



Part 1

September 1943-April 1944

Salina, Kansas (Smoky Hill)

Kharagpur, India (B-1)

Pengshan, China (A-7)



IN THE BEGINNING
468TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP – SEPT. 1943 TO APRIL 1944

With only four B-29 bombers at the Smoky Hill Air Base near Salina, Kansas, the personnel were coming in droves. They were men with experience or had recently trained in their particular assignment. However, not many had ever seen nor heard of a B-29. They had the necessary knowledge to learn first-hand or be taught to fly and maintain it. Whoever did the selecting did it very carefully.

Each man was assigned to one of the flying Squadrons – the 792nd, 793rd, 794th, 795th or the maintenance Squadrons – the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th or the Photo Lab Unit. The 468th Bombardment Group was formed during September and would now be properly manned.

The Aircraft Commanders were topnotch Officers with over 400 4-engine hours to their credit, many had over 1,000 hours, and some had as high as 4,000. There were Pilots who had been instructors in 4-Engine Transition Schools around the country, and some Pilots who had flown the B-17 in combat in the South Pacific or Europe. The latter were assigned to Command position if high enough in rank to permit it.

Then there were newly trained 4 engine Pilots showing up from the transition schools. They were called “Pilot”, but with fewer than 400 hours would serve under an Aircraft Commander. This caused much chuckling among them, as most agreed the title of “Co-Pilot” would do. Just being a part of the new B-29 Program was an honor in itself, especially when flying next to men of the caliber of these Commanders. With less than 400 hours, they needed further training and would receive it from a qualified personal instructor.

The other Combat Crew personnel also had much more training than ever before. The Navigators and Bombardiers could function in each other’s duties. The Radio and Radar men had gone through special training. Some of the Gunners had experience in aircraft maintenance and could be of much help to the Crew Chief. The Crew Chiefs were superbly trained and very rapidly became better as time went by. Being a new aircraft, engines were constantly being replaced and components had to be replaced or modified. So as each was finally assigned to a B-29, the Crew Chiefs trained themselves as they endeavored to keep their planes flying. Until the new planes were delivered, the Crew Chief and Ground Crew maintained a B-17 or B-26.

With only 4 B-29s on the Base, the Flight Crews had only these older aircraft in which to train. The B-26 was chosen because it had a tricycle landing gear similar to the B-29 and flew almost as fast. The B-17, of course, was the nearest thing to a B-29 and would be used for high altitude bombing and navigational training. There was much training to be done by the Co-Pilot in the Link Trainer each month. Formation practice was accomplished in both the B-17 and B-26.

Bombardiers could do some bombsight training from a scaffold being pushed across a hanger with a target drawn on the floor.



Then they would practice at a high altitude in a B-17 dropping 100 lb. practice bombs over the Pottawatomie range in eastern Kansas.

For an insight into the problems causing delay in delivery of B-29s in which to train, we suggest reading the “Point of No Return” by W.H. Morrison. None in the lower ranks of the 468th knew of these problems. Everyone, though, was performing every training assignment with hope that soon there would be more deliveries of the new plane. As it was, the one aircraft in each Squadron was used during these early months in the fall of 1943 to check out the Aircraft Commander. With 15 Combat Crews in each Squadron and downtime for maintenance, Crew training was accomplished in the B-26 and B-17.

In later months, as the new aircraft became available, Crews were sent in B-17s to pick up a B-29 at one of the factories or modification points. This too was good training, as difficulties arose when delivering a new aircraft before testing. Overheated cylinder heads could cause a return to the field, but most times the problems were solved by the Crew to enable them to bring the plane to Smoky Hill to be worked on. One problem recalled at this point was the electrical system went out after take-off from the Wichita Plant. The Pilot just told the Gunners in the rear to restart the putt-putt and it was left on to enable delivery to Smoky Hill, a short distance away. The putt-putt supplied the electrical current for proper operation of the plane.

Of course the aircraft was grounded, but much training was to be had by one maintenance Crew in tracing the wires. It was soon available for flight training.

On a Sunday in October, those on duty at Smoky Hill saw their first crash of a B-29. From the field they could see this plane trying to climb, then slowly do a cartwheel on its right wing and plummet below the trees and housetops. Then the black smoke appeared. All aboard were killed except the tail gunner, and the plane was a total loss. It was a sobering thing to see, but the following morning everyone was back to his training bit. That deep belief, “It can’t happen to me”, so often true of combat men, seemed to prevail.

Very few problems arose from flying B-17s and B-26s and were always handled well by the Crews without mishap. So this one crash of the B-29 was the only serious and most expensive experience they had at that time. In 1943 the new plane cost one million dollars each, which was a hefty sum at that time. The loss of men could never be evaluated in dollars and cents. An engine failed to respond when needed.

In December, parts for the aircraft had to be picked up in Marietta, Georgia, so a B-17 was sent down to pick these up. This, too, was training for one Crew. The ingenuity of the people involved was shown on this trip. Kansas being a dry State, the bars at Smoky Hill were running dry. One of the Aircraft Commanders was from Atlanta, and with \$1,400 donated funds was able to make a pickup of needed supplies at a store in nearby Atlanta. That was good training and good thinking. With the radio room full, plus an overflow into the bomb bay, the Pilot was gentle with his landing.



The Co-Pilot often mentioned that it was the softest landing during the darkness of early morning that he'd ever seen. For those who remained on the Base during the holidays, a more relaxed happy hour was possible.

At Christmas time and prior to leaving for overseas in the spring, training missions were used to deliver Enlisted men to a Base near their home for a short furlough. This showed the concern and caring that our high-ranking Officers had for those under their command.

At first, living conditions on Base were crowded. Scuttlebutt had it that a Colonel, a Major, one Flight Officer and a M/Sgt were sharing one room. However, builders were busy and soon had quarters available for all concerned. Surely the M/Sgt got a private room!

Living off Base was great. The people of Salina were very friendly and shared their homes when space permitted. Some even shared meals with their visitors. Of course, getting off by oneself with their wife was the best. A Co-pilot and a Navigator from different Crews found a double with two rooms on each side, with a bathroom in between, which they shared. This was a happy abode...unless someone forgot to unlock the other door when they vacated the bathroom.

Life had become pleasant indeed for the war-torn period in which we lived. Then through March and April the move to our new location began. Advance details were sent early to prepare for the later arrival of the ground and air Crews. Nine air Crews in each Squadron would fly the aircraft to the new location, and the six remaining Crews traveled by ATC or boat. Key ground personnel also traveled by ATC aircraft. Crew Chiefs traveled with their B-29 and Combat Crews.

Top secrecy had already been declared. So no one knew the new Base location until the last stop enroute. Tokyo Rose knew before we did – she was airing words of welcome prior to our arrival. Any pictures taken would be held by Security people for development until the photographer returned to the States and was safely out of the combat area. Official pictures of Crews were taken and issued to each Combat Air Crew member when it was safe to do so.

We are on our way. It was an interesting trip to make, seeing many places we had read or heard about, but never realized we would see. At the end of the trip we would learn a new life with many shortages. Some that come to mind: cool water – ice – electricity (when drilling teeth, the dental Officer used a drill turned by a GI pedaling a bicycle, with the rear wheel in the air pulling a drive belt.) We could go on and on about taking cold showers, sleeping under nets, etc., but these will be touched on later by others. Let it suffice to say, “We made do.”

There were more serious duties to take care of, we had a job to do and all personnel of the 468th pitched in to do their share. We were about to face our enemy.

The Historians of each Unit began writing their periodic history at time of departure as the following pages reveal.



HEADQUARTERS 468TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP - MARCH 1944

This was a month of organization and development for this Group at its first overseas Base. Major Clark, Group S-4 and Lt. Zielski, Special Services Officer had arrived at Kharagpur on Feb. 28th on temporary duty with XXTH Bomber Command. Arrivals of remaining Advanced Echelon personnel constituted the most important events of the month.

Major Clark and Lt. Zielski were the only representatives of the 468th until Capt. Elbert H. Greene, 1st Lt. John V. Phelan and S/Sgt. Robert G. Hildreth of the Group Intelligence Office reported for duty at Bomber Command on the 10th. They were assigned on Temporary Duty to assist Major Clark in the A-4 Section.

