

GENERAL ORDER 13

IV-BATTLE HONORS.-As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22,1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citations of the following units in General Orders 13, Headquarters Twentieth Air Force, 23 January 1946, are confirmed under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943 in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citations read as follows:

1. The 6th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy during the period 9 to 19 July 1945. As a part of a specially trained force charged with the strategic blockading of the Japanese Empire, this group, in a series of valiant actions, laid mines with telling effect to help materially in the final destruction of the enemy's shipborne lines of communications. The execution of the mining missions involved extraordinary demonstrations of skill and extreme accuracy, since the location of all mines had to be pin-pointed to permit immediate assessment of results and eventual mine sweeping operations by our own naval units. Despite the problems posed by a greatly accelerated program requiring combat flights every other night at levels of 6,900 feet to 8,600 feet over heavily defended enemy territory, and of complete reliance upon radar for the utmost precision required in mining through undercasts, the 6th Bombardment Group (VH) performed superbly its assigned missions and was instrumental in causing an estimated 60 percent of the enemy ships to be sunk or damaged between March and August 1945. On the night of 9 July 1945, 97 percent of the 31 aircraft airborne effectively mined their assigned target areas, with the loss of 1 aircraft. For tactical reasons, the aircraft were, flown at reduced speeds and at low altitudes over the heavily defended areas of Yamata and Shimonoseki Straits, encountering as many as 25 searchlights coned on a single aircraft, coordinated with heavy, intense, and accurate flak. Despite these overwhelming obstacles, the briefed courses were held valiantly and the mines were dropped in the exact assigned positions, confirmed by radarscope photographs. The 6th Bombardment Group (VH) again, took off on the night of 11 July 1946 to open a new phase of the attack on the enemy's shipping. Traversing vast expanses of water, exposed for 7 hours and 10 minutes over enemy territory on one of the longest missions of the war, and heavily loaded with mines, the group flew to the remote shores of Korea to mine the harbors of Rashin and Fusan. Although handicapped by a solid undercast at the target area, and entirely dependent upon radar, the operation was executed with such unerring precision and pressed with such determination that radarscope photos again revealed 90 percent of the mines were sown in the briefed area. The 6th Bombardment Group (VH) set out again on 19 July 1945 to intensify and maintain the blockade in seven of the vital ports and harbors of Korea and Japan by further sowing and replanting of mine fields. The determination of the crews to fulfill the assigned objective was again displayed when 94 percent of the mines, airborne by 31 aircraft were accurately dropped as briefed. This achievement contributed powerfully to the final and complete suffocation of Japan's shipping lanes. Inspired by a full realization of the strategic importance of their assignment and keenly determined to execute it with maximum

effectiveness, the ground personnel and air crews of the 6th Bombardment Group

(VH) coordinated their efforts into a smoothly functioning team. In the face of unusually difficult conditions and circumstances, which included the employment of unfamiliar and dangerous weapons and of techniques requiring the

utmost care and precision, problems were attacked and overcome through spontaneous initiative, indefatigable zeal and effort, and long hours of unselfish devotion to duty. The combined efforts of all personnel of the 6th Bombardment Group (VH) were vital factors contributing to the ultimate success

of the aerial mining blockade of the Japanese Empire, the severance of the enemy shipping lanes, and the smashing of her power to continue the war. The achievements of the personnel of this group bring great honor to themselves, the United States Army Air Forces, and to the entire military service.

2. The 9th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty

in armed conflict with the Japanese enemy for the period 18 to 28 May 1945. During this period, this group, with consummate skill and high daring carried out lone extensive and highly effective aerial mining operations in the enemy's vital Shimonoseki Straits area and in the strategic harbors of northwest Honshu and Kyushu. In these operations, the group demonstrated the strategic potential inherent in aerial mine laying, blazed the trail for subsequent mining operations by developing precision techniques and highly successful tactics, and contributed significantly to the eventual complete blockade of the key water passage into the enemy's Inland Sea and the isolation of the important Japanese northern ports and harbors. During this period, the 9th Bombardment Group (VH) flew a total of 209 mining sorties in

