

## INITIAL INSTALLMENT

Historical Report of Headquarters Detachment, 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M)  
(from 20 April 1943 to 1 April 1944)

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During the Spring of 1943, one of the medium bombardment groups organized in the Third Air Force was the 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M). With the activation of this group there came into existence four new B-26 squadrons and a headquarters detachment. This narrative concerns the headquarters detachment.

One of the first official references to Hq Detachment, 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, is found in General Order 28, Hq Army Air Base, MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida. In this general order, dated 1 April 1943, authority was given for the activation of Hq, 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) along with the 596<sup>th</sup>, 597<sup>th</sup>, 598<sup>th</sup> and 599<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadrons (M). Activation date was 20 April 1943 and the new B-26 Group was stationed at MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida. Assigned to the III Bomber Command, the group was to obtain its cadre, fillers, and replacements from sources under the control of the Commanding General, III Bomber Command. All this was in General Order 28 which further stated that the unit should reach full T/O strength by 13 July and would commence training approximately seven days after that. (See Exhibit 1.)

Temporary CO of the Group at the time of activation was Capt. Bertram E. Solomon who had come to the 397<sup>th</sup> from the 40<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing. In the original cadre assigned to the group (par 6, SO 126, Hq, III Bomber Command, dated 10 May 1943) were the following current personnel of Hq Detachment:

M/Sgt John C. Hardy  
M/Sgt Charles M. Alexander  
T/Sgt James M. Calabria  
T/Sgt Earl D. Trull  
S/Sgt Charles J. Huber  
S/Sgt David Jacobs  
Sgt James Gaffney

From Keesler Field, Maj. Ross L. Freeman was assigned to the Group on 10 May (par 49, SO 129, Hq ABAC, MacDill Fld, Fla). He served as CO for a short time and later as Executive Officer of the Group. At the same time, Capt. Forest W. Acton entered the Group from BTC, Atlantic City (par 47, SO 129, Hq ABAC, MacDill Fld, Fla) and was appointed Acting Group Adjutant. (par 5, SO 6, 397 Gp.) A week later, Maj. Frank L. Wood, Jr. came into the Group (par 6, SO 133, III Bomber Command, 17 May 43) and assumed command of the group.

The bulk of later fillers came from the 21<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (M), an operational training group in B-26 aircraft at MacDill Field, and from the 1<sup>st</sup> Minimum Altitude Bomber Torpedo Unit Medium at Eglin Field, Florida.

Shortly after activation, the Group was sent to the Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics at Orlando, Florida to pursue a course in medium bombardment. The officers and men of the Group attending the 30 day course beginning 17 May 1943 were designated in Special Order 129, Hq III Bomber Command, dated 13 May 1943. For two weeks at AAFSAT, the men took an orientation course, then moved to Montbrook Army Air Base, Williston, Florida for the final two weeks. At Montbrook, simulated bombing missions were conducted.

Returning to MacDill early in June, the Group was faced with the task of filling its ranks and organizing for the training in the Summer months ahead. There came two large shipments of fillers to Group Headquarters during these early months of the Group:

First, from Eglin Field came the following officers and men on 24 May 1943: (Present ranks and grades are listed.)

Lt. Col.	ROLLIN M. WININGHAM	(par 5, SO 139, MacDill)
Maj.	WALTER D. SNYDER, JR.	(par 7, SO 144, " )
Capt.	MONTY R. GREGOLINE	(par 5, SO 139, MacDill)
CWO	MILBURN P. MERIWETHER	( ditto )
T/Sgt	Arnold B. Dodson	(par 1, SO 139, MacDill)
T/Sgt	Gerald S. Samet	( ditto )
T/Sgt	Horace Womack, Jr.	( " )
Cpl	Louis Georgecocopoulos	( " )
Pfc	Frank O. Forsythe, Jr.	( " )

Complementing the shipment of men from Eglin Field were the men received from the 21<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group. Of the present personnel, the following came from the 21<sup>st</sup> in May and June of 1943:

Maj	ROBERT L. McCOLLOM	- 10 May 43 (par 10, SO 126, III BC )
Maj	WILLIAM RAFKIND	- 17 May 43 (par 6, SO 133, III BC )
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt	DEANE WEINBERG, JR	- 11 May 43 (SO 127, III BC )
T/Sgt	Charles R. Allison	- 30 June 43 (par 10, SO 177, III BC )
T/Sgt	James R. Ellis	- 25 June 43 (par 19, SO 172, III BC )
T/Sgt	Robert S. Irvin	- 20 June 43 (par 11, SO 167,

			III BC	)
Sgt	Horace O. Jacobs	- 25 June 43	(par 19, SO 172,	
			III BC	)
Sgt	George J. Konick	-	ditto	
Sgt	Stanley J. Kusiel	-	"	
Sgt	Clyde L. Sunquist	-	"	
Sgt	Charles W. Johnson, Jr	-	"	
Cpl	Lawrence Girgenti	- 24 June 43	(par 12, SO 171,	
			III BC	)
Cpl	Harold I. Marmorstein	- 20 June 43	(par 11, SO 167,	
			III BC	)
Pvt	Robert A. Lindahl	- 25 June 43	(par 19, SO 172,	
			III BC	)

Lt. Colonel Winingham, then Major Winingham, took command of the Group while it was at Montbrook and Captain Paul W. Vereen, from Eglin Fld, was appointed Group Adjutant. Captain Acton was transferred to the 596<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, where he became executive officer.

Fillers continued to come into Headquarters Detachment until it reached full T/O strength, and early in July the offices of the Group were moved into hangar 3 at MacDill Field.

18 July 1943, Lt Colonel John R. Batjer assumed command of the Group. Lt. Colonel Batjer came to the Group from the 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing. Major Winingham was appointed Deputy Group Commander and Major Wood became Group Operations Officer.

Captain Vereen was appointed Commanding Officer of Headquarters Detachment in addition to his other duties by VG CO 21 May 43. This appointment was confirmed and made of record by par 4, SO 73, 397<sup>th</sup> Gp, 3 August 43.

On 29 August 1943, Major Kenneth R. Majors was transferred to the 397<sup>th</sup> from the deactivated 477<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. Assigned to the 397<sup>th</sup> by par 33, SO 230, III BC, he was appointed Group Adjutant by par 1, SO 98, 397<sup>th</sup> Gp, 31 August 43. Captain Vereen was transferred to the 597<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron and Major Majors subsequently became commanding officer of Headquarters Detachment.

With the deactivation of the 477<sup>th</sup>, Headquarters Detachment received the following enlisted men from the personnel of that group: (par 33, SO 230, III BC, 29 August 1943.)

T/Sgt Fred W. Turner  
S/Sgt Donald J. Frantz

S/Sgt Benton K. Johns  
Pvt George J. Jenner

Lt. Colonel Batjer was succeeded as commander of the 397<sup>th</sup> by Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr, the present commanding officer. Colonel Coiner was transferred from the 21<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group, which we had commanded, and assigned to the 397<sup>th</sup> on 5 October 1943 (par 14, SO 269, III BC.) Colonel Batjer was transferred to the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing.