Lt. Col. Sam A. Carnes, 468th Group Executive Office and C.O. of the Advanced Echelon, arrived at Kharagpur on the 13th and reported to Command for Temporary Duty. Capt. John C. Lillie, Group Flight Surgeon and Capt. Loren Reitz, Adjutant of the 795th Bombardment Squadron, arrived on March 17th. Capt. Lloyd D. Stuckey, Group Communications Officer reported on the 19th.

The next day Lt. Phelan and Capt. Greene were relieved from temporary duty and moved to the camp near Salua. BOQ-G was selected as living quarters for Officers of the Advanced Echelon. Preparations were also made to establish a temporary Group Headquarters in that building since other buildings were occupied by the 22nd Air Depot Group. Col. Carnes, and other men of the Advanced Echelon who had been on duty with XXTH Bomber Command, moved to Salua March 21st.

Colonel Carnes' quarters were furnished with a desk and a chair, in addition to the regular furniture of a BOQ, and that room was designated as Group Headquarters Office. The room occupied by Captain Greene and Lt. Phelan became the center for the dissemination of news, censorship, and other S-2 activities while Captain Lillie's quarters became a First Aid station. In Lt. Zielski's quarters recreational equipment was available. A temporary supply warehouse was set up in the barracks behind BOQ-G. In short, the Group began to function on a minor and very temporary scale on the 21st. Temporary arrangements were made with the 22nd Air Depot Group for our personnel to dine at their mess halls. Captain Kenneth R. Baile, Adjutant of the 793rd Squadron, arrived on March 21st, and on the following day 2nd Lts. Roger W. Hope and Bruce K. Herbruck, of the Group S-2 Office, and 2nd Lt. Harvey Harris, 792nd Squadron Adjutant, arrived at XXTH Bomber Command and proceeded immediately to Salua where they reported to Colonel Carnes for duty.

The first Officers' Meeting was held on the morning of the 23rd. The work to be done was outlined by Colonel Carnes and Major Clark. Then some of the offices were given additional duty assignments. Captain Baile was appointed Acting Group Adjutant; Captain Reitz Assistant S-4; Captain Greene, Special Projects Officer with the assistance of Lt. Hope; Lt. Phelan as Intelligence Officer with the assistance of Lt. Herbruck. Lt Burke, upon arrival, will be our Mess Officer.



Colonel Carnes obtained aerial photos and plans of the housing area from Colonel Jones of the 22nd ADG. From these photographs, overlays were made by Lt. Phelan, and allocation of buildings began.

With the arrival of 1st Lt. John F. Burke, Adjutant of the 794th Squadron, and T/Sgt. Lorenzo G. Wilson, communications clerk, on the 25th, all personnel of the original Advanced Echelon were present at Salua.

During this period, a volleyball court was laid out in front of BOQ-G and an evening volleyball game became an event to which everyone looked forward. Rivalry between Officers over 30 and Officers under 30 ran high, as did that between teams of Officers and Enlisted Men.

By the end of March we felt that much had been accomplished although we still had a long way to go. Officers had been assigned on the Base and buildings had been allocated to the various units of the Group. Progress had been made in conquering the supply problem and a carpenter shop once established, was turning out desks and chairs in an efficient manner. The difficulties and inconveniences had been numerous, but the cooperation, diligence, and cheerfulness of all the men encouraged us to believe that our first ten days at Salua had been a success.

13TH BOMBARDMENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON – MARCH 1944

On the morning of March 2nd the convoy, which included the S.S. Robert M/T Hunter, passed through the Strait of Gibraltar. The Rock of Gibraltar was not passed until long after dawn, so many of the men in the Squadron had an opportunity to see this world famous landmark for the first time. Many friendly airplanes were seen flying overhead throughout the day.

The S.S. Robert M/T Hunter, along with a number of other vessels, left the convoy on the morning of March 3rd and entered the harbor at Oran, Africa. Most of the day was spent at anchor in the outer harbor, waiting for other vessels to enter the breakwater and tie up to the dock. In the evening, a convoy of motor trucks arrived to carry the personnel to Command Post Number Two, a temporary camp maintained by the Mediterranean Base Section several miles outside of Oran and close to the town of Fleurus.

Captain Maxwell's Medical Report, submitted shortly after our arrival at Oran, contained a complete statement of the conditions on shipboard, which affected the personnel during the trip. A number of the more important matters considered in this report should be mentioned here. The sanitary condition of the S.S. Robert M/T Hunter was found to be exceedingly poor prior to embarkation. There were no drains in the floor of the Enlisted Men's shower room and, as a result, water, which splashed out of the shower baths, would accumulate and had to be removed by manual means from time to time. The ventilating system was improperly installed, which made it necessary to open covers of the hatches when the weather permitted. The Officers' quarters had no ventilation at all.



The members of the ship's Crew did not know how to operate the ventilating system, fans and steam lines. It was necessary for our men to learn from experimentation. The space allotted for housing of the five hundred men was inadequate. The crowded conditions resulted in an epidemic of mild respiratory infection. Twenty-eight cases of *Pediculus Punis*, better known as the “Crabs” were also found. GI louse powder was used and found to be efficient. Kitchen facilities were inadequate. As the Galley was designed to provide mess for only 70 men, many problems were encountered in using these facilities for 500 men. At the time of embarkation, it was found that the kitchen sinks were painted with lead paint. In order to avoid the possibility of lead poisoning, it was necessary to remove the paint. Washbasins and showers were provided, and salt water was available for bathing; but there was no salt water soap on board and ordinary face soap would not lather. The ship's hospital was well equipped with instruments for advanced surgical work, but there was an insufficient supply of the simple things necessary for attending to patients. There were, for instance, insufficient sterile towels and sponges. Medical personnel were obliged to do their own sterilizing.

At Oran, the Squadron was housed in tents. Cots and two extra blankets per man were drawn. For the first two days, no C rations were available. Later, however, regular rations were drawn and hot meals were prepared by the mess section. The food prepared, practically out of doors and on field equipment, was unusually good.

The remainder of the month of March was spent in camp at Oran. Each day began with calisthenics in which all Officers and Enlisted Men, except those on guard or other duties, participated. Part of each day was also spent in road marches, close order drill, or classes conducted by each section. Athletic equipment was drawn and a volleyball court set up. Many lively softball games were played. On March 13th, non-commissioned Officers of the first grades paid a penalty for losing a game with a team of personnel of the lower grades. The former had to police the area under the watchful surveillance of the latter.

Further recreation was provided by an outdoor movie each evening. Later in the month, Lt. Ziebell, our Special Services Officer, procured films and movies, to be shown to our Squadron using our own projector. The projector did double duty during daylight hours as an amplifier for music played on our portable phonograph. The Command Post also provided showers and laundry service for the convenience of the men. PX supplies were brought in each week and every man could buy his weekly ration of soft drinks, cigarettes, cigars, candy and other items.

Throughout the month a guard was posted day and night at the water tank in the Squadron area. On March 25th an Enlisted Men's duffle bag full of clothing was missing, causing an organized search of nearby field and a showdown inspection among the personnel. The bag was found in a nearby field, minus its contents, and no explanation could be found for the loss or theft.



Extra guards were posted each night from that day on at every post except the water tank. A fire broke out on the 24th that destroyed their tent and some of the clothing and equipment of the occupants. We were paid for February shortly after arriving at Oran, but March pay was handed out on the 29th of March. The Squadron was alerted for further shipment on that same day so the last few days were spent preparing and waiting for final orders to proceed on their way.

792ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – MARCH 1944

The number of each Aircraft Commanders Crew was:

#1	Lt. Col. Edmundson	#2	Major Van Horne
#3	Major Brown	#4	Major Watson
#5	Major McPherson	#6	Major Pattillo
#7	Captain Skelley	#8	Captain Martensen
#9	Captain Good	#10	Captain Lewis
#11	1 st Lt. Pickett	#12	Captain Parsons
#13	Captain Martin	#14	1 st Lt. Reida
#15	1 st Lt. Lutz		

Crews #11, #12, #14, #15 and eight members of Crew #10 departed by boat to our overseas destination this month. Crew #13 is to stay behind until the remaining Crews fly the 9 planes to destination in April.

