on Fianese Isle. The picture "Bombardier" was showing on the squadron screen.

December 10. Another mission was scheduled for today, but it was canceled. The crews were briefed and they took off, but returned because of bad weather. The target was to have been the synthetic oil plant at Brux, Czechoslovakia. The following men returned to duty from the hospital: S/Sgt. Shinn, Sgt. Stack, and Pfc. Gallup. The picture shown on the squadron screen was "Impatient Years" starring Joanne Arthur.

December 11. The target was a Goods Station at Vienna, Austria. Although the weather was clear bombs were dropped by PFF. Most of the bombs fell short of the target. Eight planes took off from this squadron, three returned early because of mechanical failures. The rest of the planes returned safely.

December 12. Another mission today, the target the oil refineries at Blechhammer, Germany. Bombs were dropped by PFF. Two planes took off from this squadron but neither one reached the briefed target. Plane #30 had a malfunction in the PFF equipment. On the return trip they bombed the marshalling yards at Gottendorf. Plane #xx returned early because of a leak in the fuel system, dropped their bombs on Ostrava, Czecho. After leaving the target he was intercepted by enemy fighters and his plane got badly shot up. Two of his gunners were injured in the encounter. They were Sgt. Xxx and Sgt. Lynn. They were taken to the hospital upon arrival. Pvt. Lee returned from the Hospital. "So's Your Uncle" was the feature picture showing on the squadron screen.

December 13. The mission originally scheduled for today was called off when the crews had gotten down the line. 1st Lt. Turner and Cpl. Yount returned from the hospital and reported to duty. S/Sgt. Tyree was taken to the hospital.

December 14. The mission originally scheduled for today was canceled. Construction has been started on an extension to the Officer's Club and Mess Hall. "Gambler's Choice" was shown on the squadron screen.

December 15. Mission #149 was flown today. The target was the M/Y at Linz, Germany. Eight planes took off from this squadron, and all planes returned safely except one. Plane #31 failed to return. Bombing was done by PFF through a heavy undercast so the results of the mission are unknown.

December 16. The target for today was an oil plant at Brux, Czecho. Bombing was done by PFF through a heavy undercast. The results were unobserved. No enemy aircraft encountered, but the flak was intense. "GI" Shorts were shown on the squadron screen.

December 17. The mission briefed for this day's operations proved disastrous for the squadron. The target was the oil refinery at Odertal, Germany. Seven of our aircraft took off, one aborted and returned early, four are unaccounted for, and two returned badly damaged. The planes that are missing were piloted by Lts. Ford, West, Crossman, and Smith. As far as is know those losses were due to enemy aircraft. Only one of our aircraft was able to reach the target which was piloted by Lt. Welton. Capt Chalmers had to jettison his bombs at the IP because of the extensive damage done to his ship. He returned to the base with a much battered ship and two wounded gunners aboard. Latest information has it that the group has lost ten (10) ships on this day's operation. Three enemy aircraft were destroyed by our gunners, and one probably destroyed.

December 18. Mission No. 153 was flown today. The target was the Blechhammer oil refinery, Germany. Five planes took off from this squadron and all returned safely except piloted by Lt. Yancy who was forced to land on Vis Isle for some unknown reason. Bombs were dropped through a heavy undercast. Enemy opposition was slight. Pvt. Green was taken to the hospital. Lt. Marshall and his crew who were lost on Dec. 13 were dropped from the rolls and carried as MIA. "Follow The Boys" was the feature showing at the squadron theater.

December 19. Another mission today and again it was against the oil refinery at Blechhammer, Germany. Three planes took off from this squadron but none reached the target because of bad weather. Bombs were dropped on unidentified targets. All three aircraft returned safely. More construction work has been started and it being a new orderly room being built just south of the S-2 and the Operations building.

December 20. Mission No. 154 was flown today. This time the target was an oil refinery at Brux, Germany. Two planes were scheduled to fly from this squadron but only one got into the air. This plane piloted by Lt. Presho did not get to the target because of bad weather dropping his bombs on Linz, Austria by PFF and then returned to the base. The crews of Lt. Crossman, Lt. West and Lt. Smith who were lost on Dec. 17 were dropped from the rolls today. "Casanova Brown" was showing on the squadron screen starring Gary Cooper.

December 21. A stand down was called and everyone was a little relieved as the squadron had been flying pretty steady for the past few days. Cpls. Bathurst and Whitecotton, and Pfc. Blaine returned from the hospital today.

December 22. A mission was scheduled for today, but was canceled before the planes got in the air. Lt. Col. Hardy was relieved of his duty as commanding officer of this squadron

December 26. Stand down for today. Pvt. Casanova returned from the hospital today. "Chip Off The Old Block" was shown on the squadron screen starring Donald O'Connor and Terry Lynn.

December 27. Mission No. 156 was flown today. The target was the Venzone Viaduct in northern Italy. Eight of our planes took off with six one thousand lb. bombs aboard. All planes returned safely, and although clear weather prevailed, the results were poor.

December 28. Another mission today and again the target was the Venzone Viaduct in northern Italy. Six planes took off from this squadron with six one thousand lb. bombs each. Bombing was done visually. Results were good. "Christmas Holiday" was showing on the squadron screen.

December 29. The target for the mission today was the main marshalling yards at Passau, Germany. Due to adverse weather conditions they were not able to reach the briefed target so they bombed the first alternate, which was a Locomotive Repair Shop at Castelfranco, Italy. Bomb photos show a good concentration of hits on the target. Word has just been received here that Lt. Marshall and Lt. Jarnagin, missing since Dec. 15, were safely in the hands of the partisans in Yugoslavia. The whereabouts of the rest of the crew is unknown.

December 30. Stand down for today. "GI Shorts" were showing on the squadron screen.

December 31. A mission was scheduled for today, but it was called off during the night. Capt. Jasper T. Jenkins was relieved from duty and was transferred to the 7th Replacement Depot.

1945 During January, the squadron did all in its power to supplement its previous destruction of vital German installations, but the weather proved itself too formidable a foe. On twenty-four days out of the month, the operations flight board contained a schedule for a planned mission against the Axis. Yet, on only seven occasions did the big Liberators take to the sky; and on one of these complete cloud coverage of the target forced them to return the bombs to the base. Of the six times that explosives were released over enemy territory, twice it was necessary to attack an alternate in lieu of the primary objective.

During the thirty-one day period, thirty-five squadron aircraft were over enemy targets to drop a total of sixty-two tons of bombs. Of the six objectives attacked, three were in Austria, two in Italy, and one in Yugoslavia. On the many days on which combat flying was impossible, training flights were scheduled whenever local weather conditions permitted. New crews were oriented with the terrain surrounding the field and were checked out on combat procedure.



January 20th was an ill-fated day for the squadron. Lt. Yancy's ship was seen to blow up over Linz, Austria and no men were observed parachuting from the stricken aircraft.

Also on that date, Lt. McMillen ran out of fuel while circling the field for a landing and crashed near the base. His navigator, F/O Tenner, suffered two broken legs and internal injuries, and several days later died at the 34th Field Hospital.

Seven new combat crews were assigned to the organization during January, swelling the total number of aerial teams to twenty-nine. Lt. Hughes' complete crew and part of Lt. Marshall's crew, dropped from the rolls as MIA, returned to the squadron from Yugoslavia. Five flying officers and eight aircrew enlisted men, having completed their tour of duty in this theater, began their journey to the zone of the interior.

Four new silver Liberators filled vacancies on squadron xxxxxxxx during the month. This more than compensated for the two airplanes lost on January 20th. In addition to the new combat crews, two officers and four enlisted men joined the squadron in January. Capt. Thackston came down from the 49th Bomb Wing to assume the duties of Assistant Operations Officer, and Lt. Williams augmented the list of "mickey operators". First Sergeant Seaton was assigned from Group Headquarters to take over the duties of number one enlisted man of the organization. Pvt. Bonaccorso, a truck driver, and Pvt. Maddaway, a clerk typist, also made their home with the 765th Bombardment Squadron. S/Sgt. Hines, a gunnery instructor, was transferred into the squadron and placed on Detached Service with Group Headquarters.

On the other side of the ledger, six injured aircrew members and the ailing ground echelon men were transferred to the detachment of Patients during the month. Capt. Pogue, squadron engineering officer, was placed on duty with Group Headquarters; and Lt. Blake, having completed his thirty-five missions, volunteered for service with the Mediterranean Air Transport Service. M/Sgt. Nyquist, squadron technical inspector, became the first man in the organization to be returned to the United States on rotation. He had many months of overseas service prior to his assignment to the squadron. S/Sgt. Buelette, a gunnery instructor, was transferred to the 766th Bombardment Squadron.

The excellent work of numerous individuals in the squadron was recognized in the form of promotions during the month. Squadron Commander, Robert E. Baker, received his majority; Lts. Platt, Cooper and Pogue "made" captain; Lts. Panagiotopoulos, Welton and Whalen donned silver bars in place of gold; F/O St. John and 1st/Sgt. Pegg were commissioned as 2nd Lts.; S/Sgts. Liebhart and Van Nostrand passed the board and were awarded a second "rocker"; seven sergeants became "first three graders"; eleven corporals added another stripe; and four privates earned their first chevron. One corporal was reduced to the grade of private during January for insubordination.

Several changes in the duties of staff officers occurred during the month. Lt. Whitlock became engineering officer of the squadron. Newly commissioned Lt. Pegg was assigned duty as supply

officer and transport officer, relieving Lt. Whitlock of the former responsibility and Lt. Lanigan of the latter. Lt. Taylor became mess officer following the transfer of Lt. Tyson to the Detachment of Patients.

Improvements to the squadron area were undertaken at an even increasing rate. The orderly room moved into a tuffi block building across from the officers' club. The dispensary opened for business in renovated offices where the original welding shop was located. The officers' club took over the old dispensary and made it into a clock room and, at the same time, made a new entrance to the club. Work was continued on the new mess hall for the enlisted men. Sidewalks made from chipped tuffi block were built throughout the tent areas of the squadron.

The supply room issued hoods to the new type field jacket to the men, and those entitled to them received a cluster to the unit citation ribbon.

Various phases of ground training took place during January. Major Baker oriented the new crews with combat procedure and acquainted them with squadron policies.

Intelligence lectures were delivered by Capt. Platt, and classes in aircraft recognition were held. Capt. Nathan conducted a series of sex information classes. Lt. Camo explained the use and care of personal equipment to the aircrews. All of the men had their gas masks checked and were marched through the gas chamber. Two aircrew officers went on detached service with the 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari for special schooling.

Once again a barbershop was established in the squadron, this time in the enlisted men's day room. Two Italian barbers were procured to serve both officers and enlisted men.

There was a noticeable decline in the eagerness of men to attend rest camp with the wintry weather curtailing vacation activities there. However, quotas were filled and twelve officers and eighteen enlisted men spent seven days of relaxation on the Isle of Capri. Fifteen other enlisted men rested for a week at San Spirito. Four officers and eight enlisted men flew to Calro, Egypt for a five-day stay.

