

S E C R E T

H I S T O R I C A L D A T A

372nd  
History of the 372nd B.S.  
for June of 1944.

372ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
Office of the Commanding Officer  
APO #719, Postmaster, San Francisco, California

5 July 1944

SUBJECT: Historical Record.

TO : Commanding General, 13th Air Force, APO #719. Attention:  
Historical Officer. (FERU) Commanding Officer, 307th Bombard-  
ment Group (H), APO #719).

1. In compliance with 13th Air Force Regulation 80-7, the following Historical Record of this organization for the period 1 June 1944 to 30 June 1944, inclusive, is submitted herewith.

a. Completed.

b. No change.

c. The strength of this organization on 1 June was sixty-two Officers and three hundred ninety-eight Enlisted Men. A total of eighty-six Officers and four hundred and forty Enlisted Men were assigned on the last day of the month. This increase was due to the addition of several more combat crews.

d. The official address of the organization was changed from APO #324 to APO #719 during the month. This was due to the fact that the 13th Air Force uses APO #719 and all organizations assigned to it will use the same APO number. No change in station was made. Several combat crews and one ground Officer were granted rest leaves in Sydney, Australia. It is contemplated that all combat personnel and additional ground personnel will be sent to Australia in the near future.

e. None.

f. Combat missions flown by the Squadron during the month were directed against targets in the Caroline Island Group, with the exception of one mission which was carried out over Noemfoor Island.

g. A total of twenty-two strikes were carried out during the month. These missions were directed against targets in the Truk area, in the Yap Island area and one mission was flown over Noemfoor Island off the Northwest coast of New Guinea.

h. The first mission of the month was directed against Eten Island on 1 June. Five airplanes, led by 1st Lt. EUGENE G. LINN, "A" flight leader compromised the formation. Four ships carried nine 500 pound demolition bombs each and the fifth was loaded with thirty 100 pound demolition bombs. Only four ships reached the target as the airplane with the 100 pound bombs was forced to jettison its bombs into the water as they could not reach bombing altitude due to malfunction of the oxygen system. The target was obscured



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and the four ships each made individual runs at altitude ranging from 11,700 feet to 15,300 feet, dropping their bombs on ETA. Eighteen of the bombs were timed for Truk atoll, nine for Eten Island, and nine for Tol Island. Results of the bombing were not observed. There was no enemy interception.

On 2 June, five airplanes led by 1st Lt. JOHN R. SAWYER, "B" Flight Leader, attacked Dublon Town in a javelin down formation from 19,400 feet. Each airplane carried nine 500 pound demolition bombs, all of which landed in the target area. Moderate anti-aircraft fire of heavy caliber, very inaccurate as to course and altitude was encountered. The formation was attacked by twenty enemy fighters which dropped six phosphorous bombs on the ships. 20 MM cannon fire from an attacking Zero entered the cockpit of the lead ship, instantly killing Lt. JOHN R. SAWYER, fatally wounding his Navigator 1st Lt. PHILIP J. HEIMLICK, and seriously wounding his Co-Pilot 2nd Lt. WILLIAM E. WAY. Another ship was hit with cannon fire, the drift meter being shot away and another shell entering the radio compartment. Lt. Sawyer's ship was flown back to the home base by the wounded Co-Pilot and the Engineer, T/Sgt. JOHN R. HALL. Sgt. Hall landed the airplane perfectly. It was the first landing he had ever made with any type of airplane.

Five enemy fighters were definitely shot down on this mission, two Tojos, one Zeke, one Hamp, and one Val going down before the gunners' accurate fire. The first fighter, a Hamp, came in from 11 o'clock high to within 200 yards. S/Sgt. CHARLES J. WOLF fired about seventy rounds of .50 caliber ammunition from his position in the nose turret. The Hamp broke off and pulled up in a stall, smoking. The ship turned over and the pilot either fell or bailed out. S/Sgt. JAMES W. HOUSTON, nose turret gunner, fired several long bursts into a Val coming from eleven o'clock which burst into flames and hit the water. A Zeke came in on the formation from directly above to within a few hundred feet of S/Sgt. HARTLEY H. LACKEY, tail gunner, who shot off his left wing. The pilot bailed out. The first of the two Tojos was brought down by T/Sgt. WILLIAM ZEBENKA from the right waist position. The Tojo came in from about twelve-thirty o'clock high to within 200 yards when Sgt. Zelenk's .50 calibers found the target and the enemy fighter was entirely enveloped in flames. The second Tojo and the last of the five shot down on this mission was hit by T/Sgt. JAMES E. LEDBETTER from the top turret. This fighter came in from two o'clock high to within 200 yards of the formation and exploded when hit by Ledbetter's fire.

