

CHAPTER III THE MORNING FOGS OF HAMMER FIELD.

(A) ORGANIZATION

1. Mission of Organization.

Upon leaving Wendover, the 461st Bomb Group also left the 2nd Air Force. When it arrived at Hammer Field it became an organization of the 4th Air Force. In doing this, it became one of the first heavy bomb groups in many months to come under the command of the 4th Air Force for training purposes.

The original and primary mission of the Group was that of providing training in 2nd Phase for members of combat crews and the ground echelon. To this was added the necessity of receiving and processing many officers and men who were assigned to the Group after its arrival at Hammer Field, and the need for devising plans to nullify the effects of the ever threatening morning fogs of Hammer Field. In addition, the month proved to be one in which many changes were made among the key pilots who held administrative positions.

2. Growth of Organization.

a. Aerial Photo Officer. 2nd Lt. Hornbaker reported to the Group for duty on 13 November and was assigned.⁽¹⁾

b. Airplanes. On 2 November, airplanes assigned to the Group began to arrive to supplement the eight that had been flown from Wendover to Hammer Field on 29 October. By 6 November the Group had twenty-three planes. On 22 November the Group had the largest number of airplanes it had on any day during the month: on that day there were twenty-six planes assigned to the Group. The average number of planes assigned to the Group during the month of November was twenty-one.

c. Combat Crew Personnel. The original personnel of the 70 combat crews was completed with the arrival of crews from Gowen Field on 3 November,⁽²⁾ 6 November,⁽³⁾ and 8 November.⁽⁴⁾

d. Daily Morning Report. The growing strength of the Group in terms of personnel is shown in Table I – Strength and Growth in Personnel during November 1943.

**TABLE I – STRENGTH AND GROWTH IN PERSONNEL DURING
NOVEMBER 1943**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>
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⁽¹⁾ See Appendage No. 1, Chapter III, Page 1

⁽²⁾ See Appendage No. 2, Chapter III, Page 2

⁽³⁾ See Appendage No. 3, Chapter III, Page 3

⁽⁴⁾ See Appendage No. 4, Chapter III, Page 4

1 November 1943	284	1287
3 November 1943	303	1392
5 November 1943	307	1470
7 November 1943	341	1538
9 November 1943	373	1591
11 November 1943	379	1591
13 November 1943	378	1624
15 November 1943	378	1658
17 November 1943	379	1658
19 November 1943	375	1660
21 November 1943	375	1672
23 November 1943	380	1672
25 November 1943	376	1669
29 November 1943	379	1671
30 November 1943	376	1683

Table No. I reveals that comparatively large numbers of officers and men were added during the first two weeks of November. The War Department Table of Organization for Heavy Bomb Groups specifies that the Personnel strength of the Group is three hundred seventy eight officers and sixteen hundred twenty seven enlisted men. A glance at Table No. I reveals that the officer strength was reached or surpassed on 11 November and that the enlisted men strength was equaled or surpassed on 15 November. There were, however overages in certain sections and shortages in others.

e. Additions and Changes in Key Pilots. At the time the Group arrived at Hammer Field there had been but one change in the key pilots holding administrative positions, that of a change of Commanding Officer. Thus, the Group started its training in the Fourth Air Force with the following key pilots in administrative positions:

HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer, Colonel Frederic E. Glantzberg
Deputy Group Commander, Major Robert E. Smith
Operations Officer, Captain William (NMI) Burke
Assistant Operations Officer, 2nd Lt. Noel L. Dahlander

764th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Captain Albert O. Witte
Operations Officer, 1st Lt. William V. Pitt

765th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, 1st Lt. John C. Sandall
Operations Officer, 1st Lt. Norman E. Smith

766th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Capt. William H. Darden

Operations Officer, 1st Lt. William J. Franklin

767th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Capt. Royce B. Glenn

Operations Officer, 1st Lt. David P. McQuillan

Shortly after the arrival of the Group at Hammer Field, Colonel Glantzberg flew to Gowen Field to confer with officials of the 15th Wing concerning personnel. Even before this trip was made, personnel changes began to take place.

On 30 October 1943 Capt. Briggs reported from Pocatello, Idaho.⁽⁵⁾ He presently was made the Commanding Officer of the 765th Squadron in place of 1st Lt. John C. Sandall but was told by the Commanding Officer of the Group that this assignment would probably be but temporary.

