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SQ BOMB-428-HI

125 Apr. 1942

HISTORY OF THE 428TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

The 428th Bombardment Squadron (M) was activated at Key Field, Meridian, Miss., on April 25, 1942. It was the outgrowth of an attempt to fill the "paper" strength of the Third Air Force by utilizing trained groups of specialists from other organizations, around whom newly-formed units were brought to full strength. The nucleus of the 428th was a group of well-known enlisted men from the 37th Reconnaissance Squadron, among them being Staff Sgt. Walter L. Decker, Master Sgt. Raymond C. Hollen, First Sgt. Lester L. Abernethy and others. When orders were received activating the new squadron, 1st Lt. Harry A. Gerwin was named as its first Commander.

After activation, the squadron remained at Key Field only long enough to transfer in some new men, and was transferred to Columbia Air Base, Columbia, S.C., in the first week of June, 1942. It was assigned to the 310th Bombardment Group (M), which had just been activated; the entire organization being under command of the late Capt. James A. Plant, A.C. At Columbia the 428th was brought up to authorized strength from newly-arrived graduates of Service schools throughout the U.S., including Scott Field, Chanute Field, Lowry Field and the OCS at Miami Beach, Fla. For a short period following the sudden death of Capt. Plant in a crackup at Columbia, 2nd Lieut. Calvin C. Titus, A.C., was in temporary command, the dates being from May 20th to June 21st, 1942. He was relieved to go to another command and the new E. O. was announced as 1st Lt. James P. Walker, A.A.F., a graduate of West Point in the Class of 1941.

Lt. Walker held command from June 21st to July 21st, 1942, being replaced by 1st Lt. William M. Bower, A.A.F. on the latter date. Lt. Bower was one of the famous participants in Gen. Jimmy Doolittle's historic raid on Tokyo during the early part of 1942, and his command was in the nature of a reward. On August 10th, 1942, both Lt. Bower and Lt. Walker were promoted to the rank of Captain.

On August 8th, the 428th accompanied the 310th Group to Walterboro Air Base, Walterboro, S. C., remaining in training there until August 28th, when a detachment from it, consisting of the medical officer, intelligence and operations staffs and a total of 11 officers and 36 enlisted men, left for over-seas service via Fort Dix, N. J., and New York City. The detachment was commanded by Capt. Kent Sagendorph, Squadron Intelligence Officer. It left Fort Dix on September 4th, embarked September 5th on the British transport "Queen Mary", and arrived at Gourock, Scotland, in the Firth of Clyde, on September 11th. The following day the detachment proceeded to Hardwick Station, RAF, near Bungay, Suffolk, where it was billeted awaiting arrival of its flight echelon. During this period it was under the command of 1st Lt. Samuel A. Wilson, A.C.

The officers who accompanied this unit are as follows:

Capt. Kent H. Sagendorph
1st Lt. Louis Ryterband
1st Lt. Samuel A. Wilson
2nd Lt. George F. Bashich
2nd Lt. Wilbur F. Call
2nd Lt. Roland Frost

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2nd Lt. Wilson R. Haines
2nd Lt. Lawrence L. Purifoy
2nd Lt. August F. Rambosek
2nd Lt. Robert M. Westcott
2nd Lt. William A. K. Wheeler

SAMUEL A. WILSON,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Commanding.