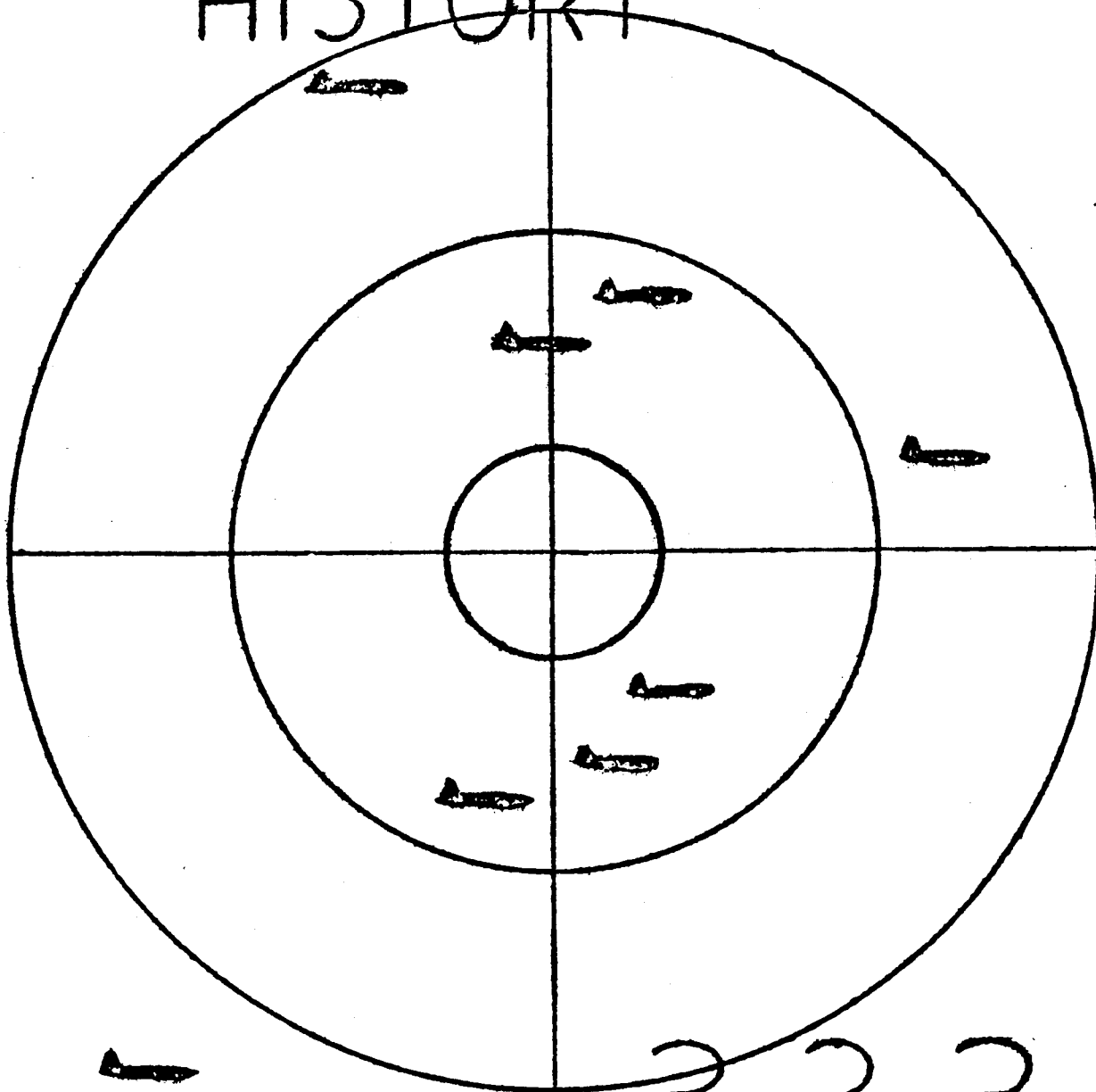


W.W. II HISTORY



3 2 3RD

BOMB GRP.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history of the 323rd Bombardment Group, 453rd Bomb Squadron, 454th Bomb Squadron, 455th Bomb Squadron and the 456th Bomb Squadron has been written, edited and compiled for the enjoyment, education and Esprit de corps of all of the present members of the 323rd Bombardment Wing. The Bomb Group and its' four squadrons are the only units of the 323rd Bomb Wing that have a wartime history. Credit for much of the material in this history belongs to the former members of the 323rd Bomb Group as they lived the history. Master Sergeant Dixie W. Johnson of the 2592nd Air Force Reserve Training Center, a Major in the Air Force Reserve, formerly an armament Officer in the wartime 323rd, supplied many of the facts and figures. Also the official histories of the units were used in extracting the material that would be of interest to the present members of the 323rd.