The Group's first permanent change of station came with the movement from MacDill Field to the Avon Park Bombing Range, Avon Park, Florida. The movement was by air and motor convoy and Headquarters personnel made the move on Tuesday 12 October and Thursday 14 October. The movement was in accordance with Ltr 3AF 370.5 (4 Oct 43), and par 9, SO 270, III BC (6 Oct 43). SO 282, par 14, Hq AAB, MacDill Fld (9 Oct 43).

The stay of the 397<sup>th</sup> at Avon Park was brief. On 1 November the Group began moving out by air, rail, and motor convoy, heading for Hunter Field, Georgia. The flight and motor movements were begun Monday morning, 1 November, and the rail movement got underway that evening. (par 10, SO 302, Hq Avon Park Bombing Range, 30 Oct 43).

In January of 1944, the Group participated in the Tennessee maneuvers, two squadrons at a time moving to Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana for two weeks of operations. A portion of Headquarters made the journey each time, the first section leaving the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the second on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. At Atterbury, the Group was attached to the I Tactical Air Division for operational control, and acted as air support for the Blue Army in the maneuver area. (Ltr, Hq 3AF, 370.5, 17 Dec 43, Subj. "Movement Orders, 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF"; par 1, SO 12, Hq 3AF Staging Wing, Hunter Field, Ga.)

Five miles south of Camden, Arkansas, a B-26 from the 598<sup>th</sup> Squadron crashed in the afternoon of 20 January 1944 and all the occupants were killed. Included in the fatality list was the name of M/Sgt Cecil A. Stewart, a member of Headquarters detachment and a group technical inspector. The death of M/Sgt Stewart was the first fatality in Group Headquarters, and marked the only training casualty in the detachment.

Returning from Atterbury, the Group made final preparations for overseas movement and on Thursday 24 February the first planes took off for England. The planes rolled down the runways of Hunter Field after a ceremony in which Colonel L. L. Koontz, commanding officer of the Third Air Force Staging Wing, presented Colonel Coiner and the group a commendation and trophy in recognition of the performance of the Group while stationed at Hunter Field. The commendation read in part:

Military personnel of the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, which includes the 596<sup>th</sup>, 597<sup>th</sup>, 598<sup>th</sup>, and 599<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons, have maintained rigid training schedules while at Hunter Field under many adverse circumstances and have performed their duties in a manner to bring credit to themselves and the favorable attention of this command. In addition, the cooperation extended by every member of the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group toward the military personnel of this command while the Bomb Group was being processed and staged for overseas movement was accomplished in a superior manner never before equaled by any unit being processed at Hunter Field, Georgia. (See exhibit 2)

In the air movement were Colonel Coiner, Major McCollum, Captain George D. Hughes, and CWO Meriweather from Headquarters. The detail for the advanced party was composed of Lt. Col Winingham, Captain Morrow, Major Rafkind, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Timberlake. Lt. Timberlake, the assistant Group Intelligence Officer arriving in the United Kingdom on 22 February was the first member of the Group to arrive in the European theatre.

The flight echelons and advance party of the 397<sup>th</sup> having gone on, the rest of the Group moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, in preparation for the overseas movement. Headquarters Detachment left Hunter Field on the morning of Monday 13 March and arrived at Camp Kilmer the next day.

Nine days after the departure from Hunter Field, the men of Headquarters detachment, struggling under duffle bags and field equipment, were the first members of the Group to board the Italian liner Saturnia in New York Harbor. Behind them were the stepping stone to combat – MacDill, Orlando, Avon Park, Hunter Field, and Atterbury; ahead, their active participation in the war in Europe.

In the early morning of Thursday 23 March 1944, the Saturnia slipped past the Statue of Liberty and the 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) was sailing for England.

Compiled 20 June 1944

By

1<sup>st</sup> Lt Tedsan S. Timberlake  
Sgt Charles W. Johnson, Jr.

Supplement to Initial Installment, Historical Report, Headquarters Detachment,  
397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) AAF.

The following orders cover assignment of Headquarters, 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp,  
from Hunter Field to 98<sup>th</sup> Combat Bombardment Wing:

1. From Hunter Field to Camp Kilmer – SO 67, 3AF Staging Wing,  
Hunter Field, Georgia, 7 March 1944.
2. From Camp Kilmer, to ETOUSA – Secret Ltr O, ASF, NYPE,  
Brooklyn, N.Y., 19 March 1944, file SPTA – GM (EC) 370.5  
(#5102) and letter 3/20/44 ASF, Camp Kilmer, N.J. (Subject –  
Movement of Troops.)
3. From ETOUSA to USSTAF – ETOUSA Letter Order AG 322 OPGC  
31 March 1944. Subject: Troop assignment #43.
4. From USSTAF to Ninth Air Force – USSTAF Letter Order 322, 4  
April 1944, subject: “Assignment of Units #38.”
5. From Ninth Air Force to Ninth Bomber Command – Ninth Air Force  
Letter Order (370.5) 22 March 1944 (Subject: Arriving Unit.)
6. From Ninth Bomber Command to 98<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing – Ninth  
Bomber Command General Order 62, par 1.

R E S T R I C T E D  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR BASE MACDILL FIELD  
C-(wms)

Office of the Base Commander

GENERAL ORDERS)  
Florida

Tampa,

April 1, 1943.

NUMBER 28 )

1. PIC Restricted GO 104, Hq 3AF, 28 Mar 43, citing ltr AG 320.2 (3-19-43) OB-I-AFDPU-M, 20 Mar 43, Subj: "Constitution and Activation of Certain AAF Units", and 1<sup>st</sup> Ind, Hq 3AF, 29 Mar 43, file 3AF 322.082 (3-20-43) AC, to same ltr, the following units are activated at this sta and assigned as indicated, effective 20 Apr 43:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>PRIORITY RATING</u>	<u>ASSIGNED TO</u>
Hq, 397 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)	1-112, 1 July 42	C-1-1604	III Bomber Command
596 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (M)	1-127, 1 July 42		
597 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (M)	1-127, 1 July 42		
598 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (M)	1-127, 1 July 42		
599 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (M)	1-127, 1 July 42		

2. Cadre, fillers and replacements will be furnished from sources under the control of the CG, III Bomber Command.

3. T/O listed above will be used as guide in the orgn of these units; specific authorization of cnl grades will be published in a separate communication.

4. This unit will be equipped in accordance with the following tables and will have a priority rating for controlled items of equipment as indicated above:

Group Headquarters	TE 1-112
Bomb Squadrons (M)	TE 1-127

5. This unit will be organized in accordance with the following schedule and will commence training approximately seven (7) days after reaching T/O strength:

<u>DATE TO REACH 25% STRENGTH</u>	<u>DATE TO REACH 50% STRENGTH</u>	<u>DATE TO REACH 100% STRENGTH</u>
May 20, 1943	June 20, 1943	July 13, 1943

By order of Colonel VOSS:

W. M. STRICKLAND, JR,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

DISTRIBUTION:

2-cys on Unit Activated

2-cys on CG AAF, TAGO, HQAD,

3-cys CG 3AF

3-cys CG 3BC

1-cy ea Base Ord O, Sig O, Cml O, FO, FO, TO, Med O, QM.

1-cy Base S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4.

2-cys Director of War Orgn and Movement, Washington, D.C.

2-cys Engr Property O.

2-cys ea CO, Sub-Depot, Sub-Depot Supply O.

1-cy ea Sub-base

2-cys CG ASC, Patterson Fld, Fairfield, Ohio.

