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So-Bomb-644-41  
Feb 45

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OS-BOMB-644-H1  
Feb 45

UNIT HISTORY  
644TH BOMBARDMENT SQDN (L)

APC 140

UNITED STATES ARMY

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COVERING THE PERIOD 1 FEB. '45 TO 28 FEB. '45

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SECRET

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I. ORGANIZATION:

The Squadron had to again re-orient itself in a new area while continuing operations. Seven Officers and 127 Enlisted Men departed from Station A-58-B in Coulouvriers, France as an advanced echelon to Station A-68 in Juvincourt, France on the night of February 1945. Headquarters was established at A-68 on 11 February 1945.

The move was so carefully planned and organized that the combat missions continued to flow smoothly. The handling of operations was so exact that a combat mission took off from A-58, bombed the primary target in Germany and returned to the new station A-68 and continued to operate as if nothing had occurred. It was a fine job of organization.

The ground echelon was moved by a trucking outfit and the work was accomplished in two days.

When outfits leave an airfield there is generally a lot of work for the new comers to the area. Not so with the 644th Squadron, as the following indicates:

HEADQUARTERS  
9TH BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M)

350.13

APO 148, U.S. Army,  
12 February 1945.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 410th Bombardment Group (M), APO 148,  
U.S. Army.

I desire to commend you, and your entire organization for the excellent condition in which Station A-58 was left upon your departure. Representatives of the occupying group stated that they considered the general appearance of the station to be "Superior". An inspection conducted by the Inspector General of this headquarters resulted in a most gratifying report which reflects credit on you and every member of your command. The splendid condition of the station clearly indicated able leadership on the part of your Officers, and an outstanding degree of discipline and fine spirit of cooperation on the part of all enlisted personnel in your organization.

s/ Samuel F. Anderson,  
t/ SAMUEL F. ANDERSON,  
Major General, US,  
Commanding."

We're mighty proud of the commendation from our Commanding General. A distinct effort was made on the part of everyone to leave Station A-58 in perfect shape. This is a splendid example of organization and what results can be achieved when concerted effort is properly managed.

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1. ORGANIZATION STATUS:

In our new location certain advantages exist in location of living quarters and areas of operations. Almost everyone likes the new lay out better than at the former field. Things are more compact. There is more association and it doesn't take too long to go from one place to another.

We're all down to a new routine and are fitting in with the pattern that Lt. Colonel Paulson and Major Gertmenian have set up to have the Unit function smoothly.

1st Lt. Richard A. Duff went on DS to Hq and Hq Squadron, 9th Bombardment Division (M).

Captain Edwin L. Osborne, 1st Lt. Marion L. Eulent, S/Sgt Ed-wood B. Oggood and S/Sgt Leroy S. Lee, returned to duty from DS to 21st Tactical Air Command, Third Army.

1st Lt. Robert J. Kelly (Ord) on DS to Station 1540, UK, as of 30 January 1945, has returned to duty as of 23 February 1945.

1st Lt. Don L. Sullivan, went on DS to Cite Universitaire, 19 Boulevard Jourdan, Paris, on 18 February 1945 and returned to duty on 25 February 1945.

Thirty nine Enlisted Men were attached to the 410th Bomb Group (L) Hq, for quarters, rations and Administration.

1st Lt. Hugh P. Cuthbertson, 2nd Lt. James F. Nichols, S/Sgt Jay Brown, S/Sgt Joseph L. Link Jr, went on DS to 21st Tactical Air Command, per par #1 SO #53, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M).

1st Lt. James P. Schwartz, was evacuated to the 203rd General Hospital and dropped from rolls on 5 February 1945.

2nd Lt. John Somers, 2nd Lt. William Marshall, 2nd Lt. James H. Sullivan, P/O James A. Bullard, Sgt Leonard J. Sauschenko, Sgt George J. Wilkinson and Sgt Charles S. Skolaki Jr, were assigned this Squadron from Headquarters 9th Bombardment Division (M).

