

HISTORY

of the

484TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944

HEADQUARTERS
484TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (PATHFINDER)
APO 520 US ARMY

8 September 1944

SUBJECT: MONTHLY STATISTICAL SUMMARY

TO : All Squadron Commanders

1. The figures assembled in this report were compiled in order to show the Squadrons the excellent job the Group is doing and at the same time show a comparison between squadrons.

2. During the month of August we attacked enemy targets in Yugoslavia, Rumania, Germany, Hungary, Italy and France. On D-Day, our Group attacked important enemy installations where the 7th Army landed and helping removed obstacles that might have proved serious, if air attack had not been carried out effectively. The Group had 696 Aircraft airborne during the month. We had 642 effective sorties with 54 early returns.

3. The breakdown of early returns and aircraft failures during the month is broken down as follows:

| | <u>EARLY RETURNS</u> | | | | <u>A/C FAILURES (*DNT)</u> | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | <u>May</u> | <u>June</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>August</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>June</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>August</u> |
| 824th Sqdn | 11 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 825th Sqdn | 4 | 10 | 15 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 826th Sqdn | 6 | 13 | 23 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| 827th Sqdn | <u>3</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>4</u> |
| Group Total | 24 | 46 | 61 | 54 | 23 | 14 | 19 | 8 |

4. The Group had an average of 69.1% of its A/C operational during August. The Squadrons were broken down as follows:

824th - 68.6% 825th - 74.8% 826th - 70.6% 827th - 62.4%

5. The Group dropped a total of 1208.5 tons of bombs on enemy targets during the month.

6. In several encounters with enemy aircraft, we shot down 7, had 2 damaged and 4 probables to our credit. We lost 1 A/C to A/A and 9 others; 2 to flak, 1 for unknown reasons, and 6 were salvaged for other reasons.

*Dnt - Did not take off.

Monthly Stat Summary (Cont'd)

7. In spite of the fact that the Group had participated in 20 missions during this past month, it had been an excellent record for the training program.

| | Formation Hrs Flown | No. of Practice Bombs Dropped | PFF Sorties Flown | Total Sorties Flown | Total Tng Hrs Flown |
|------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 824th Sqdn | 82:20 | 160 | 14 | 76 | 167:20 |
| 825th Sqdn | 102:10 | 144 | 9 | 63 | 180:50 |
| 826th Sqdn | 126.25 | 176 | 13 | 55 | 159:05 |
| 827th Sqdn | <u>91:05</u> | <u>80</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>60</u> | <u>180:35</u> |
| Gp Total | 407:00 | 560 | 41 | 254 | 686:40 |

8. During this month our losses and replacements were equal.

| | LOST (KIA, MIA, & ???) | LOST (COMPLETED MISSIONS ENROUTE US) | GAINED (REPLACEMENTS & other units) |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| PILOT & CO-PILOT | 14 9 | 31 | 64 |
| NAVIGATOR | 9 | 11 | 32 |
| BOMBARDIER | 8 | 19 | 32 |
| ENGINEER GNR | 11 | 70 | 33 |
| RADIO OPR GNR | 13 | 26 | 32 |
| ARMORER GNR | 6 | 43 | 51 |
| AERIAL GNR | <u>23</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>75</u> |
| TOTAL | 84 | 211 | 319 |

PHILLIP A. FRANKELSTEIN
Captain, Air Corps,
Group Statistical Officer

During the month of September the 484th Bombardment Group flew but five missions. The greater part of the month was spent ferrying urgently needed supplies into southern France. This unique operation by a Bomb Group will be fully explained in the following pages. On its five bombing missions the Group flew 142 sorties with but three early returns. These missions were flown during the first six days of September, and four times the targets were railroad bridges which were very valuable to the enemy. The other mission was flown against a ferry slip, also of great importance. A total of 192.75 tons of bombs were dropped on those briefed targets. Good fortune smiles upon us during the month as no losses were suffered.

Mission No. 80 - 1 September 1944 - Ferrara RR Bridge.

Thirty-four planes took off to bomb this strategic bridge in Italy, but the mission was uneventful. On reaching the target it was found to be covered by a 10/10 undercoat, and it was necessary for all planes to return their bombs to the base.

Mission No. 81 - 2 September 1944 - Mitrovica RR Bridge.

Although this target in Yugoslavia was obscured by smoke and haze, the Group turned in a very creditable performance. The target was well hit by the 133 thousand pounders which fell in a closely knit pattern.

Mission No. 82 - 3 September 1944 - Smederevo Ferry Slips.