The number of hospital patients during January was very low considering that it was a month of bitter cold weather. Only two officers and six enlisted men contracted severe enough ailments to be hospitalized. Two new cases of venereal disease were reported during the month.

One enlisted man was court martialed for AWOL during the thirty-one day period. He was sentenced to six months of hard labor at the 15th Air Force Stockade.

The usual amount of entertainment existed for the men. Fourteen motion pictures were shown during January, and a USO unit gave a performance at the Group theater. The bars in both the enlisted men's and officers' clubs continued to do a big business on nights when no movie was presented.

As the second month of 1945 approached, the eyes of the squadron were centered on the Eastern front and the spectacular Russian winter offensive. As Red Army tanks and artillery traveled at a rapid pace along the road to Berlin, everyone wondered just how much longer Germany would hold out. Would the Nazis keep on fighting should Berlin fall? Would the shifting of German troops from the west to the east permit the American, British, and French forces to break through Hitler's West Wall? These were the questions in the minds of all as January came to an end, and interest in news sheets and radio broadcasts of the latest developments in the war reached a new high.

January 1. A mission was scheduled for this date but was cancelled during the night because of the adverse weather prevailing. Snow fell upon the squadron area for the first time of the winter. A corporal was reduced to the grade of private for insubordination.

Eighteen enlisted men received promotions; seven from corporal to sergeant; seven from sergeant to staff sergeant, and four from private to private first class.

January 2. No mission was scheduled for this date. One ground echelon enlisted man was transferred from the squadron to the Detachment of Patients. Two new combat crews joined the organization.

January 3. Another stand down took place on this date because of unflyable weather. Four officers and nine enlisted men departed for rest camp.

January 4. Six squadron airplanes departed from Torretta Field with a marshalling yard at Trento, Italy as their objective. One ship was forced to return early, and the rest went on to bomb the target. Little enemy opposition was encountered, but observed results were considered poor. Capt. Nathan commenced a series of lectures on sex hygiene.

January 5. Marshalling yards at Zagreb, Yugoslavia were scheduled to receive a pounding from the squadron Liberators on this date, but the bad weather over the target forced the airplanes to return the bombs to the base. Three flying officers and eight air crew enlisted men, having completed 35 sorties against the Nazis, were not in the least bit sorry to depart from the mud covered squadron area en route to the United States.

January 6. No combat mission was scheduled for this date. Lts. Marshall and Jarnagin, MIA while returning from Linz, Austria on December 15th, rejoined the squadron. Some men of their crew are safe in Yugoslavia. Three new combat crews were assigned to the squadron.

January 7. For the second consecutive day, a stand down was scheduled.

January 8. Seven squadron airplanes took off shortly after 0830 en route to bomb the main marshalling yard at Linz, Austria. Extremely adverse weather prevented the planes from dropping their explosives on the primary objective. The same situation existed at the first alternate. They then proceeded to the second alternate target, Klagenfurt marshalling yard in

Austria, where the bombers discharged their loads on the signal of the lead pathfinder ship. Results could not be observed. Three squadron airplanes landed on emergency fields in northern Italy because of fuel shortage. They remained there overnight. Capt. Thackston joined the squadron from the 49th Bomb Wing where he had been serving as assistant A-3 officer. Four officers and nine enlisted men departed for rest camp.

January 9. The crews were standing by their ships all set to take off on a second attempt to obliterate the marshalling yard at Linz, Austria, when the stand down order came in. Training flights scheduled for later in the day had to be cancelled when bad weather closed the field. First Sgt. John Pegg was commissioned a second lieutenant and assumed the duties of supply officer and transportation officer.

January 10. No combat mission was scheduled for this date. Heavy snow fell during the greater part of the day and night, covering the squadron area with a carpet of white.

January 11. For the second consecutive day no bombing mission against the Nazis was flown. A physical inspection of all personnel was held in the enlisted men's mess hall. The sun came out and the snow began to melt. Rushing against time to enjoy some winter sport while it lasted, numerous snow battles were waged throughout the area.

January 12. This date was an uneventful one for the 765th Bomb Sq. As usual the men scheduled to fly arose at early reveille, were briefed, went down to their ships and were all ready to take off when the mission was cancelled. For the third consecutive day not a single letter was received by the squadron mailroom.

January 13. Once again the scheduled mission was cancelled before any aircraft took to the sky. S/Sgt. Hines, a gunnery instructor, was assigned to the squadron and placed on Detached Service with Group Headquarters. Pvt. Bonaccorso joined the organization and was assigned duty as a truck driver.

January 14. For the third day crews briefed to drop explosives on German installations were unable to carry out their mission because of adverse weather. The stand down order came in before any aircraft left the ground.

January 15. After six days of staying on the ground, squadron Liberators succeeded in carrying out an attack on enemy installations. The scheduled plan called for the bombardment of Vienna, Austria, but all three pathfinder ships suffered malfunctions of the special equipment contained therein and the formation was forced to turn back. In place of Vienna, the Treviso marshalling yard in northern

Italy served as the objective for the of explosives. Several direct hits were scored on the marshalling yard and two popular shops there. Four officers and nine enlisted men departed for rest camp. The gunner, seriously injured during a crash landing while returning from Blechhammer, Germany on December 17th, was transferred to the Detachment of Patients.

January 16. A barber shop for both officers and enlisted men was set up in the enlisted men's day room with two Italian barbers performing the work.

January 17. A combat mission was originally scheduled for this date, but the inclement weather caused a stand down to be called. The orderly room moved into new quarters in the tufi block building across from the entrance to the officers' club. One flying officer, having completed his "35" in this theater, departed en route to the United States. One enlisted man was dropped from the morning report as AWOL.

January 18. For the second consecutive day, rainy weather resulted in the scheduled mission being cancelled. Another gunner injured during the crash landing was transferred to the Detachment of Patients.

January 19. Squadron bombardiers unleashed explosives on a road bridge at Brod, Yugoslavia with good results. Flak was slight, but accurate.

January 20. Mission #164 was flown on this date. The target was the marshalling yard at Linz, Austria. Seven planes took off as the squadron's quota for the attack unit, but one ship aborted and returned to the base. Plane #35, piloted by Lt. Yancy was seen to blow up over the target. One aircraft was forced to make a forced landing in an open field near the base due to shortage of fuel. His plane was demolished and his navigator was injured. Result photos showed a good concentration of bombs in the target area.

January 21. Another mission was scheduled for this date, but was cancelled before the planes got off the ground. Capt. Pogue, squadron engineering officer, was transferred to Group Headquarters. Lt. Hughes and his crew, MIA since November over Yugoslavia, returned to the squadron. A USO show was presented on the stage of the group theater.

January 22. Again the scheduled combat mission was cancelled because of bad weather. Three enlisted men departed for San Spirito rest camp. The enlisted man reported as AWOL on January 17th returned to the organization.

January 23. A mission was scheduled for this date but was cancelled because of unflyable weather.

January 24. No mission was scheduled for this date. Another new crew was added to the squadron. Intelligence officer, Willie N. Platt, was promoted to the rank of captain. A gunner was transferred from the squadron to the Detachment of Patients.

January 25. A mission was planned for this date, but adverse weather resulted in its cancellation.

January 26. Again a mission was scheduled, but bad weather still prevailed and kept the crews on the ground. Lt. Blake was transferred to the Mediterranean Air Transport Service in Bari.

January 27. The scheduled mission for this date was cancelled for the same old reason – bad weather.

During February 1945, the 765<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron completed eighteen missions against the German war machine, taking maximum advantage of the favorable weather that prevailed during the later half of the month. Again, the emphasis was placed on the destruction of vital Nazi oil installations and Hitler's transportation and supply network. One hundred and nineteen squadron Liberators crossed bomb release lines to drop two hundred and eight tons of explosives on the enemy. This constituted by far the highest monthly tonnage of bombs dropped since August 1944. Targets in Austria bore the brunt of the attacks, being hit on ten occasions. Four of the objectives were located in Germany and two each in Yugoslavia and Italy.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, squadron airmen flew over Bolzano, Italy on an attempted bombing run. However, no bombs were dropped and sortie credit was not given. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, the first of a series of cloudless, sunny days at Torretta Field, two separate combat missions were completed, the later one being planned hurriedly during the morning to take advantage of the temporary departure of winter climate. One of the most outstanding missions was that on February 17 to shipyards at Trieste, Italy, where squadron bombardiers not only achieved an excellent bomb pattern on these installations but succeeded in obtaining a direct hit on an Italian battleship anchored in the harbor.

February marked the use of nine man combat crews for the first time. In such cases, the navigator assumed the additional responsibility of toggling. Throughout the month, training missions were flown whenever possible with stress placed on air to ground gunnery, practice bombing and instrument flying. General training for aircrew personnel continued in the form of lectures, bomb and link trainer instruction, and classed at gunnery school.

February saw the squadron hit unusually hard by disaster. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Kelliher's ship suffered an engine malfunction as he prepared to land and the airplane crashed into a field near the squadron area, bursting in two and bursting into flame. Eight of the nine-man crew scampered to safety but the navigator, Lt. Donald Williams, perished in the fire. Other crewmembers suffered burns and slight injuries. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, Cpl. Moore of F/O Baran's crew died while at altitude when his oxygen supply failed. The greatest tragedy occurred on February 21<sup>st</sup> when two aircraft failed to return from a mission to Vienna, Austria. The lead ship flown by squadron commander, Major Baker, and Lt. Woodruff suffered severe damage from flak and radioed in that they were heading for Russian territory. No further word was received on their fate. The other missing ship contained Lt. McMillan and his crew. On this same mission Squadron Navigator Lt. Kassler, hit by flak in the thigh and taken to the hospital. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the flight of squadron airplanes were hit by anti-aircraft fire off the coast of Italy and three men were wounded severely enough to require hospital care.

Four B-24's were lost during the month, two over the target, one on a crash landing near the base, and one resulting from a crack up on the runway. Two new airplanes were assigned to the organization during this period. Lt. Hayes' crew was the only combat team assigned to the organization during the month. Eight flying officers and seventeen aircrew enlisted men completed their tour of duty in this theater and were returned to the zone of the interior. The squadron had a roster of twenty-four crews present for duty on the last day of the month.

Other personnel changes were very few. Capt. Lund joined the squadron to assist in the handling of S-2 work until his anticipated return to the United States took place; S/Sgt. Underwood, an administrative specialist, was sent down from Wing and given duty as a public relations man. The only ground echelon loss was that of Sgt. Morris of the armament section who was transferred to the Detachment of Patients. In regard to the air echelon, Lt. Phalen, a "mickey" operator was assigned to the squadron; Operations Officer Cooper and Bombardier Sullivan were transferred to the 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing; and Lt.

Fenzl, co-pilot of Lt. Staples crew, was transferred to the Air Service group. It was almost entirely aircrew members that received promotions during the month. In the air echelon, three second lieutenants donned silver bars in lieu of gold; one flight officer was commissioned; three staff sergeants appeared before the board and were promoted to "tech"; nine sergeants added a "rocker"; seventeen corporals received their third stripe; and one private was given a chevron. In the ground echelon, Adjutant Taylor was promoted to the rank of captain; one staff sergeant made "tech"; one corporal became a sergeant; and ten privates earned a stripe.

