

**SECRET**

**HEADQUARTERS 40<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP**  
Office of the Historical Officer

APO Number 631  
3 February 1945

**GROUP HISTORY**

1 January through 31 January 1945

The month of January 1945 will long be remembered by all personnel of the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group for a number of different reasons. In the first place, a total of six missions had been completed prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the month. In the second place, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, one of the most costly tragedies in the history of the Group occurred at the rear area base. Last, but far from least, orders were received to evacuate the forward area and to commence preparations for moving to another theater of operations and simultaneously it was announced that we were losing General CURTIS E. LeMAY as Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command. Any of these events would have sufficed to make the month of January one to be remembered, but coming as they did, one on top of the other, their impact was felt throughout the Group from the Commanding Officer to the lowest ranking private.

While it had been recognized for some time past by all concerned, that it was General LeMAY's policy to speed up operations, the first 17 days of the month were hectic to say the least, as can be assumed from the following mission outline:

2 Jan BANGKOK, THAILAND from B-4  
6 Jan OMURA, JAPAN from A-1  
9 Jan KEELUNG, FORMOSA from A-1  
11 Jan SINGAPORE, MALAYA from B-4  
14 Jan KAGI, FORMOSA from A-1  
17 Jan SHINCHIKU, FORMOSA from A-1

Before the month had drawn to a close the Group had added two additional missions to its January total, SAIGON, FRENCH INDO CHINA from B-4 on 27 January and take off for SINGAPORE, MALAYA from B-4 on 31 January, but it was the six missions in 17 days from bases 1300 miles apart which left everyone with their tongues hanging out, and the ability of the Group to supply the aircraft for these missions is a tribute to the maintenance personnel.

January 1, 1945 was ushered in with appropriate ceremonies by one and all, and while the various social functions were far too numerous to attempt to describe in detail, it should be stated that every organization on the base did their utmost to help all personnel forget that the new year found them

**SECRET**

# SECRET

History Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp. 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

thousands of miles from home. Despite general parties at the Officers and Enlisted men's clubs and the Red Cross, supplemented by private gatherings of various types and description, many of which carried forward into the small wee hours of the morning, the return to reality and the business of getting on with the war was not long delayed. Field Order #24 of the XX Bomber Command dated 31 Dec 44 was put into effect on 2 Jan 45 and the "big push" was on.

"Starting at 022217Z the first of 13 aircraft was airborne against the Rama VI railroad bridge at BANGKOK, THAILAND and 32 minutes later the last aircraft was on its way.

"Immediately after takeoff the #4 engine prop governor of #738 went out; bombs were jettisoned in the river south of the field and this plane landed with #4 feathered at 2252Z.

"Enroute to the primary target #582 blew a cylinder in #4 engine; jettisoned bombs in the BAY of BENGAL at 18 37'N-91 10'E, and returned to B-4, landing at 0219Z.

"At 15 30'N-94 54'E #4 engine of aircraft #579 swallowed a valve necessitating feathering due to loss of oil. This plane visually bombed PAGODA Air Field at 15 57'N-94 20'E with unobserved results due to 8/10 cloud cover and returned directly to B-4 landing at 0609Z.

"The ten planes remaining assembled without difficulty and all dropped on the leader at the primary target at 0347Z from 21,100' T, heading 68 degrees M. Returning crews reported few scattered clouds, but CAVU conditions at the target area. One bomb hung up and was returned to B-4.

"Observed results placed the pattern about 2,000' to the left of the bridge and photographs confirmed this. With the exception of seven to ten impacts the pattern was excellent. The inaccuracy of the bombing is considered due entirely to personnel error. No fighters were reported at the target area and flak was meager, scattered and inaccurate.

"Enroute back to B-4, at 0407Z, 13 45'N-99 35'E, the #4 prop governor of aircraft #233 went out, and #233 left the formation escorted by #620 and #462, landing at COX'S BAZAAR at or about 0810Z. The escorted circled COX'S BAZAAR until #233 was seen to land safely, then continued back to B-4, both landing at 1009Z."

As was developed at the Critique following the mission there was really only one thing wrong in so far as this particular mission was concerned "we missed the target". Unfortunately there were no extenuating circumstances to account for this "miss" and it must be contributed solely to personnel error on the part of the lead bombardier, who, incidentally, is no longer a lead bombardier.

# SECRET

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

The completion of mission #24 and the start of preparations for the movement forward to A-1 for mission 25 and 26 "dove tailed" into one another as can be seen from the following narrative covering mission #25:

"In accordance with Field Order #25 of XX Bomber Command, dated 2 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group began dispatching B-29 from B-4 to A-1 on 4 Jan 45. By 6 Jan 45 a total of 15 B-29 aircraft were available at A-1 for the mission.

"Starting at 05200Z a total of 12 B-29 aircraft were airborne to attack the TACHIARAI Machine Shops at TACHIARAI, JAPAN if visual bombing was possible or the OMURA Aircraft Plant at OMURA, JAPAN if weather would not permit visual bombing. A weather ship had been dispatched earlier in order to be over TACHIARAI two hours before target time and to advise the weather conditions existing.

"At approximately 052400Z the weather ship advised that the target would be OMURA due to the weather.

"A total of nine aircraft from the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were over OMURA at 25,000' at approximately 060118Z and eight aircraft dropped a total of 48 #500 AN-N-64 TNT .1 sec delay nose fuze, .025 sec delay tail fuze and 48 #500 AN-M-76 Incendiary with instantaneous nose fuze and non-delay tail fuze. Weather was 7/10 to 9/10 undercast and bombing results were unobserved. Considerable confusion resulted from malfunction of radar equipment which necessitated changing lead aircraft three times. The final aircraft #685 took the lead only 11 minutes from the target and the crew had barely settled into position when the bomb release line was just ahead. Bomb bay doors were opened and approximately one minute later bombs were released. One aircraft #462 could not get bomb bay doors to open in time and did not release until after the turn away from the target had been completed.

"Antiaircraft fire over OMURA was meager and inaccurate and fighter opposition nil.

"It is believed that the new Jap fighter JACK II was encountered just west of KYUSHU. Flak at both SASEBO and NAGASAKI was observed.

