

HEADQUARTERS 45TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
Office of the Historical Officer

11 NOV 44 C.K.L.

SQ - BOMB - 45 - H  
(1 AUG 1944) /geb

AFC Number 631  
11 November 1944

Squadron history

1 August thru 31 August 1944

General:

Combat operations during the month of August 1944 produced definite proof to the enemy that the B-29 aircraft has been correctly defined as a "global air task force." The 10th August was D-day for a dual foray by units of the AA Bomber Command at two widely separated Japanese targets. All available aircraft were divided into two substantial forces. Staging from Trincomalee airfield in Ceylon, one force struck by night at the Pladje Oil Refinery located at Palembang, Sumatra. The other force staged from Forward Area fields in China to strike at urban areas of Nagasaki, Japan the same night. Raiding targets 4000 miles apart, simultaneously, forced the enemy to face a defensive nightmare of spreading their ground and air defenses over wide areas, not knowing in which direction the next blow would fall. The mission to Palembang was officially announced by the parent 8th Air Force, headquartered in Washington D.C. and commanded by General "Pa" H. HANCOCK, as the longest bombing mission in the annals of the United States Army Air Force history. Planes of the 45th Bomb Squadron participated in the Palembang effort, but the unit was not represented in the raid on Nagasaki.

The results of the missions of 10 August were still news in the States when a maximum effort daylight strike against the Imperial Iron and Steel Works at Yawata, Japan was ordered to be conducted on 20 August. Staging from fields in the Forward Area, five 45th Bomb Squadron aircraft dropped their bombs with good results in clear weather on the primary target. Intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered from the heavily defended target area. A large number of enemy fighters attempted to break up the attack, but to no avail. As the B-29's left the target, heavy black smoke boiled and billowed up to a height of 15000 feet and could be seen for miles by the returning crews. A great many facts were determined from the mission but one was very apparent. The B-29 had penetrated to the Japanese mainland in daylight, had bombed with good results a tremendously important strategic target, and had sustained light combat losses in relation to the magnitude of the operation. If the mission was an indication of how determined Jap resistance would be on daylight raids to the home land in the future, one fact was certain . . . it would have to be better.

Squadron history, 1 Aug, thru 31 Aug 44, HQ 45th Bomb Sq, APO 631, 11 Nov 44

### Combat Operations:

As the aircraft of the Squadron returned to India after the daylight attack against Anshan, Manchuria on 29 July, maintenance and combat crews went to work with a will getting the planes in readiness for the next mission. The 45th Bomb Squadron was directed to furnish six aircraft for the approaching raid.

On 8 August crews received a preliminary briefing and an indication as to the possible direction of the next target. The briefing was concerned primarily with operations involved in the mission from Chakulia to the staging area. It was revealed that the aircraft would take off on the actual mission, identified only as Bomarang, from Chira Day Airfield in Ceylon, island possession of Great Britain lying off the southeast coast of India. Special emphasis was laid on the layout of the field, parking and refueling instructions, and discussion of the billeting and administrative provisions that had been made by personnel sent ahead as an advance echelon.

All pilots were directed to maintain radio silence during the ferry flight from India to Ceylon, in order not to jeopardize the security of the strike. A list of instructions relative to the movement to the staging area was given to airplane commanders and the briefing concluded.

Movement to Chira Day began early on the next morning, 9 August. All aircraft of the organization completed the flight without incident, although a severe cross wind was sweeping the runway as they landed. As they landed they were immediately taxied into parking position on the taxiways on both sides of the 7200 foot Runway. Each aircraft was parked on a 45° angle in order to conserve space, and to facilitate refueling from the gasoline dispensing outlets adjacent to each aircraft's parking position.

First impression of Ceylon was the pleasant climate, a noticeable relief from the summer heat of India. The runway and surrounding installations of the field were located between two small bodies of water from which a cooling breeze was constant. Housing and mess accommodations were located in large, permanent stucco buildings on the hills overlooking the runway. For those individuals present, who had been in Penang, the complete layout reminded them of 6th Air Force Headquarters at Albrook Field, C. Z.

Evidence of the carrier borne raid by the Japs against the field in December 1942 still remained. Some of the damaged hangars had never been repaired . . . instead new ones had been constructed. British soldiers stared with awe and pride at the long line of sleek B-29's covering the parking areas. A feeling of close cooperation soon became apparent as British equipment and personnel were utilized in last minute preparations for the take-off the next afternoon.

