

Downey

DECLASSIFIED IN 1946

SECRET

Combat...



ONE
YEAR

JAN-DEC '44



716

717



718



719

This is a reprint of a 449th publication, "Combat, January to December 1944. It was typeset and republished for the 449th Bomb Group Association "for those who pause to remember." It was prepared for the 40th Anniversary of the 449th Bomb Group Association, Tucson, Arizona—November, 1983 by San Dieguito Publishers, Encinitas, California.

449TH BOMB GP (H)
FACTS & FIGURES

This brochure was originally published in January 1945 by the 449th BG, Operations Department, at Grottaglie. It provides a statistical Summary of the operational results attained by the Group in the first twelve months of combat operations.

"NAZI OIL TOP ALLIED AIR TARGET"

COUNTER AIR OFFENSIVE FINISHED PRODUCT FIRST....

Jan 8	Nostar
13	Perugia
16	Osoppo
19	Perugia
20	Guidonia
30	Udine
31	Aviano

NIPPED IN THE BUD....

Feb 22	Obertrubling Acft Factory Regensburg
23	Ball Bearing Plant Steyr, Austria
25	Prufening Acft Factory Regensburg
Mar 24	Ball Bearing Plant Steyr, Austria
Apr 2	Ball Bearing Plant Steyr, Austria
12	Werk I Acft Assembly Plant Weiner Neustadt
23	Aircraft Factory (Heinkel) Schwechat

NO DELIVERY....

Apr 4	Bucharest M/Y
5	Ploesti M/Y
15	Bucharest M/Y
16	Brasov M/Y
24	Ploesti M/Y
May 5	Ploesti M/Y

Analysis of the targets attacked during the first year of combat operations reveals the part this organization played in accomplishing long range plans of the Allied Nations. Early in the war economists throughout the United Nations declared that the final defeat of Germany could be accomplished by an all out attack on her oil resources and reserves. As a matter of academic interest, these statements were accepted and made part of the overall strategy of the war.

Although the aim was establishing early in the war, factual accomplishment was delayed for a period of years to meet more immediate and pressing demands. The RAF did attempt an air attack in 1940 and 1941 but simply did not have adequate forces of aircraft to accomplish this aim. In the lull that followed, the Germans were able to undertake a huge program of expansion in their oil industry, completing new refineries and synthetic plants.

The arrival of fleets of American heavy bombers over Europe brought the plan nearer to accomplishment. To meet this threat the Germans turned to building defensive fighters in tremendous numbers.

The leaders of the American Air Forces were not unaware of this, (Quotation from a BBC broadcast distributed by MAAF Intelligence Section.) They saw that if the Germans were allowed to carry through their huge program for mass producing single engine fighters, literally on a scale such as the world had never seen, it might never be possible to strike at the vitals of Germany by daylight. And so the first task of the Forts and Libs was to strike down the rising defensive power of the German Air Force itself

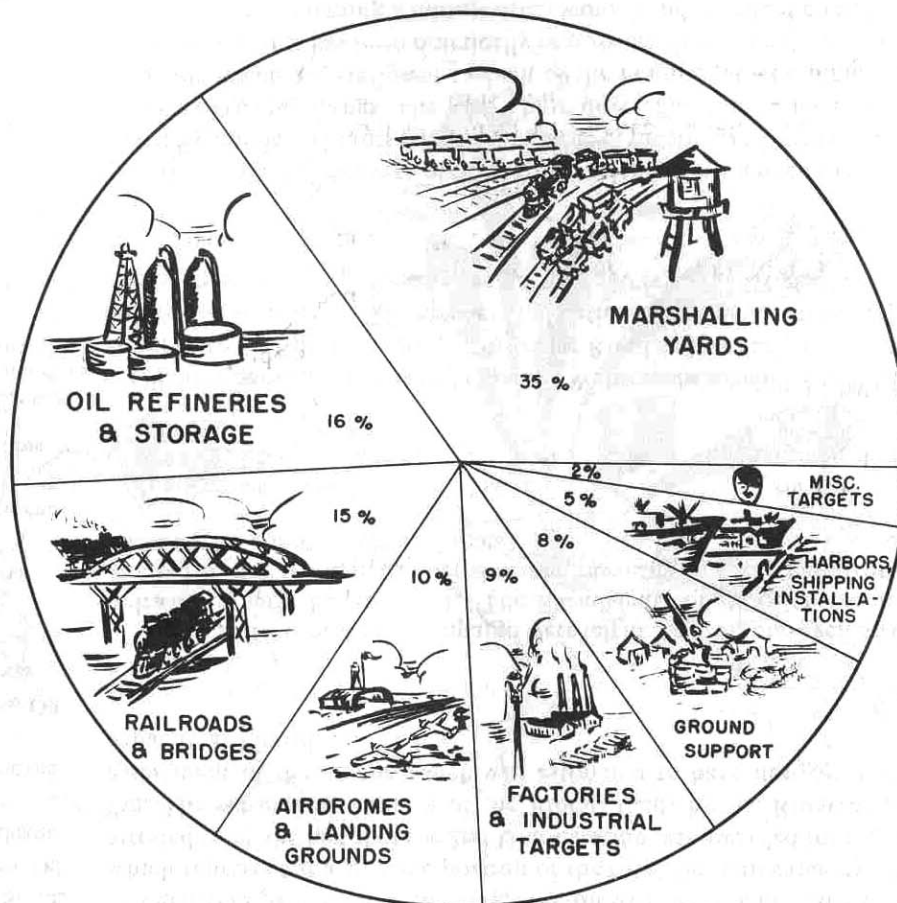
That struggle culminated in a spell of exceptionally clear weather in the final week of February (1944). In that week Americans bombed almost every one of the basic fighter assembly plants. The work of that week . . didn't prevent the Germans from turning out fighters....But did..decide the balance of air power . . .

