CHAPTER VII FRESHMAN MISSIONS PLUS THE ROUGH ONES, APRIL 1944.

(A) Narrative History.

The history of the 461st Bombardment Group for the month of April revolves very largely around the flying of combat missions. On days when there were no missions, both the combat crew personnel and the ground personnel improved their housekeeping facilities. The enlisted men's service club and the officers' clubs were further improved. Religious services were conducted for the Protestants in the Group by Chaplain Rasmussen, who also made arrangements for Jewish services. The 37th Service Group Chaplain, Captain Walter F. Junk, regularly conducted the Catholic services. Special Services Officers, Lt. Mente and Lt. Billhart, opened a Group theatre and scheduled a nightly showing of moving pictures. Visitors from other Bomb Groups, the 49th Bombardment Wing, and the Air Force frequently came and went. Skies cleared, the mud slowly disappeared, and early spring came to Southern Italy.

Although most of this chapter dealing with the events which took place in April concerns the problems and the accomplishments of the combat crews, they were far from being the only officers and men in this organization who really went to work in earnest. The ground officers and men in every Section, both in Headquarters and each Squadron, met the challenge of blasting the enemy with many long hard conscientious hours of labor. After flying five combat missions in six days, the Group was stood down for maintenance on the 8th of April. Under that date Colonel Glantzberg made the following entry in his diary: “How the ground crews keep going, I don’t see. They are doing a wonderful job.”

On April 4th Lt. Colonel William B. Keese, Commanding Officer of the 484th Bombardment Group, and some of the senior members of his staff visited the Base and had lunch in our Headquarters Officers’ Mess. A few days later, on the 9th and 14th of April, Lt. Colonel Keese’s Group arrived from Africa. Their planes were stationed on the east side of the field. When the new Group began flying combat missions on the 29th of April, the problems were presented of having both Groups using one landing strip and one comparatively tight rendezvous area.

By April 4th the Group had secured a P-40 which was used by Colonel Glantzberg or Lt. Colonel Hawes in herding the planes into formation over the assembly area and in following the formation well out over the Adriatic or the Mediterranean.

Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force, paid his first visit to the Group on the 13th of April and was present to greet Colonel Glantzberg and the crews upon their return from the Budapest mission. With Colonel Lee, Lt. Colonel Hawes, Lt. Colonel Grogan, and Major Scott, the General looked over the set-up at Group Headquarters and in some of the Squadron areas. He also inspected the field. Before leaving, he told Colonel Glantzberg that the 461st Group was the best new Group he had seen come to the Fifteenth Air Force.
From April 17th to 28th, Colonel Glantzberg was a patient in the 61st Station Hospital at Foggia, where he underwent an operation. In the Colonel’s absence, Lt. Col. Hawes assumed the duties of Commanding Officer. Upon returning from the hospital, Colonel Glantzberg flustered the members of his Staff into a new and even deeper admiration of him by insisting on leading the formation to Alessandria on April 30th.

(B) Operations.

During the month of April the Group flew a total of sixteen missions to targets, mostly marshalling yards, located in six different countries in Europe: Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary, Roumania, Austria, and France. There were 508 sorties with 69 early returns, some of which were spares. Tonnage of bombs dropped on targets totaled 874 tons. Claims of enemy fighters were as follows: nine destroyed, four probably destroyed, and one damaged. Six planes and crews were lost to flak.

A chart entitled “Analysis of Operations”, a copy of which constitutes part of this chapter, depicts the breakdown of the accomplishments of each Squadron. Another chart entitled “Mission Summary”, a copy of which also constitutes part of this chapter, presents more of an overall picture of the Group’s operations for the month of April.

MISSIONS

Mission No. 1, 1 April 1944 – Senigallia R.R. Bridge, Italy (Cancelled)

The morning of 1 April 1944 crews were briefed for their first target. This target was a railroad bridge at Senigallia, Italy. Weather was bad when crews went to their planes. Flares from the tower delayed take-off. Mission finally stood down at 1100 o’clock much to the disappointment of the whole Group.

Mission No. 1, 2 April 1944 – Bihac M/Y, Yugoslavia

The first mission flown by the Group was that to the Bihac Marshalling Yard in Yugoslavia. This mission was led, of course, by Colonel Glantzberg. Flight Leader 1st Lt. Joseph N. Donovan was the lead pilot with Colonel Glantzberg flying as his co-pilot. Captain Marion M. Pruitt, Group Navigator, was the navigator on the lead plane with 1st Lt. George V. Leffler, Group Bombardier, as the bombardier. The Deputy Group Commander, Lt. Colonel Philip R. Hawes; the Group Operations Officer, Major William Burke; and four Squadron Commanders, Major James B. Knapp, Major Robert E. Applegate, Captain James C. Dooley and Captain Edwin T. Goree flew the mission either leading a flight or as a Deputy Leader in the No. 2 position in “A” Flight of each Section. Two of the Squadron Operations Officers, Captain William J. Franklin and 1st Lt. William H. Tallant, also flew on this mission.

