

CHAPTER XX – BEGINNING OF THE END, APRIL 1945

(A) Narrative History

The story of the Group for the month of April carries several items of interest. Outstanding among them is the change of command. As has been stated elsewhere in this History, it was Mission No. 196, 19 March 1945, when the Group attacked Muhldorf Marshalling Yard, Germany, that Colonel Lawhon completed his thirty five sorties; but it was not until 15 April 1945 on the Operation Buckland to the Bologna Area, Italy, that the Colonel flew his last combat mission with the Group. During the days immediately following his last combat mission of 19 March 1945, he visited Headquarters of both the 49th Wing and the Fifteenth Air Force for the purpose of completing matters pertaining to his command and preparing for his next assignment. During his assignment with the 461st Group, Colonel Lawhon had served as Group Operations Officer from 8 September to 21 September 1944, as Deputy Group Commander from 22 September to 20 December 1944, and as Group Commander from 21 December 1944 to 16 April 1945.⁽¹⁾

On 16 April, Colonel Craven C. Rogers, who had been the Deputy Group Commander since 30 March 1945, assumed command of the Group. Lt. Colonel Charles E. Gregory arrived on 16 April and was designated the Deputy Group Commander the same day.⁽²⁾

Something new and different was added to the Group in April. Pursuant to the terms of General Orders No. 15, 23 April 1945, Headquarters 461st Bombardment Group (H), the Headquarters Detachment of the 461st Bombardment Group was created. It was organized in compliance with letter, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, file No. 320, subject “Group Headquarters Detachment,” dated 26 March 1945 and made effective 30 April 1945. Captain Raymond L. Wilcovitz, formerly Adjutant in the 767th Squadron, was designated as Headquarters Detachment Commanding Officer.

The following positions were created to attend to the necessary administrative duties:

Commanding Officer – Raymond L. Wilcovitz, Captain, Air Corps
First Sergeant (Acting) – T Sgt. Lester V. Neuberg
Sergeant Major (Acting) – S Sgt. Frederick F. Ferguson
Duty Non-Commissioned Officer – Sgt. James G. Parvin
Supply Non-Commissioned Officer – (To be announced)

Headquarters Detachment has the responsibility for initiating and maintaining such necessary records as are required of the orderly room.

The Orderly Room of this detachment was set up in what was formerly the schoolroom for Gunnery and Turret Training, and active operation began on or about 15

⁽¹⁾ See Appendage No. 1, Chapter XX, Page 1.

⁽²⁾ See Appendage No. 2, Chapter XX, Page 2.

April 1945, at which time the Headquarters Detachment began to take over its various duties from Headquarters of the 461st Bombardment Group. The transition was completed prior to 30 April 1945 and since that time the Headquarters Detachment has functioned as a unit separate from Group Headquarters.

Members of the Group tried to keep their impatience, caused by the approaching end of the war, partially under control by closely following the advance of the Allied Armies in Germany and Italy. The Italian drive was of especial interest to the Group personnel, ground and air echelon alike, because they had helped prepare for the missions or had participated in missions flown in support of the Fifth and Eighth Army fronts early in the month. The advance of the Russians in Austria brought about the capture or elimination of many of the Fifteenth Air Force targets and helped create an additional interest in the war situation.

April 2nd marked the completion of one year of actual combat. As has been stated elsewhere, it was on 2 April 1944 that the Group flew its first combat mission.⁽³⁾ On the evening of April 4, the Headquarters officers celebrated the anniversary with a party held in the Headquarters Officers' Club. Among the guests were the 49th Wing Commander, Brigadier General William L. Lee; the 49th Wing Operations Officer, Colonel R.P. Todd; the 464th Group Commander, Colonel A.J. Bird, Jr.; the 456th Group Commander, Colonel T.W. Steed; the 451st Group Commander, Colonel L.L. Stefanowicz; and approximately twenty nurses and WAC's from the General Hospital in Naples and the WAC Detachment in Caserta.

April marked the publication of the Group's first newspaper. The first year of operation souvenir edition of "Liberaider" was published by the Group. Sgt. Charles E. Dynes, Sgt. Geoffrey L. Peters of the Group Public Relations Section and Sgt. Donald R. Paine of the Group Special Services Office spent eight days in Rome preparing the newspaper for publication.

President Roosevelt's sudden death on 12 April 1945 came as a profound shock to the members of the Group. The first news came over the radio late on the evening of 12 April. The flag was lowered to half-mast on the following morning, 13 April, and continued to be at half-mast throughout the month. Memorial services for the President were held in the Squadrons on Sunday morning, 15 April.

(B) Operations

The Group flew a total of 18 combat missions during the month of April. Combat airplanes logged a total of 4113 combat hours. Of the 648 planes airborne, 624 were over briefed targets. The average number of aircraft on each mission was 36.0. Of the 1422 tons of bombs airborne, 1244 were dropped on targets.

Bombing accuracy during the month was very good. The lowest percentage was 36.1 on Mission No. 215 of 15 April, and the highest was 95.5 on Mission No. 208 of 6 April.

⁽³⁾ Chapter XIX, (B) Operations, Paragraph 1, 2, and 3.

The Group ranked sixth in the Air Force in bombing accuracy with an average score of 68.9 per cent. As compared to the standings in March, when the Group ranked thirteenth in the Air Force, this was remarkable improvement.

In the last few months of operations an interesting innovation came into the picture. Air Force gave the Group more of a free hand in picking out Mean Point of Impact which definitely led to improved bombing. By a close study of bombing over a period of training and actual combat, the Group bombardier was qualified to determine what type of check points could be more easily identified by the individual bombardiers. Working on this basis a definite improvement in bombing accuracy was noted.

Airplane losses during the month were very light. Only two airplanes were lost on combat missions – both of them to flak. Enemy fighters were seen on several occasions, but only one encounter took place when a FW-190 made a pass at one of the planes in a formation. Flak damage was comparatively light except on the mission to Linz, Austria, on 25 April when intense, accurate, and heavy anti-aircraft fire was encountered. On that day eleven aircraft were damaged and one aircraft was lost over the target. Also on the 25th of April, Lt. Demmond made a wheels-up crash landing on the runway after losing a part of the main landing gear near the field.

Although the number of missions flown during April compares favorably with the average number of missions flown in months past, the total number could have been appreciably greater but for the erratic weather and the swiftly vanishing bomb line. Several missions had to be cancelled because of fickle weather over the Alps. On two or three occasions an entire formation was forced to turn back when a weather front stood between it and the target. More and more the Group was ordered to do tactical bombing in Italy because of the fluid situation in Austria and the ever-diminishing bomb line which often changed hourly. As the Russian armies moved far past Vienna into Austria and the Seventh and Third American Armies penetrated deeper into Southern Germany, whole operational areas were wiped out; and such formidable targets as Vienna, Regensburg, Augsburg, and Munich were no more. From this it was fast becoming evident that the Fifteenth Air Force had become a tactical air force, and as Lt. General Carl A. Spaatz affirmed later in the month at a press conference in Rome, the job of the strategic air forces in Europe was done.

During the last few days of the month, rumors had the Group flying supply missions. Of course such incidents as the arrival of drop racks and supply canisters along with Captain T. Trevor Williams, an English officer from Allied Forces Headquarters, gave grounds for these rumors. April saw no supply missions despite this.

CREWS

A total of twenty-one crews were received during the month of April.

