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FORTY FOURTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
Office of the Historical Officer
AFO 631

22 December 1944

SQUADRON HISTORY
1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944

The eight month of service in India found the 44th in the thick of the fight to bring the hateful Jap to his knees. This was an extremely busy month for all men. Five combat missions were run and the balance of the time personnel were receiving training and doing maintenance work on the planes. There was not much time to relax but that didn't seem to bother anyone. Crews wanted to fly and competition was keen to get on a mission. There were enough missions to go around, however, and no one was slighted.

The first mission commenced in accordance with Field Order #14, XX Bomber Command, dated 28 October 1944. The 40th Group dispatched 13 aircraft from India to attack the Malagon railroad yards and shops at Rangoon, Burma. This mission was originally planned as a training mission to improve formation and bombing technique. Moulmein was first selected as the primary target, being the second most important target within medium range. Rangoon at first was considered too heavily defended to be attacked by a mission planned primarily for training purposes. Since the Strategic Air Force was planning to attack Rangoon about the same time as the Command's attack, it was decided to shift the strike to Rangoon and make the attack an all out effort. Taungup, Burma, was selected as the last resort target.

The Malagon Railroad Yards are the principal rail yards at Rangoon and in October 1944 contained 300 pieces of rolling stock and five locomotives. The yards include a roundhouse and repair shops for minor repairs to locomotives and cars. The large Insein Repair shops had been bombed out of existence and hence the smaller Malagon shops took on increased importance.

At Taungup the military stores area is one of the principal stores area on the west coast of Burma.

The purpose of the attack on Rangoon was to impede enemy rail transportation in the area as a result of disrupting the railroad siding as well as the main line in the marshalling

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yards, to destroy engines and rolling stock on the sidings and neutralize the roundhouse.

Of the aircraft airborne from the group, 10 bombed the primary target dropping a total of 391 X 500lb GP bombs from an altitude of 21,000 feet. Cloud cover over the target was about 6/10 but this did not prevent visual bombing.

Enemy air opposition was encountered only over the primary target area after bombs had been released. Opposition was reported as weak although some attacks were pressed home in a very determined manner. None of the Group's planes suffered any damage from enemy aircraft and claims totaled only two enemy A/C damaged.

Over the primary target anti-aircraft fire was moderate but intensely accurate and three of the group's aircraft suffered damage from flak. All A/C returned safely to Base.

Planes and crews from the squadron participating in this mission were:

#582

Major John C Eigenmann
Lt William E Baker
Lt Donald L Janasak
Lt Jesse C Ohr
Lt Michael Knezevich
Lt Vernon W Lester
S/Sgt Marion T Dissbennett
T/Sgt Samuel C Sill
S/Sgt John K Jensen
Sgt David P Lagoy
Cpl William I Douglas
S/Sgt Clifford A Bell

#541

Captain Clayton F Gray
Lt John H Danna
Lt Robert L Brush
Lt Clarence G Bernstrom
F/O Owen D Woodruff
S/Sgt Lloyd G Moulton
T/Sgt John Z Topolaki
S/Sgt Algernon Matulis
T/Sgt Harry M Hartman
Cpl Robert W Unger
S/Sgt John A Von Gotes

#39A

Captain Graham L Bleiler
Lt Gilbert M Winegar
Lt Sidney E Finley
Lt Charles B Ranson
F/O Raymond Erienbaugh
Sgt Joseph H Dimock
S/Sgt William C Weihaus
Sgt Jack G Martin
Sgt Everett J Hygard
Sgt Clifford J Cromer
T/Sgt Miroslav Anola

#503

Lt George S Gaston
Lt Mansel R Clerk
Lt William Kintie
F/O Richard Arrington
Capt Donald C Starkey
Capt Donald L Stumpff
T/Sgt Otis W Gax
S/Sgt Richard C Curtiss
T/Sgt Roland E Johnson
T/Sgt Warren S Johnson
T/Sgt Andrew D Doren

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Major Eigenmann led the formation in #582 and he was complimented for the great job he and his crew did.

The bomb load carried to Rangoon was the heaviest ever carried to any target by any airplane - 40 X 500lb bombs.

So called "Novice" pilots and those pilots who had recently returned to the squadron from Kalaikunda, where they had flown C-109's, flew the mission. The planes weighed over 133,000 pounds. This was the first weighted takeoff for Lt George Gaston and he did a superb job. Lt Col Cornett watched from the sidelines at the end of the runway and coached the takeoffs saying out loud, "Keep that damn nose down".

Upon completion of the mission, General C. E. LeMay sent word that not a single bomb had hit outside the target area. It was without a doubt the best bombing ever done by the B-29's up to date.

The crews erroneously were given the impression that this was to be an easy mission. Said T/Sgt "Andy" (Regular Army) Doran upon landing, "If this was a milk run we went to the wrong dairy".

The 3d of November was a busy day. Beside the mission to Rangoon, word was received that early in the morning of an impending mission to Singapore. Work was started immediately as time was short.

