

CHAPTER XIX – THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR OF COMBAT, MARCH 1945

(A) Narrative History

While on a routine visit to the Fifteenth Air Force, Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney, Deputy Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, visited the 461st Group on 21 March 1945. Accompanying him were Major General James M. Bevans, Deputy Commander of the Army Air Forces in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations; Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force; and Brigadier General William L. Lee, Commanding General of the 49th Bombardment Wing. After touring Group Headquarters and watching the formation take off on a combat mission to Graz, Austria, the party inspected the set up of Squadron 766. Later the party returned to the 767th Squadron Officer's Mess for lunch.

Letter of Commendation

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 US ARMY

23 March 1945

SUBJECT Commendation

:

Commanding Officer, 461st Bombardment Group (H), APO 520, US Army.

TO:

1. The following message has been received from the Commander-in-Chief, MAAF, Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker.

“Have just returned from conference with the Theater Commander. He indicated to me that he is highly pleased with his three days with the Fifteenth Air Force.

“General McNarney, as an experienced air force officer, has a keen analytical judgement of air matters. I am certain that you and your organization deserve highest praise and credit for what you showed the Theater Commander, which, although normal with you, cannot be exceeded, if equaled, by any air force.

“My congratulations to you and your people.”

2. The efforts of all personnel of this air force in demonstrating to the Theater Commander our method of operating are highly commendable. I was proud of the Fifteenth Air Force.

/s/ N.F. TWINING
Major General, USA

(B) Operations

As has been stated elsewhere in this History, the Group flew its first combat mission on 2 April 1944 in attacking the marshalling yard at Bihac, Yugoslavia. In its first full year of combat in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations the Group flew a total of 205 missions against targets located in nine different countries: Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Roumania, and Yugoslavia. During its first three months of operations the average bombing scores were the highest of any Group in the Air Force. The first superior mission flown by the Group was that against the marshalling yard at Ferrara, Italy, on 7 April 1944. The Group participated in the D-Day drive against the Germans in Italy on 12 May 1944 and in the invasion of Southern France on 15 August 1944. Well known targets attacked by this Group include those at Athena, Augsburg, Bad Voslau, Belgrade, Beziers, Blechhammer, Bologna, Bolzano, Bratislava, Brux, Bucharest, Budapest, Ferrara, Fiume, Friedrichshafen, Giurgiu, Graz Innsbruck, Linz, Lyon, Mossbierbaum, Munich, Odertal, Pitesti, Ploesti, Porto Marghera, Rogensburg, Trieste, Toulon, Verona, Vienna, Wiener Neustadt, and Zagreb.

During the first year the 4,674 airplanes of the Group over briefed targets amassed a total of 42,090 combat hours. Bombs dropped on briefed targets totaled 9,642 tons. In air encounters with the enemy, gunners of the Group claimed 129 enemy fighters destroyed, 44 probably destroyed, and 16 damaged. During the year the Group lost 106 airplanes on combat missions. Of the 903 casualties suffered by the Group, 436 are missing in action, 195 have been returned from missing in action, 177 are prisoners of war, and 95 have been killed.

The Group has been awarded two War Department Unit Citations. The first citation was for an attack on the Duna Repulepgyar Aircraft Factory at Budapest, Hungary, on 13 April 1944. The cluster to the citation was awarded for an instrument-bombing mission against the Creditul-Minier Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Roumania, on 15 July 1944. Individual decorations to personnel of the Group include: 3 Awards of the Legion of Merit, 10 Silver Stars, 264 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 27 Oak Leaf Clusters to Distinguished Flying Crosses, 12 Soldier's Medals, 58 Bronze Stars, 2,619 Air Medals, 3,709 Oak Leaf Clusters to Air Medals, 261 Purple Hearts, and 8 Oak Leaf Clusters to Purple Hearts.

For the month of March the Group had the smallest percentage of early returns and non-effective sorties in the Air Force. The fact that only 4.4 sorties in every one hundred were non-effective constitutes a new record in the history of the Engineering Section and speaks well for the engineering efficiency of the Group.

The Group flew a total of 20 combat missions during the month. Combat airplanes logged a total of 4,739 hours. Of the 631 planes that took off, 573 were over briefed targets. The average number of aircraft on each mission was 31.5. Of the 1,117 tons of bombs that were airborne, 1,010 tons were dropped on targets. In all, seven planes were lost in combat during the month: two in a mid-air collision, two to flak, and three for

other reasons. Bombing accuracy during the month ranged from 19.6 per cent to that of 69.3 per cent on Mission No. 195. The Group ranked thirteenth in the Air Force in bombing accuracy with an average of 42.7 per cent.

NEW CREWS

A total of ten new crews were received during the month of March.

Paragraph 1 of Group Special Orders No. 40, dated 3 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG, 15AF, 2 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to the 765th Bomb Sq, eff 2 Mar 45":

2nd Lt. Robert Caran and crew

Paragraph 1 of Group Special Orders No 40, dated 5 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG, 15AF, dtd 3 Mar 45, the fol named personnel are further asgd to the 766th Bomb Sq, eff 3 Mar 45":

2nd Lt. James M. Ridenour and crew

Paragraph 10 of Group Special Orders No 41, dated 5 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, 5 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to the 766th Bomb Sq, eff this date":

2nd Lt. Charles L. Brothers and crew

Paragraph 2 of Group Special Orders No 42, dated 6 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this GP VO CG 15AF, 5 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to Sqs as indicated, eff 5 Mar 45":

764th Squadron

Captain Gordon E. Gilbert and crew

765th Squadron

2nd Lt. Robert J. Bruning and crew

Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders No 47, dated 12 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, 12 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to the 766th Bomb Sq, eff this date":

2nd Lt. John R. Tebbens and crew

Paragraph 12 of Group Special Orders No 47, dated 12 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, 12 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to the 764th Bomb Sq, eff this date":

2nd Lt. Alcibiades Skalomenos and crew

Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders No 48, dated 13 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, dtd 13 Mar 45, the fol named persl are further asgd to the 764th Bomb Sq, eff this date":

2nd Lt. Robert C. Arnholt and crew

Paragraph 1 of Group Special Orders No 56, dated 24 March 1945, reads as follows: "Having been asgd to this Gp PAC VO CG 15AF, 23 Mar 45, the fol named personnel are further asgd to Sqs as indicated, eff 23 Mar 45":

764th Squadron

2nd Lt. Lawrence R. Toothman and crew

765th Squadron

2nd Lt. John J. Stanko and crew

MISSIONS

Mission No. 186, 1 March 1945 - Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria

The first mission of the month was a double header with the oil refinery at Moosebierbaum, Austria as the target. The Red Force, led by Colonel Lawhon, got through the bad weather over the Alps and reached the target. In the Lake Balaton Area the impassible weather made it necessary for Colonel Lawhon to abandon the briefed route. Instead of attempting to take his formation under the weather, he did a 360 to gain altitude and swung far to the right and east of the Russian bomb line in an effort to find a deck low enough to get over. The formation was lost by the time it got up above the weather. The radar navigator, Lt. Loverin, finally picked up Vienna, which he used in orienting himself at the initial point.

