

HEADQUARTERS
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 US Army

NARRATIVE HISTORY
JANUARY 1 TO JANUARY 31, 1945

Beyond a doubt January was the least "interesting" month we have had since the group has arrived in the theater.

On only seven days were our bombers airborne; the remaining days of the month were spent in disgusted and disgruntled remarks by all and sundry against the weather and weather men in general. Three of the missions were not scored; bombing was done by PFF through ten tenths cloud coverage. On the other four missions the Group was successful in that we dropped our bombs with an average amount of them hitting the target, thereby contributing directly in our efforts to aid our Russian allies.

On January 4 we dispatched our planes to Trento marshalling yard, Italy. Several direct hits were made on the choke point and on goods wagons and installations. On the 5th of January our target was Zagreb marshalling yard, Hungary. However, ten tenths undercast prohibited accurate bombing or any observation of results. Mission number 180 was flown to Linz south main marshalling yard, Austria. No results were observed due to the ten tenths cloud coverage. On the 15th of the month, after a week's vacation, the campaign against the enemy's communication and rail facilities continued with an attack through ten-tenths cloud coverage on Florisdorf Vienna Locomotive Werk. On the 19th we had our flub mission of the month; our target was the Brod rail bridge, Yugoslavia. One near miss was observed but the rest of the bombs fell far short and into the residential and built-up areas of the city. Mission number 183 was flown on the 20th and on this date Linz north main marshalling yard, Austria "took it." Hits were observed on the choke point and numerous goods wagons were destroyed in addition to installations and warehouses. Mission number 184 was the last mission flown during the month and fittingly, it came on the last day of the month. Thirty-five aircraft were assigned to destroy Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery but inclement weather forced us to attack the alternate, Graz marshalling yard, Hungary. Direct hits were made on the briefed aiming point; many hits were seen throughout the target area, in goods wagons and installations.

Personnel activities included the following: key officers receiving promotions included Colonel Stefonowicz; Major Morris, who completed his second tour of duty and was returned to the States for reassignment. Major Webb, Group navigator, completed his tour and is at present awaiting orders. Captain Williams, Group weather officer was promoted on the 29th of the month, one day before Captain Roemer of the 726th S-2 department received his. Captain Peterson our dentist was transferred to Air Force Headquarters at the beginning of the month. At present we have not received a replacement for him.

The major portion of the month was passed in an intensive period of ground training. Group S-2 instituted supplementary training amongst the squadron intelligence departments.

During the month one hundred officers and one hundred and seventy-two enlisted men came into the group and sixty-six enlisted men and forty-four officers transferred out. New crews were immediately indoctrinated into the Group and Air Force methods and policies used in this theater.

The winterization program a revival after the night of the "big wind". Roofs departed for parts unknown and stone walls crumbled under the buffeting from the almost hurricane blasts that assailed the plateau. Repairs were rapidly begun and the homes and administrative buildings that were damaged are now once again in shape.

Extra-curricular activities were confined to one party and dance. The 726th made merry on the night of January 20th, when they celebrated the President's birthday anniversary and made a substantial contribution in the March of Dimes.

January 8 the wandering staff of the 724th Squadron returned to the fold after being listed MIA over Poland. Stories were plentiful but the information brought back was of inestimable value to our new and untried combat personnel.

Probably the busiest department during the month was the PRO section under the able and competent direction of Sergeant Schrick. Over one thousand stories were released to the press in addition to sixty-seven radio broadcasts.

/s/ LAWRENCE E. ROBERTSON
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