

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

6 December 1944

NARRATIVE HISTORY

(1 Nov. to 30 Nov.)

Undoubtedly the most entertaining event of the month of November was the Turkey Bowl football game on Thanksgiving afternoon. Despite the absence of mink coats, colorful bands and the pomp and ceremony so familiar to the days of the past, the spectators were avid in their cheering and support of their favorites. The game between the Rank - HQ Officers, and the File - HQ Enlisted Men was excellently played and at no time was the Rank assured of the victory which they finally eked out. Our distinguished visitors included Col. Lee, Commanding Officer of the 49th Wing, his staff and war correspondents.

Sixteen missions were flown during the month results running from very good to poor. On several missions assessment was impossible due to heavy cloud coverage over the target area. On November 1 we had probably our most successful mission of the month when we bombed the Vienna Ordnance Depot, Austria. Hits were scored on the choke point and rail lines, several direct hits on the town electric power station and scattered strikes on rail and port installations and the Aspern A/D. Our excellent results were not without cost however, for we lost two planes to accurate anti-aircraft fire. The next day was sent four planes to bomb by PFF the Klagenfurt A/C factory, Austria. Heavy cloud coverage prevented bomb damage assessment. On November 4th we took off for Kafstein M/Y, Germany, on mission number 144. Results were satisfactory, but we lost two planes to intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire. On the 5th of November we sent two forces out, one to Vienna and the other to Sarajavo. Again bomb assessment was impossible due to cloud coverage but the mission to Vienna was believed to have been successful. On the 6th we again divided our forces, sending 28 ships to Vienna Ord. Depot and 9 to Salerno, Italy. Results of the Vienna raid are not known but at Salerno we inflicted severe damage to installations in the target area. On the 7th we bombed Ali Pasin Most M/Y, Yugoslavia and scored excellent bomb strikes in the target area inflicting severe damage to enemy installations. On Nov 11th we lost one plane to flak in an attack on Aviano A/D, Italy in which the results were just fair.

On Nov 15th we flew to Innsbruck M/Y< Germany. Cloud formations prevented bomb assessment. On the 16th the 451st reached another mile post when it completed mission number 150 to Munich M/Y, Germany. As was rapidly becoming common weather again prevented observation so the bombing was done by PFF. On the 17th we again sent out two "teams". The red force duplicated the efforts of the red force at Vienna Florisdorf, Austria. Each force lost one plane which hardly compensated for the good results obtained. On the 18th of November we flew our blue-ribbon mission to Villa Franco A/D, Italy. The results were excellent though the bomb loading prevented scoring the strikes. Nov 19th we "cross-up" wing and air force when we hit Maribor M/Y in Yugo when assigned to destroy Vienna Visendorf, Austria. The results were rated good; strikes being records on trackage, sheds, and workshops.

Blechhammer S. Oil Ref. was the recipient of a return engagement by our forced on Nov 20th and this trip paid dividends in damage to the enemy. Several explosions and large fires were observed and the results were reminiscent of previous attacks on Ploesti. The 21st of Nov witnessed a new use of strategic bombers for on that day we collaborated with fighters and fighter bombers in attacking MT convoys at Novi Pazar, Yugo. Results were rated good but again no score could be given for bombing efficiency. Munich continued to lead a "charmed" existence on the 22nd for we again encountered 10/10 cloud coverage and dropped on PFF on the west M/Y. Nov. 25 was last date on which we were able to fly a mission. We flew two planes to Innsbruck, Germany. Weather was 10/10 and the results were only fair. Summarizing, we might say the month was average for bombing results. We had our share of very good and also snafu missions.

Personnel changes and activities included the following: Major Dooley was assigned to the group and assumed command of the 725th Squadron. Major Anderson of the 724th joined the "51 Club" and departed for the States, leaving Major Moran in command of the 724th Squadron. Major Hoerman became Group Operations Officer, Capt. Westberg the assistant, Capt. Morris the Group Bombardier and Lt. Blue the Group PFF Navigator. Major Reichenbach assumed command of the 726th Squadron replacing Major Walkey who departed for the Zone of the Interior. Col. Applegate, Major Wilson, and Captain Golden departed for the States after observing the traditional feast of Thanksgiving Day. Lt. Col. Stefonowicz, formerly 49th Wing A-3, joined the Group and took over as Deputy Group Commander.

During the month we were assigned 32 replacement crews; six complete crews left on rotation and our combat and operational losses

totaled 13 crews. Three complete crews returned after being listed as MIA. On Nov 1 we had 49 planes, but by Nov 30 that total had dropped to 38 in spite of replacements.

The winterization program continues to have a top priority in the building program. Stone buildings are daily mushrooming throughout the group and squadron areas and the results lend emphasis to the limitless ingenuity of the American G.I.

At headquarters the physical training program continues to plague the aching muscles of the Rank and File alike. Apparently the program has paid off for the officers as witness the F.B. game on Thanksgiving Day when the File paid their debt by serving the bird at the evening meal.

Additions in the "Castle" area include a new Group Dispensary and twenty bed hospital with operating facilities and accommodations. The hospital had previously been a grain storage shed, but under the guidance of energetic Major Wagner, it assumed the sparkling appearance, characteristic of such institutions. Plans have been made to do minor surgical operations plus routine physical work.

Monday Nov 27th the Group Headquarters staff entertained at a dinner dance for invited guests which included several of the fair sex from the Red Cross and Hospital staffs. "Ma" Davidson again excelled in serving the finest and most appetizing of foods available. In the squadrons parties were held by the officers and men at Thanksgiving time and reports are all satisfactory. Of course "stand-down" nights invariably mean party night for combat personnel. Movies still are held out of doors but the attendance had dwindled considerably, few preferring to "sweat 'em out" in the arctic blasts on the plateau.

/s/ L. E. ROBERTSON,
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