The results of this mission, aside from the loss of Lts. Sawyer and Heimlick, were highly satisfactory. The bombs started falling in the buildings west of the Hospital area and continued on across Dublon Town. Seven fires were started, including one large fire which was accompanied by a huge explosion and black smoke billowing several hundred feet into the air.

The third mission of the month was against enemy aircraft and repair facilities at Eten Island. A five airplane formation, led by 1st Lt. EUGENE G. LINK, went over the target at 20,000 feet in a javelin down formation and dropped forty-five 500 pound demolition bombs. 40% of the bombs fell in the assigned target area. Twenty-seven bombs fell short of the target, landing in the water. Nine of the bombs started at the southwest corner of the island and continued on through the hangar area. Nine other bombs formed a string starting at the north end of the runway and continued on across the strip.



The formation was intercepted by a flight of enemy fighters composed of eight to thirteen Zekes and two Hamps. Two Zekes were shot down by gunners of this Squadron. Five minutes after "Bombs Away", a Zeke came in on the ship flying in B-2 position from eleven o'clock low. The Zeke circled the ship and S/Sgt LAWRENCE J. MARCOE, ball turret gunner, started firing when the fighter was 500 yards away. He continued to fire as the Zeke circled to the left and it was seen to explode on the right side of the B-24. The second Zeke came in on the same B-24 from twelve o'clock high. S/Sgt ANDREW H. SMITH, top turret gunner, started firing when the enemy ship was 600 yards away. The fighter nosed up and winged over to the right after Smith had fired a long burst. The fighter went into a tight spin after winging over and hit the water. The antiaircraft interception was heavy, but all bursts were low.

On 7 June, the squadron attacked Dublon Town with a six ship formation, led by 1st Lt. EDGAR D. FRAKER, "C" Flight Leader. Due to extremely adverse weather conditions, only two ships reached the target. Each of these ships dropped six 1,000 pound demolition bombs on Truk atoll on ETA. The results were unobserved due to the undercast. The other four ships jettisoned their bombs safe. There was no enemy interception of any type.

The fifth mission of the month was carried out on 8 June against Dublon Town. Five airplanes, led by 2nd Lt CLEMENT B BALDWIN, Assistant Operations Officer, started out, with only one finding the target, due once again to heavy weather. The single ship dropped nine 500 pound demolition bombs on Param Island. The other four airplanes could not see either the Primary target or any of the alternate targets and jettisoned their bombs in the water. The formation was jumped by approximately fifteen fighters, who dove on the formation from 25,000 feet. The antiaircraft interception was very low. One ship was hit on each wing by 7.7 fire from the intercepting fighters. Results of the bombing were not observed.

On 9 June, six airplanes carrying sixty 500 pound demolition bombs attacked Dublon Town again. Adverse weather again caused four ships to jettison their bombs with the remaining two ships dropping their bombs on Param Island and the Moen Island Seaplane Base. Eleven 500 pound bombs were dropped on the Seaplane Base and nine 500 pound bombs dropped on Param Island after timing on Tol Island. The formation, led by 1st Lt FRAKER, was not intercepted by enemy fighters and the antiaircraft fire, which was of the barrage type, was trailing the formation.

Targets in the Truk area were attacked for the seventh time during the month on 10 June when four airplanes led by 2nd Lieut BALDWIN, headed for Dublon Town. Due to heavy undercast, the target was once again obscured, only two ships dropping their bombs on the target area. Twenty 500 pound demolition bombs were dropped by these two ships. The third ship dropped eleven 500 pound bombs on Truk Atoll on the Navigator's ETA. The remaining airplane was forced to jettison its bombs after encountering severe icing conditions. It was necessary for this pilot to salvo his bomb load to maintain control of the airplane. The formation went over the target at 20,000 feet and encountered no interception, either by fighters or enemy antiaircraft fire.