"About eight to ten minutes after leaving the target the formation was hit by between three and five fighters and aircraft #685 sustained a hit in the right wing outboard of #3 engine. This aircraft lost two engines and started losing altitude rapidly. Aircraft #798 and #396 immediately left the formation and went down to protect aircraft #685 which managed to get all engines started and despite further fighter attacks and a very bad fuel leak in the right wing, proceeded to LACHOKOW escorted by aircraft #798 and #396.

SECRET

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb, Cont'd.

“Aircraft #798 was forced to land at LIANGSHAN due to lack of fuel.

“Three aircraft, due to mechanical difficulties on the part of two and inability to join formation on the part of the other, bombed the secondary target at NANKING, with from poor to good results, in CAVU weather.

“Antiaircraft at the secondary target was meager but ranged from inaccurate to accurate, and one aircraft sustained minor flak damage. Fighter opposition was weak.”

It would be well to pause at this point to discuss a subject which throughout the month constituted one of the most difficult problems in operation out of A-1, the weather. Most targets assigned for the month were generally poor with only a very few days having weather suitable for high altitude precision bombing. This fact coupled with the lack of sufficient weather information made the job of weather officers in forecasting conditions over the targets a particularly unenviable one. Every attempt to overcome the handicap of weather was made and weather aircraft preceded the formations to the target areas and radioed weather information back to the formation inflight. Never the-less weather over the target was generally poor and, as a result, radar bombing had to be resorted to on most missions out of A-1. While radar had proven itself to be a great aid to navigation and while successful bombing on large urban or industrial areas would probably be accomplished solely by its use, it has not been brought to a stage of perfection where it can be relied upon to hit the type of precision targets assigned to this Command.

Not only was poor weather over the targets generally encountered throughout the month, but the weather at A-1 continued cold, wet and generally miserable thereby adding to the general discomforture of all concerned.

The damage assessment report on mission #25 indicated that the bombs of the eight aircraft from the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group releasing on the primary target had hit in an area some five or six miles north of the aircraft plant, while little or no damage of a military nature resulting.

The period at A-1 immediately following the completion of mission #25 witnessed the usual feverish activities on the part of all personnel to get ready for the next “show”. The brunt of the work as usual fell on the ordnance and maintenance personnel assisted by the combat crew members but when all the shouting and the tumult had died down the B-29's were ready and waiting for mission #26.

SECRET

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

Due to shortage of gas at A-1, it had been decided to return all aircraft participating in mission #26 directly to the rear area via LULIANG where refueling would be conducted. This did not apply to any aircraft sustaining damage or encountering operational difficulties, under either of which conditions the crews were instructed to return to A-1, if possible.

"In accordance with Field Order #26, XX Bomber Command, dated 2 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp dispatched 12 aircraft from A-1 to attack either the dock and warehouse facilities at KEELUNG (KIRUN) FORMOSA or the air arsenal at HIETO, FORMOSA, depending upon the report received enroute from a weather aircraft which had previously been dispatched to the general target areas. The first aircraft was airborne at 082006Z and the last at 082048Z.

"Enroute to the target the message to attack KEELUNG was received. A total of eleven aircraft dropped 165 #500 M-64 TNT bombs with .1 sec delay nose and .025 sec tail fuzing and 164 #500 M-76 incendiary bombs with instantaneous nose and no delay tail fuzing. Seven aircraft from the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp accompanied by one aircraft from the 444<sup>th</sup> bombed from 23,000' in formation. Two aircraft joined up and bombed together from the same altitude and the remaining two aircraft joined up and bombed with other groups. All bombing was by precision instruments due to solid 10/10's undercast and there were no observed results.

"The eight aircraft formation is believed to have dropped some six to ten miles short of the target due to a rack malfunction in the lead aircraft.

"No fighter opposition or anti-aircraft was encountered.

"One aircraft (#740) was unable to join formation and bombed shipping in FOOCHOW Harbor on the CHINA Coast through solid undercast with unobserved results. No anti-aircraft or fighter opposition was encountered.

"As per the Field Order all aircraft proceeded from the target to LULIANG to refuel and thence to B-4. A total of 11 aircraft landed at LULIANG and one aircraft was forced to land at SUICHWAN due to failure of the fuel transfer system.

"Of the eleven aircraft reaching LULIANG ten took off for return to B-4 and one aircraft was forced to remain at LULIANG due to prop governor being out. All ten aircraft returned safely to B-4 although one aircraft was forced to land at TEZGON and remain over night due to being low on fuel and one aircraft was forced to stop off at DUM DUM to take on additional fuel. Nine aircraft landed at B-4 the night of 9 Jan 45 from 1432Z to 1715Z.

## SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan 45 through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

“The possibility of sabotage in connection with the premature release by aircraft #589 must be taken into consideration. (See letter, this headquarters, dated 11 Jan 45, to Commanding General, XX Bomber Command, marked Exhibit #1). The D-2 type toggle switch upon being taken apart after the mission revealed that a piece of copper wire was contacting the two leads to the switch. It is of further interest to note that the Group Commander was on this aircraft.”

“It is believed that the bombing run made by the eight aircraft substantiated the fact that for radar bombing the bomb run should be made up wind in order to give a lower ground speed and thereby afford the lead crew ample time to properly synchronize and set up for bomb release once the target has been definitely identified. It is believed that with the relatively low ground speed enjoyed by this formation due to the run being made up wind that excellent bombing results might have been achieved if it had not been for the premature release. It is suggested that the factor of up wind bomb runs be given serious consideration in connection with further missions.”

The question of sabotage which has always constituted a serious problem in operating out of A-1 manifested itself again in connection with this mission and served to further emphasize the necessity of the closest kind of guard being maintained on all aircraft.

Everyone arrived back at B-4 expecting something of a “breather” but this quickly proved to be wishful thinking, for on 11 Jan 45 it was SINGAPORE again.

Photo reconnaissance and weather information had been obtained by Capt CHESTER A. WOOLSEY and crew of the 45<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron on 10 Jan 45 in aircraft #795. This reconnaissance mission proved uneventful insofar as fighter opposition or anti-aircraft were concerned, but had further substantiated the fact that the Japs were still depending heavily on the facilities of the SINGAPORE Naval Base for repairs to their badly battered Naval units.