The weather was excellent; the bomb load consisted of fragmentation bombs. All members of the crews were intensely interested in watching their first bombs hit a target. As a result, two planes collided over the target and were lost. One of those planes was piloted by 1st Lt. William H. Zumsteg; the other one by 2nd Lt. Sidney S. Wilson.
Intops Summary No. 255, 2 April 1944. “35 B-24’s of the 461st Bomb Group off on freshman mission dropped 61.5 tons of 20 lb. Frags between 1131/1137 hours from 19,000/20,000 feet. Five A/C jettisoned 9.5 tons, while 1 A/C dropped 1.8 tons on Pianosa Island. Six additional A/C returned early. 4 E/A were seen in target area but there were no encounters and no claims. Two B-24’s were lost due to a collision at the rally point. Results reported by crew observations indicate 40 to 60% of bombs in target area with heavy smoke in south part of M/Y. Bomb strike photos available give incomplete coverage of bursts.”

Mission No. 2, 3 April 1944 – Drnis M/Y, Yugoslavia

The next day the Group was back to Yugoslavia again on another of its freshman missions. This time the target was the marshalling yard at Drnis. Lt. Colonel Hawes was the formation leader while Colonel Glantzberg flew as a Second Section Leader. Flying in the lead plane with Lt. Colonel Hawes were the pilot, Flight Leader 1st Lt. Floyd W. Woodard; Captain Pruitt; and Lt. Leffler. Again Major Burke, the four Squadron Commanders, and the two Squadron Operations Officers who had not flown the previous day: Captain William J. Bock and Captain David P. McQuillan also flew this mission. The air speed flown by the lead plane was too slow with the result that the formation was badly spread.

The day was hazy and Group leaders had difficulty in identifying the target against the tan background of early spring. The mission was not as successful as had been the first one, and the crew members began to realize that targets were not easy to identify and hit.

Mission No. 3, 5 April 1944 – Nis M/Y, Yugoslavia

This mission was led by Major Robert E. Applegate, 765th Squadron Commander. Colonel Glantzberg flew the deputy lead position. The Deputy Group Commander, the Group Operations Officer, and all the Squadron Commanders also flew this mission.

To the haze that had been experienced on the second mission was added 8/10 undercast for this third mission. As a result of the haze, the undercast, and the tan background on the ground, the target was missed completely. For the first and only time during the month no pictures of the bombing were obtained.

The formation was the best thus far flown by the Group. Several mistakes, however, were made. The Group failed a 360º circle and let down to bomb below the overcast; it failed to get on the step before the bomb run; it failed to cover a cripple on the way home; and it also failed to get under the overcast for the return trip home across the Adriatic.

Mission No. 4, 6 April 1944 – Zagreb A/D, Yugoslavia

The 764th Squadron Commander, Captain Edwin T. Goree, did an outstanding job in leading this mission. The lead pilot, 2nd Lt. James O. Bean, his bomardier; 2nd Lt. Geaoge B. Cran; and the Squadron Navigator, 1st Lt. Earl M. DeWitt were the officers on the lead
plane. For the fourth day in succession the freshman mission took the Group to Yugoslavia.

The mission was another fragmentation mission; this time to the north end of the airdrome at Zagreb. Nine-tenths cloud coverage obscured the target and only fifteen of the thirty-one planes over the target dropped their bombs. This was the first mission on which the Group had fighter escort and was its first encounter with enemy fighters. The attack was made by six ME-109s and by nine FW-190s. One enemy plane was shot down. This fighter was claimed by S/Sgt. Melborn Dale Williamson the top turret gunner on a plane in the 765th Squadron.

The plane flown by 2nd Lt. John K. Specht and Major Robert E. Applegate, which did not drop its bombs on the target, developed a fire in the bomb bay that led to an explosion when the bombs were jettisoned over the Adriatic returning from the target. Three members of the crew left the plane and were lost. They were: the bombardier, 2nd Lt. William S. Sullivan; the navigator, 2nd Lt. Harold E. Milne; and the nose turret gunner, Sgt. John J. Marszalkiewics. Near the Base the seven remaining members of the crew abandoned the plane and parachuted safely to earth. Crew members were rapidly learning that combat missions are dangerous. As a result of this mission all crew members developed a deep-seated and persistent dislike for fragmentation bombs.

The Commanding Officer, the Deputy Group Commander, the Group Operations Officer, and the four Squadron Commanders, and two of the Squadron Operations Officers all flew this mission.

**Mission No. 5, 7 April 1944 – Ferrara M/Y, Italy**

Freshman mission days were now behind. Instead of flying individual missions, the Group was assigned for the first time to fly Wing formation. This was the first of several missions to be flown with the Groups with the 55th Wing.

Beginning with this mission the Group began to curtail on the number of executive pilots flying every mission. As a result of the experiences gained in the former missions, Colonel Glantzberg ordered that an exceptionally competent bombardier or navigator should ride in the nose turret of the lead ship to assist in pilotage. 1st Lt. Stiles, 766th Squadron Bombardier, flew this mission in that capacity.

Although the crews did not sense it when they were briefed for their fifth mission on Good Friday morning, their missions were getting tougher. Their target was the first one which the Group had been assigned in Italy, that of the South Marshalling Yard, Ferrara. Colonel Glantzberg, Lt. Donovan, Captain Pruitt, and Lt. Leffler, who had led the first mission, were back again in the lead. Again enemy aircraft were seen but not encountered. The pilots all did a superior job of formation flying on this mission. Over the target the Group experienced intense, aimed, and extremely accurate heavy flak for the first time. Despite this new shocking experience the crews did an outstanding job. Having seen enemy fighters for the second time, having been hit hard over the target by enemy anti-aircraft guns, and having really covered the target with a beautiful pattern of
bombing, the crew members began to believe they were veterans. There was no stopping this Group after confidence built in all personnel by the success of this mission.

