

Retyped from microfilm by Joan D. Stewart

28 October 1944

Group History 1 July through 31 July 1944

July was a period of moving and re-adjustment for the 40th Group. Only two raids were scheduled. The first, a small harassing and reconnaissance raid on the Japanese Island of KYUSHU, took place on the night of July 7. The second, a maximum strike on the SHOWA STEEL WORKS at ANSHAN, MANCHURIA, was successfully carried out during daylight hours of July 29th.

In the meantime many changes were being made in the arrangement of the Chakulia Air Base Group Headquarters and the various headquarters sections were being settled in the new "E" building alongside the North-South runway. The new concrete taxiways and "dough nut" parking areas were completed and aircraft were moved to their new stations from their temporary location on the hard-stands alongside the North-South runway. Immediately this runway was re-surfaced with concrete and replaced the East-West runway for most take offs and landings, due to its better surface and the fact that prevailing winds come out of the south.

The new Group Housing area was completed, and early in July all Group and Squadron personnel moved into the new area, which was centered within a mile of the North-South runway. Previously, headquarters and flying personnel had been living in the old camp area about five miles distant from the center of activity. Personnel in the maintenance squadrons merely had to move across the street, but what a welcome move it was? They had been sleeping and eating in tents since the first day of their arrival on the base.

The new quarters were in permanent buildings, with thatched roofs, and mud walls that looked like concrete. On the inside the walls were whitewashed and the floors were concrete. A wide porch extended along the entire front of each building. Latrines and shower buildings were conveniently placed in the rear of the area. Each squadron and Group Headquarters had an excellent kitchen with adjoining Mess halls.

The move to permanent quarters was none too soon, either, for the renown Indian monsoons were well under way. Base weather forecast 20 inches of rain for the month of July, and they were reasonably correct as 17.7 inches actually fell during the month. It wasn't too bad, but here and there a jeep could be seen immersed, up to its top, in a sea of mud, and the approach to the "E" building was a series of jumps from one floating plank to another. The "E" building itself was hardly a refuge floating from the elements. The roof leaked every few feet, and it was not an uncommon sight to see a man working at his desk in the middle of the room with showers falling all around him. During the heavier downfalls,

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the floor in the Statistical section would be covered with two or three inches of water. Everyone felt better, however, for the monsoon season brought an end to the searing heat of the three previous months. No longer were mid-day temperatures running up to 130° on the line, with average daily maximum temperatures climbing over 100° in the shade. Statistics from the weather section for the month of July show an average temperature of 83° with an average daily maximum of 89°. Despite the numerous showers local flying conditions were satisfactory. Only on two occasions were inbound aircraft required to land at other fields due to weather at Chakulia.

Early in the month two memorial events happened to coincide on the same day. The Officers Club opened, and it was the Fourth of July. To celebrate the occasions, a dance was held in the club rooms. No less than ten white girls had the courage to attend the affair, and those of the 400 odd officers who didn't care for dancing found a pleasant alternative in the tasty refreshments brought in from Calcutta.

Word came through on July 5th that WILLIAM A. ROONEY, of the Advanced Headquarters detachment, had been promoted to Captain as of that date. On July 21st WILLIAM B. CHALLMAN, Group Surgeon, and CHESTER R. LAMB, Group Engineering Officer, were promoted to Majors.

Combat Operations:

Following are the narratives from the 40th Bombardment Group Consolidated Mission Reports covering the July raids on KYUSHU Island, Japan and ANSHAN, MANCHURIA.

Mission #3

“Of six aircraft dispatched to A-1, to participate in Mission #3, only four completed the flight and were available as of 7 July (D-Day), those being #351, #303, #290, and #308.

At 0945 Z on 7 July 1944 B-29 aircraft #351 took off and at 0953 Z #303 followed. B-29 aircraft #308 and #290 ran up engines, but mechanical difficulties prevented take-off. At 1232 Z #351 returned to A-1, having turned back at 30°55'N - 108°00'E at 1101 Z due to collector ring on #4 engine having burned out.

