

HEADQUARTERS
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Public Relations Officer
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15AAF IN ITALY*****The B-24 Liberator Bomb Group (the 451st not identified in the news), commanded by Colonel Robert E. L. Eaton, 119 S. Charles St., Belleville, Ill., today completed its 100th mission by bombing the Ploesti Xenia Oil Refinery, Rumania.

Flying airplane #13 to commemorate his group's record, Col. Eaton threw a challenge to "Dame Superstition" and won hands down. After several hours of research through the records, Lt. Col. Ellis N. Eno, Deputy Group Commander, Ft. Dodge, Iowa, came up with as many combinations of the number 13 as a cat has lives. Col. Eaton passed it off to pure coincidence, but vows that 13 will be his lucky number from now on.

There are 13 letters in his name. His pilot on the 100th mission, Capt. William M. Tuney, Louisville, Ky., also has the same number. Col. Eaton has been commissioned for 13 years, and has been in command of his group for 13 months. Thirteen officers and men who flew on the group's first mission to Fier Albania, last Feb. 3 accompanied the colonel on the 100th mission. The estimated time of return from the target was 1330 hours, take-off was at 0613 hours, and the briefed target time was 1013 hours. The formation crossed the Adriatic at 13,300 feet, and last but not least, 13 of the group's original airplanes are still flying regular combat missions.

800 ground personnel voluntarily paid tribute to the airmen when the group formation flew over the field. Forming a huge hundred (100) on the side of the runway, each man covered his head with a white handkerchief, the numerals standing out in sharp relief to the dark brown earth. Later the men stood stiffly at attention as the colors were dipped in salute.

During the 100 missions the group has dropped 6773 tons of bombs, is credited with 3079 sorties (individual), and has destroyed 124 enemy aircraft. The personnel of the group hold 2 Legion of Merit awards, 8 Silver Stars, 81 Distinguished Flying Crosses and clusters, 10 Soldier's Medals, 41 Purple Hearts, and 3513 Air Medals and clusters.

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/s/ ROBERT B. N. PECK
1ST Lt., AIR CORPS
ASSIST. GROUP S-2