Paragraph 1 of Group Special Orders No. 64, dated 4 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG, 15AF, 3 Apr 45 fol named pers are further asgd to sqs as indicated”:

764th Squadron

2nd Lt. Warren E. Inskip and crew
2nd Lt. J. Herbert Beson and crew
2nd Lt. J. Wilbur M. McGoey and crew

765th Squadron

2nd Lt. J. William O. Cunningham, Jr. and crew

767th Squadron

2nd Lt. Martin G. Mertz and crew
2nd Lt. J. Guion L. Phillips and crew

Paragraph 6 of Group Special Orders No 66, dated 7 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this GP VO CG 15AF, 8 Apr 45, fol pers are further asgd to Sqs as indicated.”

766th Squadron

2nd Lt. Carl H. Ledendecker and crew

765th Squadron

2nd Lt. Daniel J. Silvis, Jr. and crew

Paragraph 2 of Group Special Orders No 67, dated 9 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, 8 Apr 45, fol named pers are further asgd to Sqs as indicated.”

764th Squadron

2nd Lt. Julius M. Batenic and crew

766th Squadron

2nd Lt. Thomas J. Pearce, Jr. and crew

Paragraph 6 of Group Special Orders No 73, dated 17 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 6 SO 90 Hq 47th Bomb Wg dtd 16 Apr 45, fol named pers are further asgd to Sqs as indicated.”

767th Squadron

1st Lt. Joseph A. Ballinger and crew
1st Lt. William F. Austin and crew
1st Lt. Stanley E. Caswell and crew

766th Squadron

1st Lt. Roy A. Hatem and crew

765th Squadron

1st Lt. Edward C. Demmond and crew
Capt. Fenton H. Butler and crew

Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders No 73, dated 17 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 1 SO 90 Hq 47th Bomb Wg dtd 16 Apr 45, fol
named pers are further asgd to Sqs as indicated.”

764th Squadron

1st Lt. Edgar B. Olson and crew

765th Squadron

1st Lt. William M. Holly and crew

767th Squadron

1st Lt. John P. Hutton and crew

Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders No 74, dated 18 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 4, SO 90 Hq 47th Bomb Wg dtd 16 Apr 45, fol
named pers are further asgd to 764th Bomb Sq and are placed on DS to 885th Bomb Sq
(H).”

1st Lt. Allen L. Gilley, Jr. and crew

Paragraph 10 of Group Special Orders No 74, dated 18 April 1945, reads as follows:
“Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 6, SO 90 Hq 47th Bomb Wg dtd 16 Apr 45, fol
named pers are further asgd to 765th Bomb Sq.”

1st Lt. Richard F. Teiland and crew

MISSIONS

Mission No. 206, 1 April 1945 – Bruck Marshalling Yard, Austria

On the first day of the month a force of twenty-seven planes, led by Major Rider, was
dispatched to attack the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria. Getting off to what appeared

to be a promising start, the formation crossed the Adriatic in fair enough weather. Over Yugoslavia, however, the weather grew worse with cirrus building up to a ten-tenths layer of clouds extending from 16,000 to above 23,000 feet. A roundabout route as far east as Lake Balaton in Hungary, in an effort to find a passage through the wall of clouds, proved unsuccessful, and the formation having no other alternative returned to Base with its cargo of bombs. No mission credit was allowed.

Mission No. 206, 2 April 1945 – St. Polten Marshalling Yard, Austria

As part of the overall plan of impeding enemy troop movements in the Vienna Area, the Group was directed on 2 April 1945 to attack the marshalling yard at St. Polten, Austria. Under ideal weather conditions and in the absence of both flak and enemy fighters, the Group formation led by Major Baker achieved excellent results. Photographs show that a heavy concentration of bombs fell across the center of the St. Polten marshalling yard, scoring innumerable hits on tracks and rolling stock; another concentration fell on the west choke point, with at least seven direct hits cutting the line to Linz. Air Force plotted 79.3 per cent of bombs dropped within 1000 feet of the briefed aiming point.

Message of Commendation

SUBJECT: Commendation (Teletype)
FROM: Fifteenth Air Force, A311
TO: Commanding Officer, 461st Bombardment Group (H).

The following message (15AF A311) is forwarded with my congratulations.

“Bombing strike photographs of your attack on St. Polten Marshalling Yard on April 2 show excellent bombing patterns by squadrons of the Groups, and post raid reconnaissance reveals terrific destruction created. Please convey to the Groups my commendation for a job well done.”

COL TODD

Mission No. 207, 3 April 1945 – Bolzano Marshalling Yard, Italy (Canceled)

Mission No. 207, 4 April 1945 – Bronzolo Marshalling Yard, Italy (Canceled)

Mission No. 207, 5 April 1945 - Brescia Marshalling Yard, Italy

Aerial reconnaissance of the Fifteenth Air Force confirmed intelligence reports that the Germans were attempting to move masses of military equipment and Italian machinery out of Italy by way of the Milan to Verona railway line. For this reason Brescia, accommodating upwards of 1,000 railway cars and considered a critical link in the line, was designated the target for the day. A force of twenty-eight planes,

commanded by Major Rider, attacked the target in ideal weather with good results. Air Force scored the mission at 90.0 per cent. The bomb pattern was rectangular and well concentrated over the width and length of the marshalling yard. There was no opposition from either flak or fighters.

Mission No. 208, 6 April 1945 – Brescia/Breda Small Arms Works, Italy

The Group returned to Brescia, this time to bomb the Breda Arms Factory reported to be manufacturing shell cases for the Germans. A force of twenty seven planes, led by Major Thackston, dropped a heavy concentration of bombs directly on the target, gutting about three fourths of the factory buildings and installations. The mission was scored at 95.5 per cent, which turned out to be the highest score obtained in April. There was no interference from flak or fighters.

Mission No. 209, 7 April 1945 - Vipiteno Railroad Bridge, Italy

Unpredictable weather over the Alps prevented the Group formation from reaching its objective, the railroad bridge at Vipiteno, Italy. After fighting strong head winds and ten-tenths cumulus all the way from Fiume to a point just south of Villach, Major Trommershausser, the formation leader, conceded victory to the elements and the had the formation return to base. The Group received no credit for this mission.

Mission No. 209, 8 April 1945 - Gorizia Marshalling Yard, Italy

The field order for this day directed the Group to attack the marshalling yard at Bronzolo in northern Italy. Bad weather still prevailed and after an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate it in the area of Florence, the Group formation leader, Major Trommershausser, selected the marshalling yard at Gorizia as an alternate target. At Gorizia the weather proved no handicap, for the bombing was done visually and with excellent results. Bomb strike photographs revealed that 56.3% of the bombs found their mark within 1000 feet of the briefed aiming point, though the pattern was somewhat scattered. No flak came up to oppose the formation. The Luftwaffe made a feeble gesture when two ME109's dared show themselves in the area of Udine and did no more than observe the formation from long range.

Mission No. 210, 9 April 1945 - Troop Concentrations Northeast of Lugo, Italy

April 9th was D-Day on the Italian front. In preparation for this day along towards the latter part of March, the Group Command staff were called to a conference at 49th Wing Headquarters, where they were told that a spring offensive on the Italian front was in the offing. Plans were drawn up and every phase of Operation Buckland, as it was called, was discussed.

Upon their return from the conference, the Group command staff began to make intensive preparations. In the days following, flight navigators and bombardiers held frequent meetings behind closed doors with Colonel Rogers, Major Rider, Major Murphy, Captain Toth, and Lt. Goodfriend. A number of navigators and bombardiers were flown

to northern Italy to the scene of future operations, where they studied the surrounding terrain.

