

Retyped from Microfilm by Sparky Corradina

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS 40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
Office of the Historical Officer

APO Number 631
4 March 1945

GROUP HISTORY

1 February thru 28 February 1945

This was month of transition. With the movement of the 40th getting under way combat activities tapered off somewhat and only four bombing missions were flown – all, of course, from Chakulia – as compared to seven in January. However, the Group was assigned two photo reconnaissance jobs which necessitated numerous sorties to Singapore and to Langkawi Island on the western side of the Malay Peninsula.

On 24 and 25 February Shipments “A” and “B” respectfully left Chakulia by train for Calcutta enroute to the new destination of the 40th Group. Consequently air training was curtailed during the latter part of the month due to the lack of maintenance personnel (and also a shortage of engines in the theater). Ground training also fell off slightly but lead crew and Replacement Crew training was maintained on a high level.

On 15 February Colonel William H. Blanchard left the Group for a new assignment under General LeMay in the XXI Bomber Command. Lt. Col. Sullivan (who became Colonel Sullivan later in the month) assumed command until the arrival of Colonel W. K. Skaer from the XX Bomber Command, who took over in the 27th.

The outstanding social event of the month was a visit by Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten on the 20th.

The Group's losses for February totaled 14 men missing and two B-29's lost.

* * * * *

Briefing for Mission 35 took place at 2000 IST on 31 January; the planes took off shortly before midnight and take offs continued on into 1 February.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

“In accordance with Field Order #35, XX Bomber Command, dated 27 Jan 45, the 40th Bomb Group dispatched 28 aircraft from B-4 to attack the Floating Drydock at the SINGAPORE Naval Base, SINGAPORE, MALAYA. The 28 aircraft were airborne in 45 minutes with the first aircraft off at 311707Z and the last at 311752Z.

“Of the 28 aircraft airborne a total of 22 aircraft bombed the assigned primary target dropping a total of 88 #1000 M-44 type bombs fuzed .1 sec delay nose and .025 sec delay tail. Bombing was accomplished from 17,000' to 19,000' and weather over the target varied from 3/10 to 8/10 cloud cover. All bombing was accomplished visually and numerous direct hits on the primary target were revealed by strike photos. It is believed that major damage was inflicted. Antiaircraft from shore and naval installations ranged from meager to moderate but was reported accurate by most crews. Fighter opposition ranged from weak to moderate, but few attacks were closely pressed. Our aircraft claim three destroyed and five damaged.

“Ships in the vicinity of the target endeavored to lay a smoke screen, but it was entirely ineffective.

“Just after bombs away aircraft #589 was hit by an enemy fighter and developed a fire between #3 and #4 engines. This aircraft was last reported on a heading of between 25 degrees and 30 degrees going in the direction of the rescue subs east of MALAYA in order to ditch.

“Two aircraft, due to excessive fuel consumption bombed the secondary target (GEORGETOWN, PENANG ISLAND) with from fair to good results reported. Weather was 3/10 to 4/10 cloud cover. Antiaircraft was meager and inaccurate and fighter opposition nil to weak.

“One aircraft developed fuel transfer trouble shortly after take-off and returned to B-4 with bomb load.

“With the exception of aircraft #589 all aircraft returned safely to base. Three aircraft were forced to stop off at CHITTAGONG for additional fuel, but all others returned to base without incident. The last aircraft landed at 021353Z.” *

No word has been received regarding the crew of #589 and at the time of this writing they are still carried as missing.

At the time of the first formation over the target photographs (Photo 1) taken on the bomb run revealed that the Floating Dock was partially submerged and that the 460' freighter inside had steam up in preparation for departure from the dock.

*Narrative Summary from the 40th bomb Group Consolidated Mission Report.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Strike Photos (Photos 2, 3, 4) indicate that each of the three 40th Group formations over the target scored direct hits or damaging near misses. Damage Assessment No. 41, XX Bomber Command, dated 20 February 45, reads in part, "Reconnaissance four days after the strike show the dock to be on an even keel but very low in the water, however both tops of the bulkheads are visible for their entire length. As a result of at least one direct hit the cargo vessel was sunk in the dock and is now seen with decks awash. In view of the fact that the dock is probably 75 feet or more from the top to keel and the deepest part of the Straits shown in this area on charts is no deeper than 70 feet, the dock would not completely disappear from view. All indications are that the dock is resting on the bottom and is out of commission."

There are also indications that the 40th Group contributed the major portion of the damage.

Contrary to previous rumors Lord Louis stated at the time of his visit to Chakulia Army Air Base later in the month that he was both pleased and astonished at the accuracy (the dock is approximately (850'x200')) and the results of our bombing. The only one he said, who was unhappy about it was his Chief of Staff who would have the job of raising it again providing the Japs did not get it raised before the Allies returned to Singapore (and providing, of course, the Japs did not sink it again in that event if they did get it raised).

According to the Damage Assessment Report quoted above damage to buildings in the West Wall (on shop) Area of the Naval Base resulting from this mission amounted to 338,500 sq. ft., or 16.8 percent of the total which, together with damage effected by previous attacks, made a total of 21.6 percent.

On 6 February Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey, CG of the XX Bomber Command, made his first inspection of Chakulia AAB. Also on this date a photo reconnaissance mission to Bangkok was flown by Capt., Charlie Taylor and his crew of the 45th Squadron.

On 7 February at 0230 I.S.T. briefing was held for a mission to Bangkok and the planes took off beginning at 0400 I.S.T. Approximately two hours after the 1st plane was off a Photo Joe took off to obtain post – strike photos.

"In accordance with XX Bomber Command Field Order #35, dated 4 Feb 45, the 40th Bomb Group dispatched 32 B-29 aircraft to attack the Rama VI Railroad Bridge at BANGKOK, THAILAND. The first was airborne at 2230Z and the last at 2321Z.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

“One aircraft, #455, was forced to return after flying on course for one hour and thirty five minutes. It was necessary to feather #4 engine due to a cracked cylinder, and bombs were jettisoned in the Bay of Bengal. Number 455 proceeded to return to B-4 without further difficulty.

“The remaining thirty one aircraft proceeded to bomb the primary target in nine separate formations. The first formation arrived over the target at 03251/2Z and the last formation arrived over the target at 04201/2Z. All bombing was accomplished visually, with weather ranging from CAUV to two-tenths coverage. Excellent results were reported. From visual observations, numerous direct hits were counted. Notwithstanding this fact, no formation, including the last, reported seeing any spans of the bridge actually out. Their information on this was substantiated by strike photos. Considering the hits, confirmed by strike photos, it is possible that even though no single span was down that very considerable structural damage was inflicted.

“Fighter opposition was nil and only a very few enemy aircraft were sighted. Flak was reported as meager, scattered and inaccurate to accurate.

“No unusual observations were reported. All shipping seen was small and appeared to be river craft. At 13 degrees 48' N – 98 degrees 15' E, three rows of silver balloons were seen, two in each row. They were stretched across the river and shaped like a cigar with a tail, and were suspended 10000 feet from the ground.

“There were no casualties or unusual occurrences, and all planes returned to B-4 without mishap.” *

Despite the fact that several crews from the 40th (as well as from the other groups) reported direct hits – observations substantiated in several cases by strike photos – the bridge appeared to be relatively intact after the last plane had gone over. However post mission photos taken approximately two hours after the attack revealed the greater part of the center span (which had been the aiming point) had collapsed into the river. Damage Assessment Report No. 42, XX Bomber Command, dated 23 Feb 45, states in part, “During the course of this attack numerous near misses and at least four direct hits were scored on the framework of the bridge. The hits resulted in two principle top chord members being severed, the RR tracks and the bridge being cut, and the complete collapse of 65 percent of the center span. Near misses effected a 5 ft lateral displacement of the extreme end of the NW span.”

