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**HEADQUARTERS 40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
Office of the Historical Officer**

**Group History
1 August 1944 through 31 August 1944**

“PALEMBANG and NAGASAKI”, “Daylight YAWATA” – what member of the 40th Group will ever forget those two great performances on the 10th and 20th of August, respectively?

The raid on the PLADJOE Refinery at PALEMBANG, SUMATRA was the longest range bombing operation in the history of aerial warfare, and even as aircraft from the 40th Group were over the Island of SUMATRA on the night of August 10th other B-29's from the Group were dropping incendiary bombs on the city of NAGASAKI, on the Japanese homeland.

Preliminary briefings for the PALEMBANG mission were conducted in the war room at Chakulia on August 8th. The following morning 14 aircraft assigned to the mission took off for China Bay on the Island of CEYLON. All arrived safely at this attractive Air Base on the east coast of CEYLON. The approach to the landing strip was unique. Each B-29 glided in over the mast heads of famous capital ships of the British Royal Navy. Aircraft carriers of the Illustrious class were moored in the harbor as well as battleships of the King George class. The French battleship “Richlieu” was part of this fleet.

Final briefing was limited to one hour on the morning of August 10th as each Group of the XX Bomber Command was represented with 14 B-29's and it was necessary to share the use of the small Bass theater for individual Group Briefings. Take-off was scheduled for the afternoon. There follows the Narrative from the 40th Group Consolidated Mission Report:

“In accordance with F. O. #5 XX Bomber Command dated 1 Aug 44 the 40th Bomb Group dispatched 14 B-29 aircraft to CHINA BAY on 9 Aug 44.

At 1001 Z on 10 Aug 44 the first aircraft of the 40th Bomb Group took off and the last aircraft took off at 101331 Z. The large differential in take off time is attributable to aircraft #222 which took off the first time at 101020 Z but returned due to oil leak in #2 engine and then took off a second time.

Of the 14 aircraft airborne 11 successfully attached the Primary Target, the Pladjoe Refinery at PALEMBANG, SUMATRA, dropping a total of 11 tons of 500# GP bombs and 12 Photo Flash bombs with bombing results believed to be fair to good. The target was obscured by 7/10's to 10/10's cloud cover and while several fairly large fires were observed through breaks in the clouds no accurate observation of bombing results was possible.

Two (2) aircraft bombed the secondary target the Pangalon Brandan Refinery in SUMATRA with a total of 2 tons of 500# GP bombs. Cloud cover would not permit any accurate observation of results but crews believed they hit the general target area.

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Aircraft #310 which was assigned to act as pathfinder aircraft and light up PT with parachute flares was forced to abort due to engine trouble.

Heavy Antiaircraft at PT was reported as nil to moderate and inaccurate. There is some evidence of the employment by ground defenses or rockets giving an appearance similar to Roman Candles and reaching an altitude of 16,000'.

Possibly as many as 10 to 12 searchlights were reported in the PT area.

No antiaircraft or searchlights were reported at the ST.

Enemy fighter opposition from both single and twin engined fighters at the PT was weak. In connection with this, flights of as many as 12 to 14 enemy aircraft were reported as sighted in the target area and on the route back but all 8 attacks reported were half hearted and were not pressed home.

No fighter opposition was encountered at the ST.

No Barrage balloons or smoke screens were reported.

Blackout regulations at both targets were reported as excellent.

Aircraft #222 lost most of the oil in #1 engine just before reaching the IP and could not feather. Proceeded to bomb PT and returned to base on 3 engines with prop on #1 engine windmilling. 40 minutes before reaching CHINA BAY #4 engine quit due to lack of gas but pilot, Captain MATHEWS, made a successful landing on 2 engines. During the trip to base crew jettisoned everything moveable in aircraft except radio equipment and instruments.

Air sea rescue arrangements were excellent and very well planned and arrangement for evasion and escape, while fortunately not found necessary to utilize, resulted in very favorable comment from combat crew personnel".

Following the departure of the fourteen B-29's for China Bay on 8 Aug all the remaining B-29's that were in commission at Chakulia proceeded to A-1 to make up a striking force for an attack on the city of NAGASAKI.