On the Rangoon mission a plane from the 444th Group had ditched enroute to the target and the morning of the 4th Captain George Varoff and his crew; Lt Curtis A Bush, Lt John S Ingham, Lt George Szafranski, S/Sgt Thomas E Frederick, S/Sgt David W Grof, and T/Sgt John P Quinlan, proceeded on a search mission in a B-24J #385. It was understood that they were to rendezvous with three other aircraft at a point right off the coast. #385 reached the rendezvous point and circled for six minutes but no other planes joined up so Capt Varoff headed on course - they flew 1,000 feet above the water - weather was CAVU - approximately seven minutes before they hit the point from which they were to start the search, co-pilot, Lt Hamil shouted "Something to the right of us". The crew took a look and were convinced they had found what they were looking for - the men on the water shot a flare and waved. Capt Varoff went around again and lost altitude to 50 feet. The radio operator sent in a position report and requested a fix from the XX Bomber Command. Observers counted two rafts and 11 men - all seemed to be OK -

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The Flight Engineer, Lt Ingham, tied three 5 gallon cans of water and a sustenance kit to a Mae West, inflated it, and dropped it from 50 feet. It fell just beyond the men in the life raft, but when #385 came around again the crew observed the men in the rafts paddling toward the dropped items and then saw them pick the water and rations up. In the meantime, another B-24 flew up and dropped sea markers around the raft. The radio operator tried to call Navy Catalinas but had difficulty getting through. He sent out an emergency call to clear the air but was unsuccessful. Finally, however, he got through despite the trouble, gave the position to the Catalina and requested the latter to pick up the survivors. The Cat. answered "No - heading back to base". No reason was given, but it was assumed the aircraft was running low on fuel. Capt Varoff circled for an hour and 20 minutes; meanwhile, notifying the Bomber Command, and then returned to base. The crew felt that dropping the water was the "best bombing they had ever done".

Seventeen B-29's took off on 5 November to attack the main dry dock installations at the Singapore Naval Base. The latter base was selected as the Primary target because of its obvious importance to the Japanese Fleet in Southern Waters. Its anchorage is large enough to shelter a large number of ships and it has ample fueling and supply facilities and work shops as well as drydocks capable of performing repair work to any size ship.

The secondary target designated was the Pankalan Brandon Refinery in Sumatra. Destruction of this refinery would deprive Japan of a reserve supply of aviation gasoline amounting to 16% of total requirements, and of 1.9% of her fuel oil unless she could transport 2,880,000 barrels of crude oil a year to inner zone refineries.

The military stores area at Taungup, Burma, one of the principal stores area on the west coast of Burma was picked as the target of last resort.

The air was cool and a soothing breeze blew on those of the squadron who were left behind when the planes took off for Singapore. A bright moon lit up the runway as the first plane roared down the stretch - It was a tense moment - This was to be the longest mission ever attempted by aircraft and the target had been designated by the Chief of Staff of the United States Army. It was a precision target if there ever was one.

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The target - a lock of sliding steel that keeps water out of the huge drydock. At briefing, it had been stressed that the importance of the target was great - destroying the locks meant incapacitating the drydock, thus preventing enemy warships that had been damaged in the Philippines from coming home to repair and roost.

Of the 17 aircraft airborne, a total of 14 bombed the assigned primary target from between 20,000 feet and 21,000 with a total of 32 X 1000lb bombs. Weather was 4/10 cloud cover and bombing results ranged from unobserved to excellent with results substantiated by strike photos. Anti-aircraft fire over the target ranged from meager to moderate and inaccurate to accurate. Four A/C from the Group sustained minor flak damage - two minutes before bombs away an enemy fighter dropped parachute bombs in the anticipated path of one of the B-29's in an attempt to inflict damage and disrupt the bomb run. Two bombs were dropped with good deflection but were too high by about 1500 feet. The bombs were like smoking parachutes, which after about two minutes desintegrated.

Enemy air opposition over the primary target was weak but some few attacks were closely pressed home. Two of the Group's aircraft sustained minor damage from enemy fighters. Total claims of one destroyed and two damaged enemy A/C were made.

Major Neil Wemple, flying #290, flew a total distance of 4100 statute air-miles, which undoubtedly comprises the longest non-stop bombing raid in history. As a wise precaution against gas shortage, Major Wemple did not try to make it all the way back but instead landed at Barrackpore, picked up some gas and then proceeded to Chakulia.

#394 flown by Major Donald W Roberts, developed engine trouble and bombed the tertiary target at Taungup, Burma, with unobserved results. Weather was 10/10 undercast and no opposition was encountered.

#582 flown by Lt Col Luna and Captain Jimmy Lyons, lost No. 1 engine when only 187 miles from the primary target and proceeded to bomb a target of opportunity, an airfield at 02o49'N - 101o26'E, with poor observed results. Weather was CAVU and no opposition was encountered.

Captain William Hunter, flying #503, was first to hit the target and the 1st bomb dropped by Bombardier, Lt Frank McKinney, fell about 50 feet short of the aiming point, the sliding steel

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lock of the drydock. The concussion of the bomb in the water weakened the structure to such a point that when Major Wemple's Bombardier, Lt Boleslo McIntyre, hit in the same vicinity the lock seemed to cave in and water gushed into the drydock. Capt Glenn McCutcheon, bombardier on #587, got two hits in the dock after it had been flooded - one a hit on a large merchant vessel that was in drydock. The accuracy of all planes in the squadron, bombing this target was uncanny.