Combat losses and completion of tours of duty accounted for the numerous changes in staff personnel that occurred during the month. Capt. Cooper finished up his 35 missions and Capt. Thackston became Operations Officer. The very next day, Major Baker became MIA and Capt. Thackston assumed command of the squadron. Lt. Welton became Operations Officer and Lt. Brady was appointed his assistant. Both Lt. Netzer and Lt. Johnson finished their missions and Lt. Kassler became Squadron Navigator and Lt. Burleson became Squadron Bombardier.

Work on the squadron area continued. The new enlisted men's mess hall was completed and a grand opening was held. Group and squadron staff officers were present and a special menu was served. Other work included the start of a new PX and mail building and the creation of more sidewalks throughout the area.

In Compliance with General Lee's orders, classes on venereal disease were held on consecutive evenings. Training films on the subject were shown; Squadron Commander Baker and Flight Surgeon Nathan addressed the men; and on one evening Chaplain Rasmussen delivered an inspiring sermon.

General Spaatz and members of his staff paid a brief visit to Torretta Field during the month. After a hasty inspection of the line, they retired to Group Headquarters for a discussion of the business at hand. The S-2 office prepared new type identification cards for aircrew members. They are to be used if they are forced down in partisan or Russian-held territory. Messages

confirming their identity as American soldiers were printed on them in all applicable languages; and a small picture of the man was attached.

Men continued to relax war nerves at rest camps during February. Fourteen officers and fifteen enlisted men were sent to the Isle of Capri. Twelve enlisted men spent a week at San Spirito. Three-day tours to Rome were resumed during the month. During the twenty-eight day period, there was a big increase in the number of men sent to the hospital. Three officers and twenty-two enlisted men became patients during February. Three cases of venereal disease were contracted by men of the squadron throughout the month.

The usual amount of entertainment and recreation existed for the men. Thirteen motion pictures were presented throughout the month. A ping-pong table was installed in the enlisted men's day room and a tournament was held. There was a grand opening of the remodeled Officer's Club and a gala party took place. Guests of honor were members of an all-girl band that is currently touring this theater of operations. Our group band obtained notoriety during February. It made a weekly appearance on "Vapor Trails", a 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing program over the Foggia radio station. Also, it was selected to accompany the musical show, "Panama Battie" on its scheduled appearance throughout this region of Italy.

February marked the squadron's first anniversary at Torretta Field. Ground echelon men looked back and remembered the area as it had first appeared to them with its scattered tents and barren farm buildings. That first winter had been a rough one with the men sleeping on the ground, eating in the open and utilizing straddle-trench type latrines. Then spring arrived and along with numerous improvements in living conditions came the freshmen combat missions. Combined with the intense satisfaction of participating in the attack against the Nazis was the realization of the cost of war as squadron casualties commenced to mount. The elated airmen began finishing their tour of duty in this theater and returning to the United States; new crews arrived to take their place; and the squadron settled down to its daily routine in true veteran fashion.

The first Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays on foreign soil arrived and the men suppressed their feelings of homesickness and did their best to enjoy the efforts of the squadron to bring them some of the atmosphere of these cherished occasions. Throughout the year, the men watched with anticipation the gradual approach of Allied armies to the German border both in the east and in the west; rejoiced when Nazi soil was invaded; and were disappointed when 1944 did not bring the predicted end of the war in Europe. As their second year in Italy began, the men looked around them and considered the changes that had occurred in the squadron area. They looked with approval on the new and remodeled buildings and the neat rows of winterized tents. They realized that a maximum amount of comfort had been added to their existence during the past year. They looked too at the battle lines on the map with the hope that soon the armies that were attacking in the west would meet with those driving ahead in the east, thus crushing the German war machine in permanent defeat.



February 1 1945 The need for numerous engine changes permitted but four Liberators to take to the sky to attack the marshalling yard at Graz, Austria. Bombing was by PFF and enemy anti-aircraft resistance was slight and inaccurate. Thirty-one enlisted men received promotions.

February 2. A mission was planned for this date, but it was cancelled during the night and training flights were scheduled instead. An enlisted man found guilty of AWOL by a court-martial board was taken to the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force Stockade. While in Bari, Major Baker's jeep that had been utilized for this transportation, was stolen. Lt. Hayes crew joined the squadron. F/O Hart was commissioned a second lieutenant. February 3. Squadron flyers were all set to take off on an attack against German installations when the stand down order came in – cause as usual was weather. One officer, having finished his combat flying in this theater, departed for the United States. February 4.

The combat plans of the squadron again could not be put into effect because of the adverse flying weather. A training film on venereal disease was shown to the men. February 5. Six squadron Liberators took to the sky to attack Nazi oil storage at Regensburg, Germany. Bombing was by PFF and results could not be ascertained. Flak was very slight and no fighters were encountered. Three enlisted men departed for rest camp. One officer and five enlisted men who had returned from Yugoslavia departed enroute to the United States.

February 6. Nine squadron aircraft took off with every intention of flying a combat mission. Just after take off, a stand down was called. The planes remained in the air and a practice mission with the emphasis on formation flying was flown. One officer and six enlisted men were attached from the 86<sup>th</sup> Air Base Unit Section to set up a beam system on the runway.

February 7. Squadron fliers led the group on a mission against the Florisdorf Oil Refinery in Vienna, Austria. Bombing was partly visual and partly by affect procedure, and large columns of black smoke was observed belching forth from the target area. For the first time in combat, some nine men crews were sent into the air. In these ships, the navigator assumed the additional responsibility of toggling the bombs. All ships returned safely.

February 8. Vienna was again visited on this date. This time it was the general repair shops there that bore the brunt of the attack. Six squadron aircraft bombed by PFF, encountering moderate to intense flak over the target. For the second evening, all members of the squadron attended a class on venereal disease. In compliance with General Lee's orders, these classes are to be held for seven nights between the hours of 1900 and 2000. It is part of the Wing program to reduce the V.D. rate in the various squadrons. Speakers have been and will continue to be Major Baker and Captain Nathan. An address by the Chaplain has been scheduled for one evening. Three aircrew officers were placed on DS with Group Headquarters.

February 9. On this date, squadron aircraft were all set to take off on a combat mission when a stand down was ordered. A "mickey" ship from each of the other squadrons of the group attacked the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery near Vienna, Austria, but the aerial activity of the 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron was limited to a practice mission. The venereal disease classes continued

with Major Baker speaking to the ground echelon and Capt. Nathan lecturing to the air crews. A radar navigator was assigned to the squadron. Two officers and four enlisted men, having "sweated out 35", departed en route to the United States.

February 10. Crews were all ready to take off on a combat mission when a stand down was scheduled. Training flights were flown in lieu of the bombing attack. Chaplain Rasmussen lectured to the ground echelon men as part of the series of meetings to suppress venereal disease. At the same time, Capt. Nathan was demonstrating the proper manner of taking a prophylaxis to the aircrews. One enlisted man volunteered to take the "pro" and one of the medical NCOs administered it to him.

February 11. Again it was the same old story of going through the preparations of flying a combat mission, only to have it cancelled before take off. Numerous training flights were scheduled. Another discussion of venereal disease was given to both ground and air echelons. One enlisted man was transferred to the Detachment of Patients. February 12. Again a stand down was called as the crews prepared to take to the sky. Major Rainen conducted a quiz on the Articles of War in the EM mess hall at 1000, while Chaplain Rasmussen spoke to the aircrew members. Six officers and ten enlisted men left for rest camps. Two flying officers who had returned from Yugoslavia departed for the U.S. February 13.

It was a beautiful day at Torretta Field and maximum advantage was taken of the cloudless sky to send as many aircraft as possible over enemy territory. In addition to the regularly scheduled mission to control repair shops at Vienna, Austria, an attack on marshalling yards at Maribor, Yugoslavia was planned during the morning. The ships flying to Vienna reached their objective but the bombs were not released there and the formation proceeded to Graz, Austria to attack the marshalling yard there. Bombing was by PFF and results could not be observed. The second mission of the day took squadron airmen over the marshalling yards at Maribor, Yugoslavia. There bombing was visual and a good pattern of hits was obtained. Anti-aircraft resistance was moderate but accurate.

Arriving over the base, Lt. Kelliher's airplane had a feathered engine and a runaway engine on the same side of his ship, forcing him to crash land in a field near the squadron area. The ship broke in two and caught fire as it hit the ground. Eight persons of the nine-man crew scrambled from the wreckage but Lt. Williams, the navigator, failed to reach safety and perished in the fire. Several other of the airmen were injured and bruised, but in no way seriously. Another mournful day in the history of the 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron thus came to an end, and coincidentally again on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

The photo laboratory sent up a photographer who commenced taking pictures of each combat crewmember. These inch by inch and one-half photos are to be attached to a new type identification card to be used if forced down in friendly territory as proof of being an American soldier. The Air Corps picture, "Winged Victory", was shown on the squadron screen.

February 14. A maximum effort of nine squadron aircraft on this date paid a return visit to the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery in Austria. Anti-aircraft fire was intense but inaccurate. All ships returned safely. Reported results indicate that coils of smoke were arising from the objective. Funeral services were conducted for Lt. Williams, who perished in the crash of his ship near the base on the day before. The first rounds of an EM ping-pong tournament were held in the day room.

February 15. The mission on this date took squadron Liberators to the Penzinger Marshalling Yard at Vienna, Austria. Bombing was by PFF and the results could not be ascertained. All ships returned safely but an unfortunate accident caused the death of Cpl. Moore of F/O Baran's crew. At altitude his oxygen supply failed resulting in his death from suffocation.

February 16. Squadron aircraft were briefed to drop explosives on an airdrome for jet propelled airplanes at Neuburg, Germany, but it was completely covered by clouds and a marshalling yard at Rosenheim was bombed instead. The weather permitted a visual run on the objective and returning airmen were enthusiastic about the results. No enemy opposition at all was encountered and all airplanes returned safely. Squadron members of the group band went on temporary duty to accompany the musical show, "Panama Battie", that is touring this section of Italy. Three staff sergeants were promoted to "tech". One officer and one enlisted man, having completed "35" in this theater, departed enroute to the United States.

February 17. Squadron aircraft made a late take-off and flew to Trieste, Italy to bombard the shipyards there. Photographs of the mission showed that the airmen were right on the ball and "plastered" the objective with a solid pattern of bomb hits. These photos also showed that the group obtained a direct hit on an Italian battleship anchored in the harbor. This date marked the grand opening of the new Officers' Club. A gala party was held with the 459th Bomb Group band providing the dance music. Unconfirmed reports place the number of women present between six and ten. Reliable sources and personal observation indicated an abundance of drinkable but potent beverage. February 18. Squadron airmen were well on their way to drop their explosives on German territory when they met with unfavorable weather and were forced to return to the base with their bombs.

