



War Diary of the 340th Bombardment Group May 1945

Transcribed from US Army microfilm and illustrations added by
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*The 340th Bombardment Group on Corsica
Photo Credit: 57th Bomb Wing Archives*

[The 340th Bombardment Group HQ section did not file a day-by-day diary for the month of May 1945. No reason was given. In lieu of a detailed daily report, the HQ section filed a general description of the continuing training program that was instigated following the cessation of hostilities in Europe. Note the emphasis on the expected deployment to the Pacific theater.]

SUMMARY OF TRAINING PROGRAM (MAY, 1945) 340TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M) AAF

As soon as the war came to an end in Italy the Air Force set up and quickly put into operation a tactical training program, largely for combat crewmen, though some maintenance personnel were given training of a tactical nature. This general training program, which is not to be confused with the Indoctrination and Informational and Educational programs then already in operation, was designed primarily to keep alive the combat skills of air crewmen, to create new skills, and to ready these men to serve in air combat in the Pacific theater. In addition the program served to keep the airmen busy, thus safeguarding their morale from the dangers of idleness.

Training for the air crew members was divided into air and ground training. In the 340th group the program was placed under the direction of Major Homer B. Howard, assistant operations officer.

Since it early became known that the 340th group would be redeployed to the Pacific theater through the United States one of the objectives of the training program, which dictated in part the curriculum, was to prepare the air crews for the task of ferrying their B-25s back to the United States, probably by the South Atlantic route, various flying proficiency standards as well as radio and navigational procedures were adopted and worked on. Pilots who did not have instrument flying cards put in the required number of hours on Link trainer and "under the hood" in the air to qualify. Radio procedures of the ATC were also studied and practiced. In the air formation flying was stressed, as well as practice bombing, and in addition, four mock missions, entirely planned and briefed by squadron, rather than group, operations officers were run off. Further training in the Shoran technique was also given selected crews on special practice missions. Further practice in the use of the Norden bombsight was also given. Navigation problems, similar to those that might be expected in later combat flights or on the flight home to the United States, were solved in the air.

On the ground combat crew members studied theory. Courses were given in navigation, lectures were given on aircraft identification, ditching procedure, escape and evasion. Gunners brushed up on their gunnery by practicing on the "Jam-Handy" device, in which they fired a special type rifle or gun at the projected image of a fighter plane on a motion picture screen. In addition, they shot clay pigeons on the skeet range. Scores and scores of technical films on combat techniques in the Japanese theater, first aid, ditching procedure, etc. were shown.

Moreover, the group obtained four A-26 type attack-bombers and many pilots were taught to fly them. Several aerial engineers in the 340th attended a one-week school course on the maintenance of this plane. The course was given by a mobile training unit.