

(Retyped from microfilm by Sparky Corradina)

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

**APO Number 631
29 January 1945**

GROUP HISTORY

1 November thru 30 November 1944

November was a month of stepped up activity. Five times the planes of the 40th Group took off, either from Chakulia or the advanced base in China, to bomb important Japanese installations ranging from the aircraft plant at Omura, Japan to Singapore Naval Base. Between and even during missions every available hour was used for further training both on the ground and in the air. There was not time even to worry about becoming war-weary. Combat crews found themselves involved in a training schedule reminiscent of the days at Pratt, Kansas; mechanics could be found on the line at any time of the day and night; and staff officers developed ischial callosities from long hours at their desks.

However, morale was high – higher, probably, than it had been since the Group arrived in India eight months before. There were several factors in explanation of this. For one, it became known that tankers and obsolescent combat B-29's were to be returned to the States, and that the crews with the most combat time would ferry them back. (It was not generally understood, however, that this was only a temporary measure – a convenient means of getting rid of surplus crews. There was still no officially expressed policy by which crews could anticipate returning to “Shangri La” at the completion of so many missions or so many combat hours or after such and such a period of time.)

Other morale factors were (1) the first awards had been made to the men of the combat crews (2) everyone was kept busy (3) the weather was very nearly perfect in this section of India and (4) Chakulia Army Air Base had become – so far as personal comforts were concerned – what is commonly known in Air Force circles as a Country Club.

* * * *

The functional reorganization of the XX Bomber Command was ordered by Major General LeMay in XX Bomber Command letter, dated 15 October 1944. This reorganization was for the purpose of utilizing personnel more economically and increasing efficiency. On 1 November 1944 the functions of the Service Group and Bombardment Group were consolidated. The administration sections were consolidated into one unit and the engineering and supply sections were likewise coordinated and combined. The plan of this consolidation was outlined by Col WILLIAM H. BLANCHARD, Commanding Officer, and involved a division into three distinct sections. The Operations Section (including Intelligence) was under Lt Col HENRY LUNA, the Administrative Section under Maj WINFRED C. SHUTTERS and Lt Col ROGER FULLER was placed in charge of the Maintenance and Supply Section. Captain L N BENSON was made Group Adjutant and Captain FRANK MC WALTERS became Assistant Base Adjutant. This amalgamation

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has increased efficiency and eliminated duplication and overlapping of all departments.

On 3 November at 0613 IST the first of 13 40th Group B-29's was airborne for a mission to Rangoon, Burma. The target was the Malagon Railroad Yards and Shops, then the largest and most important railroad installation in Rangoon.

This mission (Field Order #14, XX Bomber Command, dated 28 October 1944) was originally planned as a training mission to improve formation flying and bombing technique, and to break in those crews which had as yet little or no combat experience. Moulmein was first selected as the primary target, being the second most important target within medium range; Rangoon was considered too heavily defended for a mission planned primarily for training purposes. However, since the Strategic Air Force was planning to attack Rangoon at about this time, it was decided to shift the strike to Rangoon for combined operations. The Japanese storage area at Taungup, Burma was designated as the last resort target.

The purpose of the attack on Rangoon was to impede enemy rail transportation by disrupting the siding as well as the main line in the marshalling yard, to destroy the roundhouse, and to destroy or put out of commission engines and rolling stock.

The B-29 attack was preceded by a fighter sweep, the purpose of which was to silence anti-aircraft installations and neutralize so far as possible enemy aircraft opposition.

Of the 13 aircraft airborne from Chakulia, one landed immediately after take off and two others also aborted due to mechanical difficulties. The remaining 10 bombed the target visually (despite 6/10 cloud cover) with good results observed, dropping a total of 391 x 500 lb bombs from an altitude of 21000 feet. This was the first B-29 combat mission on which the planes carried their maximum bomb load, 40 x 500 lb bombs per plane.

One plane, in which nine bombs failed to release, proceeded to Taungup, bombing with unobserved results.

Enemy air opposition was encountered only at Rangoon and after the bombs had been released. Opposition was described as weak although several attacks were pressed home in a very determined manner. None of the 40th Group planes suffered damage from enemy aircraft and only two "damaged" claims were made.

Over Rangoon anti-aircraft fire was described as moderate and accurate; three of our planes suffered minor flak damage.

There were no unusual occurrences, but none of the returning crews expressed a decided distaste for describing Rangoon as a "practice mission" target.