*Narrative summary from Group Consolidated Mission Report.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

On 8 February a photo reconnaissance mission to Bangkok and Saigon were flown.

Capt., George Varoff and his entire (44th Squadron) returned to Chakulia from China on 9 February. This crew had, had to bail out behind the Jap lines in North China when returning from Mukden, Manchuria, while on the 7 December mission, and had been walking out with the help of Chinese Communists in bitterly cold weather and more than once in danger of being captured by the Japanese during this elapsed time. Despite the strenuous journey they all returned to their outfit in excellent condition, most of them having put on weight since the time of their bailout. Once again the 40th Group was indebted to the Chinese Communist Forces who in all likelihood had suffered casualties in their successful efforts to return this crew.

At approximately 2200 I.S.T. on 10 February an alert was sounded at this base when word was received from a British Warning Unit that four unidentified airplanes were in the area. The all clear sounded about two hours later and no information was ever received here as to whether the planes were unfriendly or not. It seemed likely that they were not.

At 0630 I.S.T. on the morning of 11 February briefing was held for a mission to Dump "F" near Rangoon, Burma.

"In accordance with XX Bomber Command Field Order #36, dated 8 Feb 45, the 40th Bomb Group dispatched 15 B-29 aircraft to attack Dump "F" in the RANGOON – MINGALADON, BURMA Area. The first aircraft was airborne at 0220Z and the last at 0238Z.

"Aircraft #757 was forced to return to the local base because of a stuck prop governor on #1 engine and landed 14 minutes after take off with its full bomb load. The remaining 14 aircraft proceeded individually without difficulty to the group assembly point where formation was joined and thence to the wing assembly point, to the IP, to the target.

"Weather at the target was CAVU and bombing was accomplished visually by dropping on the leader, aircraft #888. Aircraft #740 had a 25 second early release of its bombs and aircraft #846 dropped on aircraft #740.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Aircraft #840 had difficulty in remaining in formation after opening bomb bay doors and scattered the formation and was instructed by the formation commander to leave formation which was done; aircraft #846 then formed on the left flank. The target had been previously bombed by another formation before the 40th Bomb Group formation arrived at the target and a column of black smoke was observed to the northeast of the target rising to a height of 10000 feet. The majority of the bombs dropped by the 40th Bomb Group formation landed in the northern part of the target area and in the mental hospital across the road. Two bombs are believed to have exploded approximately 300 feet below aircraft #541 based on observations made by aircraft #420 and aircraft #795 and a K-20 photograph taken by #579.

“Several unidentified fighters were observed in the target are but there were no definite attacks made.

“Aircraft #795 approximately one hour after leaving the BURMA coast on the trip back blew a cylinder on #4 engine and was escorted to B-4 by aircraft #407, #579 and #740.

“The Group suffered no casualties and makes no claims for enemy fighters destroyed or damaged. Flak damage was suffered by approximately half of the Group’s airplanes on this mission.” *

Because of the great trail characteristic of the M-47 incendiary bomb, the K-18 cameras ((9” x 10” photo)) carried were turned length wise in the airplanes and strike photos were obtained by the 40th Group formation. The pattern obtained was centered to the north of the dump area on the central and southern sections of a large mental hospital which, according to reports received from the British, was also being used for storage purposes.

Due to the fact that the Strategic Air Force also attacked the dump before post – strike photography was obtained, no distinction in damage was possible. However the bombing results of the Command were generally poor as far as accuracy was concerned; one group dropped its bombs in another dump approximately 1 ½ miles from Dump “F”.

On 13 February at 1500 I.S.T. a review was held for the awarding of decorations ranging from Silver Starts to Purple Hearts. Due to the length of the ceremony tradition was disregarded and the review was held in the amphitheater (The Cactus Bowl) with the troops seated.

*Narrative Summary from Group Consolidated Mission Report.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Awards were made on the stage by Brig Gen Ramey who was spelled by Colonel Blanchard and Lt. Col Sullivan when the strain of innumerable salutes and handshakes became fatiguing. Maj Louis E. Scherck, Group S-2, reviewed a number of the actions for which awards were being made using large maps of the area over which missions had been flown, a very worthwhile innovation. Unfortunately the impressions of the ceremony was marred somewhat by the confusion which existed as to the proper number and sequence of salutes and handshakes, between awarder and awardee. This results in a frequently audible expression of amusement from the "audience" which was probably inevitable under the circumstance but hardly flattering to the men who were receiving medals for achievement warranting more respect than was shown.

Following the review that evening the visiting Brass as well as the local Gears were entertained by Colonel Blanchard with a party in the Headquarters "Lounge".

At 0015 I.S.T. on 15 February briefing was held for a photo mapping mission to Singapore and Langkawi Island just north of Penang on the west side of the Malay Peninsula. At 0150 I.S.T. the first of six Photo Joes took off. According to information received from Bomber Command (Photo Recon Directive No. 24 and 26) the areas along the Malay Peninsula: Singapore Island, Port Dickson, Penang and Langkawi Island. The 40th Group was assigned Singapore and Langkawi Island and the 462nd Group the two other areas. It was evident that the information to be acquired was for the British and would be of importance to any contemplated operations against the Malay Peninsula. (This was confirmed on the occasion of Admiral Mountbatten's visit when he stated that the B-29's had been placed under his operational control.) The photo missions were to be run until all necessary photography was obtained.

On those first six sorties only a portion of Singapore Island was unobscured by clouds. All planes returned safely although fighters were encountered and attacks repulsed.

On 16 February Colonel William H. Blanchard left the 40th Group for the XXI Bomber Command at the request of Maj Gen Curtis E. LeMay, the new commander of the XXI. Lt Col H. R. Sullivan, Deputy C.O., assumed command of the 40th (Incl. 1), but, while the news was not released, it was learned from Lt Col Sullivan that he expected to hold command only temporarily until a new C.O. was designated by Bomber Command. However, on the next day orders were published relieving Lt Col Oscar R. Schaaf as CO of the 45th Squadron and reassigning him to Headquarters as Deputy Commander.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Maj Marvin W. Goodwyn was appointed CO of the 45th Squadron. (Incl. 2) By these same orders Capt Lee A. Hall, 45th Squadron, was appointed Group Flight Surgeon replacing Maj William F. Seffert who was being transferred to the 58th Wing.

On 17 February six Photo Joes were again dispatched. Poor results were obtained and two of the six planes received strong fighter attacks. Number 579 flown by Capt C. McGregor (45th Squadron) was badly shot up by a Tony. When one engine was put out of commission the propeller could not be feathered and the plane flew a considerable distance with the prop windmilling before it finally came off, missing the plane, and fell into the sea. With a fuel cell punctured and the gas supply running low #579 landed safely at Akyab. There were no casualties among the crew.

Number 538 (44th Squadron) also received strong fighter attacks and Sgt. William A. Partuset, tail gunner, received a slight wound in the ankle.

On 19 February two photo sorties were run. Results were considered good and both planes returned safely.