The following day, Dublon Town was attacked by five of our ships, led by 1st Lieut FRAKER. The Primary Target was obscured by a heavy



heavy undercast and the Moen Aircraft dispersal and Supply area was hit. Fifty-three 500 pound demolition bombs were dropped from 20,000 feet with the pattern starting 250 feet East of the wooded area of Mt. Toladjan and continuing 1100 feet to a point in the middle of the taxi loop. Two buildings, similar to Quonset Huts, were seen to blow up. Ten enemy fighters, identified as Zekes, attacked the formation, dropping four Phosphorous Bombs as they came in. One Zeke attacked the formation from one o'clock high, closing in to within 200 yards. S/Sgt JAMES M McINTOSH, nose gunner and S/Sgt LUDWIG L KOZISEK, top turret gunner on the same airplane, fired several long bursts. Flames were seen to come from the Zeke's tail and he went into a vertical dive and disappeared through the undercast. A large splash, followed by black smoke was seen a few moments later on the water. The antiaircraft interception was heavy; but very inaccurate as to altitude.

On 12 June, six airplanes attacked Dublon Town with a bomb load of sixty 500 pound demolition bombs, 80% of which fell in the assigned target area. The formation was led by 2nd Lt BALDWIN and went in at 20,000 feet. Ten to fifteen Zekes attacked the six ships with one Zeke being shot down and one damaged. The first Zeke came in to within 600 yards where he broke off into a vertical dive and crashed into the water after being hit by fire from the guns of S/Sgt ANDREW H SMITH, nose gunner of A-2. The second Zeke came in from ten o'clock high and received several long bursts from S/Sgt RAYMOND K KASEK, top turret gunner and T/Sgt CHARLES H McMULLEN JR, left waist gunner of the same airplane. This Zeke broke off at 400 yards and pieces were seen to fall off the cowling and the canopy; but the ship was not seen to crash. The attacking Zekes dropped fifteen phosphorous bombs, none of which caused any damage. The antiaircraft fire was intense and of heavy caliber; but inaccurate. One of our ships was holed in the leading edge of the left wing by shrapnel. Four-fifths of the target area was covered by the bomb pattern. No fires were observed.

The tenth mission of the month was flown on 13 June when six airplanes, led by the Squadron Commander, Captain FRANK H CALDWELL, attacked Dublon Island in a javelin down formation from 22,000 feet. Sixty 500 pound demolition bombs were carried over the target with approximately two-thirds of the bombs falling in the target area. Eight or ten bombs fell in the water North of the target. One large explosion, followed by red flames, was noted. The last bomb to fall started a large fire at the intersection of the shore road at the west end of the inlet.

Ten to fifteen enemy fighters attacked the formation, making eighteen passes from ten and two o'clock high. They dropped six phosphorous bombs on the formation. One ship received a 20 mm shell in the region of the flight deck with little resultant damage. The ring cowl of one ship was also holed, apparently by 7.7 fire. One Zeke passed from seven o'clock low, closing in to 400 yards. This fighter was fired upon by Sgt JOHN L HICKS, left-waist gunner on the ship flying in the B-2 position and S/Sgt LAWRENCE J MARFOE, ball gunner on the ship flying in the B-1 position. Their tracers were seen to enter the Zeke and he broke off in a vertical dive, smoking. The tail gunner of B-1 later saw a large fire on the water below. This ship was scored as damaged. The antiaircraft interception was of heavy caliber; but low. Two bursts were close to the formation; but caused no damage.



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Dublon Island was attacked again the next day when five ships, led by 1st Lt. CLEMENT B. BALDWIN went over at 21,000 feet in a javelin down formation. Fifty-four 500 pound demolition bombs were dropped on the target seven and a half tons of which fell in the target area assigned. Most of the bombs fell on either side of the radio station, which was in the center of this Squadron's target. 1 large building on the northeast tip of the target received a direct hit, three smaller fires were started in the northern one-quarter of the target.