The following day Capt. John W. Dickinson reported from Casper, Wyoming.⁽⁶⁾ He became the 766th Operations Officer in place of 1st Lt. Franklin who became the Assistant Operations Officer. With Capt. Dickinson also came 1st Lt. William J. Bock, who was assigned to the Assistant Group Operations Officer in place of 2nd Lt. Dahlander who became the Assistant Operations Officer of the 764th Squadron.⁽⁷⁾

During the day of 3 November 1943 Lt. Col. Philip R. Hawes,⁽⁸⁾ Major James B. Knapp,⁽⁹⁾ and Major Paul J. Yurkanis⁽¹⁰⁾ reported for duty. Lt. Col Hawes was made Deputy Group Commander in place of Major Smith. Major Knapp was made Squadron Commander of the 767th Squadron replacing Capt. Glenn. Major Yurkanis was placed in command of the 765th Squadron, Captain Briggs becoming the Operations Officer with 1st Lt. Smith as his Assistant.

Major Smith left on 4 November to report for his new assignment to the IVth Bomber Command Headquarters.⁽¹¹⁾ The following day Lt. Col. Carter, who had remained with the Group to assist Col. Glantzberg in the movement to Hammer Field, quietly and sadly took leave of his many friends and left to report to the Fifteenth Wing of the Second Air Force.⁽¹²⁾

On 17 November 1st Lt. Sandall left to report to the IVth Bomber Command and Capt. R.B. Glenn signed out under orders to join the 458th Group at Tonopah, Nevada.⁽¹³⁾⁽¹⁴⁾

⁽⁵⁾ See Appendage No. 5, Chapter III, Page 5

⁽⁶⁾ See Appendage No. 6, Chapter III, Page 6

⁽⁷⁾ See Appendage No. 6, Chapter III, Page 6

⁽⁸⁾ See Appendage No. 7, Chapter III, Page 7

⁽⁹⁾ See Appendage No. 8, Chapter III, Page 8

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Appendage No. 9, Chapter III, Page 9

⁽¹¹⁾ See Appendage No. 10, Chapter III, Page 10

⁽¹²⁾ See Appendage No. 11, Chapter III, Page 11

⁽¹³⁾ See Appendage No. 12, Chapter III, Page 12

⁽¹⁴⁾ See Appendage No. 13, Chapter III, Page 13

1st Lt. Winston J. Lawrence reported for duty from March Field on 18 November and became an additional Assistant Group Operations Officer.⁽¹⁵⁾

The morning of 25 November Major Yurkanis was relieved as Commanding Officer of the 765th Squadron and Capt. Briggs as Operations.⁽¹⁶⁾ 1st Lt. Bock replaced Major Yurkanis and 1st Lt. Smith again became the Operations Officer.

By the end of November, only five of the original key pilots of the Group remained unchanged in their positions. They were, Capt. Burke, Capt. Darden, Capt. Witte, Lt. Pitt and Lt. McQuillan. On that day the roster of key pilots read as follows:

HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer, Colonel Glantzberg
Deputy Group Commander, Lt. Col. Hawes
Operations Officer, Capt. Burke
Assistant Operations Officer, Capt. Word

764th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Captain Witte
Operations Officer, 1st Lt. Pitt
Assistant Operations Officer, 1st Lt. Lawrence

765th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, 1st Lt. Bock
Operations Officer, 1st Lt. Smith

766th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Capt. Darden
Operations Officer, Capt. Dickinson
Assistant Operations Officer, 1st Lt. Franklin

767th Bombardment Squadron

Commanding Officer, Major Knapp
Operations Officer, 1st Lt. McQuillan
Assistant Operations Officer, 2nd Lt. Dahlander

Col. Glantzberg hoped changes and additions were at an end but he still doubted whether Lt. Bock and Lt. Smith were experienced enough to place the 765th Squadron on a par with the other three squadrons.