On 20 February Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten paid a visit to the 40th Bomb Group. He chattered with each member of the Group Staff as well as to the heads of the other organizations on the base and then made a short and extremely informal talk to 15 of the combat crews. The visit was marked with conspicuous lack of ceremony and formality. Lord Louis expressed pride at being the first Theater Commander to be given operational control of B-29's, discussed the present and, more generally the contemplated activities of the allied forces in this Theater, and warmly congratulated the crews on their achievement to date, especially their accurate bombing of the two highly precision targets, The Rama VI Bridge at Bangkok and the Floating Drydock at Singapore. His short talk did much too quiet criticisms of the British which have become all too bitter at this base despite the fact that they are usually unfounded.

On 21 February Lt Col Sullivan was authorized to pin an eagle to his collar (Incl 3).

On 23 February nine crews left Chakulia in eight B-29's for Uncle Sugar Able. With the exception of Capt George Varoff and his crew (See 9 Feb above) each crew member was selected according to the amount of time over the target he had accumulated. Capt Varoff and his crew were being returned to the States in accordance with the policy concerning evaders and escapers from enemy territory (Incl 4).

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

The loss of the oldest and most experienced crews was a blow to the Group but no one begrudged their going.

At 2000 I.S.T. of the 23rd briefing was held for the 30 crews scheduled for a mission to Singapore and at 2330 I.S.T. the first plane started down the runway.

“In accordance with Field Order #38, XX Bomber Command, dated 19 Feb 45, the 40th Bomb Group on 23 Feb 45 dispatched 30 airplanes to attack the Empire Dock Area at SINGAPORE, MALAYA. All 30 aircraft were airborne with the first aircraft taking off at 231701Z and the last aircraft taking off at 231754Z.

“Two aircraft were early returns, one due to losing engine directly after take off and the other due to failure of prop governor. Both aircraft jettisoned bomb load and returned safely to base.

“Of the remaining 28 aircraft a total of 27 successfully bombed the primary target from 20,000' to 22,000' with from good to excellent observed results from 260 #500 M-17 (E-4) aimable cluster fuzed to separate 5,000' above the ground. Weather at the primary target ranged from CAVU to 5/10 cloud cover. One aircraft (#886), due to personnel error failed to get bomb bay doors completely open in time and dropped eight of its 10 bombs just south of the airfield and seaplane base lying approximately three miles northeast of the assigned target. Fighter opposition at the primary target was weak, there were no enemy aircraft claims nor were any of our aircraft damaged by fighters. Antiaircraft fire was reported as generally meager but ranged from inaccurate to accurate. One aircraft (#538) sustained a direct flak hit just aft of the #3 engine nacelle, and although seriously damaged, returned safely to Base. The right gunner on this aircraft was seriously but not fatally wounded.

“One aircraft due to failure of the fuel transfer system was forced to bomb the secondary target which was accomplished from 21,000' through 3/10 cloud cover. Observed results placed the center of impact about 300' south of the assigned aiming point. No antiaircraft or fighter opposition was encountered.

“Aircraft #915 developed an oil leak in #3 engine and was unable to feather prop which windmilled for a considerable period before it finally came off and the aircraft proceeded safely to COX'S BAZAAR. This is the third instance of aircraft of this Group losing props. In two instances the aircraft were able to proceed safely to base and in the other the crew bailed out just before the prop came off. It is believed that in that instance had the crew remained with the aircraft they would have been able to bring it safely back.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

“Including the two early returns a total of 28 aircraft returned to B-4 on 24 Feb 45 with the last aircraft landing at 1253Z. A total of six of those aircraft, however, were forced to land at other fields to replenish gas supply before proceeding to B-4. Aircraft #915 remained at COX’S BAZAAR for an engine change and aircraft #739 remained overnight at ARMADA ROAD due to a prop governor being out.

“Strike photographs of the primary target substantiated the observed results and is believed that very serious damage was inflicted on the assigned target.”*

During the take offs for the mission, #420, flown by Lt M. D. Massey, 25th Squadron, gave spectators a few bad moments when bombs and a bomb bay tank were jettisoned shortly after take off at a point about three miles from the end of the runway due to the loss of #4 engine. The resulting explosion sent flames leaping high into the sky casting a momentary red glare on the faces of the watchers and leaving no doubt in their minds – for a moment – but that #420 had gone in. However, except for the small white explosions of magnesium incendiaries going off, the flames died down rapidly and a few minutes later their hopes were confirmed when the navigation lights of the plane were seen approaching from the east.

Post mission photographs showed considerable damage to the target area. Nearly all of the water front warehouses were completely gutted. Although a number of large warehouses in the north and northeastern section of the target appeared to be intact despite indications (in strike photos) that they were hit, it is possible that they were either empty (being less convenient to shipping) or that they contained non-inflammables.

Also on the 24th the 40th Group Forward Echelon Detachment was reassigned to the XX Bomber command and renamed the XX Bomber Command Forward Area Detachment No 1. (See under personnel) It is understood that this Detachment, made up generally of overages, was formed in order to wind up any unfinished business after the Group has left and also to prevent, if possible, the necessity of transferring these men to the Theater Pool.

And finally, on the evening of the 24th the first Group Detachment “Shipment A”, left Chakulia for Calcutta enroute to destination “LIRP”. This shipment included 74 combat crew personnel and about one half of the total engineering and maintenance personnel on the Base.

*Narrative Summary from Group Consolidated Mission Report.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

On the evening of the 25 February Shipment "B" composed of 22 officers and 630 enlisted men, left Chakulia bound for destination "DUVA". This shipment consisted primarily those with "house keeping" duties with the exception of the remaining ground personnel of 175 enlisted men scheduled for shipment at a later date.

At 2330 I.S.T. on the 25th two Photo Joes (#274 and #804) took off to continue the mapping job at Singapore and shortly after midnight (0130 of the 26th) two more (#580 and #757) took off to photograph Langkawi Island.

Late in the morning of the 26th a message was received from #274 that #804 (Capt James Lyons, Pilot. 44th Squadron) was on fire. Shortly after this another message from #274 (Capt J. M. Silcox, 45th Squadron) stating that the fire was out and one engine feathered and that #804 was returning with wounded on board, escorted by #274 which had one engine cutting out. A little while later #274 reported that the crew of #804 had bailed out at 06 degrees 10'N 99 degrees 20'E – between the northern tip of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Late that afternoon #580 and #757 landed safely back at Chakulia and #274 made it into Cox's Bazaar where the crew remained overnight, returning to Chakulia the next day. All air – sea rescue facilities had been put into operation at the first indication of trouble and B-29's had been dispatched immediately to search the area.

Upon interrogation of the crew of #274, it was learned that, having completed the photo runs (with poor results expected) they had started back, sighting #804 for the first time at 05 degrees 45'N 99 degrees 30'E at 0305Z. No. 804 was at 13,000' and under attack by a Tony. Before #274 could reach #804 the Tony broke away and headed for land, but on its last pass the crew of #274 had seen what they described as two red flares which appeared to come from the Tony and which passed in front of #804. Capt Silcox contacted #804 on VHF and learned that #804 had a serious fire in the forward pressure compartment and that several men were badly burned.

"Aircraft #804 requested #274 to radio their condition to base which was done. Aircraft #804 then stated that they were unable to give blood plasma to the injured on board due to having used all their water to fight the fire.

"Capt SILCOX of #274 reports that #1 engine on #804 was covered with oil and was windmilling and that efforts to feather it failed, but there was no evidence of the reported fire.

"At approximately 260335Z #804 announced that they had the fire out and would try and make RAMREE ISLAND.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

“At approximately 260435Z while being escorted by #274 a fire broke out in #1 engine on #804 and the pilot cut #2 engine in an effort to extinguish the fire believing the fire might be fed from #2. This caused the aircraft to lose altitude to 3,500’.