Fifteen enemy fighters attacked the formation shortly after bombs were "away". This attack consisted of two Hamps, one Tony, one Tojc, and the remainder Zekes. They dropped a total of eight phosphorous bombs on our ships none of which caused any damage. The two Hamps were shot down by our gunners, the first coming in from four o'clock low and turned into the Squadron which was to the rear of our formation. S/Sgt. BILL WILLIAMS, tail gunner of B-1, fired several long bursts at a range of 300 yards. The plane was seen to crash in the water. The second Hamp came in from eleven o'clock level passed B-1 on the left side at 300 yards and went into a steep turn at seven o'clock. The left waist gunner, S/Sgt JAMES R. HURD fired several long bursts and the Hamp was seen to wobble and spin, smoking. It exploded 3,000 feet below. The anti-aircraft interception was heavy but extremely low.

On 15 June, six B-24's from this Squadron, led by 1st Lt. EDGAR D. FRAKER, attacked the Moen Island Dispersal and Supply area. Moen Island is in the Truk area. Fifty-seven 500 pound demolition bombs were carried over the target, six tons of which fell in the assigned area. 50% of the bombs fell in the water with the balance forming a pattern which started at the shore line West and Southwest of the Airdrome. The pattern continued across the dispersal area and ended with five bombs on the runway. Three small fires were started.

Ten to fifteen enemy fighters came in on the formation. One Tony, two Tojos, and the remainder Zekes made up the attacking formation. They dropped six phosphorous bombs, none of which caused any damage to our airplanes. One Zeke was destroyed and one Tony damaged. The Zeke came in on S/Sgt GEORGE F. CRESSWELL, ball-turret gunner, in A-2, caught him with a long burst. Flames covered half of the fighters fuselage and he went into a spin and crashed into the water. S/Sgt LUDWIG KOZISEK, right waist gunner in A-2, fired on the Tony which was closing in from four o'clock high. The Tony leveled off at 800 yards and tracers were seen to enter the ship. Pieces of the cowling flew off. The Tojos were most eager on this mission, closing in to within 200 feet of our formation. None were damaged. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy, but was low and to the right of the formation. Several ships received 7.7 fire from the interceptors and one ship received 20 MM fire in the No. 2 and 3 engines. No appreciable damage was done.

Five airplanes from this Squadron participated in a bombardment mission over Dublon Town on the sixteenth of the month. The formation was led by 1st Lt. ROBERT E. BEASLEY, Squadron Operations Officer, and carried fifty-four 500 pound demolition bombs. The formation went over the target at 19,000 feet in a javelin down formation. About ten tons of bombs fell in the target area, the pattern starting off the shore at the east end of the town. The pattern continued through the shore at the east end of the town, through the Northeast 2/3 of the target with the last nine bombs landing in the troop concentration area. Several buildings were hit. Three or four of the bombs fell



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in the water. Only a few bursts of heavy antiaircraft fire were noted and they were inaccurate as to course and altitude. Six to eight Zekes and one Hamp intercepted the formation. No damage was inflicted on the attacking fighters and only one of our ships was hit. That ship received a 7.7 in the tail turret, causing little damage.

Five airplanes returned to Dublon Town the following day, led by Captain CALDWELL, the Squadron Commander. The formation, carrying fifty-seven 500 pound demolition bombs, went in at 19,000 feet in a Javelin down formation. Fifteen tons of bombs fell in the assigned target area with the bomb pattern starting at the West end of the target area and continuing in a string which ended in the vicinity of the radio station. The Southernmost string was spotted West of the Hospital. One large fire and explosion was seen 1200 feet West of the Hospital. One good fire in the radio station area and several smaller fires scattered throughout the target area were also noted. Two large fires were seen in the tank farm.

