

SEVEN-HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

Office of the Intelligence Officer

APO 520, NY, NY

15 March 1944

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE GROUND ECHELON
DECEMBER 29, 1943 TO FEBRUARY 29, 1944, INCLUSIVE

After several months of extensive training for a combat theatre on New Years Eve, December 31, 1943, the members of the ground echelon found themselves boarding a train for a Port of Embarkation. Fourteen Officers and two hundred and sixty enlisted men boarded the train for an unknown destination. The trip was long and tiresome and the members of the organization passed the time away playing cards, reading, and looking out the windows at the scenery. Calisthenics were given each time the train made a long stop. The members of the Red Cross in various towns and cities served coffee and doughnuts to the men for between meal snacks. Duchess, the black cocker-spaniel mascot of the Squadron was left with Captain Rainen's brother at Kansas City. From a scenic standpoint, the trip was enjoyed very much by everyone.

Six days of train riding brought about the final destination, Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Everyone found the climate to be very cold in comparison with the mild California climate to which they had been accustomed for the past few months. At this station everyone was given a physical inspection and all of their clothing was checked. The movies and the Post Exchange were the main attractions here as everyone was confined to the post. One enlisted man was released from the Squadron and confined to the Station Hospital due to a minor illness.

On January 12th, fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty-six enlisted men boarded the transport George S. Hanley at Newport News, Virginia. Their destination was unknown. The first night on the transport was spent tied up to the pier. Everyone found their bunks to be quite comfortable, but the quarters were very close and space was limited. The second night on the transport was spent anchored in the harbor outside of Newport News. The following day the George S. Hanley set out to sea to join a convoy which was escorted by several United States destroyers. Everyone was happy to be at last on their way and they quickly began to accustom themselves to the life on a transport which would be their home for the next four or five weeks.

During the trip calisthenics was given each day for a half an hour. Dust drill was given each day to prepare the men for any emergency. While on deck the men were required to wear their life vests at all times. Early in the trip almost every member of the organization got seasick during a storm. One the third day out at sea, four pups were born to the mascot of the ships crew. One of the pups was given to the members of the Squadron for a mascot. He was named, "C-Rations".

On February 1st, while sailing through the Mediterranean Sea, the Squadron got its first taste of actual warfare when the convoy was attacked by enemy aircraft. The attack started at 1825 and ended at 1900. All members of the Squadron were required to go below decks. Several of the Squadron Gunners served on the ships gun crews during the attack. The destroyer escort laid a smoke screen over and around the convoy. It was believed that one of the ships was hit and had to put into a local port. There were no casualties.

The transport anchored in the bay at Agesta, Sicily for about a week and then started off for Naples where it docked at 1500 on February 15th. Here the men boarded trucks for the staging area at Bagnoli, Italy. At Bagnoli the men slept on marble floors of a modern Italian college, formerly used by the Germans for an OCS school. There were many holes in the building from bomb and artillery shells, which made it very cold at night for sleeping.

On February 15th the officers and men boarded the train for Barleten, Italy. They arrived early the next morning. Late in the afternoon they boarded trucks for Toretta, Italy, their final destination. At Toretta the members of the ground echelon and the members of the air echelon were joined together again after being separated for over a month and a half.

The remainder of the month the members of the Squadron working together fixing the Squadron area, and getting everything ready to prepare the air crews for their missions with our enemy. The high morale of the men was noted, for they were at last overseas where they would try their very best to help bring a quick victory over our enemy.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE SQUADRON HISTORY OF THE GROUND ECHELON
FROM DECEMBER 29, 1943 TO FEBRUARY 29, 1944

December 29. One EM transferred to Headquarters Detachment, 461st Bomb Group. One EM transferred to this organization from Headquarters, 461st Bomb Group.

December 30. Two EM from duty to AWOL as of today. 2nd Lt. Morin transferred to Hq & Hq Sq, IV Bomber Command, Hamilton Fld, Calif.

December 31. On the last day of the year the members of the ground echelon boarded the train for a Port of Embarkation.

January 1. 14 officers, 260 EM enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, 70 miles west of Wendover Field, Utah.

January 2. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, Minturn, Colo.

January 3. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, Harrington, Kansas.

January 4. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, Forrest, Ill.

January 5. Enroute to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. At 2400, Chillicothe, Ohio.

January 6. Arrived at Camp Patrick Henry, Va. at 2100.

January 7. At Camp Patrick Henry, Va. Lt. Col Grogan released from attached unassigned to Headquarters Detachment, 461st Bomb Group.

January 8. No change in History.

January 9. No change in History.

January 10. No change in History.

January 11. At Camp Patrick Henry, Va. 2nd Lt. N. J. Rogawich and F/O H. W. Allen attached from 767th Sqnd. Two EM transferred to the 765th Bomb Sq. One EM transferred to the 767th Bomb Sq.

January 12. 15 officers, 256 EM departed Camp Patrick Henry, Va. at 1430 and boarded the transport George S. Hanley at 1645 with destination unknown. One EM released and transferred to the Station Hospital at Camp Patrick Henry.

January 13. Aboard transport George S. Hanley, destination unknown.

January 14. No change in History.

January 15. No change in History.

January 16. No change in History.

January 17. No change in History.

January 18. No change in History.

January 19. No change in History.

January 20. No change in History.

January 21. No change in History.

January 22. No change in History.

January 23. No change in History.

January 24. No change in History.

January 25. Two Corporals reduced to the grade of Private, effective January 15th. One Sgt. And one Cpl. Reduced to grade of Pvt, effective this date.

January 26. No change in History.

January 27. No change in History.

January 28. No change in History.

January 29. No change in History.

January 30. No change in History.

January 31. No change in History.

February 1. 15 officers, 256 EM aboard transport George S. Hanley. Convoy attacked by enemy planes at 6:20PM in the Mediterranean Sea. Attack lasted until 7:00 PM. No casualties.

February 2. No change in History.

February 3. No change in History.

February 4. No change in History.

February 5. No change in History.

February 6. No change in History.

February 7. No change in History.

February 8. No change in History.

February 9. No change in History.

February 10. No change in History.

February 11. No change in History.

February 12. No change in History.

February 13. No change in History.

February 14. No change in History.

February 15. 15 officers, 256 EM debark from transport at 1900 in Naples, Italy. Arrive at Staging Area #1, Bagnoli, Italy, 2100.

February 16. At Staging Area #1, Bagnoli, Italy.

February 17. No change in History.

February 18. No change in History.

February 19. No change in History.

February 20. No change in History.

February 21. No change in History.

February 22. No change in History.

February 23. 15 officers, 256 EM depart from Staging Area #1, 1400. Destination unknown.

February 24. 15 officers, 256 EM arrive at Toretta, Italy at 1530 and join the Air echelon. 2nd Lt. Rocawich and F/O Allen released from attached and transferred to 767th Bomb Sq. One EM assigned from the 767th Bomb Sq to this organization. 56 officers and 80 EM from DS to duty, effective this date.

February 25. All members of the organization were busy cleaning up after the British who were on this field prior to our arrival.

February 26. No change in History.

February 27. No change in History.

February 28. Lt. Hume from duty to DS with the 55th Wing.

February 29. Lt. Milne from duty to hospital at 34th Field Hosp. Cherinola, Italy.