By this time the formation was an hour late. The combination of bad weather and another formation immediately ahead of Colonel Lawhon's Red Force made it impossible to drop the bombs on the first run. Despite the flak, the formation made another run on the target and Captain Churchill, finding a hole with only three-tenths cloud coverage, bombed the target visually. The Red Force was one of four out of forty-two formations in the Air Force scheduled to attack the target that bombed visually.

Photographs show that a concentrated pattern of bombs fell at the north edge of the refinery. Several direct hits were scored on the distillation plant, the compressor house, the cracking unit, and the hydraulic acid plant. Other bombs fell on the railroad siding and still others in the building area at the west edge of the refinery. The mission was scored at 33 percent.

The Blue Force, led by Major Mixson, was unable to find a passage under, above, or around the weather in the Lake Balaton Area and returned its bombs to base.

Mission No. 187, 2 March 1945 - North Marshalling Yard, Austria

Major Poole led Mission No. 187 in attacking the North Marshalling Yard, Austria, on 2 March. Because of cloud coverage at the target, the formation was compelled to bomb by instruments. Photographs of bombing show the target obscured by smoke with some bombs outside the target area. Twelve of twenty-five planes over the target were hit by flak but none were lost.

Mission No. 188, 3 March 1945 - Komarom Marshalling Yard, Hungary (Canceled)

Mission No. 188, 4 March 1945 - Graz Main Marshalling Yard, Austria

The mission of 4 March against Graz Main Marshalling Yard, Austria, found Major Rider leading a large formation. The bombs fell across the target area with twenty-five strikes on cars in the yard and other rail installations. An overhead pass was hit, while still other bombs fell on the tracks between the Main marshalling yard and the freight yards. The mission was scored at 26.7 percent.

Mission No. 189, 5 March 1945 - Linz Benzol Plant, Austria (Canceled)

Mission No. 189, 6 March 1945 - Vienna Schwechat Oil Refinery, Austria
(Canceled)

Mission No. 189, 7 March 1945 - Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria (Canceled)

Mission No. 189, 8 March 1945 - Hegyeshalom Marshalling Yard, Hungary

Both a Red and a Blue Force were dispatched on 8 March to attack the marshalling yard at Hegyeshalom, Hungary. The Red Force, led by Major Mixson, dropped 42.6 percent of its bombs within 1000 feet of the briefed aiming point which included the roundhouse. The score of the Blue Force led by Captain Thackston, was 29 percent.

Mission No. 190, 9 March 1945 - Graz Marshalling Yard, Austria

The primary target for Mission No. 190 on 9 March was the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria. Because of bad weather over the primary target, which was to have been a visual target, the Red Force was compelled to select an alternate pathfinder target. Captain MacDougall, leading the formation selected the Graz Marshalling Yard. The bombing was done by instruments with unobserved results.

Major Poole, leading the Blue Force, also abandoned the primary target and attacked the marshalling yard at Graz with unobserved results. One flight of the Blue Force became separated from the formation in the bad weather in the Klagenfurt Area. Being

unable to find the Blue Force, this Box joined the 451st Group for a run on marshalling yard at Graz but did not drop its bombs.

Mission No. 191, 10 March 1945 - Almasfuzito Oil Refinery, Hungary (Canceled)

Mission No. 191, 11 March 1945 - Muhldorf Marshalling Yard Germany (Canceled)

Mission No. 191, 12 March 1945 - Vienna Florisdorf Oil Refinery, Austria

On 12 March Captain Trommershausser led a large formation attacking the Florisdorf Oil Refinery at Vienna, Austria. A ten-tenths cloud coverage over the target necessitated pathfinder bombing with unobserved results. On this mission the Group had the unique experience of bombing a Vienna target without suffering any damage from flak.

Mission No. 192, 13 March 1945 - Regensburg Main Marshalling Yard, Germany

On 13 March Major Mixson led a four-box formation in attacking the marshalling yard at Regensburg, Germany. Again the bombing was done by the pathfinder method and again the results were unobserved. There was no flak at Regensburg.

Mission No. 193, 14 March 1945 - Wiener Neustadt Marshalling Yard, Austria

Mission No. 193 on 14 March was a planned visual mission against the marshalling yard at Bruck, Austria. Bad weather still prevailed. Lt. Colonel Hardy, leading a six-box formation, was compelled to find an alternate target that could be bombed by instruments. The target selected was the marshalling yard at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. The bombs were dropped through a solid undercast with unobserved results. This proved to be another target at which there was no flak.

Mission No. 194, 15 March 1945 - Wiener Neustadt Marshalling Yard, Austria

The marshalling yard at Wiener Neustadt, Austria, was again hit by pathfinder bombing as an alternate target. The briefed target had been the Schwechat Oil refinery at Vienna, but it could not be bombed visually. This time Major Poole took thirty-six planes over Wiener Neustadt without experiencing any flak.

Mission No. 195, 16 March 1945 - Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery, Austria

On 16 March the Group wrote "finite" on the oil refinery at Moosbierbaum, Austria. With ideal weather and only slight interference from non-effective smoke screens, the thirty-four planes in the formation hit the northeast portion of the refinery. The photographs show that a very concentrated pattern of bombs fell on that section of the refinery. Direct hits were scored on the distillation unit, the liquid air plant, buried oil storage cylinders, and oil storage tanks. The score for the mission was 69.3 percent, the highest score made by the Group during the month of March. Twenty-five of the thirty-

four planes over the target were hit by flak and three men were injured. Captain Trommershausser was the formation leader.

Message of Commendation

To: All Concerned

"My congratulations to the 461st Bombardment Group for the excellent bombing of 16 March 1945. Please pass to all participating my personal commendation."

Brig. Gen William L. Lee
Commander, 49th Bomb Wing

Mission No. 196, 17 March 1945 - Bratislava Rangier, Marshalling Yard,
Czechoslovakia (Canceled)

Mission No. 196, 18 March 1945 - Linz Main Marshalling Yard, Austria (Canceled)

Mission No. 196, 19 March 1945 - Muhldorf Marshalling Yard, Germany

One hundred pound general purpose bombs were used by the Group in attacking the marshalling yard at Muhldorf, Germany, on 19 March. A great deal of damage was done to the target, but the bomb pattern was scattered over a comparatively large area. Of the thirty-five planes led over the target by Captain Thackston, only one was hit by flak. Unfortunately, however, a man was injured in the damaged airplane. Colonel Lawhon, flying in the tail end position of the formation, finished his tour of combat duty with this mission.

Mission No. 197, 20 March 1945 - Wels Main Marshalling Yard, Austria

Lt. Colonel Hardy led a six-box formation in attacking the Wels Main Marshalling Yard, Austria, on 20 March. Again 100 pound general purpose bombs were used. Despite an eight-tenths cloud coverage at the target, the bombing was done visually. As had repeatedly been the case during the month when the Group was attacking marshalling yards of secondary - importance, there was no flak at this target.

Mission No. 198, 21 March 1945 - Graz Marshalling Yard, Austria

For Mission No. 198 on 21 March the marshalling yard at Graz turned out to be the alternate target selected for pathfinder bombing. The primary target had been the Bruck Marshalling Yard, Austria, but Major Poole, the formation leader, abandoned it because of poor visibility. One thousand pound general purpose bombs were used on this mission.

