



### 468<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP - JANUARY 1945

The month of January 1945 has been the busiest month so far in the history of the organization. In addition to returning all personnel and equipment from A-7 to the Rear Area, the Group participated in 7 combat missions, which is an all-time monthly high.

The first target attacked was a familiar one – RAMA VI bridge (at Bangkok.) Twelve planes took off on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and bombed the primary target in formation with Capt. Heneveld in A/C 486 as leader. Forty-eight tons of bombs were dropped, a record equaled only by the 444<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Fighter opposition ranged from nil to weak, and flak was meager and inaccurate. Damage report indicated hits on the northern approach span. All aircraft returned.

On Jan 6, 13 aircraft took off from A-7 to attack the Omura Aircraft Factory. Of these 13, 2 returned without bombing. A/C 5208 with Capt. Fouts as Pilot, had a fire, and 9 of the Crew bailed out safely near A-7; he and his navigator brought the plane down in an excellent emergency night landing, after jettisoning his bombs. A/C 714 returned its bombs. Three of the remaining 11 bombed the secondary target at Nanking, and 2 bombed targets of opportunity. The other 6, led by A/C 456, flown by Major Marbury, bombed the primary in formation. They used radar to make the drop through an overcast. Fighter defense was nil to weak and flak was meager and inaccurate. Due to the weather, no strike photos were obtained. All aircraft returned safely.

On Jan 9<sup>th</sup>, 12 planes took off from the Forward Area to strike at Keelung, Formosa. Nine reached the primary target and found it completely overcast. A/C 471, Major Brown, led a formation of 11 aircraft over the primary target. All bombing was by radar. Two aircraft hit Amoy singly. Capt. Yeates landed A/C 691, after a few minutes in the air, in another excellent emergency night landing. Seven of the 9 planes reached the primary target, returned to Kunming, landed at Chengkung airfield, refueled and returned to A-7 that night. It was generally agreed that the 14<sup>th</sup> Airforce personnel did everything possible to help us. This was the first shuttle mission that had been carried out as planned. All aircraft returned safely.

On Jan 11<sup>th</sup>, 13 aircraft took off from the Rear Area to hit the floating drydock in Johore Straits, Singapore. Three of the 13 hit the primary target, 1 bombing visually through scattered clouds, 1 bombing by radar and 1 bombing in an unknown manner. Five planes hit the secondary target at Georgetown and 2 hit targets of opportunity. The other 3 jettisoned or returned their bombs. Between the assembly point and the primary target, most of our aircraft ran into unusually rough weather. A/C 487, Capt. Bores, hit a storm, which tossed the plane about so violently that 4 bombs broke loose from their shackles and fell through the bomb bay doors. The excessive draft caused by the broken doors resulted in gas shortage, but the plane returned safely.



Several Crewmembers were slightly injured by the turbulence. A/C 691, Capt. Johnson, lost one bomb as a result of this storm. Other ships reported severe weather. Although the flak was reported as meager at the primary target, it was very accurate. Opposition from enemy fighters over the primary target was moderate to strong. Of the 4 aircraft over the primary area, one (A/C 678) flown by Lt. Young, received hits in a nose wheel and left throttle linkage, a tire, #1 engine and right wing. After leaving the target area, No. 1 engine began smoking and pulling less power. This, along with the less power on No. 1, made it necessary to fly 678 in a slight skid, causing a 2:30 hour delay arriving back to Base. The tower agreed on a straight in approach where the Co-Pilot, Lt. Nebbin, controlled the throttles for landing. Because of the flat tires, the plan was left on the runway after a full stop.

It is believed that the gunners did a good job over the target, but no claims were made, everyone was too busy for verification.

Lt Shafer in A/C 546 received hits in center wing tank and CFC compartment. Maj. Humphrey and Crew in 704 are missing. The attacks were well executed and closely pressed. One aerial bomb was observed, and a high altitude balloon was seen.

A/C 704 was last heard from in a bombs away message at 110203Z, placing it at the PT. Major (now Lt. Col.) Humphrey, Commanding Officer of the 793<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadron and Lt. Col. Billings, Group Operations Officer, were aboard. A report came in from the 462<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group to the effect that a 468<sup>th</sup> ship was seen with an engine feathered, under heavy fighter attack, on the breakaway. Another possibility reported the following day by Major Schnolau's Crew after a post-strike photo mission; possible parachutes were seen on an island below Georgetown. Later investigations indicated the contrary. So the Crew is still missing.

Post strike reconnaissance shows no damage to the Floating Drydock or King's Dock, but rather severe damage to warehouses and shops at Georgetown.

On Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 20 aircraft took off from the Forward Area to bomb airfield installations at Kagi, Formosa. Twelve bombed the primary target visually. A/C 543, Major Sancken, led a formation of 11 ships over the PT; A/C 456, Major Marbury, led a formation of 3 ships. Two aircraft bombed Amoy and one hit Hengyang. Nil to weak opposition was encountered at all targets. Strike photos indicated that the first formation dropped its bombs short of the aiming point. But Major Marbury's formation hit the aiming point. All aircraft returned safely.

On Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>, 21 aircraft of our group took off on a mission to bomb Shinchiku Airdrome facilities, Formosa. Eighteen hit the primary target in 2 formations; one of 12 led by Major Marbury in A/C 456, and one of 6 led by Major Sancken in A/C 542. One ship hit the last resort target. On this mission strike photos showed the bombs of both formations to be a little short, but spotted those of Major Sancken closer to the aiming point.