Twelve enemy fighters intercepted the formation. The attackers consisted of eleven Zekes and one Tojo. They dropped six phosphorous bombs on our ships, three of which were close. One of our airplanes was hit with a fragment of a phosphorous bomb, with little damage to the airplane. The fighters made six passes on the formation, one from six o'clock high and the remainder from eleven to three o'clock high. One Zeke was shot down after closing in from one o'clock high to within 100 yards of the lead ship. S/Sgt LAWRENCE J HANNA, nose-gunner, fired several long bursts and the airplane was seen to go into a spin and hit the water. The pilot bailed out. Two Zekes were scored as probables on this mission. The first was caught in the co-ordinated fire of Sgt JOHN L HICKS, nose-gunner in A-2 and S/Sgt CLIFFORD BIGGERSTAFF, right-waist gunner of the B-2 airplane. At 300 yards, the fighter broke off and went into a steep dive after large pieces were seen to fly from the wing roots. The airplane was lost from sight in the undercast. The second Zeke came in from six o'clock high on the phosphorous bomb release run. S/Sgt DONALD ALLEN, tail gunner of B-1, bracketed the fighter and he did not release his bombs. Two flashes were seen under the wings shortly after this and the bombs exploded as the pilot attempted to release them, catching the Zeke in the explosion. The ship was unobserved after this as other fighters were pressing their attack. The antiaircraft fire was heavy and accurate as to course and altitude with all of our ships reporting being bounced around considerably while on the bomb run and after turning away. No ships reported being holed however.

On the eighteenth of the month, six ships bombed Truk Atoll on Navigator's ETA. The bombing was done individually at altitudes ranging from 17,300 feet to 22,000 feet. The bomb load consisted of 160 one hundred pound demolition bombs and twelve 500 pound demolition bombs. Results of the bombing were unobserved as there was a 100% undercast over the target. Three flashes were seen on an unidentified island. Enemy interception was not encountered.

The following day, 1st Lt CARSON led a formation of four B-24's over Dublon Town at an altitude of 19,000 feet in a javelin down formation. Each airplane carried six 1,000 pound demolition bombs. Results of the bombing were unobserved due to a cloud formation over the target. All Bombardiers reported being synchronized on the target however.



as it was visible prior to "Bombs Away". Black smoke was seen emanating from the Northern one-third of the target area after the formation turned away from the bombing run. No enemy fighters came up but the anti-aircraft fire was heavy. It was of the barrage type and one ship was holed in the ball turret.

Lt BALDWIN led a formation of five airplanes over Yap Air-drome on 22 June. Each ship carried four 500 pound demolition bombs, sixteen of which were dropped over the target. One airplane lost the formation and was forced to salvo its bombs. The bomb pattern covered the middle one-third of the runway and extended 500 feet into the dispersal area. Ten enemy airplanes were left burning on the ground with another 25-30 damaged or destroyed by concussion and bomb fragments. The ships went over the target individually at 10,000 feet. One enemy fighter attempted to take off and was seen to swerve after a near miss. The fighter straightened out and received a direct hit a few seconds later. Lt BALDWIN strafed Sorol Island on the return route and destroyed a parked airplane and damaged the radio station. The anti-aircraft fire was meagre, but of heavy caliber. The bursts were inaccurate as to course however and no ships were damaged. No enemy fighters got into the air.

The following day Captain CALDWELL led a six ship formation over Yap Air-drome in a javelin down formation at 12,000 feet. One ship attempted to bomb Sorol Island with negative results. The remaining five ships dropped three 1,000 pound demolition bombs each on the target, all of which were reported as falling in the assigned target area. The pattern started on the Southeast side of the runway, 1,000 feet west of the east end and extended 500 feet into the dispersal area. One two-engine bomber was blown to bits by the concussion of a near-miss. No fighters came up to intercept the formation and the anti-aircraft fire was again inaccurate.

On 25 June, Lt BALDWIN led a six ship formation to the Yap Dispersal area with 160 120 pound fragmentation bombs comprising the bomb load. The bombs were dropped from 11,000 feet and formed an oval pattern 1,000 feet west of the southeast end of the runway. The pattern was 1600 feet wide and 1800 feet long. One enemy airplane was completely demolished by a near-miss. Fifteen to twenty enemy fighters came up to intercept the formation. These ships were all identified as Zekes with the exception of one which was believed to be a Tony. 2nd Lt GERALD D COLEMAN's airplane received direct 20 mm hits in the No 2 and 3 engines. The cockpit and Bombardier's compartment were set afire and the ship performed a perfect loop and fell off to the right in a spin and crashed in the water. The ship was strafed all the way down and no parachutes were seen. 1st Lt CARL F MARTIN's ship was hit by 20 mm fire in the wing outboard of the No 4 engine and in the right main landing gear tire. 2nd Lt FRANK ROGER's airplane was hit eight times by 7.7 fire in the empennage.

