

JAN & FEB 1945

27 Sep 58

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MICROFILMED

GP. 410-41
JAN 1945

* S-E-C-R-E-T *

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UNIT HISTORY

HQ, 410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APO 140

UNITED STATES ARMY

COVERING THE PERIOD 1 JAN.'45 TO 31 JAN.'45.

* S-E-C-R-E-T *

I N D E X

- I. ORGANIZATION AND CHANGES IN KEY PERSONNEL...Page 1,
- II. STRENGTH.....Page 1,
- III. LOSSES IN ACTION.....Page 1 & 2,
- IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS.....Page 2,3 & 4,
- V. 410TH IN THE WAR EFFORT.....Page 4 & 5,
- VI. STATION LIFE.....Page 6.

I. ORGANIZATION AND CHANGES IN KEY PERSONNEL:

There were few changes about the key personnel of the 410th Bomb Group (L) during the month of January 1945. The first change took place on the sixth day of January at which time Captain Harry E. Anderson was appointed Summary Court Officer vice Major Edwin L. Means, relieved⁷³. 1st Lt. John J. Grunewald on 15 January was appointed Group Personal Equipment Officer vice 2nd Lt. William V. Wood, relieved and Group Oxygen Officer vice Major Jarvis P. Jones, relieved⁷⁴. 2nd Lt. Fred Ebbson was assigned to the Group on 18 January and appointed Assistant Group Radar Officer⁷⁵. A Special Courts-Martial was appointed on 25 January for the trial of such persons properly brought before it⁷⁶.

II. STRENGTH:

The first day of January found the over-all strength of the Group at 342 Officers and 1330 Enlisted Men with 38 Officers and 68 Enlisted Men comprising the strength of Group Headquarters. The middle of the month found the number of personnel falling off slightly to 336 Officers and 1318 Enlisted Men, with Group Headquarters gaining in strength two Officers and losing one Enlisted Man. The end of the month found the over-all strength falling off to 323 Officers and 1308 Enlisted Men with Group Headquarters losing one Officer and one Enlisted Man.

III. LOSSES IN ACTION:

The month of January was a rather rough one for the Group so far as casualties were concerned, the organization sustaining a total of fifteen - three men killed in action, five men seriously wounded in action and seven men missing in action. The first casualty of the month took place on New Years Day when the Group lashed out against the important enemy communication center at Laroche. The Jerry was throwing up plenty of flak that day and the plane of Major Kuhn, Commanding Officer of the 645th Bomb Squadron and formation leader, was literally peppered. Tunnel gunner S/Sgt H.A. Fredericks was seriously wounded and for the second time the well-liked gunner was "put out of action" and confined to a general hospital. The day following the group dispatched two boxes of A-20's against the enemy communication center at Gouvy, Belgium and there too the Germans were throwing up plenty of heavy, accurate flak. Going in on the bomb run the lead aircraft of the second flight in the second box sustained a direct hit and went down over the target. The crew members Captain Cyrus, Lt. Epperson, S/Sgt Fowle and S/Sgt Rushmore are listed as Missing in Action. Captain Cyrus and his two gunners had been with the Group since its infancy while Lt. Epperson had joined the organization at Gosfield, Essex, England.

73. Par #6, SO #2, Hq 410th Bomb Gp (L). 6 Jan.'45. Exhibit #1-1,
74. Par #3 & 9, SO #5, 410th Bomb Gp (L), 15 Jan.'45, Exhibit #1-2,
74. Par #6, SO #8, 410th Bomb Gp (L), 25 Jan.'45. Exhibit #1-3,
75. Par #1, SO #8, 410th Bomb Gp (L). 25 Jan.'45. Exhibit #1-4,
76. For breakdown see Exhibit #1-5.

III. LOSSES IN ACTION, cont'd:

The third mission of the month found Lt. Tensdale a pilot of the 645th Squadron sustained serious wounds on his fiftieth mission as the enemy tossed a blanket of flak into the sky over Clervaux, Luxembourg. Lt. Tensdale's aircraft was one of twenty-one aircraft sustaining battle damage on the mission.