This mission was the first of its type to be experienced by the Group, but it was carried out very successfully. Direct hits were scored on the ferry slips and the causeway, and several boats in the vicinity suffered the devastating effects of our bombs. Although not spectacular, this mission was demonstrative of the ability of our crews who were busily engaged in making successful missions seem commonplace.

Mission No. 83 - 5 September 1944 - Sava East RR Bridge

Because of a very bad break in the weather, this mission must be termed unsuccessful. Arriving over the target a 10/10 undercast was encountered, and it was impossible to bomb the target by visual means. Through necessity all bombs had to be returned to the base.

Mission No. 84 - 6 September 1944 - Sava East RR Bridge

The weather cleared, and the Group went after the same target as on the previous day. This time the bridge was heavily pounded, as was the marshalling yard which was slightly to the right of the briefed course. During the course of this highly successful raid 12 of our aircraft suffered minor damage from flak which was intense, accurate, and heavy.

These were the only bombing missions carried on by this Group for the month of September, for during the remainder of the month our aircraft were needed for the essential operation of ferrying badly needed supplies to the Southern France Invasion Front.

On 21 September 1944, the advance contingent of personnel including the Group Commander, Operations Officer, Administrative personnel, cooks, carpenters and supplies were flown to Istres, France, in two B-24 airplanes. Housing facilities were procured in an apartment settlement in the town and a mess hall was set up.

On 22 September 1944, twelve B-24 airplanes and crews flew direct from Torretto, Italy to Istres, France. Twenty other B-24 airplanes were flown from Torretto to Bron A/D, Lyon, France, where they unloaded gasoline, bombs and ammunition and 375 five gallon cans of 1130 oil, and then proceeded to Istres. Four more B-24s arrived at Istres from Torretto on 23 September, bringing to 367 the total of ships based at Istres.

For the first eight days, an average of 25 airplanes transported gasoline, ammunition, bombs and empty drums to Bron. For the next two days, supplies were ferried to Dole-Tavaux, and on the final day, 2 October 1944, supplies were again taken to Bron.

A total of 422,630 gallons of 100 octane gasoline, 370 Five Hundred Pounds bombs, fins and fuses, 494,830 rounds of 50 calibre ammunition, 1875 gallons of 1120 oil, and 4,569 empty drums were transported in 10 days. Gasoline consumed by our aircraft totaled 142,690 gallons.

Following is a table showing the amounts of supplies hauled each day, destination, and the gasoline consumed.

| DATE | DESTINATION | NO. OF GALS GAS | | | BOMBS | GAS | | |
|------|-------------|-----------------|--------|----|-------|----------|--------|-------|
| | | A/C | HAULED | | | AMMUNIT. | USED | DRUMS |
| 9/23 | Bron | 26 | 51,720 | | | 1,100 | 15,535 | 459 |
| 9/24 | Bron | 26 | 50,095 | 24 | | 16,430 | 14,090 | 467 |
| 9/25 | Bron | 26 | 50,950 | 30 | | 20,140 | 13,525 | 460 |
| 9/26 | Bron | 25 | 46,010 | 30 | | 20,010 | 13,275 | 510 |
| 9/27 | Bron | 26 | 41,645 | 48 | | 151,275 | 12,525 | 458 |
| 9/28 | Bron | 22 | 31,715 | 30 | | 109,975 | 11,075 | 388 |
| 9/28 | Dijon | 2 | 2,115 | 10 | | 6,890 | 1,450 | 40 |
| 9/29 | Bron | 24 | 45,680 | 30 | | 32,005 | 11,365 | 476 |
| 9/30 | Dole-Tavaux | 24 | 37,570 | 60 | | 20,405 | 18,200 | 397 |
| 10/1 | Dole-Tavaux | 26 | 41,160 | 60 | | | 18,000 | 446 |
| 10/2 | Bron | 24 | 24,025 | 48 | | 116,600 | 13,650 | 368 |

The foregoing table of figures does not include the following supplies ferried from Torretto, Italy, to Bron by 20 airplanes on 22 September 1944: 23,285 gallons of gas, 28,150 rounds of 50 calibre ammunition, 40 five hundred pound bombs, fins and fuses, 375 five-gallon cans of 1120 oil, 196 gas drums. These ships consumed, along with the 12 that flew direct to Istres, a total of 39,695 gallons of gasoline.

A total of 37 B-24s were used in the Operations, one of the original 38 airplanes being wrecked when its landing gear collapsed while preparing to take off from Bron. A ship was ferried from Torretto to Istres as a replacement. Parts of the wrecked airplane were used to repair other ships.

Adequate medical facilities were established both on the airfield and in the billeting area. French civilians were employed to assist in the mess hall and in cleaning barracks.