Following are the crews from the squadron who participated in this record breaking flight:

<u>#587</u> Major J V McWilliams Lt H L Farrell Lt W E Stearns Capt G McCutcheon F/O F T Cox Lt F A Albers Lt V W Lester S/Sgt F Underhill S/Sgt C I Slapak S/Sgt L D Lemos T/Sgt J A Hunt	<u>#582</u> Captain J E Lyons Lt Col Luma Lt E R O'Brien Lt M B Montgomery Lt J C Eiland T/Sgt R B Haynes T/Sgt M Smola S/Sgt H J Cyr S/Sgt F C Hodgdon S/Sgt R Jorgenson Sgt J M Moffit	<u>#503</u> Captain W Hunter Lt R T Wriston Lt F W McKinney Lt J W Noble Lt L Jellis T/Sgt F E Brooks T/Sgt H B Swires S/Sgt A C Denney S/Sgt R L Hall S/Sgt R L Tepper Sgt L R Moncrief
<u>#394</u> Major D W Roberts Lt J C Harvell Lt R V Ford Lt H N Dickerson F/O E W Gray S/Sgt H T Anderson S/Sgt C W Sullivan S/Sgt I W Smith S/Sgt J L Mueller S/Sgt J D Johnson Captain Bronnan	<u>#322</u> Capt. R A Tisserat Lt D Angott Lt J Watson Lt W D Smith Lt L A Morris S/Sgt AN Carrigan S/Sgt L McGehee S/Sgt F N Bremen S/Sgt J Bicknell S/Sgt J Cohen T/Sgt P Hoffman	<u>#290</u> Major N W Wemple Lt R H Covey Capt R L Swanson Lt E A McIntyre F/O S Landau Lt E M Greenberg T/Sgt C T Price S/Sgt A G Beck T/Sgt A P Pawluk T/Sgt C N Westberg T/Sgt B R Houghton

Monday, 6 November, the sun came up early and so did the men, but this was no ordinary day and there were no complaints. It was a day when the people of the United States expressed their gratitude to the men who were doing so much for them - it was a day of awards. Down for the occasion was General LeMay, who congratulated each man personally and made the awards to the following men:

AWARD OF BROWN OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO AIR MEDAL:

Captain LOWRY, George E.
Captain McCutcheon, Glenn

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AWARD OF AIR MEDAL: CONT'D

2/Lt. LOSSING, Elden H.
" MORRIS, Leonard A.
1/Lt. NOBLE, Jerry W.
2/Lt. RANSON, Charles H.
" SMITH, William D.
" SZAFRANKI, George
" TELLICK, Nathan
P/O BRADLEY, Clarence H.
" DRIESEBAUGH, Raymond
" LAUDAU, Seymour
P/Sgt. Dobrowolski, Emil
T/Sgt. McConnell, Warren H.
" Sill, Samuel
S/Sgt. Barton, John P.
" Bell, Clifford A.
" Carrigan, Albert M.
" Cohen, Jacob
" Curtis, Richard C.
" Cyr, Howard J.
" Gorman, Clement E.
" Gisburne, Edward A.
" Hockel, Albert F.
" Hodgdon, Francis C.
" Holley, Vincent J.
" Jensen, John E.
" Jorgensen, Robert C.
" Laube, Sigmund
" Lemos, Louis D.
" McGehee, Lyman Y.
" Racila, Joseph V.
" Reed, Lloyd C.
" Rutledge, Frank E.
" Slapak, Charles I.
" Smith, Irvin H.
" Swan, Hugo
" Underhill, Frank L.
" Broussard, Frank L.
" Burgess, William J.
" Coleman, Neil F.
" Dimock, Joseph M.
Sgt. Grof, David W.
" Gulley, Herbert E.
" Hayes, Jesse T.
" Lagoy, David F.
" Yoder, Mervin H.

The citation, issued by the War Department, reads in part

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"Missions were made over enemy territory when enemy fire was expected and probable. The individual accomplished his mission with distinction above and beyond that normally expected. Undaunted by the many hazards faced regularly and continuously, he performed his duty in such a manner as to reflect great credit to the command and to the Army Air Forces".

After the ceremony the General spoke to the men; "Every one is proud of you and the work you're doing - look to your rear at the men who may never get medals but without whose work you would not be able to circle the field. Everything we do is so we may drop more bombs on Japan - that is our job - all else is practice".

On 7 November, Captain H A Harte and crew; Lt J D Hadow, Lt B K Johnson, Lt F Tasch, Lt G P Appignanni, S/Sgt E A Cisburne, S/Sgt D I Johnson, S/Egt R G Hurlbert, S/Sgt A Matulis, S/Sgt J A VonGonten and Sgt G W Miller were dispatched on a search mission for a crew that had ditched on the Singapore mission. The search was fruitless, however, and after many weary hours of flying and looking the crew returned to home base.

