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Operations: April/May/June, 1945

MARIBOR, YUGOSLAVIA - MISSION NO. 390 - APRIL 1, 1945
Thirty-two aircraft took off to bomb a Railroad Bridge at Maribor. Only six aircraft were able to drop 34, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs. All Boxes made three to four passes at the target but only one Box was able to see the target long enough to bomb. Its bomb pattern covered the target. Flak was heavy, moderate, and accurate causing the death of 2nd Lt. Richard S. Wood. Lightly wounded were 1st Lt. W. B. Cope, P; 1st Lt. A. H. Stover, P; 2nd Lt. T. C. Andrews, N; and S/Sgt. S. W. Dudley; UT, all from the 49th Squadron. S/Sgt. H. L. Lindaberry, 96th Squadron, suffered from frostbite.

B-17 #542, piloted by 1st Lt. Walter B. Cope was forced to make an emergency landing at Prakos Airdrome, Yugoslavia having engines No. 1, 3 and 4 knocked out by flak. The crew was returned to base by C-47.

GRAZ, ITALY - MISSION NO. 391 - APRIL 2, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft dropped 280, 500-lb. RDX bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Graz. A good concentration of hits was reported in the yards. Flak was heavy, moderate and accurate with no losses and no injuries.

UDINE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 392 - APRIL 5, 1945

Twenty-six aircraft dropped 1,045, 125-lb. fragmentation clusters on the Airdrome at Udine. A good pattern was reported in the assigned area. The airfields in this area had always been a particular problem for the heavies of the 15th Air Force. The enemy pilots were experienced, aggressive and the cause of loss of many B-17s, B-24s and fighters. Flak was heavy, slight and accurate with no losses or injuries.

VERONA/PERONA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 393 - APRIL 6, 1945

The Germans were on the run in Northern Italy and targets now were to cut them off from returning to Germany and also to support the British 8th Army in its drive. Twenty-five aircraft dropped 150, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs on the Railroad Bridge. There was a near miss on the bridge but patterns were to the left and right of the target. This was the third failure of the Group to completely wipe out the bridge. Flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate.

BRESSANONE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 394 - APRIL 7, 1945

Forty-three aircraft took off to bomb a Railroad Bridge at Bressanone. The planes did not bomb the primary nor alternates due to cloud cover over the targets.

BRESSANONE, ITALY - MISSION NO. 395 - APRIL 8, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft dropped 168, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs on a Railroad Bridge at Bressanone. This was the second attempt in two days to cover this target. Strike photos showed that the bridge was successfully downed. Flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate.

OPERATION BUCKLAND, ITALY - MISSION NO. 396 - APRIL 9, 1945

This mission was designed to do a saturation bombing of German troop positions in the Bologna area. The area was designated as "APRICOT." Forty-one aircraft dropped 1,537, 120-lb. fragmentation clusters on this target. Bombing by the First Wave showed an excellent pattern in the assigned area while the Second Wave started a little short, carried to the left and into the target area. Flak was heavy, moderate, and inaccurate, wounding one man.

OPERATION BUCKLAND, ITALY - MISSION NO. 397 - APRIL 10, 1945

This mission was a repeat of April 9 in support of the British 8th Army. This target was also in the Bologna area and designated "CHARLIE." Thirty-nine aircraft dropped 1,482, 120-lb. fragmentation clusters on the enemy positions with excellent coverage by both waves. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate. No injuries, no losses.

PADUA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 398 - APRIL 11, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft attacked the North Railroad Bridge at Padua dropping 446, 300-lb. GP bombs on the bridge. Probable hits on the bridge were reported. Flak was heavy, moderate, and inaccurate but damaging six B-17s, two severe. B-17 #44-8108, 429th Squadron, was severely damaged. When over friendly territory the pilot ordered the crew to bail out and he crash landed the plane without injury. S/Sgt. W. D. Schultz broke an ankle while landing. Members of the crew were: 2nd Lt. C. E. Underwood, P; 2nd Lt. K. O. Woodruff, CP; 2nd Lt. T. M. Hyndman, N; Cpl. J. M. Cloud, B; S/Sgt. C. E. Brokoff, UT; Cpl. J. E. Dobrin, LT; S/Sgt. R. W. Blades, RW; S/Sgt. W. D. Schultz, LW; Cpl. T. R. Vinsan, TG; and S/Sgt. L. W. Lisusky, RO.