March was devoted to changing engines and modifying the new planes we received this month. We now have nine aircraft and all are grounded for engine changes. This was necessary because the ships came in with engines not modified yet for operation in the theater we were bound for. These changes had to be made here at Salina because time for departure was near and modification centers were jammed with other aircraft. No more could be accepted. Some civilian technicians were brought in to assist and train personnel of the Maintenance Squadrons and Flight Crews.

Needless to say, this was a great plus for the Crew Chiefs and Air Crew men who would be assisting him enroute to an area (TOP SECRET) we were soon to head out for. They had all learned much about this new B-29 that was assigned to their Crew just a few days before. By month's end, 5 planes were ready. The Crews were anxiously waiting for their orders to take off and head out. Where to did not matter.

793RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – MARCH 1944

March was a month of little activity but much feverish expectation for our Squadron. Our B-29s were being delivered and assigned to Crews. These ships were flown in the minimum time so engines would not have to be changed before flying overseas. Most of the Crews were taken to Modification Centers around the country, by B-17s, where they were assigned to a B-29 being modified. Upon completion they would fly their plane to other “Mod” Centers until all changes and additions were made. Then they would fly it to the Base it was designated for. This duty, of course, gave our Combat Crews much needed training in this newest weapon of war.



As Smoky Hill Base near Salina filled with B-29s, we were honored by a visit from General H.H. (Hap) Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces. We welcomed him and his order “All combat personnel will be given a 5 day leave.” Maj. East made arrangements to deliver as many men as possible by B-17 to the point nearest their home. They were then to be picked up by plane so they could spend as much time as possible with family and friends. Commanders can be very kind.

Upon our return at month’s end, we found the field completely taken over by civilian technicians who, in conjunction with the XXth Bomb Command, Wright Field and the manufacturers, were rushing the B-29 Project for full readiness by the planned departure date. All Crews not assigned to fly planes over had left for our Base overseas by boat or ATC amidst much gnashing of teeth and disappointment. We received only 9 B-29s, so with 15 Crews assigned not everyone could fly a B-29 over. Every Crew will share in flying those 9 planes in training and in combat. The Crews remaining worked night and day on their planes preparing them for the long trip.

There was one slight catastrophe. Col. Engler discovered high stakes poker playing in the S-2 coffee room during duty hours. Major East brought it to an abrupt stop. We had been preparing for so long that it was hard to believe that we were at long last heading overseas. As soon as this sank in, work was done with more enthusiasm. And the bull sessions centered around how to say good-bye to our families without revealing dates. We had no knowledge where we were going.

14TH BOMBARDMENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON – MARCH 1944

As of March 1st, total strength was 353 Enlisted Men and 17 Officers and it remained the same throughout the month. We were aboard the USS Mt. Vernon enroute to our new Base. We crossed the Equator March 3rd and guessed our first port of call would be Melbourne, Australia, and after crossing the International Date Line of March 8th (thus omitting the 9th of March from our records) we docked at Melbourne on the 15th and remained until the 17th. Because of secrecy regulations we were not allowed off the ship to sightsee in Melbourne.

We sailed again on the 17th, north into the Indian Ocean, and noted that the days were becoming warmer. Officers slept on deck during night hours, but Enlisted Men were not allowed because of scarcity of sleeping space. Food was good for the Officers and only fair for the Enlisted Men. Complaints were made about the scarcity of food allowed for the Enlisted Men. We arrived at Bombay on the 31st and again were not allowed off the damned boat.

794TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – MARCH 1944

Five Combat Crews left Salina this month to go overseas. #7, Captain Estey, departed on the 8th; #9 Lt. Benedict, left on the 11th; #14, Lt. Carlton, and #15, Lt. McGill, left on the 12th; followed by #3, Capt. Stauffer who lit out on March 22nd.



On the 13th, six-day leaves were authorized for all members of the Squadron. Two shifts were formed, one leaving March 13th and the other shift left six days later. As many men as possible were airlifted to air bases near their home by our group pilots flying B-17s. One ferry plane, during the second shift, developed severe mechanical trouble at 2,500 feet in heavy weather near Casper, Wyoming. With little time to spare, Lt. Gage ordered everyone to bail out. Everybody aboard parachuted to safety and returned to Base within a few days. During this month, 1st Lt. George Wolfe, G/O Walter Siwek and T/Sgt. Arnold Kaloust were transferred to the 497th Bomb Group at Clovis, NM.

795TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – March 1944

Our average strength from Feb. 25th to March 25th was 74 Officers and 97 Enlisted Men. This included 18 men who were attached for special duty. Some of these men were shipped overseas during March to join their units. Having completed most of their training in B-17s and B-26s, the Squadron was now ferrying B-29s from modification centers. Once here a major part of modifications was accomplished by the Combat Crews and the 28th Bomb Maintenance Squadron personnel. New planes were assigned to Combat Crews who began preparing for their flight to the, (still unknown) Theater of Operations.

All personnel were issued overseas equipment and processing before the final move was to begin. 20 Officers and 50 Enlisted Men left Salina to go by boat or ATC to their Base overseas. Special 6-day leaves were granted to 100 men for a visit home before departure, these leaves made possible because of the late arrival of our new planes.

B-29 A/C 42-6365 was received and immediately assigned to the Squadron's Commanding Officer's Crew. This plane had been previously picked out at the factory to bear the name "Gen. H.H. Arnold Special" in honor of our Chief in Washington, DC.

16th BOMBARDMENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

January-February-March-1944

The New Year brought glad tidings for two of our Officers, 2nd Lts. Morrison M. Davis and L.T. MacDonnell, were notified on January 3rd that their gold bars had turned to silver. They were now 1st Lieutenants.

On January 5th after diligent preparations, and much earnest work, the POM inspectors swarmed into the Orderly Room for their inspection.



The next 24 hours were filled with anxiety as we waited for the results. When the final report arrived every man breathed a proud sigh of relief. Our Squadron was graded the best of the six units inspected that day. With this inspection now behind us we prepared to issue, inspect and pack our equipment. We made ready to move to our Point of Embarkation and began preparing ourselves to become physically and mentally in the pink while we were “on alert”. Starting with a 10-mile hike, carrying full field packs, on March 12th, we discovered a few men needed toughening up. Section Heads now set up a technical and academic program augmented with physical training exercises.

Mrs. Baumgardner, first Lady of the Squadron, invited all Officers and their wives to a dinner at the Officers’ Mess on the 13th. This social affair was enjoyed by all and served to help the Officers become better acquainted, so that a family-like relationship in which we live can be acquired.

The Engineering Section was improved with the assignment of 1st Lt. Ray Van Slyck, an Officer with considerable experience in the Aleutian Islands. He arrived on the 14th, and to keep TO at par, 2nd Lt. John Conrads was transferred to another unit. We were sad indeed to see him go. During his short stay he had made many good friends and gave freely of his talents to help us. Our loss is another Unit’s gain.

The 1st contingent, 1st Lt. William Newsome, and Sgt. Raymond Etzold, left the Squadron for detached service at a west coast POE to oversee issuing Squadron technical equipment to our overseas Base.

To acquaint us with what to expect upon arrival at our overseas destination, we received orientation lectures by Capt. Sagandorph from Group S-2 on European and Near Easter Theaters. Our own S/Sgt. Orren Armstrong and Capt. Simpson supplemented with discussions on the Pacific Theater. On the 20th, Officers and Enlisted Men went by truck to the rifle range to familiarize themselves with personal weapons. Surprise of the day – we were to walk back to Base from Camp Phillips.

At this point with POM inspection over and the issuance of field equipment completed, a constant showdown inspection of clothing and equipment began without any practical training in the field. A remedy was soon found. Our C.O. immediately made arrangements for our men to share duties on the flight line. They worked with Air Echelon personnel and the spirit of the Squadron soon returned to normal. A valuable lesson had been learned. Men were more content and happy doing practical work they had been trained to do. And that work increases their knowledge for accomplishment of future jobs.

Acting 1st Sgt. Owen McCusker transferred to the 795th Bomb Squadron on the 23rd and was replaced by 1st Sgt. Earl Hutchinson who is a very capable and conscientious person, well liked by all Officers and Men. We departed from Smoky Hill AB on the 11th headed for our POE at Camp Anza. We are finally on our way, and we’re ready to set sail as quickly as possible.



