

(Retyped from microfilm by Mona Keehn)

S E C R E T

FORTY FOURTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
Office of the Historical Officer  
APO 361

18 January 1945

SQUADRON HISTORY

1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944

December, a month of brotherly love, snow, gifts, good meals and parties to those back in the States meant nothing more than a continuation of constant bombings against the Jap to the men who spent their time in India and China during this Christmas month. The thought was to break the back of the sneaking Jap so that future Christmas seasons might be spent at home peacefully imbibing Tom and Gerrys.

Action against the nip commenced 7 December just three years after the sneak attack against Pearl Harbor. It was not originally planned that the first attack in December should fall on that day of "infamy" but the weather which always plays a prominent part in operations got its way again this time and the mission was postponed three times.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group planes were dispatched on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, in accordance with the Bomber Command Field Order dated 5 December. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December a total of 27 superforts were at Hsinching.

This mission was originally planned as a strike against the aircraft plant at Omura on Kyushu Island, Japan. This was in accordance with the apparent policy of the Bomber Command to strike at the Japanese Airforce by crippling the Jap Aircraft industry. The procedure was the same as used by the 8<sup>th</sup> Airforce against Germany in their successful destruction of the Luftwaffe by first smashing centers of production. Three previous missions to Omura in October and November had leveled the aircraft plant somewhat and it was thought that a finishing blow would be dealt if the 29's could get over the target just one in clear weather. However, this this was not to be the time for three times the mission to Omura was postponed due to a forecast of bad weather over the target and finally on the evening of 6 December it was decided by the Commanding General of the Bomber Command to shift the primary target to the Mukden Aircraft plant in Manchuria.

The Mukden Plant had not previously been bombed, though on 3 other occasions the superforts had visited Anshan, which is just a few miles south of the great city of Mukden. Mukden is one of six

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major industrial centers and is the site of end-product manufacturing plants , arsenal, machinery, rolling stock and aircraft assembly. On this mission the command was interested solely in the latter.

By the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> a total of 29 aircraft were at Hsinching ready for the mission.

Starting at 1930Z on the 6<sup>th</sup> a total of 27 aircraft were airborne, the last aircraft taking off at 2025Z. Two aircraft were ground aborts due to mechanical difficulties encountered on the final run-up. One of these was #319, piloted by Captain Raymond Moore, which developed a rough engine prior to takeoff.

Of the 27 aircraft airborne from the 40<sup>th</sup> Group, 23 aircraft bombed the primary target, eight of the 23 over the primary were 44<sup>th</sup> planes.

The first formations consisted of 12 aircraft from the 40<sup>th</sup> and one each from the 468<sup>th</sup> and 462d groups bombed from approximately 22,000 feet with good observed results which were confirmed by strike photos. The center of the bomb pattern was somewhat to the right of the aiming point but considerable damage was inflicted. The remaining 11 aircraft, 8 of which were from the squadron arrived over the primary target approximately twenty minutes after the first formation. By the time a heavy smoke screen which had been started earlier by the enemy quickly and effectively blanked the target area including the arsenal and the airfield. This screen over the target forced the bombardier of the lead aircraft, Lt. Jesse Ohr, to use an offset aiming point which reduced the accuracy of the bombing. This plus the fact that at least one aircraft had an accidental release caused most of the bombs from this formation to fall in the Railroad yards considerably south of the target area.

Extremely cold temperatures caused frosting on the inside of the glass nose, and this necessitated depressurization. Consequent low temperatures in the planes resulted in suffering and loss of efficiency on the part of crew members. Bombardiers repeatedly scraped off the frost but to no avail as the glass would frost up again. As a result, bombardiers could not use the forward gun sight or clearly see the other aircraft in the formation and this no doubt was a contributing factor in salvoing the bombs short of the target.