“In accordance with XX Bomber Command Field Order #27, dated 9 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group dispatched 10 B-29 aircraft to attack the large floating dry dock at the SINGAPORE Naval Base. The first plane was airborne at 101731Z and the last at 101754Z.

“Enroute to the primary target #3 engine of aircraft #503 failed to produce sufficient power. The last resort target, the dock area at MERGUI, was bombed visually at 2334Z (after circling about 30 minutes till daylight) with excellent results observed, and #503 returned to B-4 landing at 0446Z.

“Aircraft #233 also bombed the last resort target visually on a second run (due 5/10 cloud cover) at 0031Z with good results observed. Early return was necessitated by bad oil leak in #4 engine discovered after daylight. #233 landed at B-4 at 0517Z.

# SECRET

History 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

“With all four engines running hot the pilot of #757 thought it inadvisable to continue to the primary target and turned, crossing the MALAY PENINSULA to bomb the secondary target at GEORGETOWN, PENANG, visually with good results at 0224Z. Excellent strike photos were obtained. #757 then returned to B-4 landing at 0920Z.

“Assembly by the remaining planes could not be affected at the designated point due to instrument conditions.

“Of the remaining seven planes, two bombed the floating dry dock visually, but individually, with near misses observed in one case (confirmed by photos; no damage to target) and results unobserved due to clouds in the other.

“Two planes made individual radar – bombsight coordination runs on King’s Dry Dock (primary radar target) with unobserved results and the remaining three bombed King’s Dry Dock in formation using radar – bombsight procedure with visual synchronization during the last 10 seconds of the run. Results were unobserved and clouds obscured the target in all photographs obtained.

“Three-tenths to five tenths undercast was reported at SINGAPORE Naval Base and 7/10 to 10/10 undercast in the King’s Dock Area.

“40<sup>th</sup> Group airplanes were subjected to a total of 34 fighter attacks in the vicinity of the primary target, the majority of ZEKES, RUFES and OSCARS. Fighter opposition was described as from meager to strong. There were two definite and three probable aerial bomb attacks. Five enemy planes are claimed as damaged.

“Only one plane reported moderate and accurate flak; the remainder described the anti-aircraft defense at SINGAPORE as meager and inaccurate.

“All planes returned safely and without incident, landing at B-4 from 1032Z to 1058Z.”

Once more a carefully planned and well executed mission came to naught because of weather. Strike photographs revealed no military damage inflicted at the primary target area, either on the floating dry dock or the King’s Dry Dock Area to the south.

The strike photos from the one aircraft bombing the secondary target in CAVU weather revealed bombs well within the target area and this crew at least had the satisfaction of seeing some tangible results of their work,

The day following the SINGAPORE strike the aircraft started taking off again for A-1 and about this time people were starting to get slightly groggy but there was no let up and no signs of one.

“In accordance with Field Order #28, XX Bomber Command, dated 12 Jan 45

# SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45 Cont'd.

the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp started dispatching B-29 aircraft from B-4 to A-1 on 12 Jan 45. In accordance with instructions received, D Day was postponed 24 hours and by 13 Jan 45 a total of 23 aircraft were at A-1 available for the mission.

“Starting at 2246Z on 13 Jan 45, a total of 20 aircraft were airborne to attack one of four primary targets on FORMOSA. Final selection of the designated target was to be based upon the report of a weather aircraft, which had preceded the formation to the area by several hours. The last aircraft was airborne at 2328Z, 12 Jan 45.

“Three aircraft were ground aborts due to mechanical difficulties.

“In accordance with instructions received from XX Bomber Command, crews had been briefed that the following code names were to designate the following targets:

SHINCHIKU	Peter Able
KAGI	One Able
HEITO	Two Able
TAKAO (Radar)	Peter Roger

“There was evidentially considerable confusion in the transmission of messages, either from the weather ship to the Wing Commander, from the Wing Commander to the Formation Commanders or within the formation. One formation of seven aircraft received four different messages and fortunately interpreted the final message received as instructions to bomb KAGI, but another formation of nine aircraft received a message to bomb Two Able (HEITO).

“The formation of seven aircraft proceeded to KAGI and dropped a total of 210 #500 M-26 type fragmentation bombs, with 14 second delay nose and no tail fuzing, from 23,000' through 4/10 to 6/10 cloud cover. Bombing results were unobserved due to cloud cover. Crews reported that the target was smoking heavily when the formation arrived, due to bombs of previous formations. No fighter interception was encountered and antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate.

“The nine aircraft formation as stated, interpreted the messages received as directing them to HEITO. This formation experienced considerable navigational difficulties and believed themselves much further south when crossing the coast of FORMOSA than was actually the case. The formation actually intersected the coast line NW of KAGI and came over the target which they failed to recognize, although it was smoking heavily at the time. Believing themselves much further south and unable to properly orient themselves, the formation executed a wide left hand turn and took up a course of approximately 320 degrees to arrive over HEITO. The formation finally ended up by bombing TAICHU, since the fuel problem was beginning to resent itself, due to power settings used in endeavoring to locate the target. Bombing was 23,000'

# SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

through 5/10 cloud cover. A total of 270 #500 M-26 fragmentation clusters with 14 sec delay nose and no tail fuzing were dropped with what amounted to unobserved results due to cloud cover. Some crew members reported seeing fires in the southern part of the shop and building area east of the runway.

“It is believed that despite the navigational error that good results were obtained and that the air field and shop area were well covered. No antiaircraft fire or fighter interception was encountered.

“One aircraft was unable to join formation and bombed KAGI individually with good observed results.

“One aircraft intercepted a message designating HEITO as the primary target and proceeded to bomb HEITO in CAVU weather with what is believed to be good results. No fighter interception was encountered and antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate.

“One aircraft, due to mechanical difficulty bombed the secondary target at AMOY on the CHINA Coast visually with unobserved results, due to 6/10 cloud cover. No fighters or antiaircraft fire were encountered.

“One aircraft due to engine failure, bombed the last resort target by radar through 10/10 undercast, with unobserved results. No antiaircraft or fighters were encountered.