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Summary History, 1 Aug thru 31 Aug 44, Hq 45th Bomb Sq, Aft CBI, 11 Nov 44

Final briefing was held at 2100 H that night, even before the target was identified as the Pladje Oil Refinery at Palembang, Sumatra, the crew did know the raid was going to be long. Each aircraft had four auxiliary tanks installed and four 500 pound GP bombs loaded prior to movement to Ceylon. The briefing was thorough and special emphasis was laid on Air-Sea rescue units of the British Navy which would be in certain positions along the route. The importance of the target was explained . . . one of the most important in the entire Far East. It had a capacity of over 20,000,000 barrels of crude oil per year and was capable of cracking half that amount. It was believed that Pladje was processing almost to its full extent and producing 22 percent of Japan's total annual fuel requirements and 78 percent of its total aviation gasoline requirements. The destruction of Pladje would either deprive Japan of vast quantities of essential fuel oil and aviation gasoline, or force her to ship Sumatran crude oil to Japan for refining, and re-ship the finished products back to the southern battle zones.

A portion of the striking force was assigned to mine the Boasi River, but all planes of the 40th Bomb Group were assigned to the attack on Pladje. As the briefing was concluded members of the crews from the Squadron had many thoughts, but two prominent ones were the heavy take-off and the great amount of water over which the long flight was to run.

Take-offs for the mission began at 0945Z the next afternoon, when planes of the 402nd Bomb Group started out. Before the first 40th Bomb Group plane took off at 1001Z, a wind shift occurred and resulted in a tail wind, making the take-off more hazardous. Of the fourteen aircraft airborne from the Group six were from the Squadron. All take-offs were made without incident and the long mission was begun.

Captain LIA V. LATHENS and crew returned early in aircraft #222 due to oil leak in #2 engine, but made a second take-off in darkness at 1,312 after necessary repairs and refueling had been accomplished.

All planes of the 45th Bomb Squadron returned safely to China Bay Airfield, five having bombed the Primary Target and one the Secondary Target, but the simplicity of such a statement doesn't begin to account for the excellent mechanical condition the planes had to be in to successfully complete the mission, which averaged 17:12 hours for the 40th Bomb Group. Nor does it account for the stamina or skill of the crews, or the nerve-racking pressure of the flight on them.

A brief narrative account of the mission follows, excerpted from the 40th Bomb Group consolidated Mission Report:

"Of the 14 aircraft airborne 11 successfully attacked the Primary target, the Pladje refinery at Palembang, Sumatra, dropping a total of 11 tons of 500 pound GP bombs and 12 photo flash bombs with amazing results believed to be fair to good. The target was obscured by 7/10's to 10/10's cloud cover, and while several large fires were observed through breaks in

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the clouds, no accurate observation of bombing results was possible.

Two aircraft bombed the secondary target, the Pangasinan brandan refinery in Sumatra, with a total of 2 tons of 500 pound air bombs. Cloud cover would not permit any accurate observation of results, but crews believed they hit the general target area.

Aircraft #310 which was assigned to act as pathfinder aircraft and illuminate the primary target with parachute flares, was forced to abort due to engine trouble.

Heavy anti-aircraft fire at the primary target was reported as nil to moderate and inaccurate. Automatic weapons fire was reported to moderate and inaccurate. There was some evidence of the employment of ground defenses of rockets, giving an appearance similar to roman candles and reaching an altitude of 10000 feet.

Possibly as many as 10 - 12 searchlights were reported in the primary target area.

No anti-aircraft fire or searchlights were reported at the secondary target.

Enemy fighters opposition from both single and twin engine fighters at the primary target was weak. In connection with this, sightings of as many as 10 to 12 enemy aircraft were reported as sighted in the target area, and on the route back, but all attacks reported were half-hearted and were not pressed home.

No fighter opposition was encountered at the secondary target.

No barrage balloons or smoke screens were reported.

Searchlight regulations at both targets were reported as excellent.

Air sea rescue arrangements were excellent and very well planned, and arrangements for evasion and escape, while fortunately not found necessary to utilize, resulted in very favorable comment from combat crew personnel.