3. Stations.

Despite the fact that previous to the arrival of the 461st Bomb Group Hammer Field had been used by a B-25 organization. It presents many advantages for the training of a B-24 heavy bomb group. Included among the advantages:

⁽¹⁵⁾ See Appendage No. 13, Chapter III, Page 13

⁽¹⁶⁾ See Appendage No. 14, Chapter III, Page 14

- a. The Base Officers are, on the whole, cooperative.
- b. The housing facilities are superior for the enlisted men and satisfactory for the officers.
- c. Classrooms, mock-ups and equipment for ground school are superior.
- d. Excellent buildings for special meetings involving a large number of personnel are always available.
- e. Transportation facilities on the Base are well provided.
- f. The weather, with the exception of morning fog, is unsurpassable for flying training purposes.
- g. The Quartermaster Department is well set up to meet the needs of the Group.
- h. Sub-Depot services on everything except airplane parts are satisfactory.
- i. Superior dental and medical facilities are promptly and courteously made available to the Group.
- j. The Officers' Mess, though crowded, is excellent.
- k. An excellent field, which is used for physical training and for parades and inspections, is well situated.
- l. Office space for Headquarters is limited but well located.
- m. Bus service to Fresno is adequate.
- n. PX services and theatre accommodations are plentiful.

Some of the disadvantages experienced by the Group at Hammer Field will be discussed in another part of this Chapter under the heading of "Difficulties Encountered".

4. Relations with Other Organizations.

- a. Responsibility to Higher Command. Personal relationships between officers of the Group and representatives of the Fourth Air Force and the IV Bomber Command are discussed later in this Chapter under the heading of "Visits and Activities".
- b. Relations with Auxiliary Organizations. Before the 461st moved to Hammer Field it was known by Col. Glantzberg, Lt. Col. Carter and the Group Staff that a Supervisory Unit had been set up at Hammer Field by the IVth Bomber Command to assist in the training of the Group. Soon after the arrival of the Group it became obvious that the OTU Supervisory

Unit No. 3 had done everything humanly possible in anticipating the needs of the Group in carrying out its training program. It is the unqualified consensus of opinion of all key personnel of this Group that much of the training progress accomplished to date by the Group is due to the thoughtful planning, understanding and cooperation and constant vigilance of the personnel of the Supervisory Unit. The relationships between two military organizations could be no finer than those established between the Supervisory Unit No. 3 and the 461st Bomb Group.

The Commanding Officer of the Supervisory Unit is Col. Dougher. By his careful planning, his supervision of his own Staff, his knowledge of heavy bomb training problems, his ability to get things done, his relationships with higher echelon, his direct but thoughtful manner in dealing with problems and with officers and men and his devotion to duty he has won the unlimited respect of all personnel of the 461st Bomb Group.

The key personnel of his Staff includes the following officers:

Major Robert E. Applegate, Operations Officer.
Major Harry L. Mitchell, Ass't Operations & Ground School Off.
Captain J.P. DeVeuve, Instrument Check Pilot.
Captain J.C. Dooley, Instrument Check Pilot.
Captain S.P. Lapp, Instrument Check Pilot.
1st Lt. E.T. Goree, Instrument Check Pilot.
1st Lt. R.B. Muse, Instrument Check Pilot.
Capt. B.O. Vermillion, Gunnery Officer & Inst. Check Pilot.
Capt F.B. McComas Jr., Bombardiering Instructor.
Capt. S.W. Belk, Bombardiering Instructor.
1st Lt. J.P. Carroll Jr., Navigation Instructor.
2nd Lt. L.M. Marcus, Navigation Instructor.
Capt. C. Miller, Gunnery Officer.
Captain L. Hagen, Gunnery Officer.
CWO R.L. Campbell, Gunnery Officer.
Capt. C.W. Gilchrist, Engineering Officer.
1st Lt. W.H. Von Elm, Combat Intelligence Officer.
1st Lt. Robert S. Williams, Adjutant.
2nd Lt. D.W. Barg, Statistical Officer.
1st Lt. R.M. Wright, Ordinance Officer.
2nd Lt. J.A. Watson, Communications Officer.
2nd Lt. G.J. Monks, Communications Officer.
2nd Lt. A.M. Costikyn, Photo Officer.
1st Lt. F.M. Aufsesser, Supply Officer.
2nd Lt. J.B. Barney, Weather Officer.

