

HEADQUARTERS
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Officer of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 US Army

25 September 1944

NARRATIVE HISTORY
July 1944

July was a busy month for the Group, with twenty-two (22) missions completed, results ranging from fair to superior. They were certainly not milk runs, the targets being some of the roughest ones in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Rumania, Albania, Hungary, and Italy. Ten (10) planes were lost and 103 crew members were MIA during the period, the roughest mission being No. 92, over Ploesti, Rumania, on July 28th where we lost four (4) planes and 41 crew members were MIA. However, the Luftwaffe paid heavily for the planes lost, as we destroyed twenty-nine (29) enemy planes and probably destroyed six (6) more.

Bombing accuracy for the month was not all it should have been, since our figure of 29.9% was the lowest in the Wing. The Wing average of 32.5% was 4th in the 15th Air Force, while the Air Force average was 33%.

Personnel changes were numerous during the month. 164 officers and enlisted men left the Group while 109 officers and enlisted men came in to take their places. The changes were due chiefly to completion of the fifty (50) missions required in this theater for rotation and return to the States. Many staff changes were made in the Group and the turnover in this category was above average. Capt. Norten reported on July 8th to take over the duties of Capt. Zraick as Group Historian, Capt. Sands was transferred from the 725th to Headquarters as PRO officer. Maj. Davis, C.O. of the 727th, left for the states to be succeeded by Major Bowen and Young. Maj. Walkey took over the 726th vice Maj. Halton, MIA. New Operations Officers included Capt. Ryan in the 724th, Capt. Tuney in the 725th, Capt. Winski in the 726th and Capt. Mahon in the 727th and Capt. Wilson as assistant in Group. Lts. Collins, Davis and Kimball took over as Squadron Bombardiers in the 724th, 726th and 727th Squadrons, respectively, while Lt. Woods became Squadron Navigator in the 725th and Lt. Ford succeeded Lt. Skinner of the 726th, KIA on 22 of July.

Production in the PRO, under the able direction of Capt. Sands, hit its full stride in July. A steady four month climb brought the Group

to the top of all Air Force groups. 1006 articles, 70 features, and 82 pictures were turned out during the month, but the emphasis from now on will shift to more and better feature stories, with production levelling off at between 1000 and 1500 stories a month. Clippings of stories sent out in earlier months began to drift back in July. They were still only a small percentage of the total output, since so many clippings were never sent back. The clippings quickly filled one bulletin board set up in the office. Home town stories sent out by PRO covered 45 of the 48 states. Each combat man received an average of one or two stories a month, from Air Medal to promotion, or in the feature line.

Mission side-lights or 50 mission stories, in addition, a number of aerial target photos were radioed back to the States.

Religious activity, under Capt. McNeils direction, was concentrated in the increase of facilities for the holding of services. The Briefing Room was improved by covering the floor, fixing the seats and constructing a raised platform for the Altar table with a white screen background. Attendance declined during the month, mainly because of the hot weather. The week day services of Protestant men were omitted and the Jewish service was changed from Friday night to Saturday morning.

The Group received a Unit Commendation on July 12th from the Commanding Officer of the 49th Wing, Col. Lee, for the outstanding performance for the period from 26 Feb. 1944 to 6 June 1944.

/s/ Robert B. N. Peck
1st Lt. Air Corps,
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