2-cys Sig O, Fld Serv, Patterson Fld, Fairfield, Ohio.

6-cys Base Adjutant's File.

## HISTORICAL REPORT OF 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 1943.

Under authority of SO 155, par 1 thru 6 inclusive, Hq 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) AAF, Avon Park Bombing Range, Florida the entire personnel of this organization was transferred to Hunter Field, Georgia. Assigned aircraft were flown by designated crews, while other personnel and equipment were transported by train and truck convoy. The southeast portion of Hunter Field was designated as the headquarters and operations area, and the task of orienting the group to its new surroundings was under way.

Operations schedules, concerning routine training flights, commenced immediately after arrival. Ground and air schools were established. Major WININGHAM, the Deputy Group Commander, was in charge during the absence of the CO, Col. R. T. COINER. Col. COINER was at this time observing military tactics, employment or air power and operations in ..... (see confidential page.)

4 November 1943, the War Department awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. JOHN D. HAZLE the Distinguished Flying Cross, per GO 76. The citation read as follows:

For extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight as pilot of a B-26 aircraft on a training mission in the vicinity of Tampa, Florida on 18 August 1943. Lieutenant Hazle's aircraft was struck by a P-51 aircraft, tearing away part of the cockpit and nose section and damaging the left engine. By skillful maneuvering, he was able to hold the aircraft in a level position while four members of the crew parachuted to safety. The fifth crew member, in the rear of the aircraft, was unable to jump. Lieutenant Hazle, although still at 4,000 feet, elected to bring the aircraft down to attempt a crash landing. Lieutenant Hazle's high degree of airmanship and unselfish devotion to duty in placing the safety of others before his own is in the finest tradition of the Army Air Forces.\*

After the staff sections had commenced their regular routine duties, personnel and equipment had arrived, and maintenance of aircraft permitted, Group Mission #10 (see exhibit #1) was briefed at 0700 EWT and take-off was executed by 23 aircraft at 0857 EWT, 6 November 1943. Group Mission #11 was briefed at 0700 EWT, 10 November 1943. Twenty-two aircraft of this organization simulated bombing objectives and target "C", located 3137.0 N – 8131.0 W. (see exhibit #2.)

\*This info contained in WD GO 76, 4 Nov 43, not available here.

397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp  
Historical Report

A two day course in First Aid and Sanitation was conducted by the Medical Detachment, this Headquarters. The attendance of the entire group was approximately 90%. Officers and Enlisted Men qualified in small arms fire and the percentage qualified was 62%.

Forty-seven officers and 52 enlisted men of the 596<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron proceeded by military aircraft to Dale Mabry Field, Tallahassee, Florida, arriving 1500 22 November 1943 (see exhibit #3) for the purpose of routine training, returning 28 November 1943.

Thanksgiving! Throughout the squadron messes turkey had its rounds. Officers and enlisted men, their wives and families attended. For the one day of Thanksgiving, daily flying and ground routine was scheduled at a minimum – a day of thanks for all we cherish.

Col. COINER, CO of the 397<sup>th</sup>, resumed command of the Group per GO 12, Hq 397, 26 November 1943 (see exhibit 4). A few days following, Colonel COINER gave a lecture to the assembled personnel of this organization with comments in reference to our standard ship, the B-26 Martin "Marauder" and actual operational uses from ..... bases (see confidential page.) The emphasis of the lecture was placed on the extreme importance of proper navigation over enemy territory, and the standard OP of medium bombardment aircraft.

As yet, no problems have been encountered, but the personnel of this group felt that its future combat record will be to such an extent that in the months to follow numerous references will be made to the historical reports of the organization. In all missions, emphasis is being placed on the SOP to be used exclusively in what is considered our future assignment to actual combat.

{SIGNED}  
TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Gp. Historical Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF S-1  
SECTION FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER, 1943.

The month of November, 1943, saw definite steps in bringing the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group to full strength. Large shortages in the three types of enlisted gunner personnel were cancelled, thus completing many combat crews heretofore held back in training as teams. Many minor personnel shortages were also eliminated. Steps to remove overages in personnel by higher headquarters became more pronounced toward the latter part of that period.

Thirty-six new officers (including Warrant Officers and Flight Officers), mostly pilots, navigators and bombardiers, came in during the month. Fifteen officers were transferred out of the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

During the same period, one hundred and nine enlisted men were gained, against twenty transferred out.

The month of November 1943 also saw considerable reassignment of personnel between squadrons to correct faulty distribution and irregular attrition. At the beginning of November maximum variance between squadrons in officer strength was seven, in enlisted strength fifteen. At the close of the month, the figures were five and seven respectively.

{SIGNED}  
K. R. MAJORS,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF      D/TST/3  
Hunter Field, Georgia

10-December 1943.

INTELLIGENCE HISTORICAL REPORT FOR PERIOD NOVEMBER,  
1943.

9-11 November 1943, Captain Donald Riddle, Air Inspector, 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (M), MacDill Field Army Air Base, Tampa, Florida, accompanied by the Wing Photographic Interpreter, conducted an inspection of the intelligence sections, this organization. A negative report was rendered of irregularities previously reported but not corrected. Irregularities noted during the course of inspection were based on overages and shortages of personnel in the Group and Squadron Intelligence Sections. Other deficiencies and recommendations were noted and suggested. Action has been taken to correct each irregularity specified. See enclosures Nos. 1 & 2.

The following transfers were effected from November 1 thru November 30, 1943, per letter 330.32, Headquarters 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (M) AAF, 30 November 1943:

a. Assigned:

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE to Headquarters 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.
2. S/Sgt. FRED P. LEVY to the 596<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.
3. S/Sgt. BENTON K. JOHNS to Headquarters 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.
4. Cpl. WILLIAM W. JONES to the 598<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

b. Transferred:

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. PHILLIP M. GUBA, JR. from the 598<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. HORACE H. GAFFNEY from the 597<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. MAT D. BOULDIN from the

599<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

4. S/Sgt. JESSE M. EISEN from the 596<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.
5. Sgt. CHARLES (NMI) GAUDIN from the 599<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.
6. Pvt. ROY (NMI) GROGAN from the 598<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

PERSONNEL AS OF DECEMBER 1, 1943

Major	THOMAS E. McLEOD	Group S-2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt.	TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE	Asst Group S-2
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	HENRY C. BECK, JR.	Photo Interpreter
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	JAMES M. SNOW	Photo Officer
M/Sgt.	Charles L. Alexander	Chief Clerk
S/Sgt.	Ernest E. Claridge	Photo Interpreter
S/Sgt.	Frank O. Forsyth, Jr.	Clerk
S/Sgt.	Benton K. Johns	Clerk
Sgt.	Arthur P. Cullen	Photo Clerk
Cpl.	Charles W. Johnson, Jr.	Clerk

{SIGNED}  
TEDSAN S. TIMBERLAKE,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Asst Group S-2.

HEADQUARTERS 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF      D/TEM/1  
Hunter Field, Georgia

30 November 1943.

In reply refer to  
321

SUBJECT: Intelligence Summary.

TO : Commanding Officer, 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (M) AAF,  
MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida.