November 8th was one of the many times the squadron war room was packed with officers and enlisted men - this time getting the returns of the National Presidential Election. It seemed that this year more soldiers were interested in the outcome of the election than ever before. Throughout the day there was good natured squabbling between Republicans and Democrats, but this passed as the results kept pouring in, and by the time the final results were tabulated all differences were settled. If there were any immediate effects of the election no one in the squadron noticed it. The maintenance crews kept working to keep the planes in commission - the combat crews kept flying the missions - everything was as before.

Also on the 8th word was received of a pending mission to be staged from the forward area. In accordance with Field Order #16, the 40th Group began dispatching aircraft from the rear to the forward area on 9 November. By the 10th a total of 28 B-29's were at the China base for participation in the mission.

Targets designated were the same as the mission of #13. The aircraft plant at Omura being designated as the Primary target; the Sasebo aircraft factory at Sasobo, Japan and /or

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the Point Island Storage area, Shanghai, China, as secondary target and the Whorf area, Nanking, China, being the target of last resort.

Starting at 1846Z a total of 25 aircraft were airborne to attack the Primary target. The last aircraft was airborne at 1943Z. Three aircraft were ground aborts due to mechanical difficulties, of these only one from the squadron aborted on the ground - 587 flown by Major J V McWilliams, was unable to take off on the mission due to a bad oil leak in #1 engine.

Of the 25 A/C airborne two were early returns - #319 flown by Captain Jimmie Lyons, could not continue on the mission due to inability to change the pitch on #4 prop. #297 could not and had to return to A-1 because of failure of #1 turbo after take off.

Between 2330Z and 2350Z, #290, Piloted by Major N W Wemple; #306, Captain W R Howard; #503, Lt Col J I Cornett; #582, Major J C Eigenmann, received a message concerning a change of target when at approximate position of 32o35'N - 123o50'E. The change was made necessary by extremely poor weather in the primary target area.

Planes #322, flown by Captain R M Moore and #394, piloted by Major D W Roberts did not receive the message to bomb the tertiary target and proceeded to the primary target. Upon arriving there however the weather was so bad it was found necessary to abandon the plan to bomb Omura and instead proceeded to Shanghai. At this latter target no AA was reported and no enemy aircraft interception was encountered.

At Nanking, planes reported AA fire to be very inaccurate and meager and enemy fighter opposition was nil to weak.

The primary target was covered by 10/10 overcast. The secondary target was reported as 1/10 to CAVU and the last resort target was CAVU. Bombing results at Shanghai by the two 44th planes were observed to be excellent. At Nanking results were observed as fair to good. All 44th planes returned to home base. On 12 November all planes in the squadron made the return trip to Chakulia.

November 13th saw the squadron ordnance section almost go up in flames - during the noon period when the men of the 44th were off, including all personnel of the Ordnance section, 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 (not that anyone had to be told - it was evident what was happening). At once every man in the section left his

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meal and took off for the fire area. By this time, the ammunition was going off in all directions and the tent was ablaze - traffic on the road was quickly stopped and men dispersed in every direction - that is, except the ordnance section who were now all fire fighters and doing everything possible to stem the blaze. However, the tent was gone and the important thing was to keep flames from spreading to near-by revetments which housed every type bomb the 40th Group used. In this respect a good job was done and in an hour when things were again calm, the total loss to the squadron was the large tent and approximately 10,000 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition. The base fire fighting squadron arrived on the scene when the danger period had passed and assisted in curbing the final blaze.

One important thing that was noticed during the episode was the fine job done by the Ordnance personnel and credit could not be given to any one man as all cooperated and worked together in face of some danger and a possibility of great danger.

On 19 November in accordance with Field Order #18, XX Bomber Command, the 40th Group dispatched 30 B-29's to the forward area. All aircraft arrived without incident.

On 20 November, starting at 1830Z, a total of 28 B-29's were airborne against the Omura Aircraft Factory. This was the 3d attempt on the part of the Command to knock out the factory, the first two attempts having been frustrated to a great extent by unusually poor weather. Once again the secondary target was Shanghai, this time the Krangnan Dock and Engineering works, and the last resort target, the dock and wharf area at Nanking.

Of the 28 aircraft airborne on the mission a total of 21 were over the assigned primary target and 20 aircraft succeeded in bombing from between 20,000 and 22,000 feet. Weather was reported as from 6/10 to 9/10 cloud cover. Nineteen of the aircraft bombed by radar with unobserved results.

Enemy fighter interception over the primary target was considered strong and the group claimed a total of 12 enemy A/C destroyed, two probably destroyed and seven damaged. Anti-aircraft fire was weak and inaccurate.