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effective missions. Attacking their targets every other night, averaging flights of 2,900 miles over great expanses of trackless ocean, frequently through extensive areas of adverse and unpredictable weather and in defiance of enemy anti-aircraft fire and fighters, the air crews of the B-29s, performing with exemplary courage, precision, and technical skill, 92 percent placed of the 1,425 mines expended precisely in the predetermined strategic location. All mines were dropped from low altitudes averaging 5,500 feet. The concentrated and rapid tempo of the operations to illustrated by a series of three successive missions which were flown by the group. On 18-19 May 1945,

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aircraft mined successfully the Inland Sea approaches to the Shimonoseki Straits. On 20-21 May 1945, 22 aircraft mined the outer approaches to the Straits, with 4 aircraft remaining the inner approaches. Again, on 22-23 May 1945, the Straits were the target for 30 aircraft, which dropped mines accurately in the briefed area. The Shimonoseki Straits area was the second most heavily defended zone in the Japanese, Empire, since it was the main channel of entry for all shipping from China and Korea into the highly strategic Inland Sea, and a virtual life-and-death keypoint in the enemy war economy. The main attack of the 9th Bombardment Group (VH) was against this arterial waterway. Flying through hazardous concentrations of enemy defenses, solving difficult navigational problems, and developing and employing new modern mine laying techniques with uncanny skill, the group dealt grave and crippling blows to the movement of Japanese shipments of food, raw materials, manufactured war supplies, troop elements, and combat equipment, both to and from the enemy home islands through the Shimonoseki Straits. The personnel of the 9th Bombardment Group (VH) were keenly aware of the strategic importance of their assignment and contributed unselfishly to the splendid operational record established during this period. An average of 84.2 flying hours per B-29 aircraft on hand was achieved, and an average of 62.2 flying hours per air crew was logged. The ground personnel performed their duties with extreme devotion, even under the trying conditions existing, displaying exceptional

initiative, self-denial, and untiring effort. The 9th Bombardment Group (VH) by its efforts, helped significantly to deny to the enemy the support of his conquered territories and of his possessions, to reduce drastically his productive power, to shatter his transport, and to curtail seriously his productive power and ability to continue the war. The combined accomplishments of the air and ground crews of 9th Bombardment Group (VH), in effecting the complete blockade of Japan, bring great honor to the United States Army Air Forces and to the entire military service.

3. The 19th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy for the period 9 through 16 March 1945. During this first phase of the low-level aerial attacks against Japanese Industry, the group distinguished itself by its valor and skill and contributed decisively to the air operations which devastated Japanese war production. When the momentous and revolutionary decision was made to send the B-29s over their targets at unprecedented low altitudes of 5,000 to 10,000 feet, the 19th Bombardment Group (VH) interrupted its shake-down training to take part in the first all-out raids that were to provide the strategic key to the future bombing of Japan. Fully aware of the hazards involved in descending from previous bombing altitudes of 30,000 feet and above to levels which were expected to make the attacking aircraft dangerously vulnerable to concentrated enemy fighter assaults and antiaircraft fire, the air crews of the 19th Bombardment Group (VH) were, nevertheless, determined to do all in their power to give the new strategy a thorough trial. The astounding successes of these first low-altitude missions were due in large part to the implacable will of this group, which carried them relentlessly into the target zones, where they dropped their bomb, loads with devastating accuracy. The 19th Bombardment Group (VH) struck five maximum effort blows during the 10 action-filled days of this period, against the following cities, which represented the heart and sinew of Japanese war power: Tokyo, on 9 March; Nagoya, on 11 March; Osaka, on 12 March; Kobe, on 16 March; and Nagoya again, on 18 March. On these missions, the group unleashed 552 tons of incendiaries, carried in 116 sorties. Maintenance crews distinguished themselves, keeping each assigned aircraft flying for 67.3 hours during- the 10-day blitz, with only 6 abortive sorties. These missions included the employment of intrepid group pathfinder aircraft, which went in over the selected targets, alone and ahead of the main striking force, to light up the areas to be bombed. Poststrike reconnaissance for this period revealed that the phenomenal achievement of these bold and epoch-making blows against the primary sources of Japanese military and industrial strength justified the new strategy and the risks hazarded with such valor by the air crews. Photographs demonstrate that the 19th Bombardment group (VH) performed with superb courage and skill its full share in the destruction of 31.8 square miles of the most vital industrial regions of Japan. The 19th Bombardment Group (VH), in its iron determination to hit the target and in its successes, brings great honor to the United States Army Air Forces and to the entire military service.

