

SQ-BOMB-553-H1
JUL 44

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Classification canceled (changed to Unclass
by authority of CO 386 Bomb Sp
by CC Oates, May date 15 Nov 45

RESTRICTED

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553RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M) AAF
386TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF
APO #140, U.S. ARMY

19 August 1944

SUBJECT: Unit History.

TO : Commanding Officer, 386th Bombardment Group (M) APO #140, U.S. Army.

In compliance with letter 314.7, Headquarters Ninth Air Force, subject: "Instructions for the Guidance of Historical Sections of Commands" dated 4 January 1944, the following information is submitted covering the history of the 553rd Bombardment Squadron for the month of July 1944:

- a. Organization: Negative.
- b. Strength: 94 Officers and 361 Enlisted Men.
- c. Date of arrival at and of departure from each station occupied in ETO: Negative.
- d. Losses in action: 3 Officers and 3 Enlisted Men (See mission of 28 July).
- e. Awards and decorations earned by officers and enlisted men of this organization during July are as follows:

	14th Cluster to A.M.	13th Cluster to A.M.	12th Cluster to A.M.	11th Cluster to A.M.	2nd SOLC to A.M.
No. Officers	1				
earned award:		1	5	12	18
No. E. M.					
earned award:	0	1	6	8	12

	9th Cluster to A.M.	8th Cluster to A.M.	7th Cluster to A.M.	6th Cluster to A.M.	1st SOLC to A.M.
No. Officers					
earned award:	9	8	6	0	2
No. E.M.					
earned award:	11	9	5	4	4

	4th Cluster to A.M.	3rd Cluster to A.M.	2nd Cluster to A.M.	1st Cluster to A.M.	Air Medal
No. Officers					
earned award:	3	4	4	4	7
No. E.M.					
earned award:	4	8	4	6	3

- f. Awards and decorations received by officers and enlisted men of this organization per Hq IX Bomber Command General Orders as follows:

Awards per General Order #124, dated 11 July 1944:

- 2nd SOLC to A.M. - 1 Officer and 3 E.M.
- 9th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 13 Officers and 9 E.M.
- 8th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 13 Officers and 12 E.M.

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Awards per General Order #124, dated 11 July 1944, (cont'd).

7th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 17 Officers and 9 E.M.
6th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 5 Officers and 6 E.M.
1st SOLC to A.M. - 2 Officers and 6 E.M.
4th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 4 E.M.
3rd Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 5 E.M.
2nd Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 5 E.M.
1st Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 5 E.M.
Air Medal - No Officers and 3 E.M.

Awards per General Order #126, dated 17 July 1944:

12th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 2 Officers and No E.M.
11th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 2 Officers and 1 E.M.
2nd SOLC to A.M. - 3 Officers and 2 E.M.
9th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
7th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
6th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
Air Medal - 2 Officers and No E.M.

Awards per General Order #130, dated 19 July 1944:

13th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
2nd SOLC to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
7th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.

Awards per General Order #133, dated 22 July 1944:

Air Medal - 1 Officer and 4 E.M.

Awards per General Order #139, dated 28 July 1944:

11th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 3 Officers and 1 E.M.
2nd SOLC to A.M. - 2 Officers and 1 E.M.
9th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 3 Officers and 4 E.M.
8th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 2 Officers and No E.M.
7th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 2 E.M.
6th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and No E.M.
4th Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - No Officers and 1 E.M.
3rd Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 1 Officer and 1 E.M.
2nd Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 2 Officers and 3 E.M.
1st Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M. - 3 Officers and 3 E.M.

Important events which occurred throughout the month of July 1944 in this Squadron are summarized as follows:

4 July 1944

The first of eight missions to be led by Pathfinder airplanes started operations for July today. As is usually the case there was no observation to determine the results and no photograph to indicate the damage done to the target - an area strongly defended by enemy troops near La Barberie. This

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target, like all others bombed by our airplanes during July is in France (note for other missions in July). There was no opposition and the bomb load was sixteen 250 lb. bombs plus one leaflet bomb. The pilots were Col. Kelly, Cpts Tipton and Saltsman and Lts Young, Michael, Dismukes, Briggs, Richardson, Cleveland and Rauh.

5 July 1944

A fuel and ammunition dump at Senonches was scheduled to be bombed this afternoon but clouds sent our planes back with their bombs. Heavy, weak, accurate flak was seen at Chartres.

6 July 1944

The pattern of 250 lb. bombs from both boxes hit in almost exactly the same spot during the bombing of the fuel dump at Foret de Conches today. The results are classified as good. This was borne out later when a captured German prisoner who observed the bombing from the ground stated that many personnel were killed and considerable ammunition and stores were destroyed. No opposition was encountered by our planes. The pilots were Col Hankey, Capt Nagel and Lts Michael, Marquis, Young, Richardson, Rauh and Cleveland.

8 July 1944

Our planes participated in the aerial bombardment of German positions near Caen in preparation for the attack of British troops. The results of the bombing are termed gross to good. Each plane dropped sixteen 250 lb. bombs. Heavy, moderate, accurate flak over the target caused some concern but no planes were lost. The pilots were Lts Harris, Scott, Fugit, Rauh, Richardson, Dismukes, Michael, Crisman and Lovell.