Roscoe S. Clark

-----Public Information Officer.

The history of the "White Tailed" P-26 Marauder Group began at MacDill Field, Florida, when on September 11, 1942, the parent group, the 21st Bomb Group, gave birth to its offspring, the 323rd Bomb Group (P) AAF. The personnel originally assigned to the Group were a varied lot: flying personnel from all three flying Training Commands, ground personnel from various reception centers, from air bases at Jackson, Mississippi, and Columbia, South Carolina, and many ground Officers direct from various Officer Candidate Schools. Despite the inexperience of personnel and the definite lack of equipment, tools, and training facilities, the Group under the leadership of Lt. Col. Herbert E. Thatcher, plunged immediately into the task of preparing for combat in the short space of three months.

The 323rd had capable leadership from the first with Lt. Col. Thatcher, as Group Commanding Officer, Major Fickling, Group Air Executive and Lt. William R. Fitzgerald as Group Adjutant. The men selected to lead the Squadrons were, Capt. Richard Travis, Capt. Wilson R. Wood, Capt. William W. Brier and Capt. George O. Commenator.

MacDill Field in the summer and fall of 1942 was one of the busiest, if not the busiest, airfield in the whole United States. It was an old well established Air Field and had trained P-17 crews prior to the coming of the P-26's. Due to the lack of experienced instructors and many other factors in learning to fly new combat airplanes, the crash rate was alarmingly high at that time, and occasioned many skeptical comments as to the worth of

the P-26 as a combat airplane. It is to the credit of those first grim and determined pilots that pioneered in the operations of the "Wingless Wonder" that the first skeptical criticisms were later proved unfounded when the 323rd and its fellow P-26 groups made their outstanding combat records.

As the pilots became more proficient in flying the plane and more of them were checked-out as first pilots the formation of combat crews was begun. Then those crews started their training as members of combat teams. Bombing practice was obtained at the bombing ranges along the Gulf Coast a few miles west of Tampa. Mullet Key was the most widely used. On October 25, 1942 the 323rd was told it was now on its own and would be moving in a few days to another base to continue its combat training. The new base was to be Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The move was completed on the 2nd of November 1942. The Group was now on its own, no one to watch over it.

If any man has served at Myrtle Beach he does not need a description of the base or its surrounding territory. The field was situated about two miles south of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, a thriving resort town in the summer but a quiet village in the winter. Most men in the Group state that the winter of 1942-43 was the coldest, dampest, most miserable winter they ever spent in their lives.

Though the weather was never favorable for flying the training continued throughout the rain and cold. The combat crews were going to ground school while not engaged in flying. There were some fatal accidents at Myrtle Beach but the losses were

extremely small considering the number of hours flown and the handicaps that had to be overcome in the flying program.

After a period of several weeks of "sweating out" the train movement to the Staging Area, the Group realized that, as sometimes happens in the Air Force, the move was to be delayed for an indefinite period. There were two main reasons why the move overseas was delayed. One was because the 323rd was an experimental group, the first to test the practicability of using single control B-26's. A slow-up of production due to modifications on the plane was the other factor. After numerous rumors the overseas movement was definitely begun. The first part of March 1943, the 453rd Flight Echelon entrained for Ft. Wayne, Indiana, for a short stay to pick up the new airplanes of the Squadron and to start on the long journey overseas. The other squadrons left for Ft. Wayne at intervals of one a week, and by April 7th all of them were on their way. The Ground Echelon remained at Myrtle Beach until Easter Sunday, April 25, 1943 when two troop trains left for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and eventually overseas.

