

# CHAPTER II THE SALT FLATS AT WENDOVER.

## (A) ORGANIZATION

### 1. Mission of Organization

On the morning of 1 October 1943 a big warm sun shone brightly from a cloudless sky over the Salt Flats of Wendover. Largely due to the efforts of Capt. Howard Lund, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William Foster and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harry Oglesby, who together with a detail of enlisted men had constituted the advance party at Wendover Field, the 461<sup>st</sup> Group found itself comparatively well situated.<sup>(1)</sup> Everywhere there was hustle and bustle as the various sections of the Group began to set up operations at the new station. An optimistic feeling of confidence and hope would be sensed among the personnel of the Group.

The Group's mission during the month of October was to be that of filling up and training the Ground Echelon and the receiving and training in Second Phase the twenty (20) flight leader crews, the arrival of whom was hourly expected.

### 2. Growth of Organization

a. Key Personnel. On pages 4 and 5 of Chapter I can be found a list of the key personnel of the Group as of 25 September 1943. As time went on the following additions were made:

(a) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jack Herzfeld, Group Dental Officer	27 Sept 1943. <sup>(2)</sup>
(b) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Edward Kierman, Group Armament Officer	9 Oct. 1943. <sup>(3)</sup>
(c) 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Paul G. Rasmussen, Group Chaplain	10 Oct. 1943. <sup>(4)</sup>
(d) Mr. Norman Boggs, American Red Cross Director	20 Oct. 1943. <sup>(5)</sup>
(e) 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Sydney Spiveck, Ass't Group S-2 Off'r	26 Oct. 1943. <sup>(6)</sup>
(f) W/O Fred Medau, Group Tech Inspector	27 Oct. 1943. <sup>(7)</sup>
(g) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Charles Billhart, Group Spec. Serv. O.	31 Oct. 1943. <sup>(8)</sup>

b. Trainees. It had been expected that the Fifteenth Wing and the Eighteenth Replacement Wing would meet their obligations in furnishing officers and men as outlined in the Second Air Force "Diagrammatic Organization Schedule" for OTU Heavy Bomb Groups.<sup>(9)</sup> As the days passed, however, misgivings crept over the key personnel of the Group as it was realized these commitments were not being met on time and that the training program would inevitably suffer as a result.

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<sup>(1)</sup> See App. No. 1, Chapter II, page 1

<sup>(2)</sup> See App. No. 2, Chapter II, page 2

<sup>(3)</sup> See App. No. 3, Chapter II, page 3

<sup>(4)</sup> See App. No. 4, Chapter II, page 4

<sup>(5)</sup> See App. No. 5, Chapter II, page 5

<sup>(6)</sup> See App. No. 6, Chapter II, page 6

<sup>(7)</sup> See App. No. 7, Chapter II, page 7

<sup>(8)</sup> See App. No. 8, Chapter II, page 8

<sup>(9)</sup> See App. No. 5, Chapter I, page 6.

Twenty flight leader crews had been expected on 1 October 1943. The first nine of these crews arrived on 11 October 1943 followed by another crew on the 12th and still another on the 13th. None of these crews had navigators.<sup>(10)</sup> These arrived on 18 October 1943.<sup>(11)</sup> On the following day came five additional flight leader crews.<sup>(12)</sup> By this time it was understood that the four model crews were to be classified with the sixteen crews on hand in constituting the twenty flight leader crews.

On 19 October 1943 came thirty full crews and on the following day one additional crew.<sup>(13)(14)</sup> Thus, by 21 October 1943 the Group had fifty-one of its anticipated seventy crews.

c. Airplanes. As was stated on page 8 of Chapter I the Group had no plane when leaving for Wendover Field on September 30th. At Wendover the first airplane was received on 5 October 1943. To this one plane were added three on the 6th, one on the 9th and another on the 10th. On the 10th, however, one airplane was lost to the Group as was another on the 17th. On 25 October 1943 three planes were gained and on the following day two more were gained. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, however, one was lost. Despite the loss of this plane, for the first time the Group had a total of eight planes. The gain and loss of airplanes is presented graphically in the following table:

**TABLE III – GAIN AND LOSS OF AIRPLANES**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>NO. GAINED</b>	<b>NO. LOST</b>	<b>NO. ON HAND</b>
1 October 1943	0	0	0
5 October 1943	1	0	1
6 October 1943	3	0	4
9 October 1943	1	0	5
10 October 1943	1	1	5
17 October 1943	0	1	4
25 October 1943	3	0	7
28 October 1943	2	1	8

d. Daily Morning Report. The growth of the organization during October in strength is recorded in the following figures which are taken from the Morning Report.

