

(Typed from microfilm by Sparky Corradina)

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS
40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (VH)
Office of the Intelligence Officer

Army Air Field
Pratt, Kansas
4 December 1943

GROUP HISTORY

1 Nov 1943 to 27 Nov 43

In compliance with Letter, XX Bomber Command, subject: Submitting of Historical Data, dated 1 December 1943, the 40th Group History for November closes as of the 27th of the month, the date on which the activation of the XX Bomber Command was announced.

* * * * *

On the 15th of November the 40th bombardment Group (VH) entered the Second Phase of its training. (Incl. 1) This is defined as the Unit Training Period during which the squadrons and groups comprising the 58th Bombardment wing (VH) are to train as crews, flights, squadrons and groups.

On several days of each week all B-17's airplanes of the Group are pooled to one of the squadrons for formation flights and other unit training. During November (to the 27th) 92 navigation missions were flown, and during this same period 873 practice bombs were dropped. All missions except transition are flown at altitudes of 20,000 feet or above whenever possible.

Ground school continues, conducted by both Group Headquarters and the squadrons. The number of man-hours of ground school for November (to the 27th) was 20,263. (This refers to combat crew only; complete records for non-flying personnel are not required.) This includes instruction in Intelligence; Weather; Aero-Medical; Link, Bombsight, and Navigation Trainers; B-29 familiarization; Gunnery; Communications; Radar; and numerous others – a total of 30 subjects altogether.

Intelligence training during November was progressing two weeks ahead of schedule. Starting in December an Aircraft and Naval Recognition Contest for all combat crews is being planned. The details of this contest will be included in the Group History for December.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

40th Bombardment Group (VH) History, 1 Nov 43 to 27 Nov 43.

The Aero-Medical training being given to all combat crews has been particularly outstanding. However, in order to include numerous photographs which have just been taken, a complete account of this course will be given in the December History.

On 18 November a B26C belonging to the 44th Squadron was lost with all its crew while making a routine cross-country flight. To this date it has not been located. The ship took off the morning of the 18th from Ogden, Utah, on instrument clearance, enroute to this Field. Twenty minutes later it reported its position by radio to the tower at PAAF. It was not heard from again. The crew of five included 1st Lt David R. Oakey, Pilot; 2nd Lt Robert D. Stockbower, Co-Pilot; 2nd Lt Selwin M. Mozzini, Navigator; T/Sgt Edward Spolnick, Flight Engineer; and Pfc Ralph B. Lane, Jr, Radio Operator. Search flights sent out by all groups of the 58th Bombardment Wing (VH) and by the CAP unit at Salt Lake City have been unsuccessful in their attempts to locate the plane or any member of its crew.

General Orders No 176, Headquarters Second Air Force, dated 24 November 1943, with attached Tables of Organization, brought about radical changes in the organization of the 40th Group. (Incl 2.) By these orders, and related directives (Incl 3.), each of the four squadrons of the Group was split into three parts, so that at present the 40th Bombardment Group (H) consists of the 25th, 44th, 45th and 395th Bombardment Squadrons (VH); the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadrons (VH); and detachments of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th Bombardment Maintenance Squadrons (VH) which are attached to the 40th Group for rations, quarters, duties, and designated for immediate shipment. (Incl 3.)

Although Inclosure 3 was received later than 27 November it is felt that it should be included here for the sake of continuity and completeness.

Also by General Orders No 176 the 40th Photographic Section is now designated as the 11th Photo Lab, Bomb Gp, Very Heavy.

As of 27 November the 40th Group had 21 airplanes: 15 B-17F's, 3 B-29's, 1 YB-29, 1 B-26C (Missing), and 1 UC-78.

The strength of the entire Group as of 27 November was 476 Officers and 1436 Enlisted Men. The strength of Group Headquarters as of that date was 36 Officers and 70 Enlisted Men.

F. G. WOOD
Captain, Air Corps
Historical Officer

3 Incls:

Incl #1, Memo #50-1 Hq 40th Bomb Gp (H)

Incl #2, General Orders #176, Hq 2nd AF

Incl #3, Letter, XX Bomber Command, subject; Formation Bombardment
Maint. Squadrons, VH. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Incl. 3

HEADQUARTERS
XX Bomber Command
Smoky Hill Army Air Field
Salina, Kansas

30 November 1943

XXBC 322 (Nov 30 43)

SUBJECT: Formation of Bombardment Maintenance Squadrons, VH

To: Commanding Officer, 40th Bombardment Group (VH), AAF, Pratt, Kansas

1. Reference is made to Second Air Force General Order No. 176, dated 24 November 1943 and specifically to paragraph 3 therefore. Reference is also made to TWX this Headquarters, No. 1-790 dated 24 November 1943 which directed that officer and enlisted personnel at each squadron other than flying personnel be arbitrarily divided into two groups and same forwarded to this Headquarters.

2. Outlined below are the "Sections A and B (Column 3)" which will form the maintenance squadron indicated in column 2. The personnel concerned will be immediately transferred to the appropriate maintenance squadron. Personnel transferred to maintenance squadrons not now under your control will be transferred thereto but will be retained at your Base and attached to your group for administration, duty, rations, and quarters.

<u>Squadrons</u>	<u>Maint. Sq. Number</u>	<u>Arbitrary Units Selected to Form Maint. Sq.</u>
25	1 (17)	A (B)
44	2 (18)	B (A)
45	3 (19)	A (B)
395	4 (20)	B (A)

3. Section B of the 395th Bombardment Squadron has been designated as indicated above to form the 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, VH. The 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, VH, has been designated for immediate shipment, therefore personnel therein will be processed immediately to insure that they are qualified for overseas duty. This Headquarters is taking necessary action to assign to the 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, VH, sufficient officer and enlisted personnel to bring the unit to full strength.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. You will insure that a competent Commanding Officer is assigned at once to the 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, VH and report made to this Headquarters of officer so assigned.

5. Except as indicated in paragraph 4, above, all physically qualified personnel named in Section B, 395th Bombardment Squadron, per your letter, Subject: Transmittal of Rosters, dated 26 November 1943, will be retained in the 4th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, VH.

6. For the location of the Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, numbers 17, 18, 19, and 20, see General Order No. 176, dated 24 November 1943, paragraph 1.

7. Copies of Special Orders accomplishing this action will be forwarded to this Headquarters marked attention A-1 Section.

By Command of Brigadier General WOLFE:

L. I. HERMAN
Lt. Col., Air Corps
Adjutant

CONFIDENTIAL