

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

NARRATIVE HISTORY
September 1944

The month of September for the 451st Bomb Group was filled with momentous happenings. The 3rd of the month saw General Twining fly down to present officially two battle streamers representing two Presidential Citations to the Group for its unforgettable achievements at Regensburg (Feb. 25th) and Ploesti (April 5th). Lt. Coffee read the citation to the massed squadrons, the General pinned on the ribbons, and Colonel Eaton led his Group in review before his Commanding General.

The first of the month saw Major Beane, Captain Stone and many others return from prison camp in Rumania. They had much to say but the P.R.O. release tells the lurid story.

During the month the Group flew fourteen (14) missions of which eight (8) were supply missions to Lyons/Brons A/C, France to supply gas, oil, bombs and drums for the Tactical Air Force.

On September 1st we hit Ferrara R.R. Bridge, a vital communication point to the Axis defense system, but our results were negative due to weather. Mitrovica R.R. Bridge, Yugoslavia came up the next day. Damage was done to the bridge, M/Y and choke point. On the 5th and 6th we attacked Belgrade Sava East R.R. Bridge. The first time no bombs fell since the target was obscured by clouds, but the second time we hit the bridge and marshalling yards fairly well.

From the 10th to the 22nd we flew our supplies to France, then on the 24th we attacked the airfield at Athens/Eleusis, Greece, destroying eleven (11) aircraft on the ground. The 25th we pulled a snafu at Skamanranga Harbor, Greece. Our bombs were spread out and there was little damage to the harbor.

From the personnel point of view a number of changes occurred. One hundred twenty-five (125) officers and men left the organization, and one hundred and sixty-eight (168) came in. Nineteen (19) new aircraft built up our strength replacing losses and war weary planes. Some sixty-three crews (63) were on hand Sept. 2nd (724th-15; 725th-17; 726th-16; and 727th-15). A shortage of bombardiers and navigators existed, but the crew situation was better than before. By the end of

the month we had sixty-nine (69) crews on hand. We lost an aircraft on the 3rd which crashed on takeoff and blew up shortly afterward.

Major Marshall was transferred on the 4th to a higher echelon, and Major Reichenbach joined the Group as Assistant Operations Officer. Capt. Bartlett, Executive Officer of the 725th, returned to Group Headquarters as Adjutant on the 5th. Captain Norton replaced him as Executive Officer of the 725th, leaving his post at group as P.X., postal, and historical officer. Captain MacLennan, 725th bombardier, was wounded in action and transferred to the hospital on the 6th. Major Byers and Major Hughes, Group Navigator and Bombardier respectively, left for the States on the 8th. Captain Tucker (725th Squadron) and Captain Collins (724th) took their places. The 11th saw Captain Gould come to Group to be Squadron C.O. of the 725th to take over when Major Bowen left on rotation.

Colonel Eaton completed his 50th sortie on the 13th. Captain Tunney, 725th Operations Officer, finished his 50th sortie and left for the States on the 14th. Captain Biggs became 727th Operations Officer having recently come from Wing. Major Young, 727th C.O., and Major Winsky, 726th Operations Officer, left for the States on the 15th after completing their missions. Very rapidly we are losing our key men.

Major Bentley, Group Adjutant, was transferred to the 26th General Hospital on the 16th and will probably leave for home very shortly.

To celebrate Colonel Eaton's 50th sortie and to honor his period of command, a party was held at the headquarters officers club (Saddle Club) on the 18th. Colonel Lee, Wing Commander and part of his staff attended. A number of nurses provided excellent entertainment after a magnificent banquet.

Lt. Cols. Knapp (from the 461st) and Applegate joined the group on the 19th to be the new C.O. and new deputy C.O.

Lt. Voss transferred to Group Headquarters on the 22nd to be Personnel Equipment Officer vice Captain Kley who became Supply Officer. The Engineering Officer vacancy in the 726th was soon filled by Lt. Richmond, 725th Personnel Equipment Officer, on the 22nd. The 26th saw the two new Lt. Colonels assume command in their respective positions. Major Younkin, Group Operations Officer, finished his 100th sortie and was relieved by Major Wilson, former Assistant Operations Officer.

A number of promotions to officers and enlisted men livened things during the month. Cigars and free drinks became very free.

P.R.O. put out a total of 1286 stories including 5819 releases to date to individual papers. Of these 93 were feature stories, and the Photo Picture total rose to 123 being the highest total achieved. During the month we led every group in the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces for the stories released. Four officers and two enlisted men went to Rome to put on a radio transcript to the States. They told about ditching, prison life in Rumania, and our activities in the last months. A remarkable story about a remarkable feat came out when Lt. Jarvis of the 724th brought his ship through a thunder head. Quite a hair-raising story it turned out to be. Staff Sgt. Walter A. Summey, 727th gunner had a story written of his duties with the 8th, 9th and 15th Air Forces in almost 18 straight months of combat. He has five fighters to his credit.

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