A brief description of how the operation was carried out follows: 55 gallon drums of 100 octane gasoline, 500 lb. bombs, and 50 calibre ammunition were delivered to the airplanes at Istres by the 41st Service Group. All crews and ground personnel of our Group loaded the bombs and ammunition and pumped gas from the drums into the airplane wing and bomb bay tanks with auxiliary pumping units. As many empty drums as possible were stacked in each airplane. Then the ships were flown to their destination, the supplies unloaded, the gas pumped into drums, ammunition and bombs unloaded and the ships flown back to Istres where they were refueled and reloaded by our crews. Several attempts were made to make two trips per day with the bomb-carrying airplanes but because of inclement weather in the afternoons, this was possible on only one day. Twenty one ships usually carried gasoline and ammunition exclusively, while five airplanes took gas, bombs and ammunition. However, the load was varied as the demand for different items changed from day to day.

Four jeeps were transported in C-47 airplanes from Torretto to Istres. These and three trucks, loaned by the Service Group, plus motorcycles purchased by members of our Group, furnished transportation. While the 446 men participating in this assignment were in Istres, they received their pay, PX rations and mail... AC-47, loaned to the Group by the 49th Wing, was used as a courier plane. Two tents were set up on the line, one housing operations, the other tech supply and engineering. Each aircraft was guarded each night under supervision of an officer of the day, and interior guards were also posted at the billeting area under the supervision of another O.D.

Lack of sufficient auxiliary pumping units to facilitate loading and refueling our aircraft slowed down this operation to some extent.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
49TH BOMBARDMENT WING (H)
A.P.O. 520
U.S. ARMY

10 September 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 9)

Commendation of Unit.....I

SECTION - - COMMENDATION OF UNIT

1. The outstanding service rendered the Allied war effort by the 484th Bombardment Group (Pathfinder), in its brilliant victory on 22 August 1944 is worthy of the highest commendation. Ordered to participate in the combined effort to destroy the largest remaining oil storage in Southern Europe at Vienna, Austria, this assignment climaxed in a series of intensive raids against strategic and tactical targets. In the West this group had given invaluable support to the landings in Southern France. In the East, it has been a dominant factor in counter air-force operations, aiding in the destruction of fifty-six (56) enemy aircraft and two (2) enemy airdromes. Personnel were worn almost to exhaustion from a relentless succession of twenty-four hour work days. Never-the-less, in preparation for this assignment, described by higher headquarters as the most important contribution air power could make to the war effort, at that time, Group and Squadron staff and ground personnel worked feverishly and enthusiastically through the long night hours to assure a maximum effort for this vital mission. As a result of their untiring efforts, thirty-nine (39) bombers took off at the tail end of the Wing formation and in the most vulnerable position for enemy assault. Deep in enemy territory the Group was attacked by more than fifty (50) enemy fighters. The diversionary attack of the Eighth Air Force planned to dissipate the enemy's strength had been cancelled due to adverse weather. Now the enemy committed all available fighters from both the Vienna and Munich controls to the assault on this formation. This fierce interception was dispersed along the entire route of the approach. Reserves were continually thrown into the attack and the enemy never had less than fifty (50) ME 109's and FW 190's engaged in the violent battle. Through the entire corridor to the target this Group fought a running battle with the enemy, miraculously keeping the bulk of the force at bay. From their exceptionally compact formation, this Group threw up an almost impenetrable screen of defensive fire and in spite of the ferocious aggressiveness of the attackers, they knocked

GO Hq 49th Bomb Wg (H), APO 520, US Army, 10 Sept 44, cont'd.

thirteen (13) enemy fighters from the sky for the loss of only one (1) bomber. This unique achievement in the history of aerial warfare is consistent with the amazing past history of the Group. The target is defended by the heaviest concentration of accurate anti-aircraft fire south of Berlin and two or more bombers were destroyed in the target area, by heavy criss-cross fire. In the face of these intense barrages of enemy gunfire, and continually harried by hordes of fighters, the Group leader kept his depleted forces intact and led the formation on a highly successful bombing run, in which the entire explosive force of their bombs were centered on the assigned objective. By their intrepid valor and superior combat skill in the successful completion of this operation against the enemy's fuel supply, the 484th Bombardment Group (Pathfinder) has immobilized a large part of the enemy's air force and motorized divisions and has dealt a direct blow at the enemy's ability to continue. Their outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in the face of the heaviest resistance is worthy of emulation and deserves the highest praise.

By Order of Colonel Lee

ROBERT E. WHITE
Lt. Col., AC
Executive.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ John E. Mitchell
/t/ John E. Mitchell

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