The trip across, for the Ground Echelon, was a ride on the "Queen Elizabeth." The trip was the first ocean voyage for practically all the personnel, and consequently, extremely interesting. However the enjoyment of the trip was marred by the fact that the normal passenger load of the ship had been multiplied many times and everyone had to line up for any and all functions of the day. Chow was served twice a day because of the enormous numbers of men aboard and then it was necessary to stand in line, sometimes for hours, to get into the mess hall. All sleeping quarters were

crowded and it was necessary for enlisted men to use the regular bunks in shifts. Each man would be allowed use of a bunk for 24 hours, then would have to relinquish it to another man and go up to sleep on the floor of the enclosed deck. After 24 hours on the deck a man would then be entitled to go below and occupy a bunk for 24 hours. One advantage of being on a big ship was that fewer men were seasick than would have been the case otherwise.

Except for the first day out of New York and the last day in the Western Approaches to the United Kingdom, when aircraft flew overhead, the "Queen Elizabeth" went unescorted across the great Atlantic. Submarine detection devices and the sharp altering of the course every few minutes made the vessel safe from submarine attack. The "Queen" docked at the small fishing village of Gourock in Scotland. Then came the long train ride to the Group's first home in England. The village of Horham in Sussex. The field was an old R.A.F. base located a short distance from the village. The first of the Air Echelon arrived at Horham a short time after the Ground Echelon arrived. The Air Echelon of the 453rd, 454th, and the 455th Squadrons flew the Southern route across the Atlantic. The Air Echelon of the 456th flew the Northern route across. Immediately after the Air Echelon landed at Horham the 323rd moved to Earls Colne, another small village in England.

The training program, both ground and air, was carried on relentlessly from the moment the move was made to Earls Colne .

The all-important practice of medium level operations was carried on without delay. Though it was new to the crews and difficult to learn on such short notice, they soon became proficient at the new type of work. It became increasingly evident that the 323rd would become the first Marauder Group to go into action at medium altitude. For its work in pioneering the P-26 medium altitude operation and showing the world that the P-26 was an efficient and formidable foe for the enemy, the 323rd took justifiable pride.

The question among all of the personnel on the base during the latter part of June was when the "Big Day" was to be, for which the Group had trained so long and so hard. Finally on the 4th of July a foretaste of actual operations was given to the Group when it was sent on a diversionary raid over the English Channel. On the 16th of July, after only 2½ months practice on the new bombing technique the 323rd made the first medium altitude attack against an enemy target. The enemy installation singled out for this first blow was the important marshalling yards at Abbeville, France. Two missions were briefed and scrubbed before the Group went on its second mission on the 25th of July---a highly successful one to the Coke Ovens at Ghent.

Numerous raids were made during the remaining days of July, most of them against enemy airdromes in France in an endeavor to hinder and cripple the work of the German Air Force. Among the airfields attacked were St. Omer, Ft. Rouge, Tricqueville, Woensdrecht, Marville, and Poix. A total of 21 missions were briefed and set up in August but only eight of them were flown. Again the targets were airfields, and

marshalling yards and targets of the special construction sites. Little was known about the special construction sites that were bombed but every crew member had his own idea about what they were. It was believed that they were built in connection with some German Secret Weapon. It was not known definitely for several months that they were actually the sites being set up by the Germans from which to launch their first terror weapon, the V-1 Bomb or robot plane.

September was a comparatively big month for operations at that time, as 15 missions were successfully flown during that third month of operations. The planes continued to encounter both flak and fighters---64 planes were damaged and two were lost in combat. By October the foggy, rainy and cloudy English weather had begun to hamper seriously the work of the Group. During the last three months of 1943 only 22 missions were successfully flown against the enemy. Thirteen of these targets were airfields and the nine were against the Special Construction Targets.

On the 13th of November, the Group C.O. left to assume command of the 99th Combat Wing. Lt. Col. Wilson R. Wood, formerly C.O. of the 45th became the New Group Commander.

There were numerous enemy air raids during the first few months at Earls Colne. Many times the German Bombers could be heard overhead and the flak fire against them could be both seen and heard. It was not until the night of December 10th that the field was hit by the enemy. One string of bombs were dropped and the damage was slight.

That first Christmas overseas was a normal working day, though special Church services were held and the customary turkey and dressing was served.

The six months of operation in this first year of combat were highly successful, as the statistics will show. The Group ran sixty nine missions and two thousand and eleven sorties. In January 1944 the bad weather limited the Group to eight missions, all of them against the Special Construction Targets. On one of these missions the Group met fifty FW 190's and Me 109's. During the encounter four enemy planes were destroyed and one damaged.