Indicated below are the crew members who participated in the raid, with notation of the aircraft flown in and number of hours logged on the mission.

44-0308  
Crew

Time 15:15

Captain	WILLIAMS, WILLIAM S.	(P)
1st Lt	WILLIAMS, WILLIAM S.	(OP)
1st Lt	TUNNEY, WILLIAM S.	(N)
1st Lt	WATSON, WILLIAM S.	(N)
P/O	WATSON, WILLIAM S.	(N)

42-0308

crew cont'd

1st Sgt	Wells, Robert A.	(1)
2nd Sgt	Wagner, Arvin A.	(2)
3rd Sgt	Warrar, Samuel O.	(3)
4th Sgt	Johnston, Myra L.	(4)
5th Sgt	Wasson, Robert W.	(5)
6th Sgt	Watterfield, James L.	(6)

42-0275

crew

Time 17:20

Captain	Ward, Paul G.	(1)
1st Lt	Ward, James V.	(2)
2nd Lt	Ward, William L.	(3)
2nd Lt	Ward, Edward T.	(4)
1st Sgt	Waller, Harry G.	(5)
2nd Sgt	Woolough, Duayne L.	(6)
3rd Sgt	Worral, Gilbert H.	(7)
4th Sgt	Clark, Thomas A.	(8)
5th Sgt	Swell, Russell R.	(9)
6th Sgt	Wagon, Charles W.	(10)
7th Sgt	Walpern, Jack (res)	(11)

42-0281

crew

Time 17:25

1st Sgt	Ward, Charles H.	(1)
2nd Lt	Ward, William L.	(2)
3rd Lt	Ward, Harold H.	(3)
4th Lt	Ward, Edward (Res)	(4)
5th Lt	Ward, James A.	(5)
6th Lt	Ward, Robert J.	(6)
7th Lt	Ward, Ernest O.	(7)
8th Lt	Ward, Richard T.	(8)
9th Lt	Ward, Claude A.	(9)
10th Lt	Ward, Joseph V.	(10)
11th Lt	Ward, Alfred G.	(11)

42-0313

crew

Time 17:05

Captain	Ward, William L.	(1)
1st Lt	Ward, James V.	(2)
2nd Lt	Ward, Edward T.	(3)
3rd Lt	Ward, William L.	(4)
4th Lt	Ward, Harold H.	(5)

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# 42-0313

Crew List

1 Sgt	Brophy, Robert J.	(A)
1 Sgt	O'Leary, Humphrey J.	(F)
1 Sgt	Hanger, George W.	(W)
1 Sgt	Bridges, Herbert E.	(M)
1 Sgt	Fiedler, Alvin E.	(T)

# 42-0295

Crew

Time 17:30

Major	Allen, Edward A.	(P)
Captain	McGregor, William (M)	(W)
1st Lt	McKenna, Ralph H.	(M)
1st Lt	McLellan, Paul J.	(M)
2nd Lt	McLennan, Edward B.	(F)
1st Lt	McLennan, William (M)	(V)
1 Sgt	Slaver, Royal V.	(A)
1 Sgt	Master, Robert A.	(W)
1 Sgt	Mussig, Joseph (M)	(L)
1 Sgt	Austin, Charles A.	(M)
1 Sgt	Cox, Edward G.	(T)

# 42-0227

Crew

Time 18:15

Captain	Mathews, Ira V.	(P)
1st Lt	Winters, Robert A.	(W)
1st Lt	Hindenberg, Herbert C.	(M)
2nd Lt	Winters, William A.	(M)
P/C	Conroy, Louis A.	(F)
1 Sgt	Thompson, Fred H.	(A)
1 Sgt	Sienkiewicz, Stanley V.	(V)
1 Sgt	Winborne, Daniel F.	(W)
1 Sgt	Wool, Ralph A.	(W)
1 Sgt	McBride, Lee A.	(M)
1 Sgt	Wolver, Albert W.	(T)
1 Sgt	Stone, William T.	(F)

The last aircraft to return to Ceylon, from Palembang, was #222 of the 45th Bomb Squadron manned by Captain Ira V. Mathews and crew. To the unknowing observer who watched #222 take off late the night before, its late return on the afternoon of 11 August did not seem unusual. The exterior appearance of the plane, even with one prop whistling, and another feathered, still didn't tell the story of the miracle that occurred before the crew was able to jump out of #222 on to the firm ground of Ceylon after 18:15 hours in the air. The crew was tired and the crew

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Questions weren't asked at the time, but as the crew chief, Capt. Ericson  
W. Viox looked inside to find the majority of equipment gone and the general  
appearance of the interior resembling the wake of a small tornado, the  
woful expression on his face was testimony enough that the good ship had  
come in on a wing and a prayer.