“Aircraft #804 tried to salvo bomb bay tanks, but evidentially the rear bomb bay door failed to open completely, since #274 reported being able to see the rear tank partially hanging out. It is believed that due to the open bomb bay doors and extended tank #804 was unable to consider ditching.

“Constant radio contact was maintained between the two aircraft when suddenly at approximately 260620Z there was an explosion in the left wing section of #804 which blew out a large V shaped section of the trailing edge of the wing between #1 and #2 engines.

“Almost immediately thereafter #804 advised #274 that they were going to bail out and at approximately 260627Z five chutes were seen to emerge from the rear of the aircraft in very rapid succession. Shortly thereafter five more chutes were observed coming out of the nose wheel well some few seconds apart. After a lapse of 10 to 15 seconds two more chutes were seen to come out of the nose wheel well. The aircraft at this time was approximately 3,000’ and therefore continued in a shallow glide and started to turn to the right. As the aircraft started to complete a 180 degree turn the #1 engine was seen to fall off, followed shortly by the left wing after which the plane dove nose first into the sea and never reappeared.

“Aircraft #274 immediately turned when the last of the 12 chutes was observed and flew back over the men in the water. The crew of #804 were strung out over approximately 12 to 15 miles in about the following pattern:

```

*          *****Path of Aircraft
*          *
*          *
*          * < #1 engine and wing fell off
*          *
*          *
*          X < Aircraft hits water
Last two out of nose wheel well > *
*
*
*
*
*          < Next five men out of nose wheel well
*
*
First five men out of rear of A/C > *
*
^
```

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

“It is interesting at this point to note that crew members of #274 were unanimous in their description of the difficulties involved in seeing these men in the water. As long as the chutes were floating the men were easily distinguished but once the chute had sunk it was practically impossible to spot the men unless he was in the middle of “sea marker” area. All agree that the green sea markers from the Mae Wests was very effective.

“The crew of #274 circled the area and attached water, first aid kits, blood plasma kits and K rations to a life raft and dropped the raft by parachute. The raft was seen to land close to the five men who had bailed out of #804 first. Unfortunately, in the descent the water container was observed to break loose. Aircraft #274 continued to circle and dropped a “Gibbson Girl” radio which was seen to land close to the raft.

“Aircraft #274 remained over the area so long as the gas supply would permit and then proceeded to COX’S BAZAAR. While over the area full information concerning the bail out was sent to the ground station and air-sea rescue was notified. Just before departing the area the tail gunner on #274 observed one man had reached the raft and was getting ready to get on board.

“No boats were seen in the area and the sea was described as being very calm. Visibility was only about four to six miles, being restricted by haze.”*

At approximately 1600 of the 27th a message was received from one of the searching B-29’s that three men had been sighted in a life raft. About an hour later word was received that five men had been picked up by a PBY that morning and were at this time back in Calcutta in a hospital. Late that night the B-29 which had reported the sighting returned to Chakulia with the additional information that they had guided a British submarine to the raft and watched it pick not only the three men first seen but also one other who was in the water.

On the 28th it was learned that these men too had been returned to Calcutta via PBY.

From the survivors it was learned that #804 at 24,000 feet had been attacked out of the sun by a Tony in the vicinity of Georgetown, Penang. On the second of six plane passes the B-29 was hit by 20-mm shells which smashed through the hydraulic line beneath the Bombardier igniting the hydraulic fluid.

*From interrogation of crew of #274.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Additional hits were also made on the left wing between #1 and #2 engines. The Bombardier, 1st Lt William Kintis was severely burned and the Pilot, Capt Lyons, the Co-Pilot 1st Lt M. Bole and the Navigator 1st Lt H. Teplick suffered less serious burns before the fire could be put out using the fire extinguisher and the contents of the thermos jug. During this time the plane had lost altitude down to 11,000 feet.

Lt Kintis, obviously in serious condition, was treated with morphine, sulpha and burn ointment by the Radio Operator, Sgt J. Dimock. During this time the Tony was making additional passes and left only when #274 arrived.

Thereafter things went from bad to worse. No. 1 engine lost so much oil it could not be feathered and there was a fire in the left wing between #1 and #2. No. 1 engine was also found to be on fire and #2, thought possibly to be feeding the fire in #1, was feathered for about half an hour but to no avail. The plane lost altitude steadily. At this time it was discovered that one of the bomb bay tanks (in the forward bomb bay) was on fire so an attempt was made to jettison the tanks; unfortunately the tank in the rear bomb bay hung up on one shackle and had to be chopped loose. In falling it damaged the doors so that they could not be completely closed, thus making it impossible to ditch without killing or seriously injuring the men in the back.

Shortly after the explosion described above it was decided to bail out. Sgt Dimock jumped along with Lt Kintis who apparently used his last ounce of strength to pull the rip cord. He was seen hanging limply in the harness; the chutes then drifted apart and he was not seen again.

All of the crew were picked up later, as described, with the exception of Lt Kintis, Sgt J.J. Carney, Tail Gunner, and Pfc J.M. Moffitt, CFC Gunner.

Despite continuous searching for four days by B-29's, PBV's and the British submarine these men were not found.

At this time of writing six of the survivors have returned to their Squadron; the other three are still recovering in the hospital in Calcutta.

There can be little doubt but that the rescue of these men (six of whom had not even a raft) almost 800 miles from the nearest friendly territory will rank as one of the most amazing feats in the history of the Air Forces. (A more detailed account of this bail out and rescue may be found in the 44th Squadron History of this month).

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

The last day of February was note worthy because of the publication of the 40th Group Memorandum 35-2 (Incl 6) on that date. This Memo, titled "POLICY FOR SELECTION OF COMBAT CREWS FOR RETURN TO THE U. S.) created a furor among the crews because it was the first officially expressed policy by which combat crew personnel could determine their relative positions in the rotation line up. Although no goal could be set so far as the accumulation of points was concerned due to the variables of losses and replacements available, publication of the policy made a good impression and no criticisms of its fairness have been heard.

Due to the fact that many of the Group files have been crated for shipment the following Group Sections histories are not in all cases complete. Omissions will be made up and forwarded at a later date.

PERSONNEL

The records and Morning Reports of Headquarters 40th Bomb Group are no longer available at this station; consequently the Group History requested for the month of February cannot be compiled at this time.

Following are the pertinent historical notations pertaining to the XX Bomber Command Forward Area Detachment #1, APO 631:

(a) On 12 February 1945 the 40th Bomb Group Forward Echelon Detachment, APO 631 augmented to 40th Bomb Group, APO 631 for purpose of maintaining forward area bases, per para 1c GO 33, Headquarters XX Bomber Command, APO 495, dated 9 Oct 44.

(b) Organization moved from APO 210 to APO 631 on 28 Jan 45; organization without personnel from 28 Jan 45 to 11 Feb 45.

(c) On 12 Feb 45, 183 EM were assigned to 40th Bomb Group Forward Echelon Detachment No. 1. On 25 Feb 45 the number of EM assigned was 157.