Air superiority having been won, the attack on oil began. This started in April with attacks on the

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

ANALYSIS OF TARGETS ATTACKED

1944



May 6 Brasov M/Y

TOP PRIORITY....

May 19 In Spezia Oil Stores

25 Porto Marghero Oil

31 Romano Americana
O/R Ploesti

June 6 Romano Americana
Ploesti O/R

9 Porta Marghera Oil

10 Trieste Oil Stores

11 Constanta Oil
Refinery

14 Osijac Oil Stores

16 Bratislava Oil

24 Romano Americana
Ploesti O/R

July 3 Giurgiu Oil Stores

9 Concordia Vega
Ploesti O/R

15 Romano Americana
Ploesti O/R

22 Romano Americana
Ploesti O/R

23 Berat Oil Refinery

30 Lispa Budafpuszta
Oil Field

Aug 17 Unirea Standard
Ploesti O/R

18 Dacia Romano
Ploesti O/R

22 Oil Stores Vienna

23 Vosendorf Oil Refinery

Nov 5 Florisdorf Oil Refinery

6 Moosbierbaum Oil Ref

12 Blechhammer Oil Ref.

17 Florisdorf Oil Ref.

19 Schwechat Oil Refinery

Dec 2 Florisdorf Oil Refinery

11 Moosbierbaum Oil Ref

Rumanian lines of communications, marshalling yards, to first prevent the flow of oil to the Reich. Later the program was expanded to attacking the refineries and the storage facilities themselves. To this group as part of the 47th Wing, was allotted the task of destroying the oil refineries at Ploesti, which represented a sizeable portion of the total German capacity. That the job was well done is attested to by the fact that the 2nd Unit Citation was awarded for the raid on Concordia Vega, July 9th. The subsequent capture of the Ploesti fields by the Russians permitted detailed study and assessment of the damage which was estimated to have destroyed 90 per cent of the productive capacity at Ploesti.

The full effects of the oil campaign were felt at the years end even on the Western Front. In a recent release, General Eaker stated, "The Rundstedt counteroffensive in the west last December was limited in effectiveness by fuel shortage resulting in great part from attacks on the German Oil industry by our strategic air forces.