February 19. Combat operations were resumed with a mixed up affair that found only three out of the seven squadron aircraft briefed to bomb Vienna, Austria, actually hitting that target. One airplane returned early; others got separated in cloud formations and two attacked Fiume shipyards, a briefed alternate. One ship attached itself to a flight of the 451st Bomb Group and bombed a railroad junction southwest of Vienna. Ship #35 piloted by Lt. Michaelis failed to return from the mission. Hope was expressed that he had landed at Vis, but no definite word on him was received. The group administrative inspector was in the orderly room in the afternoon to hear complaints of any member of the organization. No one made an appearance to register a "gripe".

February 20. Seven squadron aircraft left Torretta Field to bomb enemy installations at Bolzano, Italy. However the ships never reached the primary objective, but instead dropped their

explosives on harbor installations at Fiume. Lt. Michaelis' crew that had failed to return from the sortie to Vienna on the previous day returned to the squadron.

February 21. The date marked another sad day in the history of the squadron. Six squadron aircraft bombed the south station area at Vienna, Austria, and while doing so ran into intensely heavy and accurate flak. As a result, two 765<sup>th</sup> planes failed to return. Flying in plane #37 with Lt. Woodruff's crew was squadron commander, Major Baker. This ship was hit over the target and last word from them was that they were heading for Russian territory. Lt. McMillen in airplane #24 disappeared from the formation and none of the returning airmen were able to give any suggestion as to the fate of this ship. Lt Brewster failed to land with the others, but returned early in the evening, having landed at the emergency field at Para, Yugoslavia. Torretta Field was honored by a visit from General Spaatz, Commanding General of the European Theater Air Forces. He was accompanied by Generals Twining and Ackor. He inspected the line and spent some time conferring at Group Headquarters. He did not visit the squadron area. Adjutant, Alfred B. Taylor Jr., was promoted to the rank of Captain. Operations Officer, Capt. Cooper, was transferred to the 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing to serve as a member of the A-3 department there. Capt. Thackston became operations officer of the squadron and Lt. Welton assumed duty as his assistant. One flying officer was transferred to the 96<sup>th</sup> Air Service Group.

February 22. A unique combat mission was scheduled for this date. Each squadron had a separate marshalling yard north of Munich, Germany, to attack. They were briefed to make their bomb run at 12,000 feet, a low level attack for heavy bombers. However, the aircraft got lost in the clouds, saw the marshalling yard through an opening in the undercast, and bombed it with reported excellent results. Not a person among the returning airmen could identify the objective. Returning to the base by themselves, the squadron flight encountered accurate anti-aircraft fire off the coast of Italy and three men were injured and the aircraft shot full of holes. Capt. Thackston became commanding officer of the squadron, and Lt. Welton was elevated to the position of operations officer. Lt. Brady became assistant operations officer.

February 23. Continuing their attack on German supply and transportation facilities, squadron airmen bombed a marshalling yard at Amstetten, Austria. Returning fliers claimed excellent destruction of the objective. Opposition was practically non-existent and all ships got back without trouble. It was a gala occasion for the enlisted men of the squadron as the supper meal marked the official opening of their new mess hall. Col. Lawhon, Lt. Col. Hardy, and Chaplain Rasmussen came from Group to be present at the event. Fried chicken and ice cream were the highlights of the menu. Not only is the new chow palace with its tile floor and marble topped tables a tremendous and long-needed improvement in the living conditions of the men but the new mess kit laundry functioned for better than any in the past. Three enlisted men, having "sweated out" 35 missions.

February 24. The target was Bolzano, Italy but adverse weather prevented it from feeling the tonnage of squadron bombs. The airplanes turned back and brought their bombs back to the base. The squadron area hardly appeared the same as it did on Feb. 24, 1944 with its numerous newly constructed and remodeled buildings and its neat rows of winterized tents.

February 25. Six squadron aircraft flew to Linz, Austria to bomb a marshalling yard there. Although the weather was clear, the target was covered with a protective screen of smoke, making the use of PFF instruments necessary. Very poor results were obtained with aerial photos showing that not a single bomb fell within 2000 feet of the target. All ships returned safely.

February 26. Following a record of 12 days of aerial operations, a stand down was called on this date while crews were by airplanes awaiting take-off.

February 27. The marshalling yard at Augsburg, Germany, felt the weight of one thousand pound bombs as seven crews of the squadron flew there on group mission #184. Little opposition was encountered and all aircraft returned without trouble.

February 28. Squadron airmen bombed a marshalling yard at Ora, Italy just south of Bolzano. Anti-aircraft fire, though slight in quantity, was exceptionally accurate and the ships returned with many a flak hole. Reports of the success of the mission were varied with some claiming hits on the railroad yard and others seeing explosions in the town itself and the nearby valley. A way formation for enlisted men was held at 1330. At the end of the way line were tables where the men were encouraged to purchase bar books and chances on a bond raffle. The officer received their lire at 1815. One enlisted man was promoted to sergeant. Three combat men of aircrews departed for the United States on permanent change of station. Six officers and eleven enlisted men were at rest camps having left the squadron on February 26th.

During the month of March 1945, the 765th Bombardment Squadron took part in twenty missions against the Nazis, sending one hundred and thirty-four aircraft over objectives in Control Europe to drop a total of two hundred and thirty-eight tons of bombs on these enemy installations. As in the past, the big Liberators were given the role of knocking out Germany's ever dwindling fuel supply and attacking the network of storage depots and rail yards vital in the supplying of Hitler's front line troops. Indicative of the contraction of German-held territory was the location of the targets.

On seventeen occasions, the objectives were within the boundaries of Austria; twice it was "the fatherland" itself that was attacked; and once the explosives were released over Czechoslovakian soil. With the arrival of more favorable flying weather and the decreased reliance on pathfinder bombing, a considerable improvement in the results obtained could be noted. Among the installations well hit by squadron bombardiers were the Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery, the marshalling yard at Wels, Austria, and the Florisdorf Oil Refinery in Vienna. On March 30th, the squadron participated in what proved to be a most unusual and outstanding mission. One ship was dispatched with instructions to attack a marshalling yard in Vienna, Austria only if an undercast existed there. Discovering that clear sky existed over the objective, the squadron pathfinder turned back along with other ships in the vicinity, and attacked the marshalling yard at Graz, Austria. The amount of damage inflicted on this enemy key point was intense. Throughout the month, a maximum number of training flights were scheduled. New

crews were checked out, practice gunnery and bombing missions were flown, and training in formation flying was accomplished.

Aircrew officers were sent to the 15th Air Force Headquarters to attend "mickey operators" school and combat school. During the first few days of March, a mobile training unit was parked adjacent to the orderly room building and all navigators, bombardiers and gunners were given armament instruction. March proved to be a month of both joy and sorrow. The squadron rejoiced over the return of Major Baker with Lt. Woodruff's crew and Lt. McMillen's crew, both MIA over Vienna on the 21st of February. Both had landed crippled aircraft in Hungary behind the Russian lines, although at different fields.

On March 26th, Lt. Heinze and his crew failed to return from a mission to the Vienna area. His airplane was last seen over an emergency landing field in Hungary and there seemed to be a good possibility that he reached safety. Grievous news was received that five members of Lt. Simons' crew, on detached service of a secretive nature for many months, had died as a result of wounds received in action.

Three new combat crews made their overseas home with the squadron during March. Other augmentation of aircrew personnel included the assignment of a bombardier, a navigator, two radar observers and two aerial gunners. Seventeen enlisted men and seven officers completed their thirty fifth mission and returned to the zone of the interior. One other pilot appeared before the Flying Evaluation Board in Bari, and there was grounded and placed on orders to return to the United States.

One aerial gunner applied for infantry OCS training, was accepted, and left the squadron for that branch of the service. In the ground echelon, the net result of personnel changes was a loss of men. Only two new faces were observed, one in the communications department and one in the engineering section. On the other hand, two enlisted men were transferred to Group Headquarters, one to another squadron, one to the Detachment of Patients, one to a Military Police outfit, one to the infantry upon request, two to the infantry involuntarily, and one man in confinement in the stockade was sent back to the U.S. Capt. Lund's departure for the zone of the interior marked the only change in the roster of ground echelon officers. He had been serving as assistant intelligence officer in the squadron.

With the ground echelon up to Table of Organization strength in almost every case, once again by far the majority of the promotions were of aircrew personnel. Operations officer, Captain Thackston, became Major Thackston; Squadron Bombardier Johnson, Flight Loader Kelleher and Armament Officer Dubal donned "railroad tracks"; ten second lieutenants changed to a silver bar; six flight officers were commissioned; two staff sergeants appeared before the board and added a second "rocker"; fourteen "buck" sergeants made "staff"; twenty-four corporals added a third chevron; four privates first class were jumped to sergeant; and six privates earned a four dollar per month increase in base pay. Three aircrew members were reduced to the rank of private for being AWOL for several days.

After almost thirteen months at Torretta Field, improvements in the squadron area were still progressing at a rapid pace. The PX and mailroom moved into its new offices that gave these departments a needed increase in space. In the old PX, a barbershop was made and the tonsorial artists moved into these new quarters just before the month came to an end. The exterior of all buildings in the area received a whitewashing in March, thereby giving the area a very neat and clean appearance.

Construction work was commenced on the squadron theater to be located in the former enlisted men's mess hall. There was a notable increase in the number of inspections during March. General McNarney visited the 461st Bombardment Group but did not tour the squadron. General Lee inspected the office and area on one occasion, and frequently during the month group staff officers conducted a thorough inspection of the squadron.

The orderly room accepted applications for infantry OCS and nine men requested this opportunity to train for a commission. Of these, only one man was able to meet the physical and availability requirements. The supply room collected blouses from the enlisted men and issued to them the new battle jackets. The rest camp program was augmented by the resumption of tours to Rome. In addition, the public relations office kept an almost continuous flow of men traveling to the Eternal City to make radio transcriptions to be broadcast over one of their home radio stations. Sixteen officers and nineteen enlisted men, mostly all air crew members, relaxed war-weary minds and bodies on the Isle of Capri during March. Twelve ground echelon enlisted men spent a week at the San Spirito Rest Camp.

Three flying officers were sent for five days to the new 15th Air Force rest camp at Cannes on the Riviera in Southern France. Seven officers and nine enlisted men became hospital patients during the thirty-one day period. The only serious case was that of an aerial gunner who accidentally shot himself in the leg while cleaning his pistol. Two new cases of gonorrhea developed among the men during March.

There was no change in the entertainment provided the men. Movies continued to be shown four nights out of the week with the bar open on the other three evenings. Eyes were glued to the intelligence battlefront map with even more anticipation as March drew to a close. General Eisenhower's smashing offensive into the very heart of the Reich led to optimistic views that victory was just around the corner. As the Russians advanced closer and closer to Vienna, no one seemed too annoyed at the expected loss of this area as target material. As Germany was encircled by an ever-tightening vise, more and more attention was being paid to the situation in the Pacific theater of operations. Everyone commenced wondering just what would be the fate of the men of the 765th Bombardment Squadron following VE-day.

March 1. 1945 Eight squadron aircraft flew to the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery and there encountered very adverse weather. Consequently the bombs were returned to base. Enemy fighters were observed, but they did not attack the formation. All ships returned safely. The promotion list was posted on the bulletin board. Thirteen sergeants became "first three graders", eighteen corporals added a third stripe and six privates earned their first chevron. Pay

formation was held for those absent on the previous day. A mobile training unit arrived in the squadron area and parked near the orderly room. Armament instruction for navigators, bombardiers and gunners was commenced. At 1830, the orderly room personnel accepted money to be sent home through the finance office.