B-29 aircraft #303 proceeded on the mission arriving over the first assigned target, OMURA AIRCRAFT FACTORY, at OMURA, Japan, at 1656 Z and made a radar release of eight (8) 500 lbs GP bombs and nine (9) Photo Flash bombs from 14,300' altitude. Only meager and very inaccurate AA fire was encountered and no fighter opposition. The target was observed by 10/10 cloud cover and no visual observation of the bombing was possible.

Aircraft #303 then proceeded to its assigned photo target, the MIIKE Dye Works at OMURA, Japan, arriving over the target at 1704 Z. Three (3)

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Photo Flash bombs were released from 14,300', but only the first two exploded, the last and probably most important from a photo standpoint, failed to go off. No AA fire was encountered and although several enemy aircraft were sighted, they were unable to close with the B-29 for combat. Two of these fighters chased the B-29 for approximately twenty (20) minutes, but kept losing ground. The B-29 was indicating 210 mph at this time. A large break in the solid undercast was found at OMUTA, and the outlines of the target area were visible.

Blackout regulations over the targets were excellent. No searchlights, barrage balloons, or smoke screens were reported.

Several large convoys of naval vessels were reported in the Yellow Sea proceeding east.

From 3315 Z to 2229 Z, starting at 31°14'N - 112°16'E and breaking off at 31°08'N - 111°29'E an excellent fighter attack by an enemy OSCAR was reported, resulting in a claim of one damaged enemy aircraft. This fighter attack was especially interesting due to the fact that throughout the combat the B-29 was not indicating over 180 mph, due to the pilot's desire to conserve gasoline, which he believed extremely low. No damage was sustained by #303 despite three (3) separate passes by the enemy fighter. Landing at A-1 was affected at 0105 Z without further incident.

The lack of better and more elaborate defenses at the target is considered surprising and apparently the enemy is not yet prepared to offer too effective defenses against this type of night bombing.

Maintenance difficulties, resulting at least in part from constant use of combat aircraft for hauling gas over the Hump, are beginning to manifest themselves and will unquestionably continue to be an important factor in missions run on comparatively short notice.

Mission #4

"In accordance with FO #4, XX Bomber Command, dtd 18 Jul 44, the 40th Bomb Gp began dispatching B-29 aircraft from rear to forward area on 25 Jul 44. On 25 Jul 44 eight (8) aircraft arrived A-1, on 26 Jul 44 thirteen (13) aircraft arrived, on 27 Jul 44 three (3) aircraft arrived and on 28 Jul 44 three (3) aircraft arrived. As of 28 Jul 44, there was a total of twenty-seven (27) B-29 aircraft at A-1. Of these one (1), #288, was a special photo ship. On 26 Jul 44 enroute to forward area one (1) aircraft, #291, crashed near ?????? shortly after take-off for A-1.

On 29 July 44 a total of twenty-four (24) B-29 aircraft were airborne for the assigned mission. This included #288, the photo ship. Three (3) aircraft were unable to take off due to mechanical difficulties. The first aircraft took off at 28225 Z and the last at 282301 E. Three aircraft were forced to return early due to mechanical difficulties. Of these one (1), aircraft #351, crashed 3 mil SE of A-1 due to failure of two (2) engines. Prior to crash plane had salvoed its bombs. One of the other

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Early returns had succeeded in bombing the target of last resort (CHENSCHSIEN RR yards) with good observed results and the other bombed a target of opportunity with fair observed results. Both aircraft landed safely.

Twenty (20) combat aircraft, each carrying 8-500# type N-64 bombs with delay fusing of .1 second nose and .025 second tail, and the photo ship proceeded on the assigned mission. All twenty (20) combat aircraft arrived over the primary target (SHOWA STEEL WORKS at ANSHAN, MANCHURIA) and nineteen (19) aircraft dropped a total of 156 bombs with excellent observed results. Two (2) aircraft were each able to release only four (4) of their eight (8) bombs on the primary target due to rack malfunction. One of these dropped its remaining four (4) bombs on a target of opportunity and the other was forced to jettison its remaining four (4) bombs. One (1) aircraft was unable to release any bombs on the primary target due to rack malfunction. This aircraft proceeded to the secondary and tertiary targets but still could not release and was finally forced to jettison.