There was no fighter opposition and meager and inaccurate flak. Shortly after takeoff A/C 494, Major McPherson, developed a fire; after unsuccessfully attempting to land, he salvoed his bombs. The bombs exploded and damaged the plane in such a way that it went out of control. The Crew bailed out at low altitude and four were killed on impact with the mountaintops, while those other seven floating down into the valleys were saved. Major McPherson waited patiently in the darkness until all Crewmembers were out before he jumped. Fortunately, he too sailed down between two mountain crests. All other aircraft returned safely.

On Jan 25<sup>th</sup>, 26 planes took off from the rear area on one of the most important missions yet assigned to the XXTH Bomber Command – mining of the Straits of Singapore. Naval specialists had assisted with mine fusing, and armament and ordinance personnel loaded the mines without mishap. Pilots, Bombardiers and Radar Operators had been given intensive briefings on particular tasks. All planes took off in the afternoon in perfect order. About midnight, 24 aircraft reached the Straits and laid their mines in the various assigned areas. The other 2 ships mined the Straits of Georgetown and Victoria Point. From an operational and engineering point of view, the job was excellently done. Capt. Martin in A/C 3500 had to land at Cox's Bazaar on return due to gas shortage. A few fighters were reported, but there were no attacks. Meager and inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was encountered at the primary target. The 468<sup>th</sup>'s record on this mission was much better than that of the other organizations participating. All aircraft returned safely.

During the month several photo missions have been flown. On Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, Major Schonlau, in A/C 469, flew a post-strike and search mission to Singapore. Excellent photos were taken of the Singapore and Georgetown areas. On Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, Capt. Meints flew a photo mission to Singapore; results were good but there were scattered clouds below. On Jan 28<sup>th</sup>, Lt Corvinus flew another Singapore photo mission. At the time of writing another photo mission is being flown.

In addition to combat operations, the organization has been very busy trying to prepare itself for the forthcoming move. All personnel and equipment have been brought back from China by B-29s with luggage racks in bomb bays. Showdown inspections are being held; dental and all other preliminaries are being completed.

It is interesting to note that A/C 714 participated in every one of the seven combat missions this month with the following record: bombed primary target at Bangkok, Keeling, Kagi, Shinchiku, and Singapore, then bombed the secondary target on another Singapore raid, plus an attempt to reach Omura, but weather and mechanical problems forced the Crew to abort. They returned and landed 11:00 hours after takeoff with a full load of bombs still aboard.

A/C 469 was in on 6 missions: bombed primary targets at Bangkok, Omura, Shinchiku and Singapore, plus a recon photo flight back over Singapore and another trip to Singapore where the Crew bombed a target of opportunity.



Close behind were two other planes with records as follows: A/C 734 took part in 5 missions, hitting the primary target 4 times and a secondary target once. A/C 525 also had 5 combat flights over 3 primaries and 2 secondaries.

All of the above reflects the efficiency of the Crew Chiefs, their ground maintenance Crews and even combat GIs have attained. With each passing month we see repairs so rapidly made, aircraft are placed back into action within 24 to 48 hours.

Let's not forget our Sheet Metal Men who are used more often due to more enemy fighter activity, and at a higher extent of efficiency. This is especially true around the Singapore area. We who do combat owe so very much to these men who work on our planes. Cliff Hand was one sheet metal repairman who made a point to become acquainted with the Combat Crews because he, so rightly, felt a part of the action. He was doing the patchwork.

#### 468<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP – ADVANCED ECHELON – JAN. 1945

January 1945 concludes the activities for the 468<sup>th</sup> Bomb at field A-7 in China. Though actually operating only two-thirds of the month, four missions were pulled in the 20-day period, as follows:

Twelve planes took off on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Jan. for the primary target at Tachiarai on Kyushu Island, secondary target at Nanking, and last resort target at Tangyang. Of these planes, six bombed the PT, three the secondary, and two a target of opportunity. One brought bombs back on an early return. One of the original twelve planes taking off, A/C 208, Capt. Fouts, losing an engine shortly after takeoff, salvoed bombs and returned to Base. Several Crewmembers safely jumped before landing. Another plane was immediately readied to bring total planes on the mission up to twelve.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Jan., 13 planes were airborne for an attack on Keelung, Formosa by radar. Of these ships, nine went over Keelung, two over Amoy Harbor, one returned after salvoing bombs, and one brought bombs back to Base. Of the total planes, 8 landed at Chenkung and thence to the Rear Base. Four ships returned to A-7 in addition to the early return mentioned.

On Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> 17 planes took off for the following targets: PT, Kagi, Formosa; ST, Swatow and Amoy Harbors on the east China coast; and as a Last Resort, Hengyang. Twelve bombed Kagi, 2 Amoy, 1 Hengyang, and 2 jettisoned bombs.

On Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 12 planes took off for the following targets: PT, Shinchiku, Formosa; ST, Swatow and Amoy Harbor on the east China coast; and LR, Hengyang. Of these planes, one was an early return after a salvo of bombs; one bombed LR and 18 bombed the primary target. One plane, Major McPherson attempted to return to Base because of engine trouble. While salvoing their bombs in preparation for the landing, some damage was done to the plane, causing an immediate order for a bail out.