Operation Buckland was designed to extend over several days and presented many difficulties. There could be no mistakes because thousands of lives depended on the outcome of the operation. The area to be bombed -- troop concentrations and gun emplacements in the vicinity of Lugo and most of the Santorno River -- was devoid of prominent landmarks, thereby putting a high priority on skillful and accurate navigation. Bombing was to be over a wide area and therefore had to be perfect. Moreover, the job called for precision timing because the entire Air Force had to pass over the target within the space of an hour and a half.

The Group formation of forty-one planes comprising two forces -- the Red Force led by Colonel Rogers, and the Blue Force led by Major Rider -- took to the air at 1200 hours. In the target area the Red Force encountered no difficulty: ground markers were clearly visible, radio navigational aids worked perfectly, the target was identified and bombed as planned. The Blue Force following closely on the Red Force, however, ran into unexpected interference on the bomb run. Another formation came underneath them at bombs release point and Major Rider, choosing the only possible alternative, ordered the bombardiers to refrain from bombing. By then the hour was very near to being 1520, the time when all bombing was to cease, and it was considered too dangerous to attempt a second run on the target. As a result of this the Blue Force did not bomb but returned its bombs to Base.

Contrary to expectations, enemy resistance at the target was surprisingly slight. Anti-aircraft fire was encountered but was described as slight, inaccurate, heavy, and generally ineffective. The Luftwaffe was conspicuously absent. Consequently not a single plane was damaged.

Strike photographs of the bombing by Red Force show that the aiming point was well covered though the pattern did not extend as far as was intended.

Mission No. 211, 10 April 1945 - Troop Concentrations Northeast of Lugo, Italy

Operation Buckland, in support of the Eighth Army, was continued on 10 April. The Group sent a double force, led by Colonel Rogers and Major Rider, against troop concentrations and gun emplacements in the vicinity of Lugo, Italy. The whole operation was executed as planned. A total of eighty tons of fragmentation bombs was dropped on target with excellent results. Photographs show that the assigned target area was well saturated and that the heavier concentrations fell directly on the aiming points. Enemy anti-aircraft fire was described as slight and inaccurate. Three FW-190s were seen scavenging in the target area.

Fifteenth Air Force
Office of the Commanding General

201.22

12 April 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO: Commanding Officer, 461st Bombardment Group (H).

1. The following cables have been sent from the Commanding General, Eighth Army and the Commanding General, Fifteenth Army Group, respectively, To the Commander-in-Chief, MAAP, who has passed same to this headquarters with his congratulations and appreciation.

"Much appreciated is the wholehearted support of the Fifteenth Air Force on 9 and 10 April. The carpet bombing in front of our assaulting divisions, I am convinced, has been one of the decisive factors in our rapid advance to the Santorno River. The degree of success attained shows how enthusiastically all personnel tackled those close support missions. I fully realize the special and intensive training that this task demanded of all bombing crews."

"I want you to know how fully I appreciate the splendid and effective air support which the air forces have already given us in the current attack. The excellent cooperation we have received from all air force personnel starting with the early planning phase has been a source of special gratification. I am confident of your all-out support in the future. Our Air-ground team is a great success."

2. I am particularly gratified to pass these well-earned commendations to all units of the command and to add my own praise for an outstanding demonstration of successful coordinated effort between air and ground forces.

/s/ N. F. Twining
Major General, USA
Commanding

Mission No. 212, 11 April 1945 - Bronsolo Marshalling Yard, Italy

The attack on the Bronsolo Marshalling Yard, south of Bolsano, was designed to cripple further the enemy's escape routes and to deny him the opportunity of withdrawal into the Alps. Major Thackston led the Group formation of twenty-seven planes on this mission. Against moderate flak the Group achieved excellent results -- 54.7 per cent of the bombs dropped were plotted within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. A concentrated pattern of bombs fell on the south choke point and north half of the marshalling yard, cutting through lines and destroying an unestimated number of railroad cars.

The plane piloted by 2nd. Lt. Robert Caran was hit by flak at the target and did not return. When this aircraft was last seen, five crew members had bailed out.

Mission No. 213, 12 April 1945 - St. Veit Railroad Bridge, Austria

In pursuance of the Air Force policy of interdicting all enemy escape routes, the Group was directed to bomb a small railroad bridge at St. Veit in Austria. Major Poole led the Group formation of twenty-eight planes to the target and to a superior mission. Despite a three-tenths undercast, which interfered with visibility at the target, the bombing was exceptionally good. Seventy per cent of the 1000-pound RDX bombs dropped were plotted within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point. The south approach to the bridge was particularly well hit.

Mission No. 214, 13 April 1945 - Plattling Marshalling Yard, Germany (Canceled)

Mission No. 214, 14 April 1945 - Malcontenta Ammunition Factory, Italy

The operations order for this day called for a normal effort against the Malcontenta Ammunition Factory, located seven miles due west of Venice. Major Thackston led the Group formation of four boxes. Owing to a nine-tenths undercast in the target area, only one box was able to identify the target and drop its bombs. The other three boxes after making several passes at the target abandoned it and returned bombs to Base. The mission was scored at 67.4 per cent. Anti-aircraft fire at the target was slight and inaccurate.

Mission No. 215, 15 April 1945 - German Troop Concentrations in Bologna Area, Italy

The second phase of Operation Buckland, this time in support of the Fifth Army, began on 15 April and aimed at disorganization of the enemy's day, the Red Force, led by Colonel Rogers, had for its objective enemy troop concentrations and gun emplacements located approximately a fourth of a mile north of the junction of Reno and Sette Rivers. En route to the target the plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Frank M. Brown, Jr., lost two of its engines and the crew were forced to bail out in the area of Florence. The rest of the force of thirty-eight planes got through to the target without incident. Using 250-pound general-purpose bombs, the Group unloaded its cargo of eighty tons directly on the target leveling the installations. There was no opposition at the target in the way of flak or enemy fighters.

Mission No. 215, 15 April 1945 - Nervessa Railroad Bridge Diversion, Italy

Blue Force, which was led by Major Baker, bombed the Nervessa Railroad Bridge in Northern Italy. Unfavorable weather at the target prevented one box of six planes from bombing. The other twelve planes, however, did bomb with satisfactory results for a score of 36.1 per cent. The pattern was none too good; the major concentration of bombs fell 800 feet short of the aiming point. Two planes were damaged at the target, though the flak was described as slight, inaccurate, and heavy.

Mission No. 216, 16 April 1945 - Troop Concentrations in Bolgna Area, Italy

The following day the Group again sent a large force to Bologna in support of the Fifth Army. Enemy troop concentrations were the objective, Major Trommershausser, who led the formation, upon finding the target effectively screened by eight-tenths cumulus at 10,000 feet, ordered the formation to return to Base with all its bombs. The Group did not take credit for a mission, through the Air Force allowed sortie credit.

Mission No. 216, 17 April 1945 - Troop Concentrations in Bolgna Area, Italy

This last mission to Bologna in support of the Fifth Army brought Operation Buckland to a close. Major Trommershausser led the formation of forty-two planes against German troop concentrations. Only thirty-five planes in this force were able to bomb. One box of six planes found the target obscured by smoke and had to abandon it after three unsuccessful attempts. Photos show that the bombing was good and the patter well concentrated. Photos show that the bombing was good and the pattern well concentrated. No enemy resistance from either flak or fighters was encountered.

