

Foreword

It was my privilege to serve as Group Sgt. Major of the 461st Bomb Group (H) from its inception at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, until the Group was broken up in the summer of 1945. I was one of the 15 original cadre members assigned to the Group on August 11, 1943. The other 13 members of the original cadre to make the total of 28 were assigned a few days later.

From Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, to Camp Kearns at Salt Lake City and the hellhole called Wendover Field, Utah, and finally our last domestic home, Hammer Field at Fresno, California. Then by air or ship and the ultimate reunion at Torretta Field, outside of Cerignola, Italy.

To the best of my knowledge, this copy is the official history of the 461st Bomb Group. This copy was duplicated from the copy given to me a few pages at a time, by its author, Major Leigh Lott, our Group Intelligence Officer, and although bent, torn and discolored, has always been in my possession.

The last mission in my copy of the history is #223, and was made on April 26, 1945. My memory, while to some degree faulty, says that there were missions after April 26. VE Day (Victory in Europe) when the Germans surrendered was May 6, 1945.

I also recall that in the last few months of the war, instead of dropping bombs, we were dropping peace pamphlets.

Sometime in June 1945, came the sad and fateful day when an order was posted saying that all personnel having 100 combat points or more were to be transferred to the 456th Bomb Group (only a few miles away). The 456th in essence became a Repel Depel (Replacement Depot). I was in this Group. Perhaps the personnel who stayed with the 461st Group can fill us in on what happened. The intent at the time the Group was broken up was to redeploy what was left of the Group for training on B 29's and ultimate combat duty against Japan.

To keep a promise to both Frank O'Bannon, President of the 461st Bomb Group Ass'n, and Bud Markel, President of the 461st-484th Bomb Group Ass'n, they will each receive a copy of this history at the November 1986 convention of the 461st-484th Bomb Group Assn's at San Antonio.

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