S/Sgt Jesse W. Johnston, completed 65 combat missions and was relieved from assignment and transferred to the 70th Replacement depot, Station 1594, UK, on 17 February 1945.

PROMOTIONS:

Captain Roy E. Gertmenian was promoted to the temporary grade of Major (AUC) as of 1 February 1945. (Headquarters, 9th Air Force, Per. #6, SO #32, 1 February 1945).

Major Gertmenian a former Adjutant and Intelligence Officer is now doing a fine job as Executive Officer. His experience and background is of particular value to our Squadron since we seem to be moving, getting ready to move, or setting up in a new area all the time. This calls for astute organizational skill particularly when there is a shortage of material and very little extrinsic aid. His continued effort in obtaining more and more conveniences for the Squadron has made a lasting impression on the men.

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I. PROMOTIONS, CONT'D:

The following Officers were promoted from 2nd Lt. to temporary grade of 1st Lt., as of 15 February 1945, per per #3 SD #46, Headquarters, 9th Air Force:

1st Lt. Charles M. Winkler,  
1st Lt. Robert C. Chambers,  
1st Lt. Harry A. Bade, Jr.

Four Enlisted Men were promoted from Corporal to Sergeant as of 15 February 1945.

The policy on promotions in the 644th Bombardment Squadron (D) is certainly one that brings out the best in both the Officers and the Enlisted Men.

II. STRENGTH:

The strength of the 644th Bombardment Squadron (D), of the 410th Bombardment Group (D), as of 28 February 1945 was 72 Officers, 5 Flight Officers and 308 Enlisted Men.

III. LOSSES:

While returning from a Combat Mission over Germany, 1st Lt. John W. Knight and his crew of Sgt John A. Andrus and Sgt Jack A. Hutchinson were killed in action.

Lt. Knight, the fellows all called him Johnny, was one of the best liked men in the Squadron. He was tall, six feet six inches, amiable and the main attraction in almost every gathering. He was a writer and in radio work prior to entering the Service in California. His article entitled "My First Mission" is a fine portrayal of a boy going on his initial trip in enemy territory. It will be published in one of the leading magazines. Lt. Knight had just been promoted to a First Lieutenant and had been awarded the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

February was another month for decorations:

The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to six men in the Squadron:

Lt. Col. Robert F. Paulson,  
Captain Edwin L. Osborne, and

1st Lt. Robert F. Carter, each had an engine failure enroute to the target but continued on and dropped their bombs on the objective. The exceptional ability and courage involved merits this coveted award.

Captain David Monroe led an extraordinarily successful mission against Birgit, Germany on the 28th of November 1944.

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IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

S/Sgt John Kishlo and S/Sgt William J. Viherek both had such an outstanding tour of duty that they were also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The following is a listing of Air Medals awarded during the month to the men of the 644th Bombardment Squadron (L):

AIR MEDALS:

GO #27, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M), 24 Feb. '45.

2nd Lt. Melbourne D. Thompson,  
S/Sgt Earl Cobb,  
Sgt Lee Boss  
Sgt Donald Steams,  
Sgt Calvin E. Wells,

GO #10, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M), 17 Feb. '45.

1st Lt. Clem Cook,  
1st Lt. Thomas Davenport,  
1st Lt. Charles Winkler,  
2nd Lt. Robert Chambers,  
1st Lt. William A. Fritz,  
F/O. Leo Drummond,  
Sgt. Anthony DeCostanza,  
Sgt. Donald Garner,  
Sgt. Charles Packard,  
Sgt. Theodore W. Shanoda,  
Sgt. Henry J. Stamps,

GO #19, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M), 5 Feb. '45.

1st Lt. Robert E. Carter,  
2nd Lt. John F. Lubben,  
2nd Lt. Bertram K. Berger,  
F/O. William N. Fleming,  
S/Sgt. Hubert A. Morris,  
Sgt. Robert L. Beck,  
Sgt. Charles Aiken,  
Sgt. William Cook, Jr.,  
Sgt. Albert A. Forgue,  
Sgt. Victor E. Nuth,  
Sgt. Charles L. Spiegel,  
Sgt. Herman Walsky.