(d) Following are changes in Officer Personnel:

<u>To 40th Bomb Group,</u>	<u>FED</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>From 40th Bomb Group</u>	
ELLIOTT GOLDWATER,	Capt	0 861 530		SO #32, 13 Feb 45
ARTHUR J. HUMBY,	Capt	0 433 373		SO #32, 13 Feb 45
CLETUS M. NELSON,	1 st Lt	0 865 074		SO #32, 13 Feb 45

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

To 40th Bomb Group, FED - From 40th Bomb Group

PHILLIP O. SCHWARZ,	1 st Lt	0 650 599	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
SHARON C. RISK,	1 st Lt	0 576 061	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
HERSCHEL GOFFE,	1 st Lt	0 506 592	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
ARTHUR L. DOUBLE,	1 st Lt	0 731 840	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
DOUGLAS O. ETLING,	1 st Lt	0 667 147	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
HAROLD K. LOVELL,	2 nd Lt	0 694 886	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
WILLIAM P. KIMMEL,	2 nd Lt	0 861 590	SO #32, 13 Feb 45

To 40th Bomb Group, FED - From 25th Bomb Squadron

ROBERT G. GRESHAM,	Capt	0 433 510	SO #32, 13 Feb 45
HARVEY V. CARSON,	1 st Lt	0 862 782	SO #36, 18 Feb 45
FREDERIC WALKOFF,	1 st Lt	0 863 371	SO #38, 18 Feb 45

To 40th Bomb Group, FED - From 44th Bomb Squadron

ROBERT E. WILLIAMS,	1 st Lt	0 672 540	SO #35, 18 Feb 45
JOHN T. MAIDENS,	2 nd Lt	0 889 206	SO #35, 18 FEB 45
EMANUEL M. GREENBERG,	1 st Lt	0 865 083	SO #38, 18 Feb 45
ARTHUR J. HUMBY,	Capt	0 433 373	SO #37, 18 Feb 45
ARTHUR L. DOUBLE,	1 st Lt	0 731 840	SO #37, 18 Feb 45

To 44th Bomb Squadron, - From 40th Bomb Group, FED

WARREN O. LEMP,	2 nd Lt	0 863 353	SO #36, 18 Feb 45
WALTER H. MULLER,	2 nd Lt	0 865 085	SO #36, 18 Feb 45
ARTHUR J. HUMBY,	Capt	0 433 373	SO #47, 19 Feb 45

*DS Photo Recon Det APO 210 – reld DS & asgmt & asgd to Photo Recon Det APO 210 Flt “C”.

To 40th Bomb Group, FED - From 25th Bomb Squadron

FELIX O. SINCROPE,	1 st Lt	0 738 894	SO #38, 18 Feb 45
WILLIAM G. WARBURTON,	2 nd Lt	0 861 396	SO #38, 18 Feb 45

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

To 40th Bomb Group, FED - From 45th Bomb Squadron

ROBERT C. HELFRICH, 1st Lt 0 863 009 SO #38, 18 Feb 45

To 1st Air Transport Squadron, - From 40th Bomb Group, FED

HARVEY W. CARSON, JR., 1st Lt 0 862 782 SO #52, 20 Feb 45

XX BC, APO 493

ELLIOTT COLDWATER, Capt 0 861 530 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

GEORGE VAROFF, Capt 0 427 056 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

CURTIS A. BUSH, 1st Lt 0 686 407 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

EMANUEL M. GREENBERT, 1st Lt 0 865 083 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

LOUIS V. HAMIL, 1st Lt 0 748 180 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

ROBERT C. HELFRICH, 1st Lt 0 863 009 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

CLETUS M. NELSON, 1st Lt 0 865 074 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

PHILLIP O. SCHWARZ, 1st Lt 0 650 599 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

GEORGE SZAFRANSKI, 1st Lt 0 743 865 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

ROBERT E. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt 0 672 540 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

FREDERIC WALKOFF, 1st Lt 0 863 371 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

WARREN O. LEMP, 2nd Lt 0 863 353 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

JOHN T. MAIDENS, 2nd Lt 0 889 206 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

WALTER H. MULLER, 2nd Lt 0 865 085 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

ROBERT G. GRESHAM, JR., Capt 0 433 510 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

ARTHUR L. DOUBLE, 1st Lt 0 731 840 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

DOUGLAS O. ETLING, 1st Lt 0 667 147 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

SHARON C. RISK, 1st Lt 0 576 061 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

FELIX O. SINICROPE, 1st Lt 0 738 894 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

WILLIAM P. KIMMEL, 2nd Lt 0 861 598 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

JOHN S. INGHAM, 1st Lt 0 864 939 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

HAROLD K. LOVELL, 2nd Lt 0 694 886 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

WILLIAM G. WARBURTON, 2nd Lt 0 861 396 SO #23, 23 Feb 45

Effective 24 Feb 45 the Forward Echelon Detachment was reld fr assignment to the 40th Bomb Group and assigned to the XX Bomber Command under the new name of Forward Area Detachment #1 per GO #18, XX Bomber Command dated 21 Feb 45.

The following officers Dy to DS enroute to U.S. to join CG Aerial P of D for further orders per par 1 SO 53, Headquarters XX Bomber Command, APO 493, reld of asgmt.

GEORGE D. VAROFF, Capt 0 427 056 SO #53, 22 Feb 45

XX BC, APO 493

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

CURTIS A. BUSH,	Capt	0 686 407	SO #53, 22 Feb 45 XX BC, APO 493
JOHN S. INGHAM,	1 st Lt	0 864 939	SO #53, 22 Feb 45 XX BC, APO 493
GEORGE SZAFRANSKI,	1 st Lt	0 743 865	SO #53, 22 Feb 45 XX BC, APO 493
LEWIS V. HAMIL,	1 st Lt	0 748 180	SO #53, 22 Feb 45 XX BC, APO 493

TRAINING

The following listed subjects were taught during the month of February to personnel as indicated:

K-24 and K-25 Camera	Radar Operers.
Use of 20 Mi. Variable Range Control and AFC Circuit	Radar Operers.
Blinker	Tail Gunners
Cameras	Bombardiers
Cruise Control	Flt. Engineers
Tactical Doctrine	All Crew Members
Pre-Flight Inspection & Pressurization Systems	Radar Operers.
Fluxgate Compass	Navigators
IFF Installations and Emergency Destruction of Radar Equipment	Radar Operers.
The Japanese Soldier	All Crew Members
Flyaway Kits	Radio Operers.
Pneumatic Bomb Door System	All Hqs. Pilots & Armament Personnel
Loran Review and Examination	Navigators
Components of AN/APQ-13 and Functions	Radar Operers.
E-6B Computer for All Flt Engineers	Flt. Engineers
VHF	P, CP, RO
Ditching	P, CP
Target Identification	Radar Operers.
E-6B Computer with Problems	Radar Operers.
Loran Orientation	Radar Operers.
Malfunctions of Incendiary and Fragmentation Clusters	Arm. & Ord. Officers of all Squadrons
Radar-Navigation-Bombardier Procedure	N, B, V
Icing	P, CP
Flight Maintenance Manual	Radar Operers.
Methods of Combating Radar Interference	Radar Operers.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Octants	Navigators
Turbo Surging	P, CP, FE
K-35 Radar Scope Camera	Navigators
Description and use of Converter M-209A (Film)	All Signal and Communications Personnel
Target Germany (Film)	All Combat Personnel
Recognition of Tojo & Helen (Film)	All Combat Personnel
Operating Procedures	P, CP, FE
Emergency Procedures	P, CP, FE
Interphone Procedures	All Combat Personnel
Target Identification	P, CP, N, B
Loran	P, CP, N, B

Approximately 90% of all personnel scheduled for classes attended. Those not attending were either on pass, preparing for a mission or acting as instructors.

Total man hours for classes in February were 6,227.