**TABLE IV – STRENGTH AND GROWTH IN PERSONNEL, OCTOBER 1943.**

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>OFFICERS</u></b>	<b><u>ENLISTED MEN</u></b>
1 October 1943	67	402
2 October 1943	67	424
3 October 1943	67	424

<sup>(10)</sup> See Appendage No. 8, Chapter II, Page 8

<sup>(11)</sup> See Appendage No. 9, Chapter II, Page 9

<sup>(12)</sup> See Appendage No. 10, Chapter II, Page 10

<sup>(13)</sup> See Appendage No. 11, Chapter II, Page 11

<sup>(14)</sup> See Appendage No. 12, Chapter II, Page 12

5 October 1943	67	463
6 October 1943	67	462
7 October 1943	68	522
8 October 1943	68	456
9 October 1943	67	596
15 October 1943	101	773
20 October 1943	249	1004
25 October 1943	259	1065
30 October 1943	264	1070

### 3. Stations.

During the month of October the Group trained at Wendover Field. Headquarters was housed in five tents in the middle of the tent area in which lived the enlisted men. Tents were also used by Operations on the line. The Officers occupied five wooden barracks. These buildings, plus a Group Dispensary, a Group Briefing and Interrogating Room and two mess halls for enlisted men constituted all of the wooden buildings at the disposal of the 461<sup>st</sup>.

Wendover Field is snuggled at the foot of the mountains on the state lines of Nevada and Utah where once ended Great Salt Lake. As far as the eye can carry not a tree or a blade of grass can be found. From the air one can see nothing but mountains to the west and north and nothing but ditches of water running through the salt flats to the east and south.

Naturally, the Officers' Club and the bowling alleys quickly became the centers of attraction for the officers. The Enlisted Men's Service Club, the bowling alleys, the theatre, the PX and the beer parlor were the rendezvous places for the enlisted men. With one forty eight hour pass every two weeks the officers and men quickly settled into a routine of long hours and hard work.

## **(B) MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

### 1. Governing Policies.

Lt. Col. Carter returned from Mountain Home on 2 October 1943.<sup>(15)</sup> The following day at his Staff meeting he expressed pleasure at the progress the Group had made during his absence; urged all department heads to get their files up to date; discussed the daily schedule; named Maj. Smith, the Deputy Group Commander, temporary schools officer; placed the organization on a twenty four hour work schedule; charged the Statistical Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Couch, with the keeping of the progress records; announced a stated time for Staff meetings; and gave each Department Head a maximum of three days in which to get his program going at full swing.

The evening of 11 October 1943 Lt. Col. Carter, Lt. Col. Grogan, Maj. Smith, Maj. Lott and Capt. Burke met with the nine newly arrived flight leader crews. The

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<sup>(15)</sup> See Appendage No. 15, Chapter I, Page 16

Commanding Officer welcomed the crews and frankly told them the nature and schedule of the training program. Each of the Staff Officers present was presented to the crews.

At his Staff Meeting on 16 October 1943 the Commanding Officer stated he was planning to visit Headquarters of the IV<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command to learn the details of the expected move of the Group at the end of October to a field of the Fourth Air Force. He urged all department heads to make plans in anticipation of this move.

## 2. Difficulties Encountered

As was explained earlier in this Chapter under the heading of “Growth of Organization”, one of the greatest causes of difficulties sprang from the failure of officers and men to join the Group on scheduled time.

Other difficulties included: Fuel shortages which began October 12<sup>th</sup>; sporadic oxygen shortages; no aerial Photo Officer and insufficient cameras for bomb spotting; deficiencies in First Phase training found among the personnel of the arriving crews; no wing tanks for an airplane in sub-depot; no mechanics’ jackets for men working on line; only one oil truck available to service planes of the Group; inadequate lighting system for maintenance and difficulties in scheduling tow target.

## 3. The Big Change.

Lt. Col. Carter returned from a trip to the IV<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command the evening of 23 October 1943.<sup>(16)</sup> The following morning he faced his Staff. Looking drawn, tired and ill at ease he quietly informed his Staff the Group was to be moved to Hammer Field at Fresno, California. He discussed detailed plans for movement of the Group and set up the machinery for an Advance Echelon. Then suddenly he rose from his chair, moved to the front of his desk, and told his Staff that because of his physical condition he had been taken off flying status for a period of six months and consequently was being relieved of his Command. In a trembling voice and with tears in his eyes as well became a superior officer and a very fine gentleman, he thanked his Staff for splendid past cooperation and expressed confidence in the ability of the personnel of the Group to carry on under new leadership. A deep silence fell over Group Headquarters as the meeting adjourned.