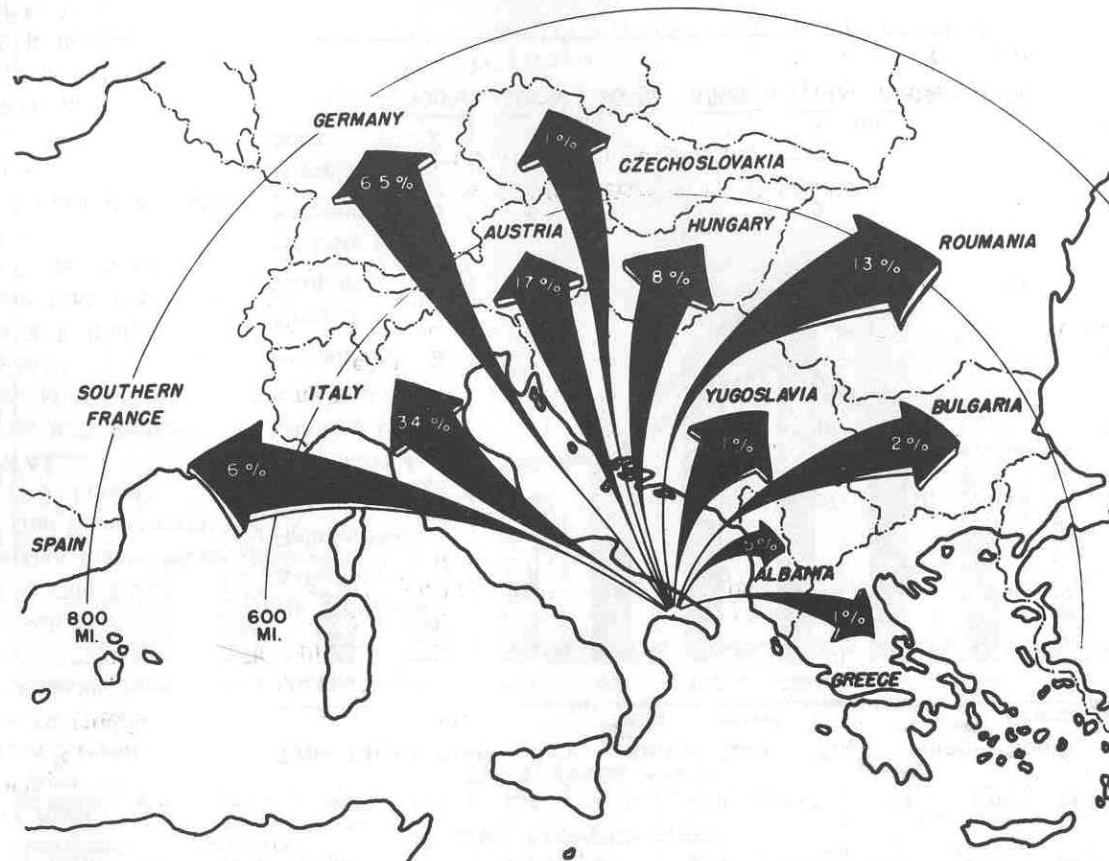
Oil, long considered by many to be the Wehrmacht's Achilles heel has been the number 1 priority target since the Spring of 1944. In order for Rundstedt to carry out his offensive, the Germans had to build up a fuel reserve. There is every indication that they hoarded every drop of oil for the preceding two or three months. . . forcing the Luftwaffe to remain inactive."

To prevent the recovery of the German oil industry retained the same high priority on the bombing list. Synthetic oil plants which loom large in the present German productive capacity received their share of the bombings. The Nazi's have developed countermeasures. . . (the effective use of repair squads which are stationed at each of the major synthetic plants). . . Actual destruction of these synthetic plants has been practically impossible since only the destruction of certain key portions of the plant (representing a minute area) would render a plant completely inoperative. Repair squads necessitated constant policing by the strategic air forces to keep the oil industry down, a job which is difficult and as huge as that of crippling the industry.

The secondary campaign has been ground support not only for the American Armies but also for the Russians. While some missions have been in direct support, the great majority have represented

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
ANALYSIS OF FLIGHTS MADE
PERCENTAGE OF ATTACKS BY COUNTRY

1944



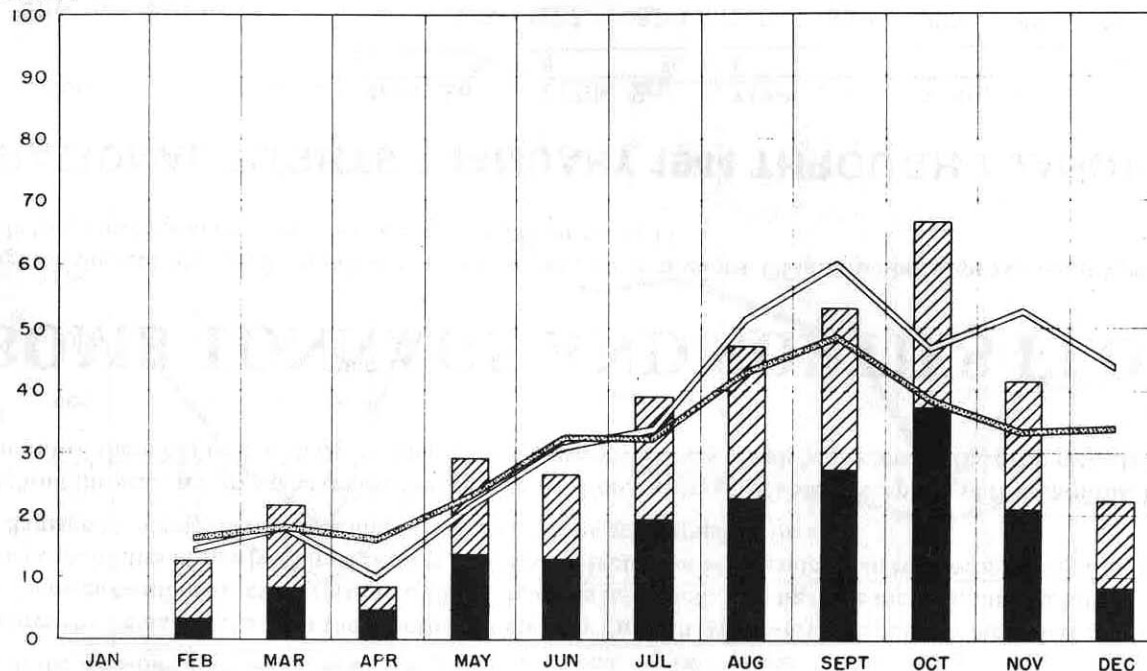
449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
AVERAGE BOMBING ACCURACY