4. The 29th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy for the period 19 to 26 June 1945, in the course of which it accomplished the destruction of high-priority industrial and military targets of the Japanese homeland. In 3 attacks involving 84 sorties, the crews of this group fought their way through desperate and persistent fighter opposition and heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire to fulfill, with exceptional valor, their part of a carefully planned series of missions against Japanese industrial areas, aircraft plants, and arsenals. On the night of 19 June 1945, the industrial area of Shizuoka was virtually eliminated as a factor in the Japanese war economy when thirty-one aircraft of the 29th Bombardment Group (VH), laden with 256 tons of incendiaries, made their bomb runs from an altitude of 8,900 feet in the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire and also the dangerous threat of terrific thermals caused by the conflagration below, which sent smoke billowing to 20,000 feet. The accuracy of the bombing of this group, despite adverse conditions, contributed tellingly toward the remarkable record of destruction of 100 percent of the industrial center of the city. The 29th Bombardment Group (VH) struck again on 22 June 1945, when 22 aircraft engaged in a daylight precision attack on the Mitsubishi aircraft plant in Tamashima, on Honshu. This mission was part of a successful all-out effort to effect drastic reductions in Japanese aircraft. The group's formations fought through to the bomb run and released 162 tons of high explosive bombs from an altitude of 18,000 feet. In this attack, mounted in conjunction with other groups of the 314th Bombardment Wing, the target was reduced to a mass of wreckage, with destruction estimated at 85 percent. The Tamashima Mitsubishi aircraft plant was written off as a complete ruin, useless to the enemy. On 26 June 1945, 31 aircraft of the 29th Bombardment Group (VH) smashed the Chigusa arsenal at Nagoya, one of Japan's leading producers of weapons and shells. About 30 enemy aircraft delivered a total of 52 attacks upon the formations of the group, but paying with 6 fighters shot down and 1 damaged. Intense, heavy, and accurate flak also met the B-29s, inflicting varying degrees of damage on 18 aircraft, and major damage to 2 others. Despite this opposition, the formations bored in intrepidly upon their objective, releasing 202 tons of high explosives with superior accuracy. Nearly half of the Chigusa arsenal was destroyed in this individually undertaken mission, a remarkable achievement of the courageous effort and skill of this single group. The effectiveness of these attacks, carried through successfully, despite enemy opposition, dangerous thermals, adverse weather, and damaged aircraft, demonstrated the highest devotion and skill on the part of both air and ground crews. Maintenance personnel were taxed to the limit to keep the bombers in readiness for combat in these stepped-up, maximum-effort missions and all men, without exception, responded nobly with long hours of work of the highest quality. The outstanding heroism, skill, and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and enlisted personnel of the 29th Bombardment Group (VH) reflect great credit on themselves, the United States Army Air Forces, and the entire military service.

5. The 39th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy during the period 23 to 29 May 1945. With exceptional valor and superb skill, this group participated in three highly successful large-scale missions, which had for their formidable objective the destruction of two major industrial centers of Japan, Tokyo and Yokohama. The group accomplished its assignment with exceptional success, despite some of the most fanatical and effective air opposition ever mounted

by the Japanese enemy, The opposition was intensified by the need to fly these strikes at medium altitudes, because of problems posed by incendiary bomb ballistics and by the unpredictable and excessive winds at high altitudes. This tactical necessity subjected the bombing aircraft to continuous attack from the largest concentration of enemy fighters and anti-aircraft guns in the Empire. Shortly after midnight on 24 May 1945, 34 aircraft of the 39th Bombardment Group (VH) joined in a massive assault on the manufacturing districts of Tokyo. Forty-eight hours later, on 26 May 1945, an equal number of the group's aircraft participated in a second crushing strike at this powerful center of the enemy's war potential. These two missions devastated 22.1 square miles of the target area in this, the world's third largest city. Vicious fighter attacks, supported by intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, shot down one B-29 on each of these missions, and damaged a total of seventeen