On October 25<sup>th</sup> a new Commanding Officer, Col. Frederic E. Glantzberg, arrived, looked over the situation, and met individual members of the Group Staff.<sup>(17)</sup> He had been relieved as Commanding Officer of the 467<sup>th</sup> Heavy Bomb Group to be assigned to the 461<sup>st</sup>. On October 26<sup>th</sup> all activities of the Group were suspended that he might meet all personnel under his Command in the Base Gymnasium. He paid tribute to Lt. Col. Carter and assumed command of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group.

## 4. The Next Move.

Brig. Gen. Samuel M. Connell, Commanding Officer of the IV<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command, and Col. Charles B. Dougher, Commanding Officer of the IV<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command

<sup>(16)</sup> See Appendage No. 13, Chapter II, Page 13

<sup>(17)</sup> See Appendage No. 14, Chapter II, Page 14

Supervisory Unit No. 3 of Hammer Field, Fresno, California, visited Headquarters of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group on October 27<sup>th</sup>. They came to meet the key personnel of the Group and to help in expediting the movement of the Group at Hammer Field.

This movement involved the dispatching of an Advanced Party,<sup>(18)</sup> the ferrying of the airplanes then in possession of the Group,<sup>(19)</sup> the ferrying of airplanes that had been assigned to the Group from other fields in the Second Air Force,<sup>(20)</sup> the movement of the Ground Echelon by two trains,<sup>(21)</sup> and a Rear Echelon.

Most of the key personnel in the Air Echelon left Wendover Field the morning of 29 October 1943 in a formation flight of the eight airplanes then in the possession of the Group. Except for having to fly at high altitude, because of the presence of an unexpected front, the formation arrived at Hammer Field without incident at approximately 1300. This was the first comparatively large formation flight of the Group. Col. Dougher and the Officers of the Advanced Party met the party. After lunch, which was served in a building near the line, everyone immediately went to work.

The first train carrying the Ground Echelon left Wendover at 1130 on October 29<sup>th</sup> with Maj. Scott, the Group Adjutant, as Train Commander. The officers and men on this train were packed into antique cars, seventy-six individuals per car. The train stopped on numerous sidetracks but finally arrived at Hammer Field at 2200 on October 30<sup>th</sup>. The troop train under the command of Lt. Col. Grogan, the Group Executive Officer, proved to be a duplication of the one commanded by Maj. Scott. This one left Wendover at 1200 October 30<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Hammer Field at 2030 on October 31<sup>st</sup>. A few days later, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Oglesby arrived at Hammer Field with part of the personnel of the Rear Echelon.<sup>(22)</sup> Still later Capt. Mitton, the Ass't Group S-4, arrived with the remainder of the personnel of the Rear Echelon.<sup>(23)</sup>

##### 5. Policies of the New Commanding Officer.

The same evening that the Air Echelon arrived at Hammer Field, Col. Glantzberg held a meeting of such members of his Staff as were then on the field. With him was Col. Dougher, the Commanding Officer of Supervisory Unit No. 3, who spoke words of welcome and assured Col. Glantzberg and his Staff of full cooperation on the part of the personnel of the Supervisory Unit.

In a period of approximately one half hour Col. Glantzberg announced the following policies:

- a. Names of individuals to be reclassified were to be submitted at once.

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<sup>(18)</sup> See Appendage No. 15, Chapter II, Page 15

<sup>(19)</sup> See Appendage No. 16, Chapter II, Page 16

<sup>(20)</sup> See Appendage No. 17, Chapter II, Pages 17, 18 and 19

<sup>(21)</sup> See Appendage No. 16, Chapter II, Page 16

<sup>(22)</sup> See Appendage No. 18, Chapter II, Page 20

<sup>(23)</sup> See Appendage No. 18, Chapter II, Page 20

- b. No drinking by members of combat crews will be tolerated during the last twelve hours before a scheduled flight. Likewise, there will be no drinking by mechanics working on the line during the twelve hours preceding the time they are scheduled to go to work.
- c. There will be a review and inspection once each week. This will be for half of the personnel on Tuesday and for the other half on Friday.
- d. Orderly Rooms, Day Rooms, Supply Rooms, Squadron Messes, Squadron Barracks and the Barrack Areas will be inspected daily.
- e. The Combat Intelligence Sections will be expected to keep Situation Maps and to make news presentations.
- f. Every Staff Officer is to place his name, rank, and duty assignment on the door of his barrack.
- g. Group and Squadron Officer of the Day and Charge of Quarters are to be provided.
- h. A list of tower control officers is to be prepared.
- i. It is hoped to establish a Drum and Bugle Corps.
- j. There will be no leaves or furloughs for any personnel of the Group until the training program is completed.
- k. Group Headquarters and each Squadron will provide a sign-out board for key personnel.
- l. A visit in the near future by the Commanding General of the IV<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command should be anticipated.
- m. There is no curfew at Hammer Field.
- n. Flying clothes will be worn only on the line.
- o. Each Group Staff will visit all his Squadron Sections weekly and submit a written report to the Group Commander.
- p. All squadron messes will open at noon of 1 November 1943.
- q. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Foster will serve as Group Adjutant until the arrival of Major Scott.
- r. Flying will be on a seven day a week schedule; Ground School on a five day a week schedule.
- s. There will be four flying periods each twenty-four hour period.

t. Major Lott, the Group Combat Intelligence Officer, was named Ground School Officer.

u. Crews will fly one day and attend ground school the next. For these purposes they will be split into Section I and Section II.

v. Ground School will start November 4<sup>th</sup>.

w. Combat crews are to have one twenty-four hour pass each week, half of the crews on Saturday and the other half on Sunday.