Intops Summary No. 260, 7 April 1944. “33 B-24’s of the 461st Bomb Group were dispatched. There were no early returns and all bombed primary dropping 66 tons of 500 lb GP bombs at 1310 hours from 21,000 feet. 5 S/E aircraft and 4 Ju-88s were seen in the distance 15 miles S.E. of target. Flak at the target was intense, accurate, heavy, aimed type. There were no losses. Photo reconnaissance photos show bombing exceedingly well concentrated on the target area, and in addition to hits which have totally blocked the yards and inflicted much damage on rolling stock, several damaging hits have been scored on industrial buildings, including the reported ball-bearing plant West of the yard. The main weight of the bombs fell on South end of the M/Y and the loco depot, damaging many of the approximately 200 cars present and at least two locos. Hits were scored on the immediate approach to the South end of the river railroad bridge which completely blocks the yard; on the sugar refinery, flour mill, goods shed West of the main line tracks; and two large buildings just to the East of the yard. Observation of other evidenced damage is hampered by the smoke from fires started in the area.”

MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED PHOTO
RECONNAISANCE WING.

SECRET
10th April 1944

INTERPRETATION REPORT No. D.B. 43. ITALY.

683 Squadron Sortie P.177, dated 10th April 1944 mean time 1600 hours shows:

Ferrara M/Y.

Attacked by 33 B-24s on 7th April 1944.
Last report AI/219, dated 14th February 1944.
Through lines are open. The main weight of the attack has fallen on the Southern end of the M/Yd, and on industrial plant in the vicinity. Some clearance and repairs are noted to areas in the town previously damaged, and to the Transformer Station, to the South, and the Canepificio Minificio Milano Hemp Factory, northwest of the M/Yd.

(1) Soc. E. Sercizio Molini Flour Mill smoldering at the time of photography and more than three quarters destroyed.
(2) At least three hits on the Southern approach to the R/R bridge have cut through tracks to BOLOGNA and branch lines to Poggio Rusco, and Porto Maggiore, but two lines have been repaired and repairs still in progress on two others. Road bridge to the East almost severed.
(3) Damage to three out-buildings of Canepificio Sinz Hemp Mill, one building one quarter destroyed, and two half destroyed by fire and H.E.
(4) Further damage, or clearance to North side of main building of the C.S. Hemp Mill. (See also 3)
(5) Additional damage to buildings in the Zuccherificio Bonora Sugar Refinery, which was already largely destroyed.
(6) Several hits in M/Yd cutting tracks and wrecking rolling stock, but through lines have been opened, and a train is seen moving south at time of photography.
(7) Direct hit cutting tracks into car shops.
(8) Moderately large R/R buildings further damaged and partially demolished.
(9) Heavy damage to main building of factory believed to be the Fratelli Zanzi Aero Engine Valve Factory. Three out of six large bays with curved roofs have been completely destroyed. Construction activity just E. of here.
(10) Direct hit on main building of the I.M.I. Ball Bearing factory.
(11) Unidentified ‘L’ shaped building half destroyed.
(12) Clearance of previously damaged area in Canepificio Linificio Milano Hemp Factory. (Not on print distributed)
(13) Industrial Siding probably cut and repaired.

Annotated Print Distributed: 4077
Prints: 4090-4092, 4076-4078
Comparative: P.94, 3110-3113, 4093-4098

COMMENDATION

As a result of this highly successful mission, the following commendation was received in the form of a TWX message from Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force:

“FROM: TWINING, CG 15AF

“TO: CO 461 BG

“FOR THE EXCELLENT BOMBING PATTERN ON ATTACK OF FERRARA, ITALY, MARSHALLING YARDS AS EVIDENCED BY STRIKE PHOTOS, I DESIRE TO SEND ‘WELL DONE’ TO THE 461 GROUP.”

Missions No. 6: 8, 9, 11 April 1944.

On the 8th of April and again on the 9th, missions were briefed for the marshalling yard at Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Both missions were stood down. On 11 April 1944 still another mission was stood down. Target for that day was to have been the M/Y at Bologna, Italy.

Mission No. 6, 12 April 1944 – Zagreb M/Y, Yugoslavia

After four days of inactivity, Mission No. 6 was flown on 12 April. The target was the marshalling yard at Zagreb. Despite a four-tenths undercast and much flak, the crews did an excellent job.

For the seventh mission, which was against the Duna Tokol A/C Components Factory at Budapest, RDX bombs were used for the first time by this Group. Major Burke flew as Group leader for the first time. On this mission a total of 58 enemy aircraft were seen. Several encounters were experienced, three enemy planes were destroyed and three more claimed as probable. Twin-engine enemy airplanes fired rockets at the formation. Single engine enemy airplanes flew parallel with the Group at a safe distance and radioed headings, altitude, and air speed to their ground installations. Flak over the target was intense, accurate, and heavy. Two bombers were lost over the target. 1st Lt. Charles W. Bauman, flying the deputy lead position in “A” Flight of the second Section, had part of a wing shot off by flak. His plane fell into the plane in the number 4 position of the same flight, which was piloted by 2nd Lt. Paul S. Mowery. A third plane flown by 2nd Lt. Kay B. Steele, which had come off the target with the formation, failed to return to the Base. Colonel Glantzberg, who was flying as co-pilot in a plane in the second Section, led a small formation of planes in chasing attacking Ju-88s away from this damaged plane. He was unable, however, to stay with the plane because of an undercast. Fifteen planes were damaged over this target.