(B) MAJOR ACTIVITIES

1. Primary Objective. The primary objective of the Group during November included:
 - a. The processing and assignment of new personnel.
 - b. The training of ground personnel in accordance with directives of the Army Air Forces, Fourth Air Force and IVth Bomber Command.
 - c. The training of seventy combat crews in ground school and in flying in accordance with directives of the Army Air Forces, Fourth Air Force and IVth Bomber Command.
 - d. The preparation of all personnel of the Group for overseas duty as prescribed by the War Department under date of 1 August 1943 in a document entitled "Preparation for Overseas Movement".
2. Governing Policies. Some of the governing policies of the Commanding Officer and of the Group may be found on pages 20 and 21 of Chapter II.

On the evening of 3 December 1943 a meeting of all personnel of the Group was held in the Base Gymnasium. On that occasion Brig. Gen. Samuel M. Connell, Commanding General of the IV Bomber Command, was present and spoke briefly to the assemblage. He welcomed the Group to the IVth Bomber Command and expressed the hope that the training of the Group could be accomplished without a fatal accident. He cautioned those present that familiarity breeds contempt. He urged the enlisted men to work hard for recognition and cautioned officers to conduct themselves as become an officer, especially in dealing with enlisted men. He emphasized the fact that a pilot is an airplane commander and that he had definite responsibility for his crew.

After a welcome to the Base had been extended by the Base Commander, Col. Guy Kirksey, and by the Commanding Officer of the Supervisory Unit, Col. Dougher, the Commanding Officer of the Group, Col. Glantzberg, made the following address:

'I take pride in presenting the Senior Staff Officers of the 461st:

Lt. Col. Philip R. Hawes, Deputy Group Commander
Lt. Col Edwin W. Grogan, Group Executive
Major R. Foster Scott, Group Adjutant
Major Leigh M. Lott, Group Combat Intelligence Officer
Capt. William Burke, Group Operations Officer
Captain Henry M. Hudson, Group Engineering Officer
Major James B. Knapp, 767th Squadron Commander
Major Paul J. Yurkanis, 765th Squadron Commander
Capt. William H. Darden, 766th Squadron Commander
Capt. Albert O. Witte, 764th Squadron Commander

'We are starting our training program in Second Phase and I can't impress upon you too strongly the importance of the job of training we have ahead of us for the next two

months. The degree of success we have upon reaching a theatre will be directly proportional to the thoroughness with which we will have accomplished this training. For this training to be successful, all the energy, resourcefulness, loyalty and wholehearted cooperation of every individual in this Group will be needed. Every available minute of every individual in this Group will be needed. Every available minute must be taken advantage of and no time can be lost through poor planning or failure to meet schedules. Each of us must learn to endure long hours of continuous effort without fatigue. When you feel that you have done all you can and you just have no reserve of energy left to fall back on, remember there is some Heinie or Jap over there boning up his job in an effort to be better than you; get your second wind, grab a technical order and outsmart the bastards.

‘Take pride in your personal appearance; look and dress like soldiers. Carry out orders with promptness and precision. Be alert, and don’t let an officer by without giving him the courtesy of a salute. The salute is a military tradition dating back to the knights in armor, when fighting men recognized friends by raising the visors of their headpieces. It is one of the few military customs which a junior has the privilege of initiating. Take the initiative and give your seniors the opportunity of returning your salute. I shall insist on strict discipline because I do not believe we can have satisfactory air discipline without first requiring superior ground discipline.

‘Look and dress like soldiers. There are locker rooms for each Squadron, with individual lockers provided for each combat crewmember. Use these lockers, and when you are finished flying leave your flying clothes in the lockers. No article of flying clothing will be worn away from the line.

I want you to have fun when you can, but the Group policy is no drinking within twelve (12) hours of a mission. And if the combat crews are interested enough in the success of their missions to report with clear eyes and alert minds, they aren’t going to appreciate a ground crew member working on their plane groggy from a hangover. Keep the drinking under control.

‘Every one of you knows that we will be here training two months, but you don’t have to tell everything you know. Where we are going and when is our own business and no one else’s. If you want to get your boat shot out from under you, just start shooting your mouth off and tell every one you know we are moving out in a couple of months. One word in a letter home or loose talk over a drink is sufficient to give the show away. Your families are proud of you and proud that you are going overseas. So fight for your country. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open. You will be surprised how much you can learn doing that, besides finding out how much pure crap is passed around as being the latest hot dope.

If every one of us puts our shoulders to the wheel, we can swing through this training program in a walk.