The next day the complete story was told. While cruising at 19,000  
feet enroute to the target, F/O LOUIS GIBBS reported the No. 4 oil cooler  
automatic regulator inoperative, but that the manual regulator was func-  
tioning properly and the oil consumption was normal. Engine operating  
speed at the time was 30 in MG, at 2000 RPM.

Thirty minutes later F/O GIBBS reported the engine oil consumption  
in No. 4 engine to be increasing, at that time 10 gallons per hour. Since  
the target was very near, it was decided to approach it direct, expecting  
three to four hours cruising from the engine after the bomb release. The  
litometer indicated 40 gallons.

Immediately after bomb away F/O GIBBS reported the oil consumption  
to be increasing rapidly in No. 4 engine. Only 120 nautical miles from  
the target, and with the oil pressure 65#, oil temperature 65°C, and quantity  
15 gallons Captain KATHENS attempted to feather the propeller. The feath-  
ering button stayed in, but the RPM failed to decrease from 1150. He pulled  
the button out and repeated the operation with the same result. Five minutes  
later, with the oil pressure 35#, oil temperature 90°C, quantity approxi-  
mately 10 gallons, and 1150 RPM, Captain KATHENS attempted to feather  
again, but with the same result.

Since it seemed impossible to fly the remaining 1700 miles with a  
windmilling prop, the bomb bay fuel tanks were immediately salvaged, and  
the crew proceeded to strip the plane of all unnecessary equipment. After  
jettisoning the gun computers, auxiliary power plant, gun sights, CPC  
equipment and firing the ammunition, the plane cruised at 11500 feet with  
an indicated air speed of 165 MPH, engine speed 31 in MG, 2100 RPM, and  
cylinder head temperature of 250°C.

Arrival at the position of a British Cruiser (air-sea rescue unit)  
was made at 0306, still holding 11500 feet of altitude, and an air speed  
of 165 MPH. About 2100 gallons of fuel remained at this point. The  
position of the Cruiser was about 700 nautical miles from China Bay.  
Hourly fuel consumption was estimated to be 375 gallons per hour. The  
navigator, Lt. Lt. Harold G. HILSHIRE gave an ETA of 0800Z at China Bay,  
which if correct would have given a reserve of 225 gallons of fuel.

Although each crew member fully realized the small chance of completing  
the flight, and with immediate rescue assured had it been decided  
on outside the cruiser, all were willing to continue and attempt to reach  
the field and save the airplane. The flight was continued and the cruiser

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was soon out of sight.

Fifteen minutes before the EFA, the No. 1 engine ran out of fuel at 2500 feet. All crew members had taken ditching stations five minutes before. The senior gunner completed removal of the upper sighting dome before taking his station.

Due to strong headwinds the original EFA was 15 minutes early, but the plane flew satisfactorily on the inboard engines at the low gross weight. After landing at China Bay F/O Gammock estimated the total fuel aboard as follows:

No. 1 engine	30 gallons residue
No. 2 engine	80 gallons
No. 3 engine	70 gallons
No. 4 engine	20 gallons residue
Total	200 gallons

On 12 August all planes of the squadron, except #222, returned home to Adia. Details of the Nagasaki mission, which occurred almost simultaneously as the Palembang raid, were revealed to crews from the 25th and 44th Bomb Squadrons who had returned the same day. Stories were swapped until late that night.

Official account of the mission is given below as recounted in the 40th Bomb Group consolidated mission report. Although no crews or aircraft of the 45th Bomb Squadron participated in the raid, pertinent facts concerning it are included in the history to complete the record of operations occurring while the squadron is a part of the Group.

The Group began dispatching B-29 aircraft from the rear to Forward Area on 7 August 1944. On 10 August the last of the eight planes dispatched arrived at A-1.