March 2. The Linz North Marshalling Yard was the target for this date. An undercast covered the objective and bombing was by PFF. The airmen encountered heavy, intense and accurate flak over Linz. All ships returned safely, though. Two new aircrews were scheduled to join the squadron, but Lt Caran's nine-men crew was the only one to arrive. Sgt. Hicks departed for a course of instruction at Cooke and Baker School.

March 3. Winter came back to Torretta Field and with it came the rain. The scheduled mission was cancelled. Four officers and eleven enlisted men departed for three days in Rome. The temporary duty of the squadron members of the group band was extended until March 25th. F/O McGillen was commissioned a second lieutenant. March 4. Seven squadron aircraft flew to Graz, Austria, to attack the marshalling yard there. Their 500-pound bombs fell upon the objective in a good pattern and extensive damage to the enemy installation resulted. No opposition was encountered and all ships returned undamaged. Lt. Rosdal was sent to "mickey operators" school at 15th Air Force Headquarters in Bari. Pvt. Ferraro, member of the kitchen staff of the organization for seventeen months, was transferred to a military police outfit.

March 5. Despite sunny sky over Torretta Field, a stand down occurred on this date. Four flying officers and six aerial gunners departed for a week on the Isle of Capri, and three ground echelon enlisted men filled the San Spirito quota for the week. News reached the squadron of the death in action of two officers and two enlisted men of Lt. Simons' crew. This crew had been on DS with the 685th Bomb Squadron for many months. The nature of their duty with that organization has been secret. No details of the disaster were available.

March 6. A combat mission was scheduled for this date, but a stand down was called before the crews went "into the blue". Flight leader Lightbody handed out the customary cigars in token of his promotion to the rank of captain. Five second lieutenants were promoted to the rank of first lieutenant. Lt. Fearis (?), a bombardier, and Lt. Murrer (?), a navigator, joined the squadron from the 767th and 766th Bomb Squadrons respectively. One enlisted man was transferred to Group Headquarters. One grounded aerial gunner was placed on DS with the 767th Bomb Squadron. All grounded and unclassified gunners were pooled in that squadron to determine in what capacity their services could best be utilized in the Group.

March 7. For the third consecutive day, no action against the enemy was accomplished. A new crew piloted by Lt. Bruning, was assigned to the organization. Lt. Wiseavage (?), a radar observer, joined the squadron from the 49th Bomb Wing. March 8. The marshalling yard at Hegyeshalom, Austria, was the target on this date. Nine squadron airplanes dropped tons of 500-pound bombs on the objective with reported good results. No opposition was encountered and all ships returned safely. Four flying officers and eight aircrew enlisted men, having completed their tour of duty in this theater, departed for the U.S. and home. A communications



man and three aerial gunners were transferred into the squadron.

March 9. Mission #190 was scheduled to be flown to the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria, but the rail center at Graz, the fourth alternate target, was bombed instead. Nine squadron ships participated in the attack. Bombing was by PFF and the results were unobserved. All ships returned without difficulty. A pilot and a co-pilot were promoted to the rank of first lieutenant. Two aerial gunners who had returned from Yugoslavia were sent back to the United States. An electrician departed for schooling at Air Force Headquarters in Bari. March 10. The scheduled combat mission for this date was cancelled before takeoff.

The squadron rejoiced over unexpected return of Lt. McMillen's crew, MIA over Vienna on February 21st. They had landed their badly crippled ship in Russian territory in Hungary. There, they patched up a 451st Bomb Group plane and flew it back to the squadron. The orderly room accepted applications of men desiring to train at the recently established infantry OCS. Approximately ten men submitted papers reporting this opportunity to earn a commission.

March 11. No combat mission was flown on this date. Numerous training missions were accomplished with the emphasis on bombing and gunnery. General Lee made a tour of inspection of the squadron area accompanied by Colonel Lawhon and other staff officers. S/Sgt. Lenjer was assigned to duty with Group Headquarters to assist in the establishment of a hospital there. Pvt. Cagne was released from confinement in the 15th Air Force stockade and assigned to replacement depot He awaits shipment back to the United States.

March 12. A maximum effort of nine squadron aircraft made a return visit to the Florisdorf Oil Refinery in Vienna, Austria. Bombing was by PFF and results were undetermined. Heavy resistance was amazingly inaccurate and the flak from Vienna's enormous highly feared heavy guns burst in advance and to the rear of the formation with the result that no airplanes were damaged. Sgt. Darron of the engineering section was transferred to the Detachment of Patients. Four officers and nine enlisted men departed for rest camp.

March 13. A normal effort of seven squadron aircraft on this date attacked the main marshalling yard at Regensburg, Germany. Bombing was by PFF and black smoke observed through the cloud coverage indicated good results. All aircraft returned safely.

March 14. Although squadron airmen were briefed to attack the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria, it was the rail center at Wiener Neustadt that felt the tonnage of the 500-pound bombs. The reason for this revision of plans was the existence of a complete cloud coverage over the primary objective. Bombing was by PFF and results could not be determined. All airplanes returned without difficulty. The supply room collected blouses from the enlisted men and issued to them the new battle jackets. Three members of the squadron appeared before the OCS board. S/Sgt. Shay, an aerial gunner, was transferred to Group Headquarters.

March 15. A maximum effort of nine squadron aircraft took off to bomb the Schwechat Oil refinery at Vienna, Austria. However, adverse weather altered the plans and for the second

consecutive day the marshalling yard at Wiener Neustadt took a pounding. Returning airmen claimed to have observed large explosions beneath them. Only slight resistance was encountered. Plane #33, piloted by Capt. Chalmers, had to land at Vis to refuel and in doing so crashed when its nose wheel collapsed. At first it was thought that no man of the crew was injured but later reports disproved this statement. All other ships returned safely.

March 16. The combat endeavors of the squadron were directed once again against the Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery northwest of Vienna, Austria. The airmen did a highly commendable job of precision bombing and aerial photographs showed the objective covered by an excellent pattern of bomb hits. Flak was both intense and accurate. Nevertheless, all the ships returned to the base safely. Lt. Frattone donned shining new 1st lieutenant's bars. Lt. Mueller of Lt. Simons' crew received a similar promotion. The three aerial gunners who had been dropped as AWOL returned to the squadron.

March 17. The first stand down in a week occurred as adverse weather prevented squadron airmen from taking off to attack the enemy. Numerous training flights were flown. Col. Grogan, accompanied by squadron staff officers, conducted an inspection of the area.

March 18. Once again scheduled combat operations were cancelled just before take-off. The reason, as usual, was the weather.

March 19. Combat activity was resumed with an attack against the marshalling yard at Muhldorf, Germany by nine squadron aircraft. Men participating in this mission claimed a widespread and thorough destruction of the target. Aerial photographs substantiated these statements. No enemy opposition was encountered and all ships returned to the field with the formation. Three officers and four enlisted men departed for a week at rest camp. Preparations were started for the anticipated visit of General McNarney, Deputy Commander of the 15th.

March 20. Crews were awakened at early reveille and told to stand by for a combat mission. After a short period of time during which no one quite knew what was "cooking", revised combat orders came through and a maximum effort of nine squadron aircraft took to the sky to attack the marshalling yard at Wels, Austria. Opposition over the target was nil, and an excellent bomb pattern was claimed by the men returning from the mission. All aircraft made it back to the base without trouble. A physical training program was in full swing in the squadron. Exercise in the form of calisthenics and organized games commenced at 0615 each morning. Each man was required to attend at least three classes each week. The mail orderly and the PX were in operation in their new building adjacent to the dispensary.

The increase in space for each of these departments constituted a major improvement. March 21. The marshalling yard at Graz, Austria, took a pounding from squadron Liberators on this date. The target was to have been the rail yards at Bruck, Austria but adverse weather made the selection of an alternate necessary. Rather poor results were obtained. Enemy resistance was slight and inaccurate and all aircraft returned safely. General McNarney visited the 461st Bomb Group but did not inspect the 765th Bomb Squadron.

March 22. Seven aircraft took off for the “blue” with every intention of bombing the Kagran Oil Refinery in Vienna, Austria. However, bad weather over this primary target caused original plans to be discarded, and the formation blasted the Florisdorf Oil Refinery in that same city with as beautiful a pattern of bomb hits as has been seen during the combat career of the squadron. Flak, as usual at Vienna, was both intense and accurate, but all ships made it back to the base. Lt. Flattone landed his ship with but three engines and no hydraulic system, utilizing parachutes tied to the waist guns in lieu of brakes. Squadron members of the group band returned to duty after over a month of accompanying the “Panama Battle” show.

March 23. A return visit was made to the Vienna area with the Kagran Oil Refinery as the objective. The normal intense enemy resistance was encountered, and aerial photographs showed that only a few bombs hit the target. All ships returned safely to base. Everyone heralded the return of Major Baker and Lt. Woodruff’s crew to the squadron. They had landed their crippled ship behind Russian lines in Hungary on February 21st after flak over Vienna had seriously damaged their airplane. The men had been taken to Bucharest and from there were flown to Bari. None of the men had been injured and looked none the worse for their experience. Major Baker resumed command of the squadron. Sgt. Ruby of Lt. Stegeman’s crew picked up his belongings and left for the Infantry OCS in this theater.

Of the nine men who originally applied for this opportunity to earn a commission, he was the only one who met all qualifications. Three flying officers and seven aerial gunners, having finished their tour of duty in this theater, left on the first leg of their journey to the U.S.

March 24. A maximum effort of squadron heavy bombers attacked the marshalling yard at Budejovice, Czechoslovakia on this date. Enemy resistance was nil and a good pattern of bombs fell on the objective. Aerial photographs showed that the explosives cut the railroad track at two distinct places. All aircraft returned safely to base. While present at a group critique, Capt. Thackston learned of his promotion to the rank of major from Col. Lawhon. Bombardier Johnson appeared in the area sporting a shining new pair of captain’s bars. Sgt. Kramer and his force of Italian workers commenced whitewashing the outsides of all buildings in the area.

March 25. The marshalling yard at Prague, Czechoslovakia, was the briefed target on this date. However, this objective was smoked in, and the aircraft held their bombs and returned to drop them on the airdrome at Wels, Austria. Poor results were reported, but aerial photographs showed that this target had been well hit. Two ships returned early, one salvoing its explosives in the vicinity of Linz, Austria, and one dropping them in the Adriatic. Lt. Brady was forced to abort near Prague and the bombs of his ship were released over Libin, a target of opportunity in Austria. All aircraft returned to base. The squadron sent its first quota of three officers to the new rest camp at Cannes, France, on the Riviera. M/Sgt. Fitzgerald and Sgt. Calvin Myers left for Rome to make a PRO radio transcription.

