HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. Army

30 July 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Ground Crew Effort Prior to the Steyr Raid.

TO : Commanding Officer, 455th Bombardment Group (H), APO 520, U.S. Army.

On the day of the mission, 2 April 1944, the Squadron Engineering Sections were able to report to Group Operations a group total of fifty (50) aircraft operational out of a total of fifty-seven (57) aircraft assigned. Of the seven (7) aircraft non-operational, two (2) were in the Service Squadron for major repair of combat damage and five (5) were awaiting parts.

All Squadron Engineering Sections were operating under serious handicap due to lack of OEL equipment. Two of the squadrons had received only forty (40) percent of their maintenance equipment while the other two squadrons were in even worse condition with but ten (10) percent of their equipment. Critical items such as wing jacks, tow bars, crew-chief stands, "A" frames, were lacking, as was other necessary equipment. Oil drums were used as crew-chief stands and the only available tools were those in the crew-chief's kit.

Due to the twenty (20) percent increase of assigned aircraft above T.O. authority, shortage of maintenance personnel, inadequate maintenance equipment, and extremely poor field conditions, ground crews were required to work from fourteen (14) to sixteen (16) hours a day to maintain this high percentage of aircraft operational. The fact that the engineering and other maintenance sections consistently furnished operations with more aircraft than were required for tactical operations is a direct contribution to the splendid record of this group.

The cheerfulness and proficiency with which these men fulfilled their assigned duties under the most trying circumstances upholds the highest traditions of the military service, reflecting great credit upon themselves and their organization.

Philip P. Crowell

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