COMPARED WITH 47 TH WING & 15 TH AIR FORCE AVERAGE

PERCENTAGE WITHIN 600' & 1000'

1944

PERCENT



15 AF AVERAGE											
NO SCORE	16.4	18.5	16.3	23.4	33.2	33.1	43.8	48.9	38.9	34.0	34.2
47 WING AVERAGE											
NO SCORE	15.6	18.4	10.9	22.1	31.8	34.1	51.9	60.2	47.2	53.0	44.3
449 BG WITHIN 1000'											
NO SCORE	12.8	21.7	8.5	29.3	26.3	39.1	47.6	52.9	66.7	41.7	22.2
449 BG WITHIN 600'											
NO SCORE	3.7	8.0	4.5	13.9	12.9	19.6	22.7	27.5	37.2	20.7	8.5

BOMBING ACCURACY

During the summer months, the highest attainment in bombing accuracy was achieved by crews of this group. The graphic presentation of the bombing accuracy by months, reveals the steady rise from June through October. This latter month, there were but five scoreable missions which would tend to distort the figures. For this reason, October is eliminated from consideration in discussing the best bombing. September represents the peak of perfection in bombing accuracy, during the period when raids were being made on communications targets requiring "pickle barrel" accuracy. Of the ten missions scored, 5 were better than 70%. Three of these were obtained on raids where the target was a railroad bridge and a concentration of bombs was needed to accomplish the mission successfully.

The figures shown on the chart for the months of February through April were computed sometime thereafter when the new method of scoring bombing accuracy within a 1000' circle was instituted. During these months, the combination of bad weather and limited capabilities of newly trained camera gunners are factors to be considered in reviewing the figures, since the greatest strategic damage to enemy aircraft assembly installations was accomplished then.

Throughout the year, the group has exceeded the 15th Air Force average, with the exception of four months. However, for the two last months, there has been a sharp decline in the bombing accuracy which has exceeded the drop recorded by the air force and wing.

BOMB TONNAGE AND SORTIES FLOWN

Throughout the year over 6600 aircraft were airborne on combat missions. Of this number approximately 9 percent returned to the base before reaching enemy lines because of weather or recall II.

OPERATIONAL FLIGHTS 8 JANUARY 1944 THROUGH 7 JANUARY 1945

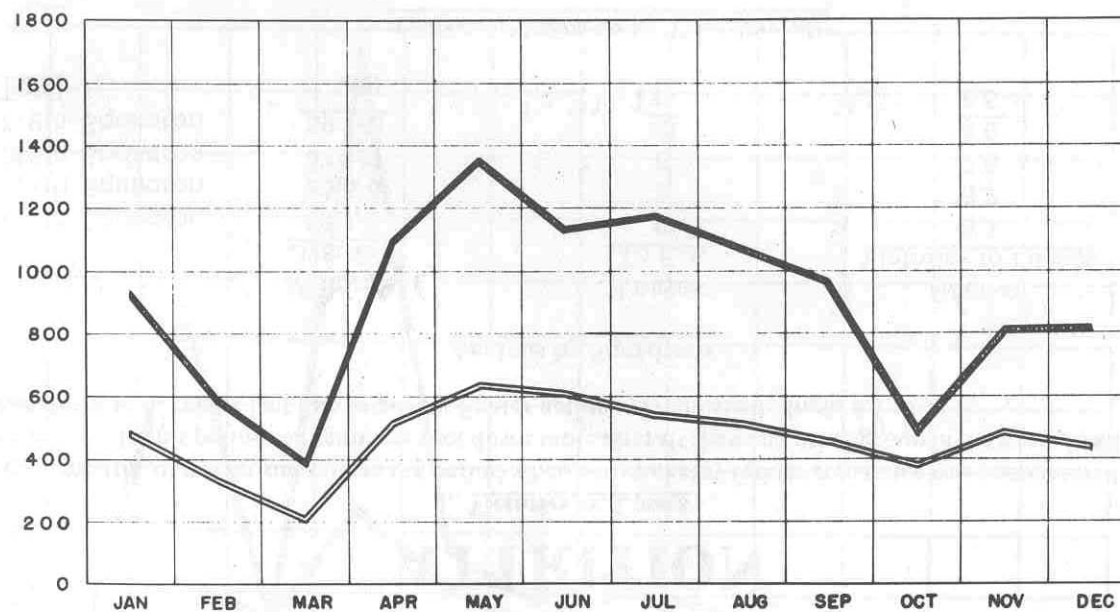
	716th. Sq.		717th. Sq.		718th. Sq.		719th. Sq.		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Effective Sorties	1196	80.8	1287	82.0	1210	80.1	1223	82.2	4916	81.2
Non-Effective Sorties	194	13.1	203	12.9	202	13.4	185	12.4	784	13.0
Early Returns	89	6.1	81	5.1	99	6.5	80	5.4	349	5.8
Total	1479	100%	1571	100%	1511	100%	1488	100%	6049	100%

The effectiveness of the group from month to month may be measured in some degree by the comparison of tonnage dropped on the target for each plane which crossed enemy lines. (See Following Chart.)