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IV. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS, CONT'D:

GO #26, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M), 22 Feb. '45.

THE SOLDIER'S MEDAL was awarded to

Pfc Felix Wysowski.

Heroism in France in parachuting from flak riddled aircraft and spreading parachute on the ground so that the pilot could land the crippled aircraft.

GO #29, Hq, 9th Bombardment Division (M),

THE PURPLE HEART was awarded to

1st Lt. Gordon G. Jones, for wounds received in action against an enemy of the US on 23 January 1945, while serving as a Bombardier-Navigator.

V. STATION LIFE:LIVING:

Living is much better at A-68 than at A-58 our former station. It's cleaner and laid out more compactly which helps considerably to facilitate administrative and messing requirements.

Of course we're still living in tents, draw our own water and use our helmets as wash basins but we do have electric lights and coal, so things are on the upward trend.

A barber shop is set up and Parlo our tailor is still keeping the men's clothes in fine shape. A shower room is under construction as is also an Enlisted Men's club.

The Officer's club has just been painted and from the looks of things its going to be fairly comfortable - this spring.

TRAINING:

Transition flying both day and night, is a normal part of our regular program. Navigators are working on the bombing trainer and attending night lectures at Intelligence Headquarters. Everything points toward keeping the men alert and informed.

From an informational standpoint we had a speaker from the General's Staff of ETOUSA, Major Mackenzie, come out and give a talk on political questions in Europe. Every effort is made to have competent and specialized speakers augment our regular program. The daily 0900 hour news broadcast is put on the bulletin board each day which is a great aid in keeping abreast of the activities in the various theatres.

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V. STATION LIFE, CONT'D:DEFENSE PLANS:

The Group has a Defense Officer whose responsibility is to take care of this function. In addition the Squadron posts its guards on the hardstands adjacent to the aircraft. Weekly Gas lectures are given by Captain Adams.

Another Defense plan is to avoid VD and is carried on by the Medics under Captain Turner's direction. Every man is examined before and after going on pass.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS:

S/Sgt Thompson broke his ankle and 1st Sgt Andrews was stricken with appendicitis which put quite a burden upon the staff in the orderly room in their absence. All is serene now that they are back on the job in full shape.

RECREATION:

Movies are shown each night except Sunday, by Special Services. Both baseball and soft-ball teams have been organized and a diamond has already been set up. Basket ball games are being played in the hanger.

Daily liberty runs go to Reims leaving at 1900 hours and returning at 2300 hours. Forty-eight hour passes to Paris are now back and available to a limited number of ground and flying personnel. Seven day furloughs are in force to England and seven day leaves to Connes, France for Flying Officers are now in order.

This program of leaves for deserving personnel surely is a booster for morale.

VI. MISSIONS:

Our Squadron is very proud of its accomplishments during the month of February. The Commendations from Commanding Generals along the Western front prove the results of our efforts to aid the ground troops to be highly successful.

On February 1st, at Brandshied, our troops were being held up by the enemy who had made it into a defended village. Captain Valtr and Lt. Aines (B/N) supported by nine other pilots from the 644th Squadron went through ten-tenths weather on instruments all the way to knock out this Nazi strong-hold. Photos taken later showed town to be squarely hit, allowing the troops to pass through the area.

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VI. MISSIONS, CONT'D:

Again on February 1st, Hiltgenheim, a communication center, was hit at night by members of the Squadron to prevent road movement and stop defense construction in the town. It was our first night mission and was highly successful. The station and rail lines were completely devastated.

On February the 2nd, we attacked Stadtkyll an important road hub through which enemy supplies were passing enroute to the Nazi front. Lt. Colonel Paulson our Squadron Commander led the Group through ten-thousand clouds to bomb this target allowing our troops to advance.

On February the 3rd, Captain Valtr led one box to Glinett/Junkerath rail sidings to stop supplies from reaching the Nazi troops. All of our missions were in direct support of the ground troops and aiding them to thrust back the enemy in the Bulge Area, our troops advanced the next day in this area.