Commendations

"I send my most hearty congratulations to your entire command for your record effort of 15 April in support of our ground forces. To your ground personnel particularly great credit is due for the near miracle of maintenance that allowed 1233 heavy bombers and 629 fighters to be dispatched on that day. Operational and Intelligence staffs were conceived, planned and directed the execution have every reason to be proud. And to the combat leaders and crews for a splendid day's work I extend my appreciation and commendation."

/s/ General Cannon

"I want you to know how deeply I appreciate the thoroughly effective support which the Air Forces under your command have already given to the 15Th Army Group in the current attack. Your excellent cooperation began with the planning phases of our operation and has continued in a manner which is most gratifying to all personnel in the 5th and 8th Armies which you are supporting."

/s/ General Clark

Order of the Day Number 2. "The advances of our ground forces have brought to a close the strategic air war waged by the United States Strategic Air Forces and the Royal Air Forces Bomber Command. It has been won with a decisiveness becoming increasingly evident as our armies overrun Germany. From now onward our strategic air forces must operate with our tactical air forces in close cooperation with our armies. All units of the United States Strategic Air Forces are commended for their part in winning the strategic air war and are enjoined to continue with undiminished effort and precision the final tactical phase of air action to secure the ultimate objective -- complete defeat of Germany."

/s/ General Spatz

Mission No. 217, 19 April 1945 - Avisio Viaduct and Railroad Diversion, Italy

The Avisio Viaduct, located approximately six miles north of Verona, is one of the vital links in the Bronner railway line. It was frequently visited by Groups of the Fifteenth Air Force and made inoperative on several occasions. Notwithstanding this, the enemy by the ingenious use of pre-fabricated spans was able to remedy the damage and continued to funnel traffic through the Bronner Pass at night. To make interdiction of all railway lines feeding into the Bronner absolute and complete, the Air Force assigned several Groups to destroy the Avisio Viaduct. The 461st Group participated in this operation.

The field order called for a maximum effort of thirty-six aircraft; the Group supplied thirty-nine aircraft. Major Thackston led the Group formation. Haze partly obscured the target but good bombing results were obtained. The pattern fell across the Viaduct and continued to a point one thousand feet west of the aiming point. Air Force scored the mission at 40.3 per cent.

Flak was moderate at the target but not very accurate for not a single plane sustained damage. The Luftwaffe was out in force. Both FW-190s and Me109s were seen in comparatively large numbers in the vicinity of Lake Garda. Enemy fighters, however, did not engage the Group formation.

Mission No. 218, 20 April 1945 - Lusia Road Bridge, Italy

Major Phillips led the successful mission of 20 April against the Lusia Bridge in Northern Italy. This bridge, one of the few left standing, spanned the Adigo River and was being used by the retreating Germans.

One thousand pound RDX bombs were dropped to obtain excellent results. Flak at target, described as slight, inaccurate, and heavy, damaged one plane; save that it interfered little with the accuracy of the bombing, for the mission was scored at 91.9 per cent. Direct hits were observed on abutments and approaches of the bridge, as well as the span itself. One lone No-262, pursued by two P-51s, was seen in the area of Bologna.

Mission No. 219, 21 April 1945 - Attnang/Puchiem Marshalling Yard, Austria

The briefed target for this mission was to be the marshalling yard at Brenner, Italy. En route, in the vicinity of Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, the formation encountered impassable weather and was forced to abandon the primary target in favor of alternate target No. 2, the marshalling yard at Attnang, Austria. Major Poole led the formation. Bombing through a three-tenths undercast, which necessitated as many as five passes at the target by some boxes, the Group nevertheless obtained good results. Air Force scored the mission at 61.1 per cent. The pattern began just short of the marshalling yard and carried well into it. Neither flak nor fighters were encountered.

Mission No. 220, 23 April 1945 - Badia Road Bridge, Italy

The Group formation, led by Major Trommershausser, gave a good account of itself in bombing the road bridge at Badia, Italy. In good weather but in face of heavy anti-aircraft fire that damaged nine planes, the formation unloaded its cargo of 1,000-pound general-purpose bombs directly on the bridge. At least twelve direct hits, or near misses, were scored on the span of the bridge. Of the bombs dropped, 85.8 per cent were counted within 1,000 feet of the briefed aiming point.

Commendation

"The results of the bombing of the Badia Road Bridge on 23 April 1945 are a source of great pride and satisfaction to me. The accuracy and precision displayed on this mission are indicative of the standards desired by every commander engaged in the final defeat of the enemy. My commendation to you for a job well done."

Brig. General Lee

Mission No. 221, 24 April 1945 - Rovereto Marshalling Yard and Gun Emplacements, Italy

Major Baker was in command of a force of thirty-seven planes that bombed the Rovereto Marshalling Yard in Northern Italy on 24 April 1945. The bomb load consisted of 500-pound RDX's; three aircraft, however, carried fragmentation bombs for the purpose of bombing gun emplacements at Rovereto. Results were good. The marshalling yard was effectively hit, but it was not possible to determine whether any of the gun emplacements were hit. One aircraft was damaged by the slight flak at the target.

Commendation

"I congratulate you and your personnel on the fine results obtained in the attack against the Rovereto Marshalling Yard on 24 April 1945. The determination and devotion to duty displayed on this attack are to be commended."

Brig. General Lee

Mission No. 222, 25 April 1945 - Linz Main Marshalling Yard, Austria

With the offensive in Italy progressing successfully, the Air Force suddenly turned to bombing in support of the Russian armies on the Southeastern front. The mission on 25 April 1945 was to Linz, Austria, with the Main Marshalling Yard as the primary target. Major Phillips led the mission with Lt. Colonel Gregory leading the second attack unit. In view of the extremely heavy anti-aircraft fire encountered, which damaged eleven of the twenty-six planes over target, the bombing was exceptionally good. Of the bombs dropped, 55 per cent were plotted within 1000 feet of the briefed aimed point.

The plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Lawrence R. Toothman was lost to flak over the target. The plane piloted by 1st Lt. Richard F. Reiland had a brief encounter with a FW-190

which opened fire at 600 yards. When the alert gunners fired back the Fock Wulf turned away and headed north to Germany.

Commendation

"The successful bombing of yesterday, 26 April 1945, by all Groups of this command was a fine display of leadership and aggressiveness. Your action in reaching targets through adverse weather that turned back many other units is deserving of commendation."

Brig. General Lee

Mission No. 223, 26 April 1945 - Lienz Marshalling Yard, Austria

The primary target for this mission was the Cortina Ammunition Stores in Italy. Bad weather in Northern Italy made identification of this small target impossible, and Colonel Rogers, leading the formation, decided on one of the alternate targets, the marshalling yard at Lienz, Austria. Because of the nine-tenths cloud coverage at Lienz, the formation had to let down to 12,000 feet in order to bomb visually. Bombing was done by boxes, some boxes making as many as three passes at the target. Two boxes dropped their bombs directly on the marshalling yard; the others were either short or over but on the whole results were very good. Air Force scored the mission at 64.6 per cent. There was no interference from flak or fighters.

Commendation

"Attacks against the enemy's vital communications center at Lienz yesterday show excellent results by the Forty-Ninth Wing. Bombing of the 451 and 461 Groups was particularly outstanding."