On 10 August a total of 7 B-29 aircraft were airborne for the assigned mission. One aircraft unable to take off due to mechanical difficulties. The first aircraft took off at 0902Z and the last at 0911Z. A short time after take-off aircraft #503 developed engine trouble and returned to the field at 1008Z. The trouble was remedied and the plane took off again. Plane #298 returned early to A-1 at 1020Z due to an oil leak in #2 engine.

Six aircraft, five carrying 10 M-18 incendiaries with fusing of 30 second nose and 3 K-10 fragmentation bombs with fusing of 3 second nose, and one aircraft carrying the same ordnance as above with addition of a photo-flash bomb, proceeded on to the target. Aircraft #319 jettisoned its bombs between Jishu Island and Korea due to the fact that radar went out on the plane and instrument weather prevented the navigator from determining his exact position.

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The other five aircraft dropped 80 bombs with excellent results. Three of the five dropped by radar, due to the fact that a large cloud obscured the target at the bomb release line. Aircraft #274 by seeing in a heading of 210° was able to bomb visually, as was aircraft #294 on a heading of 121°. On a second run over the target aircraft #274 dropped photo-flash bombs and took pictures.

All crews reported seeing large fires in and around the target. Photos taken by #294 show clouds obscuring the target, but fires could be seen through the cloud breaks. Because of the cloud cover it is not possible to determine the relationship of the fires to the aiming point.

There was no searchlights nor fighter opposition in the target area. No barrage balloons were reported in the area and no smoke screen was observed. Blackout was poor over the entire island of Kyushu, and a majority of the crews felt the enemy had made no attempt to black out the area.

Planes went over the target singularly and bombing was accomplished from 16,000 feet.

Three of our aircraft landed at A-7 because A-1 was closed in when they returned. The first of these landed at A-7 at 2333Z and the last at 0000Z. Two planes landed at A-1 at 0026Z and 0030Z. All landings were accomplished without incident.

The next few days were busy ones for the squadron. The engineering section of the 3rd Bomb Maintenance Squadron, aided by combat crews of the 3rd Bomb Squadron, went to work with a will in getting the planes back into combat condition. Speed was the order of the day and the need was determined when the Field Order for mission #7 arrived on the field, directing a maximum effort daylight strike on a way against the Imperial Army and Steel Corps located at Yawata on the island of Kyushu, Japan.

The Group bar room was closed off to traffic and became a work room for pre-mission planning and work. Captain JUMH, Group Navigator, together with other squadron navigators plotted courses on maps to be used on the mission. Other Group and Squadron specialists plotted all ground formations, both friendly and enemy on long range navigational charts to assure each crew of accurate conditions at all stages of the flight. From the first moment of the target designation, it was known the mission was to be the most hazardous, from point of probable enemy opposition, that had been contemplated up to that time.

The 1st support movement to the forward Area was begun. Four aircraft of the organization proceeded to A-1 that day. Aircraft #291, #295, #296, and #272. Aircraft #252, already at A-1, having been undergoing engine changes necessitated by engine difficulty while crossing the Channel to the forward Area to participate in the raid. First Lt. ... Lt. Colonel ... crew had already completed the work and were ready to go when the day of the mission arrived.

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1. The mission was held directly after the evaluation of the mission procedure was thoroughly explained and the briefing was reviewed with a weather forecast. The Weather officer pointed out that while flight and target conditions would be generally good, storms would be encountered over the route en route east of sea on the return flight. The forecast did not worry crew, but before the mission was concluded and made a matter of record the storms played a vital part in the success.

Operations on the mission began early on the morning of 20 August. Aircraft #299 of the Squadron was the first off. Colonel [redacted] was pilot with Captain [redacted] as co-pilot and crew consisting of [redacted] following #299 off came #402, #275, and #281 which formed the first diamond formation to depart for Iwata, and composed many of 45th Squadron's planes. Aircraft #308 was the eighth plane to get off and was in the pilot position in the second formation.

The following remarks from the narrative account of the 4th Bomb Group consolidated mission report reveals the story of the raid:

The following remarks from the narrative account of the 4th Bomb Group consolidated mission report reveals the story of the raid:

A total of 22 B-29 aircraft had been dispatched to the forward area and 20 aircraft, including #298, a special photo plane, had arrived safely at sea. Aircraft #405 of the 39th Bomb Squadron was lost somewhere between the two bases.