On February the 3rd, Lt. Colonel Paulson led the Group on a night mission to Nechernich an armored vehicle repair depot. The depot was very active up to the time of the bombing.

Major General Vandenberg's view on the results is as follows:

HEADQUARTERS  
NINTH AIR FORCE ADVANCED

AFG 696, U. S. Army  
21 February 1945.

SUBJECT: Commendation for 410th Bombardment Group.

TO : Commanding General, 9th Bombardment Division (M), APO 140,  
U. S. Army.

1. Strike photographs show the 410th Bombardment Group on 19 February, 1945 bombed the Nechernich Motor Vehicle Repair Center with truly superior accuracy, both boxes completely blanketing the target with exactly a wasted bomb.

2. Such accuracy is outstanding, even on the enviable record of the sharp-shooting 410th Group. Please convey to that unit my heartiest congratulations. The enemy already is critically short of motor transportation and such attacks materially lessen his ability to continue the war.

s/ Hoyt S Vandenberg  
t/ HUYT S. VANDENBERG  
Major General, USA  
Commanding.

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VI. MISSIONS, CONT'D: Ltr, subject, Commendation, cont'd:

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HEADQUARTERS, VII COMBATANT DIVISION (M), APO 143, U. S. Army, 27 February 1945.

TO: Commanding Officer, 410th Bombardment Group, APO 143, U. S. Army.

It is with sincere pleasure that I add my commendation to that of General Vandenberg. The continued receipt of commendations such as this unquestionably marks stepping stones in the successful progress of the war.

/s/ Samuel T. Anderson  
SAMUEL T. ANDERSON  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

This type of superior work is what makes a unit stand out as being "on the ball" and "bringing home the bacon". This is the type of achievement that makes for commendations and brings forth Unit Citations. Our Unit flew missions day and night under severe winter conditions without oxygen equipment and without aircraft heating facilities and without de-icing aids. The weather was in the main completely overcast requiring instrument flying, yet with all these disadvantages commendations like Major General Vandenberg show the caliber and skill of the men of our Unit.

On the 6th of February the enemy had made Higen a fortified village which was holding up our ground forces. This was a ground force request. Target and they provided a counter-artillery fire to neutralize flak guns which were directly in the path of our troops. When the primary area was reached the weather was so dense Captain Sellers decided he was too close to our own men to take a chance on bombing and flew around the target as long as gas supply would permit before returning to the base.

On the 9th of February, a Marshalling yard at Caradision was attacked by A-24 bomber tactics - the weather was solid. The Unit also went to shoot another Marshalling yard and bombed using GTF equipment.

On the 11th of February, a Marshalling yard at Higen was bombed through overcast weather to stop supplies enroute to enemy troops.

On the 13th of February, Captain Sellers led a box of American motor transport equipment and bombed through ten-tenths weather in an attempt to stop rail road traffic. The results were unobserved due to dense weather.

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VI. MISSIONS, CONT'D:

On the 14th of February, in an attempt to cut off enemy communications the Marshalling yard at Grevenbroick was hit in the morning by Captain Valtr and Captain Becker. The main line was blanketed and there were many direct hits on the sidings and warehouses.

In the afternoon Lt. Colonel Paulson led the Group to Eschweiler another communication center. Again let Major General Vandenberg say a few words about the results of the missions of the 14th of February:

TO: ALL GROUPS.

FROM: 64TH BOMBARDMENT DIVISION.

Following message received from Commanding General Ninth Air Force:

"Today I received a message of congratulation from the GOC First Canadian Army for the exceedingly effective air cooperation he received from the Ninth Air Force on 14 February. To you people who did the actual work I relay his message and add to it my own comment that, as usual, you did a swell job. Because of that day's work the German Army is nearer collapse. The coming good weather is bringing different and difficult tasks that are an integral part of the final blow. Keep the standards up.

Signed VANDENBERG.

Future targets may require deeper penetrations into more heavily defended areas. For your past work and past sacrifices, particularly the work of 14 February I thank you and congratulate you.