Briefing for the mission was conducted in the Forward Area. The Narrative from the 40th Group Consolidated Mission Report tells the story of this successful attack:

"In accordance with F. O. #6, XX Bomber Command, dtd 1 Aug 44, the 40th Group began dispatching B-29 aircraft from Rear to Forward area on 7 Aug 44. On 7 Aug 44 1 plane arrived

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A-1, on 8 Aug 44, 4 planes were dispatched from the Rear, 3 of these arrived at the Forward Area and one plane returned to the Rear due to engine trouble. On 9 Aug 44, 2 planes arrived at the Forward Area and on 10 Aug 44 the last of 8 dispatched arrived.

On 10 Aug 44 a total of 7 B-29 aircraft were airborne for the assigned mission. One plane was unable to take off due to it being delayed at the Rear because of mechanical difficulties. The first aircraft took off at 0902 Z and the last at 0931 Z. A short time after take off – plane #503 developed engine trouble and returned to the field at 1008 Z. The trouble was remedied and the plane took off again at 1047 1/2 Z. Plane #298 returned to A-1 at 1020 Z due to an oil leak in #2 engine.

Five combat aircraft each carrying 13 M-18 incendiaries with fusing of 30 second nose and 3 M-26 fragmentation with fusing of 5 second nose, plus 1 combat aircraft carrying the same ordnance as above with the addition of 4 photo flash bombs, proceeded on the assigned mission. Five of the six arrived over the Primary Target (NAGASAKI, JAPAN). One plane #319 jettisoned its bombs between SASHUI Island and KOREA due to the fact that radar went out on the plane and Instrument weather prevented the Navigator from determining his exact position.

Five aircraft dropped 80 bombs with excellent results. Three of the five ships dropped by radar due to the fact that a large cloud obscured the target at the bomb release line. One plane #290 by coming in on a heading of 210 T was able to bomb visually and on a plane #294 was able to bomb visually from a heading of 121 T because at the time he went over the target there was a break in the cloud. Plane #290 made a second run over the target to drop Photo Flash bombs and take pictures.

All crews reported seeing large fires in and around the target. The last plane over the target reported that after releasing their bombs they passed through the cloud and were able to see huge fires around the entire perimeter of the target as well as large fires spotted throughout the target area. The entire picture was described as looking like “a raging forest fire” and winds seemed to be helping it along.

Photos taken by #290 show clouds obscuring the target but spotty fires break through. Because of the cloud cover it is not possible to get the relationship of the fires to the aiming point.

There were no searchlights nor fighter opposition in the target area. AA was meager with no damage or hits being sustained by our aircraft. Two planes reported seeing a green flare followed by an amber-orange tail flash across the nose of the plane horizontally and at the same level as the plane. It cannot be substantiated, however that any enemy planes were in the vicinity.

No barrage balloons were reported in the area and no smoke screens were observed. Blackout was poor on the entire Island of KYUSHU, and a majority of the crews felt the enemy had made no attempt to black out the area.

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Planes went over the target singly and bombing was accomplished from 16,000'.

Three of our aircraft landed at A-7 because A-1 was closed in when they returned. The first of these landed at A-7 at 2333 Z and the last at 2348 Z. Two planes landed at A-1 at 0026 Z and 0030 Z. All landings were accomplished without incident.

It is believed that the enemy was taken completely by surprise and this is substantiated by the meager AA encountered and the lack of blackout. It is hard to explain the lack of searchlights and no attempt is made to do so.

It is felt the mission was a complete success and that in all probability the entire urban area of NAGASAKI was wiped out. This is based solely on the observation of returning crew members."

There was no let up in the activities of the Group following the long PALEMBANG and NAGASAKI missions. No sooner had the airplanes returned to Chakulia than an order sent out to prepare all combat ships for another mission. Combat Crews joined maintenance personnel on the line in long hours of sweat and toil. Engine changes and major repairs were accomplished with a celerity that would have seemed impossible earlier in the year. Experiences and knowledge were paying dividends. The B-29 was no longer the maintenance "monster" it had been in the past.

