

# CHAPTER IV – TRAINING, INSPECTION, AND PREPARATION FOR OVERSEAS MOVEMENT

## (A) ORGANIZATION

### 1. Mission of Organization.

The mission of the 461st Bombardment Group during the month of December, 1943, fell distinctly into three parts as follows:

- a. Third Phase flying training of the Flight Echelon.
- b. Frequent inspection of all types by representatives of higher echelons.
- c. Final preparation for overseas movement by both the Air and the Ground Echelons.

### 2. Growth of Organization.

#### a. Personnel.

(1) Additions. On 3 December First Lieutenant Raymond V. Gombossy, 0660485, reported to the Group and was assigned as Assistant Group Navigation Officer as an average.<sup>(1)</sup>

First Lieutenant Joseph J. Wente, 0-913181, reported for duty on the 16th of December and was made Special Services Officer.<sup>(2)</sup> Second Lieutenant C.S. Billhart became Assistant Special Services Officer with the verbal understanding that he would spend some of his time as an Assistant Group Adjutant.

(2) Changes. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December another shake-up occurred in the key flying personnel of the 765<sup>th</sup> Squadron. As a result of this shake-up, Major Robert E. Applegate, 0-22933, became the fifth Commanding Officer of that Squadron;<sup>(3)</sup> First Lieutenant William J. Bock was made Operations Officer; and First Lieutenant Norman E. Smith became the Assistant Operations Officer.

On 22nd December First Lieutenant William H. Tallant replaced First Lieutenant Smith as Assistant Operations Officer of the 765th Squadron. Lieutenant Smith was placed in command of Lieutenant Tallant's crew and became a flight leader. The following day, while flying his first mission with his skeleton crew, he crashed and suffered a broken leg. Before the end of the month he was transferred out of the Group.

During the morning hours of December 6<sup>th</sup>, Captain William H. Darden was declared missing when he and his crew flying with him failed to return from a Group

<sup>(1)</sup> See Appendage No. 1, Chapter IV, Page 1

<sup>(2)</sup> See Appendage No. 2, Chapter IV, Page 2

<sup>(3)</sup> See Appendage No. 3, Chapter IV, Page 3

search mission, which had been organized to search for Lt. Turvey and his crew. On 9 December, Captain James C. Dooley was assigned to replace Captain Darden as Commanding Officer of the 766<sup>th</sup> Squadron.<sup>(4)</sup>

First Lieutenant E.T. Goree replaced First Lieutenant William V. Pitt as Operations Officer of the 764<sup>th</sup> Squadron on December 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>(5)</sup>

When the Group officially completed its training on the last day of December only three of the original key pilots still held the positions to which they had been assigned the second week in August. They were: Captain William Burke, Group Operations Officer; Captain Albert O. Witte, Commanding Officer of the 764<sup>th</sup> Squadron; First Lieutenant David P. McQuillan, Operations Officer of the 767<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

- b. Fly-Away Airplanes. The first fly-away airplanes were officially received by the Group on 21 December, when eight airplanes were released to the Group by the Sub-Depot. By the last day of the month the Group had thirty three (33) new fly-away planes.

### 3. Stations.

The Group was stationed at Hammer Field throughout the month of December.

### 4. Relations with Other Organizations.

- a. Responsibility to Higher Command. This item is discussed in detail in another part of this chapter under the title "Visits and Activities of Noted Persons".
- b. Relations with Auxiliary Organizations. The splendid understanding established between the IV Bomber Command OUT Supervisory Unit No. 3 and the 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group during the month of November was continued throughout the month of December.

During the month of November the Group had experienced difficulties in getting cooperation from and coordination with the low target squadron that worked with the Group. In early December, however, a detachment of four planes and crews under First Lieutenant Dudley A. Philips was provided by the Eighth Tow Target Squadron of McCord Field, Washington. This detachment did a superior job in providing tow targets for gunnery missions.

Interception and fighter escort was reportedly provided during the month for Squadron and Group formations by the following organizations: IV Fighter Command, Oakland, California; Los Angeles Fighter Wing, Los Angeles, California; and San Diego Fighter Wing, San Diego, California.