Again the Group turned in an excellent mission by dropping 45 per cent of its bombs within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point on a comparatively rectangular building well hidden in woods.

**COMMENDATION**

From General Twining on the following day came the following TWX through channels:

“FROM: TWINING CITE FAF ABLE 16

“TO: CO 461ST BOMB GROUP

“IT IS DESIRED THAT YOU EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO ALL PARTICIPATING PERSONNEL IN YESTERDAY’S COUNTER AIR FORCE OPERATIONS FOR DOING AN ESPECIALLY FINE JOB. THE 460, 461, AND 483 BOMB GROUPS DID ESPECIALLY GOOD BOMBING ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY INEXPERIENCED. THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE FIGHTER UNITS AND THEIR EXCELLENT ESCORT WORK CONTRIBUTED IMMEASURABLY TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS OUTSTANDING OPERATION.”

“PS: KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.”

THE 49TH WING ADDS ITS PROUD COMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL’S EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK.

The following TWX was also received after this mission:
“FROM: LEE CO 49TH BOMB WING

“TO: COMMANDING OFFICER, 451ST 461ST 484TH BOMB GROUPS
APO 520

“THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE FIFTEENTH AIR
FORCE IS QUOTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION. CITE FAF BAKER
13 – I AM HAPPY TO PASS ON THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE
RECEIVED FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, EIGHT AIR
FORCE. ‘THE EIGHT AIR FORCE JOINS ME IN
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT OPERATIONS. WE OF
THE EIGHT FULLY APPRECIATE THE EFFECT OF THESE
OPERATIONS TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING OUR JOINT
MISSION.’”

Mission No. 8, 14 April 1944 – Chitila M/Y at Bucharest, Roumania (Cancelled)

Mission No. 8, 15 April 1944 - Chitila M/Y at Bucharest, Roumania

With Mission No. 8 the Group was off on its first mission to Roumania. Bad
weather built up over Yugoslavia and there was nine-tenths cloud coverage in the target
area. Bombs were dropped, but the results were unobserved. Twenty enemy aircraft
were seen but there were no encounters.

Mission No. 9, 16 April 1944 – Belgrade Zemun A/D, Yugoslavia

The primary target for this mission was the Brasov Airdrome in Roumania. Bad
weather experienced the day previous on the Bucharest Mission had moved westward and
built up to over 20,000 feet. Nineteen of the thirty-four planes to take off lost the
formation in the clouds over Yugoslavia and returned to the Base. Fourteen others
individually worked their way to the top of cloud formations and reformed on Colonel
Glantzberg who chose the last resort target, Belgrade Zemun A/D in Yugoslavia, as his
target.

Fragmentation bombs were dropped with unobserved results through haze and six-
tenths cloud coverage. Again twenty enemy aircraft were seen without any encounters.
Half of the planes over the target were hit by flak and one was lost through flak over the
target. On this plane, piloted by 1st Lt. Floyd W. Woodard, were the members of one of
the four original “model crews”.

Mission No. 10, 17 April 1944 – Belgrade Zemun A/D, Yugoslavia

The primary target for this mission was the last resort target of yesterday. This time
the target was completely obscured by clouds and no fragmentation bombs were dropped.
This was Major Knapp’s first mission as Group leader.
Mission No. 11, 20 April 1944 – Tagliamento Casarsa RR Bridge, Italy

Reconnaissance photography having revealed that the enemy had partially repaired the damage this Group had done to the South Marshalling Yard at Ferrara, Italy on April 7th, the Group was reassigned to hit another section of the same target. Because of bad weather over the primary target the Group went on to bomb the first alternative, the Tagliamento Casarsa Railroad Bridge at the head of the Adriatic in Italy. This was the first attempt of the Group to bomb a bridge. The cloud coverage was seven-tenths. Coming down the river and hitting the target at right angles, the Group scored several hits on both the railroad bridge and the highway bridge beyond it. Fifteen per cent of the bombs dropped were plotted within a 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. Thirteen enemy aircraft seen by the Group made no passes at the formation.

Mission No. 12, 21 April 1944 – Chitila M/Y at Bucharest, Roumania

Again the target was the Chitila M/Y, Bucharest, Roumania, and again the weather was bad. A solid undercast prevented bombing with the result that all bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic. Forty enemy aircraft were seen, several were encountered, and one was shot down. A nose gunner, Sgt. W.G. Rollins, became the first casualty on a crew when his face was cut by shell casings from another plane.

Mission No. 13, 23 April 1944 – Bad Voslau A/D, Austria

When the crew members learned at briefing that they were to attack their first target in Vienna Area, they fully realized that they were now in the big time. Before our Group hit its target the 304th Wing had performed an outstanding job in practically demolishing the buildings at the Airdrome. Uncovering the three flights of each Section in approaching the target, the Group, led for the first time by Captain Dooley, completely sprayed the landing field with fragmentation bombs. The bombing pattern was one of perfection. The returning crews doubted if it would ever be necessary to return again to that target. Several encounters were had with twenty-three enemy fighters, two of which were claimed as probably destroyed. Fourteen planes over the target were hard hit by flak.