Enemy air opposition over the target was moderate. The first formation found enemy fighters waiting for them over Anshan. Apparently the Jap had been fooled into thinking the target was to be the Showa Steel works again. However when it became apparent

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that the superforts were proceeding to Mukden the enemy followed immediately and were in position over Mukden for the latter formations. Most attacks were not closely pressed home; however, #306 received battle damage inflicted by four bullets from enemy aircraft. One hit the rudder trim tab; one entered the top of the tunnel; one hit the lower side of the #4 engine cowl going through the inter connector exhaust between the front and rear collector rings; the fourth entered #4 nacelle just above the wing and forward of the rear side of the oil tank and probably lodged in the oil cell.

Aircraft 322 also suffered some battle damage but the extent is not known in that it landed in Ankaang.

The ice in the nose of the planes made the B-29's vulnerable to frontal attacks by fighters. Luckily the Japs did not realize our crews could not see them from the front and so did not make many attacks from that quarter. There were no surprise attacks achieved by Nip fighters due to the fact that definite vapor trails revealed the position of all Jap fighters in the vicinity. Even those who attempted to attack from the sun were spotted.

Claims of enemy aircraft for the group were three destroyed, one probably destroyed and six damaged. Of these the Squadron laid claim to two destroyed, 1 probably destroyed and three damaged. As of this writing the claims as yet have not been confirmed.

Anti-aircraft over the primary target was meager and inaccurate. Weather over the primary target was CAVU with visibility 30 miles.

Three of the squadron's aircraft ran into trouble. #306 jettisoned its bombs in the Bay of Liaotung due to engine trouble and then returned to base via Hsian. #322 received battle damage and Captain Bob Tisserat landed at Ankaang with #2 and #3 engines out.

Aircraft 363 flown by Captain George Varoff had one engine shot out by a fighter over the Primary target. The pilot was un- to feather #1 and it continued to windmill. The formation Commander immediately assigned aircraft #729 and #276 to escort the crippled bomber back to the China base. The two planes dropped back to escort #363 in. Everything seemed to be progressing satisfactorily until 0553Z at which time #729 reported at #363 lowered its wheels and opened bomb bay doors. The altitude of the planes at this time was 14,000 feet and the terrain below was rugged and mountainous with steep river gorges and sheer cliffs. Capt. Varoff called Major Wemple in #729 and in a calm and unruffled matter of fact voice stated that #1 prop was getting ready to fly off and that they were abandoning the plane.

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Crew members of #729 saw what was described by Captain Bob Swanson as a "heart-breaking scene", when they observed #1 prop fly off #363 and watched the crew bail out. Eleven Chutes were seen to open, but the observers reported watching the chute of one man collapse when the strong wind blew the man against a sheer cliff. #363 was observed to crash into a mountain and explode. Bailout occurred at 0555Z at position 36°30'N - 113°00'E. As of this writing, it is known that 10 men of the crew are in the hands of Chinese Communists who are making every effort to get the men home safely. No doubt they will succeed.

Planes and crews participating in the strike were:

#363  
 Varoff, G. D, Capt  
 Hamil, L. Y(?), Lt  
 Szafranski, G, Lt  
 Bush, C. A, Lt  
 Ingham, J. B, Lt  
 Broussard, F. L, Sgt  
 Wood, W. F, Sgt  
 Teter, R. L, G/Sgt  
 Quinlan, J, T/Sgt

#541  
 Lowry, C. E, Capt  
 Burrows, J. C, Lt  
 Lacko, A. L, Lt  
 Wotipka, B. S, Lt  
 Bailey, J. A, Lt  
 Haase, A. W, S/Sgt  
 Larson, R. V, S/Sgt  
 Barton, J, S/Sgt  
 Penn, I. JR, S/Sgt  
 Grof, D. W, S/Sgt  
 Knight, C. S/Sgt

#348  
 Howard, F. R, Capt  
 Decker, T. S, Lt  
 Teplick, N, Lt  
 Harrison, K(?). S, Lt  
 Hunt, A. W, Lt  
 Racilla, J. V, S/Sgt  
 Gulley, H. W, Sgt  
 Swan, H, S/Sgt  
 Hayes, J. P, S/Sgt  
 Burgess, W. J, S/Sgt  
 Staude, H. A, S/Sgt