All of our planes returned safely. One plane, unable to close the rear bomb bay doors and consequently running low on gas, landed at Chittagong where the malfunction was repaired and gas taken on for the flight on in to Chakulia.

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On this mission a plane from the 444th Group was compelled to ditch enroute to the target. The next morning (4 November) the 40th Group's B-24J piloted by Captain George VAROFF (44th Squadron) took off for a search mission. Failing to rendezvous with three other aircraft at the designated time and place after circling for several minutes, Captain VAROFF headed on course, flying at an altitude of 1000 feet above the water. Shortly before arriving at the point from which the search was to be started, the co-pilot, Lt HAMID, sighted two life rafts and 11 men. Water and sustenance kits were dropped and the rafts were circled for more than an hour while all necessary information was radioed back to Air-Sea Rescue through Bomber Command. The B-24 then returned to base.

The 4th of November was spent in preparations for a mission to Singapore in accordance with XX Bomber Command Field Order #15, dated 1 November 1944. Briefing was held in the War Room that evening and the first of the 17 planes dispatched took off at 2246 IST.

One plane, due to #1 engine cutting out, dropped two of its three 1000 lb GP bombs on the tertiary target, the Jap storage area at Taungup, and returned one bomb to Chakulia. Results were unobserved.

Another plane, with #2 engine cutting out at altitude, bombed an airfield on the Malay Peninsula and returned safely to base.

A third plane, low on gas and with #3 engine leaking oil, turned to the secondary target, the Pangkalanbranden Refinery on Sumatra. All three 1000 lb GP bombs were dropped visually from 21100 feet with excellent results, the bombs all hitting within 200 feet of the designated aiming point (photo 1). This plane then returned safely to Chakulia.

The remaining 14 planes all bombed the assigned primary target – the 1000 feet graving dock at the Singapore Naval Base – from between 20,000 and 21,000 feet with a total of 32 x 1000 lb TNT N65 bombs. There were 4/10 cloud cover below and results ranged from unobserved to excellent.

Antiaircraft fire over the target was variously reported as meager to moderate and inaccurate to accurate, four planes sustained minor flak damage.

Enemy fighter opposition over the primary target area was weak but a few attacks were closely pressed. Two of the planes which were damaged by flak also sustained minor damage from enemy fighters. Claims for one destroyed and two damaged fighters were made.

No smoke screens were observed but one crew reported barrage balloons about 10 miles south of the Naval Base at an altitude of 15000 feet. Aerial parachute bombs were encountered over the target by one plane and there was one report of possible ground to air rockets on the return trip.

All planes returned safely to Chakulia, with one landing first at Barrackpore due to a shortage

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of gasoline. The average flight time was 17 hours and 14 minutes.

Strike photos (photo 2) taken from 44th Squadron airplane #4503 (Lt FRANK MC KINNEY, Bombardier); Captain W. A. HUNTER, Airplane Commander) show one impact directly on the sliding caisson and another at one end of it on the edge of the dock. Although no camera was carried in #6290 of the 44th Squadron (Lt B. A. MC INTYRE, Bombardier; Major NEIL W. WEMPLE, Airplane Commander) which bombed eight minutes after #503, several of the crew testified that water was not yet rushing through a breach of the caisson (as shown in still later photos) and that their bombs fell in the water 50 to 75 feet out from the caisson near the end which was later seen to have been holed below the water line. It is very possible, therefore, that both planes contributed to the serious damage sustained by the lock.

Strike photos from the other planes show impacts very near the aiming point and among the foundry and shop buildings on the east side of the dry dock as well as direct hits on a 475 foot cargo vessel which was occupying the dock at the time of the attack (photo 3).

The mission was, therefore, completely successful, and some of the bombing little short of miraculous. By this attack use of one of the most important naval installations at Singapore will be denied to the Japanese for an estimated period of at least three months and probably much longer.

The narrative section of this mission report ends with "Some aircraft flew a total distance of 4100 statute air miles which undoubtedly comprises the longest non-stop bombing raid in history. A penetration of over 1200 miles into enemy held territory was necessary, and the assigned target, the sliding steel caisson on the main dry dock, called for the most precise high level bombing in order to accomplish the desired results. The strike photos obtained clearly indicate that the mission was accomplished in a most satisfactory manner which, when coupled with the fact that not a single aircraft was lost or even seriously damaged, stamps this mission as an outstanding success."

