

GO#3507 (WD GO No 56 1945) 464th Citation Bombing Mission

GO 56

GENERAL ORDERS }
No. 56 }

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C., 14 July 1945

BATTLE HONORS.—As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citations of the following units in the general orders indicated are confirmed under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction:

9. The *464th Bombardment Group (H)* is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 23 August 1944, the group was notified to prepare to attack and destroy the oil refinery, Pardubice, Czechoslovakia. Destruction of the objective would curtail the production of gasoline and oil so critically needed by the enemy, thus giving assistance to our Allies and to our ground forces. Although the group had flown 15 combat missions in the past 23 days, making deep penetrations into enemy territory, and had sustained casualties, losses, and severe damages to its personnel and aircraft, the ground crews, when advised that another vitally important mission was planned, worked with such skill and enthusiasm that all aircraft scheduled for this mission were mechanically perfect and ready to take off. All group personnel coordinated their efforts to ensure the successful completion of the mission. On 24 August 1944, thirty-one B-24 type aircraft took off, made rendezvous with other participating groups and proceeded toward the target. Enemy defenses en route were skillfully avoided by the group leaders. On the bombing run and over the target extremely accurate flak was encountered, with several enemy aircraft menacing the formation. The unwavering courage of the gallant crews was displayed by their determination to proceed to their assigned objective despite all attempts by antiaircraft fire and enemy fighters. Notwithstanding the efforts of the enemy to lessen the efficiency of the formation, the group leader with unerring precision continued on to the target, and the gallant crews dropped their bombs to complete the total destruction of the target and to inflict serious damage to adjacent military installations. Immediately after rallying off the target, 30 to 40 enemy aircraft aggressively and viciously attacked the formation. In the ensuing battle, because of the skill, determination, and high courage of the gunners of the formation, the enemy withdrew but not until gallant gunners had taken a total of 16 enemy aircraft destroyed, 7 probably destroyed, and 5 damaged. During this fierce air battle, four bombers were lost because of enemy action and a fifth was so badly damaged that it was forced to land at a friendly base. The formation quickly rallied together for the long, dangerous flight to home base and all remaining bombers returned safely. This conspicuous gallantry and display of profes-

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sional skill and leadership by the combat crews, together with the technical skill and loyalty of the ground personnel, have reflected great credit upon the *46th Bombardment Group* and the armed forces of the United States. (General Orders 3507, Fifteenth Air Force, 2 June 1945, as approved by Commanding General, United States Army Forces, Mediterranean Theater of Operations.)

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

OFFICIAL:

EDWARD F. WITSELL
Major General
Acting The Adjutant General

G. C. MARSHALL
Chief of Staff