Mission No. 199, 22 March 1945 - Vienna Florisdorf Oil Refinery and Marshalling
Yard, Austria

The primary target for Mission No. 199 on 22 March was the Kagraan Oil refinery, which is situated due east from Vienna. Because this was believed to be the only active enemy oil refinery within bombing range of the Fifteenth Air Force, this target was rated as a first priority target. Bad weather and poor visibility in the whole Vienna area, however, made it impossible to attack this target visually. Since it could not be picked up by the mickey operator, Captain Trommershausser, leading the formation, was compelled to select another target for pathfinder bombing. The Florisdorf Marshalling Yard and Oil Refinery was selected. The lead "mickey operator", Lt. Levin, sighted on the marshalling yard, but most of the bombs carried across into the oil refinery that was believed to already have been destroyed. The intense, accurate, and heavy flak in the target area holed twenty of the twenty-seven planes on the bomb run and wounded one man.

Message of Commendation

To: All Concerned

"The Commanding General is gratified to be able to pass the following message from General Arnold to General Spaatz relayed through General Cannon:

"Noted in your message dated 24 March outlining results achieved during the period 16 to 22 March. Results are source of great satisfaction to all. Such smashing aerial attacks coordinated with relentless ground pressure can only result in complete victory. Please pass for me to all echelons of the 15th Air Force my personal commendation."

Mission No. 200, 23 March 1945 - Vienna Kagraan Oil Refinery, Austria

Mission No. 200 was flown on 23 March 1945 with Captain Trommershausser again leading the formation. Again the target was the high priority Kagraan Oil Refinery near Vienna. Despite good visibility the mission was scored only at 19.6 percent. Failure to knock out this target was a bitter disappointment to the Group because it had been hoped by all that Mission No. 200 would be one of outstanding success. Part of the poor bombing might be attributed to the fact that the lead bombardier, Lt. Rosulek, was wounded just before bombs away.

Thirteen of the thirty planes over the target were hit by flak, Lt. Rosulek was wounded and one plane was lost. The lost plane, which was flown by 2nd Lt. William R. Baird, had lost a propeller and had an engine on fire when last seen coming off the target.

Mission No. 201, 24 March 1945 - Ceske Budejovice Marshalling Yard, Czechoslovakia

On 24 March the Group bombed again in Czechoslovakia on the first mission in a long time to this country. The target was the marshalling yard at Ceske Budejovice. Captain Thackston led the formation against this undefended target. The patterns around the two aiming points were scattered but both of them carried completely across the marshalling yard. The two roundhouses and workshops were caught in the patterns as well as the passenger station and the freight yards.

Mission No. 202, 25 March 1945 - Wels Airdrome, Austria

The formation leader of the month of March, Captain Trommershausser, turned in his second superior mission of the month in dropping frags on the Airdrome at Wels, Austria. A splendid pattern fell across the airdrome area, continued into the hangers at the southeast edge of the airdrome, destroyed and damaged several enemy airplanes, and started explosions along the service apron.

Even the success of the mission, however, failed to completely erase the disappointment that attended it. The briefed primary target had been the Kbely Airdrome at Prague, Czechoslovakia, one of the hottest nests of the enemy's jet propelled Me-262 airplanes. Captain Trommershausser had led twenty-nine airplanes to the Kbely Airdrome, which is located at 50° 08' north latitude and 14° 33' east longitude, only to have to abandon the target because of mechanical failures. On the bomb run the interphone system on the lead plane went out. Without this the bombardier and the pilot were unable to coordinate the bomb run. The target was located so far from the Base that Captain Trommershausser did not dare expend the gasoline required to make a 360° circle for another run to the target. As the formation turned away from the target, the crew members saw many enemy airplanes parked on the airfield.

Mission No. 203, 26 March 1945 - Straszhof Marshalling Yard, Austria

Using 100 pound general purpose bombs, Major Poole led the mission of 26 March which brought excellent results in the bombing of the marshalling yard at Straszhof, Austria. The bombs smothered the west choke point of the yards and started large fires. Flak at the target was described as slight, inaccurate, and heavy but two planes failed to return to the Base and two others were hit. Enroute to the target the plane flown by 2nd Lt. Lloyd R. Heinze was last seen at good altitude with an engine on fire near Pecs, Hungary. The plane flown by 2nd Lt. Raymond E. Spenhalsky left the formation after being hit by flak. Pilots in the bomber formation were later told over the intercommunications system by escort fighter pilots that they had seen eight chutes open from the plane before it crashed.

Mission No. 204, 27 March 1945 - Vienna Southeast Communications, Austria
(Canceled)

Mission No. 204, 28 March 1945 - Ybbs Marshalling Yard, Austria (Canceled)

Mission No. 204, 29 March 1945 - Vienna North Station, Austria (Canceled)

Mission No. 204, 30 March 1945 - Graz Marshalling Yard, Austria

Mission No. 204 on the 30th of the month was a four plane "lone wolf" mission with the Vienna North Marshalling Yard as the primary target. Finding that the weather over the Alps was much better than had been briefed, Lt. Miller, who had taken over the lead, decided to abandon the primary target and to hit the marshalling yard at Graz as an

alternate target. Using visual means the small formation dropped its bombs with excellent results. Three of the four planes were hit by flak but all returned to Base.

Mission No. 205, 31 March 1945 - Linz Benzol Plant, Austria

The target for the last day of the month was the benzol plant at Linz, Austria. This was a planned pathfinder mission. The planes dropped their 1000 pound general purpose bombs with unobserved results. Four planes were damaged by flak and three combat crew were wounded. The plane flown by 2nd Lt. Cleone C. Conner, Jr. left the formation at the head of the Adriatic a short distance from landfall while enroute to the target, but failed to return to the Base.

MISSING IN ACTION

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Home Town</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mission Target</u>
2 nd Lt.	Paul P. Viliesie	West Hanover, Mass.	9/3/45	Graz
2 nd Lt.	Robert H. Jahries	San Diego, Calif.	9/3/45	Graz
2 nd Lt.	Charles Leifer	Louisville, Ky.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	Arthur E. Mahnke	Calumet City, Ill.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Kenneth M. Khun	Elizabeth, N.J.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	Leroy H. Grebe	Welcome, Tex.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Victor W. Davis	Astoria, L.I., N.Y.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	William A. MacDonald	Penns Grove, N.J.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Robert E. Lee	New York, N.Y.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Joseph V. Dell 'O se	Rock Island, N.Y.	9/3/45	Graz
1 st Lt.	William R. Baird	DeKalb, Ill.	23/3/45	Vienna
2 nd Lt.	Dwight B. Olson	Minneapolis, Minn.	23/3/45	Vienna
1 st Lt.	Richard C. Davis	Essex Junction, Vt.	23/3/45	Vienna
2 nd Lt.	Edward T. Wenzlik	Los Angeles, Cal.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	John G. Forster	Waltham, Mass.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	John W. Rice	Mt. Vernon, N.Y.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	Glenn A. Sligar	Bell, Calif.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	William F. Sanders	Doncaster, Md.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	William R. Vaitkunas	Chicago, Ill.	23/3/45	Vienna
S Sgt.	Marlin R. Smith	Madisonville, Tex.	23/3/45	Vienna
2 nd Lt.	Raymon E. Spehalski	DuBois, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt..	Christ Dallas	Detroit, Mich.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	George A. Leasure	Wichita, Kans.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	Louis R. Gugel	Fort Thomas, Ky.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	John R. Rayburn	Holcomb, N.Y.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	Walter E. Lechner	Fairhope, Ala.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	Stanley E. Todd	Richmond, Ky.	26/3/45	Straszhof