## (B) MAJOR ACTIVITIES

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<sup>(4)</sup> See Appendage No. 3, Chapter IV, Page 3

<sup>(5)</sup> See Appendage No. 4, Chapter IV, Page 4

1. Primary Objectives.

The primary objectives during December were a continuation of the Second Phase objectives as outlined on page 29 of Chapter III. As the training program continued there was some shifting in emphasis but the training program was not fundamentally altered.

2. Governing Policies.

On December 3rd Colonel Glantzberg met with all of the personnel of half of the total number crews and discussed governing policies with them at length. The following day he discussed the same subject with the remaining half of the crews. His speech on those two occasions was as follows:

“I have called you men together because I think the end of Second Phase training marks a convenient spot on the calendar - a kind of break in our progress, where we should do a little stock taking. It is a good thing, from time to time, for men to look around and ask themselves how they stand in relation to the total objective.

“The plant and facilities here at Hammer Field are extremely good. I do not think that a unit commander could ask for anything more than they have made available to us here - but there is one disadvantage that I think you should keep in mind. The friendly atmosphere, filled with people eager to cooperate and help us in every way, is a kind of false promise of what we may find when we get to our theater of operations. I maintain that the ideal atmosphere in which to train is the atmosphere that most closely resembles the kind of thing that we will know in the theater of operations. To that degree, then, the charms of the Bamboo Room and the gentle attractiveness of the San Joaquin Valley present an element of deception that may later trip us up.

“If they had sent us immediately, at the beginning of our Second Phase, to the theater in which we are to serve and had said to us, ‘You have nine or ten weeks in which to mold a Group that will do things’, I think we would all be better off, because in the theater we would have seen missions coming back; the lessons would be taken much more to heart; we would have a sense of immediacy that would drive home the lessons of battle better than a thousand classroom hours could ever do.

“In the course of my visits from the line to group operations and then down to the various squadrons again, certain questions came up to which I think you should have the answers. Perhaps the question that is most commonly asked is ‘Why is the damn set-up so rugged?’ I do not know anybody to whom I have talked who has not at least by implication, uttered the unspoken statement, ‘They give me so much more than I have time to do.’ This is something I would like to get straight with you men. There has never been a time since armies began when every soldier did not have infinitely more to do than the time and physical facilities available to him would permit. But that makes sense, because what a soldier does in a place like this is to prepare for battle. In battle he will never have time to do all the things he ought to do. We have tried here to create that same sense of overwhelming urgency. The reason that we have not hesitated to throw countless details at your heads here in training is because when you find yourself

confronted by the enemy, there will be countless details, and you must learn to cope with the overwhelming if you expect to come out alive.

“There is also a tendency to underestimate the importance of paper work in an Air Force’s operation. The Lord knows that nobody has a greater aversion to group, wing or Air Force poop than I have, but I think that we should realize what it is for. In the first place, the Air Force deals in highly complicated and expensive pieces of equipment. The airplanes we fly cost about \$350,000.00 a piece. A good pilot represents an investment of our people of about \$50,000.00, and aerial gunner about \$15,000.00, and so on. Where you have large investments you must also have intelligent planning for the most effective use of your investment. Planning can only be done on a basis of a body of facts which are weighed and measured and interpreted for their meaning in the future. That is why practically everything we do must be reduced to a kind of statistical measurement so that those in higher echelons will have some basis on which to guess what the next step ought to be.

“Then there is the local poop which circulates in the squadrons and the group. It is issued for the simple reason that it is difficult to get all people of a unit together for instructions. And besides these instructions are somewhat complex. They must be put down in black and white so that our men will know the score, for if an order can be misunderstood, it will be misunderstood. So much for poop.

“There are times now, and there will be times aplenty in the future when most all of us will feel like that old soldier in Stonewall Jackson’s army who had marched till his feet were numb, his body was sore, till he was a hungry and unhappy dogface. Old Stonewall rode by on his horse and noticed this soldier and asked him how he felt. The soldier answered, ‘I am all right, General. I love my country but God damn my soul if I ever love another!’”