#587  
 McWilliams, J. Major  
 Farrell, H. Lt  
 Stearns, W. Lt  
 McKinney, F. Lt  
 Cox, J. F/O  
 Albers, F. Lt  
 Underhill, S. S/Sgt  
 Slapak, C. S/Sgt  
 Hunt, J. T/Sgt  
 Lemos, L. S/Sgt  
 Spack, H. T/Sgt

#394  
 Roberts, D. Major  
 Harvell, J. Lt  
 Dickerson, H. Lt  
 Ford, R. Lt  
 Phalon, J. Lt  
 Anderson, H. S/Sgt  
 Geisler, R. S/Sgt  
 Smith, I. S/Sgt  
 Kinzer, B. S/Sgt  
 Sullivan, C. S/Sgt  
 Mueller, J. S/Sgt

#582  
 Eigenmann, J. Major  
 White, J. Major  
 Angott, D. Lt  
 Janasak, F. Lt  
 Ohr, J. Lt  
 Knezevich, M. Lt  
 Disbennett, M. S/Sgt  
 Sill (Hill?) S. T/Sgt  
 Jensen, J. S/Sgt  
 Lagoy (Glagoy?), D. S/Sgt  
 Reed, L. S/Sgt

#729  
 Wemple, N. Major  
 Punnett, D. Lt  
 Swanson, R. Capt  
 McIntyre, B. Lt  
 Greenberg, E. Lt  
 Siland, J. Lt  
 Beck, A. S/Sgt  
 Pawluk, A. T/Sgt  
 Westberg, C. T/Sgt

#306  
 Gray, C. Capt  
 Dannan, J. Lt  
 Dunsmore, J. Lt  
 Bernstrom, C. Lt  
 Woodruff, O. F/O  
 Moulton, L. S/Sgt  
 Topolski, J. T/Sgt  
 Cannon, W. S/Sgt  
 Helling, A. Sgt

#297  
 Harte, R. Captain  
 Haddow, J. Lt  
 Johnson, E. Lt  
 Appignani, G. Lt  
 Tasch, F. Lt  
 Vlazovic, A. Lt  
 Gisburne, E. S/Sgt  
 Young, M. S/Sgt  
 Matulis, A. S/Sgt

#729  
Houghton, B. T/Sgt  
Price, G. T/Sgt

#306  
Bosely, J. S/Sgt  
Urbanic, A. T/Sgt

#297  
Johnson, D. S/Sgt  
Hurlbert, R. S/Sgt

#322  
Tisserat, R. Captain  
Covey, R. Lt  
Henry, R. Lt  
Lossing, E. Lt  
Landau, S. F/O  
Hoops, E. S/Sgt  
Frederick, T. S/Sgt  
Sandrick, L. T/Sgt  
Banas, L. Sgt  
VonGonten, J. S/Sgt  
Reichart, A. S/Sgt

All planes except #363 and #322 returned to Chakulia within the next two days.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of December word was received that a mission was to be run to Bangkok, Thailand, to bomb the Rama Railroad bridge in accordance with Field Order 20, XX Bomber Command, dated 12 December 1944.

On the early morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 12 aircraft from the Group were airborne for this mission. The weather was beautiful and the smooth humming engines sang the tune of a good mission. Disaster was to strike this formation but even the most farsighted could not have foreseen the catastrophe that was to strike later in the morning.

Eleven of the 12 planes proceeded as briefed to the primary target. The 12 plane was forced to bomb the target of last resort due to engine trouble.

Upon arriving over Bangkok the eleven planes found that cloud cover obscured the target to such an extent that it was impossible to bomb visually. This was considered unfortunate at the time as enemy fighters were nil and there were no anti-aircraft thrown up. In an effort to drop visually at Bangkok two bombing runs were made at leisure over the area. Since it was impossible to bomb visually it was decided to fly to Rangoon, the secondary target. One should not get a mistaken notion from the ????? secondary for Rangoon was not secondary by any means from the point of view of defense. Outside of Yawata on Japan proper, Rangoon probably has a greater concentration of anti-aircraft gun than any other Jap target. The flyers themselves apparently had a feeling of foreboding for as they turned toward Xaingthaung Island, ??? ??????