1. In compliance with instructions contained in teletype message COBOMWG0095PD, dated 30 September 1943, the activities within the intelligence sections for the month of November are hereby submitted:

a. An aircraft recognition training course was initiated and classes were conducted by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Tedsan S. Timberlake. Training was carried out on a group basis, and other units invited to participate. Personnel of the 90<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> Airdrome Squadrons, in particular, were included in plans for the training. Attendance at scheduled recognition classes is required by order of the group commander.

b. Group and squadron S-2s cooperated with operation officers in planning bombing missions, including one Wing mission and two group missions. Intelligence annexes to field orders were prepared in each case. Intelligence officers participated in the briefing of combat crews prior to each of the three missions. Different S-2s briefed each separate mission, and all available S-2s assisted in the interrogation of returning crews. Resumes of consolidated mission reports were presented at the critiques and the essential facts tabulated on display board for information of participating crews. Photos secured by the group photo officer were utilized by the photo intelligence officer to plot details of bombing results, showing hits scored by each squadron and flight.

c. Regular weekly group conferences were held. Principle subjects discussed were: policies and procedures; assignment of special tasks to each officer for carrying out the group intelligence training program; conduct of investigations; securing of enlisted personnel required to bring the intelligence sections up to T/O authorization. Intelligence officers also attended weekly S-2 meetings sponsored by the base intelligence officer.

d. Situation maps were developed by each squadron for convenience of crews on the line. A war room was developed in the group

briefing room; the situation in various theatres posted daily; and a program developed for weekly presentation of news summaries.

e. Sandtables were planned for use in connection with briefings and construction initiated. Two officers and four enlisted men in group and squadron intelligence sections who recently attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Photo Intelligence School or the sandtable course, are being employed in this activity.

f. Facilities were arranged for display of classified documents containing tactical and other information of instructional value. Available material is being given the widest possible distribution.

For the Group Commander:

K. R. MAJORS,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF,  
GROUP OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER, 1943.

1. Key personnel:

Major F. L. Wood, S-3  
Major W. D. Snyder, Gp Bombardier  
Captain E. W. Udick, Gp Navigator  
Captain W. Rafkind, Gp Communications O.  
Captain H. T. Watson, Gp Tactical Inspector  
Captain G. D. Hughes, Asst Gp S-2

2. Mean average of 39 airplanes assigned, 28 flyable, or 71% flyable.
3. 2070 operational hours flown, or 76 hrs/day, or 1.9 hrs/day/assigned airplane.
4. Average number of pilots assigned: 143. Average number of hrs/day/assigned pilot: 1.1 hrs.
5. Three group missions: 5 Nov, 10 Nov, 17 Nov 1943.
6. Distinguished Flying Cross: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. John F. Hazle.
7. Aircraft accidents: 1 (no casualties).
8. Change in personnel: S/Sgt. Benton K. Johns transferred to group intelligence section.

{SIGNED}  
F. L. WOOD,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Group S-3

397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)  
HUNTER FIELD GA  
10 Nov 1943

F. O. )  
No. 4 )

Map: Sectional Aeronautical Charts SAVANNAH, JACKSONVILLE.

1. a. (1) The purpose of this mission is the simulated attack of three small area targets about which nothing is known except position.  
(2) JESUP and DOUGLAS are very lightly defended and will be attacked without changing course at an initial pt.  
(3) WAYCROSS may be defended by anti-aircraft and an initial pt (WARESBORO) will be used.
2. 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp employing all available B-26 aps based at HUNTER FLD, SAVANNAH, GA attacks railroad junctions at JESUP and DOUGLAS, the RR station at WAYCROSS, GA and target C of TOWNSEND Range on 11 Nov 1943.

Briefing: 0700

Stations: 0745

Start Engines: 0815

Take Off: 0830

Assembly: Over HUNTER FLD at 2000 ft swinging on course at 0900.

Route Out: HUNTER FLD, JESUP, DOUGLAS, WARESBORO,  
WAYCROSS, COX, TOWNSEND Target C.

Route Back: Target – HUNTER FLD.

Bombing Alt: JESUP 4000 ft., DOUGLAS 6000 ft., WAYCROSS  
8000 ft., Target C 10,000 ft or 500 ft below clouds.

I.A.S. During atk: 180 MPH.

Method of Bombing: Bomb from formation of all aps. Bombardier in lead aps call on course when target comes into sight. Sq ldrs sight for range and deflection. Wing men sight for range if they have M series bombsight-or drop on Sq ldr.

Maneuver after atk: Break to right taking up east heading for approx 4 min then turning north to HUNTER FLD.

Landing: Per SOP.

Critique: 1300 in Briefing Room.

Loading: 3 – 100 lb. Practice Bombs “NTA1” Spotting Charge. Am-  
none.

3. a. Each Sqdn to furnish all available Aps to be used in mission, 598<sup>th</sup> Sq leads atk followed by 599<sup>th</sup>, 596<sup>th</sup>, 597<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Aps Nos 13, 33, 53, and 73 will carry camera and photographer to obtain bombing results.
- X. (1) Crew: P, CP, BN, E, G, R.
- (2) A Navigator will fly in lead aps of each element.
- (3) Sqdns will report results to this hdqs immediately upon return.
4. a. T to take crews to aps available at 0715.
- b. Sqdns will have prchts available at 0700.
5. a. See Annex:
- b. Gnd – Control tower – HUNTER FLD
- (1) Air – lead ap Gp formation – Dep fld ldr 599<sup>th</sup> Sq leading 2<sup>nd</sup> flt of aps.

ROLLIN M. WININGHAM,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Comdg.

OFFICIAL:

{SIGNED}  
FRANK L. WOOD, JR.,  
Major, Air Corps,  
S-3.

397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)  
HUNTER FIELD GA  
17 Nov 1943

F. O. )  
No. 5 )

Map: Sectional Aeronautical Charts JACKSONVILLE, SAVANNAH, and BIRMINGHAM.

1. a. (1) Savannah, Ga, has been reoccupied by the US Army. 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) is based at Hunter Field, Savannah.
  - b. (1) Enemy munition dump is located at Target C (3137 – 8137).
  - (2) Enemy fighter airdromes protecting dump at Target C are located at: Fitzgerald (3143 – 8315); Douglas (3130 – 8251); Cordele (3158 – 8347).
2. a. 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp employing 18 B-26 aps based at HUNTER FLD, SAVANNAH, GA attacks Rwy's, grounded aps and enemy airdrome installations at FITZGERALD, DOUGLAS and CORDELE on 18 Nov 1943.
  - b. Same mission will also attack enemy munitions dump located at Target C.

Briefing: 0700

Stations: 0830

Start Engines: 0900

Take Off: 0912

Assemble: Over HUNTER FLD at 1500 ft at 0928.

Depart: HUNTER FLD at 2000 ft on course at 0930.

Route: Individual flights will be briefed at briefing.

IP for actual bombing range: TOWNSEND (3132 – 8131).

Axis of atk: 360 deg.

I.A.S. : (1) During climb on course: 180 MPH.

(2) During level flight: 185 MPH.

(3) During atk: 200 MPH.

Method of Bombing: Each Squadron will bomb individually from its flight of 6 aps. All bombing will be pinpoint. Sqdn ldrs will sight for deflection and range, wing men drop on Sqdn leader. Release in rapid train. Between IP and actual target, formation will lose 1000 ft in alt and do evasive action.

Maneuver after atk: Break away to the right, take up heading for Savannah Lightship (3057 – 8040).