MALCONTENTA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 399 - APRIL 11, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft took off to bomb the Ammo Filling Station at Malcontenta. The formation could not penetrate the weather and returned the bombs to base.

NERVESIA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 400 - APRIL 15, 1945

Eighteen aircraft took off to bomb the Railroad Diversion Bridge at Nervesa. The target was smoke covered from a previous bombing and only six aircraft dropped 72, 500-lb. RDX bombs with the bombs falling to the right of the target. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate. The remaining 12 aircraft diverted to an alternate target, the Ponte Di Plave Railroad Bridge, Italy and dropped 144, 500-lb. RDX bombs, missing the target over and to the left. It was not a very worthy occasion for the Group's 400th mission.

BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 401 - APRIL 15, 1945

This was the second mission of the day, with this formation of 41 aircraft taking off at 0850 hours and dropping 1,558, 100-lb. GP bombs on German troop concentrations in the area designated as MA-16. The target area was reported to have been well covered. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate.

BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 402 - APRIL 16, 1945

Forty-one aircraft were assigned to attack German troop concentrations at area MA-7. Due to a heavy cloud, bombing was impossible and bombs were returned to base.

It was two years ago that I sailed from New York Harbor. It has been a long, tough two years! The end seems to be in sight.

BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 403 - APRIL 17, 1945

Forty-one aircraft attacked German troop concentrations at Area MA-19 in two waves dropping 561, 250-lb. GP bombs. The First Wave reported excellent results and the Second Wave's results were fair. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate.

BOLOGNA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 404 - APRIL 18, 1945

Forty-one aircraft again attacked German troop concentrations in Area MA-19 dropping 1,535, 120-lb. fragmentation clusters on this target with results reported as fairly well covered. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate.

RATTENBURG, AUSTRIA - MISSION NO. 405 - APRIL 19, 1945

Forty-two aircraft took off with 29 aircraft dropping 348, 500-lb. RDX bombs on a Railroad Bridge at Rattenburg. There was an excellent pattern on the target with probable direct hits on the bridge and approaches. Flak was heavy, slight and inaccurate. Seven aircraft attacked Marshalling Yards at Rosenheim, Austria, dropping 84, 500-lb. bombs. Clouds concealed this target but smoke was seen rising from the Yards. Six aircraft attacked Marshalling Yards at Lienz, Austria, dropping 72, 500-lb. RDX bombs. Direct hits were observed in the Yards. There were no injuries and all A/C returned safely.

VIPITENO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 406 - APRIL 20, 1945

Forty aircraft dropped 450, 500-lb. RDX bombs on Marshalling Yards at Vipiteno with a very good concentration of bombs in the Yards. Flak was heavy, moderate, and accurate resulting in serious wounds to 1st Lt. Herman Dooha, N, 96th Squadron; serious wounds to S/Sgt. William Spaulding, B, 20th Squadron and slight wounds to S/Sgt. A. D. Goodrich, LWG, 96th Squadron.

B-17 #44-6374, 49th Squadron, 1st Lt. Tommy N. Baer, P, was hit by flak on the bomb run and lost the No. 1 and No. 2 engines. The bomb load was jettisoned; a few seconds later the left wing was blown off and the plane exploded. Lt. Baer, 1st Lt. Carleton E. Smith, CP, and S/Sgt. Robert E. Blazer were blown clear and safely parachuted into friendly territory. Lt. Smith was hospitalized in the 26th General Hospital and S/Sgt. Blazer hospitalized in the 86th Infantry/100th Mountain Division Medical Department. Lt. Baer reported he believes the other seven members of his crew went down with the aircraft and were killed.

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT: A/C #42-5050 - 96TH SQUADRON

1st Lt.	Tommy N. Baer, 0-831665, P.	(RET)
1st Lt.	Carleton E. Smith, 0-514863, CP.	(RET)
F/O	Donald L. Gawronski, T-137686, N.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Ivan L. Schraeder, 16062287, TUG.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Patrick (NMI) Shaughnessy, 39047225, U/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Orval L. Burman, 37685167, L/T.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	John H. Dunston, 32989132, R/W.	(KIA)
S/Sgt.	Robert E. Blazer, 37207308, L/W.	(RET)

Cpl. Joseph T. Hart, (ASN ?), T/G. (KIA)
S/Sgt. Hugh A. Stevenson, 34892918, R/O. (KIA)

The records of this crew were of such poor quality that one Army Serial Number, returning statements of eye witness personnel and the returning survivor statements were not legible.