more. Again, during the forenoon of 29 May, another large-scale incendiary assault was launched, this time against the industrial and dock areas of Yokohama. The 39th Bombardment Group (VH) despite the losses and the damage sustained in its last two missions, mustered 25 aircraft for the attack. During the approach to the target, and flying at 17,000 feet, the formations were subjected to fierce and accurate anti-aircraft fire, and to 37 enemy fighter thrusts. Two of the B-29s went down, and fifteen others were damaged. Despite these losses and continued harassment by the enemy, the group fought intrepidly through to the target, bombed with deadly accuracy, and aided in accomplishing the devastation of 6.9 square miles of the industrial district of the city. The great shipping center of Yokohama was written off the list of

priority targets. No other missions were ever flown against it thereafter. The

climactic successes of these three missions against two of the major industrial strongholds of Japanese war might was a fitting tribute not only to

the coolness and skill of the gallant air crews of the group, but also to the maintenance personnel, who kept the aircraft in the air and sent damaged ships

back into service in an incredibly short time. Acutely short-handed, continuously improvising to overcome a shortage of tools, equipment, and replacement parts, the ground crews repaired their wounded aircraft and managed to sustain them at an extraordinary level of mechanical excellence, though sometimes working continuously for 60 hours, pausing only for food and brief rests beside their airplanes. The valor, superior skill, and unremitting

devotion to duty exhibited by the members of the 39th Bombardment Group (VH) are in the highest tradition of the military service and reflect great credit on themselves and the United States Army Air Forces.

6. The 504th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy during the period 27 July to 14 August 1945. As part of a specially trained and highly skilled force, it was assigned

the difficult task of establishing and maintaining an effective blockade, by aerial mining, of the waters surrounding the home islands of Japan and Korea. The fulfillment of this important mission entailed many hours of hazardous flight and some of the longest combat missions ever flown over the vast

waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, through areas of adverse weather, over routes so widely dispersed, and over such great distances of Japanese-controlled territory that the crews were often without benefit of air-sea rescue facilities. The nature of the missions required the aircraft to fly individually and without escort, at night, at the low altitudes of 6,000 to 8,000 feet over formidable enemy anti-aircraft defenses, both en route to and

from their targets and in the target areas. It was necessary, moreover, to reduce air speed during the mine run for tactical reasons, thereby increasing vulnerability to enemy attacks. On

27 July 1945, the 504th Bombardment Group (VH) mined the important ports of Maizuru, Sensaki, Niigata, and the key waters of the Shimonoseki Straits. With

extraordinary indifference to enemy fighters and to heavy, intense, and accurate anti-aircraft fire, they sowed their mines with deadly accuracy; 96 percent were dropped exactly in the positions briefed. One aircraft was lost to enemy anti-aircraft fire, another went down on its way in to the target. Again, on the nights of 29 July and 1 August 1945, the tenacious and unerring night raiders of the 504th Bombardment Group (VH) struck at the frayed shipping lifelines of the Japanese Empire in two accurate mine laying blows. On 5 August 1945, they reached out daringly over vast distances to mine the areas of Rashin and Geijitsu in Korea, and to drive home devastating blows to shipping in the harbor waters of Tsuruga, Sensaki, Ours, and Hagi in the enemy

home Islands. The arduous flights to Korea were carried out successfully in the face of both strong ground and air opposition; 95 percent of the mines, sown were placed in the designated areas,, The prodigious effort to throttle Japan by sealing her off from outside supply continued with additional mine laying operations by the 504th Bombardment Group (VH) on the nights of 7 and 10 August 1945. Then, on 14 August 1945, Nanao, Maizuru, and the Shimonoseki Straits area were mined with such accuracy that the blockade and stranglehold on the Japanese Empire was virtually complete. This last mining mission of the

