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FORTY FOURTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
Office of the Historical Officer
APO 631

3 November 1944

SQUADRON HISTORY

1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944

September was a month in which everyone was necessarily "on the ball". It was full of action from the word "go" and the squadron relished it. The influence of Major General C. E. Lemay, who had joined the XX Bomber Command on 29 August, permeated throughout the Command. The Commanding General brought with him practices of the 8th Air Force that had been proven over a period of years in the European Theatre. "Learn by doing" was the watchword and a system of continuous ground school training was begun and intensive flying training continued. Specialized training was given to 2 crews in the squadron, selected as lead crews, on the basis of personnel qualifications.

Two missions were carried out during the month, both to the SWOWA Steel Works at Anshan, Manchuria. These works are the largest in Manchuria and the second largest in the Japanese Empire. It is important for satellite industries and produces pig iron, steel ingots and rolled steel material.

For the first time after a B-29 mission the Japanese retaliated by bombing the forward area at Hsinching on the nights of 9 September and 26 September.

In accordance with XX Bomber Command field order number 8, 28 aircraft from the 40th Group were dispatched to the forward area on the 5th, 6th and 7th of September. All planes arrived at the forward area without incident. The squadron furnished 6 A/C for the strike on the 8th of September. The following crews participated:

#503
Lt. Col J.I. Cornett
1st Lt G.S. Gaston
Capt G. Starkey
Capt C. McCutcheon
F/O R.V. Arrington
T/Sgt O. T. Cox
Capt D. Stumpf
S/Sgt R. C. Curtiss
T/Sgt R. E. McMahon
T/Sgt W. McConnell
T/Sgt A. D. Doran

#290
Maj J.V. McWilliams
1st Lt H.L. Farrell
LT W.E. Stearns
Lt W. Kintis
F/O J. T. Cox
Sgt F. L. Underhill
Sgt L. R. Monorief
Sgt C. I. Slapak
T/Sgt J. A. Hunt
S/Sgt L. D. Lemme
T/Sgt H. D. McCann

#541
Capt J.C. Eigenmann
1st Lt W.E. Baker
LT D.L. Janacek
Lt C.P. Donohue
Lt M. Knezevich
S/Sgt M. Diebennett
S/Sgt S. C. Sill
Sgt J. K. Jensen
Sgt M. H. Yoder
Sgt D. F. Lagry
S/Sgt C. A. Bell

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Briefing was held at about 1500 the afternoon of the 7th. At the briefing General Lemay spoke to the crews, "Let's complete the scratching of Anshan this time and move on and mop up all the rest of our targets in the Japanese Empire". The crews were in complete agreement.

The planes were originally loaded with 12 bombs, but only 6,000 feet of the runway was available for takeoff due to constant rains and as a result 4 bombs were off loaded.

The morning of the 8th crews were awakened at 0300, ate a breakfast of "Fried Eggas" and hot coffee and were down at their planes at 0400 and took stations at 0530.

The first plane to take off was #503, piloted by Lt Colonel Cornett. Takeoff was at 2240. General Lemay went along on the mission and selected #503 as the plane to ride on. He sat on a chair during most of the mission puffing on his pipe, but his action over the target when he crawled through the tunnel to aid a gunner who had been struck by flak endeared him to the whole crew.

Aircraft #319, piloted by Captain Jimmy Lyons and co-piloted by Lt. "Sandy" Clark took off at 2320 and was the last plane off the ground.

The plan was to fly a 4 plane formation and the aircraft joined up with what formation they could without regard to whether the planes were from this group or another.

About 2 1/2 hours out from Home base and enroute to the target the formation which #319 had joined was jumped by a "Wal", but the latter had no success and our gunners were likewise disappointed. Weather enroute to the target was excellent. All of the 44th planes with the exception of #290 dropped 8 X 500 Lb. GP bombs in the target area.

Aircraft #290 was not as fortunate as other 44th planes insofar as hitting the target is concerned. #290 was unable to contact the 44th formation and so fell into formation with planes of the 468th Bombardment Group. A/C #471 of the 468th Group had an accidental release and dropped its bombs in the vicinity of the Initial Point. The Bombardier of #290, Lt. William Kintis followed orders to bomb on the leader and not being aware of the situation immediately released his 8 bombs. No doubt the Initial Point received a severe shock.

