

451ST BOMB GROUP RECEIVES TWO UNIT CITATIONS

(Presented 3rd September 1944)

Under a parching Italian sun in a dusty stubbled wheat field the 451st B-24 Liberator Bomb Group Sunday received the nation's highest award for a combat organization, two battle streamers representing two unit citations and the Distinguished Unit Badge with one cluster.

Major General Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General of the 15th Army Air Force, attached the two blue ribbons to the blue and gold group banner. One was marked for the February 25th attack on Regensburg's Prefuning Aircraft Factory in Germany, and the other for the April 8th mission to the oil refineries of Ploesti.

Colonel Robert E. L. Eaton, Belleville, Illinois, the group commander, viewing the clips of nine months of combat operations, stood at attention while 1st Lt. Danial J. Coffey, Cambridge, Minn., read the two general orders.

Combat and ground men alike were commended for working feverishly, enthusiastically and with untiring intensity to insure the success of the operations.

"This is a proud day for the 451st Bombardment Group," said General Twining as the afternoon's ceremonies drew to a close. "The 451st went through two of the hardest aerial battles in the Mediterranean theater to earn the battle streamers and accomplished both of them with a maximum of success, much to the enemy's loss."

The ceremony also marked a home-coming for eight of the group's 10 men who had two days before been evacuated by the 15th AAF by air from their Rumanian prison camp near Bucharest.

Col. Eaton brought the 451st Bomb Group overseas last December and since then his group has flown 116 combat missions. Personnel of the group have been awarded two Legion of Merit citations, ten Silver Stars, 142 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Clusters, 29 Soldier's Medals, 70 Purple Hearts and 3663 Air Medals and Clusters.

The 451st Bomb Group has dropped 7,600 tons of bombs on ten enemy occupied countries of southern Europe in its 3,916 individual combat sorties. Gunners have shot down 159 of the Luftwaffe's prized fighters.

Some of the targets the 451st has helped damage include the aircraft factories at Munich, Vienna and Steyr, the oil refineries at Wels, Austria, and Szolnok, Hungary, and the rich Ploesti fields.

Col. Eaton is a veteran of 45 sorties and holds the Silver Star with one Cluster, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Cluster, and the Air Medal with two Clusters. He is a graduate of West Point and has been commander of the 451st for 16 months.

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/s/ ROBERT B. N. PECK,
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