

Sq. Room 8-223H1
MAR 44

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823RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M), 38TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)
ARMY AIR FORCES
S - 2 SECTION

A.P.O. 713 UNIT #1,
7 April, 1944.

SUBJECT: Unit History, March, 1944.

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.,

1. No changes.

2. The strength of personnel, commissioned and non-commissioned, of this squadron at the beginning of the month was sixty-six officers and two hundred and eighty enlisted men, and at the termination of this month the strength was sixty-six officers and two hundred and eighty-four enlisted men, an increase of four enlisted men.

3. This squadron was stationed at Durand Airdrome, Port Moresby, New Guinea, A.P.O. 929 since the day of our arrival on 22 June, 1943. On 9 March, 1944 the squadron was stationed at Nadzab, situated on the Markham River in New Guinea, A.P.O. 713 Unit #1. Nadzab is approximately one hundred and ninety miles from Durand Airdrome, New Guinea.

4. On the 1st March, 1944 this squadron had sixteen serviceable airplanes of which one was a B-25H, four were B-25Ds and eleven were B-25G-1s. The unserviceable airplanes numbered four of which three were B-25G-1s and one was a B-25H. At the termination of this month the squadron had nineteen serviceable airplanes of which fifteen were B-25G-1s and four were B-25Ds. The unserviceable airplanes at the termination of this month numbered two which were B-25G-1s. This squadron had seventeen complete aircrews, all trained. Two days out of each week are allotted for maintenance and training of all aircrews. Our bombardiers are required to drop five practice bombs a week and for one-half an hour weekly to train on the bomb trainer. Parafrag bombing practice is given to all pilots which is necessary because these type of bombs are used on numerous enemy targets, especially on grounded airplanes. Formation flying is practiced by the pilots as much as possible.

5. No changes.

6. No changes.

7. One of the outstanding strikes of this month was carried out by two B-25Ds and four B-25G-1s of this squadron. On 11 March, 1944 our squadron struck Bony, New Guinea, the target being airplane dispersal areas and fuel dumps East of airstrip. The squadron unloaded 30 x 500 lb. instantaneous demolition bombs in the target. The bomb weight was seven and one-half tons. None of the bombs were either jettisoned or brought back to base. One single-seat fighter made a weak feint at the airplanes, but was reluctant to attack. Two fuel fires were started just East of the strip and at least three of eight airplanes in the East dispersal area were

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left burning which was later proven by photographs. This strike was part of the New Guinea campaign. On 14 March, 1944 this squadron, in conjunction with the New Guinea campaign, struck Brandi Plantation, two miles East of Boram Strip, New Guinea. Nine B-25C-1 strafers took part in this strike. 40 x 500 lb. 8-11 second delay demolition bombs were dumped into the target. Five bombs were jettisoned at sea, but none were brought back to base. The bomb load represented ten tons. 16,685 rounds of cal. .50 and 2000 rounds of cal. .30 ammunition were expended in strafing. Bombing was excellent with much damage resulting. There was no interception by enemy fighters during and after the strike. The results of his successful strike were as follows: one direct hit on a warehouse in the plantation which was destroyed completely; fuel fires were started by intense strafing of the entire area. Bombs fell among supplies along the coastal road causing unobserved damage.

8. On 19 March, 1944 this squadron participated in a strike against shipping fifty miles North of Wewak. Our airplanes just managed to get in on the final destruction of one freighter transport. This ship was going under as our airplanes approached, but two hits were made upon the stern just before it disappeared beneath the waves. Japanese survivors and other debris were strafed heavily subsequent to the sinking of this ship. The sea was clear as the airplanes left to drop the remainder of their bombs on Nubia Plantation. Reinforcement of his beleaguered stronghold at Wewak was thwarted by this action in which other airplanes sank a total of six enemy ships and exterminated several hundred enemy soldiers. Airpower at its best was truly demonstrated by the fourteen squadrons of A-20s, B-25s, B-24s and P-38s participating in this action. This attack was part of the campaign to demolish Wewak, New Guinea.

9. There were no losses of personnel or equipment in action during the month of March during which time our squadron participated in one hundred and forty-five armed sorties over such targets as Wewak, Nubia, Kairiru Island, Tadij Airdrome and shipping off the coast of New Guinea, tactical operations in support of ground troops engaged in cleaning the Admiralty Islands of Japanese.