A/C #503, operating as a lead plane sustained minor battle damage from enemy AA. Bomb circuit wiring was damaged and the camera vacuum system was severed by flak fragments. As a result of this bombs did not release electrically and the plane's

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camera did not function.

The CFC gunner on #503 has the doubtful distinction of being the first member of the squadron to feel the sting of Jap Flak. Some spent pieces of Flak hit S/Sgt Richard C Curtis in the hand and arm but did not break the skin. In the excitement of the moment he yelled over the interphone "I've been Hit". Hearing this, General Lemay, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, crawled through the tunnel, while the plane was pressurized, to administer first aid to the stricken gunner. Luckily aid was not needed but all crew members commented on the quick action by the General.

Weather over the target was sufficiently clear for visual bombing and all crews reported observed bombing results as "good".

The "New York Times" in its writing of the mission stated "Fighter interception was reported weak, and so far our gunners claim to have destroyed six enemy fighter planes, with nine probables and eleven others damaged." From the claims presented by the 44th Squadron it would seem that fighter opposition was slightly stronger than weak.

S/Sgt Frank Rutledge, right gunner, of plane 322 and S/Sgt Clifford A Bell, tail gunner, on 541 each laid claim to $\frac{1}{2}$ an Oscar damaged. Their claim was submitted to a board of XX Bomber Command officers and was disapproved for the following reasons: Though tracers appeared to enter the enemy plane, this is deemed insufficient proof that the aircraft was so damaged as to require repair before beginning another mission. Observation of tracers has proved to be extremely unreliable basis for determining the actual path of bullets.

S/Sgt J.K. Jensen, top gunner on 541, spotted a Tojo at 8 o'clock level boring in with guns blazing. Sgt Jensen opened fire at 700 yards and Tojo's fighting days were over. Sgt Jensen received full credit for one Tojo probably destroyed.

S/Sgt Barney Davis on plane #322 spotted a Tojo coming in fast from 3 o'clock level. Tojo did a split "S" in coming around to the tail. At the point of the split when Tojo's belly was in view of the tail gunner and highly vulnerable, the latter fired approximately 100 rounds of 50 Caliber and 9 rounds of 20 mm bullets. Davis observed his shots enter Tojo and then observed him to drop his left wing sharply and start down. This action was also observed by the right gunner, S/Sgt Frank Rutledge. Full credit was given to T/Sgt Barney Davis for one enemy aircraft damaged.

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An Oscar made the fatal mistake of getting in the sights of Sgt D.A. Lagoy, right gunner on #541. Oscar came from 8 o'clock, went under the plane and came up on the right side in a climb, 100 yards in front of the right blister. Sgt Lagoy gave it a few bursts and Oscar seemed to stop its climb and start to slip down. Sgt Lagoy kept firing as it went down and it was at this stage that the radio operator, S/Sgt M.T. Disbennett, who was checking the bomb bay, saw tracers entering the left wing root. He then observed Oscar fall off sharply on the left wing and continue down in a dive. He was able to visually follow it down and observed a puff of smoke as it hit the ground. Sgt Lagoy received full credit for one enemy aircraft destroyed.

2nd Lt C.B. Ranson, bombardier on #322 had the distinction of damaging what was thought to be a new twin engine enemy aircraft having inline engines. The twin engine plane came in from 7 o'clock high, passed in front of 322, went out about a 1,000 yards, stuck its nose up and did a wing over and came in from 11 o'clock high. When the E/A was within 800 yards, Lt. Ranson opened fire and kept firing until the plane was 100 yards away at which time the enemy aircraft turned away from the nose and passed on the left side of the plane toward the tail. Copilot, Lt. "Gib" Winegar and F/O Driesbaugh verified the fact that ammunition entered the enemy aircraft. Full credit was given to 2nd Lt Ranson for one enemy aircraft damaged.