On the morning of Monday, 6 November, all personnel of Chakulia Army Air Base assembled on the new athletic field for a review in honor of those men who were to be decorated. Down for the occasion was the Commanding General of the XX Bomber Command, Major General CURTIS LE MAY, who made the awards (some posthumously for the next of kin) to the 234 men of the 40th Bomb Group listed in XX Bomber Command General Order Number 38, dated 28 October 1944. (Incl 1). The citation reads in part, "....for outstanding and meritorious achievement while participating in operational and combat flights from bases in India to bases in China and return, and from bases in China, on missions over enemy territory where enemy fire was probable and expected.....These flights were made over extremely rugged terrain where unfavorable weather made flying hazardous. Each individual exhibited untiring energy and meticulous care while flying. Undaunted by the many hazards faced regularly and continuously, they performed their duties in such a manner as to reflect great credit to this Command and to the Army Air Forces."

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On 7 November a plane was dispatched on a search mission for the crew of another group that had ditched on the Singapore mission of 5 November. The search was fruitless, however, and after many hours of flight over the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea the plane returned to Chakulia.

November 8th was a day when listening space near a radio was at a premium. The Group and squadron War Rooms were packed with officers and enlisted men getting the latest returns of the National Presidential Election. Throughout the day there was good natured squabbling between Republicans and Democrats, but as the issue became less doubtful the arguments died away and Franklin Delano Roosevelt was once more acknowledged as Commander in Chief for another four years.

Also on the 8th word was received of an impending mission to be staged from the forward base. Consequently, in accordance with Bomber Command Field Order #16, the 40th Group began dispatching aircraft from Chakulia to the forward area on 9 November. By the evening of the 10th a total of 28 B-29's were at A-1 for participation in the mission.

Targets designated were almost the same as those of mission #13. The aircraft plant at Omura was to be the primary target; the Sasabo Aircraft Factory and Point Island, Shanghai, were both designated as secondary targets; and the Railroad Terminal and Ferry Wharves Area at Nanking was to be the last resort target.

Starting at 0146 China time (1846 GCT) on 11 November a total of 25 planes were airborne for Japan. Of these, two aborted due to mechanical failure, and returned to A-1 after jettisoning their bombs.

After the planes were airborne late weather information indicated that the primary and secondary targets would be overcast so a radio message was sent to the aircraft directing them to bomb the last resort target, Nanking. Four of our planes did not receive this message, either directly or by relay from other planes, and so proceeded to Omura. Two bombed the primary target through a solid undercast and under extremely turbulent weather conditions. The other two returned to the mainland and bombed targets of opportunity with unobserved results.

Two planes bombed the secondary target at Shanghai, one with unobserved results and the other with excellent results observed.

Fourteen planes bombed the last resort target of Nanking with fair to good results observed. Of these, 10 40th Group aircraft bombed in a 12 plane formation (photo 4), two in a two plane formation and two bombed singly.

A total of four planes (including the two mentioned above) dropped on targets of opportunity. With the exception of one which scored near misses on a large merchant vessel in the Yellow Sea results were unobserved.

Each plane carried eight 500 lb demolition and four M-76 500 lb incendiary bombs and none were brought back.

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One of our planes is missing. A message was received from Lt VICKERY, pilot of #42-6237, indicating his #4 engine was on fire over Nanking. At this time the key was locked down and it is believed that the crew bailed out in the vicinity of Nanking. Following is a list of the crew, all of who were in the 25th Squadron. In addition, Major F. B. MORGAN of the XX Bomber Command, was riding the plane as a passenger.

1 st Lt. RICHARD L. VICKERY	Pilot
2 nd Lt. BURNARD L. PAGE	Co-Pilot
2 nd Lt. FELIX C. SINICROPE	Navigator
2 nd Lt. EDWARD G. CASSIDY	Bombardier
2 nd Lt. WILLIAM G. WARBURTON	Flight Engineer
Sgt. JOHN A. MYERS	Radar Operator
S/Sgt. DWIGHT E. COLLINS	Radio Operator
Sgt. FREDERICK S. CARLTON	CFC Gunner
Sgt. CARL R. REIGER	Right Gunner
Sgt. WATSON R. LANKFORD	Left Gunner
Sgt. GEORGE R. SCHUNCHARDT	Tail gunner

The only other casualty was Sgt MICHELL ZIEMBA of the 25th Squadron. Sgt ZIEMBA, the CFC Gunner on Captain DORSEY B. THOMAS's crew, was wounded when a bullet creased his head during an encounter with three Tojos. The wound was not a serious one, however.

