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SECRET

ADVANCED HEADQUARTERS
40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
Office of the Detachment Historian
APO 631

28 October 1944

40TH Base DETACHMENT HISTORY

1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944

The members of the forward echelon of the 40th Group underwent their first air raid in the early morning of 9 September 1944 when a force of Japanese bombers attacked the field. The raid followed a B-29 attack on Anshan from which all of the 40th's planes returned safely.

Marking the opening of significant activity for the forward Area history in September, B-29's took off early in the morning for a daylight attack on Anshan. Returning in the evening, all crews but Capt. LOWRY'S, who made an emergency landing at Hanchung, were interrogated. Everyone had retired when about 0030 in the morning of 9 September a two bell alert was sounded.

Our crews according to the Base Defense Plan took their stations at their guns around the field. Shortly thereafter a three bell notice was given from fighter control. Gas masks and helmets were brought out and nearby slit trenches were occupied when a plane that sounded for all the world like a washing machine began circling overhead. Minutes later a stick of bombs fell across the field. On another run dozens of frag bombs were dropped on the field. Run number three like the first consisted of 100 or 200 pound demolition bombs that passed in train off the west end of the field in the direction of the combat crew hostel. The last of these landed in a rice paddy approximately 75 yards from the hostel.

The three runs resulted in damage to the 45th's tanker #254 and injuries to S/Sgt Edward M. Cyrus and Pfc Walter McNeil. Serious facial injuries were sustained by Pfc McNeil and Sgt Cyrus was struck in the arm and eye by shrapnel from a bomb that hit the gun pit in which they were stationed. After first aid treatment was administered at the Base Dispensary the men were evacuated to Chengtu Hospital and thence to India for surgery and treatment.

Much of the time thereafter was anti climatic. Though no damage was inflicted to the field a number of days were required to get #254 in condition to return to the rear area.

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Meanwhile, on the 13th, an important morale boosting event took place – the issue of “Jungle Rations” arrived and was distributed. Along about this time, too, “Goober Time” had arrived in China. Nearly everyone had a pocket full of peanuts and could be seen at almost any waking hour snapping peanut shells and chewing peanuts.

Since August 20th five members of the crew of ship #308 had been held at Luchow awaiting air evacuation to Chengtu. On September 16th Capt BOYD M. GAUBAUGH, Lts CHARLES THORNBERRY, WALTER KURIAN and JACOB FAIRMAN and Sgt Patterson arrived at A-1 and two days later were flown to India.

After four days without the arrival of any planes from India aircraft #241 was “FCKU” in on 22 September. To celebrate the occasion the engineering section ran up a special sign on the “follow me” vehicle reading “Welcome 241.” A spring of leaves and blossoms was entwined around the “squawk” sheet when it was handed up to the flight engineer by M/Sgt Wing. Capt WALTER BALL, the pilot, was greeted by what almost passed for a review of troops when he stepped down from the plane for, almost to a man, the detachment was on hand. Only one question was on the lips of everyone – “Have you got any mail?” When assured there was mail on board morale of everyone underwent a measurable boost.

To the surprise of everyone tactical aircraft arrived September 23. With but 80,000 gallons of gasoline on the field a combat mission it appeared was scheduled. Aircraft continued to arrive the following two days and it was learned that on the 26th a B-29 treatment was again to be administered to An ban.

Not to be outdone the Japanese caused a one bell alert to be called the night before the mission when they struck out for the Chengtu area but turned back after bombing LiaBahan a fighter field 250 miles east of Hsinching.

Again all B-29's of the 40th returned safely in the late afternoon of the 26th. Again, too, the Japanese visited the field. From 1945 to 2245 the field was under a two or three bell alert. Bombs mostly fragmentation were dropped by the Jap attackers. Important damage was inflicted on Aircraft #407, 341, and 286. The latter, a photo ship was then prevented from making a scheduled photo mission the following day. Minor damage was sustained by aircraft #306 and #269 neither of which were prevented from taking off the following day for India.

No other damage was inflicted but confusion prevented the completion of a number of combat crew interrogations. These were completed the following day at A-1 or at the rear base In India.

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Throughout the month petty thefts had taken place on the line, at Headquarters, and in the hostels. This marked the first month that such an unpleasantness had shown itself to a point warranting mention. Aside from increased vigilance no definite action was taken and this month closed without further incident.

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