As to damage inflicted on the target, photo reconnaissance shows that two batteries are considered to have received sufficient damage to decommission them for a year. These plus one battery decommissioned as a result of a previous attack gives a total of 3 batteries out for at least a year. Three other batteries sustained sufficient damage to decommission them for at least six months and possibly a year. Damage to associated installations will probably render two batteries inoperative for about 30 days. Severe damage was also sustained by the Coke By-products plant and will seriously curtail the output of by-products for a considerable time.

Upon returning from the mission crews were interrogated and then "hit the sack" for a well earned rest. The Japs, however, had other plans and at midnight on the 6th crews were routed out of bed - - a "three ball" alert was called indicating that enemy planes were in the vicinity and attack was imminent. Crew members jumped or fell out of bed and with or without clothes dashed to drainage ditches. They made it just in time-- At 0030 on September 9th the first string of bombs fell. Fragmentation and H.E.'s were used. The second high explosive in the string hit on the edge of a machine gun emplacement injuring two soldiers, one a member of the squadron, S/Sgt Edward

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M. Cyrus. The latter was hospitalized and has since been awarded the Order of the Purple Heart. All bombs landed in open ground, the last of the string exploding about 100 yards from Hastel 2, which a few minutes before had been occupied by combat crews from the group. Despite the fact this was a new experience, none of the crews expressed a desire for more.

Early on the morning of 9 September the crews returned to Chakulia without incident.

On 13 September, in accordance with the new Bomber Command policy of training lead crews, the squadron sent the following personnel to Dudhkundi for training:

Major J.D. White	Major M.W. Weemple
Captain G. McCutcheon	Captain R.L. Swanson
Lt. R.E. Lossing	Lt. B.A. McIntyre
F/O C.H. Bradley	F/O I. Landau
Lt. F.A. Albers	Lt. E.W. Greenberg
S/Sgt A. Laube	T/Sgt G.T. Price
S/Sgt A.G. Beck Jr	S/Sgt F.J. Wagner
T/Sgt L.L. Landrick	S/Sgt F.J. Wagner
S/Sgt M.W. Young	S/Sgt A.L. Pawluk
S/Sgt J.L. Mueller	T/Sgt G.N. Westberg
	T/Sgt B.A. Houghton

The crews stayed at Dudhkundi for 2 weeks and got a total of 40 hours flying time. Training was mainly for the Pilot, Navigator, Bombardier and radar operators and was designed primarily to increase accuracy in bombing and to seek coordination between the Bombardier and Radar Operator in radar bombing. Lectures were given by Bomber Command personnel who had been trained in the European theater. In view of the fact that the Commanding Officer was not allowed to have a lead crew, Captain Glenn McCutcheon, who had been Bombardier, on the Colonel's crew was assigned to Major White's crew.

An unusual incident which may have ended disastrously were it not for the fine handling of an airplane in distress occurred on 16 September. Major Donald W. Roberts and crew consisting of - - Lt. J.C. Harvell, Lt. R.V. Ford, Lt. H.W. Dickerson, F/O M.W. Gray, S/Sgt R.T. Anderson, Sgt C.W. Sullivan, Sgt R.W. Geisler, S/Sgt I.W. Smith, T/Sgt D.N. Van Ormer, and S/Sgt J.L. Mueller - - were giving A/C 268 an operational and test flight after considerable repair and overhaul work had been done on it. The engine had had two ground runs and been checked and found to be in perfect condition. A retraction test had been pulled and all limit switches checked and adjusted. After take off everything was normal in every respect. Air speed calibration was checked and all engines were checked for

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feathering at altitude and all worked perfectly.