ROSENHEIM/SPITTAL, AUSTRIA - MISSION NO. 407 - APRIL 21, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft took off to bomb Marshalling Yards at Rosenheim. Due to a 7/10 cloud cover at the primary target, only six aircraft dropped 72, 500-lb. RDX bombs with unobserved results. Flak was minimal. Twenty-one aircraft diverted to a secondary target at Spittal dropping 252, 500-lb. RDX bombs into the Marshalling Yards. Bombs carried across central and NW sector of Yards, direct hits on Station, freight warehouse, rolling stock and tracks.

BONAVIGO/PESCHIERA, ITALY - MISSION NO. 408 - APRIL 23, 1945

Forty-two aircraft took off in two waves to bomb a Railroad Bridge at Bonavigo. Twenty-one aircraft dropped 250, 500-lb. RDX bombs on this target. Two patterns covered approaches to the bridge and one pattern carried over the bridge. Twenty-one aircraft dropped 252, 500-lb. RDX bombs on a Supply Depot at Peschiera with one pattern in the Installation Area and the other two patterns short and to the right.

MALBORGHETTO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 409 - APRIL 24, 1945

Forty-two aircraft took off in two waves to bomb the Railroad Bridge at Malborghetto. Only 17 aircraft dropped 102, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs on the bridge with unobserved to good results. Three aircraft dropped 18, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs on a Railroad Bridge at Casarsa, Italy with excellent results. Three aircraft dropped 18, 1,000-lb. RDX bombs on a Railroad Bridge at Arnoldstein, Italy with the bombs reported as near misses.

Nineteen aircraft returned their bombs to Base due to weather.

The Group Infirmary was partially destroyed by fire today. Fortunately, no one suffered injuries.

LINZ, AUSTRIA - MISSION NO. 410 - APRIL 25, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft took off with 26 aircraft dropping 204, 500-lb. RDX bombs on the Main Station Sidings at Linz. Bombing patterns were reported short, to the left and right. Flak was heavy, moderate, and accurate resulting in light wounds to 1st Lt. J. S. Clayton, P; S/Sgt. Raymond J. Kryzyzanek, LW; S/Sgt. Morton L. Klauber, LT; and Cpl R. C. Bentley, LT; all of the 20th Squadron. T/Sgt. J. M. Azar, UT, 429th Squadron, suffered from anoxia.

One aircraft dropped eight, 500-lb. RDX bombs on Marshalling Yards at Wels, Austria. Reports were that the West entrance to the Yards, and choke point were covered. There was one early return.

BOLZANO, ITALY - MISSION NO. 411 - APRIL 26, 1945

Thirty-one aircraft took off to bomb the Gries Stones and Ammunition Dump at Bolzano. Due to a 10/10 cloud cover over this target and alternates, no bombing was done.

The sad news of the death of Captain John G. "Jerry" Hofmann was received at Group Headquarters. Captain Hofmann was killed on the 24th of April in a tank battle in Northern Italy. For some time there had been a voluntary exchange of ground and flying officers to act as observers in order that one branch of service could understand the other.

Captain Hofmann was the original bombardier on the crew of Captain Charles E. Crafton. They left the States on April 24, 1944 and joined the 429th Squadron. He had completed his tour of duty,

received the Distinguished Flying Cross, with Cluster, and Air Medal with three Clusters. Rather than go home, he stayed with the Group, and his mission log had shown his missions, plus many local flights, evidently training new bombardiers.

Recollections from friends were: "Jerry was wonderful - he treated the enlisted men as equals. Jerry was a happy-go-lucky joker, a nice guy with a good sense of humor. Jerry was big, not in height, but in character. He was head and shoulders over most of those serving. A superb human being who was good at what he did as a bombardier. Jerry was thinking of flying a second tour. We were telling him to go home."

Captain Hofmann was awarded the Purple Heart Medal posthumously and buried in an American Cemetery near Florence, Italy. The last 2nd Bomb Group death of World War II.

This month, a Temporary Duty rotation system was established whereby men would receive a leave to the United States for a period of time, and then return. Fourteen enlisted men and one officer (Captain Alexander J. Tyborski, Adjutant) from the 96th Squadron, along with a like number from the other Squadrons, departed this station.

