

765TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Combat Intelligence Officer

WFF/jdk

APO 520, NY, NY
31 May 1944

SUMMARY OF THE SQUADRON HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

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. Captain 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.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE SQUADRON HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

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 5.

May 6. Mission #19 was flown today. The target was the Marshalling Yards at Ploesti, Romania. Our planes took off at approximately 0816, and all returned around 1530. No flak or fighters were encountered on the trip. From observations and photos, the Bombardiers had a perfect bomb pattern.

May 7. Target #20 was the Marshalling Yards at Bucharest, Romania. Take off time was 0750, and all our ships returned at 1800. Observations and photographs show that the target was well hit. Heavy flack was encountered during this mission. Captain Bock, Squadron Operations Officer, was sent to the station Hospital at Foggia, Italy. He was having trouble with his back, and it is hoped that they will be able to help him.

May 8. The weather was bad today, and no mission was flown. At approximately 0445 one of our ships caught fire on the ground and blew up with five 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 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.

May 9. There was no mission today. The following 2nd Lt's were promoted to 1st Lt., effective the 22nd of April, 2nd Lt's Garrison, Bennett, Dendy, Moss, Taylor, Kadow, Kostka, and Grimm.

May 10. Today the 765th flew its first Group Bombing Mission to the Wiener Neustadt aircraft factories in Austria. Take-off time was approximately 0730. A lot of flack and fighters

were encountered during the mission. About 7 planes out of the group came back with feathered props. Lt. Garrison had two props feathered and was forced to land at a fighter base north of Foggia, Italy. One ship from the 767th blew a tire and crashed on the runway, catching on fire. Captain Nathan, Sqd. Flight surgeon, with the aid of Capt. Goree, C.O. of the 764th, climbed inside the burning ship and got one of the crew members out who was pinned beneath the command deck. Captain Nathan was recommended for the Soldiers Medal.

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

May 12. The combat crews were briefed for their 22nd mission, the rail yards at Castle Maggiore, Italy. No flack or fighters were encountered, and all our ships returned safely around 1115. There was another briefing at 1200. However the weather closed in and all ships were kept on the ground.

May 13. Crews were briefed for their 23rd mission. The target was Faenza M/Y's Italy. No flack or fighters were encountered during this mission. An alternate target was hit today.

May 14. Our Squadron flew it's 24th mission today. The target was the marshalling yards at Padua, Italy. No fighters were seen, but there was a lot of flack. All of our crews returned safely. From Photographs and crew observations the target was well hit.

May 15. No mission was flown today.

May 16. No combat mission was flown today. EM were promoted to the following grades: 1 T/Sgt to M/Sgt: 16 S/Sgt's to T/Sgt.

May 17. The harbor and docks at Porto Ferrajo, Italy was target number 25 for our Squadron. No fighters and little flack was seen. The bomb pattern was good, and all our ships returned safely.

May 18. The 26th raid of this organization was to be the oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania. Take off time was approximately 0610. There was a heavy undercast and the target could not be found so they bombed Belgrade on xTA. Little flack and no fighters were encountered. Due to the undercast there was no observation on the results.

May 19. To-days raid makes the 27th for the Squadron. The target was the RR Viaduct at Recco, Italy. Due to bad weather several runs had to be made over the target. The results of this would be unobserved.

May 20. No mission was flown today. 2nd Lt E. W. Peterson was promoted to 1st Lt.

May 21. No Mission was flown today. The Squadron was called down to the Group Theater to hear a speech by Colonel Glantzberg on the fine standing of the Group in the 15th Air Force.

May 22. The crews were briefed this morning for their 28th mission. Take off time was approximately 0820, and the target was Pionbino, Italy. Light but accurate flack, and no fighters were encountered. All of our ships returned except #31. The ship was crewed as

follows: Pilot-1st Lt. J. T. Bennett; C-P-2nd Lt. E. W. Peterson; N-2nd Lt. R. W. Owen; B-2nd Lt A. E. Bartlett; Eng. S/Sgt. C. S. Berends; R/O- T/Sgt. O. W. Harzdorf; AE- S/Sgt. D. B. Frehulfer; ARO- S/Sgt. L. G. Ivy; Gnr. S/Sgt. J. E. Evans; Gnr. S/Sgt. R. C. Werner. The ship was last seen off the coast of Italy, and was believed to have tried to make Corsica. Air and Sea rescue crews worked for 2 days trying to find the ship, but were unable to do so.

May 23. At 0515 this morning crews were briefed for their 29th mission. The target was Subiaco, Italy. No flack or fighters were encountered and the target was well hit. 2 of our crews were sent to the Isle of Capri for a well deserved rest, and three officers were sent to Bari for the same purpose.

May 24. The target for today was Hollensdorf, Austria. It was the 30th mission for the Squadron, and a lot of flack and fighters were encountered. All of our ships returned safely. Lt. Childrey's accounted for 3 fighters, 1 each for Sgt. Pesta, Tail Gnr.; Sgt. Martin, Top Tur; and T/Sgt. Hodger, Ball Tur. Gnr.

May 25. Today's mission makes the 31st for the squadron. The men were briefed to hit the Marshalling Yards at Carnoules, France. There was no flack or fighters. Direct hits were seen on round house, and the bomb pattern was excellent.

May 26. To-day we penetrated further in France than we ever had. The mission was to Lyon, France, and it was the 32nd for the Squadron. Eight ships got under way for the target but two aborted and only six were able to continue. The bomb pattern was very good and approximately 60 were on the target. After Lt. Mixon aborted he found a target of opportunity (remainder of mission is unreadable).

May 27. The mission today was Salin, France, and it makes the 33rd for the Squadron. We had nine ships over the target; however, the raid wasn't as good as some we have had in the past. No fighters were seen, but they ran into two flack areas. Lt. Moss and crew had to land at Corsica to refuel.

May 28. No mission was flown today. Captain Bock returned from Foggia, Italy, where he had been in the hospital for the past couple of weeks.

May 29. Today the men were briefed for their 34th mission, and the target was announced as Weiner Neustadt, Austria. All of our ships went over the target, and did a very good job. Fighter coverage was excellent, however we ran into the usual amount of flack for this area. 5 B-24s of other groups were seen to go down. S/Sgt. Varner, of Lt. Phillip's crew did some god shooting and bagged himself an ME 109.

May 30. Today's mission was the 35th for the Squadron, and the target was an aircraft factory in Wells, Austria. The target was well plastered, and all of our ships returned around 1400. There were no fighters and the flack was moderate. 1 B-24 with red cowling was seen to go down over the target. 1st Lt. Dusenberry and F/O. Smithkin returned from their rest in Bari.

May 31. For the last day of May, 1944 the target picked was Ploesti, Romania. It was the 36th mission to have flown and makes 20 for the month of May. Flack for this area was heavy. A few E/A were seen, but none of them made any passes. All of our ships returned except "Landing Lady". The last she was seen, was 30 minutes after the ship 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 the gas tanks. And didn't have a chance to make it back home. The crew members are as follows: Pilot, 2nd Lt. Norris, Samuel N.; C-P, 2nd Lt. Baumann, Edwin (NMN); N-2nd Lt. Kamps, Everett C.; B-1st Lt. Stefenson, Edmond F.; Eng. S/Sgt Bindrim, A.J.; R/O. S/Sgt. DeSpain, G.P.; Gnr. S/Sgt. Farrell, J.L. Jr.; Nose Tur Gnr. S/Sgt. Culler, B.E.; Ball Tur Gunner S/Sgt. Curtin, J.S.; Tail Tur Gnr, S/Sgt. Ranieri, Harry P.