“Here in this group are 70 sets of men, 70 teams, 70 crews, 700 of you from every kind of life, from every kind of profession, rich and poor, all wearing this uniform in common, all sharing this passion to do the job well. You will climb into your heavy bombers and carry a heavy load to drop upon a target a thousand or more miles away. Each one of you will have his job to do, his private mission to accomplish. On the way to the target, enemy fighters will climb the sky to stop you. They will try to interfere with the accomplishment of your deadly errand. You will have to eliminate these interferers. Flak will rise and make holes in your ship, and in you too, but you are up there for just one thing - to drop your bombs upon the target. You must drop your bombs and get back home, straight-arming all meddlers, evading all black explosive flashes, to tell us what you saw and did, to get some sleep, to fix your ships and load them up again, to drop your bombs and come back home again, and again and again, until this damn war is done. That, gentlemen, is why we are here in this room, on this field, in this army.

“You men are here for one purpose; that is, to learn the ways and means by which you may accomplish your missions. The word ‘mission’ is one that you will hear tossed around many times as if it meant nothing more than a bus ride. But I would like you to

remember always that the basic meaning of the word is this: 'To impose one's will upon the enemy.'

"You men are new; we are all new. You groups of ten who count so on each other just learned each other's names five weeks ago, and of each ten of you, each single man has in his hands the lives of all the other nine, and the fate of the mission as well.

"I know of no aspect of the military life which represents the same sustained incentive to learn; which represents the same powerful motive for professional curiosity as heavy bombardment. In many areas of the service it is possible to carry men along who are in the army only for the ride, and who will always be passengers. Heavy bombardment has no room for passengers. We would like to carry them; they are agreeable fellows, but we carry them at the risk of their own lives, or rather the risk of our own lives. Every man is a partner. He has a continuous job to do and cannot spare one minute from improving himself and finding things out that will make him a better member of his crew. We have in this situation the most powerful spur to intellectual curiosity that exists anywhere. Sometimes we do a little kidding about it. We refer to a fellow as 'eager' but you will notice that when we say somebody is an 'eager beaver', there is a note of admiration in the phrase because we, all of us, know that an eager beaver will get the job done, and will come back with a whole skin.

"Let me ask you, in the name of God, never to abandon that will to learn to do your job better as long as you are in this Group. There is a hell of a lot of stuff to do; there is a vast amount of material to learn. We will never finish the job; we will never have reason to stop learning until the war is over and we hand our airplanes back to the taxpayers. I never want to hear it said of any man in this Group that he knew all there is to know about his job, because if I do hear that, I will know that the man is satisfied with less than his best and is, to that degree, betraying the other members of his crew.

"Peter the Great, King of Russia, was a first class soldier. He took the hide of Charles the Twelfth at Poltava a couple of hundred years ago and he did more other military tricks of which any of us would be very proud. He had a slogan that I would like every man in this Group to engrave in deep letter upon his mind and heart. Peter said this, 'I know nothing. I want to know everything. He who teaches me shall be welcome.'

"Each airplane commander has in his possession a copy of the army Air Force's Training Standard 20-2-1. He should regard this training standard as his Bible. It is the most important document he has. He should check it constantly and check his crews in accordance with it. Paragraph 3a is as far as I'm concerned, the air equivalent of 'The Lord is my shepherd'. I will read it to you and I expect you to read it and reread it and to live it.

"The functions of the bombardment airplane are performed by a group of highly trained specialists working together as a combat team. The success of each member in carrying out his assigned function depends on a large extent upon the cooperation and performance of other crew members. Precision bombing cannot be accomplished without

skillful piloting and accurate navigation. Adequate and effective defense against hostile fighter attack require the coordination of all crew members and the clear understanding on the part of each crew member of the responsibilities, capabilities, and limitations of the others. This high degree of crew coordination which is so essential to successful operation can only be attained through careful selection of personnel and long hours of instruction and supervised practice.'