“All aircraft returned safely to A-1 without incident, although one aircraft was forced to land at PEISHIYI and one aircraft at SUICHWAN to refuel. The last aircraft landed at A-1 at 1219Z.”

This mission will probably be remembered primarily in respect to “the lost formation”. At the critique held at A-1 following the mission Lt Col HENRY P. LUNA, Group Operations Officer “hailed off and let go with both barrels” and many crew members left the critique very chastened individuals.

On 17 Jan 45 the boys at last “got a break” and were able to bomb a target in CAVU weather. As indicated in the following mission narrative, results were much more gratifying:

“In accordance with Field Order #29, XX Bomber Command, dated 15 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group assigned 23 B-29 aircraft to attack one of four targets on the island of FORMOSA, the primary target to be designated by a weather aircraft which preceded the formation to the area.

“Starting at 16215Z a total of 22 aircraft were airborne in 65 minutes. One aircraft was a ground abort due to last minute mechanical difficulties.

“Three aircraft aborted shortly after take-off due to mechanical failures.

# SECRET

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45 Cont'd.

All salvoed their bombs and returned safely to A-1.

“One aircraft due to mechanical malfunction was forced to bomb the last resort target at HENGYANG, CHINA. Bombing was accomplished from 13,000' in CAVU weather and all bombs hit well within the target area for good results. This aircraft carried 30 #500 M-26 type bombs with 14 sec delay nose and no tail fuzing. No fighter opposition was encountered, and antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate.

“The remaining 18 aircraft of the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp were directed to SHINCHIKU as the primary target and bombed same in two formations of 11 and seven aircraft respectively, from 23,000' in CAVU weather. No fighter opposition was encountered and meager antiaircraft fire ranged from accurate for the first formation over to inaccurate for the second.

“Bombing results were good and it is believed that considerable damage was inflicted. It is particularly difficult to assess the damage inflicted by this Group even with excellent strike photos due to the fact that a mixed bomb load was carried, a large part of which was type M-26 fragmentation clusters with 14 sec delay nose and no tail fuzing. This type bomb is capable of inflicting severe damage especially on parked aircraft without any indication of same manifesting itself in photos.

“In addition to 330 #500 M-26, 110 #500 M-76 incendiary with instantaneous nose and no delay tail fuzing and 196 M-64 GP with .1 sec delay nose and .01 sec delay tail fuzing were dropped.

“The target had been hit by previous formations when 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group arrived and was already smoking. Numerous aircraft were parked in revetments west of the airfield along the shore and it is believed that the M-26 clusters may have caused considerable damage to these parked aircraft.

“All aircraft returned safely to A-1 without incident, the last aircraft landing at 170828Z.”

Additional study of strike photos indicated that initial reports of good bombing results were entirely justified. As to be expected the morale of the combat crews took a definite turn in an upward direction for they were once more able to see some results from the work and risks involved.

While the “gang” at A-1 had been absorbed in running missions #29 and #29, as indicated above, the Group as a whole had suffered one of the worst tragedies in its history. On 14 Jan 45 every effort was being made in the rear area to keep aircraft moving forward to A-1 for participation in the missions being run. While unloading fragmentation clusters from aircraft #582 of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, an accident occurred which turned the peaceful rear area base into a field of carnage. The following report indicates the extent of damage and loss of personnel resulting from this “low blow”:

## SECRET

# SECRET

History Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45 Cont'd.

On 14 Jan 45, while fragmentation clusters were being unloaded from B-29 aircraft #42-24582 of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, it is believed that the top or third cluster on the rear right hand rack broke and one or more bombs fell on the cement doughnut and exploded upon contact. The explosion caused a fire in the bomb bay of aircraft #582. The crash crew on duty arrived at the aircraft shortly after the fire started, and despite the knowledge that the aircraft was loaded with bombs immediately initiated efforts to extinguish the fire. In this work every assistance was given them by base and squadron personnel who were in the vicinity.

Before the fire could be extinguished it ignited some of the fragmentation clusters and a series of explosions occurred which completely demolished aircraft #42-24582, so damaged B-29 aircraft #42-63394 that it had to be salvaged and inflicted varying degrees of damage on four other B-29 aircraft and one B-24 aircraft which were parked in the vicinity.

At the time of these explosions the crash crew and various maintenance personnel were attempting to extinguish the fire and were either in or in close proximity to the aircraft. The exploding fragmentation clusters wreaked terrible havoc among these personnel as is testified to by the following casualty list:

## 44<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron

Houck, Theodore E.	Cpl	37672242	--Killed in explosion – Complete Incineration of large portions of body – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582, unloading bombs.
Gunns, Robert (NMI)	Sgt	19145639	--Killed in explosion – Complete laceration of many portions of the body – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Donnelly, Edward J.	Sgt	16135344	--Killed in explosion – Multiple shrapnel wounds of entire body – compound fracture right leg and arm – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Scharli, John A.	Pvt	39413423	--Killed in explosion – Multiple shrapnel wounds of the chest, compound fracture left leg and right arm – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Elefant, Edwin G.	Pvt	32785359	--Severely injured in explosion with shrapnel wounds of chest and abdomen – Died at Hosp 8 hrs after explosion – Armament man unloading bombs at airplane 42-24582.

## SECRET

History Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

Barkwill, Charles W.	S/Sgt	17042605	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Compound fracture of right leg and penetrating shrapnel wounds of chest – Ordnance man carrying bombs from airplane 42-24582 at the time of explosion.
Schumacher, Aloysius M.	Cpl	39912978	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Multiple perforations of the abdomen – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Hamilton, Earl C.	Sgt	34210610	--Injured in explosion – Penetrating wounds of right thigh – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Flessor, Elias T.	Pfc	36656910	--Injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds of right arm and superficial wounds of the chest – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Dobrowolski, Emil (NMI)	M/Sgt	16064983	--Injured in explosion – Superficial shrapnel wounds of back and left side – Crew chief on duty at airplane 42-65269 approximately 50 yards from the explosion. Went to help move airplane 42-63394, when that could not be done aided in moving an injured man from the sight of the explosion.
Shaw, George L.	Cpl	31242673	--Injured in explosion – Multiple abrasions of right knee and ankle – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Dimock, Joseph M Jr.	Sgt	39120758	--Injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds of left arm – Combat crew member on duty at airplane 42-63394 at the time of the explosion.
Hutton, Oscar C.	Cpl	35628494	--Injured in explosion – Minor shrapnel wounds of the body – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Hewerdine, Helo H.	Pvt	36721472	--Injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds

SECRET

# SECRET

History Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45 Cont'd.

			of the body and fracture of the right leg - Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Pierce, Charlie B.	S/Sgt	34366432	--Injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds of body and left knee – Engineering man on duty at airplane 42-51385 – he went to the aid of injured men after the first explosion.
Davis, Harvey E.	Cpl	34684120	--Seriously injured in explosion – compound fracture of left femur and multiple shrapnel wounds of body and two fractured vertebrae – Ordnance man on duty carrying bombs from airplane 42-24582.
Donlin, George E.	Sgt	38412173	--Injured in explosion – Minor shrapnel wounds of body and face – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.
Backer, Morris	S/Sgt	11050380	--Injured in explosion – Superficial shrapnel wounds of the body – Armament man on duty at airplane 42-24582 unloading bombs.

## 28th Air Service Group

All men in this unit both injured and killed were on a crash crew that drove to within 20 yards of the plane and were fighting the fire at the time of the second explosion.

Heard, Paul W.	Cpl	34736137	--Killed in explosion – Multitude penetrating shrapnel wounds of the entire body.
Fulton, Charles C.	Cpl	37538985	--Killed in explosion – 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree burns of the entire body.
Whitten, Harold A.	Cpl	34828023	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds of the abdomen and 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns of the face.
Frost, Charles H.	Cpl	42039437	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Shrapnel wounds of head and chest.
Donahue, Harry B.	Pvt	35588347	--Very seriously injured in explosion – penetrating shrapnel wounds of the chest, superficial shrapnel wounds of body.

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

Jeffery, Bradford W.	S/Sgt	31348412	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Compound fracture of the right leg, laceration of the scalp, superficial shrapnel wounds of the abdomen.
Dunlap, Eyra H.	Pvt.	35656323	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Penetrating shrapnel wounds of the abdomen And right leg.
Fisher, John A.	Pfc	34890822	--Very seriously injured in explosion – Penetrating shrapnel wound to the chest.
Fraser, Christopher J.	Pfc	31370153	--Injured in explosion – Superficial shrapnel wounds of the body.
Swilley, Wallace F.	Pfc	34828823	--Injured in explosion – Superficial shrapnel wounds of both legs.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron

Beidler, Elliott W. Jr.	Cpl	15131309	--Severely injured in explosion with shrapnel wounds penetrating the entire chest – Died at Hospital approximately 14 hrs after the explosion – Radar operator riding on truck which arrived at scene immediately after the first explosion. He was running from the plane approximately 100 yds away when struck by shrapnel.
Aldrich, Herbert E.	F/O	T-192591	--Severely injured in explosion – Compound comminuted fracture of the left ankle – He was a Flight Engineer who arrived on the scene immediately after the first explosion. He attempted to move airplane 42-63394 and when this was impossible he ran from the scene and was injured by flying shrapnel.

Unquestionably the most outstanding thing in connection with this accident and one which will forever constitute a shining page in the history of this Group was the heroism displayed by the crash crew and squadron personnel on hand when this accident occurred. For a number of months past all personnel in the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp have known that at B-4 we had an "on the ball" crash crew. Their proficiency and courage had already manifested itself on several other occasions when aircraft which had been forced to crash land and had caught on fire as a result thereof had been saved from complete destruction by the efficient work of this group of men. It would be difficult to find a better example of devotion to duty than that displayed by the personnel of the Fire Fighting Section and the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, when amidst bursting fragmentation clusters and flaming gasoline, they carried on their work and, to sum it up quickly but fully, did a swell job.

## SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

No one was quicker to recognize the splendid work of these men than our new boss, Brigadier General R. M. RAMEY, who on 20 Jan 45 had become Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command as indicated in the following paragraph. On 15 Jan 45, the day following the accident, General RAMEY personally came to B-4 and pinned the Soldiers Medal on the following men:

Cpl Aloysius M. Schumacher	39 912 978	of the 44 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, 40 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp
S Sgt Bradford W. Jeffery	31 348 412	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Cpl Christopher S. Fraser	31 370 153	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Cpl Charles H. Frost	42 039 437	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Cpl Harold R. Whitten	24 828 023	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Pfc John A. Fisher	34 890 822	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Pfc Wallace E. Swilley	34 828 823	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Pvt Harry B. Donahue	35 588 347	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp
Pvt Ezra H. Dunlap	35 656 323	Hq Sq 28 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Gp

The Soldiers Medal was awarded (Posthumously) to Pvt Paul W. Heard, 34 737 137, Hq Sq, 28<sup>th</sup> Serv Gp.

The Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to Soldiers Medal was awarded (Posthumously) to Cpl Charles C. Fulton, 37 538 985, Hq Sq, 28<sup>th</sup> Serv Gp.

The almost instantaneous recognition of these men by General RAMEY made a lasting favorable impression on all personnel of the Group.

Between missions #28 and #29, while many of the personnel were in the forward area, the "rumor factory" in its own inimitable manner ground out the news via the grapevine that General LE MAY was leaving us and that Lt Col JAMES I CORNETT, Commanding Officer of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, had been ordered back to the U. S. to go into Training Command. Rumor had it that Maj WEMPLE, Operations Officer in the 44<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron would be the new Commanding Officer. Few people therefore were surprised when the news was made public that General LE MAY was enroute to GUAM to take over the XXI Bomber Command and that General RAMEY was the new Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command.

Those of us who were in the Group when General LE MAY came to us from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force realize the fact that he revolutionized the XX Bomber Command, and that his experience and foresight have resulted in the one thing that formed the basis of General LE MAY's creed of more bombs on the target. The XXI Bomber Command is lucky to get a man of General LE MAY's caliber. General LE MAY left with the best wishes of all concerned and the sincere belief that he will go far, a prediction we are perfectly willing to put "on the record".

