

FORTY FOURTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Historical Officer

CJB/hmb

AAF, Pratt, Kansas
30 September 1943

SUBJECT: Unit History

TO : Commanding Officer, 40th Bombardment Group, (H), AAF,
Pratt, Kansas.

1. In compliance with maintenance of a daily historical journal and in accordance with AR 345-105 and AAF Regulation 20-8, the following information is believed worthy of submission for the period 18 August to 30 September 1943.

2. In devoting a short paragraph to the comparatively new primary duty of this Squadron; namely, the B-29 project, the following entries are made:

a. B-29 has not and is not progressing as rapidly and satisfactorily as anticipated. Two of the main reasons for this condition are, difficulty of adequate supply for the YB-29's, and difficulty of maintenance of the YB-29. The latter is due, mainly, to what is known as "Bugs" in any new type of aircraft. It should also be realized that any aircraft of a more advanced nature such as the YB-29, would naturally demand more attention and technical knowledge. Generally speaking, only one type of flying has been done with YB-29's assigned to this Squadron; namely, gunnery. As a result all other phases have to be sacrificed considerably. At present, this Squadron is assigned two YB-29's, only one being available. The second YB-29 is grounded at Salina, Kansas, for repairs.

b. Ground school for YB-29's has been in progress from approximately August 1, 1943 up to the present date.

c. One of the most interesting innovations of the B-29 project is the used of commissioned Bombardiers, and pilots as Flight Engineers. One requirement for a Flight Engineer for B-29 is that he be a commissioned Officer.

3. September 22, 1943 - Ordinance Section.

a. Preliminary tests with the new M-22 lift truck and a 4000 pound bomb case were made in loading the YB-29. Results of this test indicated that this equipment could not be used without modification. It is planned to conduct further trials and to see if some means can be worked out by this organization to get a load

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of block busters up into the belly of the "big boy" quickly and effectively.

4. Squadron Supply.

a. Having returned from a tropical climate where woolen equipment was seldom worn, one of the first steps was to see that the men received adequate clothing for a colder climate. By 29 September 1943, approximately 90% of the present personnel in the Squadron was equipped. New personnel had started to arrive regularly, however, the Supply continued to meet the demand.

5. August 27, 1943 -- Twenty one enlisted men were placed on detached service at Lowry Field, Colorado, to pursue a four week course in B-29 Armament and Remote Control.

August 26, 1943 -- One Officer and three Enlisted Men were placed on detached service at Salina, Kansas, for a thirty day instruction in the Flight Engineers School.

August 29, 1943 -- This Squadron transferred half of its Officers and Enlisted Men to the 25th Bombardment Squadron on the base as the 25th Squadron had sent its entire personnel to Walker Field, Kansas, (Special Order Attached). Major Cornett determined the number of Officers and Enlisted Men to be transferred and at the same time keeping in mind the equalization of both Squadrons in Pilots, Mechanics, Clerks, etc.. The strength of the unit was reduced to thirty one Officers and One hundred and eighty-five Enlisted Men. Despite this reduction of personnel the Squadron, with men working long hours, continued its full duties remarkably well. Since this date, replacements have been arriving at a rather slow pace.

September 2, 1943 -- Enlisted promotions were announced on practically a wholesale basis but there were still Table of Organization grades to be filled at a later date.

September 13, 1943 -- The Physical Fitness Program as prescribed by AAF Regulation 35-5, was started. After four days the program for this period was completed and the largest percentage of the Squadron rated "Good". With physical training emphasized we should qualify at least 75% the next test.

September 18, 1943 -- In the initial ceremony held at this base, 1/Lt. Tisserat and M/Sgt Bennett were awarded the Air Medal. The presentation was made by Brigadier General Kenneth B. Wolfe. The awards were made for meritorious achievement while participating in long range patrol flights over the Pacific and Carribbean approaches to the Panama Canal and over a period of 200 hours.

September 23, 1943 -- 1/Lt. Jack G. Shriver, 0-428423, 2/Lt. Robert W. Gunard, 0-805773, and Sergeant Clyde M. Stephenson, 17021036, crashed about one mile south of Pratt, Kansas in a B-26

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type Airplane. The accident proved fatal for all three. The bodies were escorted to their respective homes.

September 23, 1943 -- All Officers and Enlisted Men were ordered to the dispensary for a physical examination and necessary inoculations. The examination according to the Flight Surgeon was satisfactory with the exceptions of teeth and noses. Treatment for this defectiveness has been originated.

September 30, 1943 -- The strength of this Organization is 64 Officers and 255 Enlisted Men.

(signed)
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2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Historical Officer

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