All members of the Crew jumped, but because of the low altitude, four landed on the crests of the mountains before their chutes opened. The remaining Crewmembers, fortunately, dropped into the valleys between the crests. The plane crashed a few seconds after the pilot managed to jump. It ended up about 10 miles N.E. of A-1. The seven who survived carried their four dead buddies toward Base until they were picked up.

This was the last mission flown by the 468<sup>th</sup> Group from its forward China Base. Preparation for the move to Tinian now begins.

On Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, the Field Order came through alerting the personnel of the forward echelon of evacuation to the Rear Base at B-1. B-29s were to be used as much as possible for the movement of personnel with ATC taking care of other freight necessary to move.

The first planeload of personnel left on the morning of Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>. Working on through the next few days, the last of the personnel left in the morning of the 2nd when the entire unit and equipment as was necessary were completely moved. Cooperation of Officers and Enlisted Men was such that the job of moving, which was a big one, was quickly and efficiently accomplished. Major James A. Pattillo, C.O. for several months at A-7, had the following staff at the time of the move:

W. H. Barr, Capt. Adjutant  
J. W. Benton, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, S-2  
J. A. Freud, Capt., Ordinance  
J. K. Yordy, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Armament  
B. W. Padden, Capt., Supply

R. E. Hughes, Capt., Operations  
L. C. Abels, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Communications  
R. T. Friend, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Engineering  
C. W. Koger, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Armament  
J. E. White, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Statistical

While the Japanese pulled several raids against our Forward Bases in China, A-7 was never bombed during the Group's occupation there.

#### A STORY NEVER BEFORE TOLD

Some time after all Air Corps Personnel were clear from A-7, Lt. Young, of the 792<sup>nd</sup>, was dispatched to fly over the Hump to pick up 10 Army Engineers. He took 6 Crew members and upon picking up the 10 and preparing to leave was told: "If anything happens, do not come back, we may have to destroy the Base in a few hours. The Japs have a unit headed this way on foot."

Sure enough, something did happen. After leveling off at 19,000 feet to clear the crests ahead, the plane blew a hole in the tunnel. There were not enough masks for all the passengers to go on oxygen. The Pilot turned 180 degrees while coasting down to a 14,000 ft. level. Lt. Al Cherney got the maps out and plotted a course southward to a southwest course over Burma, then N.W. over the Bay of Bengal to Kharagpur. They flew at 8,000 feet across the bay.

Sgt. J. Lenau radioed ahead to identify this lone plane approaching and IFF was checked out O.K. After an early landing the next morning, there were Army staff cars waiting for the 10. (June '91 by Young.) The Crew never heard any reports of what happened at A-7.



**792<sup>ND</sup> BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – JANUARY 1945**

January found the 792<sup>nd</sup> participating in 9 missions. The first one of the month was on Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> to Bangkok. The target was the Rama Six Bridge just north of Bangkok. The following Crews and planes took part:

Capt. Yeates	– 691
Major Mills	– 703
Lt. Leighty	– 494

Capt. Steinmetz, Intelligence Officer, went on his first combat mission riding with Capt. Yeates. The formation of 12 ships was forced to make two runs over the target due to an error on the first run. Bombs were dropped on the 2<sup>nd</sup> run, and strike photos showed at least three direct hits and several near misses on the bridges. Recon. photos taken on Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> showed no material damage to the bridge except for a broken girder and a slight sag near the center span. An instantaneous fuse setting was used on this bridge. Three-fourths of the bridge is composed on girders and one-fourth of it is a railroad bed. Flak was meager and inaccurate and the fighter defenses were weak.

On Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, the Squadron took part in mission #26 to the Omura Aircraft Factory on Kyushu. For the 4<sup>th</sup> and consecutive mission to this particular target, 10/10s cloud coverage was encountered. Bombing was done by radar and results once again were unobserved. The following Crews and A/C participated:

Capt. Martin – 500	Major Mills – 703
Capt. Yeates – 691	Capt. Skelley – 494

Major Mills in A/C 703 was unable to pick up a formation at this rendezvous point so he bombed a naval convoy of ships in the Yellow Sea. All planes returned safely to Base.

On Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, five planes and Crews took part in mission #27 to Keelung, Formosa. 10/10s cloud cover was encountered and bombing was done by radar, results being unobserved. The Crews and planes listed below took part in the mission:

Major Brown – 471	Capt. Good – 424
Capt. Skelley – 494	Capt. Martin – 500
Capt. Yeates – 691	

Capt. Yeates was forced to return to A-7, in China, one hour after take-off. Low oil pressure in his #2 engine caused Capt. Yeates to feather the prop. He landed at A-7 at night. The bombs were brought back and at the time of landing A/C 691 weighed approximately 130,000 lbs. Crews were briefed to return to A-7 if the plane required maintenance and, if not, they were to proceed to Chengkung, China, land, gas up and return to B-1, our Rear Base in India, immediately. Capt. Good returned to A-7 to change a prop governor on #4 engine. The rest of the planes proceeded to Chengkung, and than back to B-1.



On Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, mission #28 was run against the floating dry dock at Singapore. The following Crews and planes took part in the mission:

Lt. Young	– 678	Lt. Shafer	– 546
Capt. Reid	– 417	Lt. Johnson	– 691
Major McPherson	– 471		

Major McPherson, in A/C 471, lost an engine immediately after take-off so he stayed in the traffic pattern, in order to land as quickly as possible. He made a remarkable night landing considering that 471 weighed approximately 135,000 pounds at time of landing.