There were two casualties as a result of this mission: Bombardier, F/O R.B. Stewart, and a ball turret gunner, Sgt. P.N. Godino, both on 2nd Lt. G. Fulks’ crew. Each was hit in the foot by flak.

COMMENDATION

“FROM: OPERATIONS OFFICE 49TH BOMB WING

“TO: COMMANDING OFFICERS, 451ST, 461ST, 484TH BOMB GROUPS

“THE BOMBING OF BAD VOSLAU, 23 APRIL, BY THE 49TH WING WAS EXCELLENT. PLEASE PASS TO ALL PARTICIPATING MY COMMENDATION FOR A JOB WELL DONE. COL. LEE DESIRES TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR A JOB WELL DONE.”
Mission No. 14, 24 April 1944 – Chitila M/Y, Bucharest, Roumania

For the third time during the month the Group went to Chitila Marshalling Yard at Bucharest, Roumania. This time the weather was CAVU with haze. The target was picked up by the lead plane, but unfortunately a bomb rack malfunction temporarily held up the bombs in the lead plane, which overshot the target. This was also true of most of the planes in the first attack unit who were dropping on the section leader. The second Section saved the day for the Group by getting 11 per cent of all the bombs dropped by the Group on the briefed aiming point. The flak was intense and heavy, but inaccurate. Of the twenty-five enemy fighters seen, several were encountered, one was destroyed, and one was damaged.

Mission No. 15, 25 April 1944 – Nord A/D, Wiener Neustadt, Austria
(Cancelled)

Mission No. 15, 26 April 1944 – Wollerdorf A/D, Wiener Neustadt, Austria
(Cancelled)

Mission No. 15, 27 April 1944 – Wollerdorf A/D, Wiener Neustadt, Austria
(Cancelled)

Mission No. 15, 29 April 1944 – Submarine Pens, Toulon Harbor, France

This mission took the Group on its first trip to France and to a target in the sixth country of Europe that the Group bombed during the month of April. This was the first mission on which the 451st, the 461st and the 484th flew as the Groups of the 49th Bombardment Wing. The mission provided another new experience for the Group in that the target had been previously obscured by a perfect smoke screen from smudge pots situated both on shore and on ships in the harbor. For the first time the Group used 1,000-pound bombs. Results were unobserved, but no bombs were believed to have hit the target. The Group Bombardier, Captain Leffler, who was the lead bombardier on the mission and who had already turned in five successful missions during the month, both laughed at and cursed the clever Kraut.

Mission No. 16, 30 April 1944 – Alexandria M/Y, Italy

For the last mission of the month the Group was back to Italy and to its marshalling yard targets. The target, a large one, was hard hit, but the bombs were scattered across a long area. Colonel Glantzberg was most unhappy when the pictures showed that only 17 per cent of the bombs had hit the aiming point of this easily identified target, especially since the weather was CAVU, and there were neither flak nor fighters to interfere with the bombing.

MISSING IN ACTION

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
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<th>Home Town</th>
<th>Mission</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<td>William H. Zumsteg</td>
<td>Burlington, Cal.</td>
<td>4/2/44</td>
<td>Bihac</td>
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<td>John C. Fuller Jr.</td>
<td>Lumberton, N.C.</td>
<td>4/2/44</td>
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<td>George M. Felbar</td>
<td>Irvington, N.J.</td>
<td>4/2/44</td>
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<td>Joseph J. Repko</td>
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<td>Oscar R. Ives</td>
<td>Diagonal, Ia.</td>
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<td>Laredo, Tex.</td>
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<td>Sgt.</td>
<td>John J. Marszalkiewicz</td>
<td>Baltimore, Md.</td>
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<td>Zagreb</td>
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<td>Charles A. Humphress</td>
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Sgt. John H. Householder  Canton, Ohio  4/24/44  Bucharest

(C) Photo Section

The enclosed photographs accompany this History for the month.

(D) Special Accounts

a. Awards and Decorations.

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS
NUMBER 12
APO 520, c/o Postmaster
New York, New York,
15 April 1944.

9. Under the provisions of WD Circular 27 (1944) the following personnel, 461st Bomb Grp, are awarded the American Defense Service Medal. The proper entry will be made in WD AGO Forms 66-1 and 24:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>LT COL EDWIN W. GROGAN</td>
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<td>MAJ R FOSTER SCOTT</td>
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<td>MAJ CHARLES J. DEISHLEY</td>
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<td>CAPT HENRY M. HUDSON</td>
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<td>CAPT WALTER G. MITTON</td>
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<td>1ST LT LOUIS C. PFISTER</td>
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<td>2ND LT JAMES C. CLARK</td>
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<td>M SGT HEWITT (NMI) CALLENDER</td>
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<td>T SGT ARMANDO B. DOMINGUEZ</td>
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<td>SGT BENJAMIN R. GREGORY</td>
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<td>LT COL PHILIP R. HAWES</td>
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<td>MAJ WILLIAM (NMI) BURKE</td>
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<td>CAPT JOHN A. WAGENER</td>
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<td>CAPT MARION M. PRUITT</td>
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<td>1ST LT GEORGE V. LEFFLER</td>
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<td>2ND LT CHARLES S. BILLHART</td>
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SQUADRON COMMANDERS

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<td>MAJ JAMES B. KNAPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAJ ROBERT E. APPLEGATE</td>
<td>022933</td>
<td>CO, 765th Bomb Squadron</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPT JAMES C. DOOLEY</td>
<td>0431130</td>
<td>CO, 766th Bomb Squadron</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPT EDWIN T. GOREE</td>
<td>0724610</td>
<td>CO, 764th Bomb Squadron</td>
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</table>

By order of Colonel GLANTZBERG:

R. FOSTER SCOTT,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.
HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

GENERAL ORDERS 19 April 1944.