Landing: Per Gp SOP.

Critique: 1430.

Loading: 6 – 100 lb M-38 practice bombs each ap.

3. a. 597<sup>th</sup>, 598<sup>th</sup>, and 599<sup>th</sup> Sqdns will furnish 6 aps and crews each.
  - b. 596<sup>th</sup> Sqdn will furnish 4 aps as spares and observers.
  - c. Cameras will be carried in last ship in each element.
  - x. (1) Crew: P, CP, BN, E, G, R. (Plus F in ships 23, 43, and 63.) (Plus N in ships 11, 31, and 51.)
  - (2) Each crew will report immediately upon landing to S-2 office of their respective Squadron for interrogation.
4. a. See annexes.

ROLLIN M. WININGHAM,  
Major, Army Air Forces,  
Commanding.

OFFICIAL:

{SIGNED}  
HARRY H. PATTERSON, JR.,  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Army Air Forces,  
Operations Officer.



## INTELLIGENCE

### 1. Summary of Enemy Situation:

- a. Enemy forces occupied SAVANNAH last July, penetrating inland to occupy Northern half of Georgia and Southern half of SOUTH CAROLINA inland as far as ALABAMA border.
- b. From fighter airdromes at FITZGERALD (3143-8315), DOUGLAS (3130-8251), and CORDELE (3158-8347), enemy is protecting munitions dump at Target C (3137-8137), also harassing sea supply line to SAVANNAH; also Enemy Fighters are operating from these three bases to escort enemy bombers from bomber bases on bombing operations farther inland.
- c. Heavy flak may be expected at all three simulated targets.

### 2. Essential elements of info: U.S. Army recaptured SAVANNAH, 1 November 1943, 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) is now based at Hunter Field, SAVANNAH.

### 3. Measures to obtain information:

#### a. Photo reconnaissance.

A photographer operating K-20 will be in last ship in each element. Photos of bomb hits to be made by each element. Photo officer to deliver five (5) copies of finished photos to 598<sup>th</sup> Sq S-2 by 0900 19 Nov. 1943.

#### b. Special instructions on Interrogation:

Crews of each plane will, on landing, report immediately to their Squadron S-2 office for interrogation. All crew members will be on the alert to observe, in area of their R/As and in area of Target C, train movements, military truck convoy movements and airdromes not hitherto posted. For all such observations, note position, time, and altitude. Watch especially for enemy planes (P-39s or P-51s) at any distance, whether apparently intending to attack or not.

### 4. Maps: SAVANNAH, JACKSONVILLE, and BIRMINGHAM sectionals.

ANNEX "C" to FO NO. 5 – 397<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP 17 Nov. 1943.

NAVIGATOR'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL FLIGHTS AND ALL SHIPS

Part I: GROUP FORMATION

	Hour	TC	Dist	Time	IAS	Remarks
Assembly	0928					Over Hunter Fld at 1500'
Departure	0930	310°	23	8	180	2000' begin 500'/min climb
Level off position	0938	310°	33	11	185	Level off at 6000' begin cruise
Turn Pt for Vidalia 3236-8158	0949	224°	32	11	185	
Vidalia (3213- 8225)	1000					Gp form splits into Sq form at Vidalia; take up individual mission

Part II: "A" FLIGHT

Vidalia	1000		300°			Begin 300'/min climb to 11000' also work R/A to reach I.P. at 1055
I.P.: RR bridge 2 mi E Abbeville (3159- 8317)	1055		172°	17	5	200'/min dive to 10000' begin evasive action at I.P.
Fitzgerald (simulated target) (3143-8315)	1100					
Fitzgerald	1100		156°	25	8	185
Willachoochee (3120-8304)	1108		082°	79	25.5	185
IP: Townsend (Act. Target) (3132-8031)	1133.5					Cruise at 10000'

Part III: "B" FLIGHT

Vidalia	1000		270°			Begin 300'/min climb to 11000' also work R/A to reach I.P. at 1114
IP: Lumber camp (3147-8256)	1114		167°	17	6	200'/min dive to 10000' begin evasive action at IP.
Douglas (simu. tar) (3130-8251)	1120					
Douglas	1120		090°	69	23.5	180
IP: Townsend (Actg. Tgt) (3132-8131)	1143.5					Cruise at 10000'

Part IV: "C" FLIGHT

Vidalia	1000	210°					Begin 300'/min climb to 11000' also work R/A to reach IP at 1105
IP: Railroad bridge 1 mi E Albany radio (3146-8359)	1105	42°	16	5			200'/min dive to 10000' begin evasive action at IP.
Cordele (simu. tgt) (3158-8347)	1110						
Cordele	1110	135°	25	18	185		Cruise at 10000'
Willachoochee	1128	082°	79	25.5	185		
IP: Townsend (act. tgt) (3132-8131)	1153.5						

---

Part V: GROUP (Still in formation.)

IP: Act tgt, Townsend.

Heading for bomb run: 360° (evasive action begins at IP)

Altitude: dive at 200'/min from 10000' to 9000'

IAS: 200 MPH

Heading after the run: Turn to right and take up heading for Savannah Lightship (3157-3040); patrol at 3000'; work R/A for rendezvous pt.

Rendezvous: Brunswick (3109-8139) at 3500' at:

A Flt: 1220

B Flt: 1222

C Flt: 1224

Over Hunter Field: 1224.

397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)  
Hunter Field, Ga.  
24 Nov 1943

F. O. )  
No. 6 )

Map: SAVANNAH Sectional CHARLOTTE, JACKSONVILLE

1. a. (1) Manchester, Ga, has marshalling yards that are used to supply large enemy base at Ft. Benning, Ga.  
b. (1) Enemy concentration located at Target C (3137 – 8137).  
(2) Enemy fighter airdromes protecting Manchester, Ga are at Macon, Ga, Griffin, Ga and Columbus, Ga.
2. a. 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp employing 18 B-26 aps based at HUNTER FLD, SAVANNAH, GA are to attack and destroy the marshalling yards at said target on 25 Nov 1943.  
b. Same mission will also attack enemy concentration located at Target C.

Briefing: 0700

Stations: 0830

Start Engines: 0900

Take Off: 0915

Assembly: Over HUNTER FLD at 0930 at 1000 ft.

Depart: 0932 on course over HUNTER FLD climbing 500 ft per min.

Route: See Navigators instruction annex C.

IP for actual bombing range: EVERETT CITY (3118 – 8138).

Axis of atk: 23 deg.

I.A.S. : (1) During climb on course: 180 MPH.

(2) During level flight: 190 MPH.

(3) During atk: 190 MPH.

Method of Bombing: Each Squadron will bomb individually from its flights of 6 aps. All bombing will be pinpoint. Squadron ldrs will sight for deflection and range, wing men drop on Squadron leader. Release in rapid train. Between IP and target, formation will lose 500 ft in alt and do slight evasive action.

Maneuver after atk: Start let-down 500 – 700 ft per min, on heading of 40 deg with evasive turns until home sta is reached.

Landing: Per Gp S.O.P.

Critique: 1400 in Briefing Room.

Loading: 4 – 100 lb M-38 practice bombs each ap.