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

BOMB TONNAGE AND SORTIES FLOWN

1944



BOMB TONNAGE											
943	602	402	1103.9	1382.5	1139.25	1174.8	1073.25	967.68	510.85	824.5	828.75
SORTIES FLOWN											
489	340	210	526	646	614	546	518	463	394	484	445

Tonnage Per Plane Crossing Enemy Lines	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
	1.92	1.77	1.91	2.10	2.14	1.85	2.15	2.06	2.08	1.30	1.70	1.86

During the months of October and November, weather interfered with ability of the group to drop bombs in target to the greatest extent. It is interesting to note that during the months of July, August and September, when bombing accuracy was reaching its peak, this group maintained a high ratio of efficiency in tons dropped on target per ship.

A total of 22,000,000 lbs. was dropped on enemy targets during the year. This figure excludes all bombs jettisoned for any reason whatsoever.

ATTRITION

Victories vs. Losses

The first seven months of operations covers the period when active enemy fighter resistance was encountered consistently by heavy bomber groups. In this period, our gunners shot down more aircraft than any other group in the wing. In addition, the ratio of fighters shot down to bombers lost due to enemy fighter action was unusually high, 6.5 to 1.

Analysis by Squadrons

	<u>Victories Over E/A</u>	<u>Losses To E/A</u>	<u>Ratio of Victories to Losses</u>
716th Squadron	76 1/3	9	8.5
717th Squadron	36 5/6	6	6.2
718th Squadron	47 1/3	6	7.9
719th Squadron	39 1/2	10	4.0
<u>Total</u>	200	31	6.5

Analysis of Victories by Type Aircraft

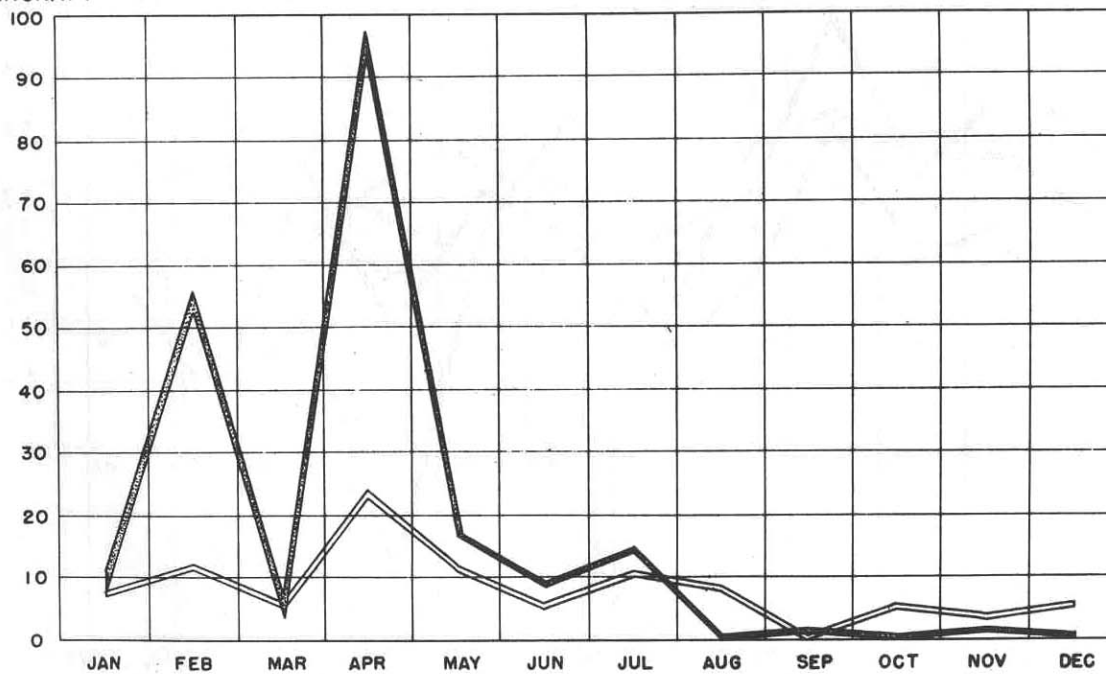
Type Aircraft	Destroyed
ME 109	119
FW 190	25
JU 88	18
ME 210-410	7
ME 110	16
Miscellaneous	15
<u>Total-</u>	<u>200</u>