NUMBER 239

SECTION XII – AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

JOSEPH N. DONOVAN, 0-666158, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 766th Bombardment Squadron, 461st Bombardment Group, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. On 7 April 1944, Lieutenant Donovan was the lead pilot of a group of B-24 type aircraft on a mission to bomb an enemy rail center in Italy. Because of his skill and judgment as a leader, Lieutenant Donovan was chosen to lead the group on this vitally important mission. The target was obscured by haze, making perception extremely difficult, and, an intense concentration of accurate heavy flak, which damaged several planes in the formation, was encountered on the bombing run. Despite the heavy opposition and grave danger, he concentrated on maintaining his course, enabling his bombardier to make a perfect bomb run on the target. Due to the excellent formation flown and the faultless bomb pattern obtained, grave damage was inflicted on enemy equipment, material, and installations. Lieutenant Donovan’s rapid development of tactical ability, his consummate flying skill and superior leadership has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: San Luis Potosi, Mexico

GEORGE V. LEFFLER, 0-2043762, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, Headquarters, 461st Bombardment Group, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations as group bombardier of B-24 type aircraft. As lead bombardier during a high altitude daylight-bombing mission over an enemy rail center in Italy on 7 April 1944, Lieutenant Leffler found the target obscured by haze, making accurate bombing extremely difficult. Directing the coordination of the entire formation with superb craftsmanship and concentrating on his task, despite an intense barrage of heavy and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire, he made a perfect bombing run on the target, thus enabling the entire formation to drop their bombs with exceptionally successful results. Because of the precision and leadership so ably displayed by Lieutenant Leffler in his capacity of great responsibility as lead bombardier on this and other combat missions against the enemy, he has reflected great credit upon himself and the Air Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Madison, Wisconsin.

By order of Major General Twining:

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

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J.M. IVINS
J.M. IVINS
GENERAL ORDERS

NUMBER 314

30 April 1944.

SECTION V – AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND/OR OAK LEAF CLUSTER FOR THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross and/or Oak Leaf Cluster for the Distinguished Flying Cross, in the categories as listed, is awarded the following named officers, Air Corps, United States Army, residence as indicated, with the following citation:

For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in Mediterranean Theatre of Operations as pilot, co-pilot, navigator and bombardier of a B-24 type aircraft. On 13 April 1944, while leading their group on a vitally important bombing mission against an enemy aircraft factory in Hungary, severe and intense enemy opposition was encountered in the target area that seriously damaged their plane, and rendered one (1) engine inoperative. Despite the fact that adverse weather conditions had partially obscured the objective and their aircraft was practically unairworthy, these crew members knowing the importance of their heavy responsibility, continued through to the target and led the group on a flawless bombing run which caused utter demolition of vital enemy installations, factories, and material. Continuing on from the target area through a veritable hail of enemy anti-aircraft fire during which their plane was further damaged, they led their group formation safely home without loss. By their exceptional professional skill, outstanding leadership and intense devotion to duty, these officers, through their cool efficiency in completing a successful and important mission against great odds, upheld the highest tradition of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS


MARION M. PRUITT, 0-356129, Captain, Headquarters, 461st Bombardment Group. Residence at appointment: Greenville, Texas.

MARION C. MIXSON, 0-382635, first Lieutenant, Headquarters, 461st Bombardment Group. Residence at appointment: Charleston, South Carolina

FIRST (1st) OAK LEAF CLUSTER (BRONZE) FOR THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

By order of Major General Twining:

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

OFFICIAL:
/s/ J.M. IVINS
J.M. IVINS
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

b. Promotions.

Promotions which became effective during the month of April were as follows:

27 April 1944 – Henry M. Hudson, Group Engineering Officer, from Captain to Major.
27 April 1944 – Jack L. Herzfeld, Group Dental Officer, from 1st Lt. to Captain.
27 April 1944 – George V. Leffler, Group Bombardier, from 1st Lt. to Captain.
27 April 1944 – Paul G. Rasmussen, Group Chaplain, from 1st Lt. to Captain.
27 April 1944 – Charles S. Billhart, Assistant Special Services Officer, from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.
27 April 1944 – James C. Clark, Group Photo Officer, from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.
27 April 1944 – Edward F. Kiernan, Group Armament Officer, from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.

c. Changes in Personnel.