Privates withdraw.

‘I am talking now to the non-commissioned officers. There are a precious few among you who have your stripes the hard way over a period of years and what I have to say now does not apply to you. The great majority of you, however, has come to the Group almost directly from specialist schools and has gotten your stripes because you took a course in one of the many specialties that are needed to keep an air unit flying. Due to the requirements of getting you trained in your specialties in the shortest possible time, it has been necessary to slight the training you have received in the duties of a non-commissioned officer. You men are the backbone of the Air Force, and while your training as soldiers has been sketchy, nevertheless I expect you to be soldiers as well as specialists and to assume your responsibilities as NCO’s to train, discipline and lead the men under you. Any one who can’t do that is not non-commissioned officer material regardless of the amount of specialized training he may have had. It is up to you now to make good as a non-commissioned officer, and I have every confidence that you will.

Non-Commissioned Officers Dismissed

‘What I have just said to the NCO’s also holds true in large part to the younger commissioned officers who have just joined the group. Your training has been largely specialized, but you are officers and as such have a definite responsibility to look, eat, and dress like officers as well as to be responsible for the training, discipline and control of officers and enlisted men under you. Learn to use good judgment, make sound decisions and carry out orders.

‘There have been several instances of bad checks following officers here from other commands and I want to caution you that under the 95th Article of War, passing bad checks is sufficient cause for dishonorable dismissal from the service. An individual who can’t stay out of debt and keep his personal affairs in order is not qualified to be an officer or in a position where he commands others.

‘I have already mentioned drinking. There will be no drinking within twelve (12) hours of a mission and that doesn’t mean you can get perfectly crocked the evening before a mission, just so you stop twelve (12) hours before you have to take off. Most of our missions will be high altitude and you are going to need all your faculties to do a good job.

All officers except Group Staff, Squadron Commanders, Squadron Staff Officers, and Combat crew Commanders dismissed.

‘The officers remaining are the commanders in the Group and upon you rests the responsibility of the state of training and military discipline of the Group. Combat Crew Commanders frequently take the attitude that they are just pilots and that it is some one else’s worry to see that the remainder of the crew is properly trained and on the job. This is your responsibility and yours only. There are facilities to help you in that training. A combat commander is responsible for the state of training of every man on his crew. If a man is weak, see that he gets extra attention. Try to strengthen him. Know and understand your crewmembers. Know their weaknesses and strive to strength them. If a man is hopeless, have him replaced. It isn’t necessary to become familiar with an

enlisted man to know him. Calling him by his first name, or having a drink with him is neither desirable nor military. Enlisted men enjoy being good soldiers and they will respect you for insisting that they be military and toe the line.’

3. Organization Established for executing Mission.

- a. Weekly Staff meetings every Tuesday at 1000 o’clock.
- b. Inspection of orderly rooms, day rooms, supply rooms, barracks area, barracks and messes.
- c. Parade and inspection once each week.
- d. Visit of each Section Head to all units of his department weekly followed by a written report to the Commanding Officer.
- e. Daily meeting of Squadron Operations Officers with Group Operations Officer.
- f. Frequent sectional meetings conducted by all Department Heads.
- g. Flying schedules arranged to provide adequate time for ground school, rest and recreation for combat crew members, six (6) hours of airplane maintenance out of each twenty-four (24) hours with three (3) hours of the maintenance to be accomplished during daylight.
- h. All missions carefully briefed and all formation missions interrogated.
- i. Priority placed on Army Air Force minimum requirements for flying personnel.
- j. Training missions of Fourth Air Force and IV Bomber Command followed closely with particular emphasis on high altitude formation flying and bombing.
- k. Tight Group supervision of all flying activities.