Brig. General Lee

MISSING IN ACTION

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Home Town</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mission Target</u>
2 nd Lt.	Robert Caran	Cleveland, Ohio	11/4/45	Bronzolo
1 st Lt.	Donald J. Rhodes	Berkeley, Mich.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
2 nd Lt.	Billy May	Montezuma, Ga.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
1 st Lt.	Robert E. Hearn	Millington, Tenn.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	Martin F. Comer	Birmingham, Ala.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	Alfred J. Cashman	Racine, Wis.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	Francis A. Schaules	Detroit, Mich.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	Albert H. Lewis	St. Louis, Mo.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	C.L. Robinson	Louisville, Ky.	11/4/45	Bronzolo
Sgt.	James B. Feyereisen	Marshall, Minn.	11/4/45	Bronzolo

2 nd Lt.	Lawrence R. Toothman	Mannington, W. Va.	25/4/45	Linz
2 nd Lt.	William Jones	Bronx, N.Y.	25/4/45	Linz
F/O	Paul R. Ashworth	Payson, Utah	25/4/45	Linz
S Sgt.	Roy J. Wieland	Alhambra, Calif.	25/4/45	Linz
S Sgt.	Oscar L. Scogin, Jr.	Slidell, La.	25/4/45	Linz
Cpl.	Robert C. Baker	Jamestown, N.Y.	25/4/45	Linz
Cpl.	John L. LaZier	Coal City, Ill.	25/4/45	Linz
Cpl.	Douglas A. Morrison	Gainsville, Ga.	25/4/45	Linz
Cpl.	Howard R. Acheson	Lowell, Mich.	25/4/45	Linz
Sgt.	Joseph H. Hoskins, Jr.	Old Hickory, Tenn.	25/4/45	Linz
S Sgt.	William L. Small	Andover, Mass.	25/4/45	Linz

KILLED IN ACTION

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Home Town</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mission Target</u>
Cpl.	Lionel W. Schultz	St. Louis, Mo.	15/4/45	Bologna

(C) Photographs

The enclosed photographs accompany this History for the month.

(D) Special Accounts

a. Promotions

Enlisted Men

<u>MOS</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>Grade</u>
502	Stanley W. Fugett	35799087	Cpl. To Sgt
657	William Frank	36166152	Pvt to Pfc

b. Missing in Action Reports

(Prisoners of War)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>MIA Date</u>	<u>Target</u>
Cpl.	Thomas F. Byers	16 December 1944	Brux
T Sgt.	Harry W. Dunham	16 December 1944	Brux
Cpl.	Paul T. Haggerty	16 December 1944	Brux
Cpl.	Thomas H. MacDonald	16 December 1944	Brux
T Sgt.	Jesse H. Palmer	16 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Charles R. Clay	17 December 1944	Odertal

T Sgt.	Lawrence F. Dixon, Jr.	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Harry D. Edmiston	17 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Lawrence M. Eidsmore	17 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Wilfred A. Engelke	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	V.L. Francisco, Jr.	17 December 1944	Odertal
1 st Lt.	Robert A. Galvan	17 December 1944	Odertal
S Sgt.	Urbain H. Granger	17 December 1944	Odertal
1 st Lt.	Jeff L. Hamilton, Jr.	17 December 1944	Odertal
F/O	Hugh H. Janley	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Eldred H. Helton	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Frank V. Hokr	17 December 1944	Odertal
Cpl.	Roger A. Koontz	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Earl W. Kreps	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	William L. McLain, Jr.	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Howard E. Munson	17 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Trefry A. Ross	17 December 1944	Odertal
Cpl.	Edgar A. Squires	17 December 1944	Odertal
1 st Lt.	Edward K. George	18 December 1944	Blechhammer
S Sgt.	John C. Kilgore	18 December 1944	Blechhammer
2 nd Lt.	Neil W. McCulley	18 December 1944	Blechhammer
T Sgt.	William H. Wiest	18 December 1944	Blechhammer
Sgt.	Forrest M. Bentz	8 January 1945	Linz
2 nd Lt.	Wellington A. Gillis	8 January 1945	Linz
Cpl.	Clarence L. Gilmer	8 January 1945	Linz
Cpl.	James A. Glasson, Jr.	8 January 1945	Linz
F/O	Bernard R. Goldstein	8 January 1945	Linz
Cpl.	Robert D. Morris	8 January 1945	Linz
Cpl.	Roy L. Noble	8 January 1945	Linz
2 nd Lt.	Thomas R. Wiley	8 January 1945	Linz
1 st Lt.	John F. Chaklos	19 January 1945	Brod

(Returned to Duty)

<u>Rand</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>MIA Date</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Returned Date</u>
Sgt.	William A. MacDonald	9/3/45	Graz	1 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Philip J. Caroselli	13/4/44	Straszhof	2 April 45
S Sgt.	James G. Erwin	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
Cpl.	Walter D. Fries	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
Cpl.	Donald R. Hall	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Lloyd R. Heinze	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
S Sgt.	William T. Jones	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
F/O	James W. Kane	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
Sgt.	Russell R. McCallicher	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
S Sgt.	Frederick J. McGrath	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Michael H. Nilby, Jr.	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45

Sgt.	Albert H. Oster	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Walter O. Reil	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
1 st Lt.	Lawrence N. Rosenberg	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
S Sgt.	Thomas J. Reiland	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Edwin F. Strauss	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Randall L. Webb	26/3/45	Straszhof	28 April 45
Sgt.	Donald L. Stackhouse	26/3/45	Straszhof	29 April 45
Sgt.	Roy J. Sturgis	26/3/45	Straszhof	29 April 45
Sgt.	George E. Winslow	26/3/45	Straszhof	29 April 45

(Hospitalized Wounded and Injured in Action)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Hospitalized</u>	<u>Date Returned</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
2 nd Lt.	Alexander G. Bell	15 April 45		
2 nd Lt.	Frank M. Brown, Jr.	15 April 45		
S Sgt.	Floyd E. Bulette	31 March 45	2 April 45	
F/O	Albert C. James	31 March 45	27 April 45	
Cpl.	Joseph F. Kennelly	7 Feb 45		Trfd to 26 th GH
S Sgt.	John E. Lancelot	11 Apr 45		Trfd to 26 th GH
Sgt.	James Manolakelli	15 April 45	23 April 45	
1 st Lt.	Lawrence H. Norton	25 April 45		
1 st Lt.	Robert L. Rosulek	23 April 45	9 April 45	
2 nd Lt.	Alfred Wallace	31 March 45	20 April 45	Trfd to 26 th GH
Sgt.	Arthur M. Yarbrough	13 Feb 45		

c. Awards and Decorations

General Orders No. 2125, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, 6 April 1945:

Award of the Silver Star

Brooks A. Lawhon, 0-397652, Colonel, Headquarters, 461st Bombardment Group. For gallantry in action as pilot of a B-24 type aircraft. On 1 March 1945, Colonel Lawhon led a group formation on a bombing mission against a vitally important enemy oil refinery in Austria. Despite severe and adverse weather conditions which threatened to preclude a successful completion of the mission, Colonel Lawhon brought his formation directly to the target. On the bombing run mechanical difficulties precluded a successful completion of the attack. Realizing the strategic importance of this target and the necessity of its destruction, through outstanding leadership, Colonel Lawhon brought his entire formation around for another attack on the vital installation. Despite intense, accurate and heavy enemy anti-aircraft fire, Colonel Lawhon skillfully maneuvered his formation through the enemy defenses for a second time to complete a highly successful bomb run. As a result of his grim determination and superior leadership, the bombs of

his group were concentrated in the target area, inflicting grave damage to vital installations and supplies. Leaving the objective, he quickly rallied his formation and, in spite of an acute shortage of fuel, enabled all the aircraft of his group to return safely to base. By his conspicuous courage, leadership and devotion to duty, Colonel Lawhon has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Tacoma, Washington.

Awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Orgn</u>	<u>15AF G.O.</u>	<u>Date</u>
Captain	Donald E. Tiffany	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Bertrand J. Arents	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	George R. Carrier	765 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Ernest R. Frazier	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Cholett Griswold	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Mark E. Kennedy	766 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Edward A. Nahkunst	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Thomas E. Oliver	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Anthony A. Romanowicz	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Charles Saur	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Ned A. Vahldieck	766 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Harry L. Walsh	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Marvin A. Whitley	764 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
T Sgt.	Walter M. Adamczak	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
T Sgt.	Brevitt Hook	767 th Sq	1983	1 April 45
Major	Charles R. Phillips	766 th Sq	2066	3 April 45
1 st Lt.	Jack A. Bowen	765 th Sq	2066	3 April 45
1 st Lt.	Bruce T. Newsted	765 th Sq	2066	3 April 45
1 st Lt.	Donald I. Plummer, Jr.	765 th Sq	2066	3 April 45
1 st Lt.	Joseph A. Stockler	766 th Sq	2066	3 April 45
Major	Frank M. Poole	767 th Sq	2166	7 April 45
1 st Lt.	Donald C. Eaby	765 th Sq	2166	7 April 45
1 st Lt.	Vincent R. Frattone	765 th Sq	2166	7 April 45
Captain	Hubert W. Souther	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Frank W. Bell, Jr.	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Harold F. Black	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	James J. Fredericks	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Carl F. Jurack	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Daniel I. Levin	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Leonard R. Rosenthal	767 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Robert L. Rosulek	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
1 st Lt.	Joseph A. Suozzi	767 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Kenneth Kase	764 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Roy E. Williams	765 th Sq	2335	13 April 45
S Sgt.	Grady M. Weeks	766 th Sq	2335	13 April 45

Captain	Stockton B. Shaw	766 th Sq	2424	16 April 45
1 st Lt.	Warren E. Steinhauser	765 th Sq	2424	16 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Chester W. Crumbo	764 th Sq	2424	16 April 45
S Sgt.	Joe R. Brown	767 th Sq	2424	16 April 45
S Sgt.	Arthur M. Yarbrough	765 th Sq	2424	16 April 45
Colonel	Craven C. Rogers	461 st Gp	2510	18 April 45
1 st Lt.	Russell G. Whalen	765 th Sq	2573	20 April 45
T Sgt.	George Christie	765 th Sq	2573	20 April 45
Captain	Ernest C. Parsonson	764 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Charles W. Cameron	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	John A. Dirienz	766 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Lloyd D. Emmert	764 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	John G.L. Oliver	764 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	William H. Rentz	765 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Elliot D. Resenberg	764 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Martin A. Rush, Jr.	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Warren A. Scott	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Roland H. Stevens	764 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Dominick Traetta	765 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Michael J. Ucci	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Robert J. Roemer	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Herman Weinstock	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
T Sgt.	Herbert N. Webster	767 th Sq	2690	23 April 45
1 st Lt.	Richard C. Decker	765 th Sq	2815	28 April 45
1 st Lt.	Perry T. Keatley	765 th Sq	2815	28 April 45
1 st Lt.	Paul F. Klein	764 th Sq	2815	28 April 45
1 st Lt.	Roy E. Philips, Jr.	766 th Sq	2815	28 April 45
T Sgt.	William T. Kimball	764 th Sq	2815	28 April 45
1 st Lt.	Charles R. Dean	767 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Chester F. Johnson	767 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Melvin J. Meyer	767 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Andrew W. Polk, Jr.	765 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Albert E. Smith	767 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Edwin K. Warren	767 th Sq	2902	30 April 45
1 st Lt.	Lawrence O. Woodruff	765 th Sq	2902	30 April 45

Awards of the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Orgn</u>	<u>15AF G.O.</u>	<u>Date</u>
1 st Lt.	George J. Wilson	766 th Sq	1984	1 April 45
1 st Lt.	Alfred J. Murrer	766 th Sq	2066	3 April 45

Awards of the Soldier's Medal

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Orgn</u>	<u>15AF G.O.</u>	<u>Date</u>
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S Sgt.	James J. Stack, Jr.	765 th Sq	2132	6 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Jack M. Dunlap	765 th Sq	2706	24 April 45
2 nd Lt.	Robert M. Kelliher	765 th Sq	2706	24 April 45

Award of the Bronze Star Medal

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Orgn</u>	<u>15AF G.O.</u>	<u>Date</u>
T Sgt.	Alfred W. Henry	765 th Sq	2041	2 April 45
Captain	Bryant S. Montgomery	764 th Sq	2442	17 April 45
M Sgt.	Wilford L. Irwin	764 th Sq	2464	17 April 45
Major	Henry M. Hudson	461 st Gp	2580	21 April 45
M Sgt.	Robert L. Butlar	764 th Sq	2584	21 April 45
T Sgt.	David E. Bowers	764 th Sq	2584	21 April 45
Captain	Willie M. Platt	765 th Sq	2657	22 April 45

d. Changes in Personnel

Numerous changes in personnel on the Group Training Board took place during the month of April. As Group flight leader pilots, navigators, and bombardiers finished their combat missions, they were assigned to the Training Board to assist in the training of potential flight leader personnel. April saw the replacement of most of the original members of the Board.

Paragraph 3 of Group Special Orders No. 62, dated 2 April 1945, placed Major Donald L. MacDougall on detached service to Group Headquarters. "MAJOR (1092) DONALD L. MAC DOUGAL, 0732037, 766th Bomb Sq, is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp (H), eff this date."

The Board gained a "mickey operator" and a navigator by the same order. Authority: Paragraph 6 and 7 of Group Special Orders No. 62 – "1ST LT (1039) ROBERT P. LOVERIN, 0707293, 766th Bomb Sq, is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp (H), eff this date." 1ST LT (1034) EUGENE W. BROCK, 0732566, 766th Bomb Sq is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp (H), eff this date."

Major James E. Thackston and Captain Theodore R. Ahlberg were placed on detached service to Group Headquarters and designated Assistant Group Operations Officers but worked with the Training Board. Authority: Group Special Orders No. 67, dated 9 April 1945, paragraph 3 – "CAPT (1092) THEODORE R. AHLBERG 0745851 766th Bomb Sq is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is further designated Asst Gp S-3 O;" and Group Special Orders No. 73, dated 17 April 1945, paragraph 2 – "MAJ (1092) JAMES E. THACKSTON 0425001 765th Bomb Sq is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is further designated Asst Gp S-3 O."

Other changes in the Board were as follows:

Group Special Orders No. 65, dated 5 April 1945, paragraph 6 – “CAPT (1092) ROBERT J. LUEBKE, 0664210, 767th Bomb Sq, is hereby reld fr DS with Hq 461st Bomb Group (H).” Group Special Orders No. 69, dated 12 April 1945, paragraph 4 – “CAPT (1092) BERTRAND J. ARENTS, 0675528. 767th Bomb Sq, is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Group (H);” and paragraph 5 of this same order – “1ST LT (1035) THOMAS E. OLIVER, 01692888, 767th Bomb Sq, is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Group (H).” Group Special Orders No. 70, dated 14 April 1945, paragraph 9 – “CAPT (1092) ARTHUR H. TRIER, 0700577, 766th Bomb Sq is hereby reld fr DS with Hq 461st Bomb Group (H);” and paragraph 13 of this same orders – “CAPT (1092) GEORGE H. MILLER, 0687335, 764th Bomb Sq is hereby reld fr DS with Hq 461st Bomb Group (H).” Group Special Orders No. 73, dated 17 April 1945, paragraph 3 – “CAPT (1034) CONSTANT V. PLATZ 0692119 767th Bomb Sq is hereby reld fr DS with Hq 461st Bomb Gp.” Group Special Orders No. 79, dated 27 April 1945, paragraph 3 – “Fol named Offs 766th Bomb Sq are hereby reld fr DS to Hq 461st Bomb Gp: CAPT (1035) LEON F. CHURCHILL, 0668704.....1ST LT (1039) ROBERT P. LOVERIN, 0707293.”