November 13th saw the 44th Squadron Ordnance Section almost go up in flames. During the noon period when the ordnance personnel were at dinner, fire suddenly broke out in the tent where .50 caliber ammunition was stored. An Indian guard, the only one on duty at the time, gave the alarm. Despite the danger of exploding ammunition, every effort was made to extinguish the conflagration, but in the end it became more important to prevent the fire from spreading to near by revetments which held every type of bomb used by the Group. The Base fire fighting squadron assisted in curbing the blaze which resulted in the destruction of one large tent and approximately 10000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Cause of the fire was never determined.

On 19 November, in accordance with Field Order #17, XX Bomber Command, the 40th Group dispatched 30 B-29's to the forward area. All aircraft arrived without incident.

On 21 November, starting at 0130 China time (201830Z), a total of 28 planes were airborne on a mission to the Omura Aircraft Factory on the island of Kyushu, Japan. This was the fourth mission to Omura, the first having been accomplished at night by Lt Col WALTER Y. LUCAS who flew the only 40th Group airplane to reach the target and the second and third having been frustrated to a great extent by very poor weather conditions. Once again the secondary target was to be Shanghai – this time the Krangunn Docks and Engineering Works – and the last resort target, the dock and wharf area at Nanking.

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Takeoffs were hampered by dust and the pilots of the last planes off had only about one-quarter of mile visibility. In addition, dust blown about while running up engines clung to the glass of the nose sections which were wet with condensed moisture, thus decreasing visibility even further. Plans have been made to wet down the runway on future missions and to install a service station at the end of the runway for the purpose of clearing the windows before takeoff.

Of the 28 aircraft airborne on the mission a total of 21 were over the assigned primary target, and 20 of these succeeded in bombing through 6/10 to 9/10 cloud cover. Nineteen planes bombed by radar with unobserved results. Aircraft #579, piloted by Major IRA MATHEWS, was able to find a hole in the clouds and bombed visually accompanied by three planes from the 462nd Group. Bombs from this formation hit just north of the aiming point outside of the target area. This was confirmed by strike photographs.

Enemy fighter interception over Omura varied from nil to strong and a total of 12 destroyed, two probably destroyed and seven damaged were claimed by crews of the 40th.

Antiaircraft fire encountered over the primary target was weak and inaccurate.

A number of air to air bombing attacks were reported but all were ineffective.

Two aircraft were unable to join formations and bombed the secondary target at Shanghai with fair results observed. Only meager fighter opposition was encountered and antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate.

Due to mechanical difficulties, two planes were forced to bomb the last resort target at Nanking with observed results reported as good. No enemy fighter opposition was encountered and antiaircraft fire was reported as meager and inaccurate by one crew and moderate and accurate by the other.

Aircraft #275 (45th Squadron) piloted by Captain JAMES COWDEN, was hit by fighters over Omura. The bombardier, 1st Lt IRA A. REDMAN, was killed and the co-pilot 1st Lt LELAND S. JONES was wounded slightly. This plane was escorted back as far as Liangshan where it straggled, hit the clouds and dropped out of sight. However, #275 continued on and reached the south leg of the approach to the field when a gasoline shortage necessitated bailing out. The entire crew, with the exception, of course, of the bombardier, parachuted to safety and were back at A-1 within a short time.

B-29 #290 (44th Squadron) landed at Ankang, China, to refuel and was almost totally destroyed when a 444th Group airplane crashed into it while attempting to make an emergency landing. The pilot of #290, Major JOSEPH WHITE, was inside of the plane when he saw the 444th airplane heading toward him, and barely managed to get out and away before the crash.

Another 44th Squadron airplane, #394 ("Last Resort"), (photo5) piloted by Major DONALD

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W. ROBERTS, landed at Laohokao, China, on two engines after an almost incredible trip back from the primary target. While on the bomb run the #4 engine propeller dome was pierced by a bullet from an attacking fighter, necessitating feathering that engine. Before the feathering was completed another wave of fighters shot up #1 and #2 engines. Number 2 engine was feathered but #1 was left windmilling because of the urgent need for electrical power. All of the turrets were being used in attempt to keep the fighters away.

Meanwhile the bombs had been released, and, unable to remain in formation with only one engine running, #394 was rapidly losing altitude. As a last resort the fuel shut off valve of #1 engine was again turned on and the throttle advanced very slowly. Though most of the instruments were out of commission it became evident from those still operating, and from the flying characteristics of the airplane, that #1 engine was again producing power.