Sgt.	Albert L. Keller, Jr.	Peoria, Ill.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	Henry L. Moran, Jr.	Chicopee Falls, Mass.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	George D. Farley	Wellsville, N.Y.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Randall L. Webb	Fayette, Ia.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Walter O. Reil	Bethany, Conn.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Michael H. Milby, Jr.	Edna, Tex.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Edwin F. Strauss	Bronx, N.Y.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	William T. Jones	Marshallville, Ga.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	Roy G. Meyers	Detroit, Mich.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	Thomas J. Reiland	Brooklyn, N.Y.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Donald R. Hall	Pueblo, Colo.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	Frederick J. McGrath	Newark, N.J.	26/3/45	Straszhof
S Sgt.	James G. Erwin	Chicago, Ill.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Lloyd R. Heinze	Holyrood, Kans.	26/3/45	Straszhof
F/O	Harold B. Roup, Jr.	Rochester, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
F/O	James W. Kane	St. Paul, Minn.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Lawrence M. Rosenberg	New York, N.Y.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Russell R. McCallicher	Reading, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Donald R. Stackhouse	Hazleton, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	George E. Winslow	Wilmington, N.C.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Joy J. Sturgis	Mitchell, Neb.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Walter D. Fries	Northampton, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Cpl.	Albert H. Oster	Miles City, Mont.	26/3/45	Straszhof
Sgt.	Donald E. Miller	Emmaus, Pa.	26/3/45	Straszhof
2 nd Lt.	Cleone C. Connor, Jr.	Maywood, Cal.	31/3/45	Linz
2 nd Lt.	Robert W. Jennings	Duluth, Minn.	31/3/45	Linz
F/O	Richard J. Meng	Ferndale, Mich.	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	Raymond J. Nelson	Burlington, Ia.	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	Donald A. Bevilacqua	Erie, Pa.	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	John D. Staniszewski	Philadelphia, Pa.	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	Milford J. Rodgers	Quakertown, Pa.	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	Richard W. Black	Bexley, Ohio	31/3/45	Linz
Sgt.	Bobbie J. Purvis	Cottonwood, Tex.	31/3/45	Linz
T Sgt.	Russell J. Heller	Wheeling, W. Va.	31/3/45	Linz

KILLED IN ACTION

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Home Town</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mission Target</u>
1 st Lt.	Chester J. Lalewicz	Cleveland, Ohio	9/3/45	Graz
2 nd Lt.	Henry H. Ivyson	Detroit, Mich.	9/3/45	Graz
2 nd Lt.	John E. Grzeszczak	Wilder, Vt.	9/3/45	Graz

2 nd Lt.	Louis Klein	Brooklyn, N.Y.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	James L. Wood	Madison, Ga.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	Oscar F. Wood	Stedman, N.C.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Noval M. Catlett	Paducah, Tex.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	Donald J. Smith	Columbia, Pa.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	George L. Walker	Weinert, Tex.	9/3/45	Graz
S Sgt.	John C. Reiser	Chicago, Ill.	9/3/45	Graz
Sgt.	Robert W. Bell	Waverly, Tenn.	9/3/45	Graz

(C) Photographs

The enclosed photographs accompany this History for the month.

(D) Special Accounts

a. Promotions

Officers

17 March 1945 - Charles G. Alex, Assistant Group S-2, from 2nd Lt. To 1st Lt.
 17 March 1945 - James W. Donnel, Group Bombsight Maintenance Officer, from 2nd Lt. To 1st Lt.
 17 March 1945 - Stanhope E. Elmore, Jr., Group Weather Officer, from 1st Lt. To Captain.
 17 March 1945 - Frank B. Maxson, Group Personal Equipment Officer, from 1st Lt. To Captain.

b. Missing in Action Reports

(Prisoners of War)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>MIA Date</u>	<u>Target</u>
Sgt.	Albert D. Arrotta	17 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Palmer D. Arrowood	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Frederick B. Capalbo	17 December 1944	Odertal
Sgt.	Hugh I. Cash	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Edward N. Chan	17 December 1944	Odertal
Cpl.	Winfield C. Oviatt	17 December 1944	Odertal
2 nd Lt.	Thomas W. Qualman	17 December 1944	Odertal
S Sgt.	Alexey J. Kosten	18 December 1944	Blechhammer

(Returned to Duty)

<u>Rand</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>MIA Date</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Returned Date</u>
S Sgt.	James R. Hazel	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45

2 nd Lt.	Robert H. Hendrickson	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45
Sgt.	Albert G. Hill	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45
1 st Lt.	Clarence P. Marshall	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45
Cpl.	Henneth R. Martin	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45
2 nd Lt.	Dewey E. McMillen	21/2/45	Vienna	9 March 45
Cpl.	Louis W. Nagy	21/2/45	Vienna	17 March 45
Sgt.	Frank C. Solecki	21/2/45	Vienna	17 March 45
Sgt.	Philip R. Veilleux	21/2/45	Vienna	17 March 45
Sgt.	John H. Angaroni, Jr.	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
Maj.	Robert K. Baker	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
1 st Lt.	Glenn W. Burluson	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
S Sgt.	James E. Carter	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
S Sgt.	William J. Harvey	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
Sgt.	Edward A. Leibe	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
Sgt.	Kenneth R. Novak	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
Sgt.	Donald S. Oakley	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
1 st Lt.	Robert F. Phalen	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
1 st Lt.	Andrew W. Polk, Jr.	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45
1 st Lt.	Lawrence O. Woodruff	21/2/45	Vienna	22 March 45

(Hospitalized Wounded and Injured in Action)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Hospitalized</u>	<u>Date Returned</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Sgt..	Purvis L. Stacks	17 Dec 44		Trfd to 26 th GH
Sgt.	Arthur C. Piccoli	17 Dec 44		Trfd to 26 th GH
S Sgt.	Ray E. Eital	7 Feb 45		Trfd to 26 th GH
Sgt.	James J. Stack, Jr.	13 Feb 45	16 Mar 45	
2 nd Lt.	Joseph V. Kassler	21 Feb 45	20 Mar 45	
Cpl.	Clifford C. Hanel	22 Feb 45	16 Mar 45	
Sgt.	Charles R. Krause	22 Feb 45	7 Mar 45	
2 nd Lt.	Robert S Staples	22 Feb 45	27 Mar 45	
Cpl.	Edward J. Lower	28 Feb 45	25 Mar 45	
Cpl.	Aubrey L. Peyton	9 Mar 45		Trfd to 26 th GH
1 st Lt.	Robert L. Rosulek	23 Mar 45		
F/O	Albert C. James	31 Mar 45		
2 nd Lt.	Alfred Wallace	31 Mar 45		

c. Awards and Decorations

General Orders No. 1071, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, 1 March 1945:

Award of the Silver Star

Wallace H. McLemore, 34827720, Staff Sergeant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, 461st Bombardment Group. For gallantry in action as engineer-gunner of a B-24 type aircraft. On 17 December 1944, Sgt. McLemore participated in a bombing mission against strategic enemy installations in Germany. Enroute to the target, his formation was aggressively attacked by approximately twenty (20) enemy fighters, firing both cannon and rockets. In the ensuing engagement, Sgt. McLemore was seriously wounded in the legs by the heavy enemy fire. Despite intense pain, shock and loss of blood, with complete disregard for his personal safety, Sgt. McLemore gallantly remained at his position and under continued heavy enemy opposition; he so skillfully manned his guns that he destroyed three (3) enemy aircraft. Through his courageous efforts in the defense of his aircraft, the enemy planes were successfully repulsed. By his conspicuous gallantry, professional skill and intense devotion to duty, as evidenced throughout twenty-eight (28) successful combat missions against the enemy; Sgt. McLemore has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at enlistment: Vidalia, Georgia.