Capt. Reid had trouble with engines #2 and #3. #2 was cutting out and oil pressure was low in #3 two hours after take-off and returned to Base without bombing. The other three planes proceeded to the primary target individually. According to the pilots who went to the primary target, a front was right over the assembly point and also the I.P., which prevented the planes from getting into formation. Lt. Young and Lt. Shafer were forced to go over the target individually and both were attacked by about 20 enemy aircraft. A/C 678 received hits in its #2 engine, causing it to cut out, and also received damage in the right main strut. Due to damage, A/C 678 was over two hours late in arriving back to Base. This Crew landed with a flat tire and Co-Pilot controlling the throttles. The linkage on the left throttle had been damaged along with the tire. A/C 546 received hits in its center wing tank. The tank was empty at the time, according to Lt. Shafer, Pilot. An explosion occurred, but no fire was started.

The enemy fighter pilots were very experienced and aggressive.

Lt. Johnson, flying A/C 691 entered a front near Georgetown, Malaya and received a violent shake-up. At one time the plane was shaken so hard one of the 1,000 pound bombs was torn loose and fell through the bomb bay doors, bending the doors. Lt. Johnson then proceeded to bomb the secondary target, Georgetown, and landed safely back at our Base in China.

The next mission, number 29 on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> was to Kaga, Formosa from the Forward Base in China. The following Crews and planes participated:

Major Brown	– 471	Capt. Skelley	– 703
Major McPherson	– 494	Capt. Reid	– 417
Capt. Good	– 424		

Major Brown, in A/C 471, lost #2 engine, and #4 was cutting out as he bombed the target of last resort, Hengyang, and returned to Base. All other planes of the Squadron bombed the primary target and returned safely to base.

Mission number 30 on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Jan. was to Shinchiku, Formosa. The weather was clear and bombing was good. The following Crews took part in the mission:



Col. Watson – 227	Capt. Martin – 500
Capt. Reida – 417	Capt. Yeates – 691
Capt. Good – 424	Major McPherson – 494

Col. Watson and Crew in A/C 227 had a failure in the #2 engine just after take-off. The bombs were salvoed "safe" from an altitude of 1,500 ft. One bomb, however, exploded upon hitting the ground.

Major McPherson, in A/C 494, had an engine failure immediately after take-off. When just over the edge of the field on the final approach, 494 had a runaway prop, forcing the plane to overshoot its landing. Major McPherson attempted to salvo his bombs "safe" from an altitude of 250 ft., but the bombs exploded upon hitting the ground, damaging the control cables. All of the Crew bailed out, but four members were killed due to the fact that their chutes did not open in time. Three of these four men fell on a high hill, precluding any chance of their chutes having time to open. A report of the accident written by Major McPherson is attached. The four Crewmembers who were killed are listed below:

1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Irby, D.V.	S/Sgt. Wilson, R.
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Grey, S.E.	S/Sgt. Shaw, Wm. H.

On Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> the Sqdn. took part in the mining of the Singapore Harbor, an entirely new type of operation for the B-29s. The mining was done from an altitude ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 ft. The mining was done visually and all Crews reported excellent results. Meager and inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was reported. There was no fighter opposition.

The moon was glowing beautifully down the center of the Strait as we flew west to east over its shining waters. We dropped our mine by a parachute that would alter dissolve. Soluble washers would then set the timing to become armed after dissolving.

Crews that took part in the mission were as follows:

Capt. Reida – 417	Capt. Yeates – 691
Capt. Good – 424	Major Mills – 703
Major Brown – 471	Capt. Skelley – 879
Capt. Martin – 505	Lt. Young – 895
Lt. Millar – 678	

Capt. Reida in A/C 417 developed engine trouble and was forced to go to the secondary target, Georgetown on Penang Island, returning to Base safely. All other Crews went to the primary target and returned safely to Base. Capt. Martin in A/C 500 landed at Cox's Bazaar, having developed engine trouble on the return leg of the mission, but he returned to Base the next day. This was the longest mining mission of the war, covering a total distance of 3,700 miles.

On Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, the Squadron took part in one of the most important missions of the war. This was mission #33 to the 800 ft. floating drydock in Singapore.



According to the first phase photo intelligence reports from the XXTH Bomber Command, the objective was destroyed as a result of the finest high altitude precision bombing seen in this theatre. The following Crews took part in the mission:

Major McPherson	– 895	Capt. Martin	– 424
Lt. Goeringer	– 703	Capt. Reida	– 417
Lt. Welsh	– 227	Major Brown	– 471
Lt. Young	– 536	Capt. Clark	– 546
Capt. Millar	– 678	Lt. Leighty	– 879

Major Brown with Col. Edmundson, our Group Commander, in A/C 471, led a formation of 11 planes over the target at 02148. Lt. Zaidlicz, the lead bombardier, made a good run and strike photos revealed that near misses on the floating drydock from a 19,000 ft. altitude. Each plane carried four 1,000 lb. G.P. bombs. Capt. Reida in A/C 417 developed electrical trouble fifty miles from the assembly point. A cable shorted the entire electrical system.