Having lost 6000 feet of altitude, and with fighter attacks continuing, the plane held altitude on two engines, but with very low air speed. During the 15 minute battle that followed two fighters were destroyed, one probably destroyed and one damaged by the gunners of #394.

For the first two hours and 15 minutes thereafter a power setting of 2400 RPM and 47.5 inches MP were held. At the end of this time the plane was much lighter, having used up a considerable quantity of fuel and all loose equipment having been jettisoned. It was possible, therefore to reduce the power setting to 2400 RPM and 42 inch MP. This setting was held for two hours. From this time until the vicinity of Laohokao, (where an emergency field was located) was reached the power setting was further reduced to 2300 RPM and 39 inches MP.

After seven hours and 40 minutes of two engine operation the plane touched down to a safe landing. During this flight oil pressures and oil temperatures were at no time higher than those encountered during normal operation. No other accomplishment could have better dispersed many of the doubts which crews have felt about the B-29 engines.

The plane was still separated by many miles from the supplies and tools needed to make the necessary repairs before it could be flown out. However, by an unexpected stroke of luck, a propeller dome and parts of a carburetor were obtained from the wreck of a B-29 which had crashed nearby several months before. Repairs were made with the only tools available (the propeller dome was installed with a sledge hammer) under the protective cover of 14th Air Force fighter planes and #394 was flown back to A-1. There it was inspected but no further repairs were made and it was flown back to Chakulia the next day. The engines have since been thoroughly checked and the two that brought #394 back were found to be in perfect condition.

For their accomplishments great credit is due to the entire crew, but especially to Major ROBERTS, the pilot, and Flight Officer ELMO W. GRAY, the Flight Engineer.

The night of 21 November, before the last crew had been completely interrogated, a two

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ball alert was called. This changed quickly to a three ball alert and shortly afterward a few Japanese bombers came over the field. Incendiary clusters were dropped inflicting varying degrees of damage to three B-29's and one C-109, and igniting two stores of gasoline. The gasoline burned brightly with flames leaping 50 to 100 feet into the air as the metal drums burst from the intense heat. The entire field was lighted up to such an extent that grave fears were felt for the B-29's parked on the "doughnuts" around the perimeter strip. Fortunately, however, no more bombs were dropped and the All Clear sounded before the fires had burned themselves out or been completely extinguished.

During the "three ball" period Lt Col JONH SEELEY, Commanding Officer of the 40th Group Forward Detachment, was injured when the jeep in which he was riding to the scene of one of the fires went into a deep ditch. Col SEELEY suffered a severe wrench to one knee which damaged the cartilage, and the driver of the jeep suffered a broken leg.

To the men of the 40th Group the 23rd of November – Thanksgiving – was very much the same as any other day except for the large and varied repasts served in all the mess halls. There was not a great deal to be thankful for this third year of World War II when everyone was half a world away from home and many could not be certain of ever seeing their homes and families again. So work continued with the hope that every small effort would help to shorten the war just that much more.

On 25 November two of the 40th Group tankers, #6241 and #6250 took off from Chakulia Army Air Base for return to Uncle Sugar. The crews were headed by Major PERIER KOENIG (45th Squadron) and Captain W. A. HUNTER (44th Squadron), and were chosen because they had more combat time than any other crews in their respective squadrons.

On 26 November, in accordance with XX Bomber Command Field Order #18, the planes of the 40th once more roared into the air – this time from the rear area – to attack the Bangsue Marshalling Yards at Bangkok, Thailand. Fifteen aircraft were dispatched and of these 13 successfully bombed the primary target.

Bombing was accomplished from 18000 to 19000 feet and Lt JESSE OHR (44th Squadron), who was the lead bombardier, had the satisfaction of seeing his bombs fall directly on the aiming point. Unfortunately "B" and "D" flights were flying wide of "A" and "C" in the center, and their bombs fell outside the target area indicating the necessity for further training in formation flying. Results of the bombing were clearly shown in strike photographs and in the reconnaissance photographs taken by a 40th Group plane piloted by Major ROBERT MOSS (45th Squadron) which was over the target about two hours later. A total of 145 500 lb AN M-64 TNT bombs were dropped at the target.

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Only weak fighter opposition was encountered but the weakness of the loose formation was clearly shown when one lone Zeke in a head on attack flew through the entire formation, inflicting minor damage on four B-29's, and escaping unscathed by return fire.

Antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate. Weather at Bangkok was CAVU.