"We are starting a new training set up. The crews in each squadron are being divided into four sections. Each squadron will fly three days and go to ground school on the fourth day. We are behind schedule on our flying training; we are a little bit ahead of schedule on our ground school. The new arrangement puts additional responsibility upon the initiative and imagination of the combat crews. We are eliminating certain ground school courses that are theoretical, other courses such as skeet, turret firing. The malfunction range will have to be accomplished by you just the same, but on your own time during flying days. The airplane commander under this new set up assumes a greater importance in whipping together the elements of his crew and leading them to the accomplishment of even higher standards of team performance. More than ever it will be his responsibility to make sure his team is capable of producing skilled piloting, accurate navigation, effective defense, effective communication, and precision bombing. In addition he will have to take on some of the functions of a governess to make sure that all his men get checked out in conventional turrets. The Group Armament Officer will keep in touch with your Squadron Operations and assign you a time and place which will be followed as the Squadrons follow any other assignment of training facilities such as link or bomber trainer.

### **FOR AIRPLANE COMMANDERS**

"Officer gunners such as navigators and bombardiers need gunnery maintenance just as much as career gunners do. When you have time, get your crews together, draw some machine guns from Ordnance, give each man in the crew a machine gun and time yourself on dismantling and putting the thing together again. If every man in these crews can handle a machine gun as well as he can cope with the mechanical problems of pouring a can of beer, I shall be satisfied with anything that Adolf or Tojo could ever toss at us. But as you know, these things take practice.

"Navigators have got to be qualified to take over the bombardier job and the bombardiers have to know enough about navigation to get the ship back. I think that airplane commanders should emphasize this mutual relationship between navigator and bombardier and get the men together and have them teach each other the elements of his trade.

"I am particularly interested in seeing that pilots and radio operators take radio procedure with the utmost seriousness. The radio operators are good technicians. The pilots can learn much from them.

I want each member of every crew to know the fundamentals of his airplane. I want every member thoroughly familiar with fuel system so that when they get down to the

ground with only a short time for servicing, everyone can pitch in and help with the refueling job.

“Every crew member should have some knowledge of communications. It does not make sense to have only one man in a ship who can communicate with the ground or with other airplanes. This knowledge must be shared. We are going to get into jams and men should be trained in every ship to take over when jams occur.

“I don’t think we load the airplane commander too much. The airplane commander occupies a curious position in the military organization of our time. He is the skipper of the ship for sure, but he is more than that. He is, in a sense, their parent. In this regard while much progress has been made in indoctrination by airplane commanders on combat crew procedure, there is need for much more practice and much more knowledge within the crew of what each man is expected to perform. We must learn that now.

“One of the points which needs constant emphasis and thought is our formation flying. We have had some good formation flying, but not enough. Airplane commanders must realize by now that in practically every theater of operation, a good defensive formation to and from the target is the best guarantee of bringing an outfit back. The whole principle of interlocking firepower can only operate when ships present themselves to the enemy like a kind of flying porcupine. Think about this. Work on it. There is much room for improvement here.

“It’s easy enough to judge your position. If you are in No. 2 position, have your co-pilot frame the leader in your window and stay just high enough to see the co-pilot of the lead plane. If you are in No. 2 position, frame the leader yourself in the co-pilot’s window and stay high enough so that you can see the leader’s head. That will put you on the line with or slightly higher than the lead plane and just the right distance out (about 100 feet).

“And a hint on leading formations. Climb no more than 1000 feet from the field, when it is contact, or 500 feet above the overcast when you are making instrument formation take off, then fly level at 130 miles per hour while you make your turn and until the first plane catches up, then open up to 160 miles per hour.

“No matter what theater we go to, punctuality will be essential to the success of any mission. Time schedules in combat represent the difference between life and death. We know what happened on the Ploesti mission when one group came in late - the ground defenses were alerted and they got the hell shot out of them. The time of rendezvous and of rallies is of critical importance. Every airplane commander must look upon his watch as a kind of armor plate. If he pays attention to his watch, and keeps it properly synchronized, it will save his life.

“We have had some examples of superior airmanship and crew procedure which I like to think prevail throughout the Group. We have had examples as well of courage under pressure which have done my heart good because I like to think of them as a kind of performance that every man in this Group will produce in a crisis when he is called

upon. Look around you. You airplane commanders notice these lessons and apply them to your own crews. Ask yourselves in all honor and humility, if, in a similar situation, you and your crew would have responded as well.