**THE LAST MISSION OF THE MARY ANN**  
By Major Clarence C. McPherson

We took off from A-7, our China Base, in the "Mary Ann", A/C 42-24494, before daylight on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945, on a combat mission to Formosa. The bomb load was twenty-seven 500-pound bombs. The night instrument take-off was normal and a climb on course was started. At an indicated altitude of 6,500 ft. the Flight Engineer said the #3 engine oil cooler shutter would not work, either in automatic or manual positions. I leveled off and throttled back #3 engine while the Engineer checked the oil cooler fuse. The trouble was not in the fuse so a 180-degree turn was made to return to Base. The #3 engine was left running at idle RPM in the event it was needed for a go-around upon landing, and the Engineer was instructed to notify me if oil pressure started dropping on that engine.

We returned to Base and circled the field while letting down to an altitude of 1,200 feet above field elevation. Visibility was 1/10 with darkness, fog and drizzle. I made an instrument approach, but when we crossed the field boundary we were to the side of the runway and the landing had to be aborted. Power was applied to the 3 good engines and the gear was raised immediately. The aircraft continued to settle so power was also applied to #3 engine and RPM and manifold pressure as increased to take-off power. Our line of flight from the field was up a river valley altitude 100 ft. above the terrain and flight conditions were total instruments. Flaps were raised to 25 degrees, airspeed increased to 170 miles per hour, and an altitude of 300 feet was attained. As manifold pressure was reduced to climb power, the Engineer called that the oil pressure was going to zero on number 3 engine. I told the Co-Pilot to feather the prop but the prop ran away at the same instant and would not feather. We were losing altitude and airspeed fast so manifold pressure was increased again to take-off power on the three good engines.



I knew the engines would not stand that power setting long and altitude could not be gained so I told the Bombardier to salvo the bombs. The bombs struck the ground almost immediately after being salvoed and part or all of the load exploded. The blast was terrific. Fire flashed all around us, the front bomb bay bulkhead door was blown in and shrapnel splattered the airplane. I felt the heat and blast from the explosion thru my side window (which I had opened on the approach). The plane banked almost vertically to the right as shrapnel cut the rudder cables.

I thought the plane was going in immediately and no one would get out in time, but I flipped the bail out bell and ordered the Co-Pilot to bail out. I rolled the aircraft out of the steep right bank with the ailerons and pushed the nose down to prevent an immediate stall. We were turned into the hills bordering the river but loss of the bomb load and the force of the blast increased our altitude to about 500 ft. The Radio Operator bailed out as the Co-Pilot lowered the gear and he landed safely. The airplane was very sluggish, required nearly full left aileron to maintain wing level flight and due to the gear being down, the bomb bay doors open and a prop windmilling we were losing the altitude we had gained from the bomb blast.

The Bombardier followed the Radio Operator out, but his chute didn't open in time and he was killed (his third bailout). The Engineer followed the Bombardier out, and it appeared from cuts on his face that he had rolled up in the shroud lines when the chute opened and was strangled to death. The Co-Pilot bailed out next and landed okay. I turned to leave my seat when the Navigator appeared from behind the gun turret. He had been watching the bomb drop through the front bomb bay bulkhead door and it hit and stunned him when it was blown in by the blast. He came forward and asked if he could jump with one leg strap unfastened. I told him to get going. He went back to the nose wheel well fastening the other strap on the way back. He then returned to the front and asked if I was going to fly the plane in.

At the time I was flying totally by instruments, fighting to keep the plane from stalling, and expecting to hit a hill any second. I told him to get out as he was slowly killing me. When I saw him disappear through the nose wheel well, I left the seat just as I thought I saw a hill loom in front of the plane. I pulled my rip cord ring free of the container on my way back to the wheel well, dropped down to the bottom run of the ladder and fell free of the airplane. As soon as I felt the slipstream, I jerked my rip cord and saw the chute stream out. The chute opened with a sharp crack, the raisers jerked hard, and it seemed as if I was stopped in mid-air for a couple of seconds (a very nice feeling). Simultaneously the airplane hit the ground and exploded. The sound of rending metal, exploding oxygen bottles and ammunition, and a sheet of flame filled the air. I had a sudden sensation of moving backwards rapidly and the ground coming up at me. Just as I started to pull on my risers, I heard a cracking of branches and felt myself going through a tree. When the din died away, I found myself swinging gently in my chute, which was caught in a tree, and when I stretched, my feet could just touch the bank of the ravine I had just landed in.



I left my chute hanging in the tree and in the darkness slowly made my way to the burning plane. The aircraft crashed in a lake and the top gun turret, a wheel, and burning gasoline were catapulted onto the land. I reached the scene at the same time as the Navigator, who also landed okay. Daylight was just breaking.

In the rear of the plane during the bailout, the Left Gunner went out the open rear bomb bay doors and landed safely. The Senior Gunner stepped to the side of the Right Gunner to assist him through the rear door, then made the plunge himself. Little did he know his care for another Crew buddy would actually save his own life. Timing was such that he landed safely while the Right Gunner's chute did not open soon enough to save him. The Radar Operator followed the Senior Gunner out and landed safely. The Tail Gunner followed the Radar Operator out, but his chute didn't open in time and he was killed. I could not see the ground during the bailout, but estimate the altitude above the hilly terrain to have been 500 ft. or less. If you landed on a hill you didn't make it, if you landed in a valley you had a chance. Of the 7 successful bailouts, one man had a slight limp for a day or two from a turned ankle, but the other 6 men had nothing more than slight scratches or bruises.

We walked back to A-1 (a base just north of our base) and picked up the bodies of the deceased on our way back. The Navigator, Senior Gunner and myself got in to A-1 about 1830 that evening and remained there overnight. When I got back to India the next day my roommates told me they thought I had bought the farm and were about to divide the contents of my foot locker.

