

FORTY FIFTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
Office of the Historical Officer

CPL/amb

3 June 1944

History
Period of 1 February thru 29 February

General:

The history period, covered by the inclusive dates above, reflects a multitude of rapid changes in the phases of squadron life and activity. While most of the history will record the preparation and movement of the organization from its training ground at Pratt, Kansas to the theatre of operations, mention will be made of the closing days of training and the preliminary stages of organization at APO #631. The expediency of work and preparation prior to overseas movement, coupled with unavoidable errors congruent with any large scale planning, caused morale and unit spirit to fluctuate as much as the variances in personalities. This writing will attempt to record accurately the true status of the squadron throughout the complete period.

1 February to 17 February 1944

Training:

During the period of time indicated above all efforts in the squadron were directed towards completing all assigned training before the prior to Overseas Movement inspection scheduled for February 19th.

All personnel, not already qualified in their authorized arms, were sent to the range until qualification was obtained. Kansas at the time was having some of its coldest weather and difficulty was experienced in handling cold steel to the degree of proficiency demanded by regulations.

Classes in ground school were dispensed with, except for make-up's in aero-medical and Intelligence lectures. Operations concentrated on scheduling available B-17's in long-range navigation and high altitude missions to complete this phase of air training. At the same time crew members were concluding work in combat technique.

Personnel:

Clothing inspections were held and every effort was made to have all men in the organization properly equipped with clothing and individual equipment. Service records, 201 files, clothing records and all related records were checked and brought up to date. The squadron was administratively prepared for the approaching move overseas.

On 12 February 1st Lt PAUL E McDERMOTT CM, O-566070, was assigned to the organization as adjutant, vice 1st Lt ROBERT J. MERRISON, O-564020 relieved. Lt MERRISON was transferred because of length of time required to recover from a major operation, and all personnel were sorry to see him left behind. In Lt McDERMOTT we received a capable replacement with a good background in personnel and administrative work.

18 February to 29 February 1944

General:

On the 18 February the first overseas B-29, airplane # 42-6261, was assigned to the squadron. The airplane was further assigned to the crews of Capt BOYD L GRUBBS and 1st Lt HARVIN W. SPOCKETT. There was a multitude of work to be accomplished, since the plane was not modified. All engines had to be changed, replaced with the new combat engine, along with numerous modifications in certain equipment and parts of the airplane. To facilitate speed of work, and at the same time further equipt combat crew personnel with the maintenance aspects of the B-29, the two crews were placed on 12 hour shifts to bring the airplane into commission.

During the remainder of February the following additional airplanes were assigned to the 45th Bombardment Squadron, and in turn assigned to the crews indicated:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Airplane No</u>	<u>Crew</u>
23 February	#42-6275	Capt MARVIN W GOODWIN Capt JACK C LEDFORD
28 February	#42-6313	Capt WILLIAM G HENTRO Capt JASPER W WOODRUFF
29 February	#42-6308	Capt CHARLES TAYLOR Capt GLENN W LANDRETH

In each assignment the same provision for accomplishing necessary modifications was made by placing the crews on 12 hour shifts of maintenance, and modification work.

Training:

All training was considered completed at the end of February. The last days of February saw most operations schedules listing high altitude bombing missions in B-17's and ferry missions carrying crews to the Modification Centers at Marietta, Ga and Oklahoma City to bring back B-29's to the Group. Total flying time for the Squadron, B-17's and B-29's combined, was 506:55.

The completion of the training was viewed in two different lights by combat crew personnel. For the most part the men were proud of their efforts and hard work. A lot had been accomplished. They could look back and remember when the first B-29 was assigned to the Squadron in July 1943. It was the first plane to come off of the production line, and the first to be assigned to a Squadron. All training had been conducted under severe handicaps. Production "bugs" had to be ironed out and familiarization and training of crews on the airplane was retarded by the fact that at no time were there more than two B-29's assigned to the Unit. Maintenance men were confronted with the problem of keeping an airplane flying that was constantly presenting difficulties associated with any new type of equipment. B-17's had to be substituted to meet the training requirements. Kansas had given a good portion of bad weather in addition. Yet, with all hindrances, a precedent had been established and the new airplane was viewed with pride and confidence.

On the other side of the ledger was the idea that the project was incomplete. Some felt that the lack of gunnery, restricted amount of actual flying time, and actual extensive training in the B-29 itself might be a serious problem in combat operations. However, crews had been formed and personnel were organized. Individual pride in ability and confidence in the importance of the assignment to use predominated.

Personnel:

On 21 February 1st Lt CLARENCE F. LOWMAN, Squadron Intelligence Officer, 1st Lt PAUL E. MCKENRY JR, Squadron Adjutant, and Sgt Scaborn M. Brock Jr, Intelligence N. C. O. departed from the Squadron and Pratt to proceed to the Theater of Operations, via A. T. C. They were part of the Advanced Headquarters, 40th Bombardment Group, which totaled 11 officers and nine EM.

Note: Record of strength of unit for the period not available. As soon as information is obtained it will be forwarded in a supplementary report.

History of the Department of the Army for Period of 1 Feb 1904 to 29 Feb 1914

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