Planes in the squadron and crews participating were:

^{#318} Captain C E Lowry ^{#382} Major J C Eigenmann ^{#394} Major D W Roberts

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Lt W C Burrows	Lt W E Baker	Lt J C Harvell
Lt A V Lacko	Lt D L Janasak	Lt R V Ford
Lt B F Wotipka	Lt J L Ohr	Lt H W Dickerson
Lt J A Bailey	Lt M Knezevich	F/O E W Gray
S/Sgt T M Frederick	S/Sgt M Disbennett	S/Sgt H T Anderson
S/Sgt R V Larson	T/Sgt S C Sill	S/Sgt R W Geisler
S/Sgt J F Boston	S/Sgt J K Jensen	S/Sgt I W Smith
S/Sgt D W Grof	Sgt D F Lagoy	S/Sgt C W Sullivan
S/Sgt I Penn	S/Sgt C A Bell	Sgt B J Nyggard
S/Sgt C A Knught	Sgt S A Guilford	S/Sgt J L Mueller

#306

Captain W R Howard
Lt T J Decker
Lt N Teplick
Lt G W Lober
Lt A W Hunt
S/Sgt J V Racilla
Sgt H E Gulley
S/Sgt H Swan
S/Sgt J T Hayes
S/Sgt W J Burgess
S/Sgt H A Staude

#319

Captain C F Gray
Lt J H Dannan
Lt R L Brush
Lt C Bernstrom
F/O O D Woodruff
S/Sgt L G Moulton
T/Sgt J Topolski
S/Sgt W R Gannon
S/Sgt J M Bosley
S/Sgt A A Helling
S/Sgt G A Wangler

#503

Lt Col Luna
Lt L A Thomas
Lt R L Lantz
Lt R L Barg
Capt W W Walters
T/Sgt M L Bresnok
S/Sgt V Gregorio
S/Sgt J P Glennon
S/Sgt H H Glassman
Sgt LeVallee
T/Sgt E L Robertson

#290

Major J D White
Lt D B Punnett
Lt E H Lossing
Lt O P Donohue
F/O C H Bradley
S/Sgt S Laube
S/Sgt AM Riechart
S/Sgt E H Hoops
T/Sgt L L Sandrick
S/Sgt L J Hanas
S/Sgt M W Young

#297

Capt R A Harte
Lt J D Haddow
Lt G Appaigmanni
Lt E K Johnson
Lt F Tash
S/Sgt E A Gisbure
S/Sgt A Matulis
S/Sgt D L Johnson
S/Sgt R G Hurlbert
S/Sgt J A VonGenten
Sgt G W Miller

#322

Capt R A Tisserat
Lt D Angott
Lt W D Watson
Lt W D Smith
Lt L A Morris
S/Sgt A M Carrigan
S/Sgt McGehee
S/Sgt P N Bremen
S/Sgt J D Bicknell
Sgt C J Cromer
T/Sgt P F Hoffman

#541

Captain W A Hunter
Lt F L Brown
Lt F W McKinney
Lt J W Noble
Lt L Jellis
T/Sgt F E Brooks
T/Sgt H B Swires
S/Sgt A C Denney
S/Sgt R L Hall
S/Sgt R L Tepper
Sgt L R Monorief

#363

Captain G D Varoff
Lt L V Hamil
Lt J S Ingham
Lt G Szafranski
Lt C A Bush
Sgt W W Wood
S/Sgt F L Broussard
S/Sgt R L Teter
Cpl W I Douglas
T/Sgt J P Quinlan
S/Sgt J Hawakes

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The 44th planes that hit the primary target were: #582, 541, 322, 319, 306, 297, 290, and #503.

Captain Hunter in 541 searched for 394 thinking it had ditched and then proceeded to Suichwan, China, an emergency B-29 base and on the following day returned to A-1.

Captain Gray flying 319 landed at Liangshan for fuel and then continued on to A-1 after spending the night.

Captain Tisserat in #322 landed at Sinning, China, and returned to A-1 the next day.

Captain Howard in 306 landed at Liangshan, China, for gas and then came on in.

Aircraft #363 was an early return due to mechanical failure and Captain Varoff was forced to land at A-5.

B-29 #290 flown by Major White landed at Ankang to pick up gas and was almost totally destroyed when an aircraft of the 44th Bomb Group in making an emergency landing crashed into #290 on the runway. Major White barely escaped with his life in the accident. He was inside #290 when he saw the 44th heading towards him and managed to get out of the plane and away from the scene just before the crash.

B-29 #394 flown by Major Roberts came through what was an almost impossible situation. The story of #394, as narrated by Flight Officer Elmo W. Gray, follows:

"Nothing seemed out of the ordinary as we were briefed at our forward base in China just before the mission to Omura, Japan on 21 November. To most of the crews the briefing was more or less routine, for we were about to play another return engagement to the homeland of the Japs. The target was designated as the Omura Aircraft Factory at Omura on the island of Kyushu.

The mission proceeded as planned - - we took off and the planes had joined in formation and climbed to their bombing altitude. The formation was tightened, the bomb bay doors opened and we were on the bombing run when it happened. We were approximately thirty seconds before the bomb release point when it seemed as if the whole Jap Air Force concentrated on our plane, the 'Last Resort'.

On the first pass the fighter made, the #4 engine propeller dome was pierced by a bullet and the engine had to be

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feathered. Before we had completed the feathering of #4 engine, the second wave of attacking planes was on up. We could hear the bullets ripping through the plane and immediately the instruments on #1 and #2 engines indicated that they also had been shot out. The fuel pressure on #1 engine dropped to below zero and the manifold pressure dropped to 15 inches. The manifold pressure on #2 engine dropped to 15 inches also. The fuel supply was shut off to #1 and #2 engines. Number 2 engine was feathered but #1 engine was left windmilling because of the urgent need for the electrical power to operate the turrets being produced by the generator on that engine. All of the turrets were being used at the same time as we tried to keep the fighters away.