Numerous hits on the aiming point (coke ovens) and surrounding industrial installations were reported by all crews. Numerous fires and extensive smoke were also reported. A large number of photos were taken but have not as yet been made available for analysis of target damage.

The photo ship #288, proceeded on its assigned mission and finding thunderstorm activity over OAKU, its first photo target, dropped to an altitude of 9,500' in an endeavor to obtain pictures. However, even at this altitude it is doubtful if clear pictures were obtained due to weather. The next assigned photo target CHINWANGTAO could not be photographed due to weather, but at HULUTAO, the third assigned target, the weather cleared and it is believed that good photographs were obtained. This was also the case at ANSHAN, PENHISU, and DAIREN, and other assigned targets. All of the last four (4) targets photos were taken from 25,000' contrary to the Field Order due to structural weakness in the plexiglass covering of the forward camera well. The original glass installation had cracked and broken under pressure at altitude on the trip from the rear area to A-1 and it had been necessary to hastily improvise the plexiglass substitute in order that the ship might take-off on the mission. The crew of this ship reported they were able to see a huge pillar of black smoke rising from the primary target area to an estimated height of 15,000' when the ship was over DAIREN, 100 miles away.

Weather over the primary target was CAVU with just a few clouds to the N which did not obscure the target area.

Fighter opposition was weak to moderate with a total of twenty-one (21) attacks being made against our aircraft, mostly in the general target area. These attacks resulted in claims by our aircraft of two (2) enemy aircraft probably destroyed and three (3) damaged. Two (2) of our aircraft sustained minor damage from enemy aircraft.

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AA encountered in the target area was meager to intense heavy caliber, but inaccurate. The first ships over the target did not encounter much AA but later ships reported a great increase in AA fire.

No barrage balloons were reported in the target area. One ship reported the possibility that artificial smoke screen might have been employed but conclusive evidence is lacking.

Our aircraft employed a four (4) ship diamond formation which proved very satisfactory and bombing was accomplished from 19,000' to 25,500'. All bombing was visual employing the bombsight.

Our aircraft started landing at A-1 at 290934Z and the last plane was down at 291055Z. All landings were accomplished without incident.

It is believed that the enemy has materially added to the installations previously unreported were sighted both enroute to and returning from the target. In all probability this general area in MANCHURIA has been developed by the enemy along very extensive lines and now comprises an important part of his general war effort.

This is the first mission on which B-29 aircraft have been able to employ the bombsight. Until such time as the numerous photos taken are available for study and analysis, any detailed conclusions as to damage inflicted is not feasible. However, based solely on visual observations as reported by returning combat crews, it would appear that there is an excellent chance that the primary objective of the mission, the destruction of the coking ovens at the SHOWA STEEL works, was accomplished. It is believed that the numerous photographs taken will substantiate this conclusion.

Cargo Operations

XX Bomber Command had ordered the 40th Group to deliver 157,250 gals. of gas to the forward area in the period 20 June through 31 July. About the middle of July, however, all tactical aircraft were taken off cargo missions in order to have as many B-29's as possible in commission for the next combat mission. Despite this fact, a total of 137,200 gals. had been delivered to the forward base by the end of the month. A total of 67 cargo trips were flown during July, 10 by the 25th Squadron, 16 by the 44th Squadron, 20 by the 45th Squadron and 21 by the 395th Squadron.

Fifty two deliveries were by tactical aircraft and 15 by tankers. July figures from the Statistical section for cargo delivered over the "hump" are as follows:

Gasoline	96,135 gals
Oil	1,400 gals
Passengers	58
Dry Cargo	36,687 lbs

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Total Weight of above –	303.2 tons	
Average T/O weight – Tankers		131,060 lbs
Average T/O weight – Tactical B-29's		131,189 lbs
Average fuel delivery – Tankers		2,246 gals
Average fuel delivered – Tactical B-29's		1,203 gals

At the beginning of the month the 40th Group had 27 Tactical B-29's and five Tankers. Three B-29's and one Tanker were lost and five new B-29's were delivered to the Group. In addition one B-29 was reassigned to the Group as a photo reconnaissance airplane, making the total aircraft strength at the end of the month 30 Tactical B-29's and four Tanker B-29's, an overall gain of two B-29's.