## 6. Visits.

Lt. Colonel William L. Hines, Assistant Inspector of the Second Air Force, intermittently spent several days in the Group during the first full week in October. This was his annual inspection of all units in the Second Air Force. A letter concerning his inspection of this Group is enclosed in the Appendage. He told Lt. Colonel Carter he was forwarding a rating of "Excellent" to Headquarters of the Second Air Force.

The visit of General Samuel M. Connell and Colonel Charles B. Dougher has already been recorded in this chapter.

## 7. Biographical Introduction.

William G. Carter, the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Carter, was born 29 December 1906 at San Antonio, Texas. After being graduated from the high school at Port Lavaca, Texas, he enrolled as a student in mechanical engineering at Texas Agricultural and mechanical College.

On 1 July 1929, a few weeks after his graduation from college, he reported to Brooks Field for Primary Training as an aviation cadet. He was graduated as a pursuit pilot at Kelly Field on 23 June 1930 and immediately began a tour of active duty that covered a period of sixteen (16) months. At Kelly Field, Carter flew one of the original Curtiss Hawk Planes, the original model of the present P-40. His first assignment was with the Third attack Group which was located at Fort Crockett, Galveston, Texas. Davenport Johnson was then the Commanding Officer of the Group. Later he was assigned to the 20<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group at Mather Field, California, of which Clarence L. Tinker was then Commanding Officer.

After leaving the 20<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group, the young pilot was on inactive duty for a period of four and one half (4 ½) years. During that time, however, he flew sufficient time with reserve components to retain his rating as a Group One Pilot.

On 16 March 1936, Carter returned to active duty by rejoining the 20<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group that was then stationed at Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana. In May 1937, he was assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Base Group at Hamilton Field. Later he became the Base Engineer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Base Group at the same field. He spent the winter of 1940-41 with the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Base Group at Fort Douglas, Utah. In May of 1941 he became the Engineering Officer of

the 39<sup>th</sup> Air Base Group and was sent to Boise, Idaho, where he served during the construction of Gowen Field.

With the outbreak of war in December, 1941, he was assigned to Headquarters of the Army Air Force in Washington, D.C., in the A-3 Section. From March 9, 1942 until he was relieved for assignment to the Second Air Force, he served with the War Organization and Movement Department at Army Air Force Headquarters.

He was assigned to the Second Air Force in December 1942. His first assignment was that of a Provisional Group Commander of thirty-six crews stationed at Blythe, California. Upon completion of First Phase Training at Blythe, he moved his Group to the Army Air Base at Pyote, Texas, for Second and Third Phase Training. Following completion of this training he took his Group to the Twenty First Wing for processing and eventually to a European Theatre.

Upon his return from this mission he reported for temporary duties at Headquarters of the Second Bomber Command at Fort George Wright, Washington. There, on 1 August 1943, he received orders to assume command of the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group.

In the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group he deeply impressed all with whom he came in contact with his knowledge of heavy bombardment, his devotion to duty, his straightforward policies, his bearing, his intelligence and sympathetic understanding of the officers and men under his Command, and his faith in his subordinates.

On April 8, 1937 he was married to Miss Toleda Louise Bruning. To them was born their only child, David Willis Carter, on April 20, 1938. Carter holds the permanent rank of Captain. He was commissioned a Lieutenant Colonel, 29 May 1943 as of 1 March 1942.

**HISTORY OF  
461<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)**

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**REDESIGNATION \*\* NONE**

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ASSIGNMENTS - -

GROUND ECHELON: Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, 11 August 1943 to 10  
September 1943.

Army Air Base, Kearns, Utah, 11 September 1943 to 30  
September 1943.

AIR ECHELON: Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, 11 August 1943 to 13 August  
1943.

Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, Fla, 13  
August 1943 to 1 September.

AAB, Pinecastle, Florida, 1 September 1943 to 30  
September 1943.

461<sup>ST</sup> GROUP: AAB, Wendover Field, Utah, 30 September 1943 to 29  
October 1943.

AAB, Hammer Field, Fresno, California, 29 October to  
December 31, 1943.