

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520

C-UPD-rmb

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 4303)

1 November 1944
SECTION

Citation of unit I

SECTION I - CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular No 89, Headquarters NATOUSA, 10 July 1944, the following unit is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy:

885TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) (SPECIAL). For outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. Assigned the difficult and extremely hazardous task of delivering, by night dropping operations, eighteen (18) agents and 67,000 pounds of arms, ammunition and special supplies to units of the hard-pressed French Forces of the Interior at clandestine targets scattered throughout Southern France, the ground crews worked diligently and untiringly to insure the mechanical perfection of their aircraft to enhance the success of this highly important mission. On the night of 12 August 1944, eleven (11) heavily loaded heavy bombardment type aircraft took off and individually, alone and unescorted, set course for their respective destinations. In the complete darkness of a moonless night, by use of celestial navigation and such recognition points as could be discerned, with virtually no radio navigational aids available, all targets were accurately reached. Under these adverse conditions, the pilots, flying on instruments over 1200 miles, were required to fly at low altitudes over hostile and unfamiliar terrain, despite the presence of mountain peaks in the immediate vicinity of their targets. Reaching the objectives, descents were made to altitudes as low as 500 feet, where dropping runs were made at retarded air speeds. Flying in the immediate vicinity of numerous fighter airdromes, within range of all light and heavy arms fire, these gallant crews successfully accomplished their assigned tasks with unerring accuracy. On the return flight, though pursued by enemy aircraft, they successfully evaded the hostile ships and returned safely to base. Through their extraordinary skill in night navigation and instrument flying, each crew reached its specified target and carried out their objectives with 100% success. A total of 67,000 pounds of supplies were dropped to the French Forces of the Interior, at strategic points for the immediate use in the support of the pending invasion. Eighteen (18) active agents were safely dispatched to take their vital parts in the organization of the Underground Army. In addition, 225,000 leaflets, alerting the population of three (3) large cities in Southern France, were dispatched. The outstanding success achieved by the Squadron in this operation provided valuable stores of arms with which the Maquis were able to give invaluable aid to the Allied invasion of Southern France. By the outstanding courage, professional skill and determination of the combat crews, together with the superior technical skill and intense devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 885th Bombardment Squadron has reflected great credit upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United States Of America.

By command of Major General TWINING:

R. K. TAYLOR,
Colonel, GSC,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

J. M. IVINS,
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Adjutant General.