We arrived in Camp Anza on Feb. 14th. And it will be remembered as a place of incessant rains, good food and the beginning of censorship. Our unit departed this Camp on Feb. 26th and boarded the USS Mount Vernon early that evening at Wilmington, CA. On the following morning it was “anchors aweigh”, and we sailed out into the mighty Pacific. We still had no knowledge of where we would end up. Crossing the Pacific Ocean was very uneventful as we cruised along with happy reports of no enemy sightings. This ship was a former luxury liner now loaded to capacity. We each had a bunk of our own and were served 3 good meals each day. Because of the crowded quarters, the planned training programs were abandoned. Time was spent watching the vast Pacific, reading, playing cards, and sweating out the long PX lines. Although we were unescorted, we arrived at Melbourne, Australia without harm.

After remaining in Port 48 hours without shore leave, we left Port escorted by a British Light Cruiser. Now we knew the chips were down. From now on we will be in a war zone with faithful Allies to guard us. These Chaps and their cruiser were later replaced by 2 Corvettes to guard and guide us the rest of the way. These 3 ships arrived in the Port of Bombay, India on Mar. 31st 1944. From there we traveled overland to our Base of Operations near Kharagpur, India.

Lessons learned on the trip, too late of course, were that we could have taken many items along with us without objection. Sweets were selling at a premium due to short supplies, contrary to information released to us at the original POE.

Strength of the 16th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron at time of departure from the US was 339 Enlisted Men and 14 Officers. 16 Enlisted Men and 4 Officers stayed on Detached Service in the States and we are happy to say all arrived safely without loss to join us in India.

A BEGGAR BOY IN INDIA

PHOTO BY YATES SMITH





HEADQUARTERS 468TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP – APRIL 1944

Development of the Base in preparation for the arrival of the remaining personnel and equipment of the 468th was given greatest efforts this month.

On April 1st our first B-29 Crew arrived via ATC. This was Capt. Estey of the 794th Bomb Squadron, and Crew. Five more arrived between the 4th and 16th. Then on the 17th the first Crew flying a B-29 arrived. This was Capt. Ivanovic and Crew of the 793rd Squadron. By the end of the month, 17 Crews and 9 B-29s had reached Kharagpur.

Lt. Col. Ted S. Faulkner, Group Deputy C.O., came on the 21st and assumed command. Capt. Robert T. Arnoldus, Group Navigator, also arrived and became acting Operations Officer. Population on Base increased greatly with the arrival of the 14th and 16th Bombardment Maintenance Squadrons on the 13th. At this time, Group Headquarters and Intelligence moved into permanent Quarters. News Summaries were given twice daily by S-2 Officers in the new Situation Room.

The first briefing was held in this room April 30th by Lt. Col. Faulkner, Captains Greene, Stuckey, Arnoldus and Lt. Don Lane with Lt. Sims, Captain Bores, Good and their Crews attending. This briefing covered the first of a series of cargo missions to our Advanced Base in China. This would include hauling fuel and bombs for our missions over Japan and other targets in Eastern Asia.

The highlight for entertainment and recreation this month was the show put on, on May 5th, by Paulette Goddard, William Gargan and Keenan Wynne. Other activities included movies 3 times a week and numerous volleyball and baseball games. With the arrival of more personnel each day, we were looking forward to our first engagement with our enemy.

792ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

On April 1st the Squadron Intelligence Officer and remaining members of Crew 10 departed for overseas. Crews flying our new B-29s left Salina and arrived at Kharagpur as follows:

Crew #	Plane #	Left Salina	Arrived Kharagpur
1	6264	4-12-44	4-29-44
3	6243	4-09-44	Enroute
4	6362	4-09-44	4-19-44
5	6356	4-09-44	Enroute
6	6271	4-12-44	Enroute
7	6255	4-09-44	4-17-44
8	6389	4-09-44	4-21-44
9	6230	4-14-44	Enroute

The remainder of the month was devoted entirely to setting up living quarters, mess halls and offices at Kharagpur Army Air Base.



Four of our planes have arrived with 5 still on their way. Col. Edmundson, our C.O., arrived April 29th and assumed command of the Squadron.

Our forward Base in China, known as A-7, is nearing completion. A little time was given to sports with volleyball attracting the most attention. The intense heat in India, 120 degrees at times, heavily curtailed athletic activities. Several members of our Squadron suffered severe stomach cramps due to over-exertion in the sun. Dysentery was also encountered because of the change in climate and food. Work schedules at the Base were 7:30-11:30 work; 11:30-14:30 lunch and 14:30-17:30 work.

Many times the Crews worked late into the night preparing their planes for a possible trip over the Hump. Crew Chiefs, with help from the Combat Crews, were performing most of the maintenance work at this time because ground maintenance had not as yet received much training on the B-29. This was the first time there were enough B-29s around for ground Crew training and this time it was for real. A serious mission of some kind would be flown soon after necessary repairs.

The last day of the month found Lt. Sims and Capt. Good's Crews working feverishly to prepare their assigned aircraft for an early trip over the Hump to our forward Base, A-7, in China.

793rd BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

The first days of April were spent in feverish preparation for our movement overseas. All Crews were on the flight line working on their planes from early morning until late at night, making last minute modifications, inspections and loading their aircraft with necessary maintenance equipment and supplies. Take-off weights would be heavier than any of us had ever experienced and included a heavy spare engine.

Supply personnel spent many hours issuing the latest and finest equipment, than had ever been issued before, to each of us for our use. But there were no clues to the location of where we were going. We now had clothing for the tropics; parkas for winter wear, jungle kits, and now were given lectures on malaria and cold weather starting. All this was quite confusing but the hot money was on the Asiatic area.

Men who were to go by ATC drew their flying equipment, and then the next day received orders to turn them in. Navigational equipment will be taken - 60 pounds weight allowance – no parachute – bring a blanket and so on. It worked out so well, there was no record of any man reaching the POE with all his requirements. It was an interesting time in our lives.

While Capt. Baile and S/Sgt. Walter Leeds were preparing our permanent overseas Base, and Capt. Berman and Crew were cornering the ice market and digging the slit trenches, we were still here in the States stuffing empty boxes with liquor and toilet tissues.



And, of course they were frantically trying for that last fling in the good old USA.

Certain members of our Squadron had narrow escapes on disposing of their cars. In some quarters it was rumored that they were traded for things the boys decided they would miss the most.

Then came the first briefing, held by ATC personnel, in the Salina War Room. It wasn't too bad, but there were many surprised men walking out of there that night. They had learned the first leg would take them to Gander Lake, Newfoundland. That didn't sound like the Tropics. Where in the world were we going? Here is the story of Major Hatfield and Crew:

TEN THOUSAND MILES IN TEN DAYS
BY 1ST LT. GERHARD C. WECKL-BRUBARDIES-NEUGAFOR
Crew #6-793rd Bomb Squadron-A/C 3355

We departed Salina on Easter Sunday, April 9th 1944 bound for our first scheduled stop enroute to an, as yet unknown, overseas destination. We took off at 1000 hours on a first leg that would bring us to Presque Isle, Maine. Those of us who had never visited the Eastern States were looking forward to getting a bird's eye view of States new to our travels. We were doomed to disappointment. For we flew over solid undercast, and at times in the clouds, until we reached the central New York area. Then we began to get occasional glimpses of the ground.

We arrived at Presque Isle at 1880 hours and spent the night in wooden barracks similar to those found throughout the USA. The next morning, Monday, April 10th, we ate breakfast to the tune of steadily falling heavy rain. Ours was the first ship off that morning, laying a course for our second stop, Gander Lake, Newfoundland. We would be given our next course there.

Without further incident we neared Gander Lake and gradually letting down, we broke out of the clouds at about 800 feet to find that one other plane had arrived there first and was already in the traffic pattern. We entered the pattern as number two to land, but somehow the other pilot came in on the wrong runway and had to go around, thus we had the dubious honor of being the first plane in our contingent to land at Gander.

The night of April 10th was spent there for we weren't allowed to take off on the next jump on the same day we arrived, and even had we been, the Atlantic weather was then too bad a risk.

A good, northern blizzard blew up on the afternoon of the 11th, forestalling anyone's hope of taking off that afternoon so we had another night to spend. The Officer's Club was very nice and several B-29 Crews arrived there in the last few days to gather and renew acquaintances with former classmates.



It was still snowing on the morning of the 12th, but we were briefed in the afternoon preparatory for take-off that evening. Later in the afternoon the weather cleared a little and the OK was given to take off, provided we were off at a certain hour...we wouldn't have had time to get back in clear weather if we developed any trouble.