“I would like to quote paragraph 4 of our circular 1-1, ‘Command in Echelons’, because I think it sums up what I have been trying to say in these last few paragraphs. ‘The Chain of Command is, in its truest sense, a physical human chain. Every plane commander, every man under his command, is a vital link. Every officer must be well trained, self-disciplined and must possess those intangible qualities of a leader. He must command the respect and obedience of his men by his ability to make decisions that are CORRECT. These will come to the officer only as the result of his own self-discipline and thorough training. It is an officer’s duty to see that his men are well trained; That they understand the full import of the part they play in the organization; that they are equal to their tasks.’

“One final word about equipment. We have not been too fortunate in the mechanical condition of the ships assigned to us, but we have managed to establish here the habit of respect for our airplanes. We all know that we must take good care of our airplanes, and that we must learn to get the most out of them, so that when we have to call on them in a tight spot they won’t let us down.

“I am always interested in scanning some of the poop that crossed my desk when it presents training lessons, and I like to check up to see if these training lessons are being neglected in this Group. The other day I say that one of the most common deficiencies noted in the Second Air Force inspection was that practice of feathering propellers had been neglected, and I said to myself, ‘Uh oh, that is not true to this outfit.

“About the 15<sup>th</sup> of December we will start getting our fly-away airplanes - sixty two of them. Our plan now is to assign one combat crew to a plane. You will eat, sleep and live with that plane. It will be your baby. How you will make out in combat will be directly proportional to how well you know that plane and how well you take care of it. The plane will be yours and yours only. Although we will continue ground school until the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, the crews that are assigned airplanes before then will be excused from Ground School in order to work on their planes. Maintenance personnel will be spread very thin and you will all have to pitch in and work on them. It will be your own plane that you will be working on, the one you will fly into combat, so know it will and take care of it.

“Before I close, I have one more thought to leave with you. Since I came to the Group, a little over a month ago, I have had one single goal in mind. All of my energy has been devoted to having this Group, each Squadron, each crew, each one of you, as perfectly prepared for combat as it is humanly possible to be. Possibly I’ve been a bit impatient, or don’t you think so? General Connell has been here several times and General Lynd once. Both of them have given me the impression that they think this Group is way out in front. At the time I felt they hadn’t taken a very good look. Sunday I flew down to Muroc and March Field to have a look at the two groups there that are in the process of moving out and I’m damned if I don’t agree with what General Connell

said the last time he was here; and that we are in better shape right now than either of those two groups. I'm really proud of you - you've done a swell job, but don't go getting swelled heads. We may be better than a couple of groups ahead of us, but there is some competition over there that has really had experience. We are just getting off the nest, and we shall have a hell of a lot to learn before we start throwing our weight around in the big league. But if you keep on the way you've been going, I'll guarantee Uncle Adolf will get a hell of a jolt when the 461<sup>st</sup> uncorks its first show."

### 3. Organization Established for Executing Mission.

During the month of December the policy was continued of having the Group carefully supervise the training missions of the Squadrons. The old practice of constant vigilance and constant daily checking of progress was continued.

More time was devoted to flying and less to ground school. The ground school program was discontinued on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

As the new fly-away airplanes began to arrive they were assigned to those crews which had completed the minimum requirements for a heavy bombardment group. Second Lieutenant Clyde A. Stevens, a flight leader of the 764<sup>th</sup> Squadron, and his model crew received the first plane. As each crew received a plane the members were excused from all other commitments possible to spend all their time checking, calibrating, testing fuel consumption, and getting the plane ready for overseas flight.

### 4. Plans and Procedures Established.

As was stated in Chapter III a great deal of emphasis had been placed during the month of November on high altitude flying and bombing. To these were added in December high altitude gunnery, both by individual airplanes and by formation flights.

During November the group formation flights had revealed that much training of this type was needed. As a result, group formation flights had been temporarily abandoned and the emphasis placed on squadron formation flights. A great deal of time was spent on take-off at thirty-second intervals, on assembly over the field, on approach peel-offs, and quick landings. When the Group resumed its former policy in December of large formation flights it was evident that this training by squadrons had paid off in a big way.

Col. Glantzberg spent much of his time in the air during the month of December leading formation flights, flying 'tail-end Charlie', or observing formations from a B-25. Day after day after day he hammered away on take-offs, assembly, defensive formation flying, peel-offs and quick landings.