4. Plans and Procedures Established. The functioning of the organizations established for executing the mission of the Group has been followed closely in two manners:

- a. Frequent personal visits of Department Heads to each Squadron followed by reports to the Commanding Officer.
- b. Activity reports and progress reports of all phases of the training have been made by the various sections of the squadrons to Group Headquarters where they have been consolidated, studied, and forwarded to higher echelon as follows:

DAILY REPORTS

<u>NAME OF REPORT</u>	<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>
Daily Report of Missions Completed	IV th Bomber Command
Minimum Training Requirements of Heavy Bombardment Units	IV th Bomber Command
Daily Airplane Status and Flying Time Report	IV th Bomber Command IV th Statistical Control Unit
Available and Assigned Combat Crews	IV th Bomber Command IV th Statistical Control Unit
Daily Ground Training Report	IV th Bomber Command

REPORTS ON ALTERNATE DAYS

Daily Report of Changes in Personnel Status	IV th Bomber Command
Personnel Overage and Shortage Report	IV th Bomber Command

WEEKLY REPORTS

Weekly Statistical Report 86 AB	Surgeon General Fourth Air Force IV Bomber Command Hammer Field
Care of Flier Report	Surgeon General Fourth Air Force IV Bomber Command Hammer Field
Training Report of Medical Department EM	Fourth Air Force IV Bomber Command Hammer Field
Weekly Ammunition Report	Hammer Field

SEMI-MONTHLY REPORTS

Report of Air Corp or Arms and Service Personnel Assigned to Army Air Forces	Hammer Field
Report of Arms and Service Personnel	Hammer Field

Assigned to Army Air Forces

Report of Services Pondered by Sub-Depot Hammer Field

BI-WEEKLY REPORT

Operation Training Report for Heavy Bombardment Groups Fourth Air Force Statistical Control Unit
IVth Bomber Command

MONTHLY REPORTS

Enlisted Men on Flying Status IVth Bomber Command
Hammer Field

Report AWOL IVth Bomber Command

Utilization of Graduates of the United States Military Academy IVth Bomber Command

Station Housing Report Hammer Field

Controlled Items of Equipment Hammer Field

Monthly Aircraft Status Report IVth Bomber Command
Hammer Field

Station Housing Report Fourth Air Force
IVth Bomber Command

Automotive Disability Report Hammer Field

Monthly Ammunition Report Fourth Air Force

Auditing of Amount of Funds Hammer Field

Military Personnel Returned from Theatres outside the United States IVth Bomber Command

Report of Enlisted Men Assigned and Transferred IVth Bomber Command

Dental Report Fourth Air Force
Hammer Field

Monthly Statisticall Report 860 Surgeon General
Fourth Air Force
IVth Bomber Command
Ninth Service Command

	Hammer Field
Report Sheet S/MD – Sick and Wounded	Fourth Air Force IV th Bomber Command Hammer Field
Sanitary Report	Hammer Report
Monthly Venereal Report	Ninth Service Command Fourth Air Force Hammer Field

OCCASIONAL REPORTS

Changes of Commanding Officer of Squadron or Group	Fourth Air Force Statistical Control Unit IV th Bomber Command
Flight Surgeon Report of Aircraft Accidents	Air Surgeon Flight Control Command Fourth Air Force
Classification and Audit List	Fourth Air Force Statistical Control Unit

5. Difficulties Encountered.

a. Personnel. This item has already been discussed in this Chapter under the headings of “Growth of Organization”.

b. Training.

- (1) Many of the airplanes assigned to the Group after its arrival at Hammer Field were found to be in poor condition. Between the period of November 2nd and November 14th, nine (9) of the planes were not flyable. Many of the planes necessitated long periods of maintenance and many engine changes. Two (2) airplanes lost in crashes were not immediately replaced.
- (2) Between November 15th and November 28th inclusive the airplanes were grounded a total of two hundred fifty nine (259) hours because of bad weather. Most of this was morning fog that moved in shortly before daylight and closed the field for several hours. During the early days of the month plans were completed for operations out of the Army Air Base at Muroc. On November 20th orders were issued for the movement of a Detachment to Muroc but later in the day these were cancelled. The presence of the morning fog was overcome by changing the flying schedule so that the planes took off in the morning before

the fog closed in and remained aloft until after the field was clear.

- (3) Only one (1) bombing range was available during the earlier part of the month and throughout the month the occasional absence of lights on all bombing ranges prevented the completion of many missions.
- (4) During the first half of the month there were no target ships. During the last half of the month the tow target ships assigned were of limited value because only one (1) tow target range was available before the 25th of November and also because the tow target ships were not fully equipped.
- (5) An inadequate supply of oxygen at all times made it impossible to fly many prescribed missions.
- (6) A grossly inadequate supply of B-24 parts, which included prop governors and bombsight replacements. Added to the difficulty of maintaining airplanes that had been received in poor condition.
- (7) The Sub-Depot Engineering Section maintained only two (2) eight (8) hour shifts. As a result, engine changes have been slower than they should have been and no parts had been repaired or replaced between 2400 and 0800 o'clock.

c. Installations.