We were fortunate and at 3140 CCT we took off and headed out over a fishing village of Newfoundland and the ice floes of the North Atlantic toward Marrakech, French Morocco.

An uneventful night passed and early morning found us a couple hundred miles off the coast of Africa. The sun arose to disclose a layer of cumulus between us and the ocean through which we quickly sighted a convoy of freighters churning their way northeastward, possibly enroute to Casablanca.

An hour or so later we sighted the coast of Africa and the mountains, which served as a backdrop for Marrakech in the afternoon of the 13th.

We were all tired and hungry, and our first thoughts, after the plane had been taken care of, turned to the satisfaction of those desires. After receiving tickets for blankets and being assigned to tents, we took our late mess passes from the billeting clerk and proceeded to the mess hall where we were regaled with fresh fried eggs and our taste of Spam.

The first dose of Spam and the fried eggs wasn't too bad, especially to hungry men even though their coffee was putrid. Then we went on to draw blankets before going to our tents.

There was one thing we couldn't understand – the heat beat down on us with the force of a trip hammer, yet they issued four blankets per man. However, before the night was over we were grateful, for it turned surprisingly cold and four blankets weren't at all too many.

Living quarters weren't too bad and food was passable. We might have enjoyed our day's stay there if it had not been for their terrible latrines. Commodes were of mortar, situated in mortar booths in a mortar building. A few had wooden seats but most had none at all or just a broken portion. Worse yet, the old fashioned plumbing didn't work and worst of all, it hadn't worked for some time with nothing being done about it. Many of the men just resorted to the wide-open spaces, just like the old days down on the farm.

Most of us on the Crew had our hair cut even shorter than it was by Moroccan barbers in the PX who were surprisingly good in their manipulation of scissors, hand clippers, and comb, their only tools. We also tried the PX offering of Coca-Cola with resemblance in color only and by that time were ready to leave Marrakech for good.

The afternoon of the 13th we had our usual medical briefing warning us of the dangers of local diseases and women, and on the afternoon of the 14th we had a route briefing at which we found out for the first time our ultimate destination.



We departed Marrakech at 2130 CCT the 14th for Cairo and early morning found us flying over a most desolate desert area which still showed occasional signs of the desperate battles fought there by the British and Germans. Near eight o'clock we sighted the pyramids and by 0830 we had landed at our field near Cairo.

Again we thought of food and sleep and we were well satisfied with the way both were furnished. The mess hall served tasty food prepared and served by Italian prisoners of war. The barracks were constructed of brick and stone which combination made them pleasantly cool and made for wonderful sleeping.

We would have liked to see Cairo and the pyramids close up, but a ruling had been put into effect for B-29 Crews that they could only go on escorted Red Cross tours, and then only if they had been there something like three days and weren't leaving the next. That stopped us for we got there the 15th and left the 17th. Because of that, none of us saw any of the sights.

A weather and route briefing was attended the afternoon of the 17th and we left that night for Karachi, India. The British have a quite elaborate system worked out for challenging any planes flying near the Suez Canal so we kept a sharp weather eye out as we headed out over the corridor past the Suez. We hadn't long to wait before we were challenged by blinker, but it was the wrong challenge for that particular time. The Bombardier had a biscuit gun in the nose and flashed back the answer for the challenge. The challenge came again. This time he answered with the answer prescribed for that time, but again the challenge was repeated by flare. So the Co-Pilot opened his window and shot forth an answering flare. That did the trick and we continued on our way with no further challenge.

We landed there in the early morning hours of the 18th and after the usual tending of the airplane's needs, proceeded to our assigned tents to clean up and rest. We had two meals there, noon and supper, and would gladly have remained much longer just for the sake of that food, which was the best we had yet and compared most favorably with any in the States.

Despite the enticement of the food, we got up that night about 2400, ate breakfast, got briefed and prepared to leave for our final destination and overseas Base, Kharagpur, India. Preparations completed, we departed Karachi at 0130 the morning of the 19th and continuing all that night and morning we flew past the Taj Mahal to finally land at Kharagpur, the second ship to arrive from our Group and the first in our Squadron. Something like 45 hours had been spent in flying from Salina, Kansas to Kharagpur, India.



Footnotes: Major W. F. Savoie, Group Operations Officer was a passenger on A/C 265. Rumor had it at first that A/C 265 and Crew were floating outside of Newfoundland, then off the coast of Africa and finally that they were all safe in the Azores. Major Harve J. Johnson, Group Bombardier, was a passenger. One day, the 13th, was spent visiting old friends at Patterson Field, Ohio.

Major George P. Putnam, Group S-2 Officer, was a passenger.

Major Ladd departed Salina on the 9th, but had problems with the #2 and #4 engines about 100 miles out and returned to Base. After repairs were made they took off again, flew to Patterson Field on the 12th and spent the night there. See story of flight over.

Capt. “Doc” Mitchell was a passenger on A/C 370.

, pilot, describes his last leg as follows: “Left Karachi as 1050, April 22nd. Two engines cut out at 0520, flight terminated, no landing.” The entire Crew bailed out over the Salt Flats near Karachi at an altitude below 2,000 feet with Capt. Darden going out at 500 feet. They returned to Karachi in dug out canoes and finished the trip to Kharagpur, via ATC, on the 27th. It was our first major accident but we felt fortunate indeed that none of the Crew were lost or injured seriously. Quick thinking and skilled handling by Bob Darden deserved much of the credit. The men of Crew #4 reached Salua with all their worldly possessions destroyed in the burned out wreck of A/C 369. Burton has been sponging ever since.

Capt. R. W. Kirk was a passenger on A/C 229 and Capt. Richard Bell was with Pilchard and his Crew. Not counting the speedy Crews of Hatfield and Matthews who arrived without incident, the rest of the ships were delayed by grounding orders from the 20th Bomber Command. These Crews spent pleasant (?) layovers at historic spots enroute, while they waited for replacement parts to be flown in.

Lt. Hal Arnold and Crew were delayed longer as later history will show. By the time all the planes had landed the Adjutant was busy with assignments and straightening papers. S-2 began briefing us on spy-infested India and what a pleasant experience it would be to walk out of the Hump. Our tour of duty in the CBI has begun.

14TH BOMBER MAINTENANCE SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

We remained on board the USS Mt. Vernon the night of April 1st in port at Bombay, India. On the 2nd, our Squadron, along with the 16th Bomb Maintenance Squadron and a Signal Corps Company, disembarked and boarded a troop train at 1100 hours. The train ride to Deolali will be long remembered by those of us unfortunate enough to experience it. There were too many stops in a 100-mile trip, on a train itself unworthy of the name. The 1st class coaches occupied by the Officers would be used as 2nd class boxcars in the States. The Enlisted men rode in cars too embarrassing for anyone to describe properly. At each stop countless beggars came up to the cars crying out “Bohksis Sahib, bohksis.” This was the theme song all along the way. We arrived at Deolali, an English camp, the same day at 2100. Here the weather was quite hot but cooler than in Bombay since we were now about 2,000 feet above sea level. In this Camp we experienced the



English custom serving tea, but the food here was terrible. Tea was brought to each Officer every morning served at his bedside. Then again at 1600 the bearer would serve tea to his “master” in quarters. The meals were all served in courses, but the quality of food was poor and variety was practically non-existent. Most of the Officers and Enlisted Men suffered from diarrhea and one of the latter was hospitalized with amoebic dysentery. The mosquitoes were so abundant it was necessary to sleep under netting. Little did we know then, this would be SOP for our entire stay in India. The drinks at the British Officers’ Club were mixed with very poor whiskey or rum and it was impossible to get a cold one. Scotch was better if one had an acquired taste for it.

On the 8th of April, the Officers and men of the 16th Bomb Maintenance Squadron loaded a train thinking we were headed for Assam, near the thick of a Japanese drive from Burma. Officers and Men now had much better riding accommodations than on our recent trip to Deolali. In fact, a few of the Officers’ cars had showers and these were shared with the Enlisted Men. Our food was “C” rations but good when compared with our food at our recent layover. Our drinking water we picked up at each stop had to be chlorinated before use. And we were back to numerous stops enroute for no particular reason; this was beginning to become quite monotonous. We figured our speed to be 12 MPH during this 100-mile trip.