March 26. It was the Straszhof west marshalling yard, just north of Vienna, Austria, that felt the impact of squadron bombs on this date. Aerial photographs showed that the airmen did an

excellent job and covered this installation with a good pattern of explosives. Lt. Louches, flying #27, was forced to land at Hare, Yugoslavia, when two engines gave out on him. There he found an aircraft in flyable condition and flew it back to his base, leaving #27 over there. Lt. Heinze and his crew failed to return from this mission, but it was hoped and felt that they were safe somewhere behind Russian lines in Hungary.

March 27. The first stand down in a week occurred on this date. Numerous training flights were flown. Work was commenced on the construction of a squadron theater in the former enlisted men's mess hall. Plans called for a stage and dressing room as well as for a larger motion picture screen. Five flight officers replaced their blue enamel bars with the gold ones of second lieutenants. Capt. Lund departed from the squadron en route to the United States.

March 28. The crews had been briefed and were ready to take off when a stand down order was issued. Squadron airmen were disappointed rather than overjoyed as the mission promised to be an easy one. Men of Jewish faith from the entire Group commemorated their Passover with a Sedor dinner in the enlisted men's mess hall. An aerial gunner accidentally shot himself in the leg while cleaning his pistol. The bullet shattered the bone and he was rushed to the hospital in serious condition. Squadron barbers moved from the EM Club to new quarters in the old PX building.

March 29. Adverse flying weather caused the third stand down in a row to take place. Practice flights were scheduled with the emphasis placed on formation flying and gunnery.

March 30. The story of the squadron's single ship mission on this date made one of the most interesting and outstanding narratives of combat that has come out of this organization. Lt. Louches and crew took off early in a pathfinder aircraft with instructions to attack a marshalling yard at Vienna, Austria only if an undercast existed over the objective. Nearing the target, it became apparent that the sky over Vienna was clear. Consequently, four aircraft from the Group assembled into a formation and were joined by several airplanes from other groups.

This flight then attacked the second alternate target, the marshalling yard at Graz, Austria. There, a devastatingly accurate bomb run was initiated and a great deal of damage was inflicted on this objective. Lt. Louches and crew returned without any trouble, having enjoyed this unusual mission. During the day, "unite" training flights took place with the emphasis placed on formation bombing. Pvt. Padula and Pvt. Durden were transferred to the 1st Replacement Depot, at which location they will receive infantry training. These men were the first from the squadron to be transferred to the infantry involuntarily. Capt. Chalmers, who had appeared before the Flying Evaluation Board in Bari, was transferred to Replacement Depot #7 and from there will return to the United States. S/Sgt. Barkdull, an aircraft mechanic, was assigned to the squadron.

March 31. A normal effort of seven squadron aircraft bombed the Linz benzol plant in Austria. The objective was almost completely obscured by an undercast and pathfinder bombing was employed. Results were unobserved. All airplanes returned to base. In true last day of the

month fashion, the eagle spread its wings and paid off its fighting men. Chances on a war bond raffle once again were sold at the end of the pay line. The public relations office sent four more enlisted men to Rome to make radio transcriptions.

During April, the 765th Bombardment Squadron took advantage of spring in Italy to fly twenty-two combat missions against rapidly collapsing Germany. One hundred and forty-eight aircraft flew over enemy territory to drop a total of three hundred and twenty-six tons of explosives on Nazi installations. On three days, adverse weather made it necessary for the airmen to return their bombs to base. The location of the targets once again was indicative of the advance of Allied ground troops. On sixteen occasions, the Liberators took to the sky to attack objectives in Northern Italy. The other six targets were attacked in Austria. The outstanding aerial activity of the month was that in coordination with ground activity on the Italian front. On two consecutive days, fragmentation bombs were dropped on German troop concentrations north of the Sesio River in Italy to assist the British Eighth Army in their drive on that sector of the front. Three times the Fifth Army offensive near Bologna was given aerial support, out on one of these occasions unfavorable weather made it necessary that the bombs be returned to base. On April 15th, the squadron reached a new high by sending fifteen aircraft on two separate missions to northern Italy. Bombing results during April were, in most cases, highly commendable. Partly responsible for this was the absence of enemy opposition on a majority of the missions, permitting several passes at the objective to be made when necessary to pick up the point of impact accurately. The crews used the new type escape kits throughout the month, the ones that contained chits in lieu of money. The proper procedure for handing these chits was explained to the men. A maximum number of training flights were scheduled throughout April, especially on the eight stand down days.

Tragedy hit the squadron twice during the thirty-day period. On April 11th, it was proven once again that there is no such thing as a guaranteed "milk run". There was not a great deal of flak over the target, the marshalling yard at Bronsolo, Italy, but the few guns defending that area were fired with accuracy. Lt. Caran's airplane received a direct hit in the bomb bay, went into a flat spin and plunged groundward in flames. In addition to the regular crew, Lt. Hearn, squadron gunnery officer, was aboard the stricken bomber. On April 16th, a freak occurrence took the life of an aerial gunner. While assembling over the local area in adverse weather, two airplanes suddenly went into spins. Both pilots leveled off their bomber after a considerable loss of altitude; but, before this occurred, a total of seven airmen had parachuted from the two aircraft. One gunner was killed when he bailed out at such a low altitude that his parachute had no time to open. Expert judgment and superb flying skill prevented what could have been another calamitous event. Arriving back over Torretta Field with one wheel shot completely off of his aircraft, Lt. Hammond (?) bailed out seven of his crew and then brought his bomber in for a brilliant landing with only the nose wheel upon which to roll along the runway. The last day of the month saw the return of Lt. Heinze's crew to the squadron. MIA over Vienna, Austria, on March 28th, they had landed on an emergency landing field behind Russian lines.

Five new combat crews made their home with the squadron during April. Of these, four joined the organization from the 47th Bomb Wing, and these crew members had from seven to

twenty-seven missions to their credit. On the other hand, Lt. Braning's crew was transferred to the 96th Bomb Group. Seven flying officers and fifteen aircrew enlisted men, having completed their missions, were returned to the United States. Other air echelon personnel changes included the assignment of Capt. McDonnell, a pilot; the transfer of two bombardiers to other bomb groups; the loss of two hospitalized aerial gunners to the Detachment of Patients; the assignment of a radar monitor, a radar observer, and a gunnery officer; and the transfer of a bombardier and a radar observer to another squadron in the group.

In the ground echelon, Intelligence Officer, Capt. Platt, left the squadron to undergo training for military occupation work, and Capt. Russell joined the organization to take over the S-2 section. Seven radar men were assigned to the squadron during April. Two enlisted men left the squadron during the month. Staff Sergeant Underwood, a veteran of thirty-three months in the ETO, returned to the zone of the interior; and Private Stinson moved to group headquarters to work in the newly constructed hospital there.

With the one exception of eight ground echelon men who earned their first chevron, it was aircrew personnel that received all of the promotions during April. Two flight leaders donned "railroad tracks"; eighteen lieutenants changed the color of their collar insignia from gold to silver; five staff sergeants and two corporals made "tech"; fourteen sergeants became "first three graders"; and a similar number of corporals added a third stripe. One enlisted man was court martialed and reduced to the grade of private for the unauthorized use of a squadron vehicle.

Again numerous changes in staff personnel occurred. Major Thackston was appointed Deputy Squadron Commander, and Capt. Gray assumed duty as Operations Officer. Later in the month, Major Thackston went on DS with group headquarters and Capt. McDonnell became deputy commander of the organization. Lt. Hazeler (?) once again became squadron Navigator as Lt. Murrer finished his tour of duty; and Lt. Burleson resumed as Squadron Bombardier in place of Lt. Pearin, transferred to the 767th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Brady was selected to be assistant operations officer.

The affairs, records and clothing and equipment of the members of the organization came under close scrutiny during April. First of all, each man was called into the orderly room to check his adjusted service rating. Points for length of service, overseas time, awards and decorations and the number of children had been compiled and each individual audited this calculation to make sure he had been given full credit. Next came a show-down inspection of clothing and equipment, with its purpose to determine shortages of these items. Later in the month, a personal affairs questionnaire on each enlisted man was filled out. As April came to a close, both officers and enlisted men were having their records checked by a group screening team.

Fourteen squadron airmen were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in April "for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight." Other decorations earned by members of the squadron included one Soldiers Medal, two Bronze Stars, one cluster to the

Bronze Star, one Purple Heart, and numerous Air Medals and clusters thereto. Good Conduct Medals were distributed to men authorized to wear this ribbon.

Ground training for the men continued. One electrical specialist was sent to Flux Gate Compass School. Each man passed through the gas chamber to check the function of his mask. A venereal disease training film was presented before one of the featured movies. A news summary was presented each morning at 1100 in the squadron briefing room. A ground-training program for aerial gunners continued to be emphasized.

The rest camp program during April was augmented by the receipt of quotas for several new recreation centers. Ten officers and eight enlisted men were sent to the Santa Caesera rest camp in Southern Italy. One enlisted man had the opportunity to spend five days at Nice on the Riviera in Southern France, and the squadron's second group of three officers vacationed at Cannes in the same locality.

Twelve officers and twenty-one enlisted men spent a week on the Isle of Capri, and thirteen other enlisted men rested for a similar period at San Spirito. The Public Relations Office sent fourteen men to Rome to make radio transcriptions. Train excursions to the Eternal City were commenced.

As April drew to a close, the atmosphere in the squadron was one of expectancy. Victory in Europe seemed not too far in the future. As Germany drew ever closer to total collapse, speculation as to the fate of the organization became the foremost topic of conversation. Once again, the squadron was engulfed with that great Army evil, a series of inconsistent, contradictory rumors. As usual in such a situation, the net result was that everyone expected some big development to occur, but no one knew exactly what it would be. The big question on the lips of squadron members as May 1945 approached was whether or not the 765th Bombardment Squadron would return to the United States when the time came to depart from Torretta Field.

April 1. It was Easter Sunday in Italy and squadron airmen were all set to deliver one-quarter ton eggs to the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria. However, adverse weather forced the crews to bring the explosives back to the base. No credit for the mission was given. Crews were now using the new type escape kits – those without any money in them. The new system of using chits in payment for services rendered by civilians behind enemy lines was explained to the crews. Two officers and three of the air echelon bade farewell to friends as they climbed aboard a 2½-ton truck to depart for the U.S.A and home. Communications men rewired the office area as a second putt-putt was obtained to absorb one-half of the electricity load. The result was a brightening of lights throughout the "business district" of the organization. The monthly promotion list was posted on the bulletin board, listing fourteen new staff sergeants, fourteen new sergeants, and eight new privates first class. The men who had been "awaiting out" their departure to Rome since Thursday, March 29th, finally took off for three days in that city.

April 2. Squadron fliers dropped their explosives on the marshalling yard at St. Polten, Austria, on this date. No enemy resistance was encountered and all ships returned without trouble. Men participating in the attack claimed that the marshalling yard had been knocked out prior to their arrival over it.

Squadron bombs landed in the target area, adding to the intense destruction already inflicted on this enemy installation. This date marked the squadron's first anniversary as a combat unit. Since 2 April 1944, the organization had participated in 20% missions against the Nazis. Four officers and nine enlisted men departed for rest camps. Men of the ground echelon went through the gas chamber to test the functioning of their masks. At 0200 in the morning, watches were advanced to 0300 as double summer time came into affect at Torretta Field.