I would like to say that we were very fortunate to have had Colonel James V. Edmundson as our Group Commander. His leadership and personal courage was an inspiration to all of us.

It was a privilege to have been a member of the 468<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group during the war. The reunions that our group holds annually show the close personal attachments we made during our overseas tour, the pride we had in our outfit and of our personal contribution to the fall of the Japanese Empire.

"Shoes" McPherson

#### 793<sup>RD</sup> BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – JANUARY 1945

January 1945 was the busiest month of our operation with 7 combat missions and several photo "Joes".

On Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, four planes of our Sqdn. struck at the Rama VI Bridge at Bangkok, Thailand for the second time. Meeting almost negligible opposition, the following Crews participated in the mission:

Lt. Warner – Major Humphrey	4487	Bengal Lancer
Lt. Ellestad	4442	Wichita Witch
Lt. Nelson	4704	The Gear Box
Major Schonlau	4469	



Although an excellent pattern was obtained, the bridge was only slightly damaged and we learned that "bridge busting" from 18,000 feet is difficult.

Several Officer promotions occurred the first of the month:

Ken Baile to Major	Executive Officer
Jim Cobb to 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	Pilot
Jack Tice to 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	Pilot
Willie Wills to 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt.	Pilot

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of Jan. 5 planes of our Sqdn. attempted once again to hit our "booga-boo", the Omura Aircraft Factory. As usual, the planes met ten-tenths cloud coverage and bombing was done by radar. All planes from the group returned safely. The following Crews of our Sqdn. participated:

Major Schonlau	4469	
Capt. Dean	4442	Wichita Witch
Major Marbury	3456	
Major Feeley	4525	Mary K

Capt. Michaliszyn and Crew in A/C 3415 were forced to abort and bombed the last resort target at Tang Yang. Capt. Dean and Crew were forced to land at Liangshan due to low fuel conditions.

Keelung, Formosa was the target for the Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> attack. Only twelve aircraft were dispatched from our Group, of which the following participated from the 793<sup>rd</sup>:

Major Hatfield -	4704	Major Marbury -	3456
Major Feeley -	525		

Major Feeley and Crew were forced to bomb the secondary at Amoy, China, while 4704 and 3456 were forced to drop on the PT by radar. Major Hatfield and 6 other planes from the group landed at Chengkung Air base instead of returning to A-7, and completed the first successful shuttle mission. This move stretched a relatively short mission into a tiring one as Crews that landed near Kunming remained on the ground only long enough to refuel and eat and then took off over the Hump!

For the second time, on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, Singapore was the object of attack of the XXTH Bomber Command. This time the floating dry dock was the target and proved a very costly mission for our Squadron. First of all, there was terrific thunderstorm activity east of the Malay Peninsula, causing Capt. Al Bores and Crew in A/C 487 to have a harrowing experience. The details of this flight are attached. Major Schnolau and Crew in A/C 469 were forced to bomb a target of opportunity due to mechanical difficulty. Major Humphrey and Crew, with Lt. Col. Billings as their co-pilot have been listed as missing since the time their radio "bombs away" message was received.

Crews reported that there were severe and persistent fighter attacks to and from the target.



And it is possible this was the direct cause of A/C 704's trouble. A plane of another Group reported seeing what he believed to be a plane of the 468<sup>th</sup> with one and possibly two engines feathered 30 minutes past the target along the Malacca Straits. The reporting aircraft was headed for China Bay, Ceylon and requested 704 to join them. No answer was received. It is hoped that the Crew was able to bail out or successfully ditch along the Malay Peninsula and the Sqdn. has confidence that this was the case. The loading list of A/C 704 is as follows:

Major Donald J. Humphrey	- P	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Martin J. Govednik	- V
Lt. Col. Robinson Billings	- CP	S/Sgt. John A. McDonald	- SG
Capt. Carl A. Hansman	- N	T/Sgt. Ralph C. Lindley	- RG
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. William F. Duffy	- B	T/Sgt. Harold D. Gillett	- LG
1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. Earnest E. Saltzman	- FE	S/Sgt. Roulmer E. Spratt	- TG
T/Sgt. Michael A. Kundrat	- R		

Major Douglas H. Hatfield has assumed command of the Sqdn. and Major William Marbury is Operations Officer. Capt. P. K. Carlton is Assistant Operations Officer.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> our planes were back in the Forward Area and were at Formosan targets again. This time it was airfield installations at Kagi. Marbury and Crew, with Lt. Brandmeyer as Bombardier, led a 3-ship formation over the target and laid them right on the button. The following Crews participated:

Doherty 3524	Marbury 3456	Feeley 4525
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Major Feeley and Crew were forced to bomb short of the primary target and hit Amoy once again. Capt. Michaliszyn and Crew, due to mechanical difficulties, had to return to A-7 shortly after takeoff.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of Jan. Doc Schonlau and Crew ran a photo strike mission to Singapore and down to the Liago Archipelago. It was a mission designed to obtain post-strike photos, seek out the Jap fleet and search for signs of Crew 704.

The direct effect of our operations of this past month have now become readily apparent. Coordinated action in the Pacific between the XXTH Bomber Command striking Tokyo and other points on Honshu from bases in the Marianas, Gen. Douglas McArthur's 6<sup>th</sup> Army invasion of Luzon at Singayen Gulf, Admiral Nimitz' Pacific fleets scoring irreparable damage to the Jap fleet, Airforce and ground installations from the Bonins, Ryuku Islands down to Saigon, French-Indo-China; the British, American and Chinese land offensive in Burma, that has pushed down to Mandalay, and finally opened the Ledo Road from Calcutta to Kunming, ties directly into our own strikes against Formosa and Singapore and Bangkok and Saigon.