The fighter interception began just after "Bombs Away" and continued for twenty to twenty-five minutes. Attacks were made from all around the clock and was the best co-ordination of attack and feints that the enemy has exhibited against this Squadron. The attacks were made by two, three or four fighters scissoring from widely separated points. Two were shot down and two were damaged. The first Zeke attacked from nine o'clock low and was fired upon by T/Sgt CHARLES E McMILLAN, left waist



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gunner and S/Sgt DONALD T JEPSEN, ball gunner of Airplane No 567. The fighter was seen to catch fire at the wing roots and crash in the water. S/Sgt MELVIN B MILLER, ball gunner of the lead ship, caught the second Zeke at eleven o'clock low and the fighter broke off to the left and exploded at 200 yards. Two other Zekes were damaged by fire from our gunners. The antiaircraft fire was heavy but inaccurate as to course and altitude.

Captain DONALD DIXON, a newly-assigned pilot, led a six ship formation over Yap Airdrome and Sorol Island on 27 June. Capt DIXON's ship was the only one to bomb at Yap with the remaining five bombing Sorol Island. Capt DIXON's bombs were unobserved and of the bombs dropped on Sorol Island, two fell 50 feet from the radio station, three in the wooded area near the shore west of the radio station, one on the shore near a parked seaplane and nine fell in the water. Each ship carried three 1,000 pound demolition bombs and the bombing was done individually from varying altitudes. Fifteen to twenty enemy fighters intercepted over Yap and inflicted slight damage on Capt DIXON's ship with 7.7 fire in the top turret. The fighters dropped a total of eight phosphorous bombs, none of which detonated near our airplane. There was no interception over Sorol Island.

Lt BALDWIN led a five ship formation over Yap Town on 28 June. Five ships carried thirty 100 pound demolition bombs and the sixth ship carried twenty bombs of the same type. Another ship was scheduled to fly with the Squadron; but did not make the rendezvous point and bombed Sorol Island with unobserved results. The bombs which fell on Yap Town were also unobserved due to undercast. Ten enemy fighters came up to intercept over Yap Town, two of which were shot down and one damaged. Both of these fighters were shot down by S/Sgt GEORGE F CRESSWELL, ball turret gunner in airplane No 603. The first one came in from six o'clock low and broke into a shallow dive and exploded after being fired upon. The second fighter came in a few minutes later from two o'clock low and after being fired upon, broke off in a vertical dive and crashed in the water. Another fighter was damaged by the nose gunner of the same airplane.

The final mission of the month was carried out on 30 June when a six ship formation, led by Captain DIXON, attacked the Namber Supply and dispersal area on Noemfoor Island, off the Northwestern coast of New Guinea. Each airplane carried four 1,000 pound demolition bombs, all of which hit in the target area. The formation went over at 10,000 feet and encountered no interception of any type. The bomb pattern started northeast of the South Causeway near Namber Airdrome. A barracks was destroyed by a direct hit. Four fires were seen and three explosions, followed by red flames and little smoke were noted.

Five hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds of demolition and fragmentation bombs were dropped over enemy territory during the month. Of this total, it is known that two hundred and seventy-two thousand pounds fell on assigned targets. Due to poor visibility on several missions and definite figure cannot be given. Sixteen enemy fighters were shot down by our gunners, while four were scored as probables and six were listed as damaged.



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i. Captain FRANK H CALDWELL, 0663845, commanded the Squadron throughout the entire month.

j. Six Officers and six enlisted men were killed in action during the month and one Officer was wounded in action.

k. The Squadron received a Presidential citation on 27 June for the part it played in the mission over the Truk area on 29 March of this year. Major General MILLARD F HARMON, Commanding General of the South Pacific area, commended the organization for its performance of duty while a member of his command. These commendations are enclosed as Incls 1 and 2.

l. Bomb Plot charts for missions carried out during the month are enclosed as Incl 3.

