

lead aircraft, the only pathfinder in the formation, blew a cylinder head at 0928 and was forced to turn back. Lead of the formation was instantly assumed by the deputy lead, but bombing now had to be visual. Three aircraft crippled by fighter attack and flak left the formation before reaching the target and bombed targets of opportunity. Six aircraft failed to return.

One of these, after successfully bombing with the formation ditched in the Adriatic Sea, the other five bombers were shot down by enemy fighters. Twenty four bombers successfully bombed the objective.

9. The first force of enemy fighters consisting of seventeen ME 410's, was sighted just south of Fahlenbach. The second enemy of Me 210's was seen just after the turn to the IP above and ahead of the formation. Both forces were apparently exceptionally well coordinated by ground control. Almost immediately they gathered their combined strength for a concentrated assault. The

ME 210's sped across the top of the formation in an air to air bombing attack. At the same time the ME 410's launched a fusillade of rockets into the center of the formation. Rockets and bombs expended, all attacking planes rushed to the rear and into position to close for the kill. In a ferocious assault, augmented by FW 190's and ME 109's, the entire fighter force desperately attacked the formation from five to eleven O'clock. Specific assaults were continually made on the lead aircraft as the formation closed on Munich. Repeatedly and with almost suicidal aggressiveness they attempted to disrupt or destroy the formation before completion of the mission. In the course of this violent battle five of our aircraft were knocked from the sky and eighteen enemy aircraft were put out of action, destroyed or damaged. Still the attack did not abate and enemy fighters continued to harry formation even as it came with range of the anti-aircraft batteries defending the target. It was now observed that a dense smoke screen covered the entire area. Braving the intense barrages of heavy enemy gunfire the group gallantly flew on to the objective, hoping that some break in the passive defense would permit visual bombing. This proved impossible and the group leader quickly rallied the formation out of range of the flak batteries.

10. The formation was now seriously crippled, Every bomber had been hit by either fighter gunfire or flak. many men were wounded.

Aircraft were so seriously damaged that they had difficulty remaining in formation. The lead aircraft had been seriously hit with twenty millimeter cannon shells and both ships on the wings of the lead aircraft had been badly damaged. In spite of these seemingly insurmountable difficulties and fully realizing the danger of another assault the group

leader determinedly led his formation on to the alternate target, the important marshalling yards at Innsbruck. For the second time the group encountered devastating anti-aircraft fire. With his entire force in grave danger of destruction, the group leader nevertheless braved these intense barrages of enemy fire again and guided his formation through for a perfect bombing run. Despite the crippled condition all bombers stayed well in formation and under the superior direction of the group leader the entire explosive force of their bombs were dropped on the objective, Later reports from Headquarters, Mediterranean Allied Strategic

Air Force confirming the damage states: "Concentration of bombs fell across the South choke point. . . in addition the main rail line to the South has been cut at below the choke point".

11. By their gallant action in the successful completion of this mission, the 484th Bomb Group inflicted a far reaching blow to the enemy's war effort on the ground and in the air. Destruction of this vital communication link impeded the transport of valuable troops and supplies over this important route. The interdiction of this main rail line seriously effected the GAF production and the force of this strike opened new breaks in the enemy wall of resistance through which ever more powerful blows have been struck.

12. This mission was successfully completed against the powerful opposition by a bomber force weakened by enemy action. The tremendous damage inflicted on the enemy on this occasion is a great tribute to the gallant determination of all personnel involved, both on the ground and in the air. Exhibiting superior professional skill, outstanding courage and the highest degree of heroism, the 484th Bombardment Group has reflected great credit

upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The unswerving devotion to duty of every member of the organization, and their continued determination to carry the war to the enemy, is deserving of the highest commendation.



*Vivacious Lady in happier times.*



*General Nathan Twining CO 15th Air Force speaks to the troops at the presentation of the Presidential Unit Citation*