April 3. Early reveille begins long after regular reveille on this date, being scheduled for 0720. However, before that hour came around, a stand down had been called. Numerous training flights took place. A lengthy training film on venereal disease was shown.

April 4. For the second consecutive day, a stand down was called before the crews were briefed on the scheduled mission. Both Col. Lawhon and Col. Rogers made a thorough inspection of the squadron area. The enlisted men's club tried out a new policy of opening its bar from 1600 to 1730 to enable the men to have a "quick one" before chow. Lt. Cunningham's crew arrived to augment the squadron's list of aerial teams. Two enlisted men departed for Rome to make PRO radio transcriptions.

April 5. The second completed combat mission of the month was carried out on this date. The target was the marshalling yard at Brescia, Italy, and bombing was by boxes. The squadron flight did not release its bombs on the first pass and made a 360-degree turn to make a second run. On this second attempt, the 500-pounders were dropped on the yard with devastatingly accurate results. An explosion occurred that was felt in the airplanes and black-brown smoke rose up many thousand feet. No enemy resistance was met and all aircraft had no difficulty in returning to base. Two new Liberators made their home on squadron hardstands, bringing the total of combat ships up to fourteen. Two officers were promoted to first lieutenant.

April 6. It was the same town but a different installation there that was bombed on this date. This time it was the small arms plant at Brescia, Italy, that received a "plastering". Once again, squadron bombardiers did themselves proud and achieved an excellent pattern of hits on the objective. Enemy opposition was nil and none of the aircraft had any trouble returning to base. An enlisted man departed to attend for seven days the Flux Gate Compass School in Bari.

April 7. The squadron planned to continue its onslaught against the Nazi supply and transportation system in northern Italy, but the weather interfered and covered the target, the Vipiteno Railroad Bridge, with clouds. The airmen brought the explosives back to the base and were not given credit for a mission. Four flying officers and seven air echelon enlisted men, all having completed thirty-five missions in the theater, left the squadron area en route to the U.S.A.



April 8. The Bronzolo marshalling yard in northern Italy was scheduled to be the target on this date. However adverse weather precluded a successful bomb run there, and the aircraft attacked the marshalling yard at Gorizia, Italy. This objective met the same fate as the installations at Brescia had several days prior; and, when the big Liberators headed for home, there was not much left of this railroad depot. It was another "milk run" for the lads and no flak was present to menace them. Aerial photographs confirmed the reports of extensive damage inflicted on this target. Major Baker spoke to a gathering of the enlisted men for the first time since his resumption of duty as commanding officer. Among other topics of discussion, he commended the men on cooperating in making the area so neat appearing that the organization took first place in the monthly inspection contest between 461st Bomb Group squadrons. A quota was received for the Santa Caesera rest camp in Southern Italy, and the squadron's first list of men to go there departed on this date. Four officer and four enlisted men were selected to vacation there. Three enlisted men left for Rome to make a PRO radio transcription. Capt. McDonald was assigned to the squadron. His principal duty is that of pilot.

April 9. A maximum effort of ten squadron aircraft took off on a mission that was so secret that the target could not be revealed even after all the crews had safely landed. When the security ban on this activity was lifted, it was revealed that the airmen had supported the British 8th Army as they forced their way across the Sechio River. Fragmentation bombs had been released over German troops defending that area. Aerial photographs showed that a good pattern of hits was achieved on the designated target area. Four officers and ten enlisted men departed for rest camps.

April 10. The mission for this date was a follow up to that of the preceding day. Because of their noteworthy success and familiarity with the terrain from the mission of the previous day, the same crews were selected to fly. The results, although good, were not up to the day before. All crews returned safely to base. Good news was received by the orderly room in the form of word that Lt. Heinze and his crew, MIA over Vienna on March 26th, was safe in Allied hands. No further details were received.

April 11. On this date, the squadron learned through sad experience that there was no such thing as a cinch "milk run". Seven aircraft took off on an attack to bomb the marshalling yard at Bronsolo, Italy. Little enemy resistance was anticipated. However, the comparatively few guns located at the target were fired with accuracy and Lt. Caran's airplane received a direct hit in the bomb bay. His airplane went into a flat spin and plunged groundwards in flames. In addition to the regular crew, Lt. Hearn, squadron gunnery officer, was flying on that ship. Opinions on the success of the mission were varied. S/Sgt. Knapp of the communications department became the first enlisted man of the squadron to visit the new rest camp located at Nice in France. The supplementary payroll was paid at 1300.

April 12. It was the St. Veit railroad bridge in Austria just north of the Yugoslavian border that served as the target for squadron bombs on this date. Good results were reported by those who participated in the attack. No enemy opposition was encountered and all ships safely

returned to base. Major Thackston was designated Deputy Commander and Capt. Gray resumed duty as Operations Officer.

April 13. The combat mission scheduled for this date was cancelled before the crews were briefed. Bombers of the squadron awoke to be stunned by the news of the death of their Commander-in-chief, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Everyone kept on hoping that it was a false rumor until confirmation came in from numerous news agencies. Grieved over this tragic loss, the men were more than ever determined to defeat our enemies and establish the principles of freedom for which President Roosevelt dedicated his life. Aircrew members turned in their weapons to the ordnance department, an activity that augmented the abundance of rumors already besieging the area. The enlisted men of Lt. Caran's crew, missing in action over Bronzolo, Italy, were automatically promoted to the rank of sergeant. One officer and two enlisted men departed from the area en route to the U.S. They had completed their tour of duty in this theater. More excitement and rumors began circulating as all men in the organization were called into the orderly room to verify their points for demobilization after the fall of Germany. Most of the men did not have sufficient overseas time to get very optimistic about their prospects.

April 14. A normal effort of seven squadron aircraft attacked the Malcontenta Ammunition Factory near Venice, Italy. No opposition was encountered, but over the target the other squadron flights failed to follow the 765th squadron lead. The result was that 765th bombardiers were the only ones who released their explosives over the objective and only a small number of these hit in the target area. All ships returned to base. Twelve enlisted men left for rest camp in Rome. Four officers flew to the Eternal City to vacation there for a similar period. Lt. Bruning and his entire crew were transferred to the 98th Bomb Group. F/O Sparber was relieved of duty in the squadron and sent to the 576th Bomb Group. Enlisted men of the ground echelon turned in their weapons and ammunition to the ordnance department.

April 15. Fifteen airplanes from the squadron took to the sky to drop explosives on Axis installations. This attacking force was divided into two units and each attacked a separate target. The smaller force went to knock out the Nervessa Railroad Bridge in Northern Italy, while the other group of ships participated in a secret mission. A tragic and unusual series of aerial mishaps occurred as the later attack force was assembling over the area. The weather was very adverse and both Lt. Staples' and Lt. Brewster's airplanes suddenly went into spins and headed groundwards. Both pilots were able to level off their ships after a loss of altitude; but, before this occurred, a total of seven airmen had parachuted from the two ships. Exceptionally grievous because it was so unnecessary was the death of Cpl. Schultze of Lt. Brewster's crew who perished when he jumped from his airplane at such a low altitude that his parachute had no time to open. Sgt. Manolakelli of that crew suffered an ankle injury. Lt. Bell, bombardier of Lt. Staples' crew, suffered a slight skull fracture. The other four men were not injured. Members of the organization fell out at 1600 in Class "A" uniform and were transported to the Group Headquarters area where they participated in a memorial service in honor of President Roosevelt.

April 16. The mission on this date was a return visit to the target of the day before. A security silence was once again placed on the name of the objective. Adverse weather prevented the airmen from dropping their bombs and the explosives were returned to base. Neither credit nor whiskey was given for the mission. A showdown inspection took place in the ground echelon enlisted men's area. The purpose of the check was to determine shortages of clothing and equipment. Those items were displayed in front of the tents on shelter halves.

April 17. For the third consecutive day, a maximum effort of squadron airplanes participated in a secret mission. This time the explosives were dropped and inflicted a large amount of damage on the target. Upon the return of the crews, the security silence on the name of the objective was suspended and it was learned that squadron airmen had flown to the Bologna area for the past three days to lend support to advancing Allied ground troops. Four new crews joined the squadron. They were transferred from the 47th Bomb Wing. Members of these combat teams had from 7 to 27 missions to their credit. They had been selected to finish their tour of duty in this theater rather than to return to the U.S. with their units. Col. Craven C. Rogers assumed command of the 461st Bomb Group (H). He succeeded Col. Brooks A. Lawhon, who was transferred to the 49th Bomb Wing.

April 18. Once again a maximum effort of ten squadron aircraft were scheduled to take to the sky on a combat mission. However, a stand down was called before briefing occurred. Members of the squadron were called into the orderly room to be interviewed for the purpose of filling out a personal affairs questionnaire. Good conduct medals were distributed to men already awarded this ribbon. Major Thackston was placed on DS with Group Headquarters.

April 19. Once again the squadron sent every available ship into the sky, and on this date it was the Avisio Railroad Viaduct and Bridge in Northern Italy that was attacked. It was claimed that the bombs hit in the area of the bridge, but the exact amount of damage inflicted could not be determined. Moderate but inaccurate flak was encountered; and, although some of the ships had close calls, all returned to base. A mechanical malfunction caused an engine of Lt. Frattone's plane to fail and he was forced to drop behind the formation on the return flight. He was escorted to friendly territory by two P-38's.

April 20. The crews again took to the sky to cooperate with our ground troops fighting in Northern Italy. One thousand pound bombs were released over the Lusia Road Bridge; and, when the airplanes returned homeward, the bridge had been completely knocked out. No opposition was encountered and all aircraft returned safely. Intelligence Officer, Capt. Willie Platt, was transferred from the squadron. No S-2 officer had as yet been assigned to take his place. Lt. Steinhauser and S/Sgt. Yarbrough were awarded the DFC. S/Sgt. Yarbrough, injured when his airplane crash landed on February 13th, was transferred to the Detachment of Patients.

April 21. Squadron airmen were scheduled to attack a rail center in Northern Italy, but a last minute change in orders sent them to the Attnang/Puchiem marshalling yard in Austria. Excellent results were again obtained by squadron bombardiers. No opposition of any nature

was encountered. The organization's first fire in many months occurred when one of the tents in the officer's area caught fire from its stove. Capt. Wilbur H. Russell joined the organization to assume duty as squadron S-2 officer. Four flying officers and three aircrew enlisted men bade last farewells before departing for the U.S.A. on a permanent change of station. Nine men departed for Rome to make radio transcriptions. The usual weekly inspection of the squadron area occurred. Lt. Norton was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant.

April 22. Combat plans were cancelled during the night and aerial activity on this date was limited to training flights. Lt. Kimbell was transferred to the 450th Bomb Group. Lt. Haberman and Lt. Franks, members of one of the crews transferred to the squadron from the 47th Bomb Wing, were promoted to first lieutenants.

April 23. A force of ten squadron aircraft attacked the Badia Road Bridge over the Adige River, which runs across Italy north of the Po River. Excellent results were obtained; bomb strike photos showed a large mass of hits solidly on the bridge. The mission was another "milk run" for the airmen. Four officers and ten enlisted men departed for rest camps. Promotion policy was explained to aircrew enlisted men at a meeting in the theater at 1930.