- (1) There are no celestial navigation trainers on Hammer Field.
- (2) The ramp at Hammer Field is not large enough to adequately accommodate a B-24 training organization.
- (3) For weeks the parking and servicing of planes was complicated by the presence of a comparatively large number of B-25 airplanes which were parked not far from the control tower.

6. Biographical Introduction.

The following article concerning the Commanding Officer of the Group, Colonel Frederic E. Glantzberg, appeared in the December 1st issue of the Hammer Field weekly newspaper, "The Bomb Bay":

"His skull fractured by a swinging antenna weight from another plane flying overhead, the army pilot slumped against the cowling, unconscious.

“The co-pilot in the seat behind, also struck senseless by the same deadly missile, relinquished his grip on the controls. The plane plummeted earthward.

“At 500 feet, the pilot in the rear seat came to and bailed out. The other pilot, also regaining consciousness in the nick of time, pulled the ship out of its dive and landed safely, then lapsed into unconsciousness again, blood streaming from a hole in the right side of his head. Army doctors had to remove four square inches of shattered skull in treating the wound.

“This was one of the thrilling air experiences of Colonel Frederic E. Glantzberg, commander of the 461st Bomb Group at Hammer Field whose military career is packed with real life adventures that surpass those of many a story book flier.

“Tall and huskily built, with sandy hair and mustache and ruddy, weather-lined face, the Colonel physically fills the bill for the big job he holds and those he has held successfully in the past.

“Graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1927, Colonel Glantzberg then 2nd Lt. Glantzberg of the Reserve Corps, received flying instruction at Brooks Field in July, 1927, and in 1928 graduated as a pilot and as an observer from Kelley Field advanced school.

“Temporarily shelving his military status, he took a job with the Ford Motor Company, flying the company’s huge transports from Detroit to Chicago and Detroit to Buffalo on the Model Airway.

“In February, 1929, he was commissioned as second lieutenant in the regular army and joined the 9th Observation Group at Mitchell Field, later transferring to Wright Field, Dayton, O., where he remained for two years.

“The young flier was transferred to the Phillipines in January, 1932, where his narrow escape from death in the falling plane occurred. He returned to the States in 1935, joining the 2nd Bomb Group at Langley Field, Va., where he remained for 4 ½ years.

“He flew the first B-27s in 1937 at Langley, amassing 1000 hours flying time in them by the end of 1938.

“He flew as navigator on two good will flights to South America, visiting Columbia and Buenos Aires. In June, 1939, he was ordered to Columbia as technical advisor to the Columbian Air Force in which capacity he served until September, 1941, when he transferred to Panama as S-3 in the 6th Bomber Command.

“Col. Glantzberg was ordered to Washington from Panama when war was declared by the United States on the Axis, and placed on the plans division of the Air Staff. He was also made Air Force representative of the joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission.

“In May, 1943, he flew the Mexican Military Commission to North Africa and he was the second Allied plane to land in Tunis, his illustrious predecessor being none other than General Giraud. Colonel Glantzberg’s B-17 set its wheels down on the Tunisian runway just three days after the Huns moved out – in a hurry.

“Col. Glantzberg met and talked with General Giraud both in Algiers and in Tunis, before returning to the United States via England, arriving in this country June 1, 1943. The first week in September, he flew a cadre to Orlando, Fla., and later joined the 461st at Wendover, Utah, as Group Commander. He arrived at Hammer Field October 29.

“A native of Springfield, Mass., the Colonel received his high school education at DeWitt Clinton High School in New York and then entered M.I.T.

“He is married, has four children, one a sturdy 9 year old boy, Freddy, who wants to be an army pilot like his dad.

“Not only has the Colonel flown 5,000 hours but he has received the Aztec Eagle, a Mexican decoration, and the Boyeca Cross, awarded by the Columbian government for his excellent work as a technical advisor to its air force.

“A restless man is Col. Glantzberg – apparently he craves action. Of course his past life in the army has been so uneventful.”