The four aircraft lost during the month were as follows:

1. Tactical B-29 #42689 assigned to the 44th Squadron was lost by fire on the ground at Chakulia July 8th. The airplane was being serviced at the time, and some fuel had siphoned out of the upper bomb bay tanks. This was being swept away from the plane, but in some way an electric light bulb, attached to a machine drop cord fell to the ground and exploded, igniting the gasoline. The fire quickly spread to the airplane and although the station fire truck arrived within five minutes the B-29 was completely destroyed. There were no casualties.
2. Tactical B-29 #426291 assigned to the 395th Squadron crash landed at Midnapore, India on July 29th, 30 minutes after take-off from Chakulia in route to the forward area. Capt ALVIN E. HILLS, Jr., the pilot, was forced to make an emergency landing, with #1 and #4 engines cutting out and #3 engine on fire. Breaking out through the overcast at 100 feet he made a belly landing in a clear area. Contact was made with the ground at about the radar section and an explosion followed. Nine men were killed or died of injuries while four men, including the pilot, received only minor injuries.
3. Tactical B-29 #426351 assigned to the 25th Squadron crashed endeavoring to make an emergency landing shortly after the take-off from the forward area on the Anshan Mission of July 29th with number 4 engine feathered. The pilot circled the field twice, endeavoring to get the landing gear fully extended when #3 engine quit. The airplane lost flying speed, and crashed in the hills three miles from the airfield. Eight member of the crew, including the pilot, Capt MURR E. SKOUSEN, were killed and three other crew members sustained only minor injuries.
4. B-29 Tanker #426240, assigned to the 395th Squadron was long overdue and considered lost in a flight over the hump on July 30th. Seven

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Crew members, including the pilot Maj EDWIN R. GLASS, and a passenger, Capt C. R. HOWELL, of the XX Bomber Command were on the aircraft and are reported as missing.

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**ADVANCED HEADQUARTERS
40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 210**

15 August 1944

**DETACHMENT HISTORY
1 July through 31 July 1944**

Two activities dominated the 40th Group's Forward Area History for July and they were the preparation for missions and unloading cargo aircraft. It is hard to determine which was the more important or which required the most work.

Warned that there would be a mission between July 7th and 10th sometime in advance of those dates, Sections in the Forward Area put in motion the activities they had learned from the previous mission had to be carried out prior to the arrival of the planes.

During that time the Nation's number one holiday rolled around. The Chinese demonstrated they were as aware of our holiday's as we are ourselves. A sign reading, "We Congratulate Your Independence Day", hung from one roadside stand near the hostel. The inimitable "Jimmy Co." adjacent to the Group Hostel added to his message of congratulations "We hope you get drunk as hell (here)."

To commemorate the day the mess hall went all out with poached "eggs" on toast for breakfast, peach tart for dinner desert and chicken and layer cake for supper menu.

Not one to forget holidays either are the Japanese. They provided a two ball air alert in mid-morning. Fighter cover however was completely effective and a Dinah photo reconnaissance ship fell to their guns about eighteen miles north of A-1.

Six ships arrived for the mission which was to be a photo and bombing raid. The last aircraft, #308, to be piloted by Lt. Col. Oscar R. Schaaf arrived only a few hours before take off time. Only two aircraft were airborne for the mission late in the afternoon of July 7th. Of these one piloted by Major Henry Luna made an early return with a broken collector ring.

Not to be outdone on this date were the Japanese. A number of pilots of planes returning early came into the Fighter Command Headquarters. Some of them were believed to be enemy planes tacking on to early returning B-29s to pass through the warning net. A three ball alert resulted but in less than one hour the alert was over with no enemy planes sighted and foxholes were evacuated.