Losses

Since June 1944 this group has maintained the lowest ratio of aircraft losses per 100 sorties in the wing. In addition, most of that

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
VICTORIES VS LOSSES
 1944

AIRCRAFT



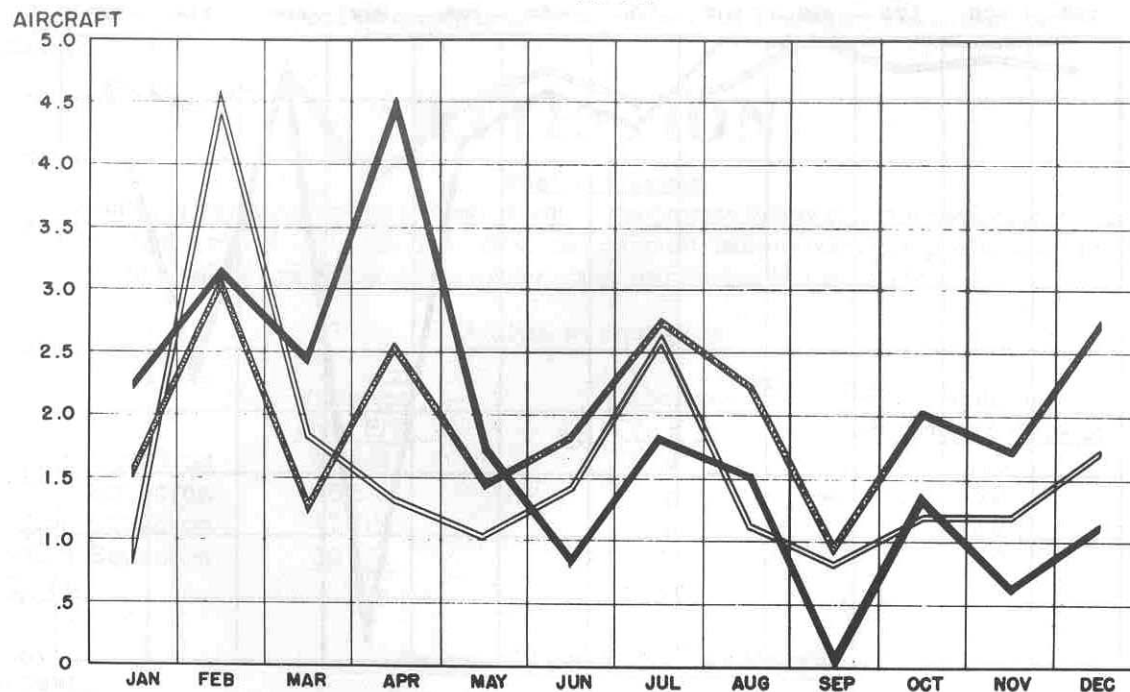
VICTORIES

7	53	4	88	23	9	14	-	1	-	1	-
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LOSSES

11	11	5	23	11	5	10	8	-	5	3	5
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449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
OPERATIONAL LOSS OF AIRCRAFT
 COMPARATIVE LOSSES PER 100 SORTIES
 1944

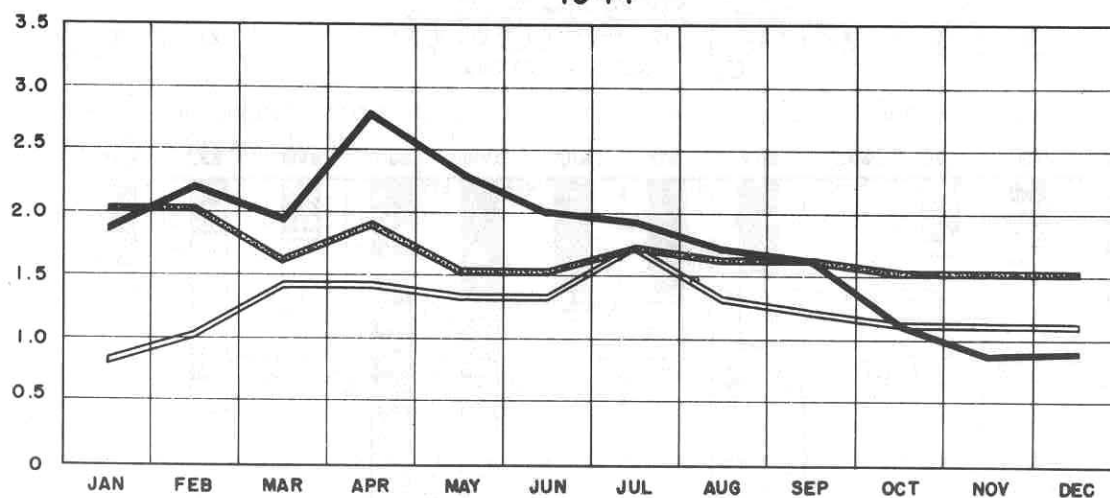


449 TH GP											
2.2	3.1	2.4	4.4	1.7	0.8	1.8	1.5	0.0	1.3	0.6	1.1
15 AF-B 24											
1.5	3.0	1.2	2.5	1.4	1.8	2.7	2.2	0.9	2.0	1.7	2.7
15 AF-B 17											
0.8	4.4	1.8	1.3	1.0	1.4	2.6	1.1	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.7