Signed ANDERSON"

On the 16th of February Captain Valtr and Captain Osborne took part in the raid on Solingen an aerial engine works which is a strategic target. The workshops were blanketed thus stopping the assembling of engines for one type of aircraft.

On the 19th of February Captain Moore led a box to Mechernich Motor repair depot. Lt. Colonel Paulson bombed the same target on the 3rd of February. The two missions wiped the depot out. Major General Vandenberg's commendation on these missions is a fine tribute to the skill and precision of the men of the 64th Bombardment Squadron (B).

On the 21st of February Captain Valtr and Captain Becker took a box of aircraft to bomb Geldern Ford Bridges which controlled the heavy traffic to the bulge area. The cloud coverage was about five-tenths and the terrain made it difficult to pick up the target but the overall results were Excellent. A fine piece of work.

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VI. MISSIONS, CONT'D:

The 22nd of February was a big day. The enemy must have thought that all of hell had broken loose. Clarion mission took place, in which thousands of aircraft bombed targets in Germany.

Our Group had five major targets. Capt. in Command of the 64th Bomb Squadron led his men and had superior results on bridge which was his target. "An excellent pattern blanket railroad bridge, highway and approximately five hundred feet of the main line". The Group recorded three "Superiors" and two "Excellent's".

A message from Major General Anderson came in shortly after the mission, stating:

"Commendation".

Preliminary reports indicate from viewpoint of Ninth Bomb Division, operation "Clarion" was extremely successful. Please accept my congratulations and thanks for your efforts.

Signed ANDERSON"

And later came another message from Major General Anderson:

TO: 410TH BOMB GROUP (L).

FROM: 9TH BOMB DIV, VIA 97TH WING.

"I congratulate and commend you most highly for the results obtained on the operation Clarion and for following up a few hours later with large scale and very successful night operations.

The Versatility, initiative, aggressiveness and accuracy you displayed was outstanding. I am damn proud of you and your continued success.

Signed ANDERSON".

The General had reference to the night mission to Blatheim the communication center, the object of this mission was to destroy the built up area surrounding the target also to destroy the main highway running through the town, thereby isolating the battle area. The resulting large fires at the primary target attest the excellent results.

On the 24th of February, Lt. Colonel Paulson took the Group of

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VI. MISSIONS, SUMMARY:

On 15th of February, the 64th Bomb Squadron was successful in that the results were "Good". Night missions are possible in that the 64th Bomb Squadron was able to see the target and the target so the individual aircraft can both the 64th Bomb Squadron which is in the center of the target. Many searchlights and flak are the results but no hits have been scored on our target yet.

On the 16th of February, our target was Michroth, a communication center close up to the front. The bombline was five miles away and the two 4.2 inch counter battery fire to silence the flak guns since intense experience had been recorded in the front. The results were unobserved because of weather. The flak guns were silenced.

On the 17th of February, Captain Fellers took a box to Hesperon road junction and he had an instrument with unobserved results. On the 20th of February, the 64th Bomb Squadron was successful in that the 64th Bomb Squadron was able to see the target and the target so the individual aircraft can both the 64th Bomb Squadron which is in the center of the target. Many searchlights and flak are the results but no hits have been scored on our target yet.

On the 21st of February, the 64th Bomb Squadron was successful in that the 64th Bomb Squadron was able to see the target and the target so the individual aircraft can both the 64th Bomb Squadron which is in the center of the target. Many searchlights and flak are the results but no hits have been scored on our target yet.

Normally the 64th Bomb Squadron was able to see the target and the target so the individual aircraft can both the 64th Bomb Squadron which is in the center of the target. Many searchlights and flak are the results but no hits have been scored on our target yet.

The 64th Bomb Squadron is a tactical and strategic, day and night bomb squadron. The 64th Bomb Squadron is a tactical and strategic, day and night bomb squadron. The 64th Bomb Squadron is a tactical and strategic, day and night bomb squadron. The 64th Bomb Squadron is a tactical and strategic, day and night bomb squadron.

W. A. KILPATRICK,  
1st Lt, Air Corps,  
Historian.

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