3. a. 597<sup>th</sup>, 598<sup>th</sup>, and 599<sup>th</sup> Sqdns will furnish 7 aps and crews each. (Ex. the 7<sup>th</sup> crew being a replacement if necessary).
  - b. Cameras will be carried in last ship of each element.
  - c. (1) Crew: P, CP, BN, E, G, R. (Plus F in ships 23, 43, and 63.) (Plus N in ships 11, 31, and 51.)  
  
(2) Each crew will report immediately upon landing to S-2 office of their respective Sqdn for interrogation.
4. See Annexes.

ROLLIN M. WININGHAM,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

OFFICIAL:

{SIGNED}  
FRANK L. WOOD, JR.,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Operations Officer.

ANNEX "A" TO FO. NO. 6 – 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp, dtd 24 Nov 43.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### 1. FREQUENCIES:

- a. Ship to ship (Command Set: Transmitter on, Receiver on

INTELLIGENCE

1. Summary of Enemy Situation:
  - a. Enemy forces occupy area to west of SAVANNAH with lines established around the city forming a semi-circle identified by the following points: AUGUSTA, GA, DUBLIN, GA, and VALDOSTA, GA. This is a semi-fluid line, men and material being supplied from the permanent base located at FT. BENNING, located some 125 miles west. Intelligence indicates some 100,000 men are stationed at BENNING. Main supply lines to this point are two R.R. from the north with a division point at MANCHESTER where large marshalling yards have been built up. Latest photo recon. indicates huge reserves of supplies concentrated in these yards. Destruction of these supplies will seriously handicap and stifle enemy movement for another 30 days.
  - b. Enemy fighters located at COCHRANE FIELD (3242-8340), MOULTIE (3110-8348), ALBANY (3133-8340), are providing protection for this concentration of materiel as well as cover for troop movement from BENNING to advance lines to the east. Munitions dump located at Target "C" is protected by fighters based at WAYCROSS (3115-8222).
  - c. All four of these bases are heavily protected by AA instl. and flack, heavy and intense can be expected.
2. Friendly Situation: US Army recaptured SAVANNAH 1 November 1943. Our forces have taken positions, pending additional reinforcements at points directly East of line established by enemy. 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M) is based at HUNTER FIELD, SAVANNAH, GA.
3. Information Desired, Measures to Obtain.
  - a. Photographs.

Last ship in each element will carry photographer operating K-20 camera. Photos of bomb hits will be made by each element. Photo Officer to deliver five copies of finished photos to 599<sup>th</sup> Squadron S-2 by 0900, 26 November 1943.
  - b. Observation.

Crews of each ship will be on the alert to observe and report all enemy fighters (for this purpose AT-6's – BT 9, 13 and 15, P-39's and P-51's). Locations, height, direction of attack. (2) Train movements, military truck convoys and airdromes not mentioned above. (3) Any unusual circumstance or situation observed in or around large hospital located at WARM SPRINGS just west of marshalling yards. This has been declared "OPEN" and is not to be bombed under any circumstances unless there is evidence of violation of agreement by the enemy. (4) Crew of each plane will, immediately on landing, report to their Squadron S-2 tent, for interrogation, the Bombardier will before landing complete the form supplied at the briefing for results of bombing and turn this in at interrogation.

ANNEX "C" to F. O. NO. 6 – 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp 24 Nov. 1943.

Part I: GROUP FORMATION

	Hour	TC	Dist	Time	IAS	Remarks
Assy.	0930					Over Hunter Field, 1000'
Dept.	0932	288°	60	22'	180	1000' begin to climb to 10000', 500' per minute.
Level off position	0954	288°	110	39'	185	Level off at 10000' begin cruise
IP	1033	259°	15	5.5	190	IP (THOMASTON) (3254-8419) Dive to 9000' – Evasive Action.
Target (Simulated)	1038.5	121°	173	1hr. 3min.	185	Make turn & drop to 8500'

1. At 11:03 Elements will go into staggered trail, continuing on same course. Lead element 8500'.

IP	1142	24°	16	3min.	190	IP (EVERETT CITY) 1 <sup>st</sup> Flight do slight evasive, drop to 8000' – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Flight 7800', 3 <sup>rd</sup> Flight 7600'.
Target "C"	1147	39°	30	11min.	185	Return to Hunter Field, as Briefed

HUNTER FIELD 1158

2. All distances measured as knots.
3. Airspeed may be changed in flight by lead ship in order to arrive at all points at correct time.
4. Ships will always keep ten feet between wing tips.

HEADQUARTERS 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF  
Hunter Field, Georgia

9 December 1943.

GROUP CHAPLAIN'S HISTORICAL REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 1-30, 1943

The month opened with a new scene of activity at Hunter Field, Georgia. The Chaplain's office was established in Chapel No. 1, sharing it with the Base Catholic Chaplain, Captain R. S. Goshorn who cooperated fully. Services were held regularly Sunday mornings in the Chapel. Also spot services were held on the Line, with groups of men standing around the Chaplain, several times about a fire, when the morning was cool. The men were responsive, reverent, and grateful especially for these brief informal line services.

The Chaplain participated in Physical Training, Squadron parties, Schools, regular visits to the dispersal areas and to the Hangar Line, secured a number of homes for personnel in civilian community, ate in Squadron Mess Halls, and visited offices and Day Rooms and made Pastoral calls in a few homes. The number of men seeking advice on problems was small, indicating high morale. The fact of no weddings, baptisms, or funerals is unusual for a month but has no particular interpretive value. Hospital calls were more frequent than usual.

The attitude of Enlisted Men toward their officers in this group is excellent with practically no complaints coming to the Chaplain. The work schedule seems well balanced, and is intensive enough to make the personnel contented. Activities planned by the Special Service Officer are markedly valuable and successful. The suggestion is respectfully made that more measures should be instigated to make us group conscious, to work together more as a group, and to build loyalty to the group as well as to the squadron.

{SIGNED}  
CLARENCE R. COMFORT, JR.,  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Group Chaplain.

HEADQUARTERS 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF  
Office of the Group Communications Officer

J/WR/4

Hunter Field, Georgia,  
10 December 1943.

Arrived Hunter Field 1 November 1943 and found base signal officer very cooperative. The area we were assigned to had very few facilities for telephone communications and it was necessary to set up a sub-switchboard to the base system.

Because of the inconvenient location of the Base Communication School a Group Communication School was set up in the immediate vicinity of Group Operations. It seems to be working very smoothly and over sixty (60) per cent of the combat crews have already been checked out on Code Blinkers and British Procedure. Arrangements are being made to checkout the remainder in the near future.

Lectures have been given to all combat crews on British Procedure. It is receiving a great deal of stress in all communications sections.

Teletype Operators are attending Base Teletype School and will be completely checked out in accordance with Third Air Force Memorandum 50-16 in the near future.

Progress charts are being kept in all squadrons. Sixty (60) per cent of the personnel are fully qualified, thirty (30) per cent in training and ten (10) per cent still short.

Inspection was made by 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing and all discrepancies have been corrected.

The moral in the communications sections is very high and everybody is eager to see action. Those still in training are working hard to be completely checked out and ready for combat.

{SIGNED}  
WILLIAM RAFKIND,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Communications Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF  
FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 1943 TO 31 DECEMBER 1943.

