

HEADQUARTER
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 232)

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Citation of Unit. Section I

SECTION I - CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No. 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP. For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Notified to prepare maximum aircraft for a mission against the highly important and heavily defended Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery, Moosbierbaum, Austria, the ground crews, despite acute shortages in personnel and equipment, worked untiring and with grim determination to have their aircraft in the peak of mechanical condition to insure the success of this vital operation. On 26 June 1944, thirty-six (36) B-24 type aircraft, heavily loaded with maximum tonnage, were airborne, and, assuming the lead of the other groups of their Wing, set course for their destination. Enroute to the target the formation was intercepted by approximately twenty (20) twin-engine enemy fighters which were engaged by the escorting fighters. Immediately thereafter, the bomber formation was attacked by approximately sixty (60) additional twin-engine in a series of vicious head-on attacks, firing rockets, heavy machine guns and 20mm cannon in a desperate effort to destroy the bomber formation. Nearing the target sixty (60) more single engine fighters joined in the aggressive and relentless attacks against the group formation. Heedless of this seemingly overwhelming opposition, the gallant crew members battled their way through the heavy enemy fire to the objective. One of the bombers, after colliding with an attacking fighter, remained persistently with the formation for the bombing run before dropping out in flames. Two other bombers set on fire by enemy gun fire, continued over the target, successfully dropped their bombs and then exploded in mid-air. With complete disregard for the continued heavy opposition, displaying outstanding courage, leadership and fortitude, the Group held its load of the Wing formation, bringing it through the enemy defenses for a highly successful bombing run. The oil storage area of the refinery was heavily hit with large fires started. Eight direct hits were sustained by the power station and numerous rolling stock and vital installations were severely damaged throughout the plant area. During the fierce aerial battle to the target, the gallant gunners of the Group, through their skill and determination in defense of their formation, accounted for thirty-four (34) enemy fighters destroyed, to hold the losses of their Group to ten (10) heavy bombers. By the conspicuous gallantry, professional skill and determination of the combat crews, together with the superior technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 455th Bombardment Group has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service, thereby reflecting great credit upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

R.K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ J. M. Ivins
/t/ J. M. IVINS
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General