April 3. A board consisting of eight officers was appointed for the purpose of interviewing and making recommendations on nominees for appointment and/or termination of appointments of non-commissioned officers of the Grades 1 and 2. (1)

April 6. 1st Lt. Abraham Levine, relieved from assignment with Headquarters and reassigned to the 764th Bombardment Squadron. (2)

April 17. A Board consisting of the four Squadron Commanders was designated as the Group Awards and Decorations Board. (3)

A Flying Evaluation Board of six officers was designated. (4)

Chief Warrant Officer Fred C. Medau replaced 2nd Lt. Frank B. Maxson as Post Utilities Officer. (5)

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(1) See Appendage No. 1, Chapter VII, Page 1, Par 1.
(2) See Appendage No. 2, Chapter VII, Page 2, Par 9.
(3) See Appendage No. 3, Chapter VII, Page 3, Par 3.
(4) See Appendage No. 3, Chapter VII, Page 3, Par 4.
(5) See Appendage No. 3, Chapter VII, Page 3, Par 5.
April 19. Twelve replacement crews were assigned to the Group and further reassigned to the Squadrons of the Group. The first pilots were as follows:

2nd Lt. Robert E. Arbuthnot (765th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Jack R. Baker (764th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Edwin W. Boyer (767th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Charles A. DeSpain (766th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Merlon G. Morgan Sr. (767th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Otto Muller (767th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Rollen L. Phillips (765th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Chester A. Ray Jr. (766th Squadron)
1st Lt. James B. Robinson Jr. (765th Squadron)
1st Lt. Leroy G. Russell (764th Squadron)
2nd Lt. Jack R. Wright (766th Squadron)
F/O Samuel M. Zive (766th Squadron)

Captain Edwin T. Goree was added as a member of the Flying Evaluation Board.

April 21. 1st Lt. Alson E. Clark was appointed Group Ordnance Officer vice 1st Lt. Steve J. Ozanich.

d. Missing in Action Reports.

As a result of the thirteenth mission of the Group on 23 April 1944, 1st Lt. Matias M. Torres Jr. and his crew were reported missing. Late in the evening of the same day the information came down through channels that all of the crew members were safe on the Island of Vis and that only one of them had been injured. In a few days time nine members of the crew were back in their Squadron. It was then learned that the crew had bailed out over the Island of Vis and that the pilot had sustained a head injury when hitting the ground. As a result of this injury Lt. Torres was eventually returned to the United States. The co-pilot of the crew, 2nd Lt. Leonard P. Cash became the first pilot and the crew was restored to combat flying status.

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(6) See Appendage No. 4, Chapter VII, Page 4, Par 8.
(7) See Appendage No. 4, Chapter VII, Page 4, Par 5.
(8) See Appendage No. 5, Chapter VII, Page 5, Par 6.
(10) See Appendage No. 6, Chapter VII, Page 6.
APPENDAGES
Chapter VII, Page 1

APPENDAGE No. 1

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS NUMBER 8
APO 520, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York, 1 April 1944.

EXTRACT

1. A board consisting of the following officers is aptd to meet at the call of the president for the purpose of interviewing and making recommendations on nominees for appointment and/or termination of appointments of NCO’s of grade 1 and 2. Auth: AR 615-5. Board aptd by Par 2 SO 53 (1943) this Hq is hereby terminated).

   MAJ  MORRIS J. DROBECK     0305003  766TH Bomb Sq (President)
   CAPT  HARRISON G. WORD      0431916  461st Hq
   2ND LT  BRUANT S. MONTGOMERY 0863750  764th Bomb Sq
   1ST LT  MARION G. MIXSON     0382615  765th Bomb Sq
   CAPT  HERALD D. BENNETT     0376511  767th Bomb Sq
   CWO   FRED C. MEDAU          W2123965  461st Hq
   1ST LT  WILLIAM H. TALLANT   025795  764th Bomb Sq
   2ND LT  DESIRE L. BROUSSARD  0862521  766th Bomb Sq

   By order of Colonel GLANTZBERG:

   R. FOSTER SCOTT,
   Major, Air Corps,
   Adjutant.

   OFFICIAL:

   /s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
   R. FOSTER SCOTT
   Major, Air Corps,
   Adjutant.

   U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

   CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

   LEIGH M. LOTT
   Major, Air Corps.
APPENDAGES
Chapter VII, Page 2

APPENDAGE No. 2

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS
NUMBER 9

APO 520, c/o Postmaster,
New York, New York,
6 April 1944.

EXTRACT

9. 1st LT (1034) ABRAHAM (NMI) LEVINE, 0801110, is hereby reld fr asgd to Hq, 461st Bomb Gp, and is reasgd to the 764th Bomb Sq.

By order of Colonel GLANTZBERG:

R. FOSTER SCOTT,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps.
APPENDAGES
Chapter VII, Page 3

APPENDAGE No. 3

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS
NUMBER 13
APO 520, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York, 17 April 1944.

EXTRACT

3. The following named officers are hereby designated as members of a Group Awards and Decorations Board:

MAJOR JAMES B. KNAPP 0-21890 766th Bomb Sq (President)
MAJOR ROBERT E. APPLEGATE 0-22933 765th Bomb Sq
CAPT JAMES C. DOOLEY 0-431130 766th Bomb Sq
CAPT EDWIN T. GOREE 0-724610 764th Bomb Sq

The purpose of this board will be to evaluate all organizational recommendations for awards and recommendations. The Board will meet informally at the call of the President, as often as is deemed necessary, to study and evaluate organizational recommendations and to make further recommendations to the Group Commander, for his formal decision, on the appropriate awards or decorations, if any, which the Board believes are justified.