During the period between 5 January and 12 January 1945, the Group flew but two missions. On the first of these missions the Group returned to bomb Clervaux while the second saw two boxes behind PFF aircraft lash out at Steinbrunn, Germany. On both of these missions the Group was fortunate in that it sustained no casualties. On 12 January, however, heavy intense, accurate flak accounted for two casualties over East, Germany as Lt. Hamster and 1st Sgt Jax of the 645th Squadron were seriously wounded. Twenty-one of the attacking B-24's sustained battle damage and two aircraft were lost.

A mission to Walleceburg on 16 January saw no casualties but on the following mission, 21 January 1945, Lt. Baymont of the 645th Squadron was seriously injured as his pilot successfully crash landed his plane away from the base. The day following, Lt. Ben L. Smith and crew, S/Sgt Cornwell and Kirschner, of the 647th Bomb Sq (L) went down near Gerolstein, Germany, target of the day, as nineteen aircraft sustained battle damage, including two aircraft lost.

The last five missions of the month found the Group sustaining but three casualties and those took place as a flak crippled plane crashed within a few miles of the home base. Target of the day had been the enemy communication center at Stadtkyll, Germany where the Germans' heavy accurate flak had damaged eighteen aircraft. One of the planes piloted by Lt. Bachstein of the 645th Bomb Sq (L) had been shot up considerably but the pilot had nursed it back to the field and had circled for a landing. Anxious eyes of a hundred men on the ground watched the plane as it circled, saw flames burst from the engine cowling and the plane plummet to earth and explode. It was a gallant effort on the part of the pilot to save his crew and his plane at the cost of his life. Lt. Bachstein still lives on for his was the supreme sacrifice. Other members of the crew were S/Sgt Gibbons, and Soderer, who we have reason to believe had been seriously wounded before the crash for as the plane passed overhead, naked eyes could see the gaping holes where German flak had ripped into the belly and tail of the ship.

And so during the month of January the 410th Group sustained a total of fifteen casualties, more than twenty-percent of the previous total of seventy-three casualties sustained during eight months of combat operations.

IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

Unlike the month of December, the month of January found a large number of the members of the 410th Bomb Group receiving the prized DFC, Bronze Star and other awards and decorations. First man to receive the

IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

DFC during January were Captain Robert F. Valtr and S/Sgt Joseph A. Fisher⁷⁷. Captain Valtr was awarded the DFC for piloting a badly crippled aircraft over the target and bombing it and then returning to friendly territory where he bailed out his crew and successfully crash-landed his plane. S/Sgt Fisher received his award for a tour of duty marked by a demonstration of courage and outstanding devotion to duty.

To Lt. Colonel Charles F. Riggle, Major Rolf D. Cape, 1st Lts William J. Alexander, Robert E. Carter, Robert A. Hobbs, Louis Newmark and S/Sgt William J. Viherrek went the DFC under the provisions of General Order #17, Headquarters Ninth Air Force. Lt. Col. Riggle, Commanding Officer of the 647th Bomb Sq (L) was awarded the DFC along with his bombardier, Lt. Alexander for making four bombing runs to successfully bomb the enemy railhead at Kyllburg. Major Cape was awarded the DFC for leading his formation on a very successful mission against an enemy communication center despite the presence of intense accurate flak and enemy fighters in the immediate vicinity of the target.

Lt. Carter earned his award by attacking the target alone and without escort after one engine had quit forcing him to lag far behind the formation.

Lt. Hobbs, Group bombardier, earned his DFC on the same mission for which Lt. Alexander also received the award. Flying as formation leader in the plane piloted by Lt. Colonel Hughey, Group Commander, Lt Hobbs called for three runs on the target and his bombs coupled with those of Lt. Alexander to cut the enemy railhead at Kyllburg and render through traffic impossible.

To Lieutenant Newmark and S/Sgt William J. Viherrek went the DFC for tours of duty marked by superior airmanship, courage and initiative while flying combat missions in the ETO.

The bronze star medal was awarded to three Enlisted Men of the Group⁷⁸. T/Sgts Willis J. Cathey, Jack L. Conan and Fred J. Gagliardi for meritorious service between May 1944 and November 1944.