Thirteen planes returned safely to Chakulia and one proceeded to Chittagong after losing #4 engine.

Leaving the primary target the pilot of aircraft #452 radioed the formation commander that he had wounded personnel aboard due to the fighter attack and that he could not close his bomb bay doors. In the vicinity of Diamond Island enroute back he asked permission to proceed to Chittagong. The formation commander asked if there were any major mechanical difficulties or shortage of gasoline and was assured there were none, that #452 had plenty of gas and that no escort was needed. Permission was given and #452 left the formation. Enroute a radio message was received at Chakulia that #352 was proceeding to Chittagong. This plane was not heard from thereafter, did not arrive at Chittagong and to this date of this writing is still unaccounted for despite extensive searching. Following is a list of the crew, all members of the 45th Squadron.

1 st Lt.	CARL E. BLACKWELL	Pilot
2 nd Lt.	VERN H. HUNNELL	Co-Pilot
1 ST Lt.	WILLIAM H. WEBSTER	Navigator
2 nd Lt.	JOHN G. GETTLER	Bombardier
2 nd Lt.	ROBERT J. FANCHER	Flight Engineer
S/Sgt.	WILLIAM J. GABRIEL	Radio Operator
Sgt.	WILLIAM T. STONE	Radar Operator
Cpl.	CARSON E. COLE	CFC Gunner
Sgt.	BERNARD ROTH	Right Gunner
Sgt.	ROBERT A. McCORMICK	Left Gunner
Sgt.	L.D.E. POWERS	Tail Gunner

On 28 November the Base Service Center at Chakulia was completed (photos 7, 8, 9) and dedicated by Colonel WILLIAM H. BLANCHARD. With the deactivation of the 395th Bombardment Squadron and the 4 Maintenance Squadron, sufficient buildings were available to provide for a Base Service Center. This idea was conceived by the Commanding Officer, Colonel BLANCHARD. His plan called for a large athletic field, including ball diamond, tennis courts, basketball courts and a track as well as for a large open air theater, Social Room, Bar Room, Orientation Room, Reading Room and offices for Special Services and the Red Cross Field Director. This project was started on 25 October under the direction of Captain RICHARD G. CANIER, former CO of the 4th Maintenance Squadron. By means known only to himself and with little assistance other than from the Special Service personnel and countless Indian laborers, Captain CANIER acquired large quantities of fine teak wood furniture, rugs and drapes for the Service Club ("The Bamboo Room"), supervised the painting and decorating of all buildings, and directed the construction

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of an outdoor theater ("The Cactus Bowl"), complete with lighted stage and large enough to seat everyone in the 40th Group, and what is said to be (by an India-Burma Theater Special Service Officer) the finest athletic field on any base in India. He accomplished this tremendous task in 34 days and then, with a job of which he could justly be proud behind him, received his orders and departed shortly afterward for "Shangri La."

During November only combat missions took precedence over training, and ordinarily those crews who were left behind could be found attending ground school. Ground school classes were conducted covering approximately 50 different subjects with particular emphasis on lead crew training and target identification as ordered by General LeMAY. A great deal of work was done in getting the synthetic trainers ready for use the following month. A total of 3451 man hours of ground training was accomplished in November.

Also on 28 November Captain ROBERT GAUGHN and his crew (25th Squadron) left for the States in B-29 tanker #6254 ("Hump Happy Pappy").

A large building was made available for Engineering in November and the electrical and instrument departments for all second and third echelon work were consolidated therein. These departments also received several new types of testing equipment and personnel were trained in their use, the result being better tested and adjusted equipment for installation in the airplanes as well as a marked decrease in the number of parts which formerly had had to be sent to depots away from the field.

During November five replacement B-29's arrived from the States. Total losses for the month amounted to eight planes, all of which have been mentioned above with the exception of #42-6310 which left Chakulia on 30 November for the United States. This plane was flown back by Captain ROBERT COPLEY and his crew (25th Squadron).

Additional improvements were made to the new Base Dispensary (also known as the Health Factory) which had been opened on 1 October. This installation consisting of four connecting buildings arranged in the form of a square has a capacity of 50 beds and facilities for Surgery, Dentistry, X-ray, Laboratory, Supply and Pharmacy. It is located in a grove behind the 44th Squadron area and is operated by Group Medical Personnel. This dispensary evacuates quarters patients from the 40th Group and from the 28th Service Group. Major surgical and medical cases are evacuated to the 98th Station Hospital on the other side of the Base.