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the initial point for Rangoon, the formation tightened up consider-

ably and so did the men. The aiming point was the Central Railroad Station and yards.

An Excellent bombing run was made in weather that was "ceiling and visibility unlimited", at 20,000 feet and in the words of Lt. Col. Cornett, who was formation commander, "the formation was entirely satisfactory". To the men who knew the standards Col. Cornett set, this meant Perfect.

"Bombs away" was at approximately 0444Z. A few seconds thereafter there was a tremendous explosion and where just a moment before there had been a beautiful formation, there were now eleven planes strewn over the sky. One plane that had been a proud superfortress a few seconds before was on its back hurling earthward, a mass of flame. No one was seen to get out. Three other planes received mortal wounds and were not heard from soon after the remaining planes left the scene. Captain Shenks of the 45<sup>th</sup> Squadron was badly damaged, but at the insistence of the formation commander he kept flying away from the target until he was about 100 miles west of the target area. At that time he called the formation commander and stated that he could not go on and was bailing out. As a result of the explosion a total of four planes from the group failed to return from the mission. All eleven planes were riddled with holes. Only two of the eleven were able to return directly to Chakulia. Four others were forced to land at Chittagong due to damage sustained and one aircraft landed at Cox's Bazar.

As a result of the explosion most crew members were dazed and were not at all sure what had actually happened. The exact cause of the explosion remains a mystery but several theories were advanced. Some crew members thought it was a result of a tremendous barrage of flak, another theory advanced and one that seems to be accerted by the majority of persons, was that it was caused by one or more of our own bombs exploding in mid-air. The mid-air explosion could have been caused by the bombs colliding just after release, or by a lucky flak hit on the bombs.

The reports on AA at Rangoon vary considerably. Some crews described it as moderate and accurate and other as meager and inaccurate.

Fortunately for everyone concerned there was an entire lack of enemy fighters over the target.

Of the 44<sup>th</sup> planes flying the mission #587 flown by Major J. W. McWilliams and #729 flown by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. G. S. Gaston landed at Chittagong. Aircraft # 685 flown by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. M. N. Clark landed at

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Chakulia with a wounded radar operator, Sgt G. W. Miller, aboard

The latter had been hit in the leg by a piece of shrapnel.

Bombing results were excellent as borne out by strike photos.

Battle damage sustained by #729 were five holes; by #685 32 hits; by #587 14 hits, but all three planes returned safely to base.

The following crews participated:

<u>#729</u>	<u>#685</u>	<u>#587</u>
Gaston, G. Lt	Clark, M. Lt	McWilliams, J. Major
Cornett, J. Lt. Col.	White, J. Major	Farrell, M. Lt
Brush, R. Lt	Montgomery, M. Lt	Stearns, W. Lt
Kintis, W. Lt	Donohue, O. Lt	McKinney, F. Lt
Arrington, R. F/O	Gray, E. F/O	Cox, J. F/O
Laube, S. S/Sgt	Haynes, R. T/Sgt	Underhill, F. S/Sgt
Reichart, A. S/Sgt	Miller, G. Sgt	Albers, F. Lt
Hockel, A. S/Sgt	Rogers, E. Sgt	Slapak, C. S/Sgt
Sandrick, L. T/Sgt	Douglas, W. Cpl	Hunt, J. T/Sgt
Denney, A. S/Sgt	Rutledge, F. S/Sgt	Lemos, L. S/Sgt
Carney, J. Sgt	Robertson, E. T/Sgt	McCann, H. T/Sgt

Commencing on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, the 44<sup>th</sup> Squadron participated in a novel series of missions. For the first time since its inception the XX Bomber Command attempted and successfully carried out three missions within a period of four days. The first on December 18<sup>th</sup> to Hankow, China; the 2d on December 19<sup>th</sup> to Omura, Japan and the third on December 21<sup>st</sup> to Mukden, Manchuria. This was a real test of the endurance of men and machines and both came through admirably. It was a test also for the medical men; a test to see whether they could keep the combat crews during succeeding missions and put them to sleep when they weren't flying. Captain "Doc" Anderson deserves a lot of credit for keeping the men in perfect condition so that some of them were able to fly 3 missions in 4 days.