To Carl V. Pitts went the Purple Heart for wounds received in action against the enemy while serving as a gunner on an A-20 bomber on an operational mission over enemy territory.

Also receiving the DFC were Major Robert W. Paulson, Captain Joseph Nicholson, Captain Edwin L. Osborne, 1st Lts Robert L. Bachstein, Donald W. McLain, Paul H. Randall and S/Sgts John Kishlo and Harry D. Squibb⁷⁹. Major Paulson received the award for demonstrating courage and determination by continuing to the target alone and without escort after one engine had failed requiring him to leave formation. To Captain Nicholson went the award for courageously electing to make a second run on the heavily defended ammunition dumps in the Metz-Nancy area despite the fact that the Germans had been throwing up plenty of accurate anti-aircraft. Captain Osborne earned his DFC by continuing to the target alone after enemy flak had knocked out one engine and after releasing his bombs on the target returning to friendly territory where he successfully crash-landed his aircraft.

77. Par #1, GO #3, Hq Ninth Air Force, 5 Jan.'45.

78. Sec. #I, GO #5, Hq Ninth Bomb Div, 12 Jan.'45.

79. Sec. #II, GO #15, Hq Ninth Air Force, 24 Jan.'45.

IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS, cont'd:

Lt. Bachstein was awarded the DFC for continuing to the target after flak had shattered his canopy and cockpit and temporarily blinded him. Lt. Bachstein remained in formation and dropped his bombs on the target and nursed his badly crippled aircraft back to friendly territory.

Lieutenant McLain received his award for bombing the target after flak had severely crippled his plane forcing him to lag behind the formation. Lieutenant McLain continued on to the target and dropped his bombs despite the fact that he was rapidly losing power and altitude.

To Lt. Randall and S/Sgt. Kishle and Scribb went the DFC for tours of duty marked by outstanding determination, courage and devotion to duty.

Other awards during the month included fifty-six Air Medals, sixteen, First Oak Leaf Clusters, twenty-nine Second Oak Leaf Clusters, and eight Third Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

V. 410TH IN THE GAS REPORT: 80

Hardly had the new year begun before A-20's of the 410th Bomb Gp (L) were winging their way toward the break-through bulge area in an effort to further destroy enemy communications in the city of Laroche. As the six flights fanned out, and came in for the attack the Jerry began tossing up plenty of flak but to no avail for three of the four flights dropping bombs had superior to excellent results. The fourth attacking flight had no photo coverage while two flights could not release their bombs due to broken clouds over the target area.

The day following the group had its most disastrous mission in months, so far as results were concerned, when of six flights dispatched but three flights could bomb and of those only five percent of the bombs burst within 1000 feet of the MFI. The target was Couvy, Belgium.

On 5 January 1945, two boxes of A-20's behind PPF aircraft were dispatched against the communication center of Clervaux, but the equipment failed in the lead aircraft and clouds prevented visual bombing of the target. A rack malfunction on the bomb run caused premature release of bombs in a single aircraft in the lead flight whereupon two trailing flights of the first box and four aircraft of the second box released their bombs. The flak that day was heavy and accurate and twenty-one aircraft sustained battle damage. Six days later, 11 January 1945, the Group returned to Clervaux and under favorable weather conditions, visually bombed the target with superior and excellent results. Flak was heavy, intense and accurate and nineteen aircraft returned from the target nursing flak wounds.

Lucky "13" when speaking of the Group, or unlucky "13" if your speaking of the fellows on the ground who received the full weight of the fifty-one tons of bombs showered on the Jerry at Steinbruck on 13 January 1945. Behind PPF lead two boxes of A-20's came through with excellent bombing as their five hundred "pounders" blanketed the target area.

V. 110TH IN THE WAR EFFORT, cont'd:

Heavy, intense accurate flak on 14 January prevented the first of two boxes from releasing its bombs but could not prevent the second box from coming through with an excellent performance. Target of the attack was the road network in Rodt and bombs of the second box blanketed a 1000 foot section of the main highway leading to St. Vith.

Hallschlag, Germany was the recipient of the full weight of fifty-four tons of explosives as thirty-six A-20's dropped 216 five-hundred pound general purpose bombs on the target on 16 Jan.'45. The patterns of two boxes blanketed buildings, highways and road intersections with the weight of the attack centering on the built up area in the center of the town.