As the plane approached the field, Major Roberts called for landing instructions and then slowed down on the down wind leg to lower the gear. Opposite the field, the wheels were started down in the normal manner. The left gunner, Sgt Smith reported left wheel down and the right gunner, Sgt Van Ormer, reported right wheel down and the Co-pilot, Lt Johnny Harvell, checked the nose wheel. All three green lights were on and checked. When the plane was ready to turn on the base leg there was suddenly heard a heavy thump and a vibration followed by two more thumps. The left gunner yelled over the interphone "number 2 engine is on fire". Major Roberts looked back and saw smoke coming from back of the intercooler flap and from the top cowl flaps. A moment later he saw a vicious fire coming from above the cowl flaps. He started for the field at about a 45° angle and about 1 mile from the field at 300 feet altitude #2 engine dropped off. He used full right rudder, full aileron and full trim and 40 HG on #1 engine. Number 3 and #4 engines were practically useless as when he tried to use power on them the right wing would start up. He came in about 2,000 feet from the end of the runway and touched down on the runway apron. That did not end the trouble of #268 - - As the wheels touched the runway the left wheel folded and the wing touched the ground. The pilot ordered the crew to get out of the plane as soon as possible. Aircraft 268 finally slid to a stop about 90° to the direction it was landing. The crew wasted no time in getting out. Net result - - All personnel safe - - 1 plane lost. It must be said, it was only through the masterful handling of this plane by Major Roberts, assisted by Lt. Harvell, Co-pilot, and P/O Gray, Engineer that the entire crew escaped without a scratch. The fact that they all walked away is testimony enough. Special commendation is in order for Major Roberts and his crew.

The squadron temporarily lost another crew to the C-109 Provisional unit at Kalidundi when Captain Graham Blieler and his crew - - Lt. Gib Winegar, Lt. A.R. Finlay, P/O R. Dreistaugh, T/Sgt Barney Davis, Sgt Neil Coleman, S/Sgt Vincent Holley, S/Sgt Frank Rutledge, Sgt Joseph Dimock was put on 3D with that unit. These men joined Capt Raymond Moore and crew and Capt Clayton Gray and crew who had left earlier. These men were doing a wonderful job in flying gasoline across the hump in C-109's. They were flying day and night in all kinds of weather, weighing up to 68,000 pounds which far exceeded the maximum intended load for the airplane. The dire need for gasoline at the forward area made this project necessary and the men served willingly and well.

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The second mission for the month commenced on 23 September, when 27 A/C from the group took off for A-1. The mission was to be a repeat attack on the Shawa works at Anshan. As the result of two previous attacks on the target the steel works had been reduced from first to second position in the Japanese Empire as a producer of metallurgical coke, the indispensable material to the manufacture of Iron and Steel. The Imperial Iron and Steel works at Yawata now occupies first position. It was decided to reduce Anshan even further.

Dairen, the finest mainline port north of Shanghai, and Manchuria's principal harbor and terminus of the double-tracked mainline railroad from Harbin and Mukden, was designated as secondary target. Much of the material wealth that Jap is extracting from Manchuria is exported through Dairen.

The Sinsiang Railroad Yards, representing one of the potential bottle necks to the flow of Japanese troops and military supplies along the Peking-Hankow Railroad was designated as target of last resort.

Aircraft and crews from the 44th Squadron participating in this mission were as follows:

503
Lt Col J I Cornett
Lt Lt G S Gaston
Capt G Starkey
Capt B G McCutcheon
F/O R V Harrington
T/Sgt O T O ox
Capt D Stumpff
S/Sgt R C Curtiss
T/Sgt R E McMahon
T/Sgt W H McConnell
T/Sgt A D Doran

587
Maj. D W Roberts
Lt J C Harvell
Lt R V Ford
Lt H W Dickerson
F/O E W Gray
Sgt H T Anderson
Sgt C W Sullivan
Sgt R W Geisler
Sgt I W Smith
T/Sgt D N Van Ormar
S/Sgt J L Mueller

342
Maj J D White
Lt D B Punnett
Lt E H Lossing
Lt R K Lantz
F/O C H Bradley
S/Sgt S Laube
Sgt R P Lavallee
Sgt A G Beck
T/Sgt L L Sandrick
sgt C R Gormen
S/Sgt M Y Young

290
Maj N W Wemple
Lt R H Covey
Capt R L Swanson
Lt B A McIntyre
F/O S Landau
T/Sgt G T Price
Lt E M Greenberg
S/Sgt Beck
T/Sgt A F Pasluk
T/Sgt C Westberg
T/Sgt B Houghton