After 3 ½ days travel we reached Kharagpur, about 110 miles from Calcutta. We stayed on the train until the next day, 4-12-44, then detrained and went to our new Base, Salua Air Base about 6 miles from town.

The most noticeable thing about our new Base was the heat and dust. We were glad to get American food again. Diarrhea stopped the minute we began eating good food. The Officers were quartered in barracks and the Enlisted Men in tents. The 14th and the 16th were both stationed there. Conveniences were crude. Private ice-boxes were made and buried in the ground, lister bags were hung up for drinking water, water jugs and wash bowls were fitted into our newly made washstands, and finally we got electric lights.

On the 24th, a newly assigned Officer joined the 14th, Earl L. Jones, 2nd Lt. On the same day, Bernard Friedman, 2nd Lt., and Erling W. Eng, 2nd Lt. were assigned to our Squadron from the 468th Bomb Group. Our Unit and the 468th Group are operating but not yet at full scale. Some of the tactical Squadron Crews have not arrived as yet, nor has Colonel Engler, the 468th Group Commanding Officer.

**15TH BOMBARDMENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON
DECEMBER 1943 – APRIL 1944**

The 15th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron (VH) was activated effective 11-20-43 by Paragraph 1, General Orders No. 176, HQ. 2nd A.F., dated 11-24-43, Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Salina, Kansas. And the unit was assigned to the 468th Bombardment Group (VH).



The first personnel were assigned to the unit on 1 December 1943 by paragraph 15, SO No. 65, HQ 468th Bombardment Squadron (VH) dated 1 December 1943. Personnel were transferred from the 794th Bombardment Squadron (VH) and the entire unit was assigned to the 794th Bombardment Squadron (VH) for duty. The Cadre consisted of five Officers and 128 Enlisted Men. Command was assumed by Captain Murrell D. Nelson, Jr., effective December last 1943.

Strength of the organization was 362 Enlisted Men and 17 Officers. Activities consisted of organization and training of personnel to function as a maintenance unit for a Combat Squadron of B-29 aircraft. On-the-job training was acquired in conjunction with the 27th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron with the two organizations servicing aircraft assigned to the 794th Bombardment Squadron (VH).

Warning orders were received January 5th 1944. The strength of the unit was now 225 Enlisted Men and 13 Officers. On-the-job training continued until 10 January, 1944 when a Squadron school was started covering first aid, survival, malarial control, camouflage, safeguarding military information and various other subjects necessary at this stage. School was completed 22 January 1944 and personnel returned to on-the-job training. School continued for personnel joining the unit after 10 January 1944.

Pre-POM inspection by 2nd Air Force was 1-12-44. Inspection was satisfactory. POM inspection occurred at a later date. All information pertaining thereto was classified as secret. Movement orders were received 1-15-44.

Major George W. Baker assumed command of Squadron 1-21-44 and on the 2nd of February (under secret orders) the Squadron left Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Salina, Kansas, for overseas service. Going to Camp Patrick Henry, Newport, Virginia, the unit embarked 2-22-44, crossing the Atlantic Ocean on the William B. Giles, in convoy, and landing at Casa Blanca; by train to Oran, French Algeria, North Africa on 3-11-44. The unit remained in C.P. 2 area until 4-6-44 on which date it embarked aboard the Oran of Amsterdam, operated by Dutch command and Crew, and going in convoy, led through the Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, and thence across the Arabian Sea to Bombay, India, debarking Bombay 4-27-44 and on that date taking a train across India, arriving at Kharagpur, India 5-22-44. Unit then quartered with the 468th Bombardment Group nearby.

One death occurred in our ranks while crossing the Atlantic. This was Corporal Ted M. Hedderich, ASN 35716585, from Evansville, Indiana. Death occurred 2-27-44 due to a chronic heart ailment and burial was at sea. The body was committed to the sea over the starboard side at 1030, 2-28-44 by Colonel Samuel Miller, Army Chaplain, who was traveling with us.

Actual strength of the organization upon embarkation from the States was 349 Enlisted Men and 17 Officers. 13 Enlisted Men and 4 Officers were left on DS. The Unit arrived at destination with 327 Enlisted Men and 13 Officers.



The Unit traveled through many countries and enjoyed many experiences enroute. There was a wide variation in weather and climate – a damp chilly day upon leaving the States, a rather warm Atlantic voyage, cold nights and warm days in North Africa and sweltering heat as India was neared, necessitating the discarding of woolen clothing. Rations for the organization were good. Both ships were comfortable, considering the nature of the trip. The Dutch Crew of the Volendam was very cooperative and considerate. Due to the extended time at sea and lack of an opportunity to re-supply the ship, the British were unable to offer rations as good as those received elsewhere.

Due to the splendid service afforded by our postal system, mail was both sent and received at various places along the route. The morale of the unit remained unusually high in spite of the tension and monotony of extended travel under adverse conditions. Every Officer and Enlisted man enjoyed it and appreciated the opportunity of viewing sights over one-half of the globe, even though such opportunity came while discharging their duty in prosecuting a grim war in preservation of our freedom. Almost every day the remark, “I’m damn glad I’m an American,” can be heard.

794TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

During April 1944 the 794th Bombardment Squadron left Salina, Kansas for Kharagpur, India. The following is a brief outline of each Combat Crew’s trip: Crew #1, with Crew Commander Major Clinkscales, left Salina, Kansas 4-13-44 and arrived at Presque Isle, Maine the same day. This Crew stayed at this station until 4-15-44, when they left for Gander, Newfoundland and arrived there 4-15-44. Flight was resumed on 4-17-44 when the Crew left for Marrakech and arrived there 4-18-44. On 4-21-44 they took off for Cairo and arrived there 4-21-44 where they were grounded until 5-2-44 by orders from the 20th Bomber Command. On 5-2-44, this Crew left Cairo for Karachi, India and arrived there the same day. On 5-4-44 they left Karachi and arrived at their destination, Kharagpur, India the same day.

Crew #2, with Crew Commander Major Humphrey, left Salina, Kansas and arrived at Patterson Field, Ohio on 4-12-44, when they left for Presque Isle, Maine and arrived at Gander, Newfoundland where they were grounded for weather and engine trouble until 4-17-44 when they left for Marrakech and arrived there 4-18-44. On 4-19-44 they left Marrakech for Cairo and arrived there the same day. From 4-19-44 until 4-30-44 they were grounded by orders from 20th Bomber Command, and on 4-30-44 left for Karachi, India and arrived there the same day. On 5-1-44 they left Karachi and arrived at their destination, Kharagpur, India, 5-1-44.

Crew #3, with Crew Commander Captain Stauffer, left Salina 3-22-44 and arrived at Kharagpur 4-15-44 via ATC.

Crew #5, with Crew Commander Captain Nye, left Salina, Kansas 4-12-44 and arrived at Patterson Field, Ohio the same day. On 4-13 they left Patterson Field and arrived at Presque Isle, Maine where they were grounded due to weather until 4-15 and left for



21-1

Gander and arrived there the same day. They left Gander 4-15 and arrived at Marrakech 4-16. On 4-16 they left Marrakech and arrived at Cairo 4-17 where they were grounded until 4-19 because their booster pump went out. They left Cairo 4-19 and arrived at Karachi, India the following day. On 4-21 they left Karachi and arrived at their destination, Kharagpur, India the same day.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS 468TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (VH)
 SMOKY HILL ARMY AIR FIELD
 SALINA, KANSAS

4 April 1944

SUBJECT: Movement Orders

TO: All concerned

1. PIC classified letter Hq. XX Bomber Command, dd 8 March 1944, and PAC Memorandum 35-15, dd 18 December 1943, Hq. 2AF Colorado Springs, Colorado, this headquarters having been assigned to Shipment #0280 and transferred to overseas destination to be designated by Commanding General, Air Transport Command, the following named military personnel are assigned to aircraft and shipment number as indicated below and WP by air at the proper time from Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Salina, Kansas, to overseas destination of Shipment #0280-TZ.
2. By authority of Commanding Officer, Smoky Hill Army Air Field, Salina, Kansas, assignment of quarters in BOQ's (room and bath) are terminated date of departure in accordance with Par. 13 b (3) (1) 1, AR 210-10 dd 20 December 1940.