General Orders No. 1104, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 2 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Throughout many long and hazardous combat missions against vital strategic targets deep in enemy occupied territory, though confronted by heavy enemy opposition from highly aggressive enemy fighters and intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, the personnel listed below have consistently displayed outstanding courage, aggressiveness and intense devotion to duty throughout all engagements. With their aircraft frequently severely damaged by heavy enemy fire, these men have courageously remained at their stations, battling their way through to their targets to aid materially in the utter destruction of vitally important enemy installations and supplies. Heedless to severe and adverse weather conditions encountered over rugged mountainous terrain and surmounting many other major obstacles that faced them during these hazardous missions, these men have gallantly engaged, fought and defeated the enemy with complete disregard for their personal safety and against overwhelming odds. The conspicuous and extraordinary achievements throughout these many missions against the enemy have been of inestimable value to successful combat operations and have reflected great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Robert K. Baker, 0-726551, Major, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 16 February 1945. Residence at appointment: Albany, New York.

Alfred J. Murrer, 0-2057986, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Austria, 8 February 1945. Residence at appointment: Rochester, New York.

John L. Underwood, 0-701976, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 22 August 1944. Residence at appointment: Lake Orion, Michigan.

General Orders No. 1121, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 3 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

George H. Miller, 0-687335, Captain, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 13 October 1944. Residence at appointment: St. Louis, Missouri.

Jack Schwartz, 0-1540534, Second Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Austria, 14 February 1944. Residence at appointment: Chicago, Illinois.

General Orders No. 1153, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 5 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Thomas B. Burns, Jr., 0-717177, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Yugoslavia, 5 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Portland, Oregon.

Edward R. Carey, 0-1692790, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 22 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Lockport, New York.

Russell T. Holmes, 0-713188, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 22 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Akron, Ohio.

Albert J. Pick, 0-718016, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Bombardier, Germany, 21 August 1944. Residence at appointment: New York, New York.

General Orders No. 1296, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 8 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Robert W. Hess, 0-798503, Captain, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 25 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Forksville, Pennsylvania.

Harold F. Ehrlich, 0-669311, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 23 January 1945. Residence at appointment: Marion, Kansas.

Robert M. Hacker, 0-752811, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Bombardier, Germany, 16 February 1945, Residence at appointment: Denver, Colorado.

Calvin E. Jarnagin, 0-711686, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Roumania, 10 August 1944. Residence at appointment: Colorado City, Texas.

Clarence P. Marshall, 0-709225, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 15 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Pittsburg, Kansas.

Jessie E. Pettey, 0-713545, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 20 January 1945. Residence at appointment: Nacodgdoches, Texas.

Thomas J. Sobieski, 0-705085, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Yugoslavia, 13 February 1945. Residence at appointment: Detroit, Michigan.

Lawrence D. Weimer, 0-767926, First Lieutenant, 766th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 27 December 1944. Residence at appointment: San Jose, California.

Robert T. Barnes, 0-925816, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 12 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Chicago, Illinois.

Cornelius H. Brady, 0-2057249, Second Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 7 February 1944. Residence at appointment: Long Island, New York.

Award of the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross

Allyn E. Roberts, 0-664247, Major, Headquarters 461st Bombardment Group, Pilot, Austria, 20 January 1945. Residence at appointment: Galveston, Texas.

William G. Garrett, 0-821256, Captain, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 20 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Ishpening, Michigan.

General Orders No. 1345, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 11 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguish Flying Cross

John B. Moore, Jr., 0-705762, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Roumania, 26 August 1944. Residence at appointment: Dearborn, Michigan.

General Orders No. 1384, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 13 March 1945:

Award of the Silver Star, Posthumous

Seymour J. Tenner, T-131760, Flight Officer, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, 461st Bombardment Group. For gallantry in action as navigator of a B-24 type aircraft. On 20 January 1945, Flight Officer Tenner participated in a bombing mission against vital strategic enemy installations in Austria. Returning to base after the completion of a highly successful bombing attack on the target, the nose wheel of his ship could not be lowered preparatory to landing. As the pilot circled the field to enable this mechanism to be released manually, the airplane ran out of fuel, making a crash landing inevitable. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Flight Officer Tenner immediately left his comparatively safe position on the flight deck to enter the nose compartment and warn the men there, making certain before he left that all three of them were in the bomb bay. The aircraft crashed before he could leave the entrance to the nose passageway and as a consequence, he sustained injuries in the crash landing that resulted in his death. By his conspicuous courage and devotion to duty, as evidenced throughout his brilliant combat

career, Flight Officer Tenner has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at appointment: Newark, New Jersey. Next of kin: Mrs. Lena R. Tenner, (Mother), 14 Rock Avenue, Newark, New Jersey.

General Orders No. 1402, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 14 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Nicholas Rawchuch, 0-799455, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Italy, 15 January 1944. Residence at appointment: Marlboro, Massachusetts.

General Orders No. 1545, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 19 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Constant V. Platz, 0-692119, Captain, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 16 December 1944. Residence at appointment: New Orleans, Louisiana.

Roger F. White, 0-753094, Captain, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Bombardier, Austria, 13 February 1945. Residence at appointment: San Francisco, California.

General Orders No. 1572, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 20 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Richard S. Hammond, 0-732072, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 22 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Liverpool, New York.

Cyril L. Kline, 0-710970, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 20 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Charleroi, Pennsylvania.

Don R. Littell, 0-716484, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 20 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Sol S. Sklansky, 0-685175, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 13 October 1944. Residence at appointment: Somerville, New Jersey.

John M. Wilson, Jr., 0-720650, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Roumania, 17 August 1944. Residence at appointment: Houston, Texas.

Sebastian R. Leggio, 0-722924, Second Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Yugoslavia, 6 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Hartford, Connecticut.

James R. Hazel, 36535391, Staff Sergeant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Gunner, Germany, 17 December 1944. Residence at enlistment: Detroit, Michigan.

General Orders No. 1675, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 23 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Frederick A. Gray, Jr., 0-684724, Captain, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Italy, 29 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Orange, New Jersey.

James E. Thackston, 0-425001, Captain, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 19 February 1945. Residence at appointment: Rantoul, Illinois.

Harold C. Debth, 0-718046, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Bombardier, Austria, 23 February 1945. Residence at appointment: Toledo, Ohio.