One event of February 1944 which was of special interest to combat crews was that some of them completed their fiftieth mission, the first man to reach his mark was Lt. Red Phillips, a navigator in the 455th Squadron. This was a particularly busy month for enemy air raids. The siren screamed fourteen times during the cold winter nights of the month. Operations for the month consisted of eighteen raids. The weather continued to be bad but missions were run every day that planes could venture off the ground. The Group lost three airplanes and crews in combat this month, but destroyed seven enemy planes in the air.

During March 1944 the Group taking advantage of the improved weather sent many missions against enemy targets in Western Europe. After the month of March, the objectives of the Group changed radically. The campaign against the marshalling yards was started off on the 8th of April by a thirty nine ship attack on the Hassolt Marshalling yard. For one week during April the Group was taken off combat operations and given a week to devote to refresher training in formation flying. May could be classified as the "bridge bombing month". Since it was during this month that the "White Tailed Marauders" concentrated their powerful blows against these important pre-invasion

targets. A total of eight bridges were blasted in an endeavor to seal off Western France from the rest of Europe. How well this purpose was accomplished could be seen later in the confused efforts of the enemy to send supplies and reinforcements to his forces in France when practically all the bridges on the lower Seine were knocked down.

June brought some of the most momentous days in the history of the 323rd, as it was during this time that the Allies' grand assault on Hitler's vaunted Western Europe was staged. This long awaited event not only brought a new sense of determination and a great upswing in moral for the Group, but it also brought new problems and increased responsibilities. The bombing of the pre-invasion targets of bridges and coastal installations continued for the first few days of June, and during all this time the men knew that "the day" was not far away. The Group hummed with activity as all personnel were in the throes of hurried planning and preparations for the big day.

With the necessity for added secrecy during pre-briefing of lead crews and preparation for the regular briefing, the Intelligence section maintained an Officer guard on duty twenty-four hours a day, to doubly insure that no unauthorized persons gained access to the top secret information. Engineering was busy with the rush job of painting the Zebra-like stripes on all the planes. The other sections of the group were likewise busy with their last minute preparations for D-Day.

The excited babbling of the crewmen betrayed their eagerness for the start of the all-important invasion mission, when they gathered in the crew room for the 0200 briefing on the morning of

June 6, 1944.

The Group, using fifty-four planes, rather than the usual thirty-six, took off at 0415 and assembled in the early morning darkness. After the long trip over the ship-invested Channel to the Cherbourg Peninsula the three boxes of the Group blasted their separate targets. The bombs were away at 0617, just a few short minutes before the first wave of assault troops dashed onto the enemy shore. No planes were lost and only slight enemy opposition, in the form of light to heavy flak was encountered. The results of the bombing were classed as fair to good.

For the next few days after D-Day the raids of the Group were concentrated against road junctions, bridges and marshalling yards in an effort to separate still further the immediate battle area from the rest of France. The threat of the German secret weapon, the pilotless aircraft or flying bomb, became a reality when on the night of June 16-17 the air raid signal was given numerous times. Many alerts were sounded during the remainder of the month as the enemy intensified his attack with the new weapon. During the last days of June the attack against the enemy consisted of more attacks against the launching sites of the flying bomb. Also during this time a new type bombing was practiced. This was night bombing accomplished by bombing in trail, visual, on flares dropped by PFF aircraft. This new program was designed to make the Group a potent bombing force after dark and thus enable the Bomber Command to do 'round the clock bombing.

After the particularly busy and exciting days of June, July was more or less a let-down to the Group as no missions were flown during

the first seventeen days of the month. This lapse in activity was due to the continuing bad weather, which the English described as the worst in fifty years.

After more than thirteen months at Earls Colne the Group moved to a new location, Beaulier Airdome in the county of Hants in Southern England. This was the first move in the Groups jaunt from England to the Continent. This move was made on July the 18-21 by rail, air and motor transport.

Life at Beaulier was not much different from that at the old base, though the base and its surrounding territory was different. The terrain for miles around was very flat and there were very few trees on the base. The weather continued so bad for the first part of July that a mission could not be flown until the 18th of the month. On that day the Group took its part in the 9th Bomber Command attack on the Demouville Defended area, just east of Caen. Attacks were carried out against other bridges and fuel dumps but the most important attack for the month was the mission to the St. Lo Defended Area. The importance of this attack was seen later when the St. Lo breakthrough was recognized as the turning point of the Normandy campaign.