### 5. Difficulties Encountered.

a. Personnel Changes. The training program was hampered, as it had been in the past, by changes in key personnel as well as by changes in crew personnel.

b. Crashes. December proved to be a month of costly accidents. They started during bad weather the night of December 4<sup>th</sup>. First Lieutenant William H. Zumstag and his skeleton crew were caught in an overcast beyond Las Vegas, Nevada, during the night. He was compelled to go on instruments and presently his radio failed him. Eventually he ran low on gasoline that resulted in a forced landing which he made on a short landing strip at Wansaner, California. He ran off the end of the runway, hit a ditch, and very badly damaged the plane. Fortunately no one but his navigator, Second Lieutenant Joseph J. Repko, was injured. Lt. Repko has since returned to active duty.

That same night Second Lieutenant Charles W. Turvey and his skeleton crew were lost. Neither the plane nor any member of his crew has been found. The plane is believed to have crashed between Mt. Whitney and Huntington Lake, California. Riding with Lt. Turvey at the time of the crash were his co-pilot, Second Lt. Robert M. Hester; the navigator, Second Lt. William M. Cronin; the bombardier, Second Lt. Ellis H. Fish; the engineer, S/Sgt. Robert C. Bursey; and the radio operator, Sgt. Howard A. Wandtke.

On December 6<sup>th</sup> a searching party consisting of ten B-24's was organized to fly a formation search party for Lt. Turvey. While on this mission, which was flown at a comparatively low altitude, Captain William H. Derden suddenly developed engine trouble and is believed to have been caught in a down-draft. His co-pilot and radio operator parachuted to safety at a very low altitude but all the other members of the crew were lost. Again, neither the plane nor any bodies have been found. Within a few hours of the time of the accident, however, oxygen bottles, flying jackets, and broken wooden parts from the interior of an airplane began to float ashore on Huntington Lake. There seems to be no question but that Captain Derden failed in his courageous effort to ditch the plane on Huntington Lake. He is believed to have hit the water down-wind with his bomb bay doors open.

“The 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group lost a fine gentleman and an outstanding squadron commander in the crash which took the life of Captain William H. Derden and most of his crew. A graduate of Virginia Military Institute and a former instructor-pilot, he was truly an outstanding leader of men. Small but wiry, he was, nevertheless, highly intelligent and extremely resourceful. This little bundle of ceaseless energy was probably the best known, the best liked and the most inspiring officer in the 461<sup>st</sup> Group.

Co-pilot 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Morion. C. Settle and the radio operator, Sgt. George J. Barulic, were the two who parachuted to safety. Those lost with Capt. Darden were: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Samuel J. Schlosser, navigator; S/Sgt Franklin Nyswonger, engineer; Sgt Richard L. Spengle, gunner; and Sgt. Donald Vandepasch, gunner.

On 23 December, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Norman E. Smith was returning to Hammer Field from a routine flying mission to Tucson, Arizona, the first mission he had flown as a flight leader with his crew, when one of his engines ran away. Before he could feather the prop the head of the engine dropped off and he found it impossible to maintain altitude. He then ordered the crew to bail out. After all aboard had left the plane, he trimmed the plane as best he could and slid off the cat-walk. As he was sailing down to earth he noticed that the plane had made a circle and was approaching him. To avoid being hit by the plane he pulled in

much of his parachute and hit the earth with terrific force near Slaome, Arizona. Lt. Smith suffered a badly broken leg and his navigator, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harold Kurzberg, suffered from concussion as a result of a bump on the head. The other members of the crew were uninjured. They were: the co-pilot F/O Harold H. Brown, the engineer S/Sgt Paul Tait, and the radio operator, S/Sgt James P. Hagen.

c. Material. It is believed that the constant use of Ninety-one octane gasoline necessitated frequent engine changes which retarded the training program.

d. Weather. On the 20<sup>th</sup> day of December the weather suddenly but definitely took a turn for the worse. There was no twenty-four hour period between that date and the end of the month but what it rained. From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> day of December inclusive a total of 1881 flying hours were lost due to the weather.

e. Clothing Shortages. Both the ground and the air echelon experienced difficulties in securing prescribed clothing for enlisted men. Lt. Col. Grogan and Major Scott, who were in command of the ground echelon when it left at the end of the month, were very much perturbed about the reception they would get at the port of embarkation, because of the large number of clothing shortages.