Lashing out at the Mayen Marshalling Yard on 21 Jan.'45, thirty-five A-20's dropped more than fifty-two tons of explosives on the target and bomb bursts blanketed approximately 1000 feet of track cutting the main line and sidings and blasting a large number of freight cars inside the yard itself. 'Recon' photos showed all lines severed and the mission was a complete success.

Bombing on "GEE" and "ETA" six flights of A-20's did little if any damage to the Gerolstein railroad junction on 22 Jan.'45. The A-20's had been dispatched behind a pathfinder aircraft and when the equipment failed in this aircraft and weather would not permit visual bombing the flights went into the target and bombed on "GEE" and "ETA".

Recognizing the versatility of the A-20 the mission assignment of 23 January 1945, called for low level, on the deck, bombing and strafing of an enemy column of motor transports. The target was moving Eastward in the vicinity of Blankensheim, Germany when the six A-20's let go their frag bombs in a glide and then went down to the tree tops to cut loose with their fifty calibre machine guns. The Heinies were mighty surprised to see those huge birds streaking towards them, spouting lead and flame fifty feet from the ground. Tunnel gunners and pilots squeezed their triggers and Jerry hit for the woods and ditches but a large number never reached the shelter as flying lead caught them before they could take more than a stride. It was the first low level mission by light bombers and it was a huge success as more than fifteen transports were shot up and left burning while a large number were seriously damaged. Six aircraft were dispatched and all came back and the "super six" as they called themselves proved that "on the deck" or "high in the blue" the A-20 is one "helluva" good ship.

The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of January found A-20's lashing out against Stadtkyll, Germany. The second of these two missions was a huge success as all six flights came through with excellent and superior bombing. The road network which had been the target of the attack received the full weight of more than fifty-two tons of explosives and the crews of thirty-five A-20's knew that they had come through with a job well done.

The last two missions of the month found the Group doing some blind bombing behind PPF aircraft and results of these missions to Mayen and Habscheid, Germany were undetermined as 10/10's cloud cover prevented visual observation and photo coverage.

VI.

STATION LIFE:

For the most part of the month of January found the ground covered with a blanket of white and on those too-rare occasions when the sun broke through the clouds A-58 became a sea of mud. The mercury, it's true, had its "ups and downs" but the weather required the almost constant wearing of heavy, cumbersome clothes during the day and called for the familiar huddle of personnel around the old "pot-belly" at night. The almost daily snow flurries and consequent icing of runways kept the engineers busy around the clock but they came through with a magnificent job and not once did runway conditions prevent this Group from taking to the air. Make-shift plows, brooms and shovels, G-I ingenuity and French labor plus plenty of hard work and sleepless nights accomplished nothing short of a miracle.

GI movies when the projector was operational, which was all too seldom, provided one source of amusement to the "stay-at-homes" while the Officers' and Enlisted Men's Clubs saw few nights without the usual gatherings and "bull sessions" over a glass of beer, cognac or Champagne. The base theatre, or "big-top" as it was oft-times called, proved no match for the wind and biting cold and finally had to be abandoned in favor of individual squadron showings of GI movies in smaller but more substantial buildings.

Forty-eight hour passes to Paris were available to a small percentage of Officers and Enlisted Men with all squadrons, Group Headquarters and other station units sharing in the over-all quota of three officers and sixteen enlisted men. These passes were in addition to the regular fifteen hour passes available once weekly to all personnel at the station. Near the end of the month "forty-eights" were made available to a larger percentage of the personnel as the Group inaugurated another program calling for passes to the nearby city of Meaux. The Group had taken over two small hotels there and in short order GI meals were being served to the men on pass and comfortable beds took the place of GI canvas cots. While lacking the color of Paris and being less of an attraction, the men eagerly seized the opportunity to get away from A-58 and the city of Meaux was shortly housing a large number of both Officers and Enlisted Men of this bombardment group.

HEADQUARTERS
410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

AFPO 140, U S Army,
6 January 1945.