9 July 1944

Finding the primary target obscured by clouds, our planes bombed a casual target - a highway bridge near Orleans at a crossing of the Loire River. Generally the results were good with at least one of the 1000 lb. bombs striking the center of the bridge, causing extensive damage and other hits of lesser importance. The heavy flak was moderate and inaccurate in the vicinity of Caen and Mezidon and presented less of a problem than the clouds. The pilots were Col Kelly, Cpts Nagel and Hochrein and Lts Dismukes, Fansler, Lytle, Marquis, Scott, and Young.

11 July 1944

Four 1000 lb. bombs were dropped by each of our planes on a fuel dump near Fleurs. Following pathfinder airplanes the bombing was completed through a heavy overcast making observations impossible. No opposition was observed. The pilots were Maj Dewhurst and Lts Rauh, Fugit, Bennett, Lytle and Dismukes.

12 July 1944

An intelligence report that a concentration of German SS troops were at

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Forêt de Cinglais, having been sent there from the front lines, resulted in a mission for our planes. Poor visibility continuing from yesterday necessitated following pathfinder again today and bombing results are unknown. Each airplane dropped sixteen 260 lb. fragmentation bombs. There was no opposition. The pilots were Capt Nagel and Lts Scott, Crisman, Fansler, Meyers, Harris, Briggs and Young.

The weather cleared sufficiently this afternoon to permit a visual bombing of two bridges in France. The first target, a railroad bridge at Nogent Le Roi suffered little damage from the 2000 lb. bombs which fell wide. Good results were obtained on another railroad bridge at Bonneval which was at least temporarily incapacitated. Clouds over the first target temporarily discouraged the second box and caused their diversion to the secondary target after being largely responsible for the poor results of the first box. Heavy flak at Dreux was moderate and accurate. The pilots were Maj Dewhurst and Lts Boersema, Hodge, Adams, Dismukes, Michael, Harris Rauh and Lytle.

15 July 1944

A bombing planned for enemy positions in the St. Lo area did not materialize today because of poor visibility over France. Over the Alderney Islands heavy, meagre, accurate flak was seen. All planes returned with their bombs.

17 July 1944

One of the most colorful bombings of the month occurred today when one of the largest fuel dumps near the fighting front - at Rennes - was hit and set on fire. Large fires were started in the target area sending smoke from three to four thousand feet into the sky. Later photographs showed that the gasoline stores were entirely wiped out. Lt. William E. Smith of this Squadron led one box. The results of the bombing are classified good to excellent. Heavy, moderate to intense accurate flak was encountered over the target. Sixteen 260 lb. bombs were carried by each plane. The pilots were Col Hankey and Lts Lytle, Adams, Meyers, Michael, Bennett, Dismukes, and Harris.

18 July 1944

Enemy strongpoints five miles east of Caen were hit when our planes dropped 260 lb. fragmentation bombs with fair to good results. Heavy, intense, accurate flak over the target which necessitated continuous evasive action together with smoke and dust from friendly artillery bombing which almost obscured the target impeded the bombing. The Marauder of Lt. Perkins (555th Bomb Sq.) was shot down over the target and he managed to escape by parachute. Upon reaching the ground he was captured by the Germans and later recaptured by the British. Our pilots were Lts Young, Lovell, Crisman, Fansler, Harris, Briggs, Michael, Cleveland and Richardson.

Word that the enemy was about to transport a division over the railroad bridge at Nogent Le Roi established that bridge as the target for this afternoon. Attacking it in flights the results varied from poor to excellent

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and photographs show that the bridge was severed. The value of this indicated by intelligence reports which state that the enemy division was delayed a week in reaching the front by having to detour. Four 1000 lb. bombs were dropped by each airplane. Heavy flak varied in accuracy and intensity at Caudebec. Our pilots were Maj Perry, Cpts Nagel and Hochrein and Lts Boersema, Rauh, Adams, Dismukes, Lytle, Meyers, Harris and Hodge.

23 July 1944

A fuel dump at the Forêt de Conches was spared when our planes turned back with their bomb load because of poor visibility. Heavy, moderate, inaccurate flak was encountered near Tronville.

24 July 1944

Lt. W. E. Smith of this Squadron led the second box as bombardier while Maj. Dewhurst piloted during the destruction of the railroad bridge at Sable Sur Sarthe today. Before reaching the target, the planes split into flights and Lt. Smith's flight received the only excellent rating scoring direct hits on the target. The total results varied from poor to excellent. Two week later the bridge was still observed as down. The load was four 1000 lb. bombs. There was no opposition. The pilots were Col. Kelly, Maj. Dewhurst and Lts Hodge, Rauh, Harris, Boersema, Young, Fugit, Scott and Dismukes.