Raymond A. Cress, 0-711658, First Lieutenant, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, Pilot, Germany, 13 October 1944. Residence at appointment: Sparta, Michigan.

Charles V. Lang, Jr., 0-667823, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Roumania, 17 August 1944. Residence at appointment: Houston, Texas.

Sebastian R. Leggio, 0-722924, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 17 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Carrollton, Alabama.

Robert J. Louches, 0-824148, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 13 October 1944. Residence at appointment: Dyer, Indiana.

Robert A. Crinkley, 0-709510, Second Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 20 November 1944. Residence at appointment: South Minneapolis, Minnesota.

General Orders No. 1784, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 26 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

Robert T. Chalmers, 0-798437, Captain, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 17 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Rutland, Vermont.

Morgan A. Shaw, 0-723189, First Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Navigator, Germany, 4 November 1944. Residence at appointment: Ogden, Utah.

Oliver Meggard, Jr., 0-826237, Second Lieutenant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Germany, 17 December 1944. Residence at appointment: Larchmont, New York.

William G. Dilworth, 16004204, Technical Sergeant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Engineer, Austria, 9 March 1945. Residence at enlistment: Hinsdale, Illinois.

Donald R. Milgart, 36803433, Technical Sergeant, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Engineer, Germany, 2 December 1944. Residence at enlistment: Park Falls, Wisconsin.

General Orders No. 1810, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 27 March 1945:

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Showing a high order of courage, leadership and professional skill, these gallant air crew members have distinguished themselves throughout many long and hazardous combat missions against the enemy despite severe and adverse weather conditions and enemy opposition by large numbers of fighter aircraft and intense, accurate and heavy anti-aircraft fire. Displaying great combat spirit and aggressiveness, these men have met, engaged and defeated the enemy regardless of the fact that at times their planes were so severely damaged that only by extraordinary skill and fortitude were they able to fight their way through to the objective and aid in the grave damage inflicted upon the enemy. By their heroism, skill and airmanship, as shown throughout their combat careers, together with their intense devotion to duty during this period of intense combat operations against the enemy, these men have upheld the highest traditions of Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

John Trommershausser, 0-793866, Captain, 764th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 16 March 1945. Residence at appointment: Chicago, Illinois.

Warren Miller, 0-437811, Captain, 767th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 9 March 1945. Residence at appointment: New York, N.Y.

Donald J. Herbert, 0-822716, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Pilot, Austria, 9 March 1945. Residence at appointment: New York, New York.

Charles W. Meisenheimer, 0-717820, First Lieutenant, 765th Bombardment Squadron, Bombardier, Austria, 16 March 1945. Residence at appointment: Hamburg, New York.

Award of the Bronze Star

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Orgn</u>	<u>15AF G.O.</u>	<u>Date</u>
M Sgt.	John W. Gatz	764 th Sq	1122	3 Mar 45
M Sgt.	Vinal E. Archer	764 th Sq	1348	12 Mar 45
M Sgt.	James P. Harris	764 th Sq	1348	12 Mar 45
M Sgt.	Clifford L. Larsen (cluster)	765 th Sq	1348	12 Mar 45
S Sgt.	William S. Field	764 th Sq	1348	12 Mar 45
S Sgt.	Walter F. Lenjer	765 th Sq	1372	13 Mar 45
T Sgt.	Melvin G. Yaeger	765 th Sq	1553	20 Mar 45
Sgt.	Jack T. Kramer, Sr.	765 th Sq	1553	20 Mar 45
T Sgt.	Thomas A. Flaherty	765 th Sq	1662	23 Mar 45
T Sgt.	Ernest L. Dickey	764 th Sq	1663	23 Mar 45

d. Changes in Personnel

(1) Additions. In anticipation of the day when Colonel Lawhon would complete his tour of combat duty and leave the Group, Colonel Craven C. Rogers, who had but recently arrived in Italy from the United States, was assigned to the 461st Bombardment Group and placed on detached service with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 49th Wing. On 21 March Colonel Rogers was relieved from detached service to the Wing. On 29 March Lt. Colonel Otha B. Hardy, Jr., who had been the Deputy Group Commander since 20 December 1944, was transferred to the Twelfth Air Force Service Command. Colonel Rogers replaced him as Deputy Group Commander of the 461st. Authority: Paragraph 6 of Group Special Orders No. 52, dated 17 March 1945 – “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 3 SO 57 Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 15 Mar 45, COL (2162) CRAVEN C. ROGERS, 0-21539, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp eff 15 Mar 45 and is placed on DS with Hq and Hq Sq 49th Bomb Wg eff 15 Mar 45.” Paragraph 7 of Group Special Orders Np. 54, dated 21 March 1945 – “PAC Par 1 SO 62 Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 20 Mar 45, COL (2162) CRAVEN C. ROGERS, 0-21539, Hq 461st Bomb Gp is reld fr DS with Hq and Hq Sq 49th Bomb Wg eff 20 Mar 45.” Paragraph 14 of Group Special Orders No. 59, dated 29 March 1945 = “PAC Par 2 SO 86 Hq 15AF, dtd 27 Mar 45, LT COL (1092) OTHA B. HARDY, JR., 0-22524, is reld fr asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is trfd to XII AFSC.”

Paragraph 3 of Group Special Orders No. 38, dtd 1 March 1945, added a full time gunnery officer to the Group. Authority: “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 1, SO 42, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 27 Feb 45, MAJOR (2554) BUCKMASTER, ALPHEUS D., 0-279911, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Group (H), and is hereby designated Group Gunnery Officer.

On March 8 Major Marion C. Mixson, who had almost completed his combat tour of duty as Commanding Officer of the 764th Squadron, was transferred to Group Headquarters and designated Assistant Operations Officer. He was replaced by Captain John Trommershauser. Authority: Paragraph 3 of Group Special Orders No. 44 – “MAJ MARION C. MIXSON, 0-382615, is hereby reld fr asgd to the 764th Bomb Sq and is reasgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is further designated Asst Gp Opns O.” Paragraph 4 of same Special Orders – “By DP announcement is made of the appointment of CAPTAIN JOHN TROMMERSHAUSSER, 0-793866, AC, as Commanding Officer of the 764th Bomb Squadron eff this date.”

The Group gained an Assistant Bombardier by the following order: Paragraph 10, Group Special Orders No. 47, dated 12 March 1945 – “1ST LT (1035) SHERMAN L. GOODFRIEND, 0-716860, 764th Bomb Sq is hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Sq.’

Paragraph 4 of Group Special Orders No. 50, dated 15 March 1945, reads as follows: “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 4, SO 56, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 14 Mar 45, CAPT (1092) WILLIAM E. BELCHER, 0-438500, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is hereby designated Asst Operations Officer, eff 15 Mar 45.”

Paragraph 5 of Group Special Orders No. 51, dated 16 March 1945, reads as follows: “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 4, SO 57, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 15 Mar 45, CAPT (2161) RICHARD H. INGRAM, 0-728873, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp and is designated Asst S-3 O.”

An Air Inspector-Technical was added to the Group on 22 March 1945. Authority: Paragraph 1, Group Special Orders No. 55 – “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 2, SO 62, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 20 Mar 45, WOJG (4823) PETER DRILL, W-2125513, is further asgd to the Hq 461st Bomb Gp (H), and is hereby designated Air Inspector-Technical (primary duty), eff 22 Mar 45.”

