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100TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
40th Bombardment Group
APO 631, c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

30 June 1944

SQUADRON HISTORY
From 25 May thru 25 June

Into these past thirty days have been rolled some of the most memorable, exciting, and absorbing experiences in our brief history.

Our first combat mission on 2-9 was executed on June 4 and the days and hours of planning preceding the mission as well as the day of the flight shall remain in our thoughts for some time yet to come.

Even in this far-flung battle front we still must shine our shoes and slick our hair cause the Colonel is out for an inspection.

On this first day of preparation for the raid, June 2, even though we didn't know it at the time, the Colonel found the ships fairly glistening from all our cleaning and polishing as he inspected each crew and ship.

The general briefing for all combat crew members was held in the afternoon of June 4 and the news broke as to all details of the raid except target and weather.

From the moment following the briefing until take-off time the next morning the entire field was a beehive of activity. Such bustle and hustle is not likely to be found anywhere except on an airfield such as this the night before a big raid.

Crew chiefs and maintenance personnel were giving their engines a final check-up--tightening a loose connection here and there and replacing a broken safety wire somewhere else; changing valves or replacing a generator.

Armament men were sweating over bomb loading and fusing, trying to alleviate a dead spot, condition a release, or correct faulty bomb hoists--all the time mildly complaining cause they had to haul the bombs in individually and couldn't back the trailer full o' bombs right under the racks as they could in a B-17.

Trucks, jeeps, command cars, and bomb trailers were swishing in and out among the planes all night, delivering their "pay load" or leaving instructions. The entire field was a galaxy of reaching turning lights the night thru.

During the very early hours of the morning, June 5, the flight crews were briefed on the target--a railroad center at Bangkok--and the weather. The first ship took off at 0555 and the last left the ground at 0630.

One ship in our Squadron crashed on takeoff approximately one mile from the end of the runway on impact. Only the engine and propeller were

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accident.

Two more of the ships from our Squadron were forced to ditch in the Bay of Bengal while returning from the target when their fuel transfer system failed to operate.

One ship that ditched hit the water with three engines feathered and one idling about 20 miles from land. Four of the crew were killed during the impact between impact and the ship filling with water--they were the navigator, tail gunner, Radar operator, and left gunner. The remainder of the crew escaped and were picked up by a cutter shortly after ditching. The ship remained afloat and drifted on a sandbar where the salvage crew found and destroyed it.

The other ship which ditched was not close to land and there was an explosion in the rear of the ship on impact which severed the tail from the remainder of the ship about the Radar Section.

All personnel including a passenger were saved except the Pilot and Radio Operator. The Radar operator and one gunner floated in the water supported by their Mae West and a floating oxygen bottle for approximately 24 hours before their dinghy's were able to pick them up. Both men were seriously injured and performed a miraculous feat of endurance.

Both dinghys finally made land and got assistance from natives before they were picked up by a PBY approximately two days after ditching. Of the three ships which were lost all personnel that were initially saved shall recover, in fact some of them are already on duty status again.

For a period of almost nine days following the first raid our ships underwent thorough maintenance and made a few trips over the hump.

On June 14th three of our ships left to cross the Hump and run a mission from their China base. It was not until the final briefing in China that the crews even suspected the target to be on the coast line of Japan.

Only two of the three ships we sent out were able to make the raid but they had no mechanical trouble nor were they touched by enemy action. Since the mission was during the hours of darkness and the blackout over the target almost complete the bombs were released by Radar.

Once again the combat ships are restricted from Hump flights while undergoing a minor overhaul to completely condition every working part. When the time comes again we intend to be ready!

All crews have gotten three day passes into Calcutta within the past two weeks and the difference has helped build up morale among the crews as well as maintenance personnel both in India and China.

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When the next rain comes off we plan to have everything in readiness so that we can give them both barrels at once!!

William R. Howard
WILLIAM R. HOWARD
Captain, Air Corps
Ass't Historical Officer.