The 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (M) AAF remained at Hunter Field, Georgia, for the month of December. Following directives received from Headquarters, 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (M), MacDill Field, Florida, the group underwent a series of missions using various combat procedures by superimposing our bombing flights on the English and European map layouts. This method involved the average flying time, routes out and return, altitudes, and axis of attacks as would be used for actual missions against occupied Europe, within the range of the B-26, Martin "Marauder". These missions, a total of three, were supplied by the 55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing Field Orders and our Group Field Orders with the standard reports and procedures following.

Weather conditions, involving ice and low ground haze, delayed flying operations for the most part until noon. However, reports from Headquarters, Third Bomber Command, MacDill Field, Florida, show that this group had seventy percent of our assigned aircraft available for flying. The 397<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group averaged in second place within the Bomber Command for pilot time and hours flown for assigned aircraft for the month of December.

On December 14 through 16, the Commanding Officer, Deputy Commanding Officer, Group Staff members and Squadron Intelligence Officers attended a 55<sup>th</sup> Wing instructional course at MacDill Field, Florida. This course entitled "Theatre of Actual Operational Procedures", was conducted by B-26 personnel returned from combat.

On December 16, the 598<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron conducted a search for members of the crew of the YP-246, grounded and sunk off Savannah, Georgia (enclosed as Exhibit "A" in the report of the 598<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron Historical Officer). Re: Letters of appreciation from the Commanding Officer, this Group, and the Commandant, Sixth Naval District, Fort Sumter Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina.

The Squadrons participated in over-water training flights (via Nassau and Cuba) on several occasions. Night flying has been above average with emphasis on administrative and tactical preparations for possible overseas duty.

There were major adjustments in personnel, involving transfers in and out. Along with thirty reclassifications of Enlisted Men, adjustments of personnel included 19 Officers and 34 Enlisted Men transferred from the organization and 7 Officers and 70 Enlisted Men being assigned. These transfers are resulted in a net loss of 12 Officers and a net gain of 36 Enlisted Men.

Christmas and New Years Day and the fact that date of the units being ordered overseas was thought to be not far off, resulted in an increase in the

number of leaves and furloughs being granted. The Group Chaplain's report indicates a higher morale among the Officers and Enlisted Men with attendance at the Chapel far above average. Towards the end of the month various examining and qualification boards from the 55<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, Third Bomber Command and Third Air Force arrived to check over our administrative and tactical certification and procedures.

Since the 26 of December the 596<sup>th</sup> and 597<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons were busy preparing to leave for two week's maneuvers at Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana.

{SIGNED}  
TEDSAN L. TIMBERLAKE  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Group Historical Officer.

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL SECTION 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP  
(M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 1943 TO 31 DECEMBER 1943.

December saw only minor adjustments, involving a small number of transfers out and in. Thirty reclassifications of Enlisted Men were made. Major adjustments of personnel of the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group were made in the month preceding. Nineteen Officers and thirty four Enlisted Men were transferred from the organization with seven Officers and seventy Enlisted Men being assigned to the unit, with the net loss of twelve Officers and net gain of thirty six Enlisted Men.

A number of basics were received in to the organization to be trained as telephone switchboard operators, one of our main shortages in Enlisted Men.

December saw an increase in number of furloughs and leaves granted, due to Christmas and New Years Day. Also the fact that date of the unit's being ordered overseas was thought by most all individuals to be not far off, increased the leave and furlough activity through the latter part of the month.

III Bomber Command Officer's Qualification board arrived on 27 December to check over the certifications made by the Group and Squadron Commanders on all the officers. The Board consisted of Lt. Col. Everett C. Freer, Flight Surgeon III Bomber Command, Major Simon P. H. Townsend, A-1, III Bomber Command, and Captain Reade R. Pickler, Asst S-3, III Bomber Command. Main proceedings, which lasted into the second day, centered around the disposition of grounded commissioned flying personnel. Brig. General James E. Parker, Commanding General, III Bomber Command, accompanied the Board to Hunter Field but returned the same day.

Personnel and personnel records were among the subjects of two inspections on the 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group during December. Army Air Forces inspectors inspected on 16 December 1943 and the Third Air Force inspectors on 30 December 1943.

{SIGNED}  
K. M. MAJORS,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant

HISTORICAL REPORT OF THE GROUP INTELLIGENCE SECTION, 397<sup>TH</sup>  
BOMB GROUP (M) AAF FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 1943 TO 31  
DECEMBER 1943.

Routine activities were predominate for the month of December. This Intelligence section coordinated with group S-3 on the three 55<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing missions with briefing handled by group, and interrogation covered by squadron personnel. S-2 narrative is submitted in Exhibit "A".

The only change in Intelligence personnel, for the month of December, was Lt. Berberg of the 599<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

In December 14 - 16, the group and squadron Intelligence officers attended a 55<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing Instructional course at MacDill Field, Florida. This course entitled "Theatre of Actual Operational Procedures," was conducted by B-26 personnel returned from combat, and held vast interest for all concerned.

On December 16, a B-26 of the 598<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron conducted a search for crew members of the grounded YP-246. As a result, the YP-246 was found by this aircraft and led to further assistance by Navy blimps and coastal patrol vessels. The B-26 mentioned was the only aircraft aloft at this time due to adverse weather conditions.

Towards the end of the month, various examining and qualification boards from the 55<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, Third Bomber Command, and Third Air Force arrived to check over our administrative and tactical files and procedures.

The last few days of December were in preparation for movement to Atterbury Army Air Field, Columbus, Indiana for a two week maneuver period. The 596<sup>th</sup> and 597<sup>th</sup> squadron S-2s and personnel with the group S-2 were transported by air and train the first part of January.

{SIGNED}  
TEDSAN L. TIMBERLAKE  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Assistant Group S-2.

HISTORICAL REPORT FOR 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP SUPPLY AND  
TRANSPORTATION FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 1943 TO 31 DECEMBER  
1943.

Packing and Crating School was arranged for the 598<sup>th</sup> and 599<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons.

Group Transportation officer and Squadron Transportation officers attended a 4 day Special Purpose Vehicle school at Rantoul, Illinois, from 19 December to 22 December 1943.

Daily inspection of Squadron Motor Pools.

Weekly inspection of Squadron Property Records and storage facilities.

Edited all Group and Squadron requisitions.

Made preparations for movement of 596<sup>th</sup> and 597<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons to Columbus, Indiana for 2 week maneuvers.

Group Supply officer attended 2 day meeting at Headquarters, 55<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, MacDill Field, Florida.

Group and Squadron Supply records were inspected by Major Swinson, AAF inspector.

Group and Squadron Supply records were inspected by inspection staff, Third Air Force.

{SIGNED}  
CLAUDE L. FUNDERBURK  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Air Corps,  
Group Supply Officer.

397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)  
HUNTER FIELD, GA.  
30 December 43

FIELD ORDERS )  
(DRILL) :  
NO 13 )

Maps: Jacksonville, Savannah Sectional.

1. See Intelligence Annex "B"
2. This Gp atks target No 12 at 1430. Primary target No II target No 12 at 1435. Secondary target ANDREWS at 1441½ on 31 Dec 43.

Briefing: 0900

Stations: 1009

Start Engines and Taxi out: 1039

Take Off: 1054

Assembly Point: 1500 ft over HUNTER FIELD.