Starting at 0600 on 20 August 1944 the first aircraft took off on the assigned mission to bomb the Imperial Arm and Steel Works at Iwata, Japan. The primary target at Leoyao, China was assigned as the secondary target and the railroad yards at Kaifeng, China as the target of last resort. A total of 22 B-29 aircraft were airborne in 35 minutes without incident. Two aircraft were unable to take off due to mechanical difficulties and #298, the photo plane, was not permitted to join the mission on order from AF Jomber [redacted] and but was assigned a special photo mission at a later date.

Of these 22 aircraft four were forced to return without bombing the primary target, due to mechanical difficulties. However, one of these four was able to bomb the target of last resort by radar with uncovered results.

The remaining 18 aircraft proceeded to the primary target and it is known that 17 of these bombed visually with good results. It is believed that the remaining aircraft probably bombed the primary target, but evidence to substantiate this is lacking as the plane is listed as missing.

Weather at the primary target was WVCU and a total of between 20.75 and 25.25 tons of type M-64 500 lb GP bombs with fusing of .1 second nose and .025 second tail were dropped on the Imperial Arm and Steel Works from approximately 20000 feet using the old color works as the aiming point. Aircraft of the group were over the target from 0800 to 1051a.

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Enemy antiaircraft fire ranged from moderate to inaccurate for the first planes over the target to intense and accurate for later planes. A barrage type of fire was resorted to by the enemy, and the heavy defenses around the target put up enough fire to give the impression to crews of a large fire cloud resulting from the bursts.

Enemy fighter opposition was moderate to strong with numerous twin-engine fighters being used.

The enemy apparently had sufficient advance notice from his warning nets to properly alert his defenses both ground and air.

Sixteen aircraft of the group returned safely to base, and three were missing. Five of the aircraft returning to base sustained battle damage from antiaircraft fire and fighters. Four were superficially damaged and one was seriously damaged.

The aircraft while attempting to photograph airfields in the vicinity of Yokota, obtained several photos of large spherical balloons flying at considerable altitudes. Although these balloons are evident on the photographs (A-20 camera), no crew member on any aircraft reported having seen them.

Strike pictures secured of the primary target were excellent and several hits being made in the immediate area of the aiming point. However, these pictures covered only the situation created by the first few minutes over the target and further reconnaissance will be necessary in order to make an accurate assessment of damage.

Aircraft leaving the primary target started landing at 4-1 at 1454 and the last aircraft was down at 1702. Two aircraft were forced to land at 4-1 due to shortage of fuel.

The cooperation of the U.S. Navy in supplying two submarines to assist in air-sea rescue operations was the subject of very favorable comment on the part of all personnel concerned and was an excellent morale booster. Positions of enemy convoys seen in the Yellow Sea, and radius to the submarines, furnished successful target later in the day for torpedoing, and the Navy sent a message of thanks to the Commander Comard.

Two squadrons aircraft, out one, returned from the mission. Captain [redacted] and crew [redacted] bailed out in friendly territory after having bombed the primary target with planes of another group. No radio reports were reported after take off and until the crew was out and told their story, the plane and crew had never been heard from and were presumed lost. Their story, as told, is basis for the following narrative:

The crew immediately went on oxygen and the radio gear was sent back through the tunnel to help with the wounded crew members. The ship was repaired in the rear cockpit and first aid and first impressions were taken.

The crew reported numerous other fighters in the area and further attacks were made against #306. More flak was encountered just as the formation passed over the coast line enroute to China, but no hits were reported. The ship continued to operate satisfactorily and about one mile back across the China Sea Captain GIBBAUD decided to leave the formation due to his desire for lower power settings to conserve fuel. Despite all efforts on the part of the crew the CFC never flew from his aircraft at about the same time as #306 left the formation.

His first hit by flak and fighters, Captain GIBBAUD had considered the idea for "convier" but had abandoned the idea due to the wounded man on board as he feared the crew might have to bail out on arrival. On the trip back across the China Sea at 11,300 ft, the flight engineer had succeeded in effecting repairs which resulted in bringing back the instrument for all engines except #1. This was accomplished at between 23000 feet and 27000 feet while on oxygen and in reserve of attention.