On August 18th and 19th B-29's were dispatched to the Forward Area with their pay load of bombs and ammunition. Following the final briefings at A-1. Take offs were scheduled in mid-morning of Aug 20th, in order to be over the Primary Target at sunset. This was to be the second visit by the 40th Group Combat Crews to the IMPERIAL IRON AND STEEL WORKS at YAWATA on the Japanese Island of KYUSHU, and the first daylight mission, in force, against the Japanese homeland. The enemy was waiting, but not in enough strength to hinder the success of the mission. Over the target the action was intense. One Japanese fighter rammed and destroyed a B-29 from another Group and this in turn resulted in the destruction of another B-29 which was flying in the "slot" of this formation. Enemy aircraft dropped phosphorus bombs. There was the usual Antiaircraft fire, and something entirely new in air raid defense was noted for the first time. The Japanese had released a type of barrage balloons, which climbed to elevations over 20,000'. The Narrative from the Group Consolidated Mission Report follows:

"In accordance with FO #7, XX Bomber Command, dated 12 Aug 44, the 40th Bomb Group started dispatching B-29 aircraft from its rear area to A-1 on 18 Aug 44. By D day (20 Aug 44) a total of 26 aircraft had been dispatched to the forward area and 25 aircraft, including #288, a special photo ship, had arrived safely at A-1. Aircraft #425 was lost somewhere between the two bases and is still missing.

Starting at 0144 Z on 20 Aug 44 the first aircraft took-off on the assigned mission to bomb

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the IMPERIAL IRON and STEEL WORKS at YAWATA, JAPAN. Port facilities at LAOYAO, CHINA was assigned as the secondary target and the railroad yards at KAIFENG, CHINA as the target of last resort. A total of 22 B-29 aircraft were airborne in 35 minutes without incident. Two aircraft were unable to take off due to mechanical difficulties and #288, the photo ship, was not permitted to join the mission on order from XX Bomber Command, but was assigned a special photo mission at a later date.

Of these 22 aircraft four were forced to return without bombing the Primary Target due to mechanical difficulties. Of these four aircraft three were early returns. One was able to bomb the target of last resort by radar with unobserved results. Another aircraft proceeded nearly to the primary target but was forced to turn back and jettison its bombs when one engine cut out. One was almost an immediate return due to inability to change prop pitch and the fourth aircraft was forced to jettison his bomb load in the vicinity of the last resort target when an oil leak necessitated feathering one engine. All four aircraft returned to A-1 without incident.

The remaining 18 aircraft proceeded to the primary target and it is known that 17 of these bombed visually with good results. It is believed that the remaining aircraft probably bombed the primary target but evidence to substantiate this is lacking as the aircraft are listed as missing.

Weather at the primary target was CAVU and a total of between 26.75 and 28.25 tons of type M-64 500# GP bombs with fusing of .1 second nose and .025 second tail were dropped on the IMPERIAL IRON and STEEL WORKS from approximately 26,000' using the old coke works as the aiming point. Aircraft of this Group were over the target from 200803 Z to 200851 Z.

Enemy AA ranged from moderate and inaccurate for the first ships over the target to intense and accurate for later ships. A barrage type of AA fire was resorted to by the enemy.

Enemy fighter opposition was moderate to strong with numerous two engined fighters being used.

The enemy apparently had sufficient advance notice from his various warning nets to properly alert his defenses and both ground and air opposition increased rapidly in intensity.

Interrogation of returning combat crews of this Group indicated that probably a minimum of four B-29 aircraft were lost to enemy action over the target.

Of the 18 aircraft of this Group believed to have bombed the primary target 15 returned safely to base, one is believed to have crashed after the crew bailed out approximately 125 miles NE of A-1 and two are listed as missing.

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Five of the aircraft returning this base sustained battle damage from AA and enemy fighters. In the case of four aircraft the damage was only superficial and in the case of the fifth aircraft it is not believed that serious damage was sustained, although a further detailed inspection will be necessary in order to accurately ascertain its condition.

Aircraft of this Group claim three enemy aircraft destroyed, three probably destroyed, and three damaged.