Hankow has long been a thorn in the side of the XX Bomber Command and the 14<sup>th</sup> Airforce for it was from Hankow that enemy planes started their missions when bombing XXth bases and 14<sup>th</sup> AF bases in Western China. There was a gleam in the eyes of every man when it was disclosed at the briefing that the first of this "Triple Play" was aimed at knocking out Hankow. This was a tactical mission, one that would relieve pressure on our own forces and the effect of which would be felt by the enemy at once. It was also a combined mission with the 14<sup>th</sup> Airforce. They supplied B-51's and B-25's to work over the airfields in the area and

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and the XX Bomber Command supplied the superforts to bring destruction to the wharf and warehouse area.

Starting at 2339Z on the 17<sup>th</sup> a total of 16 aircraft were airborne to attack the target at Hankow. Seven of these 16 were 44<sup>th</sup> planes.

A total of 15 aircraft from the group bombed the assigned primary target from 19,000 feet with a total of 1652, M-47 and 39 M-76 type bombs. Weather over the target was CAVU but a 75 knot headwind was encountered at altitude. It was found that the M-47 type bombs were subject to very wide dispersion but approximately 75 were reported to hit in the target area. About 255 landed in the river and on the east bank. Excellent results were achieved.

Anti-aircraft fire was meager and inaccurate and fighter opposition was weak.

Aircraft #297, flown by Captain Howard, had a rack malfunction and only 15 bombs would release on the primary target. Howard proceeded to the target of last resort in an attempt to drop his bombs there, but the malfunction continued and after three separate attempts it was found necessary to jettison the bombs.

All aircraft returned safely to base.

Planes and crews that participated follows:

<u>#729</u>	<u>#319</u>	<u>#297</u>
Wemple, N. Major	Lyons, J. Captain	Howard, W. Captain
Thomas, L. Lt	Punnett, D. Lt	Decker, J. Lt
Lober, G. Lt	Brower, G. Lt	Teplick, N. Lt
Barg, R. Lt	O'Brien, E. Lt	Harrison, N. Lt
Bresnek, M. T/Sgt	Throp, K. Lt	Hunt, A. Lt
Glennon, J. S/Sgt	Dimock, J. Sgt	Racille, J. S/Sgt
Kinzer, B. S/Sgt	Jorgenson, R. S/Sgt	Gulley, H. Sgt
Gregorio, V. S/Sgt	Cyr, H. S/Sgt	Swan, H. S/Sgt
Lavallee, R. S/Sgt	Hodgdon, K. S/Sgt	Hayes, J. S/Sgt
Wangler, G. S/Sgt	Moffit, J. Pvt	Rutledge, F. S/Sgt
	Smola, M. T. Sgt	Staude, H. S/Sgt
<u>#348</u>	<u>#752</u>	<u>#620</u>
Moore, R. Captain	Tisserat, R. Captain	McWilliams, J. Major
Papson, A. Capt	Reger, R. Lt	Farrell, M. Lt
Franklin, J. Lt	Watson, J. Lt	Stearns, W. Lt
Lee, H. Lt	Smith, W. Lt	McKinney, F. Lt
Deiser, E. Lt	Bradley, C. F/O	Cox, F. F/O
Frederick, T. S/Sgt	Carrigan, A. S/Sgt	Albers, F. Lt
(Illegible) S/Sgt	McGehee, L. S/Sgt	??all, E.. Lt
(Illegible) T/Sgt	Breman, P. S/Sgt	Brooks, K. T/SGt
(Illegible) S/Sgt	Cohen, J. S/Sgt	Slapak, C. S/Sgt