Throughout the month the routine of freight handling and refueling continued. Up to 20 July all cargo unloading was handled

by the Sector Air Freight Section except for the fuel unloading of C-87s. Refueling of all aircraft was done by the 40th Bomb Group.

At midnight of 20 July the task of unloading all Bomb Support planes plus their maintenance and refueling was assigned to the 40th Bomb Group. Manpower, needed to prepare for the maximum effort mission on the 29th, had to be funneled off to handle this new burden. Transportation also had to be found on which to unload the gas drums and the freight. Much of the work went to the armament section and the supervision of loading became the job of M/Sgt Thomas Sylvestro. Men, all too inadequate in number, and untrained in the work, attempted to keep up with the job. Though higher headquarters knew it, Bomb Support ships for the entire B-29 project blithely continued to land at A-1 for off loading instead of going to the bases to which the cargo was assigned. Each day it seemed, new instructions were given for the cargo ships to land at the other fields, but each day the planes again landed at A-1 instead. Though new refueling unit specialists had arrived the job still meant back breaking endless hours of toil for everyone assigned to it.

To compensate in some degree for this, however small, a Sunday truck to Chengtu was instituted. As many men as possible were permitted off on Sunday and as many as the truck could accommodate were given passes to Chengtu.

One incident obscured by the activities of the first mission but nevertheless a bright spot in the 40th Group History was the presentation of a pennant to the 40th Group by the people of Hsinching on the occasion of the 7th Anniversary of China's war with Japan. Capt Ray K. Kinslow, Communications Officer of the Forward Area accepted the pennant for the 40th Group. The ceremony of presentation took place in Hsinching July 7th, at which the mayor of the village and all the local dignitaries were present. A presentation speech was made by the Mayor and an acceptance speech was made by an officer from the Forward Area XX Bomber Command for all of the organizations receiving flags. Wine and cookies for the meal that evening were also presented with the flags.

Scientists studying the brain's faculties for mental telepathy might do well to use the 40th Group Forward Area Personnel as their field of study. Well in advance of any official notice that a mission was forthcoming July 29th men began preparing for it. On July 24th and 25th only tankers arrived. Then, on July 26, a tactical ship landed, taxied up to the revetment and opened it's bomb bay doors. Watchful maintenance men took a quick look inside to confirm what they expected—8x500s were slung on the racks. Aircraft continued to arrive that day and for two days thereafter until 25 tactical B-29s and two tankers were on the field. Weather Control had been watching the weather for many days stuck it's finger in it's mouth, held it aloft, surveyed the skies and pronounced July 29th as the best day for weather.

Engineering with all its components mastered the tremendous

job of preparing all ships for the mission. Combat crews worked on their own aircraft getting each in combat trim. Maj. Marvin Goodwyn's crew on 275 worked by flashlight to repair a Fluxgate Compass. Capt E. O. Barry, his crew, and all available manpower worked thru the night to pull 348 out of the mud.

Except for Lt. Col. Williamson in #269 all planes took off on schedule for the attack on Anshan Manchuria. In mid-morning all the personnel of the Group who had stayed behind to sweat out the mission saw the early return and tragic crash of #351 piloted by Capt. Murr E. Skousen. Crews returning from the mission were exuberant over the results of their bombing. Interrogations in some instances consisted in part in crews walking around their interrogation room saying "Woosh", "Boom", and "Phoom". Other interrogations were attended by visiting generals, nine in number, headed by Lt. Gen. BARNEY GILES, Maj. Gen. GEORGE B. STRATHMEYER, and Brig Gen LA VERNE SAUNDERS. Thirteen aircraft departed for the rear area on July 30th. Others were held over several days when the rear area was threatened with bad weather.

As the month closed little time was lost in reflecting on past missions but work was already pointed toward the August effort. War bulletins from other theaters were read with increasing interest and talk was rampant about the 40th Group going home.

Strength of the Forward Area Detachment 31 July was 10 Officers and 118 Enlisted Men.

**WILLIAM A. ROONEY,
Capt., Air Corps
Detachment Historian**