The Group gained one rated Captain on 2 April, who had but recently arrived in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations from the United States. Group Special Orders No. 62, dated 2 April 1945, paragraph 11 – “PAC Par 3, SO 73, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 31 Mar 45, CAPT (1092) CHARLES P. MC DONNELLY, 0427604, having been asgd this Gp, is further asgd to the Hq 461st Bomb Group (H), eff 31 Mar 45. Duty assignment is Asst S-3.”

An Information and Education Officer was added to the Group on 7 April 1945. Group Special Orders No. 66, dated 7 April 1945, paragraph 3 – “Having been asgd this Gp PAC Par 3 SO 77 Hq 49th Bomb Wg dtd 4 Apr 45, CAPT (5004) J. HAROLD OWENS, 0572892, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is hereby designated Group Information and Education Officer as primary duty asgmt vice CAPT JOSEPH J. MENTE, 0913181.

Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders No. 66, dated 7 April 1945, transferred Captain Raymond L. Wilcovitz to Group Headquarters and designated him Commanding Officer of the 461st Bombardment Group Headquarters Detachment. Paragraph 8 of the same orders relieved Captain William L. Hallauer from assignment to the 764th Squadron and reassigned him to the 767th Squadron to replace Captain Wilcovitz. Paragraph 9 of this same orders moved 1st Lt. Lester C. Hume from Group Headquarters to the 764th Squadron to take Captain Hallauer’s place as the Squadron Adjutant. Paragraph 10 transferred WOJG Jack A. Shephard from the 767th Bomnb Squadron to Group Headquarters and designated him Cryptographic Officer.

Captains Wayne W. Connor, Luverne S. Johnson, and Charles P. McDonnell were transferred from Group Headquarters to Squadrons as indicated by paragraphs 12, 13, and 14 of Group Special Orders No. 66 – “CAPT (1092) WAYNE W. CONNOR 0667659 is hereby reld fr asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and reasgd to 764th Bomb Sq. CAPT (1092) LUVERNE S. JOHNSON 0724772 is hereby reld fr asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and

reasgd to 764th Bomb Sq. CAPT (1092 CHARLES P. MCDONNELL 0427604 is hereby reld fr asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and reasgd to 765th Bomb Sq.”

Paragraph 2 of Group Special Orders No. 74, dated 18 April 1945, transferred Captain Willie M. Platt to the Air Division, United States Control Council Austria. Authority: “PAC Par 11, SO 105, Hq 15AF, dtd 15 Apr 45, CAPT (9301) WILLIE M. PLATT, 0581094, is hereby reld fr asgd to the 765th Bob Sq and is trfd to Air Div U.S. Control Council Austria, Hq AAF/MTO WP via mil acft govt mtr T and/or rail RUAT to CO for dy.”

The Group Bombardier, Major Benjamin S. Murphy, was transferred to the 7th Replacement Depot per paragraph 12 of Group Special Orders No. 74, dated 18 April 1945 – “PAC LO Hq 15AF CO/HER/jrb-2, dtd 17 Apr 45, MAJOR (1035) BENJAMIN S. MURPHY, 0730809, is trfd to 7th Repl Depot WP thereto via mil acft govt mtr T and/or rail RUAT to CO for further instructions.”

e. Biographical Sketches

Brooks Albert Lawhom, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Lawhom, was born at Elgin, Texas, 3 August 1914. After his graduation from the Levelland Texas High School in 1932, he enrolled at the Southwest State College in Oklahoma. Later he transferred to the University of Oklahoma. From November of 1937 to June of 1939 he was a secondary school teacher in the high school at Welch Oklahoma. During part of that time he also served as the high school principal.

On 29 December 1939 he began primary training as an aviation cadet at the Spartan School of Aviation at Tulsa, Oklahoma. He received his basic training at Randolph Field and his advance training at Kelly Field. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on 30 August 1940 and assigned the serial number of 0-397652.

On 9 September 1940 he joined the 17th Bombardment Group at McChord Field, Tacoma, Washington, in which he flew the following types of airplanes: B-18, B-23, and B-25. With the 17th Group he served as a Squadron Operations and Intelligence Officer. On 8 December 1941 he moved with the 17th Group to the Army Air Base at Pendleton, Oregon.

On 17 June 1942 he reported to the 309th Bomb Group at Columbia, South Carolina, and was made the Squadron Commander of the 376th Squadron of that Group. Following his assignment to the Group, he was placed on detached service with his squadron to Miami, Florida, where he did submarine patrol duty in type B-25 airplanes. On 16 September 1942 he returned to the 309th Group with which he served as Assistant Group Operations Officer and as Group Operations Officer until 13 December 1943.

On 15 December 1943 he became a member of the 49th Bombardment Wing which was then stationed at Greenville, South Carolina. In February of 1944 he moved with the

49th Bombardment Wing to the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and was stationed in Italy as the Wing Assistant Operations Officer.

He was placed on detached service to the 461st Bombardment Group on 11 August 1944 where he served as the training officer. From 8 September to 21 September he was the Group Operations Officer. On 22 September 1944 he became the Deputy Group Commander. From 21 December 1944 until 16 April 1945 he was the Commanding Officer of the 461st Bombardment Group.

He holds an Officer's Reserve Commission. The dates of his promotions are as follows: First Lieutenant, 12 March 1942; Captain, 21 August 1942; Major, 19 December 1942; Lieutenant Colonel, 7 May 1944; and Colonel, 26 January 1945.

The Colonel has been awarded a Silver Star, a Distinguished Flying Cross and Oak Leaf Cluster, an Air Medal with a silver and bronze cluster, the Europe-Africa-and Middle East Service Ribbon with two campaign stars, and the American Defense Ribbon.

He was married on 1 March 1941 to Miss Margaret Ebson who now makes her home at Tacoma, Washington.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