10. No recommendations for awards were approved by higher headquarters.

11.

12. After some seven false starts, the orders finally were published for squadrons of the 38th Bombardment Group (M) to move from its location of almost eighteen months at A.P.O. 929, Durand Airdrome, New Guinea to A.P.O. 713 Unit #1, Nadzab, New Guinea. The movements began on 3 March, 1944 and were completed sufficiently to operate from Nadzab by 11 March, 1944. Aircrews have always dreaded what they termed "The Hump", but they were happy to be on the northside of the backbone of mountains that stretch through the middle of New Guinea. Weather conditions in this part of the world are some of the very worst. Weather and mountains can be a fatal combination to airplanes. Eliminate the mountains and bad weather loses most of its hazards. The building of a new camp was immediately begun on a flat site covered with sago palms and four feet of kunai grass. Within the month an orderly, well laid-out camp lay against the foothills of ten thousand feet of mountains which help form the scenically beautiful Markham Valley. Since first

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Lieutenant Kampel, bombardier-navigator, has been appointed mess officer the process of dishing out esculent foods has changed considerably. When worse comes to worse and the menu for the day consists of bully-beef, it is so well made up that it is hardly recognizable. There have been very few complaints by the personnel of this squadron about food. During this month the enlisted men have adopted a new form of recreation-baseball. Nightly, after work, they play a game with teams composed of the office personnel and the combat aircrews. Each man participating in these games considers this to be a good exercise as well as an interesting and exciting time to pass the usually dull and quiet evenings. Since the activation of these games, the office personnel has won every game except one. Cooperation among the players is excellent. In addition to this sort of recreation, the communications section (our thanks to them) have set up a loud speaker in the area. Each night we are able to hear some of the finest songs, new and old, played by our favorite orchestras. Through this loud speaker we also receive the world news and broadcasts both from Australia and the United States. This is a wonderful addition to our squadron. Our sign painter has used up his time conscientiously. He has painted numerous signs needed around the area. A sign displaying the name "Tiger Terrace" is located at the entrance to our squadron area appropriately symbolizes our squadron insignia, a bloody mouthed, growling tiger. Our group street is called Strafer Blvd. Every spare moment is being used for a splendid purpose, one of those is the setting up of floors in the tents. Occupants of each tent are laboring zealously to do a good job in building their tents to make life in New Guinea more pleasant. Some venture even as far as to use bamboo poles, plentiful in the thick jungles, as pipes to receive the rain water. Give the men time and they think up some unique ideas to facilitate living conditions. Mosquitoes are a menace of the past. Once in a great while a mosquito, probably a straggler seeking new areas, exposes himself in the area. The absence of these pests has the boys sleeping without nets. Although the absence of the mosquito seems like an impossibility, we nevertheless take precautions by constant use of atabrine pills, amply supplied in the mess hall. This area is situated on a low level plateau between two ranges of mountains, standing out majestically and immensely to the naked eye. A long, winding road, used daily by so many kinds of army vehicles, runs from Madzab into the heart of Iae, once the proposed capital of Australian New Guinea. In retrospect of life and scenery at Port Moresby, New Guinea, this is indeed a remarkable change. Life in our new location is one hundred per cent more pleasant. Conditions existing here are so much better that very seldom the words "when am I going home" are uttered. Most of the men, the ones who arrived the 22 June, 1943 in New Guinea and even the aircrews can call themselves seasoned men. They have learned the hard way; they have seen action in the air; they have built an operation squadron out of inexperienced men. There is much to be accomplished in the war in the Pacific yet. This squadron stands ready to do its part in furthering the defeat of the enemy. It is realized that every effort put into this work brings them closer to home and their loved ones. When the squadron was activated, the present land, sea, and air offensive was in its embryo stage. During the ensuing eight months we have come over four hundred miles closer to the enemy's heart and after the total destruction of his airforce by the hard flying U.S.A.A.F. and of his fleet by

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the working U.S. Navy, the remaining two thousand miles will be quickly covered. Then this unit and all the units of the Air Forces, Ground Forces, and Naval Forces will commence an assault on the home islands of the enemy Japan that will make them wish for an earthquake for respite.

George H. Puddy

GEORGE H. PUDDY,
1st Lieut., Air Corps,
Unit Historian.

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