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, China-based B-29s again left the Chengdu area to bomb airfield installations at Shinchiku, Formosa. Although the bomb patterns of the group fell slightly short, the target was effectively hit.



The following Crews participated:

Vester – Hatfield	5272	Miss Shorty	Schnonlau	4469	
Doherty	3534		Feeley	4525	
Marbury	3456		Mary K	Greenwald	5276

Lt. Greenwald and Crew, due to mechanical difficulties, were forced to hit airdrome installations at Changsha, China.

Doc Joyce and the Crew of Raiden Maiden have completely deserted the war effort and have taken off for Madras, India to rest camp. It is a humorous rumor that he has lost his place in the rotation plan and will have to start at the bottom again.

On Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>, Don Humphrey's Lt. Colonelcy came through; also Richard D. Bowling and Roy M. Young received their 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenancy.

On Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> one of the most important missions assigned to this Command was run against Singapore roads. The Navy sent experts to our India bases to brief and help load serial mines to block the channels leading into the harbor and dock facilities of Singapore. The mission was a low altitude night mission and was singularly successful, although the results gauged in sunken ships and closed ports will not be known for many weeks or months. The following participated:

Greenwald	- 4469	Warner	- 3456
Vester	- 5272	Carlton	- 3534
Bores	- 3530	Doherty	- 5276
Michaliszyn	- 3415	Windler	- 4525

Capt. Saunders and Crew were forced to go to Victoria Point and spread the destruction along the Malay Peninsula. The 444<sup>th</sup> Group mined Singapore at the same time, while the 462<sup>nd</sup> did a bang-up job mining Saigon, followed the next day by the bombing of port installations by the 40<sup>th</sup>.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Capt. H. L. Meints and Crew took a solo flight over Singapore and did an excellent job as a photo weather scout.

The XXTH Bomber Command has contributed a great deal to the Pacific War in photoreconnaissance missions over and above the effect of our bombing sorties. The 793<sup>rd</sup> has done its share in this, as listed below:

Major Marbury	- Singapore	Capt. Michaliszyn	- Nagasaki
Capt. Bores	- Singapore	Capt. Michaliszyn	- Nanking
Capt. Michaliszyn	- Nagasaki	Major Schonlau	- Singapore
Capt. Michaliszyn	- Kyushu	Capt. Meints	- Singapore
	Shanghai – Saishu		

The Crews of this Sqdn. have been flying hard and fast since coming overseas and added greatly to the total weight of bombs dropped on Jap targets. The list that follows indicates after the airplane Commander's name the number of completed combat missions participated in by our Crews:



<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Completed Missions</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Completed Missions</u>
Major Feeley	13	Capt. Meints	10
Major Hatfield	12	Capt. Saunders	10
Major Marbury	18	Lt. Ellestad	9
Major Schonlau	19	Lt. Greenwald	9
Capt. Bores	11	Lt. Nelson	14
Capt. Carlton	8	Lt. Warner	14
Capt. Dean	7	Lt. Windler	5
Capt. Joyce	9	Lt. Vester	12
Capt. Michaliszyn	11	Capt. Berman	12

Toward the end of the month, Capt. Bob Berman and Lt. Pat Malloy, after having the unusual experience of flying Major Gen. Curtis L. LeMay to Guam and Saipan, were transferred to the XXTH Bomber Command Headquarters. Lt. Jim Evans, S/Sgt. Murray, Sgt. Kirby and S/Sgt. Butler also made the momentous flight that brought the new Commanding General, Brigadier Gen. Roger M. Ramey from the Marianas to India, but have stayed with us to continue to Crew the Bengal Lancer.

The last day of the month, Robert Casey, Robert Dyer, Eric Lohela and Harry Polgar made 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenancy, while George Myers made M/Sgt. and "Red" Ryder made T/Sgt.

During the month the Sqdn. was again awarded the Billy Mitchell flag for best performance among the Squadrons of our group during December.

Besides this being the greatest operational month of our outfit, the Group has helped in evacuating our China Bases. With Schonlau, Meints, Ellestad and Marbury possibly being among the last of the B29s to fly out of the Chengtu bases.

We now anxiously await the word for our movement into new quarters of the globe and the speculation as to "when" and "where" has put all else into the background.

NARRATIVE REPORT of Capt. Albert Bores and Crew of A/C 487 on Mission No. 27 (Singapore). Particular attention storm encountered enroute.

Our first wind and general weather from base to one and a half hours from turning point was as briefed. At this time there was a slight change in wind and it blew us to right of course. On the turn across the Malay Peninsula the winds were still pretty much as briefed, however the direction was accurate but the velocity increased much higher. More cloud coverage was encountered at start of Peninsula, and kept building up all the way to turning point just before the I.P. At this point we encountered tail cumulus clouds up to 14,000 feet, and started for a course for the A.P. There was an abundance of strato-cumulus below and above us. Ten minutes from the A.P. we circled a large thunderhead to the right and in the direction of the mainland.