Each Squadron Commander will appoint an investigating officer who will be assigned the duty of gathering all pertinent facts surrounding any particular meritorious act of a member of the squadron. These investigating officers will also be responsible for the actual preparation of the proposed recommendations for forwarding to higher headquarters, after final approval of the case has been made by the Group Commander.

This headquarters will be informed of the squadron investigating officer within 48 hours after issuance of this order.

4. A Flying Evaluation Board of this Group consisting of the following officers will meet at the call of the president for performance of duties set out in ltr XV AF file 334. Sub: Flying Evaluation Boards, dd 16 Mar 1944 (cerf). The board appointed per par 5, SO 46 (1943) this hq is dissolved this date.

   LT COL  PHILIP R. HAWES 0-21220 President
   MAJOR  JAMES B. KNAPP 0-21890
   MAJOR  ROBERT E. APPLEGATE 0-22933
   CAPT  JAMES C. DOOLEY 0-431130
   MAJOR  CHARLES J. DEISHLEY 0-393951

5. 2ND LT (7542) FRANK B. MAXSON, 0-862899, is rel'd as Post Utilities Officer and is hereby designated Group Personal Equipment Officer. Vice CWO FRED C.
MEDAU, W-2123965, reld this date. Auth XV AF MEMO 56-1 (5 Apr 1944). AFF Reg 55-7 (1943) and XV AF MEMO 56-1 will be complied with.

By order of Colonel GLANTZBERG:

R. FOSTER SCOTT,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

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CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps.
APPENDAGES
Chapter VII, Page 4

APPENDAGE No. 4

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS
NUMBER 14

APO 520, c/o Postmaster,
New York, New York,
19 April 1944.

EXTRACT

5. Par 4 SO 13 (Flying Evaluation Board) this hq dd 17 Apr 44 is amended to include CAPT EDWIN T. GOREE, 0-724610, 764th Bomb Sq.

8. Having been assigned to this Gp pursuant tp VOCG, XV AF, 11 April 44, and P. 11 SO #106, Hq, XV AF, 15 April 44, the fol named O and EM are asgd to sq as indicated eff 11 April 44:

764th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 84
2ND LT (1024) JACK R. BAKER 0665268
765th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 38
1ST LT (1024) LEROY G. RUSSELL 026043

764th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 19
2ND LT (1024) ROLLEN L. PHILLIP 0677865
765th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 21
2ND LT (1024) ROBERT E. ARBUTHNOT 0690028

766th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 59
1ST LT (1024) JAMES B ROBINSON JR 0452052
766th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 52
2ND LT (1024) CHESTER A RAY JR 0809872

766th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 57
F/O (1024) SAMUEL M. ZIVE T122242
767th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 79
2ND LT (1024) JACK H. WRIGHT 0810977

767th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 78
2ND LT (1024) CHARLES A DESPAIN 0753865
767th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 77
2ND LT (1024) EDWIN W. BOWYER 0544019

767th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 77
2ND LT (1024) MERLON G MORGAN SR 0809850
767th BOMB SQ – CREW NO. 77
2ND LT (1024) OTTO (NMI) MULLER 0738005

By order of Lieutenant Colonel HAWES:

R. FOSTER SCOTT,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:
/s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

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LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps.
APPENDAGES
Chapter VII, Page 5

APPENDAGE No. 5

U.S. RESTRICTED Equals British RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
461st Bombardment Group (H) AAF

SPECIAL ORDERS
NUMBER 15
APO 520, c/o Postmaster,
New York, New York,
19 April 1944.

EXTRACT

6. 1ST LT (4512) ALSON E. CLARK. 01549683, on DS this Gp fr 6631st O.A.S.C., pursuant to VOCG, XV AF, is atchd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp is hereby aptd Gp Ordnance Officer, vice 1ST LT STEVE J OZANICH 01555116, 767th Bomb Sq, reld. (Branch of Service: Ordance).

By order of Lieutenant Colonel HAWES:

R. FOSTER SCOTT,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:
/s/ R. FOSTER SCOTT
R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

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LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps.
APPENDAGES
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APPENDAGE No. 6

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 US ARMY

SPECIAL ORDERS 24 May 1944

EXTRACT

To: All Concerned.

Pursuant to authority contained in Sec V, Paragraphs 1 and 4, WD Circular 127, dated 29 May 1943, the following named Officers and EM, orgns as indicated are placed on DS with AFF Redistribution Station No. 1, Atlantic City, New Jersey, WP via mil acft, govt mtr T, and/or rail to Personnel Center No. 6, PBS, for trans-shipment to the United States, where upon arrival, they will report to the CO, AFF Redistribution Station No. 1, Atlantic City, New Jersey for issuance of further orders. Upon completion of DS, Officers and EM will return via most expeditious available water transportation to permanent station, Personnel Center No. 7-A at DUKO. The following forms will be carried on their person by each individual: Form 77 (Officers’ Pay Data Card) or Form 28 (Soldier’s Individual Pay Record) and Form 31 (Immunization Register). Necessary rations in kind will be furnished. TDN, 91-66 P 432-02 A 0425-24.

461ST BOMB GROUP (HV)

1ST LT LATTIAS M. TORRES, JR., 0664088 AC

By order of Major General TWINING:

/s/ MARTIN GOLDMAN
MARTIN GOLDMAN
Captain, AGD,

CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps.
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<tr>
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<td>No. Effective Sorties</td>
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<td>Weather</td>
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<td>% Airborne Returning Early</td>
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