August was a month long to be remembered in the history of the Group. It was during this month that the long expected and long awaited move to France was made. During the first week of the month a message was received warning the Group to prepare for an overseas movement. From that time on the base was alive with rumors and suppositions as to the destination of the outfit. It was not until the 15th that the final order was received. The new home was to be

Number A-20, an air strip two miles NE of the little French Village of Lessay. The advanced Echelon left for France on August the 18th. The Group was entirely moved by the 31st of August. The move was made by train and boat with the exception of the planes which were flown to the new home. The outstanding combat news for the month of August was the fact that the Group exhibited its all-around bombing excellence. On the night of the 6th and 7th it successfully completed its first night mission. On this and several succeeding nights the technique of bombing in trail on target indicator flares was used in blasting different enemy installations.

The new home in France was a landing strip and was only partially completed. It had steel mat runways and hardstands. The field was situated in the midst of the area over which the Americans and Germans had fought so hard before the breakthrough to the west coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula. Though the field had been de-mined as thoroughly as possible, there were still some mines at various places and a few accidents resulted, one of them fatal. The disadvantage of living under field conditions had been discussed for months, but even the gloomiest predictions had not taken into account the scourge of bees and flies that made it practically impossible to eat a meal.

Giving further proof of its efficiency and ability the Group flew a mission off its steel mat runway less than 24 hours after the planes arrived at the new base. It was a part of the first American Bomber effort from French soil. The strong points and forts at Brest occupied the attention of the Group for a period of eight days. These raids were made in conjunction with other B-26

groups and heavy bomb groups.

With the American onslaught breaking so fast through France and Belgium it became necessary to shift the emphasis of the groups bombing support of our ground forces to the bombing of objectives along and behind the Siegfried Line in Germany. With the targets along the Siegfried Line getting further out of range each day, it became necessary to move to a closer base. The Group moved between the 14th and 21st of September to a large Airfield, once the pride of the French civil airlines, located at Chartres. At this home the successful raids of Allied Bombers had left a dismal picture of destruction. Booby traps and mines were plentiful, and the "graveyards" of wrecked aircraft was a constant peril to curiosity seekers. The bad weather continued with scarcely a let-up during the Groups sojourn at Chartres. Because of this only six of the twenty-six briefed targets could be flown. During these missions the stiffening of German resistance was evident from the increasing intensity and accuracy of the flak encountered. As the relentless drive of the American and Allied Ground Forces swept forward it was necessary for the Group to move again in order to be within range of its targets. This time the move was made to Northern France. The move began on the 13th of October and ended on the 15th.

Shortly after arrival at Laon a system of passes to Paris was started. Combat crews were allowed 3 day passes and ground crews 18 hour passes. This afforded the men some respite from the work and dreariness and enabled them to see more of France. Liberty runs were made to Reims. The winter at Laon was a tough and

dreary one---to be always remembered for its snow, rain, mud and cold North Winds. These, combined with growing homesickness after many months in the E.T.O., poor housing and inadequate rations at times, caused morale of the men to reach a new all-time low. With such severe winter weather it became necessary to maintain alert crews at all times to insure that the runways and taxiways were kept free of snow, sleet and ice so that the planes could take off and land. For the rest of the month of October there were only two missions run. Excellent results were obtained.

The weather continued to be bad during November, but the Group was able to run five very successful visual missions and some PFF missions. Thanksgiving passed unnoticed except for the usual turkey and trimmings at the evening meal.

December at Laon was a very interesting month, to say the least. For a month usually characterized by Christmas festivities and gaiety, this one was quite different. It was composed mostly of hard work due to the great German counter-attack which was such a rude blow to the complacency built up in the American army after the great successes of the previous summer and fall. The months aerial activities were primarily in support of ground action. These were mainly the 8th Army Group's offensive in the Saar region and the attempts of the 21st and 12th Army Groups to stem the German drive in the Ardennes salient. While not in close support of our troops, the mission served to knock out bridges and defended villages vital to the enemy's plan of battle. Some successful missions were run during the first part of the month but extensive activities were prevented by the seemingly permanent bad weather.

When Christmas was just around the corner, the great offensive of the Germans came in all its fury. Enemy air activity became prevalent and local danger became probable. Nearby airfields were strafed and paratroopers and enemy agents were dropped in many nearby places. Acts of sabotage and violence against American troops on the roads were reported daily. Double airplane guards, area guards, and armed messengers were employed.