*Frank H. Caldwell*  
FRANK H. CALDWELL,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

3 Incls:

Incl 1 - Presidential Citation

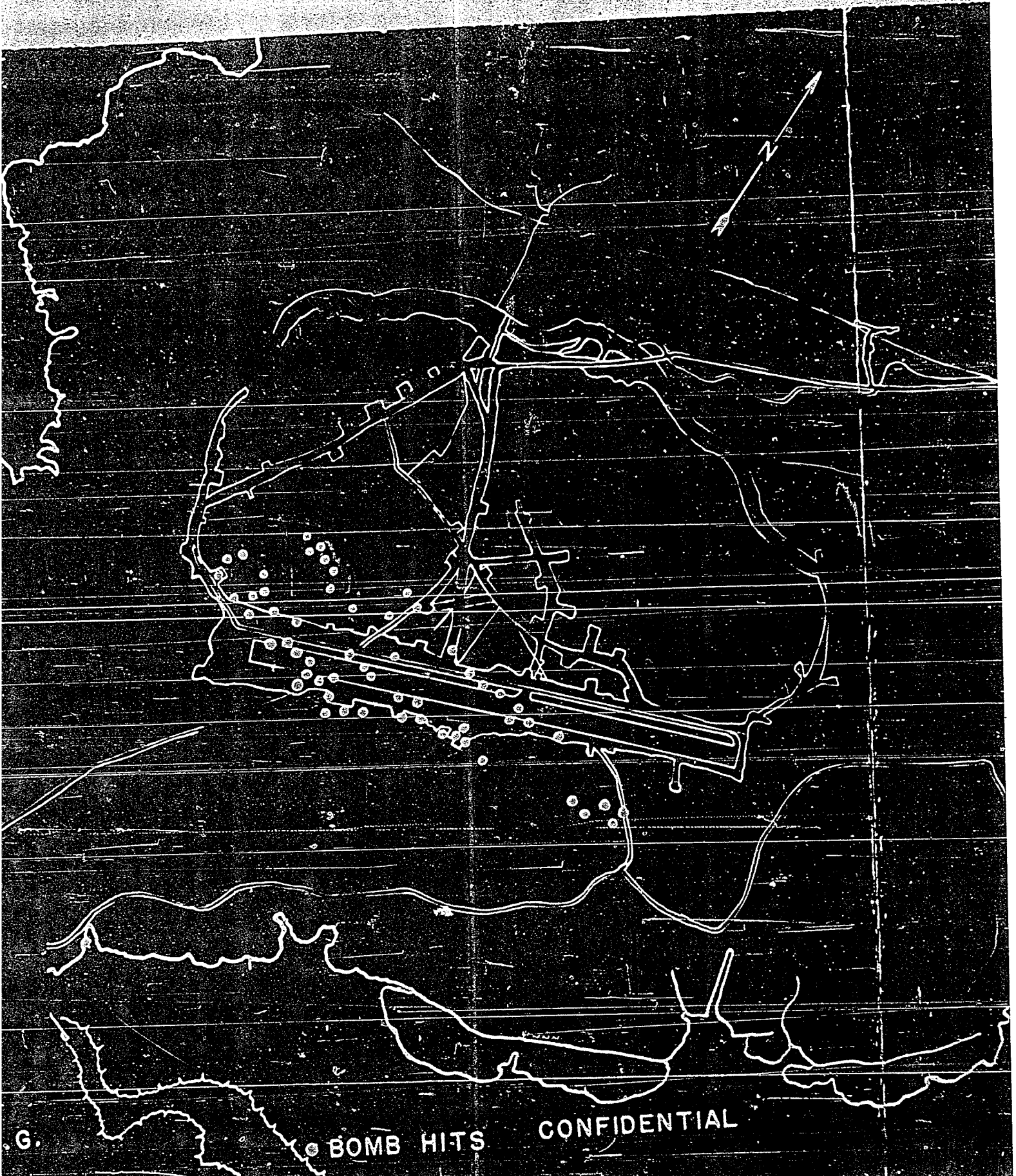
Incl 2 - Commendation by Major General HARMON

Incl 3 - Bomb Plot Charts

SECRET: Auth - 13th Air Force Regulation 80-7



YAP A/D - Date ?



G.

● BOMB HITS

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