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
**COMPARATIVE COMBAT CREW OPERATIONAL
 ATTRITION RATES**

LOSSES OF COMBAT CREW PER 100 SORTIES BASED ON A SIX
 MONTH RUNNING AVERAGE

1944



EXPERIENCE B-24 FAF

2.0	2.0	1.60	1.88	1.50	1.50	1.70	1.60	1.60	1.50	1.50	1.50
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EXPERIENCE B-17 FAF

0.8	1.0	1.40	1.40	1.30	1.30	1.70	1.30	1.20	1.10	1.10	1.10
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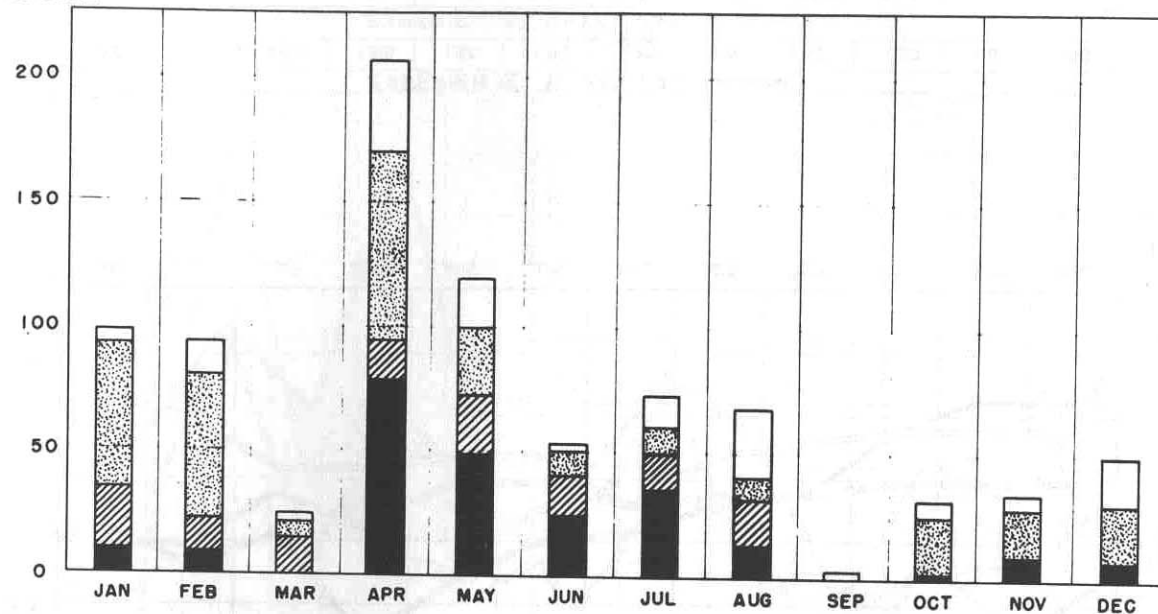
EXPERIENCE 449 BOMB GP

1.83	2.17	1.92	2.57	2.31	1.98	1.92	1.70	1.51	1.07	.86	.89
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449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
**ANALYSIS OF
 LOSSES OF COMBAT CREW PERSONNEL**

1944

CREW
MEMBERS



KILLED IN ACTION											
2	12	2	37	13	2	11	20	2	5	1	3
NON - BATTLE DEATHS											
1	1	-	-	7	-	1	7	-	-	3	15
MIA PERSONNEL - NO REPORTS											
61	59	7	76	27	10	11	9	-	24	20	22
PERSONNEL REPORTED PRISONERS OF WAR											
25	13	15	16	23	17	14	19	-	-	-	-
PERSONNEL RETURNED FROM MIA											
10	9	-	78	49	24	36	13	-	2	10	9
TOTAL CASUALTIES (OMITTING WOUNDED)											
99	94	24	207	119	53	73	68	2	31	34	49

period the ratio is lower than the air force figure for either B-17's or B-24's. The unusually high losses sustained the early months of the year tended to keep the six months running average of crew losses per 100 sorties above the air force figure. However, as soon as the April losses were omitted from the calculations, the rate dropped sharply below normal Fifteenth Air Force experience. Reference to the graphic presentation of these facts will clearly show monthly comparisons of our losses with Fifteenth Air Force in both aircraft and crews.