There is some slight evidence of the possibility of a small high balloon barrage (about six in number) being employed in the YAWATA air defenses. No smoke screen was reported.

As was the case in the raid on the PLADJOE REFINERY in SUMATRA, some slight evidence of the employment of a type of rocket by ground defenses was reported. However, if employed it was not considered effective.

Neither AA or enemy fighter opposition was encountered at the secondary target or target of last resort. It is possible that our radar may have been successfully jammed by the enemy at the secondary target. Some reports of radio jamming were submitted.

Strike pictures secured of the primary target were excellent and showed hits being made in the immediate area of the aiming point. However, these pictures covered only the situation created by the first few flights over the target and further reconnaissance photos will be necessary in order to make an accurate damage assessment.

Aircraft bombing the primary target from this Group started landing at A-1 at 201455 Z and the last aircraft was down at 201709 Z. Two of our airplanes were forced to land at A-3 due to shortage of gas. The night landings necessitated by this operation did not present any great difficulty at this base.

The cooperation of the US Navy in supplying two submarines to assist in air sea rescue operations were the subject of very favorable comment on the part of all personnel concerned and was an excellent morale factor for the combat crews.

This mission demonstrated the difficulties involved in conducting daylight operations against the Jap mainland without the benefit of fighter cover and proved conclusively the enemy's defensive capabilities where the homeland is concerned."

Combat Operations

XX Bomber Command set the August quota of 40th Group gasoline deliveries to the Forward Area at 56,000 gals. At month's end 57,076 gals had been delivered over the hump. Twenty eight cargo trips were completed. Twenty two by Tankers and six by Combat planes. Additional Cargo included 70,457 lbs of freight, 9 passengers and 300 gals of oil. Figures from the Statistical

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Section show the following:

Average gasoline deliveries, Tankers.....	2368 gals
Average gasoline delivers, Combat B-29's.....	827 gals
Average Total Weight of Cargo, Tankers.....	16428 lbs
Average Total Weight of Cargo, Combat B-29's.....	8954 lbs
Average T/O Weight, Tankers.....	132668 lbs
Average T/O Weight, Combat B-29's.....	132318 lbs

The overall accident rate for August was 1.88 per 1000 hours flying. Combat flying produced an accident rate of 3.50 for every 1000 hours, and the rate for transport flying was only 0.95 per 1000 hours. Though the figures seem low, the accident rate per combat mission would be relatively higher than that experienced by other Bombardment Units having the same hourly rate, due to the unusual length of the B-29 missions.

That the accident rate for August was about the normal expectancy, may be shown by the following figures covering the accrued accident rate for the period through 31st of all operations by the 40th Group in this Theater.

Combat flying.....	3.88 accidents per 1000 hours flying
Transport flying.....	0.98 accidents per 1000 hour flying
Combined flying.....	1.26 accidents per 1000 hours flying

Aircraft strength of the 40th Group at the beginning of August was 34 B-29's of which 30 were combat airplanes and 4 were tankers. On August 15th B-29 #222 was changed from a combat airplane to a tanker. Seven new combat ships were received during the month and four were lost, making the total aircraft strength at the end of the month 37 B-29's comprising 32 combat airplanes and 5 tankers.

All four B-29 combat planes were lost in connection with the daylight YAWATA mission. On 19 August B-29 #425, assigned to the 395th Squadron, departed for the Forward Area with Capt SCHALL, his entire crew, crew chief, and Lt Col H. R. SULLIVAN, the Deputy Commander. The flight was routine until reaching a point 70 miles WSW of HSICHANG. Here #4 engine started throwing oil and all attempts to feather the engine failed. The rpm ran up to 35000 and the engine began to disintegrate, with pieces flying off and striking the plane. The wing vibrated so badly that it appeared likely it would be torn loose. Lt Col SULLIVAN gave orders to abandon airplane. Seven crew members left though the front wheel hatch, five through the rear bomb bay, and the tail gunner though his escape hatch. All landed safely, but became widely separated due to the uneven terrain. Thanks to the kindness of the natives, they were all brought together the following day at the home of a Chinese Catholic Priest. On 21 August the party set out for HSICHANG and finally arrived there on the 23rd. Five days later they were flown back to Chakulia in a C-46 after being entertained by General CHANG, who is in command of the 24th Army.