The new Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command, Brigadier General R M RAMEY comes to us from the XXI Bomber Command, where he served as Chief of Staff. We all feel that General RAMEY will continue the policies laid down by General LE MAY.

At the same time that Col BLANCHARD announced the change in Commanding Generals to his staff he also disclosed that the 40<sup>th</sup> was headed for a different field of operations. Col BLANCHARD advised the staff that the XX Bomber Command was evacuating the China bases

## SECRET

History, Gp 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

and that preparations to move would be initiated at once although the moving date was still some time off. He emphasized the necessity of security and warned all concerned against useless and harmful speculation as to our new destination. This information was passed on to all personnel through command channels.

On 18 Jan 45 Lt Col JAMES I CORNETT left for the US on aircraft #313 which ATC was ferrying back to the states. Lt Col CORNETT had been very closely identified with the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, having been Commanding Officer of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron since 8 Sep 42 and while his transfer was complementary to him personally and will open up greater opportunities, his leaving was a distinct loss to the Group. Major NEIL WEMPLE was given command of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq.

On 24 Jan 45 the forward area detachment started arriving from A-1 and by 28 Jan 45 the last of the "China Hands" were back at B-4. Preliminary preparations for movement were initiated and once more lumber for crating and packing became an item of top priority.

On 21 Jan 45 Colonel BLANCHARD called meetings for all Officers and enlisted men in the Amphitheatre and indicated in no uncertain terms that the manifest lack of military courtesy within the Group would cease. It would be well to say that his manner of presentation was such that there was no doubt in anyones mind that the "old man" meant what he said. At these meetings Col BLANCHARD again emphasized the need for better security in connection with the impending move of the Group.

On 22 Jan 45, aircraft #267 with Capt RONALD A. HARTE of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq as airplane commander was forced to "ditch" at 21 05'N – 67 35'E only 40 miles from shore, when the fuel supply became exhausted. Aircraft #267 had been on a photo mission to the Saigon Area in FRENCH INDO CHINA and the ditching unfortunately resulted in the deaths of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt ALBERT VLAHOVIC, 0 864 139, 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, radar operator and Cpl ARTHUR H. JORDAN, 36 586 489, 25<sup>TH</sup> Bomb Sq, photographer, and injury to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt WILLIAM G. STEPHENS, 0 869 301, 10<sup>th</sup> Weather Sq Observer.

Of the 13 men comprising the crew all but the two killed were picked up by CAPT GRAHAM, pilot of PBY of American Air Service Rescue, after having been in the water for 7 ½ hours. All injured personnel will completely recover.

On 26 Jan 45, photo and weather reconnaissance was conducted by two aircraft of this Group. Capt AUBREY J RICHARD and crew of the 25<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq in aircraft #589 were dispatched for the SINGAPORE Area and Capt SILVIO D LANZONI and crew of the 45<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq for the SAIGON Area in aircraft #718. Both crews successfully accomplished their missions and returned safely to base. It should be noted that Capt LANZONI and crew flew for a total of 22 hours due to aircraft #718 being forced to abort and return to base for repairs after their first take off. The crew immediately took off in aircraft #404 and accomplished the mission. Take a bow, LANZONI and crew.

## SECRET

# SECRET

History, Gp 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

On the night of 26 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> was entertained by Benny Meroff and his cast of "Funsafire". It was a grand show and one and all managed to take their eyes off the good looking girls long enough to get a barrel full of belly laughs. Directly following the show briefing for Mission #32 took place and we were back in the business of killing Japs.

"In accordance with Field Order #32, XX Bomber Command, dated 23 Jan 45, the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp assigned a total of 27 B-29 aircraft to attach the Graving Dock and Military Wharf area at SAIGON, FRENCH INDO CHINA.

"Starting at 261918Z a total of 25 aircraft were airborne with the last aircraft taking off at 262015Z. Two aircraft were ground aborts due to last minute mechanical difficulties.

"One aircraft developed a bad oil leak in #4 engine shortly after take off and salvoed bombs and returned to base.

"One aircraft, due to failure of fuel transfer system, bombed the secondary target (Rama VI RR Bridge at BANGKOK, THAILAND) in CAVU weather from 22,000' with poor results. No fighter or antiaircraft were encountered.

"One aircraft blew a cylinder in #4 engine just short of the IP and was forced to jettison and return to base with #4 feathered.

"A total of 22 aircraft in two formations of nine and 13 aircraft respectfully bombed the primary target at 270335Z and 270339Z from 19,000'. Weather was from 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover and blind bombing was accomplished with the aid of radar. The first formation made two bomb runs and dropped a total of 54 #1000 type M-44 bombs with .1 sec delay nose and .025 sec delay tail fuzing with unobserved results. The second formation dropped a total of 73 of the same type bombs and strike photos would indicate that they hit some 3,000' east of the target area. No fighter opposition or antiaircraft were encountered.

"A total of nine aircraft landed at CHITTAGONG and COX'S BAZAAR, due to questionable fuel reserve and of these eight immediately returned to B-4 after taking on gas. One aircraft (#798) remained at COX'S BAZAAR, due to #4 engine being out. The remaining 13 aircraft all returned safely to B-4 without incident.

"The last aircraft landed at B-4 at 271517Z."

SAIGON was the same old story, 7/10's to 9/10's cloud cover over the target and morale of the crews, which had gone up after SHINCHIKU, started downhill again.

Just to make it an even figure the night of 31 Jan witnessed the briefing and

# SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

take off for mission #33 to SINGAPORE which will be covered in detail next month.

## PERSONNEL

Officers promotions for the month of Jan were:

Maj WINFRED G SHUTTERS (Group Executive Officer) was appointed Lieutenant Colonel per SO #2, Twentieth Air Force, dated 2 Jan 45.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt ELLIOT GOLDWATER (Engineering Officer, Forward Area) was appointed Captain per SO #2, Twentieth Air Force, dated 15 Jan 45.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt BRUCE D. MILLER (Assistant Group Intelligence Officer) was appointed Captain per SO #2, Twentieth Air Force, dated 15 Jan 45.

Due to overages in grade promotions for enlisted men were restricted to those eligible for the second grade.

