

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

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GROUP PHOTO AND PHOTO INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES
IN THE U.S.

The 451st Bomb Group Photo section was organized and began to operate at Wendover Field, Utah. The activities of the section were directed by Lieutenants Herbert F. Marco and William M. Dwyer who were graduates of the Army Air Forces Intelligence School and the Yale Photo School, respectively.

The primary objectives of the Photo Section at Wendover were:

- 1) To train the personnel in bombardment and reconnaissance photography.
- 2) To obtain photographic records of bomb impacts.
- 3) To obtain photographs and other pertinent information for target charts and folders of military objectives within a radius of three hundred miles for training missions and photo bombing

These three objectives were accomplished despite numerous handicaps. Equipment was not available. Camera equipment consisted of a K-24, and a few K-21s. The K-21s proved unsatisfactory due to short focal lens and faulty design of the magazine. Hence, only the one K-24 was available for use.

Laboratory facilities for the Group were non-existent. However arrangements were made to use the base photo lab which was already taxed by the photographic demands of the Air Base and two other Bomb Groups. Most of the Group's work was done during the few hours allotted us in the middle of the night.

The lack of target photos and target charts was seriously handicapping the training of combat crews. To overcome this deficiency, sixty-two hours of the first ten days at Wendover were spent obtaining aerial photographs of military installations within the three hundred mile radius of action. This was a considerable chore for only one camera was available and only one trained aerial cameraman was in the group.

Within this time photographs, verticals, obliques, and stereo-pairs were obtained of all the important industries in the Salt Lake City area, the Priest Valley, and the Mining region of Nevada. Some of the photographic targets were steel plants, smelters, power plants and dams, airdromes, marshaling yards, oil refineries, mines, bridges, etc. These photos were interpreted and incorporated in target folders.

Ground checks were made of the targets photographed to test the accuracy of the information and interpretations included in the target folders.

The photographic facilities at the Fairmont Army Air Field were a great improvement over those at Wendover. A new photo laboratory which had been just completed was turned over to the Group for its use. K-20, K-21, K-24 and A-4 cameras were available for training purposes. Training at this station progressed rapidly. Photo bombing, bomb spotting, and laboratory procedures were stressed. As before target folders for training missions had to be prepared. In addition the photo section flew the first controlled mosaic of the Fairmont Air Base and its vicinity. The target folders and mosaic were commended by the Commanding General of the II Air Force. This material is now on file at that headquarters.

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Group P.I. Officer.