Three more rated Captains who, like Captain Belcher and Captain Ingram, had but recently arrived in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations from the United States were added to the Group on 30 March. Authority: Paragraph 1 and 2 of Group Special Orders No. 60 – “Having been asgd to this Gp PAC Par 2 SO 71 Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 29 Mar 45, fol named officers are further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp: CAPT (1092) WILLIAM BANNISTER, 0-465410; and CAPT (1092) WAYNE W. CONNOR, 0-667659.” “Having been asgd this Gp PAC Par 4, SO 71, Hq 49th Bomb Wg, dtd 29 Mar 45, CAPT (1092) LUVERNE S. JOHNSON, 0-724772, is further asgd to Hq 461st Bomb Gp.”

(2) Losses. Paragraph 3 of Group Special Orders No. 54, dated 21 March 1945, transferred Captain Belcher to the 767th Squadron.

(3) Training Board Changes. Paragraph 3 of Group Special Orders No. 48, dated 13 March 1945, reads as follows: “The fol named officers, 767th Bomb Sq, are hereby placed on DS to Hq 461st Bomb Group (H): CAPT (1035) ROGER F. WHITE, 0-753094 and CAPT (1034) CONSTANT V. PLATZ, 0-692119.”

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

	<u>MARCH</u>					<u>CUMULATIVE</u>				
	764TH	765TH	766TH	767TH	GROUP	764TH	765TH	766TH	767TH	GROUP
SORTIES										
NO. AIRCRAFT AIRBORNE	156	152	163	160	631	1509	1508	1498	1560	6075
LESS NON-EFFECTIVE SORTIES	25	17	7	9	58	278	288	287	297	1150
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES	131	135	156	151	573	1231	1220	1211	1263	4925
% AIRBORNE EFFECTIVE	84%	89%	96%	94%	91%	82%	81%	81%	81%	81%
AVE. NO. ACFT. AIRBORNE PER MISSION	7.8	7.6	8.1	8	31.5	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.6	29.7
EARLY RETURNS										
MECHANICAL FAILURES	2	6	3	3	14	93	102	114	114	423
PERSONNEL FAILURES	0	2	0	1	3	7	9	11	26	53
WEATHER	9	8	0	0	17	74	77	69	56	276
TOTAL	11	16	3	4	34	174	188	194	196	752
% AIRBORNE RETURNING EARLY	7.1	10.5	1.8	2.5	5.4	11	12	13	13	12
BOMB TONNAGE										
NO. AIRBORNE	279	264	286	288	1117	2952	2953	2910	3052	11867
DROPPED OVER TARGET	233	235	271	271	1010	2399	2427	2356	2460	9642
% AIRBORNE DROPPED O/T	84%	89%	95%	94%	90%	81%	82%	81%	81%	81%
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	2	0	0	0	2	13	11	13	6	43
TO ENEMY AIRCRAFT	0	0	0	0	0	7	9	7	9	32
OTHER COMBAT LOSSES	2	2	1	1	6	3	10	11	9	33
TOTAL	4	2	1	1	8	23	30	31	24	108
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	1178	1108	1241	1212	4739	10759	10383	10280	10668	42090
NON-COMBAT HOURS FLOWN	357	488	526	408	1779	3009	3213	2800	2757	11779
TOTAL	1535	1596	1767	1620	6518	13768	13596	13080	13425	53869
HRS. PER OPER. ACFT	141	156	151	136	146	117	127	119	118	120
HRS. PER OPER. CREW	69	69	79	63	70	76	74	75	75	75
COMBAT HRS. PER OPER. CREW	53	48	56	47	51	59	57	59	59	58
AIRCRAFT										
AVERAGE NO. ASSIGNED	13.8	14.6	14.6	15.0	58.0	14.7	14.3	13.9	14.4	57.3
AVERAGE NO. OPERATIONAL	10.9	10.2	11.7	11.9	44.7	11.8	10.7	11	11.4	44.9
% OPERATIONAL	79	70	80	79	77	80	75	79	79	79
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES PER ACFT. ASGD.	9.5	9.2	10.7	10	9.9	84	85	87	88	96
CREWS										
AVERAGE NO. ASSIGNED	24.4	26.6	25.6	26.3	102.9	20.6	21.5	20.3	20	82.4
AVERAGE NO. OPERATIONAL	22.3	23.1	22.3	25.6	93.3	18.1	18.3	17.4	17.8	71.6
% OPERATIONAL	91	87	87	97	91	98	85	86	89	81
NO. EFFECTIVE SORTIES PER CREW ASGD.	5.4	5.1	6.1	5.7	5.6	60	57	60	63	60

**HEADQUARTERS 49TH BOMBARDMENT WING (H)
APO 520 US ARMY**

22 March 1945

OPERATIONS ORDER

NUMBER 146

1.
 - a. See latest Intelligence Summaries and annex "A".
 - b.
 - (1) Bombers: Six Gps 5th Wg will destroy (3 Gps) RUHLAND OIL RFY (51-29, 13-53); (3 Gps) KRALUPY OIL RFY (50-14, 14-18); KP time 1036-1051A. Four Gps 47th Wg will destroy (2 Gps) ST. POLTEN S. M/Y (48-18, 15-38) (2 Gps) ST. VALENTINE M/Y (48-11, 14-32); KP time 1018-1028A. Four Gps 55th Wg will destroy GMUND M/Y (48-47, 14-59); KP time 1003A; Tgt time 1157A. Four Gps 304th Wg will destroy ST. VALENTINE TANK WKS; KP time 1013-1033A; Tgt time 1227-1247A. 5th Wg is using KP KNITTLEFELD (47-12, 14-49). 47th, 55th and 304th Wgs are using same KP as 49th Wg.
 - (2) Escort: 15th Ftr Cmd will provide close escort for 5th and 49th Wgs, route and target cover for 55th, 304th and 47th Wgs and dispense chaff in lead of 49th Wg.
2. Maximum effort B-24s each: 451st BG, 461st BG, 484th BG will destroy KAGRAN OIL RFY DISTILLATION UNIT (48-15, 16-28) on 23 March 1945. This is Plan "A".

WING RENDEZVOUS: 451st BG will be in rendezvous rectangle from 0829A until 0849A. 585th BG and 461st BG will follow SOP to rendezvous with lead Gp. 451st BG will enter rectangle at BOVINO, go around one time and depart at BOVINO enroute to KP via CASALNUOVO. Rendezvous altitude: 8,000; 9,000; 10,000 ft in order.

FIGHTER BOMBER RENDEZVOUS: See Par. 1. b. (2) To be furnished later.

WING FORMATION: Staggered column of Gps stepped up.

AIR FORCE FORMATION: Column of Wgs: 5th-49th-55th-304th Red Force. 47th-304th Blue Force.

ORDER OF FLIGHT: 451st BG lead – 484th BG – 461st BG.

ROUTE OUT: Base to KP to TP#1 to TP#2 to IP to target.

KEY POINT: VRGADA (43-51, 15-31) Base altitude 15,000 ft at 0953A.