7. Visits and Activities of Noted Persons.

Brigadier General Samuel M. Connell, Commanding General of the IVth Bomber Command visited Hammer Field on November 3rd and inspected the activities of the Group. He also appeared in the Base Gymnasium that evening and briefly addressed the personnel of the 461st Bombardment Group as recorded on page 7 of this chapter.

On November 12th Major General William E. Lynd, Commanding General of the Fourth Air Force, and Brigadier General Connell came to Hammer Field. General Lynd looked over the set-up and expressed satisfaction with Hammer Field as a training field for a heavy bombardment group and with the organization and development of the 461st Group.

General Connell was annoyed by the lack of progress in training accomplished by the Group due to slow airplane maintenance. He took two steps to correct this condition:

(1) Requested Sub-Depot to set up eight (8) airplane engines so that they would be available for immediate engine changes.

(2) Directed the Group Engineering Officer, Captain Henry M. Hudson, to locate needed airplane parts in various sub-depots situated in the extreme western part of the United States and to take steps to secure the parts immediately. Airplane maintenance was improved after compliance was made with General Connell’s orders.

The IV Bomber Command General returned to the field on November 26th and expressed satisfaction with the improvements he noted in airplane maintenance.

General Connell's last visit to the Group occurred on the last day of the month. In view of the fact that the ground training program was ahead of schedule and that the flying training program was behind schedule, he directed that the time allotted to ground school be curtailed in order to provide more time for flying training. Immediate compliance was made with the directive.

The Air Inspector of the IVth Bomber Command, Lt. Colonel Arthur C. Goebel, made his first visit to the Group and was present at the review and inspection of troops on Friday, November 12th.

8. Morale.

In early October word went out from the office of the Commanding Officer through channels that the officers and men who had not had ordinary leave or furlough during the past six months would be granted a leave or a furlough before the Group completed its training. A plan was immediately put into effect under which some officers and men were granted and others were promised a leave or furlough on a schedule designed not to handicap the training program seriously. As soon as the Group arrived in the Fourth Air Force it was learned that all leaves and furloughs, except in the case of an emergency, had been cancelled. In the Group were many officers and hundreds of men who were adversely affected by this decision. Colonel Glantzberg and his Staff successfully avoided the possibilities of a sag in morale by setting the pace with long hours and hard work. Every officer and man was given more work than he could possibly do. Because of long hours and hard work the officers and men had little time for sleep and even less for recreation and reflective thinking. Colonel Glantzberg and his staff are proud of the high morale possessed by the personnel of this Group.

9. Crashes.

On November 3rd General Connell told the Group he hoped the training program could be completed without any fatalities. This, however, was not to be. The prelude to the first fatal accident occurred at dusk the evening of November 20th when Second Lieutenant Ralph T. Seeman was bringing his plane in for a landing. The instant the plane hit the runway a tire blew, the plane veered to the right, and nosed over. Largely due to excellent emergency operation procedures exhibited by Lieutenant Seeman and his well disciplined crew, there were no crew injuries nor was there any fire. After the crew had been interviewed concerning the accident, Lieutenant Colonel Hawes, Deputy Group Commander, said: "That crew did everything right."

The ending of the next accident was not so fortunate. Second Lieutenant Reginald B. Tribe was flying with his crew in a group formation flight when he developed engine trouble at 21,000 feet near Tonopah, Nevada. After he had lost two engines he began to lose altitude rapidly. Seven of his crew members followed his instructions and bailed out and all parachuted safely to the ground. Riding with the crew was a representative of the

First Moving Picture Unit, Sergeant F.H. Finnegan. This man tore open his parachute in the excitement. When Lieutenant Tribe learned this he decided to ride the plane down through an overcast. The co-pilot, Second Lieutenant Edward J. Drucker stayed with the airplane commander. So did gunner, Sergeant Chester G. Kline. When the plane hit, Lieutenant Tribe was stunned but he managed to get out. Sergeant Finnegan, though injured, dragged Sergeant Kline, who had suffered a back injury, from the plane. After the three were out of the plane it burst into flames. Realizing that Lieutenant Drucker was still in the plane, Lieutenant Tribe attempted to reenter the flaming mass but was held back by other members of the crew who rushed to the scene of the crash after safely bailing out. Thus, Lieutenant Drucker became the first fatal victim of an airplane crash in the 461st Bombardment Group.