An informal review was held 1 Jan 45, Col BLANCHARD officiating. There were 239 medals awarded to members of the 40<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, of which three went to members of Headquarters, 40<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. Col WILLIAM H BLANCHARD (Group Commander) received 1<sup>st</sup> Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal; Capt MICHAEL T. REID (Group Navigator) received 1<sup>st</sup> Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal; and Lt. FREDERICK D SELBIE (Assistant Group Radar Officer) received the Air Medal.

A formal review was held 13 Jan 45 with Gen CURTIS E LE MAY officiating. There were 14 medals awarded to members of the 40<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. Maj JOSEPH D WHITE (Air Inspector) was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for outstanding heroism in an airplane flight 6 Jul 44.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Forward Detachment, which comprised 148 Enlisted men and 10 Officers, was returned to the Rear Area (B-4) during the period 24-28 Jan 45.

Officers gained and lost during the month of January 1945 were:

### Gains

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>From</u>
JOHN N SANDERS	Capt	0 412 973	P-3 SO290 Hq 40 <sup>th</sup> BG 2 Jan 45	25 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq
JAMES I CORNETT	Lt Col	0 392 755	P-6 SO-8 Hq 40 <sup>th</sup> BG 11 Jan 45	44 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq
WILLIAM M KNIGHT	Capt	01 554 225	P-9 SO-8 XX BC 13 Jan 45	Hq XX BC

# SECRET

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>From</u>
IRWIN KATZKA	2/Lt	0 871 402	P-10 SO-12 XX BC 12 Jan 45	Hq XX BC
WILLIAM H JAMES	1/Lt	0 575 088	P-10 SO-22 XX BC 26 Jan 45	Hq XX BC
FRANCIS J CAHILL	1/Lt	0 567 539	P-7 SO-19 Hq 40 <sup>th</sup> BG 28 Jan 45	25 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq
LAWRENCE B EUSTIS	1/Lt	0 864 875	P-2 SO-21 Hq 40 <sup>th</sup> BG 31 Jan 45	11 <sup>th</sup> Photo Lab Sq

### Losses

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>Authority</u>	<u>To</u>
ROBERT E CHEATUM	1/Lt	0 434 334	P-1 SO-251 XX BC 1 Jan 45	28 <sup>th</sup> Air Serv Gp
SIDNEY D VILLERE	1/Lt	0 582 522	P-1 SO-251 XX BC 1 Jan 45	28 <sup>th</sup> Air Serv Gp
THOMAS S BLANKLEY	1/Lt	01 003 670	P-1 SO-2 Hq XX BC 5 Jan 45	87 <sup>th</sup> Air Serv Gp APO 493
EARL M SINGLEY	2/Lt	0 570 272	P-2 SO-4 Hq XX BC 8 Jan 45	86 <sup>th</sup> Air Serv Gp APO 222
EDWARD R. ZITAR	1/Lt	0 582 646	P-11 SO-5 Hq XX BC 9 Jan 45	22 <sup>nd</sup> Air Depot Gp APO 493
JOSEPH V FREEDMAN	1/Lt	0 862 475	P-2 SO-10 Hq XX BC 14 Jan 45	Cargo Sv Unit APO 493
BRADFORD KITCHELL	2/Lt	0 864 604	P-6 SO-10 Hq XX BC 14 Jan 45	444 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp APO 215
WILLIAM E ECKELMANN	2/Lt	0 683 125	P-7 SO-16 Hq XX BC 19 Jan 45	Hq XX BC APO 493
FRANK T ALEXANDER	1/Lt	0 568 520	P-10 SO-22 Hq XX BC 26 Jan 45	Hq XX BC APO 493
HANS A ROTHE	1/Lt	0 864 334	P-1 SO-7 Hq XX BX 28 Jan 45	Aerial P of D US
WILLIAM H JAMES	1/Lt	0 575 088	P-8 SO-19 Hq 40 <sup>th</sup> BG 27 Jan 45	25 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq
JAMES I CORNETT	Lt Col	0 392 755	P-2 SO-11 Hq XX BC 31 Jan 45	Aerial P of D US

Enlisted Men gained and lost during the month of January 1945 were:

Gains: - 22

Losses: - 171

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

Authorized and Assigned strength for the month of January 1945 were:

## Officers

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Auth Dec 31</u>	<u>Asgd Dec 31</u>	<u>Auth Jan 31</u>	<u>Asgd Jan31</u>
Colonel	1	1	1	1
Lt Colonels	3	2	4	3
Majors	9	8	11	8
Captains	12	16	13	20
1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenants	5	14	5	15
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants		5		2
Warrant Officers	1		1	
Totals	31	46	35	49

Increase in authorization was addition of 1 Lt Colonel – Air Inspector; 2 Majors – Tech Inspector and Asst. Operations Officer; 1 Captain – Flight Engineer.

## Enlisted Men

Master Sergeants	6	8	6	10
Tech Sergeants	6	6	10	7
Staff Sergeants	8	16	10	20
Sergeants	15	31	17	34
Corporals	18	26	18	28
Privates First Class		15		18
Privates	22	22	22	18
Totals	75	124	83	135

Increase in Authorization was addition of 2 Staff Sergeants – Link Trainer Repairman and 2 Technical Sergeants and 2 Sergeants – Link Trainer Operators.

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

Increase in assigned totals were caused, in the case of Officers, to absorption of the Forward Detachment Personnel and of Enlisted Men, to normal reassignment attrition,

The Forward Echelon Detachment had an assigned strength of 11 Officers and 147 Enlisted Men on 31 December 1944. No men were assigned as of 31 January 1945.

## ENGINEERING

During January aircraft in the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group suffered only minor "battle damage" considering the fact they participated in seven completed missions.

<u>A/C#</u>	<u>Mission</u>	<u>Damage</u>
24589	25	One small hole through fabric in right elevator.
63505	25	Two bullet holes in upper forward turret, midway between and slightly below the guns.  One bullet which hit the rear of the radar compartment cut both the deicer pressure line and the vacuum line and went out through the rear pressure bulkhead door.
24738	25	Bullet in landing flap, cut the flap drive torque half in two, damaged both the tracks that support the flap track and slightly damaged the rear spar in two places.  Bullet hole in fabric of rudder.  Explosive bullet ripped 16 sq inches of material off right horizontal stabilizer and inflicting minor damage to fuselage skin.
24522	25	Flak hole in right wing tip. No internal damage.
63394	27	Bullet in right wing, passed through wing flap, severed the aileron trim tab cable, passed through the rear spar and lodged in #4 fuel cell.
24582	27	Bullet went through left elevator and passed through the main elevator spar.