Meanwhile we had reached the bomb release point and dropped our bombs. We were unable to stay in formation with only one engine running and we were losing altitude very rapidly.

We needed power badly and as a last resort the fuel shut-off valve on #1 engine was turned on and the throttle advanced very slowly. The tachometer was operating normally, the oil pressure was normal, the fuel pressure was still out and the manifold pressure was fluctuating from 15 to 30 inches. However, as the throttle was advanced, still further, the manifold pressure settled down and it was evident by the instruments and the flying characteristics of the airplane that the #1 engine was producing power.

In the five minutes that had elapsed since the first wave of fighters had attacked up we had lost 6,000 feet of altitude, but we had two engines running and were maintaining level flight even though the airspeed was very low. We were still being attacked by everything the Japs had up that day. As soon as our plane was 'crippled' and had to leave the formation, all the fighters came after us. A fifteen minute battle followed, during which our gunners destroyed three Jap fighters. The remainder then turned tail for the homeland, each probably counting us as destroyed.

We were safe for the moment. Out over the Yellow Sea, free from fighters, our greatest problems at that time were: would the engines withstand the terrific punishment they were then taking in order to maintain level flight, was the gas supply sufficient for us to reach friendly territory and would we, in our crippled condition, be able to fight our way across enemy occupied China?

At that time #1 and #3 engines were running at 2400 RPM and 47.5 inches M.P. This was a lower RPM than is normally

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thought practical or possible to use with such high manifold pressure, but it seemed to be the only combination in which the engines would run cool to insure continuous operation. At first 2600 RPM and 47.5 inches M.P. were used and in order to keep the engines cool the primers were held on for approximately ten minutes. Then we started experimenting with different RPM and M.P. combinations and finally arrived at the suitable combination of 2400 RPM and 47.5 inches M.P. Cylinder head temperatures were maintained at 250°C. with 60 of cowl flaps. That power setting was used for two hours and fifteen minutes. Considerable fuel had been used by that time and all the plane's loose equipment had been jettisoned, therefore we were able to reduce the power setting to 2400 RPM and 42 inches M.P. That power setting was used for two hours, cylinder head temperatures being maintained at 250°C. with 50 cowl flaps. A power setting of 23000 RPM and 39 inches M.P. was then used for two hours and thirty minutes.

By that time we were close enough to an emergency field listed on our map as a last resort field. However, it was in friendly territory and we started a descent for which a power setting of 2200 RPM and 35 inches M. P. was used. Cylinder head temperatures were held at 250° with cowl flaps closed. That power setting was used for fifty-five minutes.

After seven hours and forty minutes of two-engine flight a landing was made at the emergency field. During this period of two-engine, high power operation, oil pressures and oil temperatures were precisely those that would be encountered during normal operation.

After landing, inspection of plane and engines disclosed numerous bullet holes. Number 1 engine fuel pressure line had been shot up and the manifold pressure line on the engine had been creased by a bullet. Number 4 engine had been put out of commission by a bullet through the propeller dome. The #2 engine carburetor fuel metering valve had been shot away putting that engine out of commission.

We were many miles from the supplies and tools needed to make the necessary repairs so that the plane could be flown out. 'Lady Luck' was still with us and a propeller dome and parts for the carburetor were obtained from a B-29 that had crashed nearby several months previous. The propeller dome was installed with a sledge hammer, the carburetor fuel metering valve replaced and other emergency maintenance accomplished under the protection of American fighter cover.

The plane was flown from the emergency field to the regular advanced base as soon as possible, even though the air

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ducts of #2 and #4 engines were full of holes and it was doubtful if any turbo action could be obtained. However, we experienced no difficulty obtaining take-off power. The plane, and engines were inspected at the forward base but no other repairs were made and the plane was flown back to the rear base in India the next day.

Right now the plane is undergoing battle damage repairs. The engines have been thoroughly inspected and checked in every way possible on the field, and have been found to be in perfect condition. They are remaining on the 'Last Resort' and are ready for another mission.

Number 1 engine, Serial #AAF 42-84523, mfg. #69143, was manufactured by the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Patterson, New Jersey, Plant #7, Wood Ridge, New Jersey, January 22, 1944. It was first installed on B-29 A/C #42-6384 in #3 position and was removed at AAF Pratt, Kansas, on July 19, 1944, because of internal failure having a total of 197:30 hours at that time; the engine was given a major overhaul at Oklahoma City Air Depot and was next installed on B-29 A/C #42-63394, the 'Last Resort', in the #1 position at Morrison Field, Florida on 2 October 1944. This engine now has a total of 157:50 hours.

Number 3 engine, serial #AAF 43-150422, mfg. #151111, was manufactured by Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Patterson, New Jersey, Plant #7, Wood Ridge, New Jersey, on August 21, 1944. This engine was installed in #3 position on B-29 A/C #42-63394, the 'Last Resort', on October 24, 1944 at APO 631. At the present time this engine has a total of 90:50 hours on it.