319
Capt J C Eigemann
Lt W E Baker
Lt D L Janasak
Lt C P Donohue
Lt M Knezevich
S/Gt M T Dishennet
S/Sgt S G Sill
Sgt J K Jensen
Sgt M H Yoder
Sgt D F Lagoy
S/Sgt C A Bell

541
Capt W A Hunter
Lt F L Brown
Lt L Jellis
Lt F W McKinney
Lt J W Noble
T/Sgt F E Brooks
Lt F A Albers
Sgt R L Hall
Sgt H L Tepper
Sgt A C Hanny
T/Sgt H E Hore

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322

Capt W L Mueller
Lt W D Wilson
Lt R E Spain
Lt C W Olson
F/O L V Bauer
T/Sgt C W Shiflet
Sgt J E Laysak
Sgt A F Hookel
Sgt L O Reed
S/Sgt R A Lamin
T/Sgt H Spack

Briefing was held at the Forward area on 25 September and a total of 22 A/C from the group were airborne between 2254 and 2372 on the 26th. Aircraft 348 was unable to take off due to a burned out starter on #2 engine and #587 was unable to participate due to an engine change. #290 developed an oil leak in #3 and was forced to return to base. Major Wemple, pilot, did a beautiful job landing in inclement weather with a heavy load. #322 was unable to release its bombs over the target due to a rack malfunction and so bombed a target of opportunity (Dock area at 40-31N - - 120-49E). #541 was unable to join the formation due to extremely bad weather and bombed the secondary target with good results. At Dairen #541 encountered meager AA fire.

Aircraft #319 dropped 12 X 500 pounders and #503 dropped 10 X 500 pound bombs on the primary target. Weather conditions over the target were unfavorable for visual bombing and crews reported 8/10 to 10/10 cloud coverage.

Anti Aircraft over the target was reported as meager to moderate and inaccurate to accurate. The intensity of the fire was about the same with the accuracy slightly increased over that encountered on 8 September, when visibility was much better and our planes were flying at a higher altitude.

Air opposition was considered moderate and to the pleasure of the gunners Jap attacks were more closely pressed than in any other B-29 mission. Crews reported instances of enemy planes diving through the formation; and others, of attacks being pressed to within 50 yards. Use of aerial bombing attacks also increased but none of the squadron planes were damaged.

T/Sgt W H. McConnell, right gunner on #503 had the distinction of claiming the only B/A destroyed on this mission by the 40th Bombardment Group. At 0522Z, 23,400 feet over the target

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area, a B-29 came in from 2:30 o'clock low and was first hit by Sgt McConnell at 1,000 feet. McConnell kept firing until Hamp was at 4:15 o'clock and it was at this point the B-29 burst into flames and smoke poured out. T/Sgt "Regular Army" Doran cautioned the right gunner against further firing as the wing men in the formation were coming up. The B-29 was seen to descend in flames in a steep dive by T/Sgt Cox, radio operator, T/Sgt Doran, and T/Sgt McConnell. The latter only fired 30 rounds at this A/C and as a result is gaining fame as "Dead-eye" McConnell. The claim was approved by a board of Officers as 1 enemy aircraft probably destroyed.

Sgt R. L. Tepper and T/Sgt H. E. Moore, left gunner and tail gunner respectively on #541 each claimed 1/2 credit for a Tojo damaged. Tojo came in level from 5 o'clock at an altitude of 14,000 feet after #541 had bombed Hsien and was proceeding back to Hsinching. Tojo dove slightly and came in at 5 o'clock toward the tail at 1200 yards. The right gunner Sgt A.C. Denney fired until the B-29 crossed the tail and then the T/gunner picked it up and fired a continuous burst until the B-29 came within 800 yards. At 6:30 o'clock Sgt Tepper fired until Tojo got out of range. Both Tepper and Moore observed Tojo enclosed by tracers. The right gunner did not claim any hits. A board of officers disapproved the claim on the ground that seeing tracers enter a plane is insufficient proof that it had been hit.