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<u>#348</u>	<u>#752</u>	<u>#620</u>
Stilson, F. Sgt	Bicknell, J. S/Sgt	Hunt, J. T/Sgt
Swires, H. T/Sgt	Hofmann, P. T/Sgt	Lemos, L. S/Sgt



#541

Lowry, G. Captain  
Burrows, W. Lt  
Lacko, Lt  
Wotipka, B. Lt  
Bailey, J. Lt  
Haase, A. S/Sgt  
Larson, R. S/Sgt  
Barton, J. S/Sgt  
Penn, I. S/Sgt  
Grof, D. S/Sgt  
Knight, C. S/Sgt

The following day, 19 December, 13 aircraft were dispatched in accordance with field order #22, XX Bomber Command, to attack the Omura Aircraft Factory at Omura, Japan.

Starting at 1930 on the 18<sup>th</sup> a total of 12 aircraft were airborne. One aircraft was a ground abort, due to mechanical difficulties. This was plane #394, whose instruments failed prior to take-off.

A total of eight aircraft succeeded in reaching the primary target in formation and bombed by radar from 22,000 feet. Weather was 10/10 undercast and no visual observation of bombing results was possible. Antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate and only fighter opposition was encountered.

Aircraft #752, flown by Captain Robert Tisserat, was delayed in take-off due to mechanical difficulties and flew directly to the assembly point was unable to join any formation. He then proceeded to bomb the secondary target, Shanghai, from 22,000 feet visually with good observed results. No antiaircraft fire or fighter opposition was encountered.

Aircraft #582, flown by Captain Graham L. Bleiler, was forced to turn from its course to Japan due to mechanical difficulties and proceeded to Nanking, the target of last resort. Bombing there was accomplished visually from 20,000 feet with good observed results. No antiaircraft fire or fighter opposition was encountered.

The following crews and planes took part:

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#541

Lowry, G. Captain  
Burrows, W. Lt  
Lacko, Lt

#729

Wemple, N. Major  
Thomas, L. Lt  
Lober, G. Lt

Wotipka, B. Lt	Lantz, R. Lt
Bailey, J. Lt	Barg, R. Lt
Haase, A. S/Sgt	Bresnok, M. T/Sgt.
Larson, R. S/Sgt	Glennon, J. S/Sgt
Barton, J. S/Sgt	Kinzer, B. S/Sgt
Penn, I. S/Sgt	Gregorio, J. S/Sgt
Knight, C. S/Sgt	LaVallee, R. S/Sgt
Grof, D. S/Sgt	Wangler, G. S/Sgt

#582	#752
Bleiler, G. Captain	Tisserat, R. Captain
Winegar, G. Lt	Reger, R. Lt
Finlay, S. Lt	Watson, J. Lt
Ranson, C. Lt	Smith, W. Lt
Driesbaugh, R. Lt	Bradley, C. F/O
Dybell, J. Sgt	Carrigan, A. S/Sgt
Coleman, N. S/Sgt	McGehee, I. S/Sgt
Holley, V. S/Sgt	Bremen, P. S/Sgt
Glassman, R. Sgt	Cohen, J. S/Sgt
Niehaus, W. S/Sgt	Bicknell, J. S/Sgt
Davis, B. T/Sgt	Hoffman, P. T/Sgt

That night Captain Lyons in #319 and Captain Moore in #348 took off when a two ball alert sounded about 2000 CST.

A few minutes after take-off #319 was over A-1 with landing lights on heading for A-7. He landed there because of engine trouble.

Captain Howard was ready to take off in #297 when he gave the to "Put - Put Put in Run". The enlisted men misunderstood it to be "Cut the Put-Put and run". They did just that - #297 never did get off.

Bombing by enemy aircraft was a feeble effort and only very slight damage was done to the runway.

The last of the "Triple Header" commenced on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December when 13 B-29's were dispatched for an attack on Manchuria.

Twelve aircraft were airborne to attack the Manchuria Airplane manufacturing Co. at Mukden. Plane 582 was a ground abort due to excessive mag drops on the two engines.