I, the flight engineer, and the entire crew of the 'Last Resort' wish to thank Wright Aeronautical Corporation and all the employees responsible for these engines that really went 'above and beyond' to bring us safely home."

The story of the last resort is one that the entire airforce can well be proud of and will long remember.

At the forward area in China the first indication that anything was amiss was when reports started coming through that #394 had peeled out of formation shortly before bombs away and after being attacked by enemy aircraft and contacted a submarine preparatory to ditching. It was taken for granted by those who didn't know "Robby" too well that he had gone down. Those who knew him and about his 7000 or more hours of flying experience, inwardly knew that he and his valiant crew could be back. Those who had faith in the "Last Resort" were rewarded

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When late on the night of the mission word was received at Asinching that #394 had safely landed at Laohokow.

The preliminary report on the activities of the "Last Resort", received at the rear area the 23 November, told part of the story: This plane now at Laohokow. Nothing said about crew members. Here is story of what happened: Bombed primary target - Omura - from 22,000 feet indicated. No AA encountered at target - Enemy aircraft encountered at target numbered 20, and included - Tojo's, Tony's and some twin engine fighters, which were not further identified. These enemy fighters were from 16,000 feet to 22,000 feet - three were destroyed and two probably destroyed in the encounters in the target area. Robert's aircraft was seriously damaged approximately one minute before bombs away by two twin engine fighters. These fighters attacked from high right and shot out engines #2 and #4. One of these fighters was hit and dropped into the sea - 20 fighters attacked after Roberts left the formation and turned home - It is thought that this is in addition to the previously mentioned fighter attacks, for of these enemy aircraft, eleven were seen to disintegrate and fall into the sea in flames and two were seen to disappear into the clouds smoking. This would seem to give a grand total of 14 destroyed and 4 probably destroyed. Roberts landed at Laohokow on two engines at 0925Z, low on gas and glad to get back".

The whole story was not told until #394 arrived back at Chakulia, and it was at that time that Flight Officer Gray, engineer on the "Last Resort" wrote the above mentioned story, which was sent to the Wright Aeronautical Company.

Major Roberts could not praise his crew enough - he stated that despite the stress and strain occasioned by the terrific experience the boys went through, there wasn't a single man who didn't take it in stride. Our hats are off to Major Roberts, Lt Harvell, Lt Ford, Lt Dickerson, F/O Gray, Sgt Geisler, S/Sgt Smith, S/Sgt Mueller, Sgt Nygaard and S/Sgt Sullivan.

The night the planes returned from the mission a three ball alert was sounded and shortly thereafter enemy planes were over the field. The planes were not heard by most of the personnel but those on the ground could see a flash when the enemy aircraft released their incendiary clusters. Immediately AA crews on the ground opened up on the attackers. Tracers lit up the black sky, but no enemy A/C fell. The bombs fell on both ends of the runway and hit gasoline drums on either end of the field. From the slit trenches a mile or more away from the line, the huge fires could plainly be seen and the sky was lit up like a Christmas tree. At the moment things looked black.

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To lookers from afar it appeared as though many planes on the ground must have been hit - when the sound of falling bombs stopped and there was a chance to survey the damage, it was found that two B-29's had been hit pretty severely, but no other damage had been done. One of the planes was #503, Col. Cornett's "Nippon Nipper II". The Nipper suffered a direct hit on #3 nacelle, the stabilizer was severely damaged and at least 100 holes in the fuselage and empenage were apparent. It seemed at the time that Nippon Nipper had nipped its last nip, but those who doubted that #503 would fly again were wrong. Work was begun the next day to bring it back to normal. However, it was anticipated, it would take at least a month to bring the plane back to India.

The next few days saw all the crews and most of the planes back at the rear area.

Until the 26th of November, crews attended classes as scheduled by Group and received specialized training in target identification. Much flying was done, especially by lead crews, who bombed Holliday Island continually. Most of the crews wondered what kept the island above the water, after the vicious rounding it was taking.

On 26 November, in accordance with Field Order #18, dated 23 November 1944, the 40th Group went to work again. This time to attack the Bangsue Marshalling Yards at Bangkok, Thailand. Fifteen aircraft were dispatched and out of these 13 successfully bombed the assigned primary target.

Bombing was done from an altitude of 18,000 to 19,000 feet with excellent observed results. Lt Jesse Ohr was lead Bombardier for the formation, flying in #587. He is credited with having dropped his bombs right on the aiming point. Bombing results were excellent.

Only weak fighter opposition was encountered but the formation was relatively loose and the weakness was clearly demonstrated when one lone Jap Zeke fighter came in on a head on attack, flew through the entire formation and inflicted minor damage to 4 B-29's, without receiving so much as a scratch himself. Anti-aircraft fire was meager and inaccurate.

Aircraft #319, flown by Capt. James E Lyons, was over the primary target but developed a mechanical malfunction of AFCE equipment on the bomb run and did not drop his bombs. However, he proceeded to what appeared to be a light industrial plant

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area about 1 mile south of Don Muang airfield and slightly E. of the NNE - SSW railroad line running into the primary target. Bombing results were poor with bombs reported landing west of the railroad tracks. All of the 44th squadron aircraft returned safely to Chakulia.