In their usual bored super exaggerated manner, Tokyo radio on 28 September stated "In their raid on 9 September, Japanese aircraft heavily pounded and destroyed several airfields (Chengu area) and followed up with devastating attacks on enemy airfields recently in a second raid. Apparently enemy at this airbase (Hsinching) has been thrown into chaotic state and General Henry Arnold, Commander in Chief of the United States AAF, now confronted with deplorable situation". Nothing could be farther from the truth. The bases in the forward area are open for business as usual. The Japs apparently were not discouraged by their failure to cause any damage in their raid of the 9th, for on the night of the 26th they returned causing slight damage to 5 B-29's. Personnel took cover in revetments and slit trenches away from the runway, and no one was injured. The Jap bombers were unhindered in their operations and were able to come in low due to the absence of A/A and fighters.

By the end of September, the 44th led all squadrons of the Group in enemy planes destroyed, probably destroyed and damaged, which is the indication of high proficiency the gunners have achieved.

On the 27 of September all crews returned to the rear area.

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All sections of the squadron were busy during the month. Two new planes were received as replacements - - #587 and #582. The former was assigned to Major J.D. White and the latter to Captain J. Eigenmann. One slightly battered B-25D, #283 was assigned to the squadron on the 20th for maintenance. During the month four engine changes were accomplished and the airplanes flew a total of 617 hours 35 minutes.

September saw a sharp increase in the amount of gas and dry cargo carried over the hump. Seven trips were made by B-29 tankers and seven by B-29 combat planes. The 14 trips produced the following high results in material delivered:

30,669 gallons of 100 Octane gas.
18,398 pounds of dry cargo.
200 gallons of oil.
4 passengers.

The ordnance section of the squadron won high praise from the XI Bomber Command Ordnance Officer for an intricate and effective camouflage net erected over the bomb revetment - - the only one of its kind on the base. Section personnel employed real ingenuity as there was a shortage of material and equipment on hand. A new device for attaching bomb lift trucks M-1 to Bomb Service truck M-6 was designed by Ordnance section chief, MGt Robert L. Lyman, and plans were forwarded to XI Bomber Command after exhaustive tests were made.

At mission time the Ordnance Section was extremely busy. All personnel including office and armorer units and vehicle mechanics frequently worked from 24 to 36 hours at a stretch. Officially no record was kept but it was a matter of pride among section personnel that Squadron Aircraft were the first to be loaded. All weapons aboard aircraft were thoroughly inspected before and after each mission.

The Squadron war room which had been set up the earlier months proved to be a source of enjoyment and information to the entire squadron. Situation maps are kept current with the aid of a radio that carries news broadcasts continually. Intelligence information is disseminated and digested eagerly by all personnel. Popular magazines are plentiful and the men take advantage of the soft chairs and sweet music that are provided.

The health of the squadron was generally good during the month. Diseases and injuries suffered, by percentage, follows:

50% fever of undetermined origin

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15% Nasopharyngitis
10% Jaundice
5% Broken bones and sprains
2% Gastritis
1% Pyruroclosis
1% Hemorrhoids
1% Cellulitis infection
1% Malaria
3% Hepatitis Infection
10% Amebic Dysentery
1% Hematuria

Captain Paul Anderson, Squadron Flight Surgeon, was transferred to the 263rd General Hospital for treatment of a rare skin disease called Lamphox. He was gone the entire month and was missed by the entire squadron. Sick call was not the same with "Andy" gone.

Moral in the squadron remained high. The Post Exchange operated efficiently and practically everyone in the Squadron participated in sports. A baseball team was organized - - Volley ball courts were constructed for officers and enlisted men. Passes were granted as frequently as possible to give the men a chance to relax in Calcutta or Jamshedpur. Ordnance, Mess and supply sections enjoyed a get to-together in the old group area, which was successful from every view point.

The squadron is looking forward to October as a month in which to add to the troubles of the Japanese.

SQUADRON STRENGTH

1 September	83 Officers 96 Enlisted Men
30 September	83 Officers 96 Enlisted Men

Irving B. Gottlieb
IRVING B. GOTTLIEB,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Historical Officer.

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