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Ten aircraft were over the assigned primary target and dropped a total of 145 - 500lb bombs from 22,000 feet. At the primary target, most of the arsenal on the west, and the greater part of the airfield on the south were completely obscured by a very effective smokescreen. So that despite CAVU weather it was necess-

ary to resort to offset bombing. Visual bombing was limited to seeing the bombs enter the smokescreen and then seeing fires in the target area after turning off the bombing run.

Fighter opposition was probably the heaviest every encountered by a B-29 formation. The formation was under almost constant attack from the initial point into the target and all the way out of the target area. Practically every type of Jap fighter was encountered ranging from the most obsolete to the most modern. Several instances of near ramming were reported. It is not known whether this tactic was intentional or whether it was simply a result of eagerness on the part of the enemy pilots. Attacks on most of the planes were from the frontal quarter and in most instances were well coordinated.

Antiaircraft fire was generally meager, ranging from accurate to inaccurate and air to air bombing was attempted by the enemy.

Captain Tisserat's aircraft #752 received separate attacks from fighter and destroyed one and damaged another.

Major Donald Roberts' plane, #394, was attacked seven times by enemy fighters and gunners succeeded in destroying three enemy aircraft and damaging a fourth. Aircraft #541, flown by Captain Howard, was attacked four times by enemy fighters. Plane #620, with Major McWilliams at the wheel, has the doubtful distinction of being rammed by an enemy fighter and then getting back safely to base. #620 was attacked on five separate occasions and succeeded in damaging four out of the five. The ramming incident occurred when two Tojo's made a coordinated attack coming in level from eleven and one o'clock respectively. One Tojo peeled off and the other's propeller clipped the left wing of #620 and caused it to split.

Plane #729, flown by Major Neil Wemple, was attacked four times and damaged one Nick.

All planes from the squadron returned safely and upon their return crews stated that this was their worst mission insofar as enemy opposition was concerned since their eventful trip to Yawata on 20 August.

Planes and crews participating in this last mission of the month were:

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<u>#729</u>	<u>#620</u>	<u>#752</u>
Wemple, N. Major	McWilliams, J. Major	Tisserat, R. Captain
Thomas, L. Lt	Ferrell, M. Lt	Reger, R. Lt
Lober, G. Lt	Stearns, W. Lt	Watson, J. Lt
Lantz, R. Lt	McKinney, F. Lt	Smith, W. Lt

Barg, R. Lt	Cox, F. F/O	Bradley, C. F/O
Bresnek, M. T/Sgt	Albers, F. Lt	Carrigan, A. S/Sgt
Glennon, J. S/Sgt	Kinzer, B. S/Sgt	McGehee, L. S/Sgt
Lester Lt	Brooks, K. T/SGt	Breman, P. S/Sgt
Gregorio, V. S/Sgt	Slapak, C. S/Sgt	Cohen, J. S/Sgt
Lavallee, R. S/Sgt	Lemos, L. S/Sgt	Bicknell, J. S/Sgt
Wangler, G. S/Sgt	Hunt, J. T/Sgt	Hoffman, P. T/Sgt
	McCann, H. T/Sgt	

#541

Howard, W. Captain  
 Decker, J. Lt  
 Teplick, N. Lt  
 Harrison, N. Lt  
 Hunt, A. Lt  
 Racille, J. S/Sgt  
 Gulley, H. Sgt  
 Swan, H. S/Sgt  
 Hayes, J. S/Sgt  
 Rutledge, F. S/Sgt  
 Staude, H. S/Sgt

#394

Roberts, D. Major  
 Harvell, J. Lt  
 Ford, R. Lt  
 Dickerson, H. Lt  
 Phalon, J. Lt  
 Anderson H. S/Sgt  
 Geisler, R. S/Sgt  
 Smith, I. S/Sgt  
 VanOrmer, D. T/Sgt  
 Sullivan, C. S/Sgt  
 Mueller, J. S/Sgt

Apparently the last mission was timed so that the men could return to India in time for Christmas. The Christmas season in was different for most of the men than any they had ever experienced. The thing they missed most was the home atmosphere. Then also, there was no snow and no Christmas trees. But there was no dearth of presents or gayety. For five straight days the mail room was filled with packages from the states. The powers that be did a wonderful job of getting the presents overseas.