Plane #42-6232

Crew #T-24

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>S.N.</u>	<u>MOS</u>
Francis W. Nye	Capt.	O-437883	1093
Clyde S. Uber	Capt.	O-436547	2161
Edward G. Millar	1 st Lt.	O-742507	1093
Jules H. Tallichet	1 st Lt.	O-667210	1034
Lucius (NMI) Beebe	2 nd Lt.	O-685100	1034
Bernard H. Feigener	F/O	T-192788	1028
Phillip W. Miller	M/Sgt.	6950810	750
John S. Gibson	S/Sgt.	19119512	580
Joseph A. Csonka	S/Sgt.	6840927	1684
Norman E. Stiffler	S/Sgt.	13030165	748
Thomas G. Goodger	Sgt.	38427006	757
Frank (NMI) Hillebrand	Sgt.	32459844	1685
Ted S. Faulkner	Lt. Col.	O-021593	Group Deputy Commander
<i>(Added as passenger)</i>			

Deleted by
Group
Headquarters

This is a permanent change of station.

TDN 1-5250 P 431-01-02-03-04-05-06-07-08 A 0425-24.

By order of Colonel Engler

W. J. BRADY
 Capt. AC
 Adj.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D



21-2

Crew #7, with Crew Commander Captain Estey, left Salina, Kansas 3-8 and arrived at Kharagpur, India 4-1. The Crew came via ATC.

Crew #8, with Crew Commander Captain Christy, left Salina, Kansas 4-12 and arrived at Patterson Field, Ohio the same day. The following day they left Patterson Field and arrived at Presque Isle, Maine. On 4-14 they left Presque Isle and arrived at Gander where they were grounded with an oil leak in #2 engine until about 4-16 when they left for Marrakech and arrived there 4-17. Due to a 50-hour inspection, they stayed at Marrakech until 4-19 when they left for Cairo 4-20, and were grounded there until 5-1 by orders of the 20th Bomber Command. On 5-1 they left Cairo and arrived at Karachi, India. They stayed at Karachi until 5-3 because of engine trouble and then left for Kharagpur and arrived there the same day.

Crew #6, with Crew Commander Captain Feeley, left Salina, Kansas 4-14 and arrived at Presque Isle the same day. They left Presque Isle 4-15 and arrived at Gander the same day. They stayed at Gander due to Lt. Tribble who became ill and was left at Presque Isle, and also another Crewmember who became ill at Gander.

Crew #9, with Crew Commander Lt. Benedict, left Salina, Kansas 3-11 and came by boat to Casablanca and then went by ATC to Kharagpur, India where they arrived 4-19.

Crew #11, with Crew Commander Major Giles, left Salina, Kansas 4-12 and arrived at Patterson Field the same day. On the following day, they left Patterson Field and arrived at Presque Isle, Maine. On 4-14 they left Presque Isle and arrived at Gander the same day. They stayed at Gander until 4-16 when they left for Marrakech and arrived there 4-16. On the same day they left Marrakech and arrived at Cairo 4-17 where they were grounded until 5-2 by orders from the 20th Bomber Command. On 5-2 they left Cairo and arrived at Karachi, India, where they stayed until 5-4 and then continued to their destination, Kharagpur, India and arrived there 5-4.

Crew #12, with Crew Commander Marbury, left Salina, Kansas 4-14 and arrived at Presque Isle the same day. They stayed at Presque Isle, due to a carburetor change until 4-16 then they left for Gander and arrived there the same day. At Gander they were grounded because of another carburetor change until 4-18, when they left for Marrakech and arrived at Cairo on 4-20 where they were grounded by order from the 20th Bomber Command until 5-1 when they left for Karachi, India and arrived there the same day.

Crew #13, with Crew Commander Major Billings, left Salina, Kansas



April 12th and had arrived at Patterson Field, Ohio. At Patterson Field they had to replace an oil distributor seal and then left for Presque Isle and arrived at Gander the same day. On April 18th they left Gander and arrived at Marrakech the following day. On April 20th they left Marrakech for Cairo and arrived there the same day. They were grounded at Cairo by orders from the 20th Bomber Command until May 3rd when they left for Karachi and arrived there the same day. The following day they left Karachi and arrived at their destination, Kharagpur, India.

Crew #14, with Crew Commander Lt. Carlton, left Salina, Kansas March 12th and arrived at Casablanca by boat on March 28th. From Casablanca they went by ATC to their destination, Kharagpur, India, and arrived there April 15th.

Crew #15, with Crew Commander Lt. McGill, left Salina, Kansas March 12th and arrived at Casablanca March 28th. From Casablanca they went by ATC to their destination, Kharagpur, India and arrived there April 18th.

Crew #4, with Crew Commander Captain Schonlau, has not arrived at Kharagpur as yet.

Crew #20, with Crew Commander Captain Yeates, is still in Salina awaiting orders.

795TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

B-29 Combat Crews of the 795th Squadron started their migration to the theater of operation in March 1944. Five Crews left Salina during March to travel by rail, boat and ATC. Four of these five have arrived and are in Camp Salua.

Nine Crews left Salina flying their new B-29 and five have arrived safely at Camp Salua.

One Crew, commanded by Major Blackmore, made a crash landing at Karachi, India. The crash was fatal to the following men: Major Blackmore – Crew Commander, Lt. McChesney – Navigator/Bombardier, Lt. Endlich – Engineer, Sgt. Montague – Gunner, and Sgt. Lester, Gunner.

The Co-Pilot and Radio Operator were seriously injured and are being returned to the US. The remaining Crewmembers are proceeding to Salua to be used as alternates.

Lt. Castleberry, of Major Blackmore’s Crew did an outstanding job removing the men from their crashed plane in Karachi. He should be commended for his actions in saving the lives of the men aboard.

Four Crews are still in transit and are expected to arrive in a few days. One Crew is remaining in Salina to give transition training to the replacing Squadron and will follow shortly bringing another B-29.

Captain Reitz, former adjutant of the 795th Squadron, was chosen to command the advance cadre of men of the 468th Bombardment Group who were sent to our Advanced Base in China.



At present, our men are taking turns at alert and guarding the planes and are taking part in improving the barracks area and other installations nearby.

16th BOMBARDMENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON – APRIL 1944

About 1030 hours on the 2nd, a day that will be long remembered as the hottest yet experienced, our Squadron disembarked from the ship and marched 1-½ miles to the railroad station. It was about 200 yards from ship to station as the crow flies. But no one in India has heard “a straight line is the shortest distance between two points”. So the road meandered far afield and weary feet counted every step as they flattened under the weight of backpacks, firearms and other impediments. All heavy Squadron equipment was hauled by truck. At the station our baggage was placed at a focal point, which was chosen by selecting a clear space furthest from the train and designating it as the depository spot for baggage.

When the troops arrived at the station there was much confusion. After finding what cars they were assigned to, they had to dig out their personal baggage from the pile at the focal point and carry it back a long distance to their car. This was a Herculean task, considering the heat, a full pack, field equipment and the long distance to the cars. Ultimately, the men were placed aboard and then it was discovered that the supplies – rations and TAT equipment were slow in arriving. This delayed the schedule departure at 1200 hours by 90 sweltering minutes.

The train was divided into two long sections consisting of 12 passenger cars, an Officers' car and 3 baggage cars. This train served as transportation for the 14th Bomb Maintenance Squadron, a Signal Corps Organization, as well as our Squadron. The cars used by the Enlisted men were ancient, of the 3rd class variety, and had seen their best days decades ago. They had wooden benches that reminded one of the obsolete streetcars back in the States and were only slightly larger. The men were crowded into these cars with their duffle bags and above, beneath and amid their duffle bags they found seats. There was no water supply, save what one had in his canteen. The toilet facilities in India required one to furnish his own paper. The railroad was generous enough to furnish a hole in the floor. These inconveniences did not worry anyone since we were going to reach our destination in 4 hours, a distance of 110 miles.

But we soon learned that railroads in India had a time schedule in name only, because after a late start we did not reach our destination until 1930 hours.

A few minutes before arriving at Deolali (our destination) a British Captain boarded the train to tell the train commander, Captain Jay D. Baumgardner, Commanding Officer of the 16th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron, that everything was ready for our arrival.