The following planes and crews participated in this last mission for the month of November:

<u>#297</u>	<u>#319</u>	<u>#322</u>
Capt G L Bleiler	Capt J E Lyons	Capt R M Moore
Lt G M Winegar	Lt M R Clark	Lt R T Wriston
Lt S B Finlay	Lt B R O'Brien	Lt J R Franklin
Lt C B Ranson	Lt F W Ford	Lt H L Lee
F/O R Driesbaugh	Lt G V Brower	Lt E E Deiser
S/Sgt N F Coleman	Lt M R Montgomery	T/Sgt F E Brooks
S/Sgt C J Holley	Sgt J F Dimock	S/Sgt K F Johnson
S/Sgt H Glassman	S/Sgt R Jergreen	T/Sgt E Hartman
S/Sgt W Neihaus	S/Sgt H J Cyr	S/Sgt E P Beach
S/Sgt R Anderson	S/Sgt C Hodrdon	T/Sgt H P Swires
T/Sgt B Davis	T/Sgt M Smola	Sgt S Stilson
	Pvt J M Moffit	

<u>#587</u>	<u>#729</u>
Major J C Eigenmann	Lt G S Gaston
Lt D L Angott	Lt F L Brown
Lt D L Janasak	Lt W Kintis
Lt J L Ohr	Lt R L Brush
Lt M Knezevich	F/O R V Arrington
Lt Z W Lester	Capt K L Stumpff
S/Sgt M P Disbennett	S/Sgt S Laube
T/Sgt J K Sill	S/Sgt R L Hall
Sgt C A Lagoy	Sgt S H Guilford
S/Sgt J K Jensen	S/Sgt A C Denney
S/Sgt C A Bell	S/Sgt J J Carney
S/Sgt C Cromer	Captain P S Anderson

TRAINING

The training program outlined by the Bomber Command shades even the program laid down at Pratt during training days. The squadron had more than 2000 man hours of training in the following subjects:

GROUND SCHOOL

Target Identification
Bomber Command Memo's
Aircraft Recognition
Formation flying and bombing

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Instrument procedure
Evasion and Escape
Weather
Aldis Lamp
Mechanics
Orientation
Navigation (star identification)
E 6 B (for flight engineers)
Bomb Loading
B-29 Facilities
C F C
A-3 Bomb Training
Loran Training

FLYING TRAINING

15 hours formation
46 hours instrument flying
48 hours night flying
89 instrument take-offs
44 long range navigation missions
400 bombs dropped by visual radar and blind (both in formation and individually)
150 hours radar operation
a number of missions with simulated fighter attacks for gunnery training.

NEW PLANES

On a new B-29 joined the squadron (#729) in November and was assigned to Lt George Gaston III.

MOHALE

This important factor which can make or break an organization remains extremely high. Contributing factors, no doubt are: hard work, many missions and extremely low combat losses, plus a team spirit that has been built up over the past few months.

PERSONNEL

Captain Bleiler's crew and Captain Gray's crew reported back to the organization from the C-109 Group on the 1st of November and Lt Markham's crew went on D S to the same Group.

On 2 November, the following were assigned to the 1st: 2d Lt L B Cox, Lt R B Henry, 2d Lt J M Dunsmore, S/Sgt R S Swires, Sgt L J Banas, Sgt S A Gailford and Sgt J J Dyball.

On 3 November, Spl M D Rosenholtz, Pfc F M Catagnola,

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Pfc S K Heath and Pvt K B Bellows were transferred to the C-109 unit.

On 6 November, Sgt Yoder, who had been injured in the crash of #288 in October, was moved to the Chengtu Hospital in China.

Captain J D Conway and Lt D F Whitt were transferred to the XX Bomber Command on 7 November.

On 8 November, Pvt's Selsor, Askins and Meredith were assigned to Hq, 40th Group.

On the 13th, Lt C C Pinson was assigned to the 45th Bomb Squadron and Lt Warren Lemp was assigned to the 28th Service Group.

Enlisted Men - Balint, Warner, Wilson and Hall were transferred to the 1st Air Commando Unit APO 690.

November 16th M/Sgt Charles Bennett was killed in an auto accident at Ranikhat rest camp. Three other enlisted men were injured, Morse, Gill and Hourne - Morse died from his injuries on the 21st.

On 25 November, aircraft #250 flew off the runway for the last, enroute to Morrison Field, Florida. Aboard the plane were: Captain W A Hunter, Captain G McCutcheon, Capt D Starkey, Lt W Baker, Lt J Noble, T/Sgt O Cox, T/Sgt A Doran, T/Sgt W McConnell, S/Sgt R Curtiss and T/Sgt R E McMahon.

November 29th Lt R T Wriston was transferred to the 45th Squadron.

	<u>SQUADRON STRENGTH</u>
1 November	125 Officers 540 Enlisted Men
30 November	123 Officers 524 Enlisted Men

Irving L. Cottler
IRVING L. COTTLER,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Historical Officer.

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