There was an abundant supply of Spiritus Frumenti for all. The enlisted men imbibed theirs at the "Bamboo Room" and the Officers retired to the Officers Club.

Many men took advantage of the church services that were offered by all denominations

Christmas day everyone had a headache and took it comparatively easy. That evening the Red Cross repeated a show it had shown the night before. The amphitheatre was jammed. Suddenly two bursts of AA was heard and the siren wailed. Incredulous as

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it seemed at the time - that was the signal for a yellow alert - the amphitheatre cleared in an instant and the crowd disappeared to the fox holes. A half hour later three bursts of AA indicated that a red alert was in effect - the Jap airplanes were only about 60 miles away. For 24 hours the men waited in the fox

holes for something to drop from the sky - nothing did. Some were relieved - some were disappointed - all finally went to sleep - Christmas night had been spent in a foxhole.

HEALTH

The health of the squadron for the month of December has generally been good though there have been more quarters cases than usual. Colds have increased due to chilly nights and athletes foot has become prominent. The one battle casualty for the month was Sgt. G. W. Miller whose leg was fractured by a shrapnel wound received over Rangoon.

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TRAINING</u> <u>HOURS</u>	<u>???YER</u>
Bombardiers ?ele?sce		153
Formation Flying	49:05	
Instrument Flying	52:50	
Night Flying	36:20	
Instruments Take-offs		105
Long Range Navigation Missions		52
Practice Bombs Dropped		487

Lead crews went on practice missions to Holiday Island on an average of every other day. Other crews were sent whenever additional airplanes were available. Captain Papson's crew entered the squadron during the month as a replacement crew and was given considerable air and ground training during the process of being checked out as a No. 1 combat crew.

Total man hours of ground school training approximated 1,000 hours and included classes of various phases of communications for all crew members, target, aircraft, and naval recognition, radar bombsight procedure, tactical training, deed recording training for radar operators, subjects related to intelligence and miscellaneous training files. In addition an ????????????? of systematic training was carried on. This A-3 bomb training ???, and primary trainer were in operation throughout ?????? ???. The ??? the later part of the month the (the rest of this entry is illegible)

(The next entry is illegible. It is a title and a sentence about the squadron)

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On 2 December, 11 enlisted men were assigned to the replacement center at Camp Angus; 24 enlisted men were promoted temporary sergeants.

On 7 December, the following men were placed from duty to missing in action: Captain George D. Varoff, Lt Curtis A. Bush,

Lt. James S. Hamil, Lt. John S. Ingham, Lt. George Szafranski, T/Sgt John F. Quinlan, /Sgt Frank L. Broussard, /Sgt Roy I. Teter, S/Sgt Charles N. Graham, and Sgt William W. Wood.

On 11 December, Captain Andrew C. Papson, Lt. Martin J. Long, Lt. Delbert W. Murphy, Lt. Aldolph C. Katzback, Pfc. Hershell Till, Cpl. Ralph W. Allen, Sgt. Patsy Catino, and Cpl. Daniel S. O'Quinn were assigned to the 44<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

On 16 December, Major Joseph D. White, former operations officer of the squadron was released from assignment and was assigned to Headquarters 70<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. Lt. Russell E. Buell assigned and joined the squadron.

On 17 December, Captain Everett O. Berry left the squadron to return to 7777 Sugar Able.

On 28 December, S/Sgt Ned Plessant was transferred to group and S/Sgt Bradfield was transferred to the 44<sup>th</sup> medics.

On 29 December, Lt's Barnes and Gottlieb, squadron adjutant and Intelligence officer respectively, were transferred to 7777tain for S. O. 1, 20<sup>th</sup> AF, dated 25 December 1944.

Squadron strength on 31 December:

521 Enlisted men

122 Officers

(signed)  
IRVING L. GOTTLEIB.  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Historical Officer

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