Except for the aircraft damage in the 14 Jan fire and explosion the only operational damage suffered during the month was to aircraft 6418 which upon returning to B-4 from A-1 was unable to lower the right landing gear. Due to shortage of fuel pilot was forced to make emergency landing on left gear and nose wheel. Damage sustained

# SECRET

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

required the replacement of #3 and #4 engines and props, damage to #4 nacelle, replacement of right wing flap aileron, and outer wing panel. A total of only two weeks was required to put this aircraft back in commission.

The fire and explosion of 14 Jan 45 destroyed aircraft #582 and bomb fragments and falling debris caused damage to the following aircraft:

- 42-63394      Damaged beyond economical repair.
- 42-65267      One large hole in right outboard wing panel, 24 inches outboard of panel butt, at the trailing edge. 288 square inches of material was removed. Three ribs were damaged as well as some damage to the lower wing skin.
- One small hole in the skin above flap in right wing just inboard of #3 nacelle.
- One large hole in trailing edge of left horizontal stabilizer at the Outboard elevator hinge point.
- 42-24572      One hole in right elevator.
- One small hole in left outboard wing panel.
- One hole in #1 nacelle, the object making this hole went on into the nacelle damaging one main frame and one main stringer. This damage was so critical that the nacelle had to be removed for repairs.
- 42-24503      Several small holes in wing outboard of #4 nacelle. Several small holes in right outboard wing panel.
- One small hole in right outboard fuel panel door.
- One small hole in left hand aileron.
- 42-65269      One small hole in lower outboard cowl flap #4 nacelle.
- One small hole in right forward bomb bay door.
- One hole in leading edge of the vertical fin.
- B-24J  
42-251385      Several small holes in right side of fuselage.
- The Co-pilots window was shattered.
- The right hand waist gunner window was blown out.

## SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

About the only aircraft part or accessory which caused the Group any appreciable amount of trouble were propeller governors. Since the Tech Order was published modifying the resistor clip in the electric head, governors have been failing, on the average, at the end of about 80 hours. So far no improvements has been forthcoming although several unsatisfactory reports have been written on the subject. It is evident that the design of these clips is unsatisfactory for the imposed vibrational loads. An additional support to the resistor or a change in the clip design seems necessary.

A method for improving the clip installation has been fabricated locally, consisting of the following:

Drill a hole to the depth of 3/8" in the two rivets that hold the resistor clip to the mounting block.

Silver solder two "banana" type plugs to the ends of the resistor. The spacing of these plugs is determined by the distance between the resistor clip rivets.

When this is accomplished, the resistor is supported in the mounting block by the additional support of the plugs.

Tests are now being carried out to determine the practicability of the installation.

There were no particular maintenance problems in the rear area during the month, but due primarily to the increased number of missions run out of A-1, the problem of adequate maintenance personnel and spare parts caused something of a "headache". The only solution was to transport additional maintenance personnel and spare parts from the rear to the forward area. This was not quite as simple as it sounds for inadequate housing and messing facilities in the forward area were already taxed to overflowing.

As far as can be determined, there have been only two new modifications on aircraft arriving in this theatre from the United States.

One of these changes is the manually operated emergency wheel retraction. This consists of the three hand crank stations, two located in the rear bomb bay, and the third in the pilots compartment. This system takes the place of the emergency "hot wire" system formerly used. It is believed that there will be fewer belly landings as a result of inability to lower the landing gear, since this change has been incorporated. The system is entirely mechanical, requiring no electrical power for its operation.

The second modification is the pneumatic bomb bay doors. On previous aircraft, the doors were opened and closed by electrically actuated jack screws. This method, although it operated satisfactorily, was not ideal during salvo operation. Time lag

# SECRET

History, Hq 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, 1 Jan through 31 Jan 45, 3 Feb 45, Cont'd.

during the opening and closing of the doors was great enough to cause serious drag to an aircraft salvoing immediately after take off. With the new system of door operation, the whole salvo operation, from the opening of the doors to the closing of the doors, requires but 5 seconds.

The pneumatic system incorporates compressed air operated actuator cylinders in place of the retraction screws on the other system. Air is supplied to these cylinders, at either end depending on whether you are opening or closing the doors, at 170 to 185 pounds per sq in. Pressure is built up and stored in an accumulator at 1500 pounds per sq in, by a small air compressor, similar to those used on the gun chargers in our turrets. This accumulator pressure is then metered to the actuating cylinders thru a reducing valve, which allows only the proper amount of pressure to enter the cylinder, (170 – 180 lbs per sq in.

This installation, new as it is, has already presented the Engineering Dept with a problem. Due to the great force with which the doors are snapped open, the actuator cylinders are tearing loose at the point where they are attached to the fuselage. New brackets of heavier material are being manufactured locally to correct this situation.

## TRAINING

The month of January witnessed a continuance if not an increase in the tempo of training in the rear area. Approximately 90% of all combat crew personnel have been attending classes this month. This is an increase of 10% over the month of December 1944. The remaining 10% are either on pass, preparing for a tactical mission or instructors for classes.

The following is a list of type of training and subjects taught:

Crash Landing and Bail-Out	Navigation by AN-APQ-13
Movie-Ice Formation	Bomb – Radar Procedure and
Aero-Medical	Coordination
Movie-Air War in the Pacific	Radar Navigation
The Magic Bullet	522 Radio set
Weather at War	Theory of Bombing
Photo-Interpretation	Flight Engineers Manual
Emergency Care of Air Crew	Aircraft Recognition
Casualties	High Level Bombing
Tuning Transmitters	Liason Set
Radio Transmission Security	Command Set
Tactical Doctrine	Movie-Norden Bombsight
Target Identification	Gyro-Fluxgate System
Orientation	Small Arms
Code and Blinker	Flight Engineers Trouble
First Aid	Shooting
Emergency Landing Gear System	Training Orientation