	449th Group	98th Group	376th Group	450th Group
Aircraft Losses - June - December 1944	38	49	57	66

A record was made in September when no aircraft or crews were lost to operational reasons, a figure never before experienced by any group in the wing.

OPERATIONS

During the first year of operations this group flew 191 day missions and 5 night missions. Operations were conducted on 190 days of the year and briefings on 169 days.

DAYS OF OPERATIONS PER MONTH

January (8th to 31st) 19; February 12; March 6; April 16; May 18; June 16; July 19; August 18; September 17; October 11; November 18; December 19; January 1945 (1st to 7th) 1. Total of 190.

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATIONS

BUCHAREST M/Y 4 APRIL 1944

28 unescorted B-24's of this group blast their way through 100 aggressive enemy fighters. Attacks from all angles, with every type weapon including aerial bombs, cannon, rockets and machine guns used by the Nazi pilots. GREAT DAMAGE INFLICTED ON COMMUNICATIONS.

BOX SCORE

Losses - 7 ships. Victories - 41 destroyed, 13 probable, and 6 damaged.

CONCORDIA VEGA OIL REFINERY 9 JULY 1944

Smoke screens prove of no value to Nazis' to protect their vital oil plants from this group. A new technique in high altitude bombing is developed and brought to perfection within the group. Despite intense flak from anti aircraft, both sections employing synchronous - PFF (Radar) methods bomb and destroy the oil refinery.

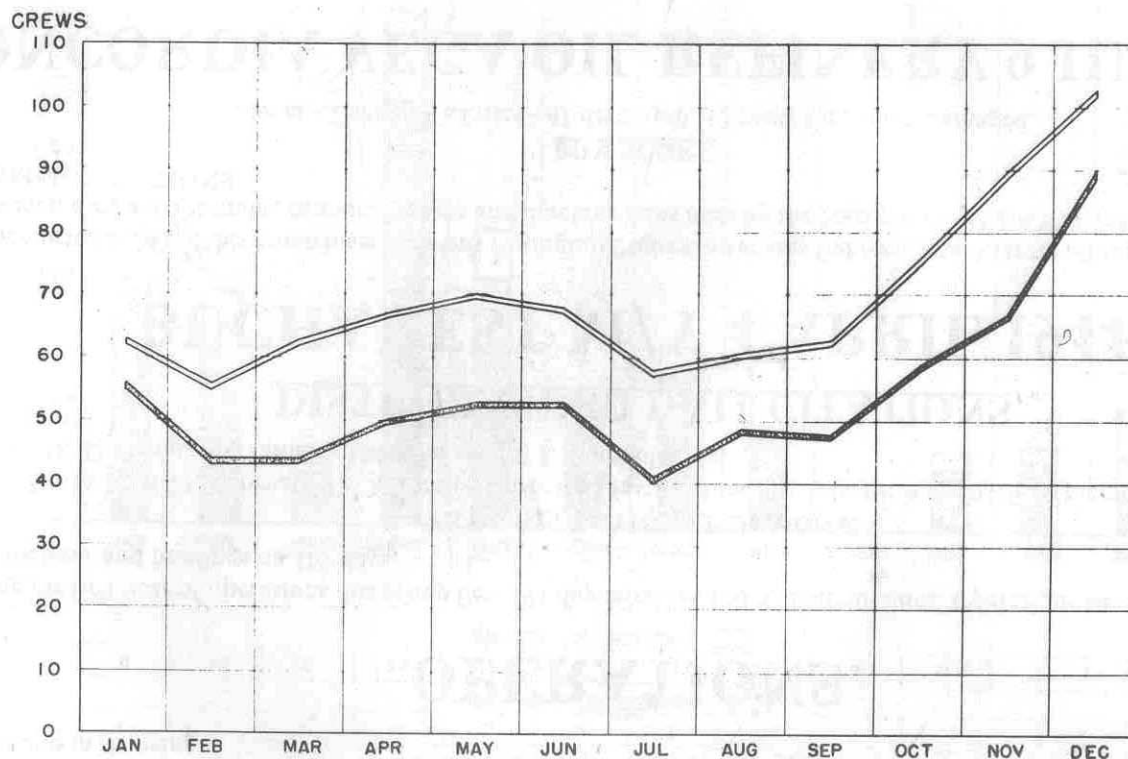
Losses - three crews of which two returned (1 to duty) and 1 ship crashed, half of crew bailing out successfully.

449 TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

AVAILABILITY OF COMBAT PERSONNEL

CREWS ASSIGNED AND OPERATIONAL

1944



CREWS ASSIGNED

63	56	63	67	70	68	58	61	63	76	90	103
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CREWS OPERATIONAL

56	44	44	50	53	53	41	49	48	59	67	90
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