Synthetic Trainers operating in February were 7-A3 Bomb Trainer, A-2 Bomb Trainer, Gunnery Trainer, Loran Trainer, and Link Trainer. Loran and Link Trainers were discontinued during the later part of February due to shortage of operating personnel. Total Man Hours for each trainer are as follows:

7-A3 Bomb Trainer – 145 Hrs.	A-2 Trainer – 130 Hrs.
Link Trainer – 63 Hrs.	Loran Trainer – 122 Hrs.
Gunnery Trainer – 1278 Hrs.	

There were no notable changes in Air Training during the first half of this month. The later part of the month training was curtailed due to lack of maintenance personnel and shortage of engines in this theater. Lead Crew and Replacement Crew Training was maintained on a high level consistent with the group policy. It is expected that the tactical operations of this group will show a sharp decline in results due to curtailed training as a result of the present movement.

There were two (2) courses conducted by instructors from outside this group.

(1) A course in "Naval Recognition" by the Navy's Ensign Tobin was conducted of Feb 14th and 15th, which was very good, and attended by all combat crew members.

(2) A course in "Air-Sea-Rescue" was conducted by the Navy's Commander McNeely. This course was attended by all combat crew personnel and it was found to be very helpful and every one was very much interested. Course was conducted on February 16th and 17th.

No particular difficulties were noted during February except lack of power for showing Training Files and discontinuing use of the Loran and Link Trainers due to lack of personnel during the latter part of the month.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

During the early part of February Capt. Bachman, a staff writer for the Army Air Forces published "Air Force" visited this Group to gather pertinent information concerning training conducted in a combat theater with a new weapon, i.e., The B-29, which necessitates constant revision in the training of combat crews.

It is anticipated that the article will appear in Air Force so as to orientate crew members in the training commands as to what is expected of each in a combat theater and also to impress the training commands that a well trained replacement crew will take many a burden off the tactical organization. It was unfortunate that our synthetic training devices and classrooms were being readied for shipment as Capt. Bachman desired to take pictures of the "Ideal" combat theater training section, however, the following pictures have been sent along to Air Force and may be later published.

- (1) The results as recorded on projected charts. (Photo 5)
- (2) Blacked out aiming point using the A-2 trainer to practice off-set bombing. (Photo 6)
- (3) As seen from above off-set aiming points are selected so as to accurately bomb a cloud or smoke covered target. (Photo 7)
- (4) Special class for navigators in the Flux Gate Compass, instructor, Lt. Townes a graduate of the Pioneer Flux Gate Compass School in Philadelphia, Pa. (Photo 8)
- (5) Improved E-14 Gunnery trainer set-up for a complete gun crew, Bomb, CFC, LG, RG, TG, may all track a projected target on a screen and each in turn will fire when the object is in their line of fire. Hits are recorded and misses, smoothness of tracking and length of bursts are reviewed by the instructors. (M/Sgt Insel, center background). (Photo 9)
- (6) "Five Minute Break" note training Officer with back to camera checking the class for suggestions to aid in the improvement of training. (Capt Needleman) (Photo 10)
- (7) "Actual demonstration" After attending an indoor lecture the actual demonstration is performed on the best mock-up, the actual aircraft. (Photo 11)
- (8) A new modification in an replacement aircraft the Pneumatic Bomb Bay Door. Instructor of this type (actual at the aircraft) is insurance of a 100% trained combat crew. (Photo12)
- (9) "Signing the Attendance Roster" A must in selecting a well trained crew for a hazardous mission. (Note: Col. Blanchard, Gp Commander signing up) (Photo 13)

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

(10) "Gathering Crystal Ball Gazers" A class in Radar Means rain or shine bombing of the enemy. (Photo 14)

(11) "On the Job Training." (Photo 15)

(12) Combat Crews performing an engine change. Personal pride is taken by individual combat crews in breaking all existing records for engine changes of the "Super-Fort". (Photo 16)

(13) The Flight Surgeon. An integral part of any Squadron and the man who trains Combat Crew personnel to be interns for in-flight battle casualties. Though the training and instruction by flight surgeons and personal equipment officers of this group, the rate of missing and killed combat crew members is held to a record breaking minimum. (Photo 17)

ENGINEERING

Field Order #33 2-2-45

1. Airplane #42-63396, one bullet entered leading edge of wing right outboard panel. One bullet entered C.F.C., compartment below and aft of upper sighting blister on left side, going down and to the right. It went through the floor of the compartment through the forward pressure bulkhead, and out through the right aft bomb bay door. One bullet entered the cover plate of the oil filter neck of number two engine, damaging the oil cell and shell beyond repair; other damage to member of the nacelle resulted. One explosive shell or 20 MM bullet entered the forward bomb bay 12 inches aft of the forward pressure bulkhead doing severe damage to the control cable pulleys; mounted at this point one elevator cable was cut half way through. The lead in wires to the Marker Beacon receiver were cut. Several small holes were found in the pressure bulkhead. Ten days work was required to return this airplane to service.

2. Airplane #42-63498, one bullet entered the trailing edge of the left wing, 6 inches aft of the rear spar and 3 feet outboard of the flap retracting screw, going on through the main spar of the flap. One day and replacement of flap returned plane to commission.

3. Airplane #42-24804, one bullet entered the right side of the flight hood #2 engine.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

It damaged the nozzle box and went through feathering pump. One bullet entered the front pressurized compartment 8 inches forward and 12 inches below the Copilots sliding window. Forty-eight hours placed the plane back in commission.

FIELD ORDER #35, 2-8-45.

1. Airplane #42-24894, one flak hole through fuel access door of right inboard wing panel. Forty-eight hours needed to place plane in commission.

2. Airplane #42-24597, one flak hole in lower side of right panel at junction of outboard wing panel, 12" aft of front spar. Damage was done to stringer #9 and fuel cell. One piece of flak made a 2" diameter hole in the lower side of left outboard wing panel. One piece of flak went thru left aileron tearing fabric and damaging one rib. One week needed to return plane to commission.

3. Airplane #42-63527, one flak hole in lower side of right outboard wing panel, flak cut junction of stringer and rib at this location. One piece of flak entered left side of aft bomb bay, cutting skin at hinge line, going on up and aft thru the pressure bulkhead and lodging in the vent tube of left cabin pressure regulator. Aft pressure bulkhead and skin on left side of bomb bay door were damaged. One piece of flak made a 1" x 2" hole in the lower inboard section of left wing panel, midway between # 2 nacelle and fuselage just aft of front spar. One piece of flak entered lower side of left horizontal stabilizer, 17" aft of front spar and came out leading edge of stabilizer. Four days required to place plane in commission.

4. Airplane #42-63462, one piece of flak went through outboard wing panel at #1 nacelle. One piece of flak went through fairing between the vertical and dorsal fin. One day needed to place plane in commission.

FIELD ORDER #36, 2-13-45.

1. Airplane #42-24541, one piece of flak entered #3 nacelle just forward of starter access door hinge, going up and aft resulting in damage to supercharger. Two days required to place plane in commission.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

2. Airplane #42-63420, one piece of flak through fabric on right aileron, one piece of flak hit left elevator, six (6) inches aft of leading edge and 12" outboard of fuselage resulting in fabric and structural damage. One piece of flak entered lower surface of left horizontal stabilizer 6" aft of front spar, minor internal damage. Three days required to place plane in commission.

3. Airplane #42-63505, one small flak hole in lower surface of right outboard wing panel. One piece of flak entered #4 nacelle just forward and below inboard turbo going up and to the rear, severe damage to the turbo shroud. One piece of flak entered skin lower side of left inboard wing panel 12" inboard of wing panel junction. Three days required to repair damage.