The ship continued to function satisfactorily with #1 engine putting out power. Due to a shortage of oxygen resulting from large quantities having been used in an effort to save the CFC number, let down had been accomplished to about 15000 feet at which altitude the crew was able to get along with only intermittent use of oxygen. Approximately 250 miles before crossing the enemy lines in the western part of occupied China a solid bank of thunderstorms was encountered. The pilot reported that while excessive, the turbulence was not the worst he had ever encountered but that electric disturbances were the worst he had ever seen. St. Elmo fire played all over the ship and props and lightning lit up the ship with startling brilliance. At a point which the navigator from #4 believed put them approximately over the enemy lines the ship hit a terrific updraft. Despite the fact that the pilot kept the nose of the ship down, the ship was carried up several thousand feet. At the top of the updraft the ship stalled out and headed down at what the pilot described as greater than a 90 degree angle.

The pilot realized that they were over territory with 11000 foot peaks, but feared that he would tear off the wings if he brought the ship out too quickly. At about 8000 feet Captain GIBBAUD managed to bring the ship out of the dive and zoomed up to about 10000 feet. During the dive all crew members who were not held by safety belts had been pinned against the ceiling of the plane. At 10000 feet Captain GIBBAUD leveled the ship off but found that he could not hold altitude despite an IAS of 250 mph. He found that by dropping the nose until he got an IAS of 210 he was able to keep flying. Repeated attempts to fly straight and level were to no avail and since he was losing approximately 500 feet a minute in mountainous country Captain GIBBAUD gave orders to the crew to bail out. At the time of bail out ship position was estimated at 31 30'N, 11 15'E.

When he gave orders to bail out the Pilot salvaged his rear bomb bay doors and dropped the nose wheel, keeping the main gear up. When the order to bail out came the radio operator started tearing the rear of the ship through the bomb bays and while his experience was undoubtedly harrowing it was an amusing side. He climbed over the cat walk on top of the forward bomb bay tanks and over the wing at the side of the mid-section. When he looked down into the rear bomb bay he saw that the bomb bay doors were intermittently shutting and opening. The force of the wind was such that they would not remain open for any long period of time. He pondered the advisability of endeavouring to jump through the intermittent opening and finally decided to take a chance. Shutting his eyes he jumped hoping and expecting to drop into mid air. He was somewhat more than startled when he only dropped a few feet and hit the bomb bay doors which just when he had decided to jump had swung shut and remained closed. Beside jumping on the doors in his frustration he was unable to open them and finally clambered across them through the battered rear pressure door into the crew compartment thence to the side door via the radar compartment. He was the first of those in the rear to leave the ship.

At the front part of the ship the Navigator, Bombardier and Flight Engineer bailed out through the nose wheel well, the Pilot and Co-pilot remaining with the ship for some two or three minutes after the Flight Engineer left. In the rear of the ship the Radio Operator, Right Gunner and Left Gunner bailed out through the side door. The Left Gunner who was the last to leave the rear of the ship reports that just before he jumped he spoke with Sgt. Henshaw, the Radar Operator, who was with him in the "putt putt" compartment. Henshaw informed him that he would follow as soon as he had fastened the leg straps on his chute which he had on at that time.

Captain Gilmartin reports that during the dive of the ship he had lost his headset and was unable to recover it again. For this reason he did not know if he was on interphone communication with the Tail Gunner. He kept shouting the bailout order over his throat "micro" and kept sounding the alarm bell but does not know if these signals reached the Tail Gunner. Some two or three minutes after the Flight Engineer had jumped Captain Gilmartin turned on the alarm bell, kept it on and followed the Co-pilot through the nose wheel well. At this point all crew members with the exception of the dead CPU Gunner, the Radar Operator and the Tail Gunner are known to have bailed out. At the time this report is being written it is known that only two (2) bodies were subsequently found in the wreckage of the crashed ship. It is assumed that one of these is that of the Tail Gunner or the Radar Operator. All other crew members are known to be safe and the possibility of either the Tail Gunner or the Radar Operator being alive cannot be known.

All crew members had varied stories to tell after bail out but in substance were basically the same. All parachutes opened OK and all

... 20, 1941 ...

... Captain ...

... help ...

... arrived ...

... on 27 August ...

... the office ...

... the crew ...

... As the ...

... Indicated ...

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