TURN POINT #1: JUDENBURG (47-10, 14-40)

TURN POINT #2: STADT DROSENDORF (48-52, 15-38)

TURN POINT #3: CASTA (48-24, 17-21)

TURN POINT #4: SZENTMIHALYFA (48-01, 17-35)

TURN POINT #5: CAKOVEC (46-23, 16-25)

TURN POINT #6: SIBENIK (43-40, 15-53)

INITIAL POINT: GUNTERS DORF (48-39, 16-03)

AXIS OF ATTACK: 147° TC.

AIMING POINT AND INTERVALOMETER SETTING: Optional.

AREA TO BE BOMBED: All Gps MPI: 5.3-8.4 on MBC 14-61.

TARGET TIME: 1200A

BOMBING ALTITUDE: 24,000; 25,000; 26,000 ft in order.

TARGET ELEVATION: 514 ft.

RALLY: Left.

ROUTE BACK: Target to TP#3 to TP#4 to TP#5 to TP#6 to bases.

ALTERNATE #10: GRAZ/KOFLACHER F/Y (47-05, 15-25) IP: KNITTELFELD (47-12, 14-49) Axis of attack: 110°. Rally: Left. Bombing altitude: All Gps 23,000 ft. Area to be bombed: All Gps F/Y located at 12.5-14.5 on Target Chart 14-41A-NA. Target elevation: 1180 ft.

ALTERNATE #11: LEOBEN M/Y (47-23, 15-05) IP: HIFLAU (47-36, 14-44) Axis of attack: 135°. Rally: Sharp right. Bombing altitude: All Gps 22,000 ft. Area to be bombed: All Gps M/Y located at 7.5-6.4 on MBC 14-88. Target elevation: 1770 ft.

ALTERNATE #12: ST. MICHAEL M/Y (47-21, 15-01) IP: HIFLAU (47-36, 14-44) Axis of attack: 145°. Rally: Sharp right. Bombing altitude: All Gps 22,000 ft. Area to be bombed: All Gps M/Y on MBC 14-90. Target elevation: 1965 ft.

3.

x.

- (1) All Gps load 500# RDX fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail.
- (2) Gps will be at bombing altitude and go into left echelon at TP#2.
- (3) PFF A/C will lead for navigation. This is a planned VISUAL MISSION.
- (4) No PFF Bombing in CZECHOSLAVAKIA. Positive identification of all targets will be made before bombing.
- (5) 451st BG will furnish WX Recon A/C to precede formation on route out to vicinity of YUGOSLAVIA COAST.
- (6) A formation of 18 jet-propelled fighters attacked B-17s on 22 March 1945. It is recommended gunners be warned of possible attacks by jet aircraft.

4. No Change.

5. a

a.

- (1) Command Radio: SOP.
- (2) Bomber Call Signs: (5th Wg, "Shaply"), (47th Wg, "Lacework"), (451st BG, "PLAYFAIR 1"), 461st BG, "PLAYFAIR 3"), 484th BG, "PLAYFAIR 2", (55th Wg, "IMPISH"), (304th Wg, "Reckless")
- (3) Fighter Call Signs: 49th Wg escort – "GREENHERD 1". 49th Wg chaff dispensing force – "GREENHERD 2".
- (4) Recall Identification Codeword: (5th Wg, "Scarface"), (47th Wg, "Pingpong"), (49th Wg, "MOONGLOW"), 55th Wg, "Ashtray"), (304th Wg, "Pooltable"), (15th Ftr Cmd, "Catwalk").

RUSSIAN Landing Codeword: Suitcase.

- (5) Bomber-Fighter WX Recon VHF Channel "A".
- (6) Visual Signals: SQP
Aldis Lamp: SQP
- (7) All units so equipped will employ carpet. All A/C of 451st BG, 461st BG and 484th BG load 3 cartons Window. Dispensing will

begin 3 minutes before IP and continue at the rate of 3 bundles every 20 seconds until clear of flak.

b.

(1) Combat Wing Commander: Lt. Col. Hoermann.

(2) Deputy Combat Wing Commander: Capt. Atterholt.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL LEE:

R.P. TODD
Colonel, Air Corps.
A-3.

OFFICIAL:

R.P. TODD

INTELLIGENCE ANNEX "A" FOR
OPERATIONS ORDER NO. 146, 22 Mar. 45

A-2 Section
Hq, 49th Bomb Wing
APO 520, US Army
2230 hrs, 22 Mar. 45

PLAN ABLE: 15th AF will attack Oil, Communications & Industrial tgts in AUSTRIA & GERMANY on 23 March employing max effort.

5th Wg: 3 Gps RUHLAND OIL RFY, TC 13-114-NA, T.T. 1220.

3 Gps KRALUPY OIL RFY, MBC 15-14, T.T. Optional.

47th Wg: 2 Gps ST. POLTEN M/Y, See annotated Photo, T.T. Optional

2 Gps ST. VALENTINE M/Y, MBC 14-27, T.T. 1232.

55th Wg: 4 Gps GMUND M/Y, MBC 14-86, T.T. 1157.

304th Wg: 4 Gps ST. VALENTINE TANK WKS, MBC 14-27, T.T. (1st Force – 1227-1232,) (2nd Force – 1242-1247)

15th FC Provide strong close esc for 5 Wg on PTW; Provide close esc for 49 Wg on PTW; Provide route and tgt cover for 55, 304 and 47 Wgs; Dispense chaff in lead of 49th Wing.

49th Wg: KAGRAN OIL RFY, Aust. (48-15, 16-28), MBC 14-61, MPI-5.3-8.4, Elev. 514, IP-ASPARN (48-35, 16-30), T.T. 1202, Axis 185 deg.

Rfy situated 5 mi NE of center of VIENNA. Semi-circular water area part of old DANUBE R bed is 4 mi SW of tgt. Rfy is on E side of RR from SE VIENNA to BRUNN, in open country. Small fcty adjoins N edge otherwise surrounded by open fields.

One of the last four rfys within range of the 15AF, the complete disablement of KAGRAN O/R is necessary. Despite an attack on this date, further accurate bombardment is deemed necessary to attain this goal.

DEFENSES: 324 guns. Rally left to avoid guns at BRATISLAVA. Mobile flak may be located on R.R.s leading W & NW out of VIENNA. 484th reported SAH flak (12 bursts) in vicinity of TP 6 on 22 Mar. Suggest going wide around this point. See Route Photo.

FIGHTERS: Negligible attacks, or none at all, are expected. While 40-50 Me 109s and FW 190s are believed present for defenses of VIENNA, the enemy has steadily refused to attack escorted bombers in this area.

ALTERNATE TARGETS:

#10 GRAZ/KOFLACHER F/Y, Aust. (47-05, 15-25), TC 14-41A-NA, 25 guns.

#11 LEOBEN M/Y, Aust. (47-23, 15-05), MBC 14-88, 37 guns.

#12 ST. MICHAEL M/Y, Aust. (47-21, 15-30), MBC 14-90, 37 guns.

RSCAPE: See current bulletins.

COVERAGE: BC & TC 14-40-NA, TCS 14-109, MBC & MP 14-61, Ills #1(a) (ii)36/1.
See flak clock on KAGRAN, 21 March.

CLIFFORD V. STELL,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
A. C. of A., A-2.

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