The news blackout imposed by the Army commanders prevented the rank and file from keeping up with the latest development in the Battle of the Bulge, but it was realized throughout the whole base that the situation was critical. The Group was alerted for any possible eventuality, and everyone was warned to be ready to move on six hours notice. This would have necessitated burning much of the supplies and equipment.

Christmas passed almost unnoticed except for the huge meals of turkey and accompanying edibles. Here and there a brightly lighted tree reflected the creative initiative of a soldier who refused to let the Holy Holiday pass unsung. On the 23rd of December, in an attempt to deny to the enemy the use of supplies moving up by rail, the railroad bridge at Eller was bombed. Nearly every group lost some planes, and one of the groups, the 397th, lost 10 planes. The 323rd lost two planes to the extremely accurate and intense flak.

For its outstanding bombing on December 24 to 27 of the supply and transportation facilities used in reinforcing the great German counter-offensive the Group was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Starting on Christmas Eve with a full scale attack against

a railroad bridge at Trier, Germany, the 323rd bombed enemy installations six times in four days. All of these missions were accomplished with excellent and superior results despite the seemingly insurmountable odds of adverse weather conditions and the intense enemy anti-aircraft fire. It was necessary for ground crewmen to go without sleep for many, many hours in order to load and service the planes for their vital work. Without a doubt the work of the 323rd played a vital part in breaking the back of the great German counter-offensive since it contributed so effectively during Christmas week to disrupting the enemy's transportation and supply facilities.

The New Year of 1945 was literally brought in with a bang. The usual annual midnight festivities had scarcely died away when an FW 190 came screaming across the field with his guns blazing. Anti-aircraft batteries opened up on the nuisance raider and were given credit for having destroyed him when he crashed a few miles west of the base. No casualties were caused---the worst damage was that some caught cold while crouching in their icy slit trenches.

Two blizzards during the month left little doubt that it was really winter. Snow drifted high up the sides of the tents and bitter cold penetrated the canvas day and night. Squads of men were kept busy clearing the runway and taxi strips so the Group could maintain the constant alert for take off. The existence of the threatening enemy bulge on the Ardennes front continued to influence the type of targets. The Germans had established the city of St.Vith as the hub of the recaptured area. Because of this it

was the target on the first day of the year, when 31 planes loaded with 1000 pound bombs braved the intense flak fire to blast the city again. On one mission during the month one plane was lost and twenty-five ships had category A. flak damage and three men were wounded. Late in the month of January the 323rd moved again. This time to strip A-83, located about four kilometers south of the city of Valenciennes. The 455th and 456th Squadrons were located in the Eastern outskirts of the village of Herin, to the northwest of the main highway from Valenciennes to Douai. This area was about a mile from the main field and was formerly a prison camp. The 453rd and 454th squadrons were not so fortunate, but their tent areas were soon made comfortable. During this move the Group Commander, Col. Wood returned to the United States and Lt. Col. Rollin Winningham from the 397th Group took command.

The handicaps of changing the base of operations and the usual adverse February weather proved to be surmountable ones. The 19 missions that were run carried the "White Tailed Marauders" over enemy strongholds to disrupt transportation, paralyze aircraft production and shatter bulging marshalling yards. The enemy in his last gasp for survival took a heavier toll in aircraft lost and damaged and in wounded personnel than in previous months. Eight planes were lost in combat, with 33 men being carried as missing in action, and 11 others wounded. Since most of the missions for the month were Pathfinder missions it was impossible to assess the amount of damage done on the various raids.

Shortly after the sun set on the 21st of February, it was evident that Operation Clarion was scheduled to be run the following

day. Hours of hectic briefing activity followed to make ready for the biggest and most vital air operation since D-Day. "Clarion" was to be a co-ordinated aerial offensive of all flyable aircraft in the ETO against hundreds of junctions, bridges, and marshalling yards. The targets for the 323rd were all in the area east of Hamm and affected railroads feeding that important marshalling center. March, 1945, saw the weather lift and as if to say, "That's all we've been waiting for", the 323rd proceeded to run 43 successful missions during the month--by far the greatest amount of bombing done in any one month of the Group's history. The Great air offensive continued through April with the whole effort concentrated at blasting a path before the slugging ground forces. The raids for this last month of operations consisted of raids on marshalling yards, oil storage dumps, an airfield and ordnance depots.