Additional awards made to combat crew personnel of the 40th Group are listed in XX Bomber Command General Orders 57 and 58, dated 16 November 1944 and 17 November 1944 respectively. (Incls 2 and 3).

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Also enclosed are photographs of the 40th Bomb Group Enlisted Men's Club (photo 10 and 11), and a photograph of the 40th Bomb Group Headquarters, Officer Quarters and Mess (photo 12).

During November the weather was dry with no precipitation recorded, and the temperature varied from a maximum of 92 degrees on the 3rd to a minimum of 51 degrees on the 30th. The average was 73 degrees

The Group strength at the end of November was 455 Officers and 1902 Enlisted Men. There were no significant changes in the strength of the Group during the month.

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

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS FORWARD ECHELON DETACHMENT
40TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
OFFICE OF THE HISTORICAL OFFICER

APO 210, STATION A-1
12 DECEMBER 1944

DETACHMENT HISTORY 1 NOVEMBER 1944 TO 30 NOVEMBER 1944

DURING THIS MONTH THERE WAS A SLACKENING NOTICED IN THE NUMBER OF MISSIONS FLOWN FROM THIS BASE AND AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF MISSIONS FLOWN FROM INDIA. FROM THIS BASE THERE WERE TWO COMBAT MISSIONS FLOWN BY THE GROUP, AND ONE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE MISSION. THE TWO GROUP MISSIONS WERE FLOWN ON 11 NOVEMBER AND 21 NOVEMBER, RESPECTIVELY, AGAINST THE AIRCRAFT FACTORY AT OMURA, JAPAN AND IN BOTH INSTANCES THERE WERE NIGHT TAKE OFFS. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE MISSION WAS FLOWN ON 23 NOVEMBER BY THE CREW OF CAPTAIN HOWARD L. GERBER OF THE 25TH BOMB SQ. IN B-29 AIRCRAFT 420 TO FORMOSA. IMPORTANT NAVAL SIGHTINGS WERE MADE OF THREE PROBABLE BATTLESHIPS, ONE AIRCRAFT CARRIER AND SEVEN SMALL SHIPS IN SUO HARBOR AND THREE SMALL SHIPS NEAR KARENKO HARBOR.

ON THE NIGHT OF 21 NOVEMBER 1944, THIS FIELD WAS UNDER ENEMY ATTACK AGAIN. THE TWO BALL ALERT WAS CALLED AT 1215Z AND THE THREE BALL AT 1250Z TWO ENEMY BOMBERS DROPPED BOMBS OF THE 1/3 KILO. ANTI-MATERIAL TYPE AT 1345Z AND 1401Z, RESPECTIVELY FROM ABOUT 2500 - 4,000 FT. ALTITUDE AND FROM THE SOUTH. B-29'S #503, #303, AND #574 OF THE GROUP RECEIVED MAJOR DAMAGE FROM SUCH BOMBS. #503, AS A RESULT, NEEDED A NEW LEADING EDGE ON THE RIGHT WING, PATCHING ON THE RIGHT HORIZONTAL STABILIZER AND MAJOR REPAIRS TO NO. 4 ENGINE NACELLE. #303 RECEIVED A DIRECT HIT BETWEEN THE FRONT AND REAR BOMBS WHICH WRECKED THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM AND ALSO RECEIVED DIRECT HITS IN THE CO-PILOTS COCKPIT AND BETWEEN NO. 3 AND NO. 4 ENGINES. #574 RECEIVED HOLES IN THE FUSELAGE AND DAMAGE TO THE LEFT WING. A NUMBER OF GASOLINE DRUMS AND AN UNLOADING PLATFORM IN THE SW CORNER OF THE FIELD AND A NUMBER OF GASOLINE DRUMS IN THE NE CORNER OF THE FIELD WERE FIRED AND A C-109 WAS DAMAGED BY BOMB HITS ON THE RIGHT WING AND STABILIZER. A US ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY JUST RECENTLY TRANSFERRED FROM BURMA TO THIS FIELD HAD ARRIVED A FEW DAYS BEFORE AND ALTHOUGH NOT COMPLETELY SET UP, FIRED A FEW ROUNDS FROM THEIR 40 MM GUNS AT THE ENEMY RAIDERS BUT WITH NO EFFECT. P-61 NIGHT FIGHTERS WERE ACTIVE OVER THE FIELD AND REPORTED SHOOTING DOWN A JAP BOMBER 18 MILES NW OF A-2 AT 1337Z. THE ALL CLEAR CAME AT 1500Z. FIGHTER CONTROL REPORTS THAT THE RAID WAS STAGED OUT OF KANKOW AROUND 0930Z.