4. Airplane #42-24587, one piece of flak entered upper forward aft bomb bay. Three hours needed for repairs.

5. Airplane #42-24542, one flak hole in inner skin of left forward bomb bay door. Three hours to repair.

6. Airplane #42-24740, one piece of flak cut skin on lower side of left outboard wing panel. Four hours to repair.

FIELD ORDER #38, 2-25-45

1. Airplane #42-63538, was damaged by flak as follows: 16 square feet of material was blown from the landing flap and trailing edge of the right wing aft of #3 nacelle. The landing flap and spar was cut completely in two, 6 wing ribs were damaged beyond repair as well as the skin at this point and about forty flak holes in the rear bomb bay and rear pressurized compartment. One flak hole in the lower surface of the right horizontal stabilizer, several electrical wires were cut and three control cables were damaged. As far as major structural damage goes none resulted but due to shortage of men and equipment the plane will be sent to the 22nd Depot for repairs which will take about two weeks.

BATTLE DAMAGE ON PHOTO MISSIONS

1. Airplane #42-24579, was hit by 2 explosive bullets while on a photo mission. One bullet entered the lower part of number 1 nacelle exploding under the oil tank. All wiring to the feathering pump were cut and the bottom of the Oil Tank was damaged. These factors kept the engine from being feathered and due to loss of oil the engine ran dry and as it was windmilling

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

became hot and froze, the propeller coming off going high above the plane causing no further damage. This was an important fact as it had been the common belief that a propeller coming off would wreck the airplane. Whether this is a isolated case or not is unknown at this time, although as below listed in the case of airplane #42-24915 in which the same thing occurred a few days later it may be assumed the loss of a propeller isn't as dangerous as believed before. In one way it is an advantage as the airplane air speed increased about 25 miles per hour due to the drag reduction.

2. Airplane #42-24804, was attacked while returning from a photo mission and as a result of gun fire was set on fire, several crew members being injured. As they later bailed out and have not yet returned to the base no details are available at this time.

3. Airplane #42-24915, while returning from a photo mission on which no battle damage had been incurred, ran into propeller Governor trouble that is worthy of note. The first indication of trouble was a bad oil leak on #3 engine. Because of danger from fire an attempt to feather the propeller was made but the system failed to operate. The engine windmilled for about three hours and lost all oil. The engine ran out of oil and froze up and the propeller came off going slightly forward and high above the plane. No other damage occurred and the plane continued on to a forward base where a landing was made and the engine changed.

PARTS AND ACCESSORIES

1. Only two accessories have been outstanding as trouble makers. The fuel transfer pump and propeller governors.

(a) Transfer pump having the carbon vanes cannot be depended on due to the vanes breaking. The broken pieces lodge in the fuel selector valves and this permits fuel in the wing tanks to drain back to the center wing tank. To prevent this we made and installed screens in the out-let lines of the Pump. The 22nd has designed a steel vane to replace the carbon and these will be installed on the planes as fast as they can be received.

(b) Propeller Governors electrical heads have proven very unsatisfactory. The worst failure being that the propeller sticks at one R.P.M. setting and as this usually occurs at the higher R.P.M.'s a plane is unable to complete a long mission due to excessive fuel consumption. Information from the States indicates the electric head may be replaced with the manual control as in the B-17.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS

1. The only maintenance problems encountered during the month were the readjustment due to shortage of equipment that had been packed for shipment.

MODIFICATIONS

1. The only major modification appearing on the B-29 is the air operated bomb bay doors. The main advantage of this door is fast operation, cutting down the length of time the doors are open on the bomb run as well as facilitating jettisoning bombs in an emergency on take off.

OPERATIONAL DAMAGE

1. None during the month.

ENGINEERING FEATS

1. None that can be described as unusual.

AIR INSPECTOR

(1) The most common observations made during inspections of the line areas during the month of February are as follows:

a. Group Memo 120-1 not complied with. Airplanes are not being reported for inspection as they come due. Several airplanes had as many as four engine changes, for which a 50-hour check should be made, but no inspections were called in. At times airplanes were called in for inspection when not ready, even the crew chief not being informed of the inspection.

b. Gasoline is being used for cleaning purposes in a hazardous manner as regards to possible fire.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

- c. Many of the CO2 fire extinguishers on the line had broken seals.
- d. "No Smoking" signs were not always in evidence at planes.
- e. Bomb bay fuel tanks were often improperly installed.
 - 1. Sway braces not used on most installations.
 - 2. End straps loose and not properly aligned.
- f. Bomb bay tanks removed from airplanes were in some cases improperly cradled or did not have openings sealed.
- g. There was too frequent use of broken and unstable stands and ladders.
- h. In some cases engines removed from airplanes were cradled in a hazardous manner.
- i. Oil left to drain under airplane engines causing a hazardous working condition and also a fire hazard.
- j. Fuel selector valves were not drained daily.

(2) It is believed that most of the discrepancies noted were caused by the departure of most of the trained maintenance crews.

TACTICAL

(1) Do to the coming movement, no formal tactical inspections have been made during the month of February, but the following are points of interest which might be some value as a supplement to the Group History.

a. The majority of crews have been so well trained that the efficiency in bombing targets has steadily increased during the past few months. There is now a tendency toward less aborts and a greater percentage of ships hitting primary targets. For this the training and operations section should be given a pat on the back.

b. A "point" system has recently been instituted within the Group for the purpose of determining the eligibility of crews for rotation. It is believed that this new system will now give crews something to shoot at and should be good for the morale.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

c. As an aid to flight engineers on long missions, a new computer has been developed by Lieutenant J.J. Holecek of the 25th Bomb Squadron which enables engineers to complete fuel flow more accurately. This computer has now been almost universally adopted within the Group and has been submitted to Bomber Command for approval and patent.

d. Due to the fact that crews have become more fuel conscious and have received excellent training along this line, long trips are no longer dreaded. This is a far cry from our first Bangkok mission.

e. It is now expected that the new one-man life rafts will play an important roll in the future. One case was clearly illustrated this month when this raft would have been invaluable.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSPECTORS

1. The Administrative Inspector Section of the Air Inspector's Office took an active part in preparing the various organizations located in the Bomb and Service Groups for their impending move to a new station. Service records, pay data cards, and organization funds were gone over and necessary corrections made.

2. All unit funds were audited during the month of February and plans made for conversion of funds into Treasury checks or Postal Money Orders. This was completed before the end of the month.

3. The Administrative Inspection section has assumed the responsibility for the inspection of all vacated buildings prior to their being turned over to the anticipated Base housekeeping part. A directive from the Base Administrative Inspection section outlining procedures has been issued to all organizations.

ORDNANCE

(A) Ammunition

(1) Two malfunctions in the use of incendiary bombs and clusters occurred during the period covered by this report. In both instances detailed reports covering these malfunctions have been forwarded thru channels for action. Both occurred when CWS ammunition of various types were used. One instance was the premature functioning of M47AZ A2 incendiary bombs used on Mission #36. The other was the loosening of cluster securing bands on an M17 incendiary cluster shortly after loading in preparation for mission #40 on the 3rd February. Recommendation for corrective action have been included in detailed reports and need not be reported here.

(2) Use of cal. 50 ammunition linked one tracer per every 20 rounds, has caused considerable discussion among gunners and armament personnel of this organization.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

The majority of gunners and combat crew members interviewed at completion of last three missions are decidedly antagonistic toward continued use of cal. 50 ammunition linked in this manner. Most of them advance the following argument: the primary mission of the gunner is to protect his airplane against attack and not to shoot down enemy fighters. All feel that the primary mission can be better accomplished with ammunition linked in the normal manner.