25 July 1944

The heaviest load yet carried by our planes - twenty 260 lb. fragmentation bombs - was dropped on a German defended area west of St. Lo as part of the great air bombardment which preceded the major American breakthrough out of the Cherbourg Peninsula. All the bombs of the first box fell within the designated target area. The bomb pattern of the second box fell across its aiming point, a secondary road intersection, and hit numerous other buildings and installations, all adjacent and south of the pattern of the first box. The results were good to excellent. There was no opposition. The pilots were Lts Scott, Cleveland, Adams, Harris, Nelson, Meyers, Crisman, Goodwin and Rauh.

26 July 1944

General Thatcher piloting Maj Dewhurst's airplane led the first box in another attack on German dug in positions west of yesterday's bombing and near Marigny. This time the planes dropped twenty-eight 100 lb. bombs. Intervening clouds obscured the bombing and the results are unknown. There was no opposition by the enemy. The pilots were General Thatcher, and Lts Cleveland, Briggs, Harris, Fansler, Fugit, Dismukes, Richardson and Adams.

28 July 1944

For the first time in many months enemy fighters attacked our airplanes near the target and planes of this Squadron suffered the brunt of the attack. The target was a railroad bridge at Ecouches and the damage caused by the 1000 lb. bombs is unknown because it was a pathfinder mission. Attacking

from cloud cover, the enemy fighters first made a pass from above and then attacked our planes from the rear. Outstanding shooting was done by S/Sgt Harry J. Jacobs and T/Sgt Betrand B. Wilkenson of this Squadron, the former being credited with two planes shot down and the latter with one probable and two damaged. An FW 190 dove into the formation smoking and struck the wing of Lt. Briggs Marauder causing our only loss. The fighters were soon beaten off. Those of Lt. Brigg's crew missing are 1st Lt Frederick O. Briggs, 0813311, 1st Lt Claude C. Cannaday, 0759894, 1st Lt Leon C. Higginbotham, 0815478, T/Sgt Selwyn C. Denowitz, 12084158, S/Sgt Robert J. Birmingham, 31318690, and S/Sgt Charlie H. Johns, 37502498. The pilots were Lts Briggs, Boersma, Disukes, Henry, Crisman, Rutt, Scott, Richardson and Sentner.

30 July 1944

Another pathfinder mission was directed at an enemy strong point south of Caumont and the bombing was completed with good to fair results. Photographs which managed to be taken revealed that the bombs were dropped in two patterns, one to two thousand feet from the aiming point. The planes dropped another large load of twenty 260 lb. fragmentation bombs each. Heavy flak over the target was slight and inaccurate. The pilots were Lts Henry, Rutt, Boersma, Scott, Crisman, Harris, Fugit, Cleveland and Marquis.

31 July 1944

Extensive damage was inflicted on a railroad bridge at Tours/La Riche by our planes which attacked in flights. 2nd Lt Jack Eskenazi, bombardier who joined this Squadron this month recieved an excellent rating by dropping his bombs squarely on the center of the bridge as photographs indicate. After the bombing large gaps were seen in the center of the bridge and at the south end. Four 1000 lb. bombs was the bomb load. Overall results of the bombing varied from poor to excellent. Heavy, moderate, accurate flak was encountered over the target. The bridge hit today had been rebuilt after serious damage from a previous bombing and construction equipment was hit with the bridge. Also this was the longest mission to date. The pilots were Col. Hankey and Lts Adams, Richardson, Hodge, Scott, Rutt, Lytle, Harris and Cleveland.

Miscellaneous

Inclement weather impeding observations decreased the number of missions flown this month and necessitated the use of pathfinder airplanes frequently. All the targets were in France and directly or indirectly in support of or assistance to our troops. An unusually large number of fragmentation bombs were dropped on enemy defended areas. One of our planes was lost during the enemy fighter attack on July 28th and another of our airplanes was forced to land in France for repairs but crashed in landing. General Anderson presented Bronze Star Medal ribbons to the following crew chiefs whose airplane's completed 50 missions without an abortion: T/Sgts H. Dugas, M. Ginsburg, G. Heiselman, H.I. Levy, J. Miller, M.W. Muhl, K. W. Reinders, and S/Sgt J.H. Baker. Presentation was made on July 25th. On July 10th, Capt Albert E. Hill who did such outstanding work in this Squadron was transferred to Group Hq. as Group Bombardier and he is succeeded by 1st Lt William

E. Smith. On July 18th Lt. Col. Franklin W. Harris, having returned after spending over two months in the zone of the interior on detached service, was transferred from this Squadron of which he was commanding officer since its formation and sent to the 99th Bombardment Wing. Maj. David H. Dewhurst assumed command of this organization. 2nd Lt Peter Cantu, intelligence officer and 2nd Lt Bob D. Fox, armament officer, joined us during July. Six combat crews were transferred from this organization to the zone of the interior and four new crews joined us during July also. Having started operations on 31 July 1943, this Group completed its first year of operations this month. Demolition bombs dropped by our planes during July are as follows:

No. Dropped	Weight of Bomb (lbs.)
18	2000
239	1000
760	260 fragmentation bombs
446	250
254	100
2	leaflet bombs

Louis T. Little
 LOUIS T. LITTLE,
 Capt., Air Corps,
 Executive Officer

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