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DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE MONTH CAPTAIN JAMES C. MCALLISTER, ORDNANCE OFFICER, WAS RELEASED FROM ASSIGNMENT WITH THE DETACHMENT AND WAS SUCCEEDED BY 1ST LT. GERALD S. OESTREICHER, WHO ALSO TOOK OVER TRANSPORTATION. DURING THE ENTIRE MONTH A CAMPAIGN WAS WAGED FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THE GROUP VEHICLES WHICH WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL. A MOTOR POOL AND REPAIR SHOP WERE SET UP IN THE DETACHMENT HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AND CAPTAIN MCALLISTER AND LT. OESTREICHER SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS. THE DETACHMENT VEHICLES CONSIST OF 14 JEEPS, 7 WEAPONS CARRIERS AND 7 6X6 2 ½ TON TRUCKS OF WHICH 3 JEEPS ARE ON MEMORANDUM RECEIPT TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER, SECTION NO. 2 CASAC, AND 2 ON MEMORANDUM RECEIPT TO THE BASE COMMANDER OF STATION A-1 AND ONE 6X6 2 ½ TON TRUCK ON MEMORANDUM RECEIPT TO 1980TH QM TRUCK BASE COMMANDER, STATION A-L.

ALSO DURING THE MONTH A RADAR SHOP WAS SET UP AND WORK STARTED ON SETTING UP A G.C.I. STATION UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF 1ST LT. LANGDON C. HEDRICK, RADAR OFFICER OF THE 25TH BOMB. SQ. WHO WAS TRANSFERRED ON TD TO THE DETACHMENT TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH WORK.

THE ONLY SERIOUS CASUALTY OF THE DETACHMENT OF THE JAPANESE BOMBING RAID OF 21 NOVEMBER 1944, WAS THE DETACHMENT COMMANDING OFFICER, LT. COL. JOHN M. SEELEY, WHO SUFFERED A RUPTURED INTERNAL LATERAL LIGAMENT OF THE LEFT KNEE IN A JEEP ACCIDENT DURING THE RAID. COL SEELEY, AND 1ST LT. C. M. NELSON, THE ASST. ENGINEERING OFFICER, WHO RECEIVED MINOR ABRASIONS OF BOTH LEGS, WERE PASSENGERS IN A JEEP DRIVEN BY 1ST LT. SAMUEL B. JERVIS, BASE EX. OFFICER, WHO WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED, AND WERE DRIVING TO THE GASOLINE DRUM FIRE IN THE SW CORNER OF THE FIELD WHEN THE JEEP SUDDENLY PLUNGED INTO A DEEP DITCH. LT. COL. SEELEY WAS TAKEN TO THE DISPENSARY WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL 28 NOVEMBER 1944 AT WHICH TIME HE RETURNED TO DUTY ON CRUTCHES. LT. COL. SEELEY HAD BEEN PROMOTED TO THAT RANK FROM MAJOR BY PAR. 1, SO #209, HQ. XX BOMBER COMMAND, DATED 16 NOVEMBER 1944, AND EFFECTIVE AS OF THAT DATE.

THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTION DURING THE MONTH SET UP A TEMPCO TRANSMITTER FOR USE IN THE AIR – GROUND STATION AND ALSO RECEIVED AND SET UP VARIOUS TESTING EQUIPMENT.

NOVEMBER WAS A MUCH MORE PLEASANT MONTH AS FAR AS THE WEATHER WAS CONCERNED IN COMPARISON WITH OCTOBER AS THE RAINFALL SHARPLY DECREASED. THE MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE WAS REACHED ON THE 19TH AND 26TH, WITH 69 DEG. F. AND THE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE OF 41 DEG. F. ON THE 21TH. THE RAINFALL FOR THE MONTH WAS 0.13 INCHES AND FOR TWENTY FOUR DAYS WE HAD A CLOUD COVERAGE OF MORE THAN

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6/10 FOR 12 OR MORE HOURS. HEATING OF BARRACKS AND QUARTERS STILL REMAINED A MAJOR PROBLEM.

ON 1 NOVEMBER 1944, THE DETACHMENT HAD 167 EM AND 13 OFFICERS AND ON THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH 150 EM AND 12 OFFICERS.

**BRUCE L. MILLER
1ST LT., AIR CORPS
HISTORICAL OFFICER**

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