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 2) F-A-T-R-A-C-T

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6. CAPT HARRY R. ADLEMAN, AC, O 559793, Hq, 410th Bomb Gp (L) is detailed as Summary Court Officer for the trial of such persons as may be properly brought before him vice MAJOR ELWIN L. WEARS, O320649, 645th Bomb Sq (L) reld. (ADD DY).

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By Order of Lt. Colonel HUGHEY:

ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Ross B. Northrop, Jr.,
/t/ ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps.,
Adjutant.

EXHIBIT #1-1.

HEADQUARTERS
410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APO 140, U. S. Army,
15 January 1945.

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER

5)

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

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3. 1ST LT JOHN J. GRUNEWALD, AC, 0581768, (7536), Hq, 410th Bomb Gp (L)
is aptd Gp Personal Equip O (PRIN DY) vice 2ND LT WILLIAM V. WOOD, AC, 0582617,
(1042) reld.

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9. 1ST LT JOHN J. GRUNEWALD, AC, 0581768, (7536), Hq, 410th Bomb Gp (L)
is hereby aptd Gp Oxygen Officer (ADD DY) vice MAJOR JARVIS P. JONES, 0338412,
AC, (2161) reld.

By Order of Lt. Colonel BUGEY:

ROSS B. NORTHPROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps.,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Ross B. Northrop, Jr.,
/t/ ROSS B. NORTHPROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps.,
Adjutant.

EXHIBIT #1-2.

HEADQUARTERS
410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APO 140, U. S. Army,
25 January 1945.

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 8) L-X-T-R-A-C-T

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6. Having been asgd to this group per p r #29, SO #20, Hq, 9th Bomb Div (M)
std 20 January 1945, 2D LT FRED RABSON, 0861904, AC, is asgd to Hq 410th Bomb
Group (L) and aptd asst Group Radar C (PRIN DUTY).

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By order of Lt. Colonel HUGHLEY:

ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Ross B. Northrop, Jr.,
/t/ ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps.,
Adjutant.

EXHIBIT #1-3.

HEADQUARTERS
410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APD 140, U. S. Army,
25 January 1945.

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER

8)

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

1. A Special Courts-martial is appointed to meet at AAF Station A-58N at the call of the senior member thereof, or as soon thereafter as practicable for the trial of such persons as may be properly brought before it:

MAJOR EDWIN L. MEANS, 0320649, AC (President)
CAPT JAMES W. SEAY, 0649856, AC (Member)
CAPT DONALD M. HUTCHINSON, 0385569, OPD (Member)
CAPT JOE G. HARGRELL, 0581803, AC (Member)
1ST LT BRADLEY J. BENNETT, 0859698, AC (Member)
1ST LT ARTHUR L. PODDA, 0582324, AC (Member)
1ST LT HENRY A. FLY, 0577570, AC (Defense Counsel)
1ST LT ALFRED A. BRADBURY, 01554684, AC (Asst Defense Counsel)
CAPT GLENN D. COMMONS, 0913646, AC (Trial Judge Advocate)
CAPT JIM R. SOWELL, 0576345, AC (Asst Trial Judge Advocate)

All orders in conflict with the above are hereby rescinded.

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By order of Lt. Colonel HUGHES:

ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Ross B. Northrop, Jr.,
/t/ ROSS B. NORTROP, JR.,
Major, Air Corps.,
Adjutant.

EXHIBIT #1-4.

HEADQUARTERS
410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APO 120, U. S. Army,
19 February 1945.

GROUP STRENGTH FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

<u>SQUADRONS</u>	<u>1 JANUARY 1945</u>		<u>15 JANUARY 1945</u>		<u>31 JANUARY 1945</u>	
	Off's	EM	Off's	EM	Off's	EM
Hq, 410th Gp	38	68	40	67	39	66
644th Sqdn	81	313	76	311	75	311
645th Sqdn	80	320	79	320	77	316
646th Sqdn	62	301	60	299	55	296
647th Sqdn	81	326	81	321	77	319
TOTALS	342	1390	336	1318	323	1308

BERNARD J. GOLDEN,
Captain, Air Corps,
Gp Historical Officer.

EXHIBIT #1-5.