We then took a heading for the I.P. Throughout the first part of the trip we had maintained contact with A/C 704, 469 and 691. About 75 miles from turning point, at 0100Z, our life raft sprang out and destroyed the antenna. From this time on we had poor reception from A/C 704 which was ahead of us in the clouds and therefore in the static, but reception was very good from A/C 691, which was somewhere behind us and still in the clear.

Despite the malfunction of the radar set which would go off and on, we took a heading with the help of the set. At 0152Z we hit a storm, and we were caught in a downdraft, which sent us from 24,000 feet to 12,000, at the rate of 6,000 ft. a minute or better. We were in a spiral to the left. An updraft hit us and we ascended from 18,000 feet (where we had finally managed to climb under some control) to 25,000 ft., at the rate of 6,000 ft. a minute or better. Our air speed went from 310 miles per hour to 180 on downdraft. Both Pilot and Co-Pilot's gyro-horizons and Pilot's gyrocompass went out. Both Pilot and Co-Pilot fought the controls to keep the ship out of spin, and the Pilot attempted to depressurize at 25,000 ft. The Pilot pulled the handle to no avail, and told the Engineer to try. Depressurization was accomplished by the Engineer, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R. D. Klein, but by this time the storm damaged the airplane in such a manner as to make it nearly impossible for all Crewmembers to put on oxygen masks.

The Radar Operator's seat was torn from the floor before the Operator had a chance to put on his mask. He held on to his table, but the table also jarred loose. He unbuckled his safety belt and crawled back to the Right Gunner who attempted to give him oxygen, and finally succeeded. The Top Turret Gunner suffered shock from severe jolting, and crawled down later with upset stomach. Bombs were sheared from their shackles and driven through the Bombay doors at approximately 0200Z. The Pilot and Co-Pilot finally effected a recovery at approximately 1210Z. The Navigator took a bearing from the SW tip of the island (20 miles inland), which could be seen through a hole in the clouds. The airplane swung around WSW and headed for home. (Actual time of storm was from 0152Z to 0210Z. Major Pattillo later assigned to fly A/C 487 (with what had been Berman's Crew) and Al Bores told him, "I never want to fly that airplane again!"

#### 794<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – JANUARY 1945

The strength of the Squadron on January 26<sup>th</sup> was 124 officers and 520 Enlisted Men. These figures include the Crews of Lt. H. H. Hinkle and Major Giles who were on detached service with a local C-109 outfit.

Following are the serial numbers of the operational aircraft (B29 type) in this Squadron:

42-24486, 42-65208, 42-542, 42-24429, 42-24714, 42-24734  
42-63445, 42-63464, 42-24719, 42-65275, 42-63529, 42-24892

The last three aircraft listed were assigned during the month: A/C 275 arrived on Jan. 9;



A/C 529 arrived Jan.14th; and A/C 892 was added to the Squadron on Jan. 18: A/C 42-6284, 42-6409, 42-6407 and 42-6272 were turned over to the ATC and returned to the United States. When A/C 284 left the Squadron it had a total of 673:45 flying hours, the greatest number of flying hours of any ship on the field at the time. A/C 409 had a total of 560:00 hours; A/C 407 had a total of 387:00 hours; and A/C 272 accumulated a total of 544:25 hours. F13A (42-24567), the photo ship assigned to this Sqdn., was turned over to the 1<sup>st</sup> Recon. Sqdn. at A-1 in the forward area, along with Capt. Gremmler and his Crew to fly it.

Listed below are the flying hours for Dec. 25 '44 to Jan 26 '45.

<u>COMBAT</u>	<u>COMBAT/PHOTO</u>	<u>COMBAT/FERRY</u>	<u>TRAINING</u>	<u>MISC TOTAL</u>
542:35	74:05	378:40	179:55	1179:05

No new Crews have been added except 2 who returned after flying with the C-109 Outfit: Lt. H.H. Hinkle and Major Giles. Major Giles has been appointed Dir. of Training with the 468<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, and his Co-Pilot, Lt. James Smith, has become First Pilot of his Crew.

The 794<sup>th</sup> participated in 7 missions during this month:

Bangkok-Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>-Mission 24; 5 of our A/C bombed the Primary.

Omura-Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>-Mission 25; 2 of our A/C bombed the secondary target at Nanking

Formosa (HEITO)-Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>-Mission 26: 3 A/C of the 794<sup>th</sup> bombed the Primary and 1 hit the secondary target at Amoy.

Singapore-Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>-Mission 27: 1 plane hit the Primary and 4 hit the secondary target at Georgetown.

Kagi-Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>-Mission 28: 6 planes hit the Primary and 1 hit the secondary target at Amoy.

Formosa (Shinchiku)-Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – Mission 29: 9 A/C of the 794<sup>th</sup> hit the Primary.

Singapore – Jan. 25-26 – Mission 31: 8 of our planes bombed the Primary Target with excellent results. Our Squadron also flew the longest combat mission ever before flown to date, over 4050 miles. (Route flown was longer than any other Squadron in our Group has ever flown.) Crews participating in this raid were commanded by: Major Anderson, Major Eaton, Capt. Goodrich, Capt. Heneveld, Capt. Fouts, Lt. Olsen, Lt. Britton and Lt. Johnson.

Our Squadron has the most accumulative flying hours in the 468<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group to date: 5908:20 hours. This is more than 150 flying hours over the other Squadrons. We have the record flying time for this month, and the distinction of having the most aircraft in the forward area for the 6 missions during the month, as well as the greatest number of aircraft over the Primary target for the period.