SALZBURG, AUSTRIA - MISSION 412 - MAY 1, 1945

Twenty-eight aircraft dropped 309, 500-lb. RDX bombs on the Main Station Marshalling Yards at Salzburg by PFF with possible hits reported in the East Marshalling Yards. Flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate causing slight wounds to S/Sgt. C. F. Radcliff, LW. S/Sgt. C. T. Knox, suffered from anoxia.

B-17 #485, 49th Squadron, was last reported heading for the Munich area with one prop feathered. The crew was later reported to have landed at Cervia, Italy with all members reported safe. Crew members were: 1st Lt. W. B. McCulloch, P; 2nd Lt. J. B. Cook, CP; F/O J. C. Davis, N; Cpl. D. F. Hart, TOG; T/Sgt. D. E. Davis, UT; M/Sgt. R. H. Richardson, LT; S/Sgt. R. R. Shorten, RW; S/Sgt. R. T. Powers, LW; S/Sgt. H. G. Fichtner, TG; and S/Sgt. E. H. Ricketts, RO. All members returned to Base.

THIS WAS THE LAST COMBAT MISSION FLOWN BY THE 2ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP IN WORLD WAR II.

2nd Lt. Farley G. Mann was the Navigator on the crew of 2nd Lt. Wallace R. Braff when assigned to the 429th Squadron, September 9, 1944. January 9, 1944: "I flew my first combat mission September 15, 1944 to Athens, Greece, which was not credited for some reason which I don't remember, but my flight log shows that our flight was for 6:25 minutes. My next one was September 17 to Budapest, Hungary and that was my first credited mission. The missions came fast and furious until I began flying Squadron Lead and then my missions stretched out.

"I remember one mission to Munich, Germany. We were flying Deputy Lead and we saw Lt. Donovan's plane go down. I am not sure but I believe a portion of the wing was lost and the plane went into a spin. I have learned since that there were three chutes. Lt. William Daly, Navigator; Lt. Henry Safer, Bombardier and Sgt. Robert Hindert, Radio Operator, survived. Our Tail Gunner kept us informed and then he lost sight of the plane.

"I had two 'Solo' missions. These were flown during the daytime and the idea was to send a single aircraft in the weather. Keep the enemy and their radar on their toes. We had radar on our ship and could see the target. I did not care for these missions. The flak was still there and on one we saw fighters, but quickly found safety in the clouds. I don't know how many were flown by the Group.

"I flew five missions to the Vienna area. The flak was terrible there! I went to Munich three times, Regensburg, Blechhammer and Ruhland. We were after the Nazi oil and they really had the flak

batteries around them. Ruhland was a rough one! It was the first mission I remember being hit by jet fighters. Two members of my original crew, Lt. James Barnett, Bombardier, and T/Sgt. Donald Dorman, Engineer, were killed while flying with another crew.

“My 33rd and last mission was to Salzburg, Austria on May 1, 1945. It was the Group’s 412th. I believe it was the last mission flown by the 15th Air Force in World War II. I was the lead Navigator flying with Colonel Reardon. As we were approaching the target, a decision was made by Colonel Reardon, and agreed on by his crew, that we would not drop our bombs on the Marshalling Yards at Salzburg. We all knew that the war was all but over. Colonel Reardon said, ‘Let’s get them in the open fields, this war is over,’ and we dropped our bombs in what we hoped were open fields. We were called to Group that evening as the bomb strike photos disclosed that we had not hit the target. The CO of the Group appeared to be a little upset with us. However, I believe he was putting on an act. I was 20 years old at the time and did not really appreciate the historical significance of the final mission. I would like to hear from anyone else who was in the lead aircraft. I sure would appreciate knowing who they were and where they live. The one I remember was Colonel Reardon and perhaps Captain Sisson was the Bombardier. I just don’t remember.”

MAY 2, 1945 - GERMANS IN ITALY SURRENDER!

MAY 5, 1945 - NEWS CAME OF GERMANS SURRENDERING IN HOLLAND AND NORTHERN GERMANY!

MAY 8, 1945 - V-E DAY!

All towns nearby are off limits for 48 hours. At the camp tonight it was like the 4th of July. Pistols, rifles, machine guns going off, even some flares. It is a wonder no one was killed!