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On 20 August B-29 #426301 assigned to the 25th Squadron was unreported after leaving the primary target at YAWATA. Later on it was learned that the airplane went down at a point 170 miles south of A-1. The pilot, Captain JAMES A SLATTERY and all crew members were killed, and were buried on the spot by the Chinese.

At month's end, the whereabouts of B-29 #4293829 was still a mystery. Piloted by Major RICHARD M. McGLINN of the 395th Squadron, the airplane bombed the primary target at YAWATA in formation with other B-29's of the 40th Group. Captain CHESTER WOOLSEY, flying on the right wing, reported that Major McGLINN had an engine shot out over the target, and had headed north, after waving good bye to the formation shortly after leaving KYUSHU ISLAND. Later that night, radio reports indicated that the crew had bailed out in China, not more than two hours flying time away from A-1. The next few days failed to bring any confirmation of these radio reports, however, and nothing more was heard about the airplane or crew.

B-29 #426308 piloted by Captain BOYD GRUBAUGH, likewise bombed the primary target on 20 August but also failed to return to the A-1 and no radio or other reports were received to indicate the disposition of airplane or crew. Two days later, however, word came through, and was later confirmed, that Captain GRUBAUGH and some of his crew had bailed out in friendly territory. By the end of the month it was learned that all but three were safe. The bodies of two men were found in the wreckage of the airplane.

The 40th Group has a change in command at the beginning of the month. Colonel LEONARD F. HARMON, who had been Commanding Officer from the time the Group arrived in India, was ordered back to the United States as an assistant to General KENNETH B. WOLFE, the first Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command. Prior to his departure, Colonel HARMON was awarded the Legion of Merit for his notable contribution to the development of the B-29 project. Colonel LOUIS E. COIRA, Deputy Group Commander, also left for XX Bomber Command, and subsequently for the United States. Colonel COIRA was one of the oldest members of the 40th Group, having served with the organization since the time it was operating in the PANAMA area. On August 4th, Colonel WILLIAM H. BLANCHARD, from the XX Bomber Command became the new Commanding Officer and Lt Col HENRY R. SULLIVAN was appointed Deputy Group Commander. Lt Col SULLIVAN had been with the 468th Group.

In August, squadrons began to take a lively interest in their individual accomplishments. A scorebook of squadron claims against enemy aircraft appeared in the war room. Squadrons competed with one another in the development of their new housing areas. The 4th and 395th claimed the most attractive PX and Beer Garden, in all of India. The 1st and 25th were justly proud of their mess. The 2nd and 44th had the largest and nicest intelligence lounge. The 3rd and 45th, hidden "around the corner" would not be outdone. Their athletic field included a grass baseball diamond. They set up their own movie theater.

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Improvements were made at Group Headquarters. The leaking roof in the "E" building was being replaced. Major LOUIS E. SCHERCK, Group S-2, placed Lt FRANK CAHILL in charge of the new War Room. Large situation maps covering the operational range of the 40th Group's B-29's were erected behind the stage. Along both side walls, and in the rear of the main briefing room, maps and attractive displays told the story of tactics and techniques, target identification, aircraft recognition, enemy antiaircraft guns, escape and evasion, security, as well as the current war situation in all theaters. Smaller rooms in the building were used for map storage, drafting and the handling of escape and evasion material.

CHAKULIA weather in August was a continuation of the monsoon season. As in July, however, not as much rain fell as was anticipated. The forecast was for 20 inches, but only 13.68 inches were recorded by the end of the month. Clearing skies raised the average daily maximum temperature to 90 degrees as compared to 87 degrees in July. The average daily minimum was 77 degrees, and the overall average was a comfortable 83 degrees. August 17th took the dubious honors of being the hottest day of the month with a maximum temperature of 95 degrees in the shade. August 25th was outstanding in two respects. It was the coolest day and the wettest. The minimum temperature recorded on that day was 75 degrees. One shower after another brought the total rainfall to 4.32 inches. The airfield was closed to traffic during most of the day and night.

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