

S E C R E T

453rd BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M) AAF

Historical Record - 31 March 1944

(1) Strength - Total	74 Officers	348 Enlisted Men	Total
Ground Echelon	14	272	286
Air Echelon	60	76	<u>-136</u>
	22 Crews in six flights		422

(2) Stations in ETO

AAF Station 358, Earls Colne	1-20 March
AAF Station 164, Great Dunmow	20-21 March
AAF Station 358, Earls Colne	21-31 March

(3) 2nd Lt Halmyth C. Reese, S/Sgt Alex E. Sundberg, Sgts Ralph R. Brown, Donald R. Jacobs, and Paul R. Scott, missing in action near Ijmuiden, 26 March 1944. S/Sgt Eulon C. Bell slightly injured in parachute jump near Thetford, 11 March 1944.

(4) Awards and Decorations

41 DFC's Capts Sparks, Rubin, 1st Lts Barton, Wheat, VanAntwerp, Garza, Jenks, Merrigan, Chriesman, Swan, Vaughan, Ambrose, Jerrel, Reed, Corbell, Adams, Johnson, Beamer, Cunniff, Price, F/O Brown, Sgts Keefer, Maxwell, Broecker, Beecher, Nusser, Bothwell, Priar, Harris, B.T., Hamley, Kraus, Kennedy, Coggins, Pippin, Asp, Edwards, Asp, Oveson, Dunn, Sudbury, Reeves, and Mills.

142 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal

Air Medals 32

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HISTORICAL RECORD FOR MONTH ENDING 31 MARCH 1944

During the first eight days of March, 103 planes from this Squadron participated in eight missions, dropping bombs on seven. These missions were directed against enemy airdromes, marshalling yards, and "construction works" on the "invasion coast" area. On the mission of the 5th to a Noball target, the 1st Pathfinder Squadron was used for the initial time, with poor results. The other missions in this period were successful, the marshalling yard at Amiens being battered and airdromes at Rosieres and Soesterburg hard hit.

On the 2nd of March M/Sgt George D. Herrin was transferred to the Detachment of Patients, 121st Station Hospital, prior to return to the U.S. Sgt Herrin has been Armament Chief of the Squadron since its organization. During the recent months his health has been very poor.

Five new armorers and several combat crew members were assigned to the Squadron on the 5th. These armorers bring the line sections of the Squadron up to full strength. New combat personnel are Lts Reese and Kiehm, 1st pilots, S/Sgt Sundberg and Sgts Jacob and Scott.

On the 7th M/Sgt Bradshaw, the Squadron Inspector, having successfully qualified, was discharged as an enlisted man and sworn in as a Warrant Officer,(jg). Mr. Bradshaw was assigned to Headquarters, 323rd Bomb Group as Group Technical Inspector. Another member of the Squadron, 1st Lt Gray R. Coane, was transferred to Group Headquarters on the 7th. Lt Coane, an administrative officer, took over the duties of Group S-4.

A second mission utilizing the Pathfinder Squadron was run on the 11th with nine aircraft from this Squadron participating. Poor weather prevented the completion of the mission. S/Sgt Eulon C. Bell, on Capt Gohdes crew, bailed out over Thetford, England, while passing through a heavy cloud formation.

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On the 16th, Capt V.J. Adduci, Squadron Engineering Officer, was transferred to IX Bomber Command. Capt Adduci will join the Air Inspection Section.

March 20th, in connection with mobility exercises being conducted throughout Ninth Air Force, the Squadron moved to Station 164, and took over the living and technical sites of the 553rd Bomb Squadron. The Squadron left Station 358 in several elements on the morning of the 20th and arrived at Great Dunmow about noon. The planes flew a practice mission from the field, landing at Great Dunmow. Normal duties were performed at the new station until the following morning when the Squadron returned to Station 358. During the evening of the 20th a Junkers 88 crashed on a hard stand occupied by a plane from the 553rd Squadron, destroying both aircraft. The crew members were either killed or captured.

On the 26th, planes from this Squadron participated in a raid against "E" boat pens at IJmuiden. A so called "revenge" raid, where 10 months previously, B-26's in a low level attack suffered a severe defeat. Good results were obtained against the target in spite of heavy accurate flak. A ship piloted by Lt Reese, with S/Sgt Sundberg, Sgts Brown, Jacobs and Scott, went down over the target.

Two of the crews sent on Detached Service in February to Groups beginning combat operations were returned to the Squadron on the 29th. Capt Sparks and Lt Merrigan and crews were re-assigned.

On the 29th promotions authorized by an increase in table of organizations increase to 24 combat crews went into effect. This allowed for the promotion of combat crew members who were under ranked. 3 radio operators were promoted to T/Sgt, 14 Gunners to S/Sgt.

William E. Timmons
WILLIAM E. TIMMONS,
Captain, Air Corps,
Acting Historical Officer.

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