## 6. Tactical Exercises.

On December 16<sup>th</sup> the Group flew a formation mission for the IV Bomber Command. Another formation mission for the IV Bomber Command was flown on 31 December 1943.

## 7. Significant Achievements.

a. Ninety eight percent of the combat crew members were qualified during the training period on their basic small arms weapon, the .45 caliber pistol.

b. By the last day of the month, sixty-seven of the seventy crew had fulfilled Minimum Requirements for Heavy Bombardment Units as prescribed by Headquarters Army Air Force in Army Air Force Training Standards 20-2-1.

c. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Col. Robert L. Bower and his associates submitted their final Preparation for Overseas Movement Inspection report. In doing this Lt. Col. Bower said, "I have inspected a good many groups in their final stages of preparation for overseas. This is one of the three best groups I have ever seen."

## 8. Visits and Activities of Noted Persons.

December 1 – Lt. Col. George Geehmanek, A-2 of the IV Bomber Command, inspected the combat intelligence set-up at Group and in the Squadrons.

December 5-8 – Lt. Col. Arthur C. Goebel, Air Inspector of the IV Bomber Command, and his associates made their first of two inspections of the Group during the month.

December 11 – Brig. Gen. Samuel M. Connell, Commanding General of the IV Bomber Command, also stopped at Hammer Field on his way to Muroe to attend a conference with General Lemay.

- Brig. Gen. Lemay, Wing Commander of the Eight Air Force, and his party stopped at Hammer Field briefly and conferred with Colonel Glantzberg.

December 15-16 – Major Albert O. Meals, Tactical Inspector of the Fourth Air Force, visited the Group. He attended the briefing of the IV Bomber Command Mission of December 16<sup>th</sup> and also flew as an observer on the mission.

December 18-21 – Lt. Col. Goebel and his associates made their second and final inspection of the Group for the month of December.

December 19-20 – Lt. Col. Robert M. Bower, Senior POM Inspector, and his associates inspected the Group for overseas movement. Lt. Col. Bower's associates were: Major W.C. Baker, Capt. H.N. Deniel, Capt. H.A. Sosaler, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. C.F. Kingl.

December 20 – Maj. Gen. William E. Lynd, Commanding General of the Fourth Air Force, spent considerable time in his final visit of the month to Group Headquarters. With him was the IV Bomber Command Commanding General, Samuel H. Connell.

December 21 – Col. Elder Patterson, Executive Officer of the IV Bomber Command, visited Group Headquarters. Major Edward L. Burge, Gunnery Officer of the IV Bomber Command, also visited the Group that day.

December 23 – 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Lloyd J. Davidson of the A-2 Historical Section of the IV Bomber Command conferred with the Group Historian.

December 26-27 – Lt. Col. George Checmanek and Major D.M. Wiseman, the Officer Qualification Committee of the IV Bomber Command, discharged their duties at Headquarters of the Group.

December 27 – Brig. Gen. Samuel M. Connell paid his final visit of the month to the Group. On that same day Lt. Col. Robert C. Whipple, A-3 of the IV Bomber Command and Major J.J. Braddock, Processing Unit IV Bomber Command, were at Headquarters.

December 31 – Capt. Albert L. Norberg, Assistant A-2 of the IV Bomber Command, visited the Group to pick up classified materials that were being returned to his Section.

## 9. Movement of Ground Echelon.

During the afternoon of the last day of December the first train left Hammer Field as the beginning of the movement of the ground echelon to the designated port of embarkation. This train, under the command of Lt. Col. Grogan, was made up of Group and Squadron equipment and the ground echelon of the 765th Squadron.<sup>(6)</sup>

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<sup>(6)</sup> See Appendage No. 5, Chapter IV, Page 5

The balance of this echelon was to leave the first day of the New Year.<sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>(7)</sup> See Appendage No. 5, Chapter IV, Page 5