	<u>APRIL</u>					<u>CUMULATIVE</u>				
	764TH	765TH	766TH	767TH	GROUP	764TH	765TH	766TH	767TH	GROUP
SORTIES										
NO. AIRCRAFT AIRBORNE	162	160	164	162	648	1671	1663	1662	1722	6718
LESS NON-EFFECTIVE SORTIES	14	13	29	23	79	292	301	316	320	1229
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES	148	147	135	139	569	1379	1367	1346	1402	5494
% AIRBORNE EFFECTIVE	91%	92%	82%	86%	88%	83%	82%	81%	81%	82%
AVE. NO. ACFT. AIRBORNE PER MISSION	9	8.9	9.1	9	36	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.7	30.1
EARLY RETURNS										
MECHANICAL FAILURES	5	5	7	3	20	98	107	121	117	443
PERSONNEL FAILURES	0	3	0	1	4	7	12	11	27	57
WEATHER	0	0	0	0	0	74	77	69	56	276
TOTAL	5	8	7	4	24	179	196	201	200	776
% AIRBORNE RETURNING EARLY	3.1	5	4.3	2.5	3.7	10.7	11.8	12.1	11.6	11.5
BOMB TONNAGE										
NO. AIRBORNE	356.6	343.6	353.8	358.1	1412.1	3309	3297	3274	3410	13290
DROPPED OVER TARGET	321.5	315.4	298.5	308.4	1243.8	2721	2742	2655	2768	10886
% AIRBORNE DROPPED O/T	90%	92%	84%	86%	88%	82%	83%	81%	81%	82%
VICTORIES										
DESTROYED	0	0	0	0	0	34	54	25	16	129
PROBABLES	0	0	0	0	0	8	16	8	12	44
DAMAGED	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	5	1	16
VICTORIES PER LOSS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.9	0.8	0.7	1.2
VICTORIES PER 100 SORTIES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	4.4	2.1	1.3	2.7
LOSSES										
TO ANTI-AIRCRAFT	1	1	0	0	2	14	12	13	6	45
TO ENEMY AIRCRAFT	0	0	0	0	0	7	9	7	9	32
OTHER COMBAT LOSSES	0	0	0	0	0	3	10	11	9	33
TOTAL	1	1	0	0	2	24	30	30	24	110
TO A/A PER 100 SORTIES	1.5	1.8	1.6	0	1.5	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.5	0.9
TO E/A PER 100 SORTIES	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9
FLYING TIME										
COMBAT HOURS FLOWN	1042	998	1046	1027	4113	11801	11381	11326	11695	46203
NON-COMBAT HOURS FLOWN	481	606	589	553	2229	3490	3819	3389	3310	14008
TOTAL	1523	1604	1635	1580	6342	15291	15200	14715	15005	60211
HRS. PER OPER. ACFT	109	107	117	113	111	132	141	134	134	135
HRS. PER OPER. CREW	66	67	78	66	69	83	81	84	82	82
COMBAT HRS. PER OPER. CREW	47	42	50	43	45	64	61	64	64	63
AIRCRAFT										
AVERAGE NO. ASSIGNED	15.6	16.8	16.8	16.4	65.6	14.6	14.3	13.8	14.2	56.9
AVERAGE NO. OPERATIONAL	13.8	14.8	13.9	14.2	56.7	11.6	10.8	11	11.2	44.6
% OPERATIONAL	88	88	83	87	86	79	76	80	79	78
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES PER ACFT. ASGD.	9.5	8.8	8	8.5	8.7	94	96	98	99	97
CREWS										
AVERAGE NO. ASSIGNED	25.1	26.3	24	25.7	101.1	20.9	21.9	20.6	20.5	83.9
AVERAGE NO. OPERATIONAL	22.8	24.4	21.1	24.3	92.6	18.5	18.8	17.6	18.3	73.2
% OPERATIONAL	91	93	88	95	92	89	86	85	89	87
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES PER CREW ASGD.	5.9	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.6	66	62	65	68	65

461st BOMB GP (H) MISSION SUMMARY APRIL 1945 (Cont)

MISS NO	DATE	TARGET	1 st ATTACK UNIT LEADERS	2 nd ATTACK UNIT LEADERS	AC/TWO	BRLY RTNS	A/C O/T	SORT	TONS DRPTON B TGT	% IN 1000	WEATHER R AT TGT	AA	E AC SEEN	CLAIMS	A/C DMCD	A/C RTN	AC/LOST	MIA	CASUALTY	RATING	REMARKS
217	4-18-45	AVISIO VIADUCT & RR BRIDGE, ITALY	MAJ THACKSTON LT TRAFETTA LT SEATLY LT LEAH LT PHALEN	CAPT GRAY LT WHALEN LT GIBBANK LT PRISCHEL LT LEMANCZYK LT HAYMAN	42	3	36	36	82.75 500 RDX	40.3	HAZE	MH	17	0	0	34	0	0	0	EXCELLE NT	
218	4-20-45	LUSIA RR BRIDGE, ITALY	MAJ PHILLIPS CAPT VAHLDECK LT WILSON LT LAYNE LT DIRBENZ LT CARROLL	CAPT YETTER LT MILLER LT WILSON LT BLACK LT GRIFFIN LT COLANGELO	40	2	38	36	69 1000 RDX	91.9	CAVU	SH	1	0	1	40	0	0	0	SUPERIOR	
219	4-21-45	ATTMANS- PUCNEUW M/T, AUSTRIA	LT FOYER LT LEBACK LT DEANER LT WILSON	LT HENRY LT PAYSEW LT NERKAS LT RICE	40	0	40	40	59 500 RDX	61.1	3/10	NONE	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	SUPERIOR	
220	4-23-45	SADIA ROAD BRIDGE, ITALY	MAJ FROM SHALUSSER CAPT SAUR LT ROSENAU LT FREDERICKS LT LEVIN	LT ROSS LT OVERDORFF LT HEADER	40	1	39	39	94.5 1000 GP	93.8	CAVU	MAH	0	0	9	37	0	0	0	SUPERIOR	
221	4-24-45	ROVERETO M/T & GUN EMPACEMENT, ITALY	MAJ BAER LT WELTON LT BURLESON LT POLK LT LEAH	LT VLADYKA LT MC DONALD LT CURLIANC	40	3	37	37	70 500 RDX 596 250 FRAGS	NO SCOR E	CAVU	SH	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	NO RATING	
222	4-25-45	LINZ MAIN M/T, AUSTRIA	MAJ PHILLIPS LT NIXON LT LARSEN LT COREY LT LEWIS LT NEHRON LT WILSON	CAPT YETTER CAPT VAHLDECK LT VOCK LT LAYNE CAPT STEIN	30	2	30	28	40 500 RDX	95	CAVU	IAH	2	0	0	30	0	0	0	EXCELLE NT	
223	4-26-45	LINZ M/T, AUSTRIA	LT WILSON LT WILSON LT WILLIAMS LT KACZERSKI LT PANAGIOTPOULOS	MAJ POOLE LT MC GINNIS LT HANLEY LT DOCKER LT PRISCHEL LT WILSON LT JOHNSON	30	0	29	30	64.75 250 RDX	64.6	CAVU	NONE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	SUPERIOR	

APPENDAGES
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APPENDAGE No. 1

HEADQUARTERS
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OPERATIONS ORDER

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17 April 1945

EXTRACT

4. PAC Par 2 SO 88 Hq 49th Bomb Wg dtd 16 Apr 45 COL (1092) BROOKS A LAWHON 0397652 is reld fr asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is trfd to Hq & Hq Sq 49th Bomb Wg. WP via govt mtr T and/or mil acft RUAT to CG for dy. PCS. TDN. EDCMR: 17 Apr 45.

By order of Colonel ROGERS:

R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps.
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

RICHARD B. RUSSEY
2nd Lt., Air Corps
Asst Adjutant

CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

HARRY J. OGLESBY
Captain, Air Corps.

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APPENDAGE No. 2

HEADQUARTERS
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF

OPERATIONS ORDER APO 520, c/o PM, NY, NY.

NUMBER 72 16 April 1945

EXTRACT

2. Having been asgd this Gp PAC Par 1, SO 87, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 15 Apr 45, LT COL (1092) GREGORY, CHARLES E., 022841, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp (H) and is designated as Deputy Gp CO. EDCMR: 16 Apr 45.

By order of Colonel ROGERS:

R. FOSTER SCOTT
Major, Air Corps.
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

RICHARD B. RUSSEY
2nd Lt., Air Corps
Asst Adjutant

CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

HARRY J. OGLESBY
Captain, Air Corps.