He further stated a warm meal was waiting, barracks were provided, and the Officers had only to look after their own personal needs. We were to be quartered at an old established British relocation center as guests of the British. Needless to say, this made everyone happy. But upon arrival we received our first taste of British efficiency.

After seizing the emergency rations that accompanied us, the British ordered us to remove our organizational equipment from the baggage cars, but no storage space was provided. After decisions and reversed decisions, the equipment could not be unloaded until space was made in a warehouse. In the meantime the men were marched to the area assigned to them, a distance of about 2 miles. The men's duffle bags were once more piled in one heap in the center of the area.

A superficial inspection disclosed that the barracks had just been abandoned by some ex-Italian prisoners of war who left without any policing whatsoever. And no provisions had been made for hanging mosquito bars. Filthy natives had prepared a very poor meal and the men from the three organizations were scattered all over the area of about 15 acres.

The Officers, who had traveled in first class accommodations (seats with leather cover), were as confused as the men. Most of them had been compelled to stand part of the way coming to Deolali because there were not enough seats. Upon arrival, the Officers marched in darkness to the transit Officer's quarters, about a half-mile from the Enlisted men's area and received their assignment to quarters, with a bearer assigned to each room. As they were being fed, reports started to trickle in that the men were not being taken care of as promised. Soon many of the Enlisted personnel started hunting for their unit Officers, whereupon immediate investigation showed that the men were lost in the darkness and just wandering around in utter confusion. Some were unable to find their barracks, all were unable to eat the chow prepared by the natives, because it was of poor quality, poorly prepared, and above all, filthy.

The Officers restored some semblance of order, posted guards over unclaimed baggage and saw that everyone had a bunk. In the meantime the British provided an armory for the storage of all firearms, and these were gathered up and checked in. Thus at late hours, ended the first weary day.

Before proceeding further, a little of the history of Camp Deolali: It was first established by the East India Co., and in late 1860 taken over by the British government by an act of Parliament to be used as a permanent camp for troops in India. It is a large rambling camp covering many miles, with semi-improved roads winding in all directions. An Artillery school was established there during WWI and is still in existence. It also served as a relocation center and rest camp for British and Indian troops. The sanitary conditions of all installations are primitive. There are no sewers, bucket latrines and draining ditches cut the terrain everywhere. The water supply is limited and so water is rationed. The wood supply is very limited which makes both hot and cold water a very precious commodity. The buildings are widely scattered with no apparent plan for proper location.



The permanent buildings are made of plastered walls, comparable in appearance to our stucco buildings. All are one story with tile roofs. The floors are concrete of such poor quality that even the best of them have crumbled and bulged. Many buildings have bamboo matting for walls. Rats and ants abound all over the place and are destructive to all equipment within reach.

String cots infested with lice were given to our men in their barracks. These had to be dipped into boiling water with chemicals to kill the lice.

The Mess was sorry and by no stretch of the imagination definitely “fubar”. Native contractors ran the kitchen. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, the Hindus will remain absolute strangers to Him. For two days the British were profuse with political promises to remedy the situation. Then diplomacy and patience ran out and the Squadrons were forced to take charge and oust the native “wogs”. When this was done the men started to return to the mess for their meals, leaving the canteen. However, the quality of the meals did not improve much because the rations received just did not come near to what we had been accustomed to.

It was here also that we ran into our first major health problem. Sick call was attended by at least 40 men daily suffering from the “GIs”. The Medics stated that there were many causes for this sudden influx of diarrhea.

The training program was cut down to one hour in the morning and one late in the afternoon to combat the “GIs” and to let the men become accustomed to the new climate.

Many ex-Italian prisoners of war are stationed here. They were glad to see American troops and fraternized with our men at once. To show their goodwill, spaghetti parties with good coffee and song fests were very much in evidence every evening, with our men as guest of the liberated Italians.

In our first dealing with the British we received the following impressions. They move slowly, have no sense of security; they promise everything without ever fulfilling any of them. They have a very plausible excuse for all deficiencies and, foremost, they are domineering, complacent and smug. Such conclusions may sound harsh, and from all indications they have fought a valiant war thus far. However, in being brutally frank and letting the facts speak for themselves, no other conclusions can be drawn.

Without regret we left Deolali for Kharagpur at 1800 hours on April 8th. The train accommodations were the same as before, with little more room to stretch. We averaged about 12 miles per hour, covering a distance of approximately one thousand miles in 3 ½ days.

We ate K and C rations which were a treat after the British chow; each car had a can of water, which was chlorinated. For meals we stopped where hot water awaited us at the stations in which to wash our mess kits.



At dusk each car was sprayed to kill mosquitoes and other pests. Repellent, head nets or, where feasible, mosquito bars were used as a precaution against malaria.

We arrived in Kharagpur at 0700 hours on April 12th. The train was met by Lt. Col. Sam A. Carnes and Capt. Loren Reitz. The sight of these two Officers was most welcome. A fleet of familiar GI trucks dispatched the men and baggage in a smooth, speedy and efficient manner to our new American Airbase at Salua, which is now our home.

The Enlisted men of our Squadron were assigned to tents at the north end of the Base. These tents were all set up in straight alignment, ready for occupancy, on three company streets. We were pleasantly surprised to see many semi-permanent buildings of like design and architecture in the central area. They have plaster walls and grass roof with a concrete floor and a portico running the length of the front of the building. The roofs are raised off the walls to permit an air passage. The Officers were assigned one of these buildings to be used as barracks. This Air Base is nearing completion and compares favorably with the Army Air Base of the Second Air Force in the States.

Our Squadron established their Orderly Room in one of the buildings centrally located in the area, with another building close by used by our supply section. The Line Officer and Enlisted personnel established themselves in tents near the runway area.

Following our arrival, everyone was welcomed by Lt. Colonel Sam A. Carnes, then briefed by the Group Intelligence Officer Capt. Bert H. Greene and Group Medical Officer Capt. John Lillie about censorship, security and health precautions.

In about one week after our arrival, Lt. Wm. Newson and S/Sgt. Raymond Etzold, guardians of our OEL equipment, arrived from Calcutta. Soon thereafter our equipment started to come in from Calcutta and was distributed to the section heads. Office furniture and equipment files, chairs and desks were made by our carpenters and it was not long before we were once more a unit ready for action.

Because we are located near Jap airfields, within bombing distance by carrier planes, the first safety precaution taken was the digging of slit trenches around living quarters and on the line.

For the first two weeks the Enlisted men and all Officers ate at the 14th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron mess. We then took over and established a mess hall for our Enlisted men under the supervision of S/Sgt. Gerald R. Browns. It was not long before the best meals on the field were to be found in our Squadron mess. Capt. Rolland H. McCoy, our Mess Officer, says that the secret of their success is cooks and bakers that are experienced and eager.

1st Lt. Geoffrey Myers, our S-4 Officer, together with S/Sgt. Jariniah V. O’Shaughnessy went over “The Hump” to carry on there.



During the last 10 days of the month, 2nd Lt. Garrott D. Davis, Assistant Communications, and 2nd Lt. Blair, Radar Officer, joined our Squadron. Lt. Robert D. Davis is new to our Squadron, being recently assigned to the 16th Bombardment Maintenance Squadron. Approximately 20 Enlisted Men belonging to the flying echelon sections also arrived with these Officers.

All the drinking water on the field is chlorinated. Shower facilities, which are temporary and inadequate for the moment, have first priority for improvement as soon as the engineers receive faucets. The water is now pumped by natives.

A practice alert was held April 28th with an air attack simulated by a Squadron of Spitfires. Within 2 minutes after the warning was received, the whole Base had the information of an impending raid.

“The Banana Bowl” AKA “Rice Paddy” is an outdoor theater showing films every other day. You bring your own seat.

At the close of the month the Squadron had four B-29s to work on: One that arrived around the 20th of the month, and 3 that arrived on the 29th of April. Although there was not much maintenance to be performed on these ships, the men on the line were ready and eager to go to work.

The morale of the men during the month reached a low point when they arrived at Deolali. As soon as they reached Salua their spirits had improved. Aids in morale building were rations distributed by the Special Service Officer, a good mess, a Squadron library, mail and last, but not least, pay day.



A gunner on the roof checking the top turret, some bombs not yet loaded; looks like these guys are getting ready for an early morning takeoff. They were probably out to lunch when this was taken. The 468th will strike again at those who bombed Pearl Harbor.