Route out: HUNTER FIELD – VALDOSTA – HARRIS NECK

30° 45' - 32° 05' - 32° 15' - 32° 30' – SUNNTEE

80° 30' - 79° 30' - 78° 00' - 79° 25' – RIVER MOUTH

GEORGETOWN – TARGET NO 12 – BLACK RIVER - ANDREWS

Point of departure: HARRIS NECK.

Initial point: Primary No I: GEORGETOWN

Primary No II: BLACK RIVER (33° 35' - 79° 25')

Secondary: RHEMS

Method of Bombing: Formation will bomb in 18 aps box. The leader will sight for range and deflection. The flight leaders will sight for range only. Precompute data for 10,000 ft.

Number of atks: Two (2) on primary, one (1) on secondary

Time of atks: Primary No I: 1430

Primary No II: 1435

Secondary: 1441½

Axis of atk: Primary No I: 2½ deg

Primary No II: 105 deg

Secondary: 223 deg

Targets: Primary No I: Target No 12

Primary No II: Target No 12

Secondary: ANDREWS

Breakaway: Turn on next course – no change in altitude.

Route back: Direct to HUNTER FIELD

I.A.S. : (1) Assembly - SOP.

(2) Climb - 180 mph

(3) Cruise - 185 mph

(4) Bombing run – 190 mph

Landing: As briefed.

Interrogation: Immediately upon landing.

Critique: 1600

3. 397<sup>th</sup> Gp will fly all available aps.

a. The 598<sup>th</sup> Sq will furnish aps for "A" flt, plus all others available.

b. The 599<sup>th</sup> Sq will furnish aps for "B" flt, plus all others available.

X. (1) Gas load: All wing tanks plus one (1) bomb bay.

(2) Bomb load: Nine (9) 100 lb Demo bombs per ap.

(3) Ammunition load: None

4. a. Supply

(1) Normal

b. Evacuation

(1) Personnel

(a) Gp collecting station is located at 397<sup>th</sup> Gp Dispensary,  
HUNTER FIELD

(b) Ap comdrs having dead or wounded crew members aboard  
will fire a red flare on the approach leg and turn on passing  
lights.

(c) The surgeon will provide ambulance to evacuate casualties at  
hardstands.

5. a. Plan of signal communications: Use Annex "A"

b. CP's

(1) Air

(a) Gp comdr Captain BRONSON flying No 1-1 Flt "A"

(b) Deputy Gp comdr Lt. SMITH flying No 1-2 Flt "A"

(2) Ground: HUNTER FIELD TOWER

RICHARD T. COINER JR  
Col., AC  
Comdg

OFFICIAL:

{SIGNED}  
FRANK L. WOOD, JR.,  
Lt Col, AC  
S-3

ANNEXES: A – Comm  
B – Intel

DISTRIBUTION: "I"

ANNEX "A" to FIELD ORDER NO 13 – 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GP (M) AAF, DTD 30 DEC 43

COMMUNICATIONS

1. British Procedure will be used in accordance with 397<sup>th</sup> Gp memo 100-11.
2. Call Signs and Frequencies to be given at briefing.
3. Gp Leader will contact Range Control 5 min prior to bombing.
  - a. If radio contact is not established, mission will be carried out if range appears to be clear.
4. IFF to be carried in all aps. Only the lead ap in each flt to have set turned on.

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ANNEX "B" to FO #13, 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M).

## INTELLIGENCE

### 1. Summary of the Enemy Situation:

a. Enemy forces have made landings in the GULF OF MEXICO and have pushed inland to VALDOSTA, GA. Where it is thought they are building an air strip. It is also reported that enemy convoys have been sighted heading toward the coast at (30° 45' N, 80° 30' W), (32° 05' N, 79° 30' W), (32° 15' N, 78° 00' W), (32° 36' N, 79° 25' W) and that landing barges were seen on the beach at HARRIS NECK. It is definitely known that landings have been made at WAYCROSS and that there is a large concentration of supplies inland ten miles to the north with an advance base at ANDREWS at (33° 35' N, 79° 25' W) Target 12.

b. Enemy fighters are based at TALLAHASSEE 70 miles SW of VALDOSTA. Automatic weapons and light AA may be expected at VALDOSTA, HARRIS NECK, GEORGETOWN and supply dump north of GEORGETOWN. Also if convoys are sighted they will be escorted by cruisers and destroyers, and perhaps a pocket battleship.

### 2. Summary of Friendly Situation:

a. U. S. Ground Forces hold the land from PENSACOLA, FLA. To WAYCROSS, GA. To SAVANNAH. 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group is based at HUNTER FIELD. U. S. fighters are based at TIFTON, GA., WAYCROSS, GA. and FLORENCE, S. C.

### 3. Measures to Obtain Information:

a. Photo reconnaissance: Two photographers with each Flight in ship 1-3; 2-3; 3-3; 4-3; 5-3; 6-3. Photos will be taken of all bombs dropped. Developed negatives and prints be delivered to Group S-2 within 24 hours after completion of mission.

### 4. Special Instructions on Interrogation:

a. Interrogation will be immediately after landing at Group Headquarters. Entire crews will attend interrogation. Navigators will bring leg sheets to the Interrogation Room. For the purpose of observation the following will be considered as enemy and reported as such:

1. All single engine fighter planes.

2. All ships wherever located.
3. Any motor truck convoys.

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C O P Y

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH NAVAL DISTRICT  
FORT SUMTER HOTEL  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

P15/MD6  
(39:ne)  
Serial 3996

21 December 1943

From: The Commandant, Sixth Naval District.  
To The Commanding Officer, 397<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group,  
Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia.

Subj: Letter of Appreciation for Assistance.

1. The Commandant wishes to express his appreciation for the splendid cooperation of your command in extending their prompt and efficient aid in the search and rescue operations conducted for members of the crew of the YP-426, grounded and sunk off Savannah, Georgia, on December 16, 1943.

JULES JAMES

EXHIBIT "B"

HEADQUARTERS 397<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF  
Office of the Chaplain  
Hunter Field, Georgia

GROUP CHAPLAIN'S HISTORICAL REPORT FOR DECEMBER 1-30, 1943

The activities of the Chaplain's section this month reached a high mark with the Christmas Season. Three weddings in the Group were solemnized in Chapel 1. Regular Sunday services were held on the Hangar Line and in Chapel 1 with the largest attendance record in the Chaplain's experience since entering military service. A beautiful candle-light service was held on Christmas Eve. The Base Catholic Chaplain has indicated that, due to the attendance at Masses of Catholic men from the 397<sup>th</sup> Group, at times the Chapel was filled to capacity.

The Chaplain waded through mud and water with the men, to visit each Squadron Mess Hall upon Christmas Day and would report that these were all joyous, festive banquets in the truest sense of the word. Much credit should be given to the Mess Sergeants and their staffs.

The printed Sunday Church Call was issued each week and the magazine, "Bomburst", contained a Chaplain's article. Pastoral, educational, and recreational activities as participated in by the Chaplain, were normal this month.

The usual amount of discussion among Officers and Enlisted Men as to duty assignments, transfers, and changes has been observed with the Chaplain an interested listener. One Squadron may have experienced an acceleration of this kind of talk or "buzzing" more so than the other squadrons because of changes in the flight echelon. As compared with a month ago morale seems to be higher.

{SIGNED}  
CLARENCE R. COMFORT, JR.,  
Chaplain, (1<sup>st</sup> Lt) AAF.