Again the range of the B-26 was strained to the breaking point by the great distance it was necessary to fly into Germany in order to reach the targets. The rapid advance of our armored forces and infantry had by the end of April overrun such a great portion of Germany that very few targets were left. As the German lines fell back and the battle became further and further away it became evident that the struggle could not continue for long. Now only were all targets out of range, but with the Allied troops making such rapid advances it became dangerous to bomb anywhere for fear of hitting them.

The entire Group had known for days that the long-awaited V-E day was not far off. With the leak in security that allowed the advanced notice, the Actual V-E Day came more or less as an anti-

climax to that first announcement. The joy in every C. I.'s heart was not betrayed so emotionally as was the joy of the French.

Thus ends the combat history of the 323rd, whose accomplishments in blasting the enemy extended from the rockbound coast of the Frest Peninsula to the snow covered Alps, and from the Pas de Calais rocket bomb region to the Rhineland industrial area and Northern Holland. The outstanding combat record, which required countless acts of supreme courage and sacrifice and long dreary hours of back breaking labor, will stand for all time as a tribute to the working and fighting ability of the many men who served in the 323rd.

The 323rd Bomb Group, 453rd Bomb Squadron, 454th Bomb Squadron, 455th Bomb Squadron and the 456th Bomb Squadron, for their combat record in the ETO were awarded the following awards:

SIX FATTLE PARTICIPATION CREDITS AS FOLLOWS

Air Offensive Europe	4 July 1942--5 June 1944
Normandy	6 June 1944--24 July 1944
Northern France	25 July 1944--14 Sept. 1944
Ardennes-Alsace	16 Dec. 1944--25 Jan. 1945
Central Europe	22 Mar. 1945--11 May 1945
Rhineland	15 Sept. 1944--21 Mar. 1945.

Distinguished Unit Citation

Trier, Germany	24-27 Dec. 1944
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V-E Day was over but the Squadrons of the 323rd Bomb Group had a varied history before they were de-activated and the men returned to the United States.

The first of May brought the 453rd Squadron news that rather stunned the whole Squadron. The Squadron was to be attached to the

Ninth Air Service Command and was being sent to Germany to disarm German Air Force Installations. The Squadron, since it's activation had been a combat outfit and the ground men had always been very proud of the flying men and their planes. During the next few days more information was received on the type of work to be done. The men began to realize the importance of the job to be done and they were all eager to get started.

Late in the month of May the 453rd moved to an airfield four miles north of Augsburg, Germany, and on the 25th of the month completed disarming their first target. It was a balloon factory at Augsburg.

The continued disarmament of German Air Force installations was the main official subject during the month of June, but the chief concern of the men seemed to be whether they had 85 points. On the 11th of June all of the combat men of the 453rd was transferred and now the Squadron was strictly a ground outfit.

The month of July was a period of continued activities on the Disarmament of German Air Force Installations. The 453rd continued it's disarmament program during the month of August in the Munich area. V-J day was met with a feeling of quiet joy. There was very little celebrating, but all personnel rejoiced. The next feeling was "when do we go home".

On the 11th of September the advance echelon of the 56th Air Disarmament Squadron arrived to take over the area, and the physical plant of the 453rd. This transfer was completed on the morning of the 12th and all the personnel remaining was transferred to Group headquarters. On the 13th of September the unit was reduced in

strength to one Officer and one enlisted man. Thus ends the history of the 453rd Bomb Squadron in Europe.

After V-D Day in Europe there is no official or un-offical history available about the 454th Bomb Squadron. It is assumed that their duties from V-E day until the de-activation of the Squadron closely paralleled the 453rd Bomb Squadron.

The 455th Bomb Squadron became a ground outfit early in May of 1945 and soon moved to Germany where it's assignment paralleled to the 453rd--the disarming of the German Air Force. This program of disarmament continued on through the summer until early fall when the squadron was de-activated, in Europe.

The 456th Bomb Squadron followed the pattern of the other three Squadrons and became a ground outfit--moved to Germany and spent the summer of 1945 disarming the German Air Force and was de-activated in the early fall.

We next pick up the history of the 323rd Bomb Group at Tinker Air Force Base.

COLONEL CLINT T. JOHNSON
Commanding Officer
323rd Bombardment Wing (L)