(2AP, 21, IT). An enemy pilot observing larger amounts of tracers in his vicinity will be less willing to press home his attack. Aside from these arguments the extra handling and operations required in relinking should be considered. It is the opinion of this writer that the less machine gun ammunition is handled the longer it will remain in serviceable condition.

(B) General Supplies:

(1) All organizations have been equipped to T/E allowances as regards to weapons and general supplies, other than automatic equipment.

(2) No other comments under this general heading will be made at this time.

(C) Automotive:

(1) Due to changes in personnel and equipment one control dispatching office has been established for bomb group and service group vehicles. All vehicles in operations on this base are dispatched thru this office. The Base Motor Maintenance and Inspection Station remains in operation with reduced personnel. Daily inspection is conducted by trained native helpers with one enlisted man supervising the work.

(2) Shortage of critical spare parts continues a major problem. These items will be absolutely necessary in order to properly prepare vehicles for storage and shipment. It is recommended that these required items be secured by any "legitimate" means as soon as it is possible.

(D) Miscellaneous:

(1) Combat crew personnel were employed in bomb loading operations in preparation for the last mission. A system has been worked out for bomb delivery, loading and fuzing and is described as follows:

(a) Bombs were loaded on trailers in the ammunition storage area by 901's—loaded trailers were taken by combat crew personnel and delivered to the airplane. Fins and arming wires were assembled by combat crews under the supervision of the bombardier and armament officer.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

(b) While bombs were being loaded fuzes were prepared by 901's and delivered to the airplanes as soon as loading was complete. Fuzing was done under the supervision of the bombardier and Group Ordnance Officer.

(c) All bomb loads were checked by the Ordnance Officer prior to take off.

(d) While number of aircraft used by this Group and bomb load for the mission could be considered as fairly light, no difficulties are contemplated in future operations even if the bomb load is increased, provided G.P bombs are used. Forty-eight hours advance notice would be sufficient provided no last minute changes in bomb loadings were made. However, if bombs requiring unpacking or special preparation are employed the time of "advance notice" should be increased by at least 24 hours.

(e) Modified vanes for nose and tail fuzes were employed and all fin locking nuts were stacked or safety wired.

GUNNERY

I---Four (4) guns replaced in upper fwd turret in compliance with VOGC. The extra guns were replaced to allow more concentrated fire in front zone. Statistics indicate most attacks coming from front zone.

Fighter opposition is believed to be stronger in our new anticipated theater. The extra weight of the two guns and accessories is negligible.

II---Malfunctions show a decrease over previous month. Operation out of China caused many malfunctions in the guns & CFC systems. The most common gun malfunction was rust and sluggish action of the gun due to intense cold and damp weather.

CFC malfunctions were for the most part due to the cold & dampness which caused relays to corrode & stick and corrosion of AN Connecters.

III—Gunners on the older crews show much improvement over previous months. The Group Gunnery School receives some credit for this improvement although most of the knowledge was gained through actual combat.

The new crews show a marked deficiency in gunnery. They have not been properly trained in USA as to simple practical maintenance and their knowledge of gunnery is slight.

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

All new crews have to be trained here in the field and their training detracts from combat maintenance as there are no qualified Gunnery Officers in this group. CFC maintenance officers & EM must be depended upon to teach new crews.

IV--Combat missions run from this theater this month show a marked improvement over missions run from China. This can be attributed to weak enemy fighter opposition, good maintenance and ambitious gunners.

The enemy in this theater is steadily improving in his techniques of interception as B-29 raids become more frequent along the Malay Peninsula. Most attacks are coming from the frontal zone with coordinated high attacks. Bombardiers are becoming more efficient with their guns after a reset of the Sight has been made.

RADAR

Personnel:

As of the last day of this month replacement crews were still arriving with Radar Gunners (MOS 611) as the assigned radar operator.

Eight (8) lead crew radar operators were lost due to crews returning to the States. This was a morale boost to the remaining radar operators since the radar operators had been removed from crews previously returning to the States. However, Navigator Bombardier Radar Operators (MOS 0142) are expected shortly to replace the men concerned.

Radar operators at the rate of six (6) every ten (10) days are being sent to APO 493 for a course in DR navigation.

Equipment

The operating efficiency of the An/APQ-13 equipment is increasing steadily due to better ground and flight maintenance together with modifications of equipment. The flight maintenance manual "Advice to the Lovelorn" was distributed which will be of great assistance to all operators.

The radar absolute altimeter SCR-718-A is to be re-installed in all aircraft. Kits will be made up and sent to the theater for all replacement aircraft arriving without radar altimeters.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

Operation

The outstanding contribution of the radar equipment this month was in Mission #37 on the floating drydock, Singapore. Cloud conditions were 7/10 between the IP and the target, requiring a radar approach until very close to the bomb release point. One aircraft made a 40-second visual run hitting the Floating Drydock which would not have been possible if the radar approach had not been very good. All aircraft were able to drop visually.

A study of storm formations was made on the photo-recon missions to Singapore. Scope photographs of the equatorial fronts were taken and will be forwarded to interested personnel by the Group Weather Officer.

All maintenance for the group is being accomplished by three (3) maintenance men.

MEDICAL

1. The following Medical Information concerning the medical and health situation of the Group for the Month of February 1945 is submitted:

a. The health of the command continues at a high level. There has been very little sickness among the personnel. Both the common Respiratory diseases and the common diarrheas have decreased to a low minimum in incidence.

b. There have been no serious accidents during this period. There was one combat casualty. Sgt Everett J. Nygard of the 44th Bombardment Squadron incurred a penetrating wound of the left upper chest posteriorly from a fragment of an antiaircraft shell while participating on a combat mission on 24 February 1945. His condition is not serious.

c. There were no improvements in medical facilities during the month. The Group Dispensary was closed on 15 February 1945 and the equipment packed and shipped in conjunction with the Group movement.

d. The sanitary conditions about the base are satisfactory. There was no malaria or amebic dysentery reported from any of the units.

e. There were no medical problems or difficulties encountered.

SECRET

SECRET

40th Bomb Gp., History, Feb., 45 (Cont'd), 4 March 45

WEATHER

Avg Max - - - - 86

Avg Min - - - - 59

Avg Temp - - - 72

Max for Month - - - 98 degrees on 28 Feb

Rain Fall - - - - 0.20 -- 1 Feb.

0-02 -- 18 Feb.

0.01 -- 19 Feb.

Max Winds - - - - - 22 MPH -- NE

Enclosed with this installation of the History are Special Orders concerning Group Officers. (Incls 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) It will be noted that the 40th was hard hit by the reactivation of the 58th Wing, losing Maj Joseph M. Besada, Group Bombardier; Maj Thomas S. Carroll, Group Weather Officer; Capt Sidney L. Truesdale, 25th Sq S-2; and Capt Frank J. Redler, 44th Sq Armament Officer. In addition Capt Richard L. Culpepper, Group Ordnance Officer, was transferred to XX Bomber Command.

Also enclosed are General Orders having to do with awards and decorations to Group Personnel (Incls 12 thru 22), and a number of photographs not mentioned above illustrating for the most part Intelligence activities in the Group (Photos 18 thru 28). All are fully identified on the backs of the prints.

F. G. WOOD JR.
Captain, Air Corps,
Historical Officer.

SECRET