

APO 520, C/O PM, NY, NY.
3 DECEMBER 1944

AS THEIR PLANES DRONED OVERHEAD, RETURNING FROM A MISSION TO GERMANY, MEN OF THE 461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP, COMMANDED BY COL. PHILLIP R. HAWES, PEARL RIVER, N. Y., STOOD IN FORMATION SUNDAY TO RECEIVE THEIR SECOND WAR DEPARTMENT UNIT CITATION, IN RECOGNITION FOR AN ATTACK ON THE CREDITUL-MINIER OIL REFINERY AT PLOESTI, RUMANIA, JULY 15. THE BLUE STREAMER SIGNIFYING THE AWARD WAS TIED ONTO THE GROUP'S FLAG BY BRIG. GEN. BORN, 15TH AIR FORCE DEPUTY COMMANDER.

NOTIFIED TO PREPARE FOR AN ATTACK ON THE REFINERY, THE GROUP, THEN COMMANDED BY COL. FREDERIC E. GLANTZBERG, FRESNO, CALIF., UNDERWENT INTENSIVE TRAINING TO ENABLE IT TO OVERCOME THE ENEMY'S NEWEST DEFENSIVE WEAPON—THE CHEMICAL SMOKE SCREEN. SPECIAL PATHFINDER CREWS TRAINED FOR WEEKS PERFECTING A NEW TECHNIQUE IN NON-VISUAL, SYNCHRONOUS BOMBING, REALIZING THAT SUCCESS WOULD REDUCE AXIS OIL PRODUCTION BY 1,500,000 TONS REFINERY CAPACITY.

GROUND CREWS WHO WORKED LONG HOURS MAKING SURE THAT THEIR AITCRAFT WERE IN PERFECT MECHANICAL SHAPE DID MUCH TO INSURE SUCCESS AND WERE GIVEN FULL CREDIT IN THE CITATION.

ON JULY 15, 39 PLANES TOOK OFF, ASSUMING THE LEAD OF THE WING FORMATION. BAD WEATHER FORCED THE FORMATION TO BREAK UP, ALLOWING SINGLE SHIPS TO FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CLOUD COVER. AFTER REASSEMBLING, THEY AGAIN HIT BAD WEATHER, REACHING THE TARGET ONLY THROUGH THE SKILL OF THE NAVIGATORS.

AS THEY APPROACHED THE TARGET, INTENSE FLAK ADDED TO THE OBSTACLES, BUT THE GALLANT CREWS FOUGHT THROUGH TO THE SMOKE-COVERED TARGET. IMMEDIATELY AFTER BOMBS AWAY, A BREAK IN THE SMOKE AND CLOUDS, ENABLED A PERFECT VIEW OF THE BOMB PATTERN SMOTHERING THE TARGET.

AFTER PRESENTING THE CITATION, GEN. BORN AWARDED EIGHT MEDALS TO MEN PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY. MAJ. FRANK E. MAREK, PLAINS, PA., WING ADJUTANT, RECEIVED THE LEGION OF MERIT, WHILE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSSES WENT TO CAPT. ROBERT F. EDWARDS, ARLINGTON, VA., CAPT. WILLIAM J. FRANKLIN, JR., 383 BAY AVE., PATCHOQUE, L. I., N. Y., 1ST LT. JASPAR T. JENKINS, CHARLOTTE, N. C., 1ST LT. THEODORE R. AHLBERG, PORTLAND, ORE., 1ST LT. STANLEY O. HUTCHISON, HARRISONVILLE, MO., 1ST LT. GERARD L. VENDERHOEVEN, TAYLORSVILLE, CALIF., S/SGT CHARLES E. PRIEST, BARSDALL, OKLA., AND S/SGT FREDERICK C. RODGERS, OAKLAND, CALIF.

FOLLOWING THIS THE GROUP PASSED IN REVIEW BEFORE GEN. BORN, COL. WILLIAM L. LEE, WEATHERFORD, TEX., WING COMMANDER, AND LT. COL. BROOKS A. LAWHON, 5427 S. CEDAR ST., TACOMA, WASH., DEPUTY GROUP COMMANDER.

THE FIRST CITATION, PRESENTED LAST MONTH BY MAJ. GEN. NATHAN F. TWINING, 15TH AIR FORCE COMMANDING GENERAL, WAS AWARDED FOR AN ATTACK ON THE DUNA REPOLOGEPGYAR AIRCRAFT COMPONENTS FACTORY AT BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, APRIL 12. IN ATTACKING THE DUNA FACTORY, THE 461ST HAS A TWO-FOLD AIM: TO DESTROY ENEMY FIGHTERS IN THE AIR AND TO DESTROY THE FACTORY, THUS REDUCING THE OUTPUT OF AIRCRAFT SORELY NEEDED BY THE LUFTWAFFE.

GERMAN FIGHTERS ATTACKED BEFORE THE B-24S REACHED THE TARGET AND SUCCESSIVE WAVES, FIRING ROCKETS, CANNON AND MACHINE GUNS, DID THEIR UTMOST TO STOP THE FORMATION. THE CREWS CONTINUED ON THROUGH THE FIGHTERS AND SUBSEQUENT HEAVY FLAK, TO DROP THEIR ENTIRE TONNAGE OF BOMBS WITHIN THE TARGET AREA, CAUSING INCALCULABLE DAMAGE.

SAYS THE CITATION, "THE TRAMENDOUS DAMAGE INFLICTED ON THIS VITAL TARGET CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE CURTAILMENT OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION AT A MOST CRITICAL TIME."

SINCE BEGINNING OPERATIONS IN LATER SPRING, THE 461ST HAS FLOWN MORE THAN 140 COMBAT MISSIONS, HITTING TARGETS ALL THROUGH SOUTHERN EUROPE AND LATELY EXTENDING INTO THE HEART OF THE REICH ITSELF.

SGT. CHARLES E. DYNES.