April 24. Squadron aircraft on this date flew to Rovereto, Italy, to attack the marshalling yard there. It was not until the third run on the target that the bombs were released. The explosives fell on the objective with commendable accuracy. Slight and inaccurate flak was encountered over the target. All ships returned safely. The group anniversary newspaper was distributed to the men. Each person received three copies of this newspaper commemorating the first year of combat of the 461st Bomb Group. Sgt. Mueller, a radio monitor, was assigned to the squadron. The enlisted men's war bond raffle was held in the theater before the showing of the feature picture.

April 25. A normal effort of seven squadron aircraft took off to attack the north main marshalling yard at Linz, Austria. Despite intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire encountered over the objective, good results were obtained. While preparing to land back at the base, Lt. Dormond's airplane lost a main wheel. Damage from flak caused it to drop off when released to the down position. Lt. Dormond bailed out seven men from his crew and then brought his plane in for a brilliant landing with only the nose wheel on which to roll along the runway. Lieutenant Ricland flew back with a feathered engine and was forced to land at the 454th Bomb Group field when both Torretta Field runways became blocked by crashed aircraft. The area seethed with excitement as numerous parachutes were observed in the sky above. No one realized that the men were members of the organization. All landed within a radius of a few miles of the area and were quickly picked up. Of the seven, only one, Lt. Norton, was injured to the extent that hospital treatment was required. He broke a bone at the base of his spine. Two other men suffered sprained ankles. Cpl. Wolsonovich was transferred to the Detachment of Patients. Lt. Whalen and T/Sgt. Christie were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

April 26. It was the Lions marshalling yard in Austria that was bombed by squadron Liberators on this date. Very commendable results were obtained. No opposition was encountered and all

ships returned to base without difficulty. Lt. Traetta and Lt. Rentz were awarded the DFC for leading the Wing on the mission of April 9th to attack enemy troop concentrations north of the Eight Army line in Italy. Pvt. Stinson departed from the squadron to assume duty at the newly-constructed group hospital. Sgt. McCarney, an airplane mechanic, was transferred to the 49th Bomb Wing. The two crew men, transferred to the organization from the 47th Bomb Wing, were jumped to the rank of technical sergeant.

April 27. No combat mission was flown on this date.

April 28. For the second consecutive day, a stand down occurred. The group screening team set up offices in the squadron theater, and aircrew members brought their records to each officer and enlisted man of the team in turn for examination. All deficiencies and errors were corrected at once.

April 29. For the third consecutive day, the squadron engaged in no action against the enemy. Training flights were flown. Seven enlisted men, all radar specialists, were assigned to the squadron. S/Sgt. Underwood, veteran of thirty-three months in the ETO, became the second ground echelon man to be rotated to the zone of the interior on a permanent change of station.

April 30. Once again it was a stand down, and Liberators took to the sky only on training hops. Ground echelon men commenced their screening procedure. Service records, Form 20's, pay books, dog tags, and immunization papers were checked. Wages for the month of April were paid at 1300. As usual, chances on a war bond raffle were sold at the end of the pay line. Everyone was pleased to note the return of Lt. Heinze's crew to the squadron. MIA over Vienna on March 26th, they were reported safe in Allied hands on April 10th. The crew had landed on an emergency landing field behind Russian lines.



Squadron HQ

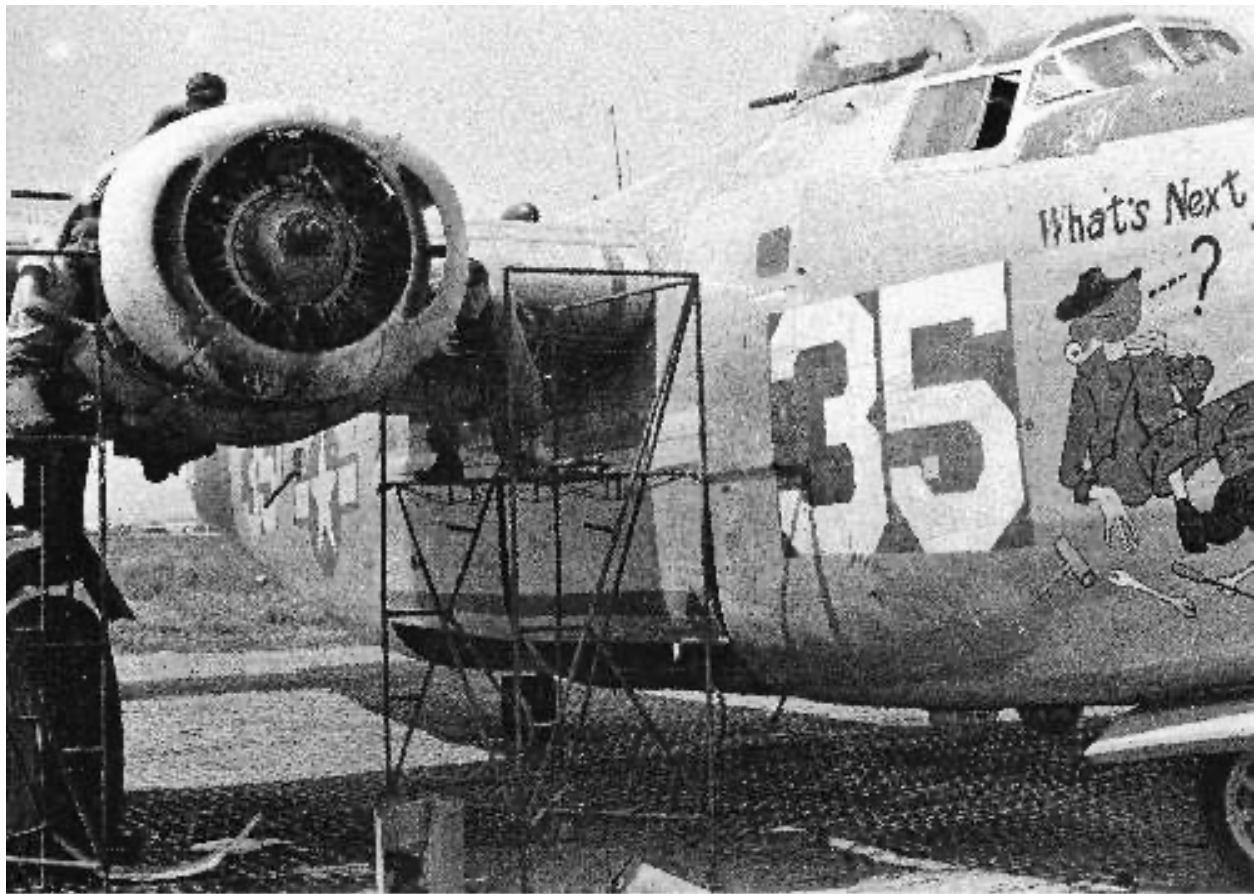


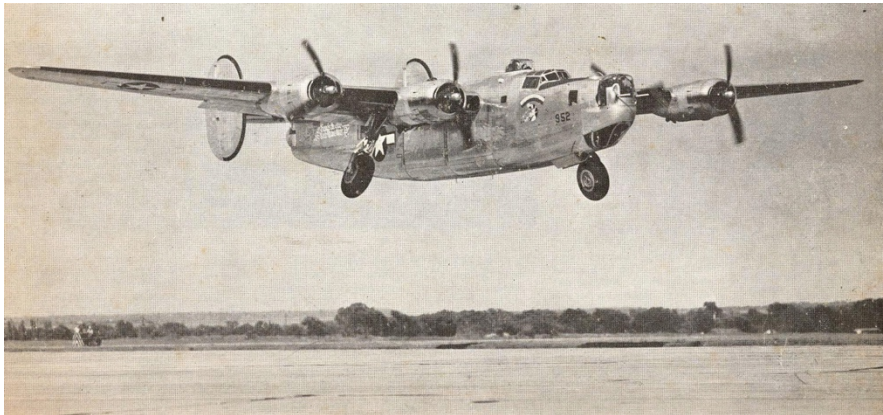
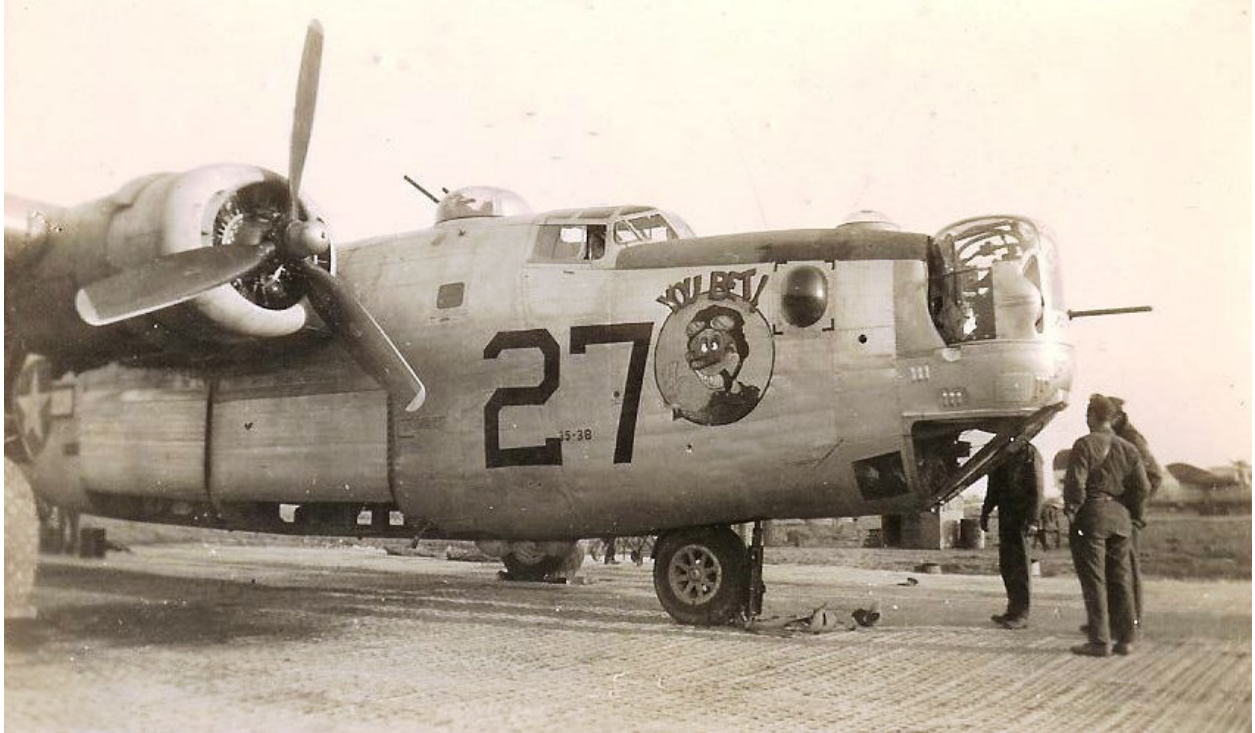












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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.