war encountered heavy, intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire and the crews repulsed successfully the desperate attacks of 42 enemy fighters, many of which were coordinated with the employment of more than 75 searchlights. The ground personnel of the 504th Bombardment Group (VH) ever conscious of the vital character of their assignment, sustained the operation with an inspiring

display of untiring effort, oblivious to the difficult conditions under which they were frequently compelled to work, and demonstrating at all times a selfless devotion to duty. The combined efforts and accomplishments of both the air crews and the ground crews, during this period, contributed immeasurably toward the successful smashing of the enemy's will and ability to

wage war. The valor and skill of the air crews and the efficiency and devotion

to -duty displayed by the ground personnel of the 504th Bombardment Group (VH)

in accomplishing the assigned mission, bring great honor to the United States Army Air Forces and to the entire military service.

7. The 505th Bombardment Group (VH) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy during the period 17 June to 1 July 1945. As part of an intensively trained aerial mine laying force, charged with

the destruction of Japanese shipborne lines of communications, this group, by its intrepid action in systematic mine planting, denied to enemy shipping the free use of the highly strategic Shimonoseki Straits, virtual lifeline to the enemy's vital Inland Sea area. The accurate placement of these mines demanded the highest skill and determination on the part of both the highly trained air

crews and ground crews. To permit the carrying of heavier mine loads, each aircraft was stripped of nearly all defensive fire power. The 505th Bombardment Group (VH) struck at night, unescorted, and in defiance of enemy anti-aircraft defenses and fighters, flying at reduced speeds for tactical reasons. The mines were dropped in priority mining target areas, which were

1,500 miles from base, entailing hazardous flights over vast expanses of ocean

and often through extensive areas of adverse weather. Such was the precision, skill, and determination of the group that by 1 July 1945, enemy shipping through the vital Shimonoseki lifeline was reduced to a mere trickle of 10 percent of that which normally moved through the straits in the premining period. On the night of 17 June 1945, 20 aircraft (B-29's), flying at altitudes of 6,000 to 8,000 feet, planted mines squarely in Shimonoseki Straits and in its adjoining Moji Anchorage. Despite the narrowness of the target area, the crews of the 505th Bombardment Group (VH) pressed the attack with such accuracy and fixed purpose that 87 percent of the mines fell in the target area substantially as briefed. A dauntless force of 12 mine laying aircraft of the group delivered another paralyzing blow to the enemy shipborne

lines of communications on 29 June 1945, this time dropping mines in the Hibiki Sea across the western approaches, in Shimonoseki Straits. Flying at 7,060 feet, the 12 crews braved the known dense concentrations of anti-aircraft

fire of Yawata, Wakamatsu, and Kokurs, and not one aircraft deviated from its briefed mining run. Once again, radarscope photographs revealed that 85 percent of the mines had been planted unerringly in the briefed target area. This attack not only supplemented and intensified the effective blockade of Shimonoseki Straits, but also denied to enemy shipping the use of vital Wakamatsu Harbor and Dokai Bay. In a continuation of this devastating series of aerial mine laying operations, the 505th Bombardment Group (VH) hit again on the night of 1 July 1945, when nine B-29 aircraft placed their mines in the

strategic waters at the eastern end of the Shimonoseki Straits. Dropping from 7,000 feet through an undercast, which obscured the target area, 100 percent of the mines were planted substantially as briefed, thus effectively closing the waterway to the already sorely beset enemy shipping. During the period from 17 June to 1 July 1945, the 505th Bombardment Group (VH) flew a total of 138 effective sorties and planted 1,998 mines with such a degree of accuracy as to accomplish its mission in an unprecedented manner. Imbued with a full grasp of the strategic importance of their assignment, ground personnel of the 505th Bombardment Group (VH) performed ceaselessly their important duties, often under difficult conditions, but always with inspiring initiative and energy, unflagging effort, and selfless devotion to duty. The coordinated efforts of air and ground crews rendered Shimonoseki Straits, the keystone target, useless to the